THE DIALECTICAL IMAGINATION

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A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research 1923-1950

MARTIN JAY

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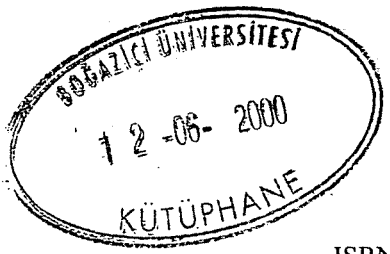

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To my parents,
Edward and Sari Jay

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Foreword

December, 1971

Dear Mr. Jay,

I have been asked to write a foreword to your book on the history of the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research. Reading your interesting work does not permit me to refuse this request; however, the condition of my health limits me to the short letter form, which should now serve as a foreword. First, my thanks are due you for the care which is demonstrated through all the chapters of your work. Much will be preserved which would be forgotten without your description.

The work to which the Institute devoted itself before its emigration from Germany — one thinks of Friedrich Pollock's book *The Experiments in Economic Planning in the Soviet Union, 1917–1927* or the subsequently published collective work, *Authority and Family* — meant something new in comparison to the then official educational system. It meant the ability to pursue research for which a university still offered no opportunity. The enterprise succeeded only because, thanks to the support of Hermann Weil and the intervention of his son, Felix, a group of men, interested in social theory and from different scholarly backgrounds, came together with the belief that formulating the negative in the epoch of transition was more meaningful than academic careers. What united them was the critical approach to existing society.

Already near the end of the twenties, certainly by the beginning of the thirties, we were convinced of the probability of a National Socialist victory, as well as of the fact that it could be met only through revolutionary actions. That it needed a world war we did not yet envisage at that time. We thought of an uprising in our own country and because of that, Marxism won its decisive meaning for our thought. After our emigration to America via Geneva, the Marxist interpretation of social events remained, to be sure, dominant, which did not mean in any way, however, that a dogmatic materialism had

become the decisive theme of our position. Reflecting on political systems taught us rather that it was necessary, as Adorno has expressed it, "not to think of claims to the Absolute as certain and yet, not to deduct anything from the appeal to the emphatic concept of the truth."

The appeal to an entirely other *(ein ganz Anderes)* than this world had primarily a social-philosophical impetus. It led finally to a more positive evaluation of certain metaphysical trends, because the empirical "whole is the untrue" (Adorno). The hope that earthly horror does not possess the last word is, to be sure, a non-scientific wish.

Those who were once associated with the Institute, as far as they are still alive, will certainly be thankful to you for recognizing in your book a history of their own ideas. I feel obliged also in the name of the dead, such as Fred Pollock, Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Franz Neumann, and Otto Kirchheimer, to express to you, dear Mr. Jay, acknowledgment and gratitude for your work.

Cordially,
MAX HORKHEIMER

Montagnola, Switzerland

Introduction

It has become a commonplace in the modern world to regard the intellectual as estranged, maladjusted, and discontented. Far from being disturbed by this vision, however, we have become increasingly accustomed to seeing our intellectuals as outsiders, gadflies, marginal men, and the like. The word "alienation," indiscriminately used to signify the most banal of dyspepsias as well as the deepest of metaphysical fears, has become the chief cant phrase of our time. For even the most discerning of observers, reality and pose have become difficult to distinguish. To the horror of those who can genuinely claim to have suffered from its effects, alienation has proved a highly profitable commodity in the cultural marketplace. Modernist art with its dissonances and torments, to take one example, has become the staple diet of an increasingly voracious army of culture consumers who know good investments when they see them. The avant-garde, if indeed the term can still be used, has become an honored ornament of our cultural life, less to be feared than feted. The philosophy of existentialism, to cite another case, which scarcely a generation ago seemed like a breath of fresh air, has now degenerated into a set of easily manipulated clichés and sadly hollow gestures. This decline occurred, it should be noted, not because analytic philosophers exposed the meaninglessness of its categories, but rather as a result of our culture's uncanny ability to absorb and defuse even its most uncompromising opponents. And finally to mention a third example, it is all too evident in 1972, a few short years after the much ballyhooed birth of an alleged counterculture, that the new infant, if not strangled in the crib, has proved easily domesticated in the ways of its elders. Here too the mechanisms of absorption and cooptation have shown themselves to be enormously effective.

The result of all this is that intellectuals who take their critical function seriously have been presented with an increasingly rigorous

challenge to outdistance the culture's capacity to numb their protest. One response has been an ever more frantic flight into cultural extremism, a desire to shock and provoke by going beyond what had previously been the limits of cultural tolerance. These limits, however, have demonstrated an elasticity far greater than anticipated, as yesterday's obscenities are frequently transformed into today's bromides. With the insufficiency of a purely cultural solution in mind, many critical intellectuals have attempted to integrate their cultural protest with its political counterpart. Radical political movements, characteristically of the left, have continued to attract discontented intellectuals in our own time, as they have done traditionally in years past. But this alliance has rarely proved an easy one, especially when the realities of left-wing movements in power have become too ugly to ignore. Consequently, the ebb and flow of radical intellectuals to and from various leftist allegiances has been one of the constant themes of modern intellectual history.

This oscillation stems as well from a more basic dilemma faced only by intellectuals of the left. The elitism of those who confine their extremism solely to the cultural sphere, rejecting its political correlate, does not necessarily engender any particular sense of guilt. For the radical intellectual who chooses political involvement, however, the desire to maintain a critical distance presents a special problem. Remaining apart, not just from society as a whole but also from the movement on whose victory he counts, creates an acute tension that is never absent from the lives of serious leftist intellectuals. The endless self-criticism aimed at exorcising the remnants of elitism, which has characterized the New Left in recent years, bears witness to the persistence of this concern. At its worst, it produces a sentimental *nostalgie de la boue*; at its best, it can lead to an earnest effort to reconcile theory and practice, which takes into account the possibilities for such a unity in an imperfect world.

But what is often forgotten in the desire to purge the phrase "activist intellectual" of its oxymoronic connotations is that intellectuals are already actors, although in a very special sense. The intellectual is always engaged in *symbolic* action, which involves the externalization of his thought in any number of ways. "Men of ideas" are noteworthy only when their ideas are communicated to others through one medium or another. The critical edge of intellectual life comes largely from the gap that exists between symbol and what for want of a better word can be called reality. Paradoxically, by attempting to transform themselves into the agency to bridge that gap, they risk forfeiting the critical perspective it provides. What usually suffers is the quality of their work, which degenerates into propaganda. The

critical intellectual is in a sense less *engagé* when he is self-consciously partisan than when he adheres to the standards of integrity set by his craft. As Yeats reminds us, "The intellect of man is forced to choose between / Perfection of the life or of the work." [1] When the radical intellectual too closely identifies with popular forces of change in an effort to leave his ivory tower behind, he jeopardizes achieving either perfection. Between the Scylla of unquestioning solidarity and the Charybdis of willful independence, he must carve a middle way or else fail. How precarious that middle path may be is one of the chief lessons to be learned from the radical intellectuals who have been chosen as the subjects of this study.

The so-called Frankfurt School, composed of certain members of the Institut für Sozialforschung (Institute of Social Research),* can in fact be seen as presenting in quintessential form the dilemma of the left intellectual in our century. Few of their counterparts have been as sensitive to the absorbing power of both the dominant culture and its ostensible opponents. Throughout the Institut's entire existence, and especially in the period from 1923 to 1950, the fear of cooptation and integration deeply troubled its members. Although the exigencies of history forced them into exile as part of the intellectual migration from Central Europe after 1933, they had been exiles in relation to the external world since the beginning of their collaboration. Far from being a source of regret, however, this status was accepted, even nurtured, as the *sine qua non* of their intellectual fertility.

Because of their intransigent refusal to compromise their theoretical integrity at the same time that they sought to identify a social agency to realize their ideas, the adherents of the Frankfurt School anticipated many of the same issues that were to agonize a later generation of engaged intellectuals. Largely for this reason, the work they did in their early years together excited the imaginations of postwar New Leftists in Europe and, more recently, in America as well. Pirated editions of works long since out of print were circulated among an impatient German student movement, whose appetites had been whetted by the contact they had with the Institut after its return to Frankfurt in 1950. The clamor for republication of the essays written in the Institut's house organ, the *Zeitschrift für Sozial-*

* The German spelling of Institut will be used throughout the text to set it apart from any other institute. It will also be used as coterminous with the "Frankfurt School" in the period after 1933. What must be remembered, however, is that the notion of a specific school did not develop until *after* the Institut was forced to leave Frankfurt (the term itself was not used until the Institut returned to Germany in 1950). As will be made clear in the opening chapter, the Weimar Institut was far too pluralist in its Marxism to allow the historian to identify its theoretical perspective with that of the Frankfurt School as it emerged in later years.[2]

forschung (Journal of Social Research), led in the 1960's to the appearance of such collections as Herbert Marcuse's *Negations*[3] and Max Horkheimer's *Kritische Theorie*,[4] to add to the already reissued selections from the writings of other Institut members, such as Theodor W. Adorno, Leo Lowenthal, Walter Benjamin, and Franz Neumann.[5] Although it is not my intention to comment extensively on the Institut's history after its return to Germany, it should be noted that much of the recent attention paid to it was aroused by the reappearance of work done in the relative obscurity of its first quarter century.

Why a history of that period has never before been attempted is not difficult to discern. The Frankfurt School's work covered so many diverse fields that a definitive analysis of each would require a team of scholars expert in everything from musicology to sinology. It would, in short, demand a Frankfurt School all its own. The hazards awaiting the isolated historian are therefore obvious. They were certainly a source of some hesitation on my part before I decided to embark on the project. However, when that decision was behind me and I began to immerse myself in the Institut's work, I discovered that the expertise I lacked in specific disciplines was compensated for by the very comprehensiveness of my approach. For I came to understand that there was an essential coherence in the Frankfurt School's thought, a coherence that affected almost all of its work in different areas. I soon learned that Erich Fromm's discussion of the sado-masochistic character and Leo Lowenthal's treatment of the Norwegian novelist Knut Hamsun illuminated one another, that Theodor W. Adorno's critique of Stravinsky and Max Horkheimer's repudiation of Scheler's philosophical anthropology were intimately related, that Herbert Marcuse's concept of one-dimensional society was predicated on Friedrich Pollock's model of state capitalism, and so on. I also discovered that even when conflicts over issues did develop, as they did, for example, between Fromm and Horkheimer or Pollock and Neumann, they were articulated with a common vocabulary and against a background of more or less shared assumptions. An overview of the Institut's development, despite the superficiality it might entail on certain questions, thus appeared a justifiable exercise.

Moreover, the timing of such a project seemed to me crucial. Although certain of the Institut's members were no longer living — Franz Neumann, Walter Benjamin, Otto Kirchheimer, and Henryk Grossmann, to name the most important — many of the others were still alive, vigorous, and at the stage in their careers when a concern for the historical record was probable. In every case they responded

positively to my initial expression of interest in the Institut's history. How much help I received will be apparent in the acknowledgment section that follows.

Despite the aid given me in reconstructing the Institut's past, however, the results should in no way be construed as a "court history." In fact, the conflicting reports I frequently received of various incidents and the often differing estimations of each other's work offered by former Institut colleagues left me at times feeling like the observer at the Japanese play *Rashomon*, not knowing which version to select as valid. My ultimate choices will not please all my informants, but I hope they will be satisfied with my attempts to cross-check as many controversial points as possible. In addition, my own estimate of the Institut's accomplishment ought not to be identified with those of its members. That I admire much of their work cannot be denied; that I have not refrained from criticism where I felt it warranted will, I hope, be equally clear. Remaining faithful to the critical spirit of the Frankfurt School seems much more of a tribute than an unquestioning acceptance of all it said or did.

My only constraint has been dictated by discretion. My access to the extremely valuable Horkheimer-Lowenthal correspondence was qualified by an understandable reluctance on the part of the correspondents to embarrass people who might still be alive. This type of control, which, to be sure, was exercised only infrequently, was the only disadvantage following from my writing about living men. It is rare for the historian to be able to address his questions so directly to the subjects of his study. By so doing, not only have I learned things which the documents could not reveal, but I have also been able to enter into the lives of the Institut's members and appreciate in a more immediate way the impact of their personal experiences as intellectuals in exile. Although the bulk of my text concerns the ideas of the Frankfurt School, I hope that some of those experiences and their relations to the ideas are apparent. For in many ways, both for good and for ill, they were the unique experiences of an extraordinary generation whose historical moment has now irrevocably passed.

Acknowledgments

One of the most gratifying aspects of writing *The Dialectical Imagination* was the opportunity to meet many people who played crucial roles in the history of the Frankfurt School. Included among them were critics as well as defenders of its historical and intellectual record, a record that has always been a stimulus to controversy. I have learned much from both sides and am pleased at this time to be able to acknowledge my debts in print. Equally welcome is the opportunity to thank friends, teachers, and colleagues who provided support of various kinds during all stages of the book's preparation.

Among the former Institut figures who graciously granted me interviews were Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, Theodor W. Adorno (shortly before his death in the summer of 1969), Erich Fromm, Karl August Wittfogel, Paul Massing, Ernst Schachtel, Olga Lang, Gerhard Meyer, M. I. Finley, and Joseph and Alice Maier. Horkheimer, Marcuse, Fromm, and Wittfogel also took the time to comment on sections of the manuscript after its completion as a doctoral dissertation in history at Harvard. Jürgen Habermas, Alfred Schmidt, and Albrecht Wellmer, of the more recent generation of Frankfurt School adherents, were also willing to submit to my questions. Although we never actually met, Felix J. Weil and I carried on an extensive and spirited correspondence concerning many facets of the Institut, in whose creation he played so important a role. His reactions to sections of the manuscript were invaluable, although our interpretations of certain issues remain somewhat at odds. Gretel Adorno and Gladys Meyer were also very helpful correspondents.

There were three participants in the Institut's history whose cooperation went well beyond anything I might have reasonably expected. Friedrich Pollock spent countless hours with me in Montagnola, Switzerland, in March, 1969, reliving his almost fifty years of involvement with the Institut. After I returned to Cambridge, we maintained a lively correspondence about the progress of my work.

He painstakingly commented on the chapters I was able to submit for his scrutiny before his death in December, 1970. The enormous pride Professor Pollock demonstrated in the Institut's achievement was such that I deeply regret not having been able to present him with a completed manuscript.

Leo Lowenthal was one of the first members of the Frankfurt School with whom I spoke at the beginning of my research. At Berkeley, in the summer of 1968, he gave generously of his time and materials, patiently explaining those references in his valuable correspondence with Horkheimer that had eluded me. In subsequent years, his interest in my work remained keen, and like Pollock he commented with great care and sensitivity on the first drafts of my chapters. Although our interpretations of specific issues were occasionally different, he never sought to impose his views on mine. Since my arrival at Berkeley, he has continued to give support and advice on the completion of the manuscript. Of all the benefits of my research, his friendship has been one of those I value most highly.

Finally, Paul Lazarsfeld offered me constant encouragement and wise counsel throughout the course of my work. Although never a member of the Institut's inner circle, he was interested in its work and peripherally involved in its affairs from the mid-thirties. The documents and letters he had preserved from that time were generously put at my disposal. Moreover, his theoretical distance from the Frankfurt School helped me gain a perspective on its work I might otherwise have lacked.

In short, my debt to the surviving members of the Institut is considerable. Nothing symbolizes this more strikingly than Professor Horkheimer's willingness to compose some prefatory remarks, despite a very serious illness.

No less an acknowledgment of gratitude is due to others who contributed to the making of this book. Of my former teachers, H. Stuart Hughes, who directed the dissertation, warrants a special mention for his many kindnesses throughout the course of my work. I also owe much to Fritz K. Ringer, who first aroused my interest in German intellectual history, for the care and severity with which he criticized the manuscript. To my friends in Cambridge I can only repeat in print what I hope they already know of my deep appreciation. Paul Breines, Michael Timo Gilmore, Paul Weissman, and Lewis Wurgaft did much more to sustain me during my graduate career than read my chapters with a critical eye. I am also very grateful for the advice of newer friends whom I have come to know through a common interest in the Frankfurt School: Matthias Becker, Edward

Breslin, Susan Buck, Sidney Lipshires, Jeremy J. Shapiro, Trent Shroyer, Gary Ulmen, and Shierry Weber. I have also greatly benefited from the opportunity to speak to older scholars concerned with the work of the Frankfurt School, including Everett C. Hughes, George Lichtheim, Adolph Lowe, and Kurt H. Wolff.

My new colleagues at Berkeley have shown me in the short time I have been in their company that considerable vitality can still be found in the old notion of a community of scholars. The book has been improved in particular by the comments of Fryar Calhoun, Gerald Feldman, Samuel Haber, Martin Malia, Nicholas Riasanovsky, Wolfgang Sauer, and Irwin Scheiner. I would also like to express my thanks to William Phillips of Little, Brown, whose unwavering enthusiasm and keen editorial eye have been of great help throughout. My fine typists, Annette Slocombe of Lexington, Massachusetts, and Bajana Ristich and her staff at the Institute of International Studies at Berkeley, were invaluable in getting the manuscript into shape for publication, as was Boris Frankel, who helped me with the index. Finally, it is a particular pleasure to be able to acknowledge the support of the Danforth Foundation, financial and otherwise, which sustained me during my graduate career.

I hope that this list of acknowledgments has not seemed unduly long, for I am anxious to convey the extent to which *The Dialectical Imagination* approached a collective project. Many of the strengths of the text derive from that fact; the weaknesses, alas, are my own responsibility.

M. J.

THE DIALECTICAL IMAGINATION

I

The Creation of the Institut für Sozialforschung and Its First Frankfurt Years

One of the most far-reaching changes brought by the First World War, at least in terms of its impact on intellectuals, was the shifting of the socialist center of gravity eastward. The unexpected success of the Bolshevik Revolution — in contrast to the dramatic failure of its Central European imitators — created a serious dilemma for those who had previously been at the center of European Marxism, the left-wing intellectuals of Germany. In rough outline, the choices left to them were as follows: first, they might support the moderate socialists and their freshly created Weimar Republic, thus eschewing revolution and scorning the Russian experiment; or second, they could accept Moscow's leadership, join the newly formed German Communist Party, and work to undermine Weimar's bourgeois compromise. Although rendered more immediate by the war and rise of the moderate socialists to power, these alternatives in one form or another had been at the center of socialist controversies for decades. A third course of action, however, was almost entirely a product of the radical disruption of Marxist assumptions, a disruption brought about by the war and its aftermath. This last alternative was the searching reexamination of the very foundations of Marxist theory, with the dual hope of explaining past errors and preparing for future action. This began a process that inevitably led back to the dimly lit regions of Marx's philosophical past.

One of the crucial questions raised in the ensuing analysis was the relation of theory to practice, or more precisely, to what became a fa-

miliar term in the Marxist lexicon, *praxis*. Loosely defined, *praxis* was used to designate a kind of self-creating action, which differed from the externally motivated behavior produced by forces outside man's control. Although originally seen as the opposite of contemplative *theoria* when it was first used in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, *praxis* in the Marxist usage was seen in dialectical relation to theory. In fact, one of the earmarks of *praxis* as opposed to mere action was its being informed by theoretical considerations. The goal of revolutionary activity was understood as the unifying of theory and *praxis*, which would be in direct contrast to the situation prevailing under capitalism.

How problematical that goal in fact was became increasingly clear in the postwar years, when for the first time socialist governments were in power. The Soviet leadership saw its task in terms more of survival than of realizing socialist aims — not an unrealistic appraisal under the circumstances, but one scarcely designed to placate socialists like Rosa Luxemburg who would have preferred no revolution at all to a betrayed one. Although from a very different perspective, the socialist leadership in the Weimar Republic also understood its most imperative goal to be the survival of the new government rather than the implementation of socialism. The trade union consciousness, which, as Carl Schorske has shown,[1] permeated its ranks well before the end of the Second Reich, meant the squandering of what opportunities there might have been to revolutionize German society. The split that divided the working class movement in Weimar between a bolshevized Communist Party (KPD) and a nonrevolutionary Socialist Party (SPD) was a sorry spectacle to those who still maintained the purity of Marxist theory. Some attempted a rapprochement with one faction or another. But as demonstrated by the story of Georg Lukács, who was forced to repudiate his most imaginative book, *History and Class Consciousness*, shortly after its appearance in 1923, this often meant sacrificing intellectual integrity on the altar of party solidarity.

When, however, personal inclinations led to a greater commitment to theory than to party, even when this meant suspending for a while the unifying of theory and *praxis*, the results in terms of theoretical innovation could be highly fruitful. It will be one of the central contentions of this work that the relative autonomy of the men who comprised the so-called Frankfurt School of the Institut für Sozialforschung, although entailing certain disadvantages, was one of the primary reasons for the theoretical achievements produced by their collaboration. Although without much impact in Weimar, and with even less during the period of exile that followed, the Frankfurt

School was to become a major force in the revitalization of Western European Marxism in the postwar years. In addition, through the sudden popularity of Herbert Marcuse in the America of the late 1960's, the Frankfurt School's Critical Theory *(Kritische Theorie)* has also had a significant influence on the New Left in this country.

From its very beginning, independence was understood as a necessary prerequisite for the task of theoretical innovation and unrestrained social research. Fortunately, the means to ensure such conditions were available. The idea of an institutional framework in which these goals might be pursued was conceived by Felix J. Weil in 1922.[2] Weil was the only son of a German-born grain merchant, Hermann Weil, who had left Germany around 1890 for Argentina and made a sizable fortune exporting grains back to Europe. Born in 1898 in Buenos Aires, Felix was sent in his ninth year to Frankfurt to attend the Goethe Gymnasium and, ultimately, the newly created university in that city. Except for an important year in Tübingen in 1918–1919, where he first became involved in left-wing causes at the university, Weil remained at Frankfurt until he took his doctorate *magna cum laude* in political science. His dissertation, on the practical problems of implementing socialism,[3] was published in a series of monographs edited by Karl Korsch, who had been one of the first to interest him in Marxism. Drawing upon his own considerable funds inherited from his mother, as well as his father's wealth, Weil began to support a number of radical ventures in Germany.

The first of these was the *Erste Marxistische Arbeitswoche* (First Marxist Work Week), which met in the summer of 1922 in Ilmenau, Thuringia. "Its purpose," according to Weil, was the "hope that the different trends in Marxism, if afforded an opportunity of talking it out together, could arrive at a 'true' or 'pure' Marxism." [4] Among the participants at the week-long session were Georg Lukács, Karl Korsch, Richard Sorge, Friedrich Pollock, Karl August Wittfogel, Bela Fogarasi, Karl Schmückle, Konstantin Zetkin (the younger of two sons of the well-known socialist leader Klara Zetkin), Hede Gumperz (then married to Julian Gumperz, an editor of the Communist *Rote Fahne*, later to Gerhart Eisler and then to Paul Massing),[5] and several wives, including Hedda Korsch, Rose Wittfogel, Christiane Sorge, and Kate Weil. Much of the time was devoted to a discussion of Korsch's yet unpublished manuscript, "Marxism and Philosophy." "The EMA," Weil wrote,[6] "was entirely informal, composed only of intellectuals," and "had not the slightest factional intention or result." Expectations of a *Zweite Marxistische Arbeitswoche* (a Second Marxist Work Week) came to naught when a more ambitious alternative took its place.

With the encouragement of several friends at the University of Frankfurt, Weil's idea of a more permanent institute, which he had conceived during the EMA, became increasingly clarified. One of these friends, Friedrich Pollock, had participated in the discussions in Ilmenau. Born in 1894 in Freiburg, the son of an assimilated Jewish businessman, Pollock had been trained for a commercial career before serving in the war. After its end, no longer interested in business, he became a student of economics and politics at the universities of Munich, Freiburg, and Frankfurt. He was granted a doctorate in 1923 *summa cum laude* from the economics department at Frankfurt with a thesis on Marx's monetary theory. Before the war, in 1911, Pollock had become friends with Max Horkheimer, who later was to emerge as the most important figure in the Institut's history, and who now lent his voice to Pollock's in supporting Weil's plan for an institute of social research.

Horkheimer, Pollock's junior by nine months, was born in 1895 in Stuttgart. At the urging of his father, Moritz, a prominent Jewish manufacturer, he too had had commercial training before entering military service. Horkheimer accepted the advice of his father on such matters as extended visits to Brussels and London, which he took with Pollock in 1913–1914 to learn French and English. But at no time were his interests solely those of the aspiring businessman. There is clear evidence of this in the series of novels he wrote (but left unpublished) during this period in his life. After 1918 he sought more disciplined intellectual training at the same three universities attended by Pollock. Initially working in psychology under the direction of the Gestaltist Adhemar Gelb, he was diverted into another field after news reached Frankfurt that a project comparable to the one in which he was engaged had recently been completed elsewhere. The new field was philosophy and his new mentor Hans Cornelius.

Although Cornelius never had any direct connection with the Institut, his influence on Horkheimer and his friends was considerable, which will become apparent when the elements of Critical Theory are discussed in the next chapter. In 1922 Horkheimer received his doctorate *summa cum laude* under Cornelius's direction with a thesis on Kant.[7] He was "habilita' !" * three years later with another

* I am grateful to Dr. Weil for providing a full explanation of this and related German terms (used below) in the academic hierarchical system, as it was around 1920: "A *Privatdozent* was the first step in the academic career. It corresponds to assistant professor in the U.S. To become one, a candidate, usually then serving, after his doctor's degree, as assistant to a full professor, to the dean of the department, or to a *Seminar* (study group), had to submit a new qualifying thesis, the *Habilitationsschrift,* sponsored by two full professors, and then defend it in a *Disputation* before the department consisting of all the full professors. (At Frankfurt University

critical discussion of Kant's work and gave his first lecture as *Privatdozent* in May, 1925, on Kant and Hegel.[8]

Horkheimer's relationship to Pollock was one of the cornerstones of the Institut, and it merits some comment here. An insight into it can be gleaned from a passage in Ludwig Marcuse's autobiography. Marcuse, no relation to Herbert, was the drama critic for a Frankfurt newspaper in the mid-twenties when Cornelius brought his two young protégés to his office. They were "an attractive man, Max Horkheimer, overflowing with warmth, and his reserved, externally austere friend, Fritz Pollock; but one also saw in him a little of what was being guarded behind the reserve." [9] Among the qualities in Pollock to which Marcuse might have alluded was a self-effacing, unquestioning loyalty to Horkheimer, which marked their friendship for the sixty or so years of its duration until Pollock's death in the winter of 1970. With only brief interruptions, the two remained in close proximity for all of their adult lives. Pollock took the role of the pragmatic, prudent realist, often arranging the mundane details of their lives to allow Horkheimer the maximum time for his scholarly pursuits. As a child Horkheimer was highly protected, and during his mature years Pollock often served as buffer between him and a harsh world. Horkheimer, so one observer recalled,[10] was often moody and temperamental. Pollock, in contrast, was steady, even obsessive. The complementarity of their personalities was one of the sources of the Institut's success. That Pollock's own scholarly career suffered to some extent was a price he seemed willing to pay. In the twenties, to be sure, this was a result that was difficult to foresee.

In fact, both men, and probably Weil as well, might have expected successful careers in their respective fields. However, entrance into the highly rigid German university system would have necessitated

there were five such departments: philosophy, law, economics and social sciences, medicine, and natural sciences.) If he passed, the department granted him his *venia legendi,* the 'permission to lecture,' which, however, was limited to a particular field. The *Privatdozent* was not a civil servant *(Beamter)* nor did he receive a salary, only a share in the tuition fees for his course.

"The next step on the ladder was the *Ausserordentliche Professor,* the associate professor. He was a civil servant, with tenure and salary, and also received a share in the tuition fees. He could sponsor *Doktoranden* and participate in the exams, but had no vote in the departmental meetings, although he could speak at these meetings.

"The *Ordentliche Professor,* the full professor, had all the rights of the *Ausserordentliche,* plus the vote in the meetings. But unlike the *Ausserordentliche* he could lecture on any topic he wanted, even outside his field (for example, the holder of a chair for art history could lecture on aerodynamics, if he so wanted). He was, of course, a civil servant with tenure (and usually a large salary), a share in the tuition fees (usually a minimum guarantee) and he was entitled to the services of a university-paid assistant. The full professor's oath of office also conferred German citizenship upon him, if he was a foreigner, unless he previously filed a declination (thus Grünberg chose to remain an Austrian, and, much later, Horkheimer preferred to remain an American)." (Letter of June 8, 1971)

confining their broad interests to one discipline. In addition, the type of radical scholarship they hoped to pursue found little favor with the established academic hierarchy. Even the non-Marxist but unconventional Cornelius was very much of an outcast among his colleagues. Accordingly, Weil's idea of an independently endowed institute for social research seemed an excellent way to bypass the normal channels of university life. Such topics as the history of the labor movement and the origins of anti-Semitism, which were neglected in the standard curriculum of German higher education, could be studied with a thoroughness never attempted before.[11] Hermann Weil, Felix's father, was approached with the plan and agreed to an initial endowment providing a yearly income of 120,000 Marks (the equivalent of $30,000 after the inflation had ended). The value of this income has been estimated by Pollock as four times what it would be in 1970. It took approximately 200 Marks (or $50.00) a month to support an unmarried assistant at the Institut. In time the initial grant was supplemented by additional capital gifts from Weil and other sources. To my knowledge, however, there is no evidence to indicate any political contributors, although allegations to this effect were sometimes made by the Institut's detractors in later years. In any event, Hermann Weil's gifts, though not enormous, did permit the creation and maintenance of an institution whose financial independence proved a great advantage throughout its subsequent history.

Although independence, both financial and intellectual, was the goal of the founders, they thought it prudent to seek some affiliation with the University of Frankfurt, itself only recently established in 1914. The original idea of calling it the Institut für Marxismus (Institute for Marxism) was abandoned as too provocative, and a more Aesopian alternative was sought (not for the last time in the Frankfurt School's history). The suggestion of the Education Ministry to call it the Felix Weil Institute of Social Research was declined by Weil, who "wanted the Institut to become known, and perhaps famous, due to its contributions to Marxism as a scientific discipline, not due to the founder's money." [12] It was decided to call it simply the Institut für Sozialforschung. Weil also refused to "habilitate" himself and become a *Privatdozent,* or to consider the possibility of further academic advancement leading to the directorship of the Institut, because "countless people would have been convinced that I 'bought' myself the 'venia legendi' or, later, the chair." [13] Holding a chair as a governmentally salaried full professor at the university was, in fact, a stipulation for the directorship of the Institut as spelled out in the agreement reached with the Ministry of Education.

Weil proposed as candidate an economist from the Technische Hochschule in Aachen, Kurt Albert Gerlach. Weil himself retained control of the Gesellschaft für Sozialforschung (Society of Social Research), the Institut's financial and administrative body.

Gerlach shared with the Institut's founders an aesthetic and political distaste for bourgeois society. He had cultivated the former through connections with the Stefan George circle and the latter through an acquaintanceship with the Fabians gained during several years of study in England. His political inclinations were firmly to the left. Many years later, Pollock would remember him as a non-party socialist,[14] while the British historians F. W. Deakin and G. R. Storry in their study of Richard Sorge wrote: "It is probable that, like Sorge, he was at this time a member of the Communist Party." [15] Whatever the precise nature of Gerlach's politics, when proposed by Weil, he was accepted by the economics and social science department as professor and by the Education Ministry as first head of the Institut. In early 1922, Gerlach wrote a "Memorandum on the Foundation of an Institute of Social Research" [16] in which he stressed the synoptic goals of the Institut. Shortly thereafter, it was announced that he would deliver a series of inaugural lectures on anarchism, socialism, and Marxism. But the lectures were never given, for in October, 1922, Gerlach suddenly died of an attack of diabetes, at the age of thirty-six. (He left his library of eight thousand volumes to Weil, who passed it on to the Institut.)

The search for a successor focused on an older man who would serve as interim director until one of the younger founding members was old enough to acquire a chair at the university. The first possibility was Gustav Mayer, the noted historian of socialism and the biographer of Engels. But the negotiations foundered, as Mayer remembers it, on the demands made by Weil — whom he later dismissed as an *Edelkommunist* (an aristocratic communist) — for total control over the Institut's intellectual life.[17] If this was true, Weil's insistence was certainly short-lived, for the next candidate, who actually got the position, asserted his own domination very quickly. Weil's influence on intellectual questions appears, in fact, never to have been very great.

The final choice for Gerlach's replacement was Carl Grünberg, who was persuaded to leave his post as professor of law and political science at the University of Vienna to come to Frankfurt.[18] Grünberg had been born in Focsani, Rumania, in 1861 of Jewish parents (he later converted to Catholicism to assume his chair in Vienna). He studied jurisprudence from 1881 to 1885 in the Austrian capital, where he subsequently combined a legal and an academic

career. In 1909 he became professor at Vienna and in the subsequent year began editing the *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung (Archive for the History of Socialism and the Workers' Movement),* popularly known as *Grünbergs Archiv.*

Politically, Grünberg was an avowed Marxist, who has been called "the father of Austro-Marxism" by one observer.[19] This characterization, however, has been disputed by the historian of that movement, who has written that it was true only "insofar as the representatives of Austro-Marxism were his students at the University of Vienna, but not in the sense that Grünberg himself can be counted among the Austro-Marxists, since his work had a primarily historical character and was not devoted to achieving a unity of theory and practice." [20] Grünberg's relative indifference to theoretical questions seems to have persisted after his coming to Frankfurt. Although his journal did contain an occasional theoretical article, such as Karl Korsch's important "Marxism and Philosophy" in 1923 and Georg Lukács's critique of Moses Hess three years later,[21] it was primarily devoted to historical and empirical studies usually grounded in a rather undialectical, mechanistic Marxism in the Engels-Kautsky tradition. Weil's own theoretical interests were never very different, and Grünberg was certainly in agreement with the goal of an interdisciplinary institute dedicated to a radical dissection of bourgeois society. So the problem of Gerlach's successor was satisfactorily resolved by the time the Institut was ready to begin operations. Grünberg, it might be noted in passing, was the first avowed Marxist to hold a chair at a German university.

The official creation of the Institut occurred on February 3, 1923, by a decree of the Education Ministry, following an agreement between it and the Gesellschaft für Sozialforschung. Accepting an invitation by Professor Drevermann of the Senckenberg Museum of Natural Science to use its halls as a temporary home, the Institut immediately began to function, as Weil remembers it, "among open moving boxes filled with books, on improvised desks made of boards, and under the skeletons of a giant whale, a diplodocus, and an ichthyosaurus." [22]

In March, 1923, construction of a building to house its operations at Victoria-Allee 17, near the corner of Bockenheimer Landstrasse on the university campus, was begun. Franz Röckle, Weil's choice as architect, designed a spare, cube-shaped, five-story structure in the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) style then becoming fashionable in avant-garde Weimar circles. In later years the irony of the Institut's being housed in a building whose architecture reflected the spirit of sober "objectivity" that Critical Theory so often mocked [23]

was not lost on its members. Nevertheless, its thirty-six-seat reading room, sixteen small workrooms, four seminar rooms with a hundred places, and library with space for seventy-five thousand volumes served the young Institut well.

On June 22, 1924, the Institut's freshly completed building was officially opened. Grünberg gave the dedicating address.[24] At the outset of his remarks, he stressed the need for a research-oriented academy in opposition to the then current trend in German higher education towards teaching at the expense of scholarship. Although the Institut was to offer some instruction, it would try to avoid becoming a training school for "mandarins" [25] prepared only to function in the service of the status quo. In pointing to the tendency of German universities to become centers of specialized instruction — institutes for "mandarins" — Grünberg was putting his finger on a persistent problem in German history. More than a century before, Wilhelm von Humboldt had attempted to draw a line between "universities" devoted to practical training and "academies" fostering pure research.[26] Over the years, however, the critical "academy" had been clearly shunted aside by the adjustment-oriented university as the model for German higher education. The Institut from its inception was dedicated to countering this trend.

Grünberg continued his remarks by outlining the differences in administration that would distinguish the Institut from other recently created research societies. Rather than collegial in leadership, as in the case of the newly founded Cologne Research Institute of Social Sciences, directed by Christian Eckert, Leopold von Wiese, Max Scheler, and Hugo Lindemann, the Frankfurt Institut was to have a single director with "dictatorial" control. Although the independence of its members was assured, true direction would be exercised in the distribution of the Institut's resources and the focusing of its energies. In subsequent years the dominance of Max Horkheimer in the affairs of the Institut was unquestioned. Although in large measure attributable to the force of his personality and the range of his intellect, his power was also rooted in the structure of the Institut as it was originally conceived.

Grünberg concluded his opening address by clearly stating his personal allegiance to Marxism as a scientific methodology. Just as liberalism, state socialism, and the historical school had institutional homes elsewhere, so Marxism would be the ruling principle at the Institut. Grünberg's conception of materialist analysis was straightforward. It was, he argued, "eminently inductive; its results claimed no validity in time and space," but had "only relative, historically conditioned meaning." [27] True Marxism, he continued, was not dog-

matic; it did not seek eternal laws. With this latter assertion, Critical Theory as it was later developed was in agreement. Grünberg's inductive epistemology, however, did not receive the approval of Horkheimer and the other younger members of the group. But in the first few years of the Institut's history Grünberg's approach prevailed. The Grünberg *Archiv* continued to stress the history of the labor movement while publishing an occasional theoretical work, such as Pollock's study of Werner Sombart and Horkheimer's article on Karl Mannheim.[28]

The tone of the Grünberg years, a tone very different from that set after Horkheimer replaced him as director, was captured in a letter sent by a student at the Institut, Oscar H. Swede, to the American Marxist Max Eastman in 1927. The relative orthodoxy of the Institut's Marxism was frustrating to the young Swede, who complained of spending

> hours of exasperating argument in a Marxist Institute with a younger generation settling down to an orthodox religion and the worship of an iconographical literature, not to mention blackboards full of mathematical juggling with blocks of 1000 k + 400 w of Marx's divisions of capital's functions, and the like. God! The hours I've spent listening to the debate of seminaries and student circles on the Hegelian dialektik, with not a single voice to point out that the problems can no longer be solved (if they ever were) by means of straw splitting "philosophical" conceptions. Even the leader [Grünberg], faced with an audience of enthusiastic youth convinced that Relativity is a further installment of bourgeois ideology substituting fluctuating ideas for Newton's absolute materialism, that Freudism [sic] and Bergsonism are insidious attacks from the rear, and that the war can be waged with the sword in one hand and the "Geschishte der Historiko-materialismus" in the other . . . is constantly being brought up against the inherent contradictions in a Marxian M[aterialist] I[nterpretation] of H[istory] and being forced to devise defences against the logical conclusion that we may sit with our arms folded and wait for the millennium to blossom from the dung of the capitalist decay. The fact is that Ec[onomic] determinism cannot produce either fighting or creative forces, and there will be no communism if we have to rely for recruits on the sergeanty of cold, hunger, and low wages.[29]

Ultimately, Swede's impatience with the unimaginative Marxism of the Grünberg years was to be shared by the Institut's later leaders, who were to comprise the Frankfurt School; but during the twenties, little theoretical innovation occurred at what the students were to call the "Café Marx."

Symptomatic of its position were the close ties it maintained with the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow under the direction of David

Ryazanov.[30] It photostated copies of unpublished manuscripts by Marx and Engels brought over weekly by courier from the SPD's Berlin headquarters and forwarded them to Moscow, where they were included in the collected works, the famous *MEGA (Marx-Engels Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe).*[31]

At the same time, the Institut began to assemble a group of young assistants with a variety of backgrounds and interests. The least important in terms of the Institut's later development, but one of the most fascinating individuals to be associated with it at any time, was Richard "Ika" Sorge. The remarkable story of his espionage for the Russians in the Far East prior to and during the Second World War is too well known to require recapitulation here. Independent Socialist and then Communist after 1918, Sorge was also a doctoral student of Gerlach's at Aachen. He combined his academic activities with such work for the Party as illegal organizing of Ruhr mine workers. In 1921 he married Gerlach's divorced wife, Christiane, which surprisingly did not cost him the friendship of his professor. When Gerlach went to Frankfurt the next year, Sorge followed. After the sudden death of the Institut's projected first director, Sorge remained with the group for a brief time, and was given the task of organizing the library. It was a job he did not relish, and when the Party told him to come to Moscow in 1924, his obedience was uncomplicated by a reluctance to leave Frankfurt. In any case, his connection with the Institut, according to Deakin and Storry, "must have been nominal and a cover" [32] for his work for the Party. It was not until his public exposure as a spy in the 1940's that the others learned of his remarkable undercover career.[33]

Other assistants at the Institut, however, were openly involved with leftist politics, despite the official intention of the founding members to keep it free of any party affiliation. Karl August Wittfogel, Franz Borkenau, and Julian Gumperz were all members of the Communist Party. Political activism as such was thus not in itself a reason for rejection by the group. It could, however, prove a hindrance, as in the case of Karl Korsch, who had been justice minister in the Thuringian SPD-KPD Coalition government in 1923, and continued as a prominent left opposition figure in the KPD until 1926. Wittfogel remembers Korsch's role in the Institut as central during its first years, but the other surviving members have all disagreed with his version of the facts. Korsch did participate in some of the Institut's seminars and wrote occasional reviews for its publications before and after the emigration, but was never offered a full membership.[34] The reasons were no doubt complex, but Korsch's stress on *praxis,* which was to lead him increasingly away from philo-

sophical speculation in later years, certainly played a role. So too did the instability that the others saw in his character.[35]

From time to time the question of Horkheimer's possible membership in the KPD has been raised. But hard evidence to support this view seems unavailable, and there is much in his writings and actions that makes his current denial of membership entirely plausible. During their student days together in Munich in 1919, Horkheimer and Pollock were nonparticipatory witnesses of the short-lived revolutionary activities of the Bavarian literati. Although helping to hide left-wing victims of the white terror that followed, they did not themselves join in the revolution, which they considered premature and inevitably doomed by the lack of objective conditions favoring true social change.[36] Horkheimer's earliest political sympathies were with Rosa Luxemburg, especially because of her critique of Bolshevik centralism.[37] After her murder in 1919, he never found another socialist leader to follow.

In one of the very few concrete political analyses Horkheimer wrote during the pre-emigration period, "The Impotence of the German Working Class," published in 1934 in the collection of aphorisms and short essays known as *Dämmerung*[38] (the German word means both dawn and twilight), he expressed his reasons for skepticism concerning the various workers' parties. The existence of a split between an employed, integrated working-class elite and the masses of outraged, frustrated unemployed produced by capitalism in its current form, he argued, had led to a corresponding dichotomy between a Social Democratic Party lacking in motivation and a Communist Party crippled by theoretical obtuseness. The SPD had too many "reasons"; the Communists, who often relied on coercion, too few. The prospects for reconciling the two positions, he concluded pessimistically, were contingent "in the last analysis on the course of economic processes. . . . In both parties, there exists a part of the strength on which the future of mankind depends."[39] At no time, therefore, whether under Grünberg or under Horkheimer, was the Institut to ally itself with a specific party or faction on the left. In 1931, one of its members characterized its relationship to the working-class movement in these terms:

> It is a *neutral* institution at the university, which is accessible to everyone. Its significance lies in the fact that for the first time everything concerning the workers' movement in the most important countries of the world is gathered. Above all, sources (congress minutes, party programs, statutes, newspapers, and periodicals) . . . Whoever in Western Europe wishes to write on the currents of the workers movement *must* come to us, for we are the only gathering point for it.[40]

When the Institut did accept members who were politically committed, it was solely because of their nonpolitical work. The most important of the activists in its ranks was Karl August Wittfogel.[41] The son of a Lutheran schoolteacher, Wittfogel was born in the small Hanoverian town of Woltersdorf in 1896. Active in the German youth movement before the war, he became increasingly involved in radical politics by its end. In November, 1918, he joined the Independent Socialist party and two years later, its Communist successor. Throughout the Weimar period he directed much of his considerable energy into party work, although he was frequently in hot water in Moscow for the heterodoxy of his positions.

At the same time as his participation in Communist politics deepened, Wittfogel managed to pursue a vigorous academic career. He studied at Leipzig, where he was influenced by Karl Lamprecht, at Berlin, and finally at Frankfurt, where Carl Grünberg agreed to direct his dissertation. He published studies of both bourgeois science and bourgeois society before turning to what was to become his major concern in later years, Asiatic society.[42] As early as 1922 Wittfogel had been asked by Gerlach and Weil to join the Institut they were planning to open. It was not until three years later, however, that he accepted the offer, his wife, Rose Schlesinger, having already become one of the Institut's librarians.

Although his new colleagues respected Wittfogel's contributions to the understanding of what Marx had called the Asiatic mode of production, there seems to have been little real integration of his work with their own. On theoretical issues he was considered naive by Horkheimer and the other younger members of the Institut who were challenging the traditional interpretation of Marxist theory. Wittfogel's approach was unapologetically positivistic, and the disdain was clearly mutual. Symbolic of this was the fact that he had to review one of his own books in 1932 under the pseudonym Carl Peterson, because no one else was interested in taking the assignment.

In 1931, to be sure, his study *Economy and Society in China* was published under the Institut's auspices, but by then he had moved his permanent base of operations to Berlin. Here, among his many other pursuits, he contributed a series of articles on aesthetic theory to *Die Linkskurve*, which have been characterized as "the first effort in Germany to present the foundations and principles of a Marxist aesthetic."[43] Wittfogel, who in the twenties had written a number of plays performed by Piscator and others, developed a sophisticated, Hegelian aesthetic, which anticipated many of Lukács's later positions. It is a further mark of his isolation from his Institut colleagues

that it seems to have had no impact whatsoever on Lowenthal, Adorno, or Benjamin, the major aestheticians of the Frankfurt School. To Horkheimer and his colleagues, Wittfogel appeared as a student of Chinese society whose analyses of what he later called "hydraulic society" or "Oriental despotism" they encouraged, but as little else. His activism they found somewhat of an embarrassment; he was no less scornful of their political neutrality.

If Wittfogel cannot be characterized as a member of the Institut's inner circle, either before or after the emigration, the same can be said even more emphatically of Franz Borkenau. Born in 1900 in Vienna, Borkenau was active in the Communist Party and the Comintern from 1921 until his disillusionment in 1929. How he became part of the Institut's milieu has proved difficult to ascertain, although it is probable that he was one of Grünberg's protégés. His political involvement seems to have been as intense as Wittfogel's and his scholarly activity somewhat constrained. Most of his time at the Institut was spent probing the ideological changes that accompanied the rise of capitalism. The result was a volume in the Institut's series of publications released after some delay in 1934 as *The Transition from the Feudal to the Bourgeois World View*.[44] Although now almost completely forgotten, it has invited favorable comparison with Lucien Goldmann's more recent *The Hidden God*.[45] Borkenau's major argument was that the emergence of an abstract, mechanical philosophy, best exemplified in the work of Descartes, was intimately connected to the rise of abstract labor in the capitalist system of manufacturing. The connection was not to be understood as causal in one direction, but rather as a mutual reinforcement. Soon after, an article appeared in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* critical of Borkenau's central thesis, the only public acknowledgment of his isolation from the others.[46]

The author of the piece, Henryk Grossmann, although a figure in Institut affairs from 1926 until the 1940's, can himself be scarcely described as a major force in its intellectual development. Closer in age and intellectual inclinations to Grünberg than to some of the younger members, Grossmann was born in 1881 in Cracow, then part of Austrian Galicia, of a well-to-do family of Jewish mine owners. Before the war he studied economics at Cracow and Vienna, at the latter with Böhm-Bawerk, and wrote among other things a historical study of Austria's trade policies in the eighteenth century.[47] After serving as an artillery officer in the early years of the war, he held several posts with the Austrian administration in Lublin until the collapse of the Hapsburg Empire in 1918. Choosing to remain in the newly reconstituted Poland after the war, Grossmann was asked

to supervise the first statistical survey of its national wealth and was appointed chief of the first Polish census in 1921. In the following year he became professor of economics at Warsaw, a post he held until the Pilsudski government's dislike of his socialism persuaded him to leave in 1925. Grünberg, who had known him in prewar Vienna, then invited him to Frankfurt, where an assistant professorship at the university and an assistantship at the Institut as aide to Grünberg were awaiting him.

An enormously learned man with a prodigious knowledge of economic history, Grossmann is remembered by many who knew him[48] as the embodiment of the Central European academic: proper, meticulous, and gentlemanly. He had, however, absorbed his Marxism in the years when Engels's and Kautsky's monistic materialistic views prevailed. He remained firmly committed to this interpretation and thus largely unsympathetic to the dialectical, neo-Hegelian materialism of the younger Institut members.

One ought not, however, overemphasize Grossmann's insensitivity to Horkheimer's work. On July 18, 1937, for example, he wrote to Paul Mattick that:

> In the last number of the *Zeitschrift* there appeared an especially successful essay of Horkheimer with a sharp, fundamental critique of new (logical) empiricism. Very worthy of being read, because in various socialist circles, Marxist materialism is confused with empiricism, because one shows sympathy for this empiricism as an allegedly antimetaphysical tendency.[49]

Like Wittfogel's and Borkenau's, Grossmann's politics were grounded in a relatively unreflective enthusiasm for the Soviet Union, but although he had been a member of the Polish Communist Party, it seems unlikely that he ever became an actual member of its German counterpart after coming to Frankfurt. Unlike them, he did not experience a later disillusionment with communism, even during his decade or so of exile in America, when many others with similar backgrounds repudiated their past.

Grossmann's quarrel with Borkenau in his *Zeitschrift* article on Borkenau's book was over the timing of the transition from the feudal to the bourgeois ideology — he put it one hundred fifty years before Borkenau — and the importance of technology in effecting the change — Leonardo rather than Descartes was his paradigmatic figure. Nonetheless, Grossmann never questioned the fundamental causal relationship between substructure and superstructure. In his article of 1935 in the *Zeitschrift*, he thus continued to express his allegiance to the orthodoxies of Marxism as he understood them; but

this was not totally without variation, as demonstrated by his stress on the technological impetus to change, in opposition to Borkenau's emphasis on capitalist forms of production. A much more important expression of his adherence to the tenets of orthodox Marxism can be found in the series of lectures he gave at the Institut in 1926–1927, which were collected in 1929 as *The Law of Accumulation and Collapse in the Capitalist System*,[50] the first volume of the Institut's *Schriften.*

The question of capitalism's inevitable collapse from within had been the center of controversy in socialist circles, ever since Eduard Bernstein's articles in *Die Neue Zeit* in the 1890's had raised empirical objections to the prophecy of increasing proletarian pauperization. During the next three decades, Rosa Luxemburg, Heinrich Cunow, Otto Bauer, M. J. Tugan-Baranovski, Rudolf Hilferding, and others wrestled with the issue from a theoretical as well as an empirical vantage point. Fritz Sternberg's *Der Imperialismus*, which modified in a more pessimistic direction the Luxemburg thesis that imperialism was only a delaying factor in capitalism's demise, was the last major contribution before Grossmann's. *The Law of Accumulation and Collapse* begins with an excellent analysis of the previous literature on the question. Then, following an exposition of Marx's own views culled from his various writings, Grossmann attempted to build on Otto Bauer's mathematical models a deductive system to prove the correctness of Marx's predictions. The pauperization he pointed to was not that of the proletariat, but that of the capitalists, whose tendency to overaccumulation would produce an unavoidable decline in the profit rate over a certain fixed period of time. Although admitting countertendencies such as the more efficient use of capital, Grossmann confidently asserted that they might mitigate but not forestall the terminal crisis of the capitalist system. The full ramifications of his argument, whose predictions have obviously failed to come true, need not detain us here.[51] Let it be said, however, that the essentially quietistic implications of his thesis, similar to those of all Marxist interpretations that stress objective forces over subjective revolutionary *praxis,* were not lost on some of his contemporaries.[52]

Pollock, the other leading economist in the Institut, was quick to challenge Grossmann on other grounds. Stressing the inadequacy of Marx's concept of productive labor because of its neglect of nonmanual labor, Pollock pointed to the service industries,[53] which were becoming increasingly important in the twentieth century. Surplus value might be extracted from workers in these industries as well as from those producing commodities, he argued, which would prolong the life of the system. Grossmann's stand continued basically un-

changed, however, and he and Pollock remained at odds on economic questions until Grossmann left the Institut after the Second World War. Carefully read between the lines, Pollock's *Experiments in Economic Planning in the Soviet Union (1917–1927)*,[54] the second volume of the Institut's *Schriften*, gives further evidence of the dispute.

Pollock was invited to the Soviet Union during its tenth anniversary celebrations by David Ryazanov, who had spent some time in Frankfurt in the early 1920's and who continued his relationship by contributing an occasional article to the Grünberg *Archiv*.[55] In the Soviet Union, although admired for his scholarly work as director of the Marx-Engels Institute, Ryazanov was regarded politically as a rather eccentric throwback to the days of pre-Bolshevik social democracy. Despite his frequent criticism of party policy,[56] he survived until Stalin sent him into exile with the Volga Germans a few years after Pollock's visit, a move that has been facetiously described as Stalin's only real "contribution" to Marxist scholarship. Through Ryazanov's friendship, Pollock was able to speak with members of the dwindling opposition within the Bolshevik Party during his trip, in addition to his actual field studies of Soviet planning. The impressions he brought back to Frankfurt after several months were thus not entirely favorable. His book carefully avoided commenting on the political consequences of the Revolution and the forced collectivizations of the 1920's. On the central question he treated — the transition from a market to a planned economy — Pollock was less the enthusiastic supporter than the detached and prudent analyst unwilling to pass judgments prematurely. Here, too, he and Grossmann had cause for disagreement.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to characterize the general attitude of Institut members in 1927 towards the Soviet experiment as closer to Pollock's skepticism than to Grossmann's enthusiasm. Wittfogel remained as firm as ever in his support, Borkenau had not yet reached his decision to repudiate the Party, and even Horkheimer retained an optimistic hope that humanist socialism might yet be realized in post-Lenin Russia. One of the aphorisms published in *Dämmerung* a few years later expresses Horkheimer's feelings during this period:

He who has eyes for the meaningless injustice of the imperialist world, which in no way is to be explained by technical impotence, will regard the events in Russia as the progressive, painful attempt to overcome this injustice, or he will at least question with a beating heart whether this attempt still persists. If appearances speak against it, he clings to the hope the way a

cancer victim does to the questionable news that a cure for cancer has probably been found.[57]

Heated *sub rosa* discussions of Pollock's findings did take place, but never broke into print. In fact, after his book was published in 1929, the Institut maintained an almost complete official silence about events in the USSR, broken only by an occasional survey of recent literature by Rudolf Schlesinger, who had been one of Grünberg's students in the twenties.[58] It was really not until a decade later, after the Moscow purge trials, that Horkheimer and the others, with the sole exception of the obdurate Grossmann, completely abandoned their hope for the Soviet Union. Even then, preoccupied with problems that will be discussed later, they never focused the attention of Critical Theory on the left-wing authoritarianism of Stalin's Russia. The lack of available data certainly was one reason, but one ought not to ignore the difficulties involved in a Marxist analysis, however heterodox, of communism's failures.

After all this is said, however, it should also be stressed that Critical Theory as it was articulated by certain members of the Institut contained important, implicit criticisms of the Soviet ideological justification for its actions. Although most of the figures in the Institut's early history already mentioned — Grünberg, Weil, Sorge, Borkenau, Wittfogel, and Grossmann — were unconcerned with the reexamination of the foundations of Marxism to which Horkheimer was becoming increasingly devoted, he was not entirely without allies. Pollock, although primarily interested in economics, had studied philosophy with Cornelius and shared his friend's rejection of orthodox Marxism. Increasingly caught up in the administrative affairs of the Institut after Grünberg suffered a stroke in late 1927, Pollock was nevertheless able to add his voice to Horkheimer's in the Institut's seminars. In the late 1920's he was joined by two younger intellectuals who were to have an increasingly important influence in subsequent years, Leo Lowenthal and Theodor Wiesengrund-Adorno (who was known solely by his mother's name, Adorno, after the emigration).

Lowenthal, born the son of a Jewish doctor in 1900 in Frankfurt, served like the others in the war before embarking on an academic career. At Frankfurt, Heidelberg, and Giessen, he studied literature, history, philosophy, and sociology, receiving his doctorate in philosophy with a thesis on Franz von Baader at Frankfurt in 1923. At the university, he moved in the same radical student circles as Horkheimer, Pollock, and Weil, who had been a friend in secondary

school. He had ties as well to the group of Jewish intellectuals surrounding the charismatic Rabbi Nehemiah A. Nobel,[59] which included such figures as Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Siegfried Kracauer, and Ernst Simon. It was as a member of this latter group, which gave rise to the famed Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus (Free Jewish House of Learning) in 1920, that Lowenthal came in contact again with a friend from his student days, Erich Fromm, who was later to join the Institut. Lowenthal's own entrance into Institut affairs occurred in 1926, although outside interests limited his involvement. He continued to teach in the Prussian secondary school system and served as artistic adviser to the Volksbühne (People's Stage), a large left-wing and liberal organization. Throughout the late 1920's he wrote critical articles on aesthetic and cultural matters for a number of journals, most prominently the Volksbühne's, and continued to contribute historical pieces on the Jewish philosophy of religion to a variety of periodicals. In addition, he acquired editorial experience that proved useful when the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* replaced *Grünbergs Archiv* as the Institut's organ.

It was as a sociologist of literature and student of popular culture that Lowenthal contributed most to the Institut after he became a full-time member in 1930 (his official title was initially *Hauptassistent* — first assistant — which only Grossmann shared). If it can be said that in the early years of its history the Institut concerned itself primarily with an analysis of bourgeois society's socio-economic substructure, in the years after 1930 its prime interest lay in its cultural superstructure. Indeed, as we shall see, the traditional Marxist formula regarding the relationship between the two was called into question by Critical Theory. Although contributing to the changed emphasis, Lowenthal was less responsible for the theoretical shift than the other important addition to the Institut's circle in the late twenties, Theodor Wiesengrund-Adorno.

Next to Horkheimer, Adorno, as we shall henceforth refer to him, became the man most closely identified with the fortunes of the Institut, which he officially joined in 1938. In the pre-emigration period, however, his energies, always enormous, were divided among a number of different projects, some of which kept him away from Frankfurt. Even after his departure from Europe, when the Institut became the dominant institutional framework within which he worked, Adorno did not confine himself to any one discipline. During his years in secondary school he had been befriended by Siegfried Kracauer, some fourteen years his elder.[60] For over a year he regularly spent Saturday afternoons with Kracauer studying Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, lessons he would recall as far more valuable

than those he received in his formal university education. Kracauer's approach combined an interest in the ideas themselves with a keen sociology of knowledge. His distrust of closed systems and his stress on the particular as opposed to the universal made a significant impression on his young friend. So too did Kracauer's innovative explorations of such cultural phenomena as the film, which combined philosophical and sociological insights in a way that had little precedent. In later years, both in Germany and in America after both men emigrated, their friendship remained firm. To anyone familiar with Kracauer's celebrated *From Caligari to Hitler*[61] the similarity between his work and certain of Adorno's which will be described later, is strikingly obvious.

However, the young Adorno was interested in more than intellectual pursuits. Like Horkheimer, he combined a rigorous philosophical mind with a sensibility more aesthetic than scientific. Whereas Horkheimer's artistic inclinations led him towards literature and a series of unpublished novels, Adorno was more deeply drawn to music, a reflection of the highly musical environment in which he had been immersed from birth. The youngest of the Frankfurt School's luminaries, Adorno was born in 1903 in Frankfurt. His father was a successful assimilated Jewish wine merchant, from whom he inherited a taste for the finer things in life, but little interest in commerce. His mother seems to have had a more profound effect on his ultimate interests. The daughter of a German singer and a French army officer (whose Corsican and originally Genoese ancestry accounts for the Italian name Adorno), she pursued a highly successful singing career until her marriage. Her unmarried sister, who lived in the Wiesengrund household, was a concert pianist of considerable accomplishment who played for the famous singer Adelina Patti. With their encouragement the young "Teddie" took up the piano and studied composition at an early age, under the tutelage of Bernhard Sekles.

Frankfurt, however, offered little beyond traditional musical training, and Adorno was anxious to immerse himself in the more innovative music issuing at that time from Vienna. In the spring or summer of 1924 he met Alban Berg at the Frankfurt Festival of the Universal German Music Society and was captivated by three fragments from his yet unperformed opera, *Wozzeck*.[62] He immediately decided to follow Berg to Vienna and become his student. Delayed only by his university studies in Frankfurt, he arrived in the Austrian capital in January, 1925. The Vienna to which he moved was less the city of Otto Bauer and Karl Renner, Rudolf Hilferding and Max Adler (the milieu Grünberg had left to come to Frankfurt) than the apolitical

but culturally radical Vienna of Karl Kraus and the Schönberg circle. Once there, Adorno persuaded Berg to take him on as a student of composition twice a week and got Eduard Steuermann to instruct him in piano technique. His own compositions seem to have been influenced by Schönberg's experiments in atonality, but not by his later twelve-tone system.[63] In addition to his training Adorno managed to write frequently for a number of avant-garde journals, including *Anbruch*, whose editorship he assumed in 1928, the year he moved back to Frankfurt. He remained at its helm until 1931, despite his renewed academic responsibilities.

Adorno's three years in Vienna were much more than an interlude in his scholarly career. Arthur Koestler, who chanced to be in the same pension with him after his arrival in 1925, remembered Adorno as "a shy, distraught and esoteric young man with a subtle charm I was too callow to discern." [64] To the equally intense but not as highly cultivated Koestler, Adorno presented a figure of magisterial condescension. Even his teacher Berg found Adorno's uncompromising intellectuality a bit disconcerting. As Adorno later admitted, "my own philosophical ballast fell for Berg at times under the category of what he called a fad. . . . I was certainly at that time brutishly serious and that could get on the nerves of a mature artist." [65] His three years in Vienna seem to have eradicated much of his shyness, but new confidence did not mean a significant lessening of his high seriousness or his allegiance to the most demanding of cultural forms. If anything, his frequent attendance at readings by Karl Kraus, that most unrelenting upholder of cultural standards, and his participation in the arcane musical discussions of the Viennese avant-garde only reinforced his predisposition in that direction. Never during the remainder of his life would Adorno abandon his cultural elitism.

In another way as well, the Vienna years were significant in his development. Many years later Adorno would admit that one of the attractions of the Schönberg circle had been its exclusive, coterie-like quality, which reminded him of the circle around Stefan George in Germany.[66] One of his disappointments during his three years in Austria was the dissolution of the circle's unity, which followed after Schönberg's new wife isolated him from his disciples. If this had not happened, it can at least be conjectured, Adorno might not have chosen to return to Frankfurt. Once there, of course, the same cliquish qualities drew him into the orbit of Horkheimer and the younger members of the Institut.

Adorno had known Horkheimer since 1922, when they were together in a seminar on Husserl directed by Hans Cornelius. Both men also studied under the Gestalt psychologist Gelb. In 1924

Adorno had written his doctorate for Cornelius on Husserl's phenomenology.[67] When he returned from Vienna, however, Cornelius had retired and had been replaced in the chair of philosophy by Paul Tillich,[68] after a short interlude during which Max Scheler had held the position. Tillich was a close friend of Horkheimer, Lowenthal, and Pollock, belonging with them to a regular discussion group that included Karl Mannheim, Kurt Riezler, Adolph Löwe, and Karl Mennicke. The *Kränzchen,* as it was called — an old-fashioned word which means both a small garland and an intimate gathering — was to continue in New York for several years, after most of its members were forced to emigrate. Adorno, when he returned to Frankfurt, was welcomed into its company. With Tillich's help he became a *Privatdozent* in 1931, writing a study of Kierkegaard's aesthetics as his *Habilitationsschrift.*[69]

By this time the Institut had undergone significant changes. Grünberg's health after his stroke in 1927 had not appreciably improved, and in 1929, in his sixty-ninth year, he decided to step down as director. He was to live on until 1940, but without any further role in Institut affairs. The three original members of the group were now old enough to be considered for a professorship at the university, the prerequisite for the directorship written into the Institut's charter. Pollock, who had served as interim head of the Institut in all but name before Grünberg came and after Grünberg's illness, was satisfied to remain occupied with administrative affairs. Weil, as noted earlier, had remained a *Privatgelehrter* (private scholar) without being "habilitated" as *Privatdozent* or "*berufen*" as professor.[70] Although continuing to guide the Institut's financial affairs and occasionally contributing an article to *Grünbergs Archiv*,[71] his interests turned elsewhere. In 1929 he left the Institut to move to Berlin, where he worked with two publishing houses, the left-wing Malik Verlag and the more scholarly Soziologische Verlagsanstalt, as well as contributing to the radical Piscator Theater. In 1930 he sailed from Germany for Argentina to tend to the family business, of which, as the oldest of Hermann Weil's two children, he was made the primary owner after his father's death in 1927, a responsibility he very reluctantly assumed. In any event, from 1923 Weil had not been at the center of the Institut's creative work, drawn as he was more to practical than theoretical questions. In later years he would sporadically return to the Institut and faithfully continue to help it financially, but he was never really a prime candidate for its leadership, nor did he intend to be.

Horkheimer was therefore the clear choice to succeed Grünberg. Although he had not been a dominating presence at the Institut dur-

ing its first few years, his star clearly rose during the interim directorship of his friend Pollock. In 1929, with the support of Tillich and other members of the philosophy department, a new chair of "social philosophy" was established for Horkheimer, the first of its kind at a German university. Weil had convinced the Education Ministry to convert Grünberg's chair in political science, which his father had endowed, to its new purpose. As part of the bargain he promised to contribute to another chair in economics, which Adolph Löwe, a childhood friend of Horkheimer, left Kiel to fill. *The Origins of the Bourgeois Philosophy of History*,[72] a study of Machiavelli, Hobbes, Vico, and other early bourgeois philosophers of history, served as Horkheimer's scholarly credentials for his new position. With the accession of Horkheimer, then only thirty-five, to its directorship in July, 1930, the Institut für Sozialforschung entered its period of greatest productivity, all the more impressive when seen in the context of the emigration and cultural disorientation that soon followed.

In January of 1931, Horkheimer was officially installed in his new post. At the opening ceremonies, he spoke on "The Current Condition of Social Philosophy and the Task of an Institute of Social Research."[73] The differences between his approach and that of his predecessor were immediately apparent. Instead of simply labeling himself a good Marxist, Horkheimer turned to the history of social philosophy to put its current situation in perspective. Beginning with the grounding of social theory in the individual, which had at first characterized classical German idealism, he traced its course through Hegel's sacrifice of the individual to the state and the subsequent breakdown of the faith in an objective totality, which Schopenhauer expressed. He then turned to more recent social theorists, like the neo-Kantians of the Marburg school and the advocates of social totalism like Othmar Spann, all of whom, he argued, had attempted to overcome the sense of loss accompanying the breakdown of the classical synthesis. Scheler, Hartmann, and Heidegger, he added, shared this yearning for a return to the comfort of meaningful unities. Social philosophy, as Horkheimer saw it, would not be a single *Wissenschaft* (science) in search of immutable truth. Rather, it was to be understood as a materialist theory enriched and supplemented by empirical work, in the same way that natural philosophy was dialectically related to individual scientific disciplines. The Institut would therefore continue to diversify its energies without losing sight of its interdisciplinary, synthetic goals. To this end Horkheimer supported the retention of Grünberg's noncollegial "dictatorship of the director."

In concluding his remarks, Horkheimer outlined the first task of the Institut under his leadership: a study of workers' and employees' attitudes towards a variety of issues in Germany and the rest of developed Europe. Its methods were to include the use of public statistics and questionnaires backed up by sociological, psychological, and economic interpretation of the data. To help collect materials, he announced, the Institut had accepted the offer of Albert Thomas, the director of the International Labor Organization, to establish a branch office of the Institut in Geneva. This proved to be the first of several such branches established outside Germany in the ensuing years. The decision to act on Thomas's offer was influenced by more than the desire to collect data, for the ominous political scene in Germany gave indications that exile might be a future necessity. Pollock was thus given the task of setting up a permanent office in Geneva; Kurt Mandelbaum, his assistant, went with him. Once the office was firmly established in 1931, the lion's share of the Institut's endowment was quietly transferred to a company in a neutral country, Holland.

Other changes followed Horkheimer's elevation to the directorship. With its guiding spirit incapacitated, *Grünbergs Archiv* ceased publication, twenty years and fifteen volumes after its initial appearance in 1910. The *Archiv* had served as a vehicle for a variety of different viewpoints both within and outside the Institut, still reflecting in part Grünberg's roots in the world of Austro-Marxism. The need for a journal more exclusively the voice of the Institut was felt to be pressing. Horkheimer, whose preference for conciseness was expressed in the large number of aphorisms he wrote during this period, disliked the mammoth tomes so characteristic of German scholarship. Although a third volume of the Institut's publications series, Wittfogel's *Economy and Society in China*,[74] appeared in 1931, the emphasis was now shifted to the essay. It was through the essays that appeared in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, some almost monographic in length, that the Institut presented most of its work to the world in the next decade. Exhaustively evaluated and criticized by the other members of the Institut before they appeared, many articles were almost as much collective productions as individual works. The *Zeitschrift*, in Leo Lowenthal's words, was "less a forum for different viewpoints than a platform for the Institut's convictions," [75] even though other authors continued to contribute occasional articles. Editorial decisions were ultimately Horkheimer's, although Lowenthal, drawing on his years of relevant experience, served as managing editor and was fully responsible for the extensive review section. One of Lowenthal's first tasks was a trip by plane to

Leopold von Wiese, the doyen of German sociologists, to assure him that the *Zeitschrift* would not compete with his own *Kölner Viertelsjahrshefte für Soziologie (Cologne Quarterly of Sociology).*

As Horkheimer explained in the foreword to the first issue,[76] *Sozialforschung* was not the same as the sociology practiced by von Wiese and other more traditional German academicians. Following Gerlach and Grünberg, Horkheimer stressed the synoptic, interdisciplinary nature of the Institut's work. He particularly stressed the role of social psychology in bridging the gap between individual and society. In the first article, which followed, "Observations on Science and Crisis," [77] he developed the connection between the current splintering of knowledge and the social conditions that helped produce it. A global economic structure both monopolistic and anarchic, he argued, had promoted a confused state of knowledge. Only by overcoming the fetishistic grounding of scientific knowledge in pure consciousness, and by recognizing the concrete historical circumstances that conditioned all thought, could the present crisis be surmounted. Science must not ignore its own social role, for only by becoming conscious of its function in the present critical situation could it contribute to the forces that would bring about the necessary changes.

The contributions to the *Zeitschrift*'s first issue reflected the diversity of *Sozialforschung.* Grossmann wrote once again on Marx and the problem of the collapse of capitalism.[78] Pollock discussed the Depression and the possibilities for a planned economy within a capitalist framework.[79] Lowenthal outlined the tasks of a sociology of literature, and Adorno did the same, in the first of two articles, for music.[80] The remaining two essays dealt with the psychological dimension of social research: one by Horkheimer himself on "History and Psychology," [81] the second by a new member of the Institut, Erich Fromm.[82] (A full treatment of the Institut's integration of psychoanalysis and its Hegelianized Marxism appears in Chapter 3.) Lowenthal, who had been a friend of Fromm's since 1918, introduced him as one of three psychoanalysts brought into the Institut's circle in the early thirties. The others were Karl Landauer, the director of the Frankfurt Psychoanalytic Institute, which was associated with the Institut, and Heinrich Meng. Landauer's contributions to the *Zeitschrift* were restricted to the review section. (In the first issue he was in very good company: among the other reviewers were Alexandre Koyré, Kurt Lewin, Karl Korsch, and Wilhelm Reich.) Meng, although more interested in mental hygiene than social psychology, helped organize seminars and contributed reviews on topics related to the Institut's interests.

With the introduction of psychoanalysis to the Institut, the Grünberg era was clearly over. In 1932 the publication of a *Festschrift*,[83] collected on the occasion of Grünberg's seventieth birthday the previous year, gave further evidence of the transition. Pollock, Horkheimer, Wittfogel, and Grossmann all contributed articles, but most of the pieces were by older friends from Grünberg's Viennese days, such as Max Beer and Max Adler. The change this symbolized was given further impetus by the acceptance of a new member in late 1932, Herbert Marcuse, who was to become one of the principal architects of Critical Theory.

Marcuse was born in 1898 in Berlin, into a family of prosperous assimilated Jews, like most of the others. After completing his military service in the war, he briefly became involved in politics in a Soldiers' Council in Berlin. In 1919 he quit the Social Democratic Party, which he had joined two years earlier, in protest against its betrayal of the proletariat. After the subsequent failure of the German revolution, he left politics altogether to study philosophy at Berlin and Freiburg, receiving his doctorate at the latter university in 1923 with a dissertation on the *Künstlerroman* (novels in which artists played key roles). For the next six years he tried his hand at book selling and publishing in Berlin. In 1929 he returned to Freiburg, where he studied with Husserl and Heidegger, both of whom had a considerable impact on his thought. During this period Marcuse broke into print with a number of articles in Maximilian Beck's *Philosophische Hefte* and Rudolf Hilferding's *Die Gesellschaft*. His first book, *Hegel's Ontology and the Foundation of a Theory of Historicity*,[84] appeared in 1932, bearing the marks of his mentor Heidegger, for whom it had been prepared as a *Habilitationsschrift*. Before Heidegger could accept Marcuse as an assistant, however, their relations became strained; the political differences between the Marxist-oriented student and the increasingly right-wing teacher were doubtless part of the cause. Without a prospect for a job at Freiburg, Marcuse left that city in 1932. The *Kurator* of the University of Frankfurt, Kurt Riezler, having been asked by Husserl to intercede for Marcuse, recommended him to Horkheimer.

In the second issue of the *Zeitschrift* Adorno reviewed *Hegel's Ontology* and found its movement away from Heidegger promising. Marcuse, he wrote, was tending away from " 'The Meaning of Being' to an openness to being-in-the-world *(Seienden)*, from fundamental ontology to philosophy of history, from historicity *(Geschichtlichkeit)* to history." [85] Although Adorno felt that there was some ground still to be covered before Marcuse cast off Heidegger's thrall entirely, the

chance for a successful integration of his approach to philosophy with that of the Institut seemed favorable. Horkheimer concurred, and so in 1933 Marcuse was added to those in the Institut who were committed to a dialectical rather than a mechanical understanding of Marxism. He was immediately assigned to the Geneva office.

With the Nazi assumption of power on January 30, 1933, the future of an avowedly Marxist organization, staffed almost exclusively by men of Jewish descent — at least by Nazi standards — was obviously bleak. Horkheimer had spent most of 1932 in Geneva, where he was ill with diphtheria. Shortly before Hitler came to power he returned to Frankfurt, moving with his wife from their home in the suburb of Kronberg to a hotel near the Frankfurt railroad station. During February, the last month of the winter semester, he suspended his lectures on logic to speak on the question of freedom, which was indeed becoming more questionable with each passing day. In March he slipped across the border to Switzerland, just as the Institut was being closed down for "tendencies hostile to the state." The greater part of the Institut library in the building on the Victoria-Allee, then numbering over sixty thousand volumes, was seized by the government; the transfer of the endowment two years earlier prevented a similar confiscation of the Institut's financial resources. On April 13 Horkheimer had the honor of being among the first faculty members to be formally dismissed from Frankfurt, along with Paul Tillich, Karl Mannheim, and Hugo Sinzheimer.[86]

By then all of the Institut's official staff had left Frankfurt. The one exception was Wittfogel, who returned to Germany from Switzerland and was thrown into a concentration camp in March because of his political activities. His second wife, Olga Lang (originally Olga Joffé), herself later to become an expert on Chinese affairs and an assistant at the Institut, worked to secure his release, as did such friends as R. H. Tawney in England and Karl Haushofer in Germany. Wittfogel's freedom was finally granted in November, 1933, and he was permitted to emigrate to England. Shortly thereafter, he joined the others in America. Adorno, whose politics were not as controversial as Wittfogel's, maintained a residence in Germany, although he spent most of the next four years in England, studying at Merton College, Oxford. Grossmann found refuge in Paris for three years and went to England for one more, rather unhappy, year in 1937, before finally coming to the United States. Lowenthal remained in Frankfurt only until March 2, when he followed Marcuse, Horkheimer, and other Institut figures to Geneva, the last to depart

before the Institut was closed. Pollock was in effect already in exile when the Nazis came to power, although he was unaware that it was to last for almost two decades and extend to two continents.

In February of 1933 the Geneva branch was incorporated with a twenty-one member board [87] as the administrative center of the Institut. In recognition of its European character it took the name of the Société Internationale de Recherches Sociales (International Society of Social Research), with Horkheimer and Pollock as its two "presidents"; Lowenthal, Fromm, and Sternheim were named their successors the following year.[88] Not only was the "Frankfurt School" now Swiss, but also French and English, as offers of help from friends in Paris and London led to the founding of small branches in those cities in 1933. Celestin Bouglé, a former student of Durkheim and director of the Ecole Normale Supérieure's Centre de Documentation since 1920, suggested to Horkheimer that some space might be found for the Institut in his offices on the Rue d'Ulm. Although a Proudhonist politically (he was an adherent of the Radical Socialist Party) and thus not sympathetic to the Marxist cast of the Institut's work, Bouglé was willing to forget politics in considering the Institut's plight. Maurice Halbwachs, another prominent Durkheimian at the University of Strasbourg, and Georges Scelle, who taught law in Paris when not in the Hague as French advocate at the International Court, joined Bouglé as cosponsors of the move. Further support came from Henri Bergson, who had been impressed with the Institut's work. In London a similar proposal was made by Alexander Farquharson, the editor of the *Sociological Review*, who was able to provide a few rooms in Le Play House. Sidney Webb, R. H. Tawney, Morris Ginsberg, and Harold Laski all added their voices to Farquharson's, and a small office was established that lasted until lack of funds forced its closing in 1936.

In the meantime, the *Zeitschrift*'s Leipzig publisher, C. L. Hirschfeld, informed Horkheimer that it could no longer risk continuing publication. Bouglé suggested as a replacement the Librairie Félix Alcan in Paris. This proved acceptable, and a connection was begun that lasted until 1940, when the Nazis once again acquired the power to intimidate a publisher of the *Zeitschrift*.

With the first issue of the *Zeitschrift* to appear in Paris in September, 1933, the Institut's initial German period was conclusively over. In the brief decade since its founding, it had gathered together a group of young intellectuals with diverse talents willing to coordinate them in the service of social research as the Institut conceived it. The first Frankfurt years were dominated by Grünberg's views, as described earlier, but under his direction the Institut gained structural

solidarity and a foothold in Weimar's intellectual life. Although concentrating on research, it helped train students of the caliber of Paul Baran,[89] who in 1930 worked on a projected second volume of Pollock's study of the Soviet economy. Hans Gerth, Gladys Meyer, and Josef Dünner were other students during the pre-emigration years who later made an impact on American social science. (Dünner, it might be noted in passing, wrote a *roman à clef* in 1937, entitled *If I Forget Thee . . .*, in which Institut figures appear under pseudonyms.)[90] In addition, all Institut members participated actively in the discussions about the future of socialism, which attracted such Frankfurt luminaries as Hendrik de Man and Paul Tillich. The independence provided by Hermann Weil's generosity allowed the Institut to remain unencumbered by political or academic obligations, even after his death in 1927. It also guaranteed the continuation of its identity in exile, at a time when other German refugee scholars were put through the strain of reestablishing themselves in an alien world without financial backing. An additional $100,000 contributed by Felix Weil, after he rejoined the Institut in New York in 1935, helped keep it financially secure through the thirties.

The sense of a shared fate and common purpose that strikes the observer as one of the Institut's chief characteristics — especially after Horkheimer became director — was transferable to the Institut's new homes partly because of its financial good fortune. It had been the intent of the founding members to create a community of scholars whose solidarity would serve as a microcosmic foretaste of the brotherly society of the future. The *Zeitschrift*, as mentioned earlier, helped cement the sense of group identity; and the common experience of forced exile and regrouping abroad added considerably to this feeling. Within the Institut itself, a still smaller group had coalesced around Horkheimer, consisting of Pollock, Lowenthal, Adorno, Marcuse, and Fromm. It is really their work, rooted in the central tradition of European philosophy, open to contemporary empirical techniques, and addressed to current social questions, that formed the core of the Institut's achievement.

If one seeks a common thread running through individual biographies of the inner circle, the one that immediately comes to mind is their birth into families of middle or upper-middle class Jews (in Adorno's case, only one parent was Jewish). Although this is not the place to launch a full-scale discussion of the Jewish radical in the Weimar Republic, a few observations ought to be made. As noted earlier, one of the arguments employed by Felix Weil and Pollock to persuade the elder Weil to endow the Institut had been the need to

study anti-Semitism in Germany. It was not, however, until the 1940's that this task was actually begun. If one were to characterize the Institut's general attitude towards the "Jewish question," it would have to be seen as similar to that expressed by another radical Jew almost a century before, Karl Marx. In both cases the religious or ethnic issue was clearly subordinated to the social. In *Dämmerung*, Horkheimer attacked Jewish capitalists who were against anti-Semitism simply because it posed an economic threat. "The readiness to sacrifice life and property for belief," he wrote, "is left behind with the material basis of the ghetto. With the bourgeois Jew, the hierarchy of goods is neither Jewish nor Christian, but bourgeois. . . . The Jewish revolutionary, like the 'aryan,' risks his own life for the freedom of mankind." [91] Further evidence of their de-emphasis of strictly Jewish as opposed to social oppression was their indifference to Zionism as a solution to the plight of the Jews.[92]

In fact, the members of the Institut were anxious to deny any significance at all to their ethnic roots, a position that has not been eroded with time in most of their cases. Weil, for example, in his extensive correspondence with this author, has heatedly rejected any suggestion that Jewishness — defined religiously, ethnically, or culturally — had any influence whatsoever on the selection of Institut members or the development of their ideas. He has also insisted that the assimilation of Jews in Weimar had gone so far that "discrimination against Jews had retreated completely to the 'social club level,' " [93] with the result that the Institut's neglect of the "Jewish question" was justified by its practical disappearance. That the Institut was founded one year after the foreign minister of Germany, Walter Rathenau, was assassinated largely because of his ethnic roots seems to have had no personal impact on the "assimilated" Jews connected with the Institut. Wittfogel, one of its gentile members, has confirmed this general blindness, arguing that he was one of the few exceptions who recognized the precariousness of the Jews' position, even of those who were most assimilated.[94] What strikes the current observer is the intensity with which many of the Institut's members denied, and in some cases still deny, any meaning at all to their Jewish identities. Assimilated German Jews, as has often been noted, were surprised by the ease with which German society accepted the anti-Semitic measures of the Nazis. Self-delusions on this score persisted in some cases as late as the war. Even so hardheaded a realist as Franz Neumann could write in *Behemoth* that "the German people are the least anti-Semitic of all." [95] His appraisal of the situation seems to have been supported by almost all of his Institut colleagues.

In the face of this vehement rejection of the meaningfulness of Jewishness in their backgrounds, one can only look for indirect ways in which it might have played a role. Certainly the overt impact of Judaism as a system of belief seems to have been negligible. The two possible exceptions to this were Leo Lowenthal and Erich Fromm, both of whom had been active in the group comprising the Frankfurt Lehrhaus. Lowenthal had been one of the contributors to the *Festschrift* dedicated to Rabbi Nobel in 1921, writing on the demonic in religion.[96] He continued to find his way into the pages of such publications as the *Frankfurter Israelitisches Gemeindeblatt* as late as 1930, although by then he had left his truly religious period behind. Still, one would be hard pressed at any time to find echoes of Lowenthal's interest in Judaism in the work he did for the Institut. Fromm, on the other hand, has often been characterized as retaining secular versions of Jewish themes in his work, even after he left Orthodoxy in the mid-twenties.[97] Frequent comparisons have been made between his work and other members of the Lehrhaus group, particularly Martin Buber. What these similarities were will be made clearer in Chapter 3. Only Lowenthal and Fromm (along with Walter Benjamin, who was to write for the *Zeitschrift* in later years) ever evinced any real interest in Jewish theological issues. To the others Judaism was a closed book.

If the manifest intellectual content of Judaism played no role in the thinking of most of the Institut's members, one has to turn to more broadly sociological or cultural explanations. In his recent study of the predominantly Jewish left-wing literati who wrote for the Berlin journal *Die Weltbühne*, Istvan Deak has had to ask similar questions to those that arise in a study of the Frankfurt School. He has correctly noted that the high percentage of Jews on Weimar's left — the *Weltbühne* circle was much larger than the Institut's, but the same correlation still held — was no mere coincidence. It was due, he wrote, "to a specific development: their recognition of the fact that business, artistic, or scientific careers do not help solve the Jewish problem, and that Weimar Germany had to undergo dire transformation if German anti-Semitism was to end."[98] However, the members of the Frankfurt School deny ever having had such a recognition. "All of us," Pollock has written, "up to the last years before Hitler, had no feeling of insecurity originating from our ethnic descent. Unless we were ready to undergo baptism, certain positions in public service and business were closed to us, but that never bothered us. And under the Weimar republic many of these barriers had been moved away."[99] Their radicalism is thus difficult to attribute to

a conscious awareness of socialism as the only solution to a keenly felt sense of ethnic oppression.

And yet, for all their claims to total assimilation and assertions about the lack of discrimination in Weimar, one cannot avoid a sense of their protesting too much. If in fact Weimar was an environment in which anti-Semitism was on the wane, which itself seems questionable, it must be remembered that the Institut's members all grew up before the First World War in a very different Germany. Even the most assimilated Jews in Wilhelmian Germany must have felt somewhat apart from their gentile counterparts, and coming to maturity in this atmosphere must surely have left its mark. The sense of role-playing that the Jew eager to forget his origins must have experienced could only have left a residue of bitterness, which might easily feed a radical critique of the society as a whole. This is not to say that the Institut's program can be solely, or even predominantly, attributed to its members' ethnic roots, but merely to argue that to ignore them entirely is to lose sight of one contributing factor.

Once in America, it might be noted parenthetically, the Institut's members became more sensitive to the Jewish question. Adorno, for example, was asked by Pollock to drop the Wiesengrund from his name, because there were too many Jewish-sounding names on the Institut's roster.[100] Paul Massing, one of the few gentiles in their midst, has said that his non-Jewishness was a slight but still significant factor in keeping him apart from his colleagues.[101] Assimilation was paradoxically more difficult in America than it had been in pre-Nazi Germany, at least so many Institut members felt.

Besides the sociological explanation of the effect of their origins, there is a cultural one as well. Jürgen Habermas has recently argued that a striking resemblance exists between certain strains in the Jewish cultural tradition and in that of German Idealism, whose roots have often been seen in Protestant Pietism.[102] One important similarity, which is especially crucial for an understanding of Critical Theory, is the old cabalistic idea that speech rather than pictures was the only way to approach God. The distance between Hebrew, the sacred language, and the profane speech of the Diaspora made its impact on Jews who were distrustful of the current universe of discourse. This, so Habermas has argued, parallels the idealist critique of empirical reality, which reached its height in Hegelian dialectics. Although one cannot draw a very exact line from the Frankfurt School's Jewish antecedents to its dialectical theory, perhaps some predisposition did exist. The same might be argued for its ready acceptance of psychoanalysis, which proved especially congenial to assimilated Jewish intellectuals. (This is not to say, of course, that

Freudianism was a "Jewish psychology," as the Nazis did, but merely to suggest a possible filiation.)

One other important factor must be mentioned. Within the German Jewish community itself, there often raged a struggle between fathers and sons over the content of Judaism and the future of the Jewish people. Sometimes this was resolved in peculiar ways. In her essay on Walter Benjamin, whose conflict with his father was particularly keen, Hannah Arendt has written: "As a rule these conflicts were resolved by the sons' laying claim to being geniuses, or, in the case of numerous Communists from well-to-do homes, to being devoted to the welfare of mankind — in any case, to aspiring to things higher than making money — and the fathers were more than willing to grant that this was a valid excuse for not making a living." [103] As in so many other ways, Benjamin was himself an exception to the rule, as his father refused to support him, but the others were not. Hermann Weil may have been a successful Argentine grain merchant interested more in profits than in revolution, but he was willing to support his son's radicalism with considerable generosity. Nor do Horkheimer's relations with his parents seem to have permanently suffered after the initial friction produced by his decision not to follow his father into manufacturing.[104] The one real period of estrangement that did occur between them followed Horkheimer's falling in love with his father's gentile secretary, eight years his elder. He married her in March, 1926, at about the same time that he began teaching at the university. As Pollock remembered it, "the frictions between Horkheimer and his parents were quite temporary. . . . After a few years of estrangement, there was complete reconciliation and Maidon Horkheimer was accepted with sincerest cordiality." [105] It was apparently much harder for his parents to get used to the idea that Horkheimer was marrying a gentile than that he was becoming a revolutionary.

In fact, one might argue that the strong ethical tone of Critical Theory was a product of the incorporation of the values likely to be espoused in a close-knit Jewish home. In any case, there is little to suggest that the Institut's members carried their rejection of the commercial mentality of their parents into outright personal rebellion. Despite the fervent expressions of solidarity with the proletariat that appeared throughout their work in the pre-emigration period, at no time did a member of the Institut affect the life-style of the working class.

Nowhere are their revolutionary sentiments so clearly articulated as in the work of "Heinrich Regius," the name Horkheimer borrowed from a seventeenth-century natural philosopher to put on the

title page of the aphorisms he published in Zurich in the first year of exile. Yet it is in one of the pieces in *Dämmerung*, "A Fable of Consistency," that he implicitly justifies the combination of radical beliefs and a bourgeois standard of living. In the fable, two poor poets are invited to accept a considerable stipend by a tyrannical king who values their work. One is disturbed by the taint on the money. "You are inconsistent," the other answers. "If you so believe, you must continue to go hungry. He who feels one with the poor, must live like them." [106] Agreeing, the first poet rejects the king's offer and proceeds to starve. Shortly thereafter, the other becomes the court poet. Horkheimer finishes his "fairy tale" by cautioning: "Both drew the consequences, and both consequences favored the tyrant. With the general moral prescription of consistency, there seems one condition: it is friendlier to tyrants than to poor poets." [107] And so, the Institut's members may have been relentless in their hostility towards the capitalist system, but they never abandoned the life-style of the *haute bourgeoisie*. It would be easy to term this behavior elitist or "mandarin" — to give Grünberg's word a slightly different meaning — as some of the group's detractors have done. But it seems unlikely that the rejuvenation of Marxist theory to which they so heavily contributed would have been materially advanced by a decision to wear cloth caps.

It is, however, at least arguable that Critical Theory would have been enriched if the members of the Institut had been more intimately involved in practical politics. The example of Lukács, to be sure, suggests that there were pitfalls involved in too close an attachment to one faction or another. But on the other side of the ledger is the case of the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, whose political experience before his imprisonment by Mussolini in 1926 always served to give his theorizing a concrete quality, which the Frankfurt School's work sometimes lacked. In one sense the Institut's period of exile can be said to have begun before its actual expulsion by the Nazis. After the failure of the German revolution, its members, at least those around Horkheimer, were alienated from all political factions on the left. The SPD was treated with the scorn its craven capitulation before the status quo deserved — in fact, one might argue that the SPD's betrayal of the working class colored the Frankfurt School's subsequent distrust of all "moderate" solutions. The KPD was equally anathema, for its transparent dependence on Moscow and its theoretical bankruptcy. And the pathetic attempts of such left-wing intellectuals as Kurt Hiller and Carl von Ossietzky to transcend the differences between the two parties, or to offer a viable alternative, were rejected for the pipe dreams they quickly proved to

be. The result was that the Frankfurt School chose the purity of its theory over the affiliation that a concrete attempt to realize it would have required. That this entailed disadvantages as well as advantages shall be seen in subsequent chapters.

The prudent transfer of the Institut's endowment to Holland in 1931 allowed the continuation of its work without much interruption. The first year in Geneva was a period of readjustment, but not stagnation. The project on the attitudes of workers and employees was not curtailed seriously. Andries Sternheim, a Dutch socialist who had ties to the labor movement, was recommended by someone in Albert Thomas's office to Horkheimer as a prospective member. In Geneva he was admitted as an assistant, and after Pollock's departure for the United States, he became the branch's director. Although of great help in collecting materials for the project, he contributed little to the theoretical work of the Institut, aside from a few contributions to the study of leisure in modern society.[108]

Hampered occasionally by the problems of adjustment to a new publisher, the *Zeitschrift* continued to appear regularly. New names were added to the roster of previous contributors. George Rusche wrote on the relationship between the labor market and criminal punishment,[109] anticipating a book he later published with Otto Kirchheimer's help under the auspices of the Institut. Kurt Mandelbaum (often under the names Kurt or Erich Baumann) and Gerhard Meyer added articles on economics to those written by Pollock and Grossmann.[110] Periodic contributions came from the Paris branch, which attracted such able assistants as Raymond Aron and Georges Friedmann. Paul Ludwig Landsberg, a philosopher for whom the Institut had high hopes that were later dashed by his murder by the Nazis, wrote on race ideology and pseudo-science.[111] American issues were dealt with by Julian Gumperz in a series of articles.[112] The "International" in the Institut's new title was thus clearly evident in the pages of the *Zeitschrift*.

It soon came to mean much more as the Institut began to look elsewhere for a new home. While appreciating its usefulness, Horkheimer and the others never considered the Geneva branch a permanent center of the Institut's affairs. In May, 1933, Grossmann had expressed an anxiety they all shared, when he wrote to Paul Mattick in America that "fascism also makes great progress in Switzerland and new dangers threaten our Institut there as well."[113] Pollock made a trip to London in February, 1934, to appraise the possibility of establishing the Institut in England; but intensive negotiations with Sir William Beveridge, director of the London School of Eco-

nomics, and Farquharson and his colleagues at the Institute of Sociology convinced him of its unlikelihood. The limited opportunities in England for the refugee scholars who began to stream out of Germany in 1933 have been frequently noted.[114] Of those associated with the Institut, only Borkenau elected to make London his permanent home in exile. He was able to obtain a position teaching international politics in the adult education section of the University of London. A few years later he took time out to visit Spain during the Civil War, which confirmed his already strong dislike for communism and produced one of the classic studies of the war, *The Spanish Cockpit.*[115] By then, his connections with the Institut, except for one last essay in the *Studien über Autorität und Familie (Studies on Authority and Family)* in 1936,[116] had been severed.

In Paris, where the academic establishment was even more impenetrable than in England, the prospects seemed equally limited. Paul Honigsheim, who fled from Cologne and became head of the Institut's Paris branch, has described the cold reception that normally greeted emigrés to France:

> The typical French intellectual, who wanted security and a predictable future for himself and his family, found his way of life threatened by those damn German intellectuals, who did not spend their time drinking apéritifs with their friends but worked twice as hard as the Frenchman. They worked for the sake of God or, if they were not religious believers, for work's sake, which for a true German scholar is almost the same. Accordingly, in contrast to the sympathetic attitude in the United States, the French did not welcome the appointment of German scholars in their midst. Thus it took courage to work openly on behalf of German refugees.[117]

Bouglé, Halbwachs, and their colleagues, Honigsheim stresses, had that courage, but they were in a small minority; as a result, France was ruled out as a possible new home for the Institut's headquarters.

Despite the Institut's Marxist image, at no time was the thought of going eastward to Stalin's Russia seriously entertained, even by Grossmann, who made a short and unsuccessful journey to Moscow in the mid-thirties, or by Wittfogel. The only serious possibility left was America. Julian Gumperz was sent there in 1933 to explore the situation. Gumperz had been a student of Pollock's since 1929 and at one time a Communist Party member, although he later gave it all up, became a stockbroker, and wrote an anti-communist book in the forties;[118] he was born in America and thus was fluent in English. He returned from his trip with a favorable report, assuring Horkheimer and the others that the Institut's endowment, which still brought in

about $30,000 a year, would be sufficient to guarantee survival in a country still mired in economic depression.

Over the years, the Institut had made several contacts with prominent figures in the American academic world, such as Charles Beard, Robert MacIver, Wesley Mitchell, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Robert Lynd, all of whom were at Columbia University. Thus when Horkheimer made his first trip to the United States in May, 1934, he was able to gain access to Columbia's patriarchal president, Nicholas Murray Butler. Much to his surprise, Butler offered the Institut affiliation with the university and a home in one of its buildings, at 429 West 117th Street. Horkheimer, fearing he had misunderstood Butler because of his limited command of English, wrote a four-page letter asking him to confirm and clarify his offer. Butler's response was a laconic "You have understood me perfectly!" [119] And so the International Institute for Social Research, as revolutionary and Marxist as it had appeared in Frankfurt in the twenties, came to settle in the center of the capitalist world, New York City. Marcuse came in July, Lowenthal in August, Pollock in September, and Wittfogel soon after. Fromm had been in the United States since 1932, when he came in response to an invitation to lecture by the Chicago Institute of Psychoanalysis. These men were among the first to arrive of that wave of Central European refugee intellectuals who so enriched American cultural life in the decades that followed.[120]

The transition was by no means without its difficulties. Still, in comparison with the members of Alvin Johnson's "university in exile" at the New School for Social Research, who had few or no financial resources to make their resettlement easy, the Institut's members were fortunate. In fact, the tensions that developed between the two refugee groups, although due in part to ideological differences,[121] were also clearly exacerbated by their contrasting financial situations. It should be added, however, that in later years the Institut maintained a strong sense of responsibility to less well-off refugees. When problems did exist for Institut members, they were those of language and cultural adjustment, which plague any immigrant, but not of finances. The most difficult intellectual adjustment, as we shall see later, involved coordinating the philosophically grounded social research practiced by the Institut with the rigorous antispeculative bias of American social science. The use of American empirical techniques that its members learned in exile was an important lesson brought back to Germany after the war, but these skills had not been acquired without considerable hesitancy.

In general, the Institut was not especially eager to jettison its past and become fully American. This reluctance can be gauged by the

decision to continue using Félix Alcan as publisher even after leaving Europe. By resisting the entreaties of its new American colleagues to publish in America, the Institut felt that it could more easily retain German as the language of the *Zeitschrift*. Although articles occasionally appeared in English and French and summaries in those languages followed each German essay, the journal remained essentially German until the war. It was in fact the only periodical of its kind published in the language that Hitler was doing so much to debase. As such, the *Zeitschrift* was seen by Horkheimer and the others as a vital contribution to the preservation of the humanist tradition in German culture, which was threatened with extirpation. Indeed, one of the key elements in the Institut's self-image was this sense of being the last outpost of a waning culture. Keenly aware of the relation language bears to thought, its members were thus convinced that only by continuing to write in their native tongue could they resist the identification of Nazism with everything German. Although most of the German-speaking world had no way of obtaining copies, the Institut was willing to sacrifice an immediate audience for a future one, which indeed did materialize after the defeat of Hitler. The one regrettable by-product of this decision was the partial isolation from the American academic community that it unavoidably entailed. Although the Institut began giving lectures in the Extension Division at Columbia in 1936, and gradually developed a series of seminars on various topics,[122] its focus remained primarily on theory and research. Together once again in the security of its new home on Morningside Heights — of the inner circle, only Adorno remained abroad for several years more — the Institut was thus able to resume without much difficulty the work it had started in Europe.

Although sobered by the triumph of fascism in Germany, Horkheimer and the others were still somewhat optimistic about the future. "The twilight of capitalism," wrote "Heinrich Regius" in 1934, "need not initiate the night of humanity, which, to be sure, seems to threaten today." [123] An intensification of their explorations of the crisis of capitalism, the collapse of traditional liberalism, the rising authoritarian threat, and other, related topics seemed the best contribution they could make to the defeat of Nazism. As always, their work was grounded in a social philosophy whose articulation was the prime occupation of Horkheimer, Marcuse, and to a lesser extent, Adorno, during the 1930's. It was here that their reworking of traditional Marxism became crucial. It is thus to the genesis and development of Critical Theory that we now must turn.

II

The Genesis of Critical Theory

> Viewed from the heights of reason, all life looks like some malignant disease and the world like a madhouse.
>
> — GOETHE

> I mistrust all systematizers and I avoid them. The will to a system is a lack of integrity.
>
> — NIETZSCHE

At the very heart of Critical Theory was an aversion to closed philosophical systems. To present it as such would therefore distort its essentially open-ended, probing, unfinished quality. It was no accident that Horkheimer chose to articulate his ideas in essays and aphorisms rather than in the cumbersome tomes so characteristic of German philosophy. Although Adorno and Marcuse were less reluctant to speak through completed books, they too resisted the temptation to make those books into positive, systematic philosophical statements. Instead, Critical Theory, as its name implies, was expressed through a series of critiques of other thinkers and philosophical traditions. Its development was thus through dialogue, its genesis as dialectical as the method it purported to apply to social phenomena. Only by confronting it in its own terms, as a gadfly of other systems, can it be fully understood. What this chapter will attempt to do, therefore, is to present Critical Theory as it was first generated in the 1930's, through contrapuntal interaction both with other schools of thought and with a changing social reality.

To trace the origins of Critical Theory to their true source would require an extensive analysis of the intellectual ferment of the 1840's, perhaps the most extraordinary decade in nineteenth-century German intellectual history.[1] It was then that Hegel's successors first applied his philosophical insights to the social and political phenomena of Germany, which was setting out on a course of rapid modernization. The so-called Left Hegelians were of course soon eclipsed by

the most talented of their number, Karl Marx. And in time, the philosophical cast of their thinking, shared by the young Marx himself, was superseded by a more "scientific," at times positivistic approach to social reality, by Marxists and non-Marxists alike.[2] By the late nineteenth century, social theory in general had ceased being "critical" and "negative" in the sense to be explained below.

The recovery of the Hegelian roots of Marx's thought by Marxists themselves was delayed until after World War I for reasons first spelled out by Karl Korsch in the pages of *Grünbergs Archiv* in 1923.[3] Only then were serious epistemological and methodological questions asked about the Marxist theory of society, which, despite (or perhaps because of) its scientific pretensions, had degenerated into a kind of metaphysics not unlike that which Marx himself had set out to dismantle. Ironically, a new understanding of Marx's debt to Hegel, that most metaphysical of thinkers, served to undermine the different kind of metaphysics that had entered "Vulgar Marxism" through the back door of scientism. Hegel's stress on consciousness as constitutive of the world challenged the passive materialism of the Second International's theorists. Here non-Marxist thinkers like Croce and Dilthey had laid the groundwork, by reviving philosophical interest in Hegel before the war. During the same period, Sorel's stress on spontaneity and subjectivity also played a role in undermining the mechanistic materialism of the orthodox adherents of the Second International.[4] Within the Marxist camp, Georg Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness* and Karl Korsch's *Marxism and Philosophy* were the most influential stimulants in the early 1920's to the recovery of the philosophical dimension in Marxism.[5] Much of what they argued was confirmed a decade later, with the revelations produced by the circulation of Marx's long-neglected Paris manuscripts. When, for one reason or another, their efforts faltered, the task of reinvigorating Marxist theory was taken up primarily by the young thinkers at the Institut für Sozialforschung.

On one level, then, it can be argued that the Frankfurt School was returning to the concerns of the Left Hegelians of the 1840's. Like that first generation of critical theorists, its members were interested in the integration of philosophy and social analysis. They likewise were concerned with the dialectical method devised by Hegel and sought, like their predecessors, to turn it in a materialist direction. And finally, like many of the Left Hegelians, they were particularly interested in exploring the possibilities of transforming the social order through human *praxis*.

The intervening century, however, had brought enormous changes, which made the conditions of their theorizing vastly dif-

ferent. Whereas the Left Hegelians were the immediate successors of the classical German idealists, the Frankfurt School was separated from Kant and Hegel by Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Dilthey, Bergson, Weber, Husserl, and many others, not to mention the systematization of Marxism itself. As a result, Critical Theory had to reassert itself against a score of competitors who had driven Hegel from the field. And, of course, it could not avoid being influenced by certain of their ideas. But still more important, vital changes in social, economic, and political conditions between the two periods had unmistakable repercussions on the revived Critical Theory. Indeed, according to its own premises this was inevitable. The Left Hegelians wrote in a Germany just beginning to feel the effects of capitalist modernization. By the time of the Frankfurt School, Western capitalism, with Germany as one of its leading representatives, had entered a qualitatively new stage, dominated by growing monopolies and increasing governmental intervention in the economy. The only real examples of socialism available to the Left Hegelians had been a few isolated utopian communities. The Frankfurt School, on the other hand, had the ambiguous success of the Soviet Union to ponder. Finally, and perhaps most crucially, the first critical theorists had lived at a time when a new "negative" (that is, revolutionary) force in society — the proletariat — was stirring, a force that could be seen as the agent that would fulfill their philosophy. By the 1930's, however, signs of the proletariat's integration into society were becoming increasingly apparent; this was especially evident to the members of the Institut after their emigration to America. Thus, it might be said of the first generation of critical theorists in the 1840's that theirs was an "immanent" critique of society based on the existence of a real historical "subject." By the time of its renaissance in the twentieth century, Critical Theory was being increasingly forced into a position of "transcendence" by the withering away of the revolutionary working class.

In the 1920's, however, the signs were still unclear. Lukács himself stressed the function of the working class as the "subject-object" of history before deciding that it was really the party that represented the true interests of the workers. As the passage cited from *Dämmerung* in Chapter 1 indicates, Horkheimer believed that the German proletariat, although badly split, was not entirely moribund. The younger members of the Institut could share the belief of its older, more orthodox leadership that socialism might still be a real possibility in the advanced countries of Western Europe. This was clearly reflected in the consistent hortatory tone of most of the Institut's work in the pre-emigration period.

After the Institut's resettlement at Columbia University, however, this tone underwent a subtle shift in a pessimistic direction. Articles in the *Zeitschrift* scrupulously avoided using words like "Marxism" or "communism," substituting "dialectical materialism" or "the materialist theory of society" instead. Careful editing prevented emphasizing the revolutionary implications of their thought. In the Institut's American bibliography[6] the title of Grossmann's book was shortened to *The Law of Accumulation in Capitalist Society* without any reference to the "law of collapse," which had appeared in the original. These changes were doubtless due in part to the sensitive situation in which the Institut's members found themselves at Columbia. They were also a reflection of their fundamental aversion to the type of Marxism that the Institut equated with the orthodoxy of the Soviet camp. But in addition they expressed a growing loss of that basic confidence, which Marxists had traditionally felt, in the revolutionary potential of the proletariat.

In their attempt to achieve a new perspective that might make the new situation intelligible, in a framework that was still fundamentally Marxist, the members of the Frankfurt School were fortunate in having had philosophical training outside the Marxist tradition. Like other twentieth-century contributors to the revitalization of Marxism — Lukács, Gramsci, Bloch, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty — they were influenced at an early stage in their careers by more subjectivist, even idealist philosophies. Horkheimer, who set the tone for all of the Institut's work, had been interested in Schopenhauer and Kant before becoming fascinated with Hegel and Marx. His expression of interest in Schopenhauer in the 1960's,[7] contrary to what is often assumed, was thus a return to an early love, rather than an apostasy from a life-long Hegelianized Marxism. In fact the first book in philosophy Horkheimer actually read was Schopenhauer's *Aphorisms on the Wisdom of Life,*[8] which Pollock gave him when they were studying French together in Brussels before the war. Both he and Lowenthal were members of the Schopenhauer Gesellschaft at Frankfurt in their student days. Horkheimer was also very much interested in Kant at that time; his first published work was an analysis of Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, written for his *Habilitation* under Hans Cornelius in 1925.[9]

If Horkheimer can be said to have had a true mentor, it was Hans Cornelius. As Pollock, who also studied under Cornelius, remembers it, his "influence on Horkheimer can hardly be overestimated." [10] This seems to have been true more from a personal than a theoretical point of view. Although difficult to classify, Cornelius's philosophical perspective was antidogmatic, opposed to Kantian idealism, and

insistent on the importance of experience. His initial writings showed the influence of Avenarius and Mach, but in his later work he moved away from their empiriocriticism and closer to a kind of phenomenology.[11] When Horkheimer became his student, Cornelius was at the height of his career, a "passionate teacher . . . in many ways the opposite of the current image of a German university professor, and in strong opposition to most of his colleagues." [12]

Although the young Horkheimer seems to have absorbed his teacher's critical stance, little of the substance of Cornelius's philosophy remained with him, especially after his interest was aroused by readings in Hegel and Marx. What does appear to have made an impact were Cornelius's humanistic cultural concerns. Born in 1863 in Munich into a family of composers, painters, and actors, Cornelius continued to pursue aesthetic interests throughout his life. Talented both as a sculptor and a painter, he made frequent trips to Italy, where he became expert in both classical and Renaissance art. In 1908 he published a study of *The Elementary Laws of Pictorial Art*,[13] and during the war he ran art schools in Munich.

Horkheimer was also certainly attracted by Cornelius's progressive political tendencies. Cornelius was an avowed internationalist and had been an opponent of the German war effort. Although no Marxist, he was considered an outspoken radical by the more conservative members of the Frankfurt faculty. What also doubtless made its impact on Horkheimer was his cultural pessimism, which he combined with his progressive politics. As Pollock recalls, "Cornelius never hesitated to confess openly his convictions and his despair about present-day civilization." [14] A sample of the almost apocalyptic tone he adopted, which was of course shared by many in Weimar's early days, can be found in the autobiographical sketch he wrote in 1923:

> Men have unlearned the ability to recognize the Godly in themselves and in things: nature and art, family and state have only interest for them as sensations. Therefore their lives flow meaninglessly by, and their shared culture is inwardly empty and will collapse because it is worthy of collapse. The new religion, however, which mankind needs, will first emerge from the ruins of this culture.[15]

The young Horkheimer was less eager to embrace so Spenglerian a prognosis, but in time Cornelius's appraisal of the situation increasingly became his own. In the twenties, however, he was still caught up by the revolutionary potential of the working class. Accordingly, his analysis of *The Critique of Judgment* showed little evidence of res-

ignation or despair; instead, it demonstrated his conviction that *praxis* could overcome the contradictions of the social order, while at the same time leading to a cultural renewal. From Kant, however, he took certain convictions that he would never abandon.

Horkheimer's reading of Kant helped increase his sensitivity to the importance of individuality, as a value never to be submerged entirely under the demands of the totality. It also heightened his appreciation of the active elements in cognition, which prevented his acceptance of the copy theory of perception advocated by more orthodox Marxists. What it did not do, however, was to convince him of the inevitability of those dualisms — phenomena and noumena, pure and practical reason, for example — that Kant had posited as insurmountable. In concluding his study, Horkheimer made it clear that although these antagonisms had not yet been overcome, he saw no necessary reason why they could not be. Kant's fundamental duality between will and knowledge, practical and pure reason, could and must be reconciled.[16] In so arguing, Horkheimer demonstrated the influence of Hegel's critique of Kant on his own. Like Hegel, he saw cognitive knowledge and normative imperatives, the "is" and the "ought," as ultimately inseparable.

Because of this and other similarities with Hegel on such questions as the nature of reason, the importance of dialectics, and the existence of a substantive logic, it is tempting to characterize Critical Theory as no more than a Hegelianized Marxism.[17] And yet, on several fundamental issues, Horkheimer always maintained a certain distance from Hegel. Most basic was his rejection of Hegel's metaphysical intentions and his claim to absolute truth. "I do not know," he wrote in *Dämmerung*, "how far metaphysicians are correct; perhaps somewhere there is a particularly compelling metaphysical system or fragment. But I do know that metaphysicians are usually impressed only to the smallest degree by what men suffer."[18] Moreover, a system that tolerated every opposing view as part of the "total truth" had inevitably quietistic implications.[19] An all-embracing system like Hegel's might well serve as a theodicy justifying the status quo. In fact, to the extent that Marxism had been ossified into a system claiming the key to truth, it too had fallen victim to the same malady. The true object of Marxism, Horkheimer argued,[20] was not the uncovering of immutable truths, but the fostering of social change.

Elsewhere, Horkheimer outlined his other objections to Hegel's metaphysics.[21] His strongest criticism was reserved for perhaps the fundamental tenet of Hegel's thought: the assumption that all knowledge is self-knowledge of the infinite subject — in other words,

that an identity exists between subject and object, mind and matter, based on the ultimate primacy of the absolute subject. "Spirit," Horkheimer wrote, "may not recognize itself either in nature or in history, because even if the spirit is not a questionable abstraction, it would not be identical with reality." [22] In fact, there is no "thought" as such, only the specific thought of concrete men rooted in their socio-economic conditions. Nor is there "being" as such, but rather a "manifold of beings in the world." [23]

In repudiating identity theory, Horkheimer was also implicitly criticizing its reappearance in Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness.* To Lukács, the proletariat functioned both as the subject and the object of history, thus fulfilling the classical German idealist goal of uniting freedom as an objective reality and as something produced by man himself. In later years Lukács was himself to detect the metaphysical premise underlying his assumption of an identical subject-object in history: "The proletariat seen as the identical subject-object of the real history of mankind is no materialist consummation that overcomes the constructions of idealism. It is rather an attempt to out-Hegel Hegel, it is an edifice boldly erected above every possible reality and thus attempts objectively to surpass the Master himself." [24] These words were written in 1967 for a new edition of a work whose arguments Lukács had long ago seen fit to repudiate. His reasons for that self-criticism have been the source of considerable speculation and no less an amount of criticism. Yet, in pointing to the metaphysical core at the center of his argument, he was doing no more than repeating what Horkheimer had said about identity theory almost four decades before.

To Horkheimer, all absolutes, all identity theories were suspect. Even the ideal of absolute justice contained in religion, he was later to argue,[25] has a chimerical quality. The image of complete justice "can never be realized in history because even when a better society replaces the present disorder and is developed, past misery would not be made good and the suffering of surrounding nature not transcended." [26] As a result, philosophy as he understood it always expresses an unavoidable note of sadness, but without succumbing to resignation.

Yet although Horkheimer attacked Hegel's identity theory, he felt that nineteenth-century criticism of a similar nature had been carried too far. In rejecting the ontological claims Hegel had made for his philosophy of Absolute Spirit, the positivists had robbed the intellect of any right to judge what was actual as true or false.* Their overly

* Throughout its history, "positivism" was used by the Frankfurt School in a loose way to include those philosophical currents which were nominalist, phenomenalist (that is, anti-essen-

empirical bias led to the apotheosis of facts in a way that was equally one-sided. From the first, Horkheimer consistently rejected the Hobson's choice of metaphysical systematizing or antinomian empiricism. Instead, he argued for the possibility of a dialectical social science that would avoid an identity theory and yet preserve the right of the observer to go beyond the givens of his experience. It was in large measure this refusal to succumb to the temptations of either alternative that gave Critical Theory its cutting edge.

Horkheimer's hostility to metaphysics was partly a reaction to the sclerosis of Marxism produced by its transformation into a body of received truths. But beyond this, it reflected the influence of his readings in non-Hegelian and non-Marxist philosophy. Schopenhauer's extreme skepticism about the possibility of reconciling reason with the world of will certainly had its effect. More important still was the impact of three late nineteenth-century thinkers, Nietzsche, Dilthey, and Bergson, all of whom had emphasized the relation of thought to human life.

To Horkheimer,[27] the *Lebensphilosophie* (philosophy of life) they helped create had expressed a legitimate protest against the growing rigidity of abstract rationalism, and the concomitant standardization of individual existence that characterized life under advanced capitalism. It had pointed an accusing finger at the gap between the promises of bourgeois ideology and the reality of everyday life in bourgeois society. The development of the philosophy of life, he argued, corresponded to a fundamental change in capitalism itself. The earlier optimistic belief of certain classical idealists in the unity of reason and reality had corresponded to the individual entrepreneur's acceptance of harmony between his own activities and the functioning of the economy as a whole. The erosion of that conviction corresponded to the growth of monopoly capitalism in the late nineteenth century, in which the individual's role was more overwhelmed by the totality than harmonized with it.[28] *Lebensphilosophie* was basically a cry of outrage against this change. Because of this critical element, Horkheimer was careful to distinguish the "irrationalism" [29] of the philosophers of life from that of their twentieth-century vulgarizers.

In the 1930's, he argued, attacks on reason were designed to reconcile men to the irrationality of the prevailing order.[30] The so-called tragic outlook on life was really a veiled justification for the acceptance of unnecessary misery. *Leben* and *Dienst* (service) had come to be synonymous. What was once critical had now become ideologi-

tialist), empirical, and wedded to the so-called scientific method. Many of their opponents who were grouped under this rubric protested the term's applicability, as for example Karl Popper.

cal. This was also true of the attack on science, which, in the hands of the first generation of *Lebensphilosophen*, had been a justified corrective to the pretensions of scientism, but which by the 1930's had degenerated into an indiscriminate attack on the validity of scientific thought as such. "The philosophic dismissal of science," he wrote in 1937, "is a comfort in private life, in society a lie." [31]

In seeing the irrationalism of the thirties basically as an ideology of passivity,[32] Horkheimer neglected its dynamic and destructive sides, which the Nazis were able to exploit. This was a blind spot in his analysis. But in another way he enriched the discussion of its historical development. In distinguishing between different types of irrationalism, Horkheimer broke with the tradition of hostility towards *Lebensphilosophie* maintained by almost all Marxist thinkers, including the later Lukács.[33] In addition to approving of its antisystematic impulse, Horkheimer gave qualified praise to the emphasis on the individual in the work of both Dilthey and Nietzsche. Like them, he believed in the importance of individual psychology for an understanding of history.[34] While their work in this area was less subtle than the psychoanalysis he hoped to integrate with Critical Theory, he considered it far more useful than the bankrupt utilitarianism that informed liberalism and orthodox Marxism.

What became clear, however, in Horkheimer's discussion of Dilthey's methodology[35] was his rejection of a purely psychological approach to historical explanation. Dilthey's notion of a *Verstehende Geisteswissenschaft* (a social science based on its own methods of understanding and reexperiencing, rather than on those of the natural sciences) did, to be sure, contain a recognition of the meaningfulness of historical structures, which Horkheimer could share. What he rejected was the assumption that this meaning could be intuitively grasped by the historian reexperiencing his subject matter in his own mind. Underlying this notion, he argued, was a Hegelian-like belief in the identity of subject and object. The data of the inner life were not enough to mirror the significant structure of the past, because that past had not always been made consciously by men. Indeed, it was generally made "behind the backs and against the wills" of individuals, as Marx had pointed out. That this need not always be the case was another matter. In fact, Vico was one of Horkheimer's early intellectual heroes;[36] and it was Vico who had first argued that men might understand history better than nature because men made history, whereas God made nature. This, however, was a goal, not a reality. If anything, Horkheimer noted pessimistically, the trend in modern life was away from the conscious determination of historical events rather than towards it. History, therefore, could not simply be

"understood," as he claimed Dilthey had hoped, but had to be "explained" instead. Horkheimer did, however, hold out some hope for the attainment of the social conditions that would make Dilthey's methodological vision viable.

Horkheimer's admiration for Nietzsche was equally mixed. In 1935 he argued that Nietzsche was a genuine bourgeois philosopher, as demonstrated by his overemphasis on individualism and his blindness to social questions.[37] Still, Horkheimer was quick to defend Nietzsche against those who sought to reconcile him with the irrationalists of the 1930's. In a long review of Karl Jaspers's study of Nietzsche[38] he castigated the author for trying to "domesticate" Nietzsche for *völkisch* (populist nationalist) and religious consumption. What he valued most in Nietzsche's work was its uncompromisingly critical quality. On the question of certain knowledge, for example, he applauded Nietzsche's statement that a "great truth wants to be criticized, not idolized." [39]

Horkheimer also was impressed by Nietzsche's critique of the masochistic quality of traditional Western morality. He had been the first to note, Horkheimer approvingly commented,[40] how misery could be transformed into a social norm, as in the case of asceticism, and how that norm had permeated Western culture through the "slave morality" of Christian ethics.[41] When it came to the more questionable aspects of Nietzsche's thought, Horkheimer tended to mitigate their inadequacies. The naive glorification of the "superman" he explained away by calling it the price of isolation. Nietzsche's hostility to the goal of a classless society he excused on the grounds that its only champions in Nietzsche's day were the Social Democrats, whose mentality was as pedestrian and uninspired as Nietzsche had claimed. In fact, Horkheimer argued, Nietzsche had been perceptive in refusing to romanticize the working classes, who were even in his time beginning to be diverted from their revolutionary role by the developing mass culture. Where Nietzsche had failed, however, was in his ahistorical belief that democratization inevitably meant the dilution of true culture. He was also deficient in misunderstanding the historical nature of labor, which he absolutized as immutable in order to justify his elitist conclusions. In short, Horkheimer contended that Nietzsche, who had done so much to reveal the historical roots of bourgeois morality, had himself fallen prey to ahistorical thinking.

Towards the third great exponent of *Lebensphilosophie* and one of the Institut's actual sponsors in Paris, Henri Bergson, Horkheimer was somewhat more critical.[42] Although recognizing the trenchant arguments in Bergson's critique of abstract rationalism, he ques-

tioned the metaphysical yearnings he detected at its root. Bergson's faith in intuition as the means to discover the universal life force he dismissed as an ideology. "Intuition," he wrote, "from which Bergson hopes to find salvation in history as in cognition, has a unified object: life, energy, duration, creative development. In reality, however, mankind is split, and an intuition that seeks to penetrate through contradictions loses what is historically decisive from its sight." [43] Horkheimer's hostility to the unmediated use of intuition as a means to break through to an underlying level of reality, it might be added, was also extended to the similar efforts of phenomenologists such as Scheler and Husserl.

In an article devoted primarily to Bergson's metaphysics of time, which Bergson himself called "a serious deepening of my works" and "philosophically very penetrating," [44] Horkheimer supported Bergson's distinction between "experienced" time and the abstract time of the natural scientists. But, he quickly added in qualification, Bergson had been mistaken in trying to write a metaphysics of temporality. In so doing he had been led to an idea of time as *durée* (duration), which was almost as abstract and empty as that of the natural sciences. To see reality as an uninterruptible flow was to ignore the reality of suffering, aging, and death. It was to absolutize the present and thus unwittingly repeat the mistakes of the positivists. True experience, Horkheimer argued, resisted such homogenization. The task of the historian was to preserve the memory of suffering and to foster the demand for qualitative historical change.

In all of Horkheimer's writings on the *Lebensphilosophen*, three major criticisms were repeatedly made. By examining these in some detail, we can better understand the foundations of Critical Theory. First, although the philosophers of life had been correct in trying to rescue the individual from the threats of modern society, they had gone too far in emphasizing subjectivity and inwardness. In doing so, they had minimized the importance of action in the historical world. Second, with an occasional exception such as Nietzsche's critique of asceticism, they tended to neglect the material dimension of reality. Third and perhaps most important, in criticizing the degeneration of bourgeois rationalism into its abstract and formal aspects, they sometimes overstated their case and seemed to be rejecting reason itself. This ultimately led to the outright mindless irrationalism of their twentieth-century vulgarizers.

As might be expected, Horkheimer's interest in the question of bourgeois individualism led him back to a consideration of Kant and the origins of *Innerlichkeit* (inwardness).[45] Among the dualistic ele-

ments in Kant's philosophy, he noted,[46] was the gap between duty and interest. Individual morality, discovered by practical reason, was internalized and divorced from public ethics. Here Hegel's *Sittlichkeit* (ethics), with its emphasis on bridging the public-private opposition, was superior to Kant's *Moralität* (morality). Despite this, Kant's view was closer to a correct reflection of conditions in the early nineteenth century; for to assume that a harmony could exist at that time between personal morality and public ethics, or between self-interest and a universal moral code, was to ignore the real irrationality of the external order. Where Kant had been wrong, however, was in considering these contradictions immutable. By absolutizing the distinction between the individual and society, he had made a natural condition out of what was merely historically valid, thereby unwittingly affirming the status quo. This was also a failing of the *Lebensphilosophen.* In later years, however, Horkheimer and the other members of the Frankfurt School came to believe that the real danger lay not with those who overemphasized subjectivity and individuality, but rather with those who sought to eliminate them entirely under the banner of a false totalism. This fear would go so far that Adorno could write, in a frequently quoted phrase from *Minima Moralia*, that "the whole is the untrue."[47] But in the 1930's Horkheimer and his colleagues were still concerned with the overemphasis on individuality, which they detected in bourgeois thinkers from Kant to the philosophers of life.

Horkheimer also questioned the moral imperative that Kant had postulated. Although agreeing that a moral impulse apart from egoistic self-interest did in fact exist, he argued that its expression had changed since Kant's time. Whereas in the early nineteenth century it had manifested itself as duty, it now appeared as either pity or political concern. Pity, Horkheimer argued, was produced by the recognition that man had ceased being a free subject and was reduced instead to an object of forces beyond his control.[48] This Kant had not experienced himself, because his time provided greater individual freedom, at least for the entrepreneur. Political action as the expression of morality was also spurned by Kant, who overemphasized the importance of the individual conscience and tended to reify the status quo. In the twentieth century, however, politics had become the proper realm of moral action because, for the first time in history, "mankind's means have grown great enough to present the realization [of justice] as an immediate historical task. The struggle for its fulfillment characterizes our epoch of transition."[49] Both early bourgeois thinkers like Kant and later ones like the *Lebensphiloso-*

phen had failed to appreciate the necessity for political *praxis* to realize their moral visions.

Horkheimer's second major objection to Nietzsche, Dilthey, and Bergson was, as noted above, that they were really hidden idealists. In contrast, Horkheimer proposed a materialist theory of society, but one that was very clearly distinguished from the putative materialism of orthodox Marxism. In one of his most important essays in the *Zeitschrift*, "Materialism and Metaphysics,"[50] he set out to rescue materialism from those who saw it simply as an antonym of spiritualism and a denial of nonmaterial existence. True materialism, he argued, did not mean a new type of monistic metaphysics based on the ontological primacy of matter. Here nineteenth-century mechanical materialists like Vogt and Haeckel had been wrong, as were Marxists who made a fetish of the supposedly "objective" material world. Equally erroneous was the assumption of the eternal primacy of the economic substructure of society. Both substructure and superstructure interacted at all times, although it was true that under capitalism the economic base had a crucial role in this process. What had to be understood, however, was that this condition was only historical and would change with time. In fact, it was one of the characteristics of twentieth-century society that politics was beginning to assert an autonomy beyond anything Marx had predicted. Both Leninist and fascist practice demonstrated the change.

Horkheimer also disliked the tendency of vulgar Marxists to elevate materialism to a theory of knowledge, which claimed absolute certainty the way idealism had in the past. In fact, to argue that a materialist epistemology could exhaustively explain reality was to encourage the urge to dominate the world, which Fichtean idealism had most vividly displayed. This was borne out by the fact that monistic materialism as far back as Hobbes had led to a manipulative, dominating attitude towards nature.[51] The theme of man's domination of nature, it might be added parenthetically, was to become a central concern of the Frankfurt School in subsequent years.

Despite the impossibility of attaining absolute knowledge, Horkheimer held that materialism must not succumb to relativistic resignation. In fact, the monistic materialist epistemology of vulgar Marxism had been too passive. Echoing Marx's critique of Feuerbach almost a century before,[52] Horkheimer stressed the active element in cognition, which idealism had correctly affirmed. The objects of perception, he argued, are themselves the product of man's actions, although the relationship tends to be masked by reification. Indeed, nature itself has a historical element, in the dual sense that

man conceives of it differently at different times and that he actively works to change it. True materialism, Horkheimer contended, is thus dialectical, involving an ongoing process of interaction between subject and object. Here Horkheimer returned once again to the Hegelian roots of Marxism, which had been obscured in the intervening century. Like Marx, but unlike many self-proclaimed Marxists, he refused to make a fetish of dialectics as an objective process outside man's control. Nor did he see it as a methodological construct imposed like a Weberian ideal type, or a social scientific model, on a chaotic, manifold reality. Dialectics probed the "force-field," to use an expression of Adorno's,[53] between consciousness and being, subject and object. It did not, indeed could not, pretend to have discovered ontological first principles. It rejected the extremes of nominalism and realism and remained willing to operate in a perpetual state of suspended judgment.

Hence the crucial importance of mediation *(Vermittlung)* for a correct theory of society. No facet of social reality could be understood by the observer as final or complete in itself. There were no social "facts," as the positivists believed, which were the substratum of a social theory. Instead, there was a constant interplay of particular and universal, of "moment" * and totality. As Lukács had written in *History and Class Consciousness*:

> To leave empirical reality behind can only mean that the objects of the empirical world are to be understood as objects of a totality, i.e., as the aspects of a total social situation caught up in the process of historical change. Thus the category of mediation is a lever with which to overcome the mere immediacy of the empirical world, and as such it is not something (subjective) foisted onto the objects from outside, it is no value-judgment or "ought" opposed to their "is." *It is rather the manifestation of their authentic objective structure.*[54]

Moreover, the relationship between the totality and its moments was reciprocal. Vulgar Marxists had been mistaken in seeking a reductionist derivation of superstructural, cultural phenomena from their substructural, socio-economic base. Culture, Horkheimer and his colleagues argued, was never epiphenomenal, although it was never fully autonomous. Its relationship to the material substructure of society was multidimensional. All cultural phenomena must be seen as mediated through the social totality, not merely as the reflection of class interests. This meant that they also expressed the con-

* *Das Moment* in German means a phase or aspect of a cumulative dialectical process. It should not be confused with *Der Moment*, which means a moment in time in the English sense.

tradictions of the whole, including those forces that negated the status quo. Nothing, or at least almost nothing, was solely ideological.[55]

In so arguing, it might be added, Horkheimer was closer to Marx himself than the self-styled Marxists who claimed to be orthodox. When discussing the bourgeois state, for example, Marx had not interpreted it solely as the "executive committee of the ruling class," but also as an adumbration, albeit distorted, of the reconciliation of social contradictions that the triumph of the proletariat was to bring about.[56] Engels, likewise, when discussing Realism in literature, had shown an appreciation for the progressive elements in ostensibly reactionary writers like Balzac, because of their ability to portray the concrete totality with all its contradictions. The Institut's extensive work on aesthetic and cultural matters was rooted in the same assumption.

In stressing the totality, Horkheimer correspondingly criticized other social theorists for concentrating on one facet of reality to the exclusion of the others. This led to one of the methodological fallacies the Frankfurt School most frequently attacked: fetishization. More orthodox Marxists within the Institut, such as the economist Henryk Grossmann, were always criticized for their overemphasis on the material substructure of society. The composition of the Institut, with its deliberate diversification of fields, reflected the importance Critical Theory placed on the totality of dialectical mediations, which had to be grasped in the process of analyzing society.

Horkheimer's stress on dialectics also extended to his understanding of logic. Although rejecting the extravagant ontological claims Hegel had made for his logical categories, he agreed with the need for a substantive, rather than merely formal, logic. In *Dämmerung* Horkheimer wrote: "Logic is not independent of content. In face of the reality that what is inexpensive for the favored part of humanity remains unattainable for the others, nonpartisan logic would be as nonpartisan as a book of laws that is the same for all." [57] Formalism, characteristic of bourgeois law (the ideal of the *Rechtsstaat*, which meant judicial universality without relating the law to its political origins), bourgeois morality (the categorical imperative), and bourgeois logic, had once been progressive, but it now served only to perpetuate the status quo. True logic, as well as true rationalism, must go beyond form to include substantive elements as well.

Yet precisely what these elements were was difficult to say. Substantive logic was easier to demand than explain. The agnosticism in Horkheimer's notion of materialism also extended to his views on the possibility of a philosophical anthropology. He dismissed the efforts of Max Scheler, to discover a constant human nature as no

more than a desperate search for absolute meaning in a relativist world.[58] The yearning of phenomenologists for the security of eternal essences was a source of self-delusion, a point Adorno and Marcuse were to echo in their respective critiques of Husserl and Scheler.[59]

Accordingly, Critical Theory denied the necessity, or even the possibility, of formulating a definitive description of "socialist man." This distaste for anthropological speculation has been attributed by some commentators to the residual influence of scientific socialism.[60] If "scientific" is understood solely as the antonym of "utopian" socialism, this is true. But in view of the Frankfurt School's hostility towards the reduction of philosophy to science, it seems only a partial explanation. Another possible factor, which Horkheimer himself was to stress in later years,[61] was the subterranean influence of a religious theme on the materialism of the Frankfurt School. It would be an error, in fact, to treat its members as dogmatic atheists. In almost all of Horkheimer's discussions of religion, he took a dialectical position.[62] In *Dämmerung*, to take one example, he argued that religion ought not to be understood solely as false consciousness, because it helped preserve a hope for future justice, which bourgeois atheism denied.[63] Thus, his more recent claim, that the traditional Jewish prohibition on naming or describing God and paradise was reproduced in Critical Theory's refusal to give substance to its utopian vision, can be given some credence. As Jürgen Habermas has noted, German idealist philosophy's reluctance to flesh out its notions of utopia was very similar to the cabalistic stress on words rather than images.[64] Adorno's decision to choose music, the most nonrepresentational of aesthetic modes, as the primary medium through which he explored bourgeois culture and sought signs of its negation indicates the continued power of this prohibition. Of the major figures connected with the Institut, only Marcuse attempted to articulate a positive anthropology at any time in his career.[65] Whether or not the Jewish taboo was actually causal or merely a *post facto* rationalization is difficult to establish with certainty. Whatever the reason, Critical Theory consistently resisted the temptation to describe "the realm of freedom" from the vantage point of the "realm of necessity."

And yet, even in Horkheimer's work there appeared a kind of negative anthropology, an implicit but still powerful presence. Although to some extent rooted in Freud, its primary origins could be found in the work of Marx. In discussing Feuerbach's attempt to construct an explicit picture of human nature, Marx had attacked its atemporal,

abstract, antihistorical premises. The only constant, he argued, was man's ability to create himself anew. "Anthropogenesis," to use a later commentator's term,[66] was the only human nature Marx allowed. Here Horkheimer was in agreement; the good society was one in which man was free to act as a subject rather than be acted upon as a contingent predicate.

When Marx seemed to go further in defining the categories of human self-production in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, Horkheimer drew back. The central position of labor in Marx's work and his concomitant stress on the problem of alienated labor in capitalist society played a relatively minor role in Horkheimer's writings. In *Dämmerung* he wrote: "To make labor into a transcendent category of human activity is an ascetic ideology. . . . Because socialists hold to this general concept, they make themselves into carriers of capitalist propaganda." [67]

The same was true of Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno. To Benjamin, the vulgar Marxist stress on labor "recognizes only the progress in the mastery of nature, not the retrogression of society; it already displays the technocratic features later encountered in Fascism. . . . The new conception of labor amounts to the exploitation of nature, which with naive complacency is contrasted with the exploitation of the proletariat. Compared with this positivistic conception, Fourier's fantasies, which have so often been ridiculed, prove to be surprisingly sound." [68] Adorno, when I spoke with him in Frankfurt in March, 1969, said that Marx wanted to turn the whole world into a giant workhouse.

Horkheimer's antagonism to the fetishization of labor expressed another dimension of his materialism: the demand for human, sensual happiness. In one of his most trenchant essays, "Egoism and the Movement for Emancipation," [69] he discussed the hostility to personal gratification inherent in bourgeois culture. Despite the utilitarianism of a Bentham or a Mandeville, the characteristic ideology of the early bourgeois era was Kantian.[70] Seeing no unity between individual interest and public morality, Kant had posited an inevitable distinction between happiness and duty. Although he gave a certain weight to both, by the time capitalism had become sufficiently advanced, the precedence of duty to the totality over personal gratification had grown to such an extent that the latter was almost completely neglected. To compensate for the repression of genuine individual happiness, mass diversions had been devised to defuse discontent.[71] Much of the Institut's later work on the "culture industry" was designed to show how effective these palliatives were.

But even allegedly revolutionary movements, Horkheimer con-

tended, had perpetuated the characteristic bourgeois hostility to happiness.[72] The fourteenth-century Romans under Cola di Rienzi, and the Florentines in the time of Savonarola, were two clear examples of revolutionary movements that ended by opposing individual happiness in the name of some higher good. Even more strikingly, the French Revolution and especially the Terror illustrated this theme. Robespierre, like Rienzi and Savonarola, confused love for the people with ruthless repression of them. The equality brought by the Revolution, Horkheimer noted, was the negative leveling produced by the guillotine, an equality of degradation rather than dignity. In the twentieth century a similar phenomenon had appeared in fascism. The Führer or Duce expressed in the extreme the typical bourgeois combination of romantic sentimentality and utter ruthlessness. The ideology of duty and service to the totality at the cost of individual happiness attained its ultimate expression in fascist rhetoric. The revolutionary pretensions of the fascists were no more than a fraud designed to perpetuate the domination of the ruling classes.

In contrast to the bourgeois ethic of self-abnegation, Horkheimer upheld the dignity of egoism. During the Enlightenment, Helvetius and de Sade had expressed a protest, however distorted, against asceticism in the name of a higher morality. Even more forcefully, Nietzsche had exposed the connection between self-denial and resentment that is implicit in most of Western culture. Where Horkheimer differed from them was in his stress on the social component in human happiness. His egoistic individual, unlike the utilitarians' or even Nietzsche's, always realized his greatest gratification through communal interaction. In fact, Horkheimer constantly challenged the reification of individual and society as polar opposites, just as he denied the mutual exclusivity of subject and object in philosophy.

The Institut's stress on personal happiness as an integral element in its materialism was further developed by Marcuse in an article he wrote for the *Zeitschrift* in 1938, "On Hedonism."[73] In contrast to Hegel, who "fought against eudaemonism in the interest of historical progress,"[74] Marcuse defended hedonistic philosophies for preserving a "moment" of truth in their stress on happiness. Where they traditionally went wrong, however, was in their unquestioning acceptance of the competitive individual as the model of highest personal development. "The apologetic aspect of hedonism," Marcuse wrote, is to be found "in hedonism's abstract conception of the subjective side of happiness, in its inability to distinguish between true and false wants and interests and true and false enjoyments."[75] In upholding the notion of higher and lower pleasures, Marcuse was closer to the Epicurean type of hedonism than to the Cyrenaic, both of

which he treated at length in the essay. (He was also in the company of an unlikely ally in the person of John Stuart Mill, who had made a similar distinction in his *Utilitarianism*.) As he explained, "Pleasure in the abasement of another as well as self-abasement under a stronger will, pleasure in the manifold surrogates for sexuality, in meaningless sacrifices, in the heroism of war are false pleasures, because the drives and needs that fulfill themselves in them make men less free, blinder, and more wretched than they have to be." [76]

But, as might be expected, Marcuse denounced the ahistorical belief that the higher forms of happiness could be achieved under present conditions. In fact, so he argued, hedonism's restriction of happiness to consumption and leisure to the exclusion of productive labor expressed a valid judgment about a society in which labor remained alienated. What was invalid, however, was the assumption that this society was eternal. How historical change would come about was of course difficult to predict, because "it appears that individuals raised to be integrated into the antagonistic labor process cannot be judges of their own happiness." [77] Consciousness was therefore incapable of changing itself; the impetus had to come from the outside:

> Insofar as unfreedom is already present in wants and not just in their gratification, they must be the first to be liberated — not through an act of education or of the moral renewal of man but through an economic and political process encompassing the disposal over the means of production by the community, the reorientation of the productive process toward the needs and wants of the whole society, the shortening of the working day, and the active participation of the individuals in the administration of the whole.[78]

Here Marcuse seemed to come perilously close to the stress on objective social development, which more orthodox Marxists had maintained, but which the Institut had attacked by emphasizing the subjective element in *praxis*. In fact, to digress momentarily, the key problem of how change might occur in a society that controlled the consciousness of its members remained a troubling element in much of Marcuse's later work, especially *One-Dimensional Man*.[79]

Whatever the means to achieve true happiness might be, it could only be reached when freedom was also universally attained. "The reality of happiness," Marcuse wrote, "is the reality of freedom as the self-determination of liberated humanity in its common struggle with nature." And since freedom was synonymous with the realization of rationality, "in their completed form both, happiness and reason, coincide." [80] What Marcuse was advocating here was that con-

vergence of particular and general interests usually known as "positive freedom." [81] Individual happiness was one moment in the totality of positive freedom; reason was the other.

The Frankfurt School's stress on reason was one of the salient characteristics of its work.[82] Here its debt to Hegel was most clearly demonstrated. Horkheimer's third major objection to *Lebensphilosophie,* it will be recalled, was that its overreaction to the deterioration of rationality had led to the rejection of reason as such. As Horkheimer would repeat over and over again during his career, rationality was at the root of any progressive social theory. What he meant by reason, however, was never easy to grasp for an audience unschooled in the traditions of classical German philosophy. Implicitly, Horkheimer referred more often than not to the idealists' distinction between *Verstand* (understanding) and *Vernunft* (reason). By *Verstand,* Kant and Hegel had meant a lower faculty of the mind, which structured the phenomenal world according to common sense. To the understanding, the world consisted of finite entities identical only with themselves and totally opposed to all other things. It thus failed to penetrate immediacy to grasp the dialectical relations beneath the surface. *Vernunft,* on the other hand, signified a faculty that went beyond mere appearances to this deeper reality. Although Kant differed from Hegel in rejecting the possibility of reconciling the world of phenomena with the transcendent, noumenal sphere of "things-in-themselves," he shared Hegel's belief in the superiority of *Vernunft* over *Verstand.* Of all the Institut's members, Marcuse was perhaps most drawn to the classical notion of reason. In 1937, he attempted to define it and turn it in a materialist direction in the following way:

> Reason is the fundamental category of philosophical thought, the only one by means of which it has bound itself to human destiny. Philosophy wanted to discover the ultimate and most general grounds of Being. Under the name of reason it conceived the idea of an authentic Being in which all significant antitheses (of subject and object, essence and appearance, thought and being) were reconciled. Connected with this idea was the conviction that what exists is not immediately and already rational but must rather be brought to reason. . . . As the given world was bound up with rational thought and, indeed, ontologically dependent on it, all that contradicted reason or was not rational was posited as something that had to be overcome. Reason was established as a critical tribunal.[83]

Here Marcuse seemed to be arguing for an identity theory, which contrasted sharply with the Frankfurt School's general stress on non-

identity. In fact, in Marcuse's writings the aversion to identity was far fainter than in Horkheimer's or Adorno's.[84] Still, in their work as well, the sanctity of reason and the reconciliation it implied always appeared as a utopian ideal. Jews, after all, may be prohibited from naming or describing God, but they do not deny his existence. In all of the Institut's writings, the standard was a society made rational, in the sense that German philosophy had traditionally defined that term. Reason, as the passage above indicates, was the "critical tribunal" on which Critical Theory was primarily based. The irrationality of the current society was always challenged by the "negative" possibility of a truly rational alternative.

If Horkheimer was reluctant to affirm the complete identity of subject and object, he was more certain in rejecting their strict dualistic opposition, which Descartes had bequeathed to modern thought.[85] Implicit in the Cartesian legacy, he argued, was the reduction of reason to its subjective dimension. This was the first step in driving rationality away from the world and into contemplative inwardness. It led to an eternal separation of essence and appearance, which fostered the noncritical acceptance of the status quo.[86] As a result, rationality increasingly came to be identified with the common sense of *Verstand* instead of the more ambitiously synthetic *Vernunft.* In fact, the late nineteenth-century irrationalists' attack on reason had been aimed primarily at its reduction to the analytical, formal, divisive *Verstand.* This was a criticism Horkheimer could share, although he did not reject analytical rationality out of hand. "Without definiteness and the order of concepts, without *Verstand,*" he wrote, "there is no thought, and no dialectic." [87] Even Hegel's dialectical logic, which Critical Theory embraced, did not simply negate formal logic. The Hegelian *aufheben* meant preservation as well as transcendence and cancellation. What Horkheimer did reject was the complete identification of reason and logic with the limited power of *Verstand.*

Throughout its history, the Institut carried on a spirited defense of reason on two fronts. In addition to the attack by the irrationalists, which by the twentieth century had degenerated into outright obscurantist mindlessness, another and perhaps more serious threat was posed from a different quarter. With the breakdown of the Hegelian synthesis in the second half of the nineteenth century, a new stress on empirically derived social science had developed alongside the increasing domination of natural science over men's lives. Positivism denied the validity of the traditional idea of reason as *Vernunft,* which it dismissed as empty metaphysics. At the time of the Frankfurt School the most significant proponents of this point of

view were the Logical Positivists of the Vienna Circle, who were forced to emigrate to the United States at about the same time.[88] In America their impact was far greater than the Institut's because of the congruence of their ideas with the basic traditions of American philosophy. In later years Horkheimer took pains to establish the similarities between such native schools as pragmatism and Logical Positivism.[89]

His first major broadside against Logical Positivism came in 1937 in the *Zeitschrift*.[90] Once again his sensitivity to the changing functions of a school of thought in different historical contexts was evident. Originally, he argued, empiricism as practiced by Locke and Hume contained a dynamic, even critical, element, in its insistence on the individual's perception as the source of knowledge. The Enlightenment empiricists had used their observations to undermine the prevailing social order. Contemporary Logical Positivism, on the other hand, had lost this subversive quality, because of its belief that knowledge, although initially derived from perception, was really concerned with judgments about that perception contained in so-called "protocol sentences."[91] By restricting reality to that which could be expressed in such sentences, the unspeakable was excluded from the philosopher's domain. But even more fundamentally, the general empiricist stress on perception ignored the active element in all cognition. Positivism of all kinds was ultimately the abdication of reflection.[92] The result was the absolutizing of "facts" and the reification of the existing order.[93]

In addition to his distaste for their fetishism of facts, Horkheimer further objected to the Logical Positivists' reliance on formal logic to the exclusion of a substantive alternative. To see logic as an analogue of mathematics, he held, was to reduce it to a series of tautologies with no real meaning in the historical world. To believe that all true knowledge aspired to the condition of scientific, mathematical conceptualization was a surrender to a metaphysics as bad as the one the positivists had set out to refute.[94]

What was perhaps worst of all in Horkheimer's eyes was the positivists' pretension to have disentangled facts from values. Here he detected a falling away from the original Enlightenment use of empiricism as a partisan weapon against the mystifications of superstition and tradition. A society, he argued,[95] might itself be "possessed" and thus produce "facts" that were themselves "insane." Because it had no way to evaluate this possibility, modern empiricism capitulated before the authority of the status quo, despite its intentions. The members of the Vienna Circle might be progressive in their politics, but this was in no way related to their philosophy. Their surren-

der to the mystique of the prevailing reality, however, was not arbitrary; rather it was an expression of the contingency of existence in a society that administered and manipulated men's lives. As man must reestablish his ability to control his own destiny, so must reason be restored to its proper place as the arbiter of ends, not merely means. *Vernunft* must regain the field from which it had been driven by the triumph of *Verstand.*

What made Horkheimer's stress on reason so problematical was his equally strong antimetaphysical bias. Reality had to be judged by the "tribunal of reason," but reason was not to be taken as a transcendent ideal, existing outside history. Truth, Horkheimer and his colleagues always insisted, was not immutable. And yet, to deny the absoluteness of truth was not to succumb to relativism, epistemological, ethical, or otherwise. The dichotomy of absolutism and relativism was in fact a false one. Each period of time has its own truth, Horkheimer argued,[96] although there is none above time. What is true is whatever fosters social change in the direction of a rational society. This of course once again raised the question of what was meant by reason, which Critical Theory never attempted to define explicitly. Dialectics was superb at attacking other systems' pretensions to truth, but when it came to articulating the ground of its own assumptions and values, it fared less well. Like its implicit reliance on a negative anthropology, Critical Theory had a basically insubstantial concept of reason and truth, rooted in social conditions and yet outside them, connected with *praxis* yet keeping its distance from it. If Critical Theory can be said to have had a theory of truth, it appeared in its immanent critique of bourgeois society, which compared the pretensions of bourgeois ideology with the reality of its social conditions. Truth was not outside the society, but contained in its own claims. Men had an emancipatory interest in actualizing the ideology.

In rejecting all claims to absolute truth, Critical Theory had to face many of the problems that the sociology of knowledge was trying to solve at the same time. Yet Horkheimer and the others were never willing to go as far as Karl Mannheim, who coincidentally shared office space at the Institut before 1933, in "unmasking" Marxism as just one more ideology among others. By claiming that all knowledge was rooted in its social context *(Seinsgebunden),* Mannheim seemed to be undermining the basic Marxist distinction between true and false consciousness, to which Critical Theory adhered. As Marcuse was to write, Critical Theory "is interested in the truth content of philosophical concepts and problems. The enterprise of the sociology of knowledge, to the contrary, is occupied only with

the untruths, not the truths, of previous philosophies." [97] Yet curiously, when Horkheimer wrote his critique of Mannheim in the pre-emigration years,[98] he chose to attack him primarily for the absolutist rather than relativist implications of his sociology of knowledge. Especially unfortunate in this respect, he argued, was Mannheim's "relationism," which attempted to salvage objective truth by arguing that all partial truths were perspectives on the whole. By assuming that such a total truth existed in the synthesis of different viewpoints, Mannheim was following a simplified Gestaltist concept of knowledge.[99] Underlying it all was a quasi-Hegelian, harmonistic belief that one could reconcile all perspectives, a belief whose implications for social change were quietistic. Unlike Marx, who had sought social transformation rather than truth, Mannheim had covertly returned to a metaphysical quest for pure knowledge.[100]

Moreover, Horkheimer charged, Mannheim's concept of the "Being" that determined consciousness was highly undialectical. To Horkheimer, there was always feedback and mediation between base and superstructure.[101] Mannheim, in contrast, had reverted to a kind of dualism of subject and object, which hypostatized both. There was no "objective" reality that individual consciousnesses partially reflected. To argue that there was was to ignore the part played by *praxis* in creating the world.

Praxis and reason were in fact the two poles of Critical Theory, as they had been for the Left Hegelians a century before. The interplay and tension between them contributed greatly to the Theory's dialectical suggestiveness, although the primacy of reason was never in doubt. As Marcuse wrote in *Reason and Revolution*, speaking for the entire Frankfurt School, "Theory will preserve the truth even if revolutionary practice deviates from its proper path. Practice follows the truth, not vice versa." [102] Still, the importance of self-determined activity, of "anthropogenesis," was constantly emphasized in the Institut's earlier writings. Here the influence of *Lebensphilosophie* on Horkheimer and his c lleagues was crucial, although they always understood true *praxis* as a collective endeavor. The stress on *praxis* accorded well with the Frankfurt School's rejection of Hegel's identity theory. In the spaces created by the irreducible mediations between subject and object, particular and universal, human freedom might be sustained. In fact, what alarmed the Frankfurt School so much in later years was the progressive liquidation of these very areas of human spontaneity in Western society.

The other antipode of Critical Theory, the utopian reconciliation of subject and object, essence and appearance, particular and univer-

sal, had very different connotations. *Vernunft* implied an objective reason that was not constituted solely by the subjective acts of individual men. Although transformed from a philosophical ideal into a social one, it still bore traces of its metaphysical origins. Vulgar Marxism had allowed these tendencies to reemerge in the monistic materialism that the Institut never tired of attacking. And yet, as we have seen, even in Critical Theory there were an implicit negative metaphysics and negative anthropology — negative in the sense of refusing to define itself in any fixed way, thus adhering to Nietzsche's dictum that a "great truth wants to be criticized, not idolized."

As thinkers in the tradition of "positive freedom" that included Plato, Rousseau, Hegel, and Marx, they were caught in the basic dilemma that dogged the tradition from its inception. As Hannah Arendt has pointed out,[103] the notion of positive freedom contained an inherent conflict, symbolized by the tension between the Greek political experience and the subsequent attempts of Greek philosophers to make sense of it. From the former came the identification of freedom with human acts and human speech — in short, with *praxis.* From the latter came its equation with that authentic being which was reason. Attempts at an integration have been made ever since. The subtlety and richness of the Institut's effort mark it as one of the most fruitful, even though it too ultimately met with failure.

Before passing on to the methodological implications of Critical Theory, the contributions of other Institut members to its formulation should be made clear. Although Lowenthal and Pollock were concerned primarily with other matters, both intellectual and institutional, they still actively participated in the discussions of the articles submitted for publication in the *Zeitschrift.* More influential, however, were Adorno and Marcuse, both of whom wrote extensively on theoretical issues under their own names. By examining their work individually, we can perhaps further clarify the Institut's philosophical stance. We will do so, however, without commenting on the validity of their analyses of other thinkers; the object is to illuminate Critical Theory, rather than to outline an alternative interpretation.

Insofar as his Institut contributions were concerned, Adorno was occupied in the 1930's almost entirely with the sociology of music. Outside of the *Zeitschrift*, however, he published one long philosophical study and worked at great length on another.[104] In both, his closeness to Horkheimer's position was manifestly revealed. Although the two men did not write collaboratively until the 1940's, there was a remarkable similarity in their views from the first. Evi-

dence of this exists in a letter Adorno wrote to Lowenthal from London in 1934, discussing his response to the recently published *Dämmerung*:

> I have read the book several times with the utmost precision and have an extraordinary impression of it. I already knew most of the pieces; nonetheless, in this form everything appears entirely different; above all, a certain broadness of presentation, which earlier had annoyed me in single aphorisms, now seems obvious as a means of expression — exactly appropriate to the agonizing development of the capitalist total situation whose horrors exist so essentially in the precision of the mechanism of mediation. . . . As far as my position is concerned, I believe I can almost completely identify with it — so completely that it is difficult for me to point to differences. As new and especially essential to me, I would like to mention the interpretation of the problem of personal contingency against the thesis of radical justice, and in general, the critique of static anthropology in all the pieces. Something to discuss would perhaps be the general relation to the Enlightenment.[105]

Here perhaps for the first time Adorno hinted at that more sweeping critique of the Enlightenment which he and Horkheimer together would carry out many years later.

Adorno's earliest major philosophical critique was *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, written in 1929–1930 and submitted as a *Habilitationsschrift* for Paul Tillich in 1931. Its date of publication ironically fell on the day Hitler took power in 1933. Siegfried Kracauer, with whom Adorno had studied Kant, was the recipient of its dedication; the impact of another close friend, Walter Benjamin, was also evident in Adorno's arguments. Both Benjamin and Tillich were among the book's favorable reviewers.[106] *Kierkegaard* was, however, not a critical or popular success. While partly due to its unapologetically abstruse style and demandingly complex analysis, its minimal effect was also produced by what Adorno was later to call its being "overshadowed from the beginning by political evil." [107]

Whatever its difficulties — all of Adorno's work was uncompromisingly exacting for even the most sophisticated reader — the book did contain many of the themes that were to be characteristic of Critical Theory. The choice of a subject through which Adorno hoped to explore these issues was not surprising in the light of his own artistic inclinations. From the beginning of the book, however, he made it clear that by aesthetics he meant more than simply a theory of art; the word signified to him, as to Hegel, a certain type of relation between subject and object. Kierkegaard had also understood it in a specifically philosophical way. In *Either/Or,* he had defined the aes-

thetic sphere as "that through which man immediately is what he is; the ethical is that through which he becomes what he becomes." [108] But as Adorno noted in his first of many criticisms of Kierkegaard, "the ethical subsequently withdrew behind his teaching of paradox-religion. In view of the 'leap' of faith, the aesthetic was deprecatingly transformed from a stage in the dialectical process, namely that of the nondecisive, into simple creature-like *(kreatürliche)* immediacy." [109] To Adorno, immediacy, that is, the search for primary truths, was anathema. Like Horkheimer's, his thought was always rooted in a kind of cosmic irony, a refusal to rest somewhere and say finally, Here is where truth lies. Both men rejected Hegel's basic premise of the identity of subject and object.

Ostensibly, Kierkegaard had rejected it as well. Yet to Adorno, Kierkegaard's renowned celebration of subjectivity unwittingly contained an identity theory. "The intention of his philosophy," Adorno wrote, "does not aim towards the determination of subjectivity but of ontology; and subjectivity appears not as its content but as its stage *(Schauplatz).*" [110] Behind all his talk of the concrete, existential individual, there lurked a covert yearning for transcendent truth; "Hegel is turned inward: what for him is world history, for Kierkegaard is the individual man." [111]

Moreover, the ontology posited by Kierkegaard was that of hell, not heaven; despair rather than hope was at the center of his vision. The withdrawal into inwardness that Kierkegaard advocated was really a retreat into a mythical, demonic repetition that denied historical change. "Inwardness," Adorno wrote, "is the historical prison of prehistorical humanity." [112] By rejecting the historical world, Kierkegaard had become an accomplice of the reification he so often denounced; his dialectics were without a material object and were thus a return to the idealism he claimed to have left behind. By denying real history, he had withdrawn into a pure anthropology based on "historicity *(Geschichtlichtkeit):* the abstract possibility of existence in time." [113] Related to this was his concept of *Gleichzeitigkeit,*[114] time without change, which was the correlate of the absolutized self. Here Adorno was making a criticism similar to that leveled by Horkheimer a few years later against Bergson's idea of *durée,* as discussed above.

Along with his analysis of the philosophical implications of inwardness, Adorno included a sociological probe of what he referred to as the bourgeois *intérieur* in Kierkegaard's time. Subjective inwardness, he argued, was not unrelated to the position of *rentier* who was outside the production process, a position held by Kierkegaard himself. In this role he shared the typical petit-bourgeois sense of im-

potence, which he carried to an extreme by ascetically rejecting the natural self in its entirety: "His moral rigor was derived from the absolute claim of the isolated person. He criticized all eudaemonism as contingent in contrast with the objectless self." [115] It was thus no accident that sacrifice was at the center of his theology; the absolutely spiritual man ended by annihilating his natural self: "Kierkegaard's spiritualism is above all hostility to nature." [116] Here and elsewhere in his book Adorno expressed a desire to overcome man's hostility to nature, a theme that would play an increasing role in the Institut's later work.

Although he wrote an occasional article on Kierkegaard in later years,[117] *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic* was really Adorno's *Abschied* (farewell) [118] to the Danish philosopher. In 1934 he left the Continent for England, where he studied at Merton College, Oxford. Except for occasional trips back to Germany, he remained in England for the next three and a half years. While continuing his interest in music and producing articles for the *Zeitschrift* on related topics, he found the time to begin a long study of Edmund Husserl, in whose work he had been interested since his doctoral dissertation in 1924. By the time it appeared in 1956, its tone was scarcely less critical than that of his earlier treatment of Kierkegaard. In this work, too, many of the ideas that Horkheimer and Marcuse were simultaneously developing can be found. Although certain sections of the work — the third chapter and the introduction — were not written until the fifties, an examination of *Towards a Metacritique of Epistemology* does give some insight into Critical Theory's attitude towards phenomenology in the thirties.

In his first book, Adorno had singled out Husserl as someone who shared Kierkegaard's stress on the self.[119] Accordingly, he now concentrated on the epistemological aspects of Husserl's work, especially those contained in his early *Logical Investigations*, which was published in three volumes in 1900, 1901, and 1913. He applauded Husserl's desire to go beyond psychologism as an explanation of cognition, but when Husserl spoke of a transcendent subject, Adorno sensed a desire to annihilate the contingent individual. In the same spirit as Kierkegaard, Husserl betrayed a fundamental yearning for ontological certainty. In attacking his "reductive" method, which sought eternal essences through a phenomenological exploration of consciousness, Adorno, like Horkheimer, argued for the importance of mediation *(Vermittlung)*.

Husserl's search for first principles revealed an inherent identity theory, despite his anti-idealistic pretensions. The need for absolute intellectual certainty, Adorno argued, was likely to be a reflex of per-

sonal insecurity: "freedom is never given, always threatened. . . . The absolutely certain as such is always unfreedom. . . . It is a mistaken conclusion that what endures is truer than what passes." [120] A true epistemology must end the fetish of knowledge as such, which, as Nietzsche demonstrated, leads to abstract systematizing. The truth was not what was "left over" [121] when a reduction of subject to object, or vice versa, took place. It resided instead in the "force field" [122] between subject and object. Absolute realism and absolute nominalism, both of which could be found in Husserl's work, led to equally fallacious reifications. As Adorno wrote in another article on Husserl, "whoever tries to reduce the world to either the factual or the essence comes in some way or other into the position of Münchhausen, who tried to drag himself out of the swamp by his own pigtails." [123]

By seeking the immutable, Husserl implicitly accepted the reality of the current "administered world." [124] Husserl, Adorno wrote, was "the most static thinker of his period." [125] It was not enough to look for the permanent within the transient, or the archaic within the present. A true dialectics, Adorno argued, was "the attempt to see the new in the old instead of simply the old in the new." [126] Although Husserl had tried to puncture the reified world by means of his reductive method based on intuition *(Wesensschau),* he had failed. Adorno admitted that intuition was a legitimate part of experience, but ought not to be elevated into an absolute method of cognition. In doing just that, Husserl had expressed an unconscious rejection of the "real world," which was "ego-alien" to him.[127] Being could no more be divorced entirely from the facts of perception than it could be equated with them.

From Husserl's epistemology Adorno went on to criticize his mathematical realism and logical "absolutism." The triumph of mathematical thinking in the West, Adorno argued, contained a mythical element. The fetish of numbers had led to a repudiation of nonidentity and a kind of hermetic idealism. Similarly, the reliance on formal logic as a mental absolute contained mythical traces. These modes of thought were also not without social significance. The reification of logic, Adorno asserted, "refers back to the commodity form whose identity exists in the 'equivalence' of exchange value." [128] Instead of formal logic, which perpetuated the false dualism of form and content, Adorno suggested a more dynamic alternative that referred back to Hegel. "Logic," he wrote, "is not Being, but a process that cannot be simply reduced to the pole of 'subjectivity' or 'objectivity.' The self-criticism of logic has as its result dialectics. . . . There is no logic without sentences, no sentences without the

synthetic mental function." [129] Formal logic with its laws of contradiction and identity was a kind of repressive taboo that ultimately led to the domination of nature.[130] Adorno also strongly objected to a mimetic theory of perception, and he found it even in Husserl's phenomenology, despite its stress on intentionality. The locus of truth, when correctly understood, he contended, "becomes the mutual dependency, the production through one another *(sich durcheinander Produzieren)* of subject and object, and it should no longer be thought of as static agreement — as 'intention.'" [131] By whatever means, Husserl's attempt to uncover the essential truth, he argued, was in vain: "Only in the repudiation of every such illusion, in the idea of imageless truth, is the lost mimesis preserved and transcended *(aufgehoben),* not in the preservation of its [the truth's] rudiments." [132]

Husserl's tendency to reify the given, Adorno argued, was related to advanced bourgeois society's destruction of *Erfahrung* (experience) and its replacement by administered, lifeless concepts. The disappearance of true experience, which Benjamin had also stressed as a characteristic of modern life,[133] corresponded to the growing helplessness of modern man. To Adorno, phenomenology thus represented the last futile effort of bourgeois thought to rescue itself from impotence. "With phenomenology," he wrote, "bourgeois thought reached its end in dissociated, fragmented statements set against one another, and resigned itself to the simple reproduction of that which is." [134] In doing so, it turned against action in the world: "The denigration of *praxis* to a simple special case of intentionality is the grossest consequence of its reified premises." [135] But worst of all, the assumption of absolute identity and immediacy could well lead to the political domination of an absolute ideology. There was, Adorno suggested, a subterranean connection between phenomenology and fascism — both were expressions of the terminal crisis of bourgeois society.[136]

Among the members of the Frankfurt School Adorno perhaps most consistently expressed abhorrence of ontology and identity theory. At the same time, he also rejected naive positivism as a nonreflective metaphysics of its own, contrasting it with a dialectics that neither denied nor fully accepted the phenomenal world as the ground of truth. Against those who stressed an abstract individualism, he pointed to the social component through which subjectivity was inevitably mediated. He just as strongly resisted the temptation to acquiesce in the dissolution of the contingent individual into a totality, whether of *Volk* or class. Even Walter Benjamin, the friend from whom he learned so much, was not immune to criticism

on this score. In an essay he wrote after Benjamin's tragic suicide in 1940, Adorno complained:

> His target is not an allegedly overinflated subjectivism but rather the notion of a subjective dimension itself. Between myth and reconciliation, the poles of his philosophy, the subject evaporates. Before his Medusan glance, man turns into the stage on which an objective process unfolds. For this reason Benjamin's philosophy is no less a source of terror than a promise of happiness.[137]

In his persistent stress on nonidentity and contingency, Adorno developed a philosophy that was as "atonal" as the music he had absorbed from Schönberg.[138]

It would be difficult to say the same for the third of the Institut's major theoreticians, Herbert Marcuse. Despite the consistent emphasis on negativity in his work and the pessimism often attributed to it,[139] Marcuse's writing always contained an implicit faith in the possible realization of *Vernunft* in the social world. Late nineteenth-century *Lebensphilosophie* seems to have influenced him less than it did Horkheimer. As Jürgen Habermas has noted,[140] Marcuse was far more receptive to twentieth-century philosophy than were the Institut's other philosophical thinkers. His experiences with Husserl and Heidegger stayed with him, although their influence was much diminished during his years with the Institut. In addition, his style of philosophizing was always more discursive than Horkheimer's or Adorno's, possibly because he did not share their active aesthetic interests. But his style was perhaps also a reflection of his belief that writing in a systematic, nonaphoristic, linear way was an effective way of analyzing and representing reality. Marcuse never stressed the *bilderlos* (imageless) intangibility of the utopian "other" as had the other major figures in the Frankfurt School.

Without suggesting that Marcuse remained the same thinker he had been before 1932, it is still useful to examine his pre-Institut writings for an understanding of his contribution to Critical Theory, as well as his later work, which has sometimes been seen as a return to his Heideggerian period.[141] While Marcuse was at Freiburg, his thinking was heavily imbued with phenomenological categories. At the same time, he was firmly committed to Marxism, although without any specific party affiliation. His efforts to combine the two seemingly irreconcilable systems anticipated similar attempts made by Merleau-Ponty and Sartre after the war. In the first article he published, "Contributions to a Phenomenology of Historical Ma-

terialism,"[142] all of Heidegger's special vocabulary—*Sorge* (care), *Geschichtlichkeit* (historicity), *Entschlossenheit* (decisiveness), *Dasein* (being-in-the-world), and so on — was on display. To Marcuse, *Being and Time*, Heidegger's recently published masterwork, was "the moment at which bourgeois philosophy dissolves itself from within and opens the way to a new 'concrete' science."[143] This was so, Marcuse argued, for three reasons: First, Heidegger had shown the ontological importance of history and the historical world as a *Mitwelt*, a world of human interaction. Secondly, by demonstrating that man has a profound concern *(Sorge)* about his true status in the world, Heidegger had correctly raised the question of what constitutes "authentic being." And finally, by arguing that man can achieve authentic being by acting decisively in the world (through *Entschlossenheit*), Heidegger had taken bourgeois philosophy as far as it could go — to the necessity of *praxis*.[144]

It was at this point that Marcuse thought Heidegger had faltered and that Marxism became relevant. The social environment of *Being and Time* was too abstract, and Heidegger's concept of historicity too general, to account for real historical conditions that constrain human action. Marxism answered Heidegger's question about the possibility of authentic being by pointing to the "radical deed." This was Marxism's "basic situation,"[145] its moment of self-revelation and self-creation. But what Marx had recognized and Heidegger ignored was the division of society into classes. At the present historical moment, only one class was truly capable of engaging in radical action, of becoming the real historical subject: "The historical deed is only possible today as the deed of the proletariat, because [the proletariat] has the only being-in-the-world *(Dasein)* with whose existence the deed is necessarily given."[146] Only because of its key role in the production process does the proletariat have the potential to perform radical acts. Only through revolution can the historical world be changed, and the possibility of universalizing authentic being beyond the working class be realized.

If, however, Heidegger must be complemented by Marx, so too should Marxism become phenomenological. Dialectics, Marcuse wrote, "must further investigate whether or not the given exhausts itself as such, or contains a meaning that is, to be sure, extra-historical, but inherent in all historicity."[147] Marxism must also abandon its traditional belief that the ideological superstructure was a reflection of the socio-economic substructure. "The old question, what has objective priority, what 'was first there,' spirit or matter, consciousness or being, cannot be decided by dialectical phenomenology and

is already meaningless as it is posed." [148] Nor must a dialectical phenomenology try to investigate nature as it does history. Here Engels had been wrong. Natural being was different from historical being; mathematical, nondialectical physics was valid in its own sphere. "Nature," Marcuse wrote, "*has* a history, but *is* not history. Being-there *(Dasein) is* history." [149] Elsewhere, in an article on dialectics, he wrote: "The boundary between historicity and non-historicity . . . is an ontological boundary." [150] This, it should be added, was a point Lukács made in *History and Class Consciousness*, as Marcuse acknowledged; it demonstrated the distance of their thinking from the more "scientific" Marxism of Engels and the orthodox Marxists of the Second International.

This contrast also revealed Marcuse's debt to Dilthey, who had made a similar distinction in his own work. The statement made earlier that Marcuse was less influenced than Horkheimer by late nineteenth-century *Lebensphilosophie* should be understood in the sense that Marcuse was less responsive to its attack on traditional metaphysics. What appealed to Marcuse in Dilthey was precisely Dilthey's merging of history and ontology. In an article titled "The Problem of Historical Reality," [151] written in 1931, Marcuse praised Dilthey for freeing the *Geisteswissenschaften* (cultural sciences) from the methodology of the *Naturwissenschaften* (natural sciences) and for restoring their philosophical foundation. Dilthey's concept of *Leben* (life) as the basis of historical reality was insightful, Marcuse argued, because of its stress on meaning rather than causality. Since men make their own history, it is unified by the values they have injected into it. Absent from the article were the criticisms that Horkheimer later leveled at Dilthey concerning his implicit idealism and identity theory, for at this time in his career Marcuse approved of the ontological premise of Dilthey's concept of history.

This was demonstrated even more clearly in what Marcuse had intended as his *Habilitationsschrift, Hegel's Ontology and the Foundation of a Theory of Historicity.* [152] Heidegger's influence, which he acknowledged at the very beginning of the work, was pervasive. The contrast between this study and his later treatment of the same subject in *Reason and Revolution* is striking.[153] Here Marcuse accepted the identity of subject and object that was at the center of Hegel's thinking. Being, he interpreted Hegel as saying, is a negative unity, a oneness that persists through all movement and separation. Thus, history is the arena in which being reveals itself. To Marcuse, Hegel's view of history was an anticipation of Heidegger's *Geschichtlichkeit* and Dilthey's *Leben.* In fact, the second half of the study attempted

to read *Leben* back into Hegel as the fundamental ontological category of his early writings, including the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* and the *Logic.*

At the end of his discussion, Marcuse treated the relationship between Dilthey's stress on the *Geisteswissenschaften* and Hegel's notion of *Geist.* "Precisely as historical and in its historicity, the inner unity and totality of life is a unity and totality of knowledge," he wrote, "and the action of historical life is essentially determined through this knowledge. Precisely as historical and in its historicity, life becomes spirit. And so Dilthey wrote the sentence through which he most profoundly expressed his closeness to Hegel's intentions: 'Spirit is an historical essence.' " [154] Thus the possibility of a satisfactory historical methodology was rooted in the unity of knowledge and life. Cognition was based on the ultimate identity of subject and object.

What set *Hegel's Ontology* apart from *Reason and Revolution,* which was written after Marcuse had been at the Institut for several years, was its basic indifference to the critical elements in Hegelian philosophy. Marcuse's stress on unity and identity led to a kind of theodicy, which he did not attempt to reconcile with the Marxism he displayed in his other writings. The concept of negation, which was to play such a crucial role in the second Hegel book, was treated in the first as only a moment in the historical differentiation of being. Moreover, because the underlying unity of being was understood to persist throughout time, negation was made to appear as almost an illusion. Nowhere in the book was Hegel treated as having preceded Marx in assailing the irrationality of the existing order. Nowhere was the nonidentity of the actual and the rational stressed, as it would be in *Reason and Revolution.* Nowhere was the importance of mediation in cognition recognized, a recognition that marked Adorno's later treatment of Husserl.

If the early Marcuse, like the Lukács of *History and Class Consciousness,* adhered to an identity theory that Horkheimer and Adorno were attacking, he likewise accepted the possibility of a philosophical anthropology, which they spurned. In addition to his approval of Heidegger's idea of "authentic being," which had anthropological overtones, he expressed considerable excitement over the newly recovered *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* of Marx. In a piece he contributed to Rudolph Hilferding's *Die Gesellschaft* in 1932,[155] he argued that it would be a mistake to interpret the philosophical concerns of Marx's early manuscripts as having been "overcome" in the mature writings. The communist revolution, he pointed out, promises more than merely a change in economic relations; it

more ambitiously envisions a transformation of man's basic existence through a realization of his essence. Through revolution, man realizes his potential nature in history, which can be understood as the "true natural history of man." [156]

In the article, Marcuse expressed an ambiguous view of man's relation to nature. At one point in his argument[157] he claimed that Marx had sought the unity of man and nature — the very goal that Adorno and Horkheimer were later to emphasize in opposition to Marx. But at the same time, what they disliked in Marx's view of nature, Marcuse himself expressed elsewhere in his article: "All 'nature' (in the widest sense of extrahuman being) is the medium of human life, the life-means [*Lebensmittel*, which also means food] of men. . . . Man cannot simply be subservient to or come to terms with the objective world, he must appropriate it, to make it his own." [158] Clearly implied here was the domination of nature rather than reconciliation with it.

This seeming contradiction is perhaps explained by Marcuse's agreement with Marx that labor *(Arbeit)* was man's means of realizing his essence. Labor, Marcuse contended, was man's nature; it was an ontological category, as Marx and Hegel had both understood, although the former was more perceptive in extending it beyond mental labor.[159] Man, Marcuse asserted, must objectify himself; he must become *an-sich* as well as *für-sich*, object as well as subject. The horror of capitalism was produced by the type of objectification it fostered. Here Marcuse agreed with the analysis of alienated labor in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, to which Horkheimer and Adorno rarely referred in their writings. Unalienated labor, he suggested, implied working with others, not against them. Only through social activity might man's "species being" *(Gattungswesen)* be realized. Capitalism, because it prevented this, was a "catastrophe of human essence" demanding a "total revolution." [160]

Significantly, Marcuse's belief in the ontological centrality of labor remained a constant factor in his work after 1933. In *Reason and Revolution* he sought to read Marx's notion of labor back into Hegel: "the concept of labor is not peripheral in Hegel's system, but is the central notion through which he conceives the development of society." [161] In focusing on *Arbeit* as the basic category of human self-realization, Marcuse necessarily de-emphasized an alternative means of self-production that can be found in Hegel's writings, especially his early ones. Jürgen Habermas has recently pointed to the equal importance of this second mode of self-production, "symbolically mediated interaction," that is, language and expressive gestures.[162]

To Marcuse, however, Hegel believed that "language . . . makes it possible for an individual to take a position *against* his fellows and to assert his needs and desires against those of the other individuals. The resulting antagonisms are integrated through the process of labor, which also becomes the decisive force of the development of culture." [163] By tracing the contradictions of society back to a specific type of labor, Marcuse was able to talk of an "essential" change, which would be produced by the overcoming of alienated labor (or the abolition of labor entirely in favor of play, as he was to argue in later works).[164] Because Horkheimer and Adorno were less sure about the ontological significance of labor, they were not as willing to predict an "integration of antagonisms based on overcoming the alienation of labor," which implied a kind of identity theory. As always, they were reluctant to make positive speculations about human nature.

Once Marcuse joined the Institut, the influence of Horkheimer on his work became pronounced. He abandoned Heidegger's vocabulary, as the impact of phenomenology on his thinking began to recede. Descending somewhat from the level of philosophical abstraction, he began to deal with more concrete social and historical issues.[165] He ceased to use Marxism as a positive philosophy answering Heidegger's question about "authentic being" and began employing it more as a critical, dialectical methodology useful in explaining history, not historicity. Even so, Marcuse never engaged in the type of empirical work that the Institut strove to combine with its theorizing. Of all the figures in the Frankfurt School he remained most exclusively concerned with theoretical issues; his *Zeitschrift* articles in the 1930's, for example, included analyses of hedonism, which has been discussed above, the concept of essence, and the relation between philosophy and Critical Theory.

In discussing the function of the concept of essence in various philosophical systems, Marcuse followed Horkheimer in situating each doctrine in its historical setting:

> According to the view characteristic of the dawning bourgeois era, the critical autonomy of rational subjectivity is to establish and justify the ultimate essential truths on which all theoretical and practical truth depends. The essence of man and of things is contained in the freedom of the thinking individual, the *ego cogito.* At the close of this era, knowledge of essence has primarily the function of binding the critical freedom of the individual to pregiven, unconditionally valid necessities.[166]

Husserl's phenomenology, Marcuse argued, was an attempt to rescue bourgeois theory, an attempt that had failed. Scheler, on the other hand, espoused an essentialism that was covertly an ideology of authoritarianism. Materialist theory in contrast "takes up the concept of essence where philosophy last treated it as a dialectical concept — in Hegel's *Logic.*" [167] It must relate the concept to dynamic, human *praxis,* as Marx had done. Here, the old Heideggerian Marcuse was clearly gone. In "The Concept of Essence" he wrote:

> Since Dilthey, the various trends of *Lebensphilosophie* and existentialism have concerned themselves with the concrete 'historicity' of theory. . . . All such efforts had to fail, because they were linked (at first unconsciously, then consciously) to the very interests and aims whose theory they opposed. They did not attack the presuppositions of bourgeois philosophy's abstractness: the actual unfreedom and powerlessness of the individual in an anarchic production process.[168]

In his essay "Philosophy and Critical Theory," Marcuse clarified the reasons why bourgeois philosophy had been so hermetically isolated: "The philosopher can only participate in social struggles insofar as he is not a professional philosopher. This 'division of labor,' too, results from the modern separation of the mental from the material means of production, and philosophy cannot overcome it. The abstract character of philosophical work in the past and present is rooted in the social conditions of existence." [169] Critical Theory, he argued, is therefore less ambitious than traditional philosophy. It does not think itself capable of giving permanent answers to the age-old questions about man's condition. Instead, it "means to show only the specific social conditions at the root of philosophy's inability to pose the problem in a more comprehensive way, and to indicate that any other solution [lies] beyond that philosophy's boundaries. The untruth inherent in all transcendental treatment of the problem thus comes into philosophy 'from the outside'; hence it can be overcome only outside philosophy." [170]

If Critical Theory was not like philosophy, though preserving many of its insights, neither was it the equivalent of a science, as vulgar Marxists had assumed. "Scientific objectivity as such," Marcuse contended, "is never a sufficient guarantee of truth, especially in a situation where the truth speaks as strongly against the facts and is as well hidden behind them as today. Scientific predictability does not coincide with the futuristic mode in which the truth exists." [171] Instead, Critical Theory must contain a strongly imaginative, even utopian strain, which transcends the present limits of reality: "With-

out fantasy, all philosophical knowledge remains in the grip of the present or the past and severed from the future, which is the only link between philosophy and the real history of mankind." [172] The stress on fantasy, especially as embodied in great works of art, and the concern with *praxis* were thus the two cardinal expressions of Critical Theory's refusal to eternalize the present and shut off the possibility of a transformed future. Here Marcuse, Horkheimer, Adorno, and the other members of the Institut's inner circle were in complete agreement. In time this was to change, but during the thirties, perhaps the most fruitful decade of the Institut's history, the integration of rational theory, aesthetic imagination, and human action seemed at least a hope, however uncertain and fragile.

The survival of that hope can be read between the lines of the work that occupied Marcuse during his last active years with the Institut, *Reason and Revolution.*[173] Written in large measure to rescue Hegel from his association in American minds with Nazism — the burden of his argument was that Hegel's political theory, including his controversial emphasis on the state, was inherently rationalist, whereas the Nazis were irrationalists in the tradition of organicist romanticism — it also served as the first extensive introduction of Critical Theory to an English-speaking audience.[174] As noted earlier, *Reason and Revolution* demonstrated the distance Marcuse had traveled in the decade since his break with Heidegger; so much so that in most crucial respects, the book agreed with the principles articulated in Horkheimer's *Zeitschrift* essays.

Marcuse, like Horkheimer, was eager to establish the critical, negative thrust of Hegel's rationalism. As he was to do with Freud much later, he was anxious to reverse Hegel's conservative image. He was likewise concerned with the ways in which this radical element had been eliminated in the work of Hegel's positivist successors. In extended critiques of Comte, Stahl, and von Stein, Marcuse sought to expose their conservative political implications, as Horkheimer had done with their twentieth-century positivist descendants. Marcuse also focused on the connections between Marx and Hegel, continuing his earlier analysis of the unity of Marx's early and later work. The Hegelian elements in Marx's thought were not a source of embarrassment to Marcuse as they had been to more "scientific" Marxists, because in his reading, Hegel was already a progressive thinker. "The conception underlying [Hegel's] entire system," he wrote, was that "the given social order, based upon the system of abstract and quantitative labor and upon the integration of wants through the exchange of commodities, was incapable of asserting and establishing a rational community." [175] Even more centrally, as we have seen, Mar-

cuse saw Marx's stress on labor anticipated in Hegel's own work, a point on which he and the Institut members were at variance.

On the other hand, Marcuse was now in full agreement with Horkheimer that the ontological impulse of Hegel's thought, which he had looked on with favor during his Heideggerian period, had been surpassed by Marx's more historical approach:

> The totality in which the Marxian theory moves is other than that of Hegel's philosophy, and this difference indicates the decisive difference between Hegel's and Marx's dialectics. For Hegel, the totality was the totality of reason, a closed ontological system, finally identical with the rational system of history. . . . Marx, on the other hand, detached dialectic from this ontological base. In his work, the negativity of reality becomes a *historical* condition which cannot be hypostatized as a metaphysical state of affairs.[176]

Marcuse also shared Horkheimer's and Adorno's rejection of the assumption that socialism was a necessary outgrowth of capitalism. Like them, he sounded a note of skepticism about the connection between human emancipation and the progress of technology and instrumental rationalism.[177]

Along with this attitude went an acknowledgment of the necessity of voluntarism and *praxis*. Still, like the other members of the Frankfurt School, Marcuse felt that the senior partner in the relationship between theory and practice was clearly the former: "Theory will preserve the truth even if revolutionary practice deviates from its proper path. Practice follows the truth, not vice versa." [178] Even in his later years, when unlike Horkheimer and Adorno he was to look favorably on activist protest, at no time did Marcuse abandon this faith in the primacy of correct theory.

In these ways and others, *Reason and Revolution* was clearly a product of the Frankfurt School. In certain respects, however, Marcuse did reveal a degree of independence from Horkheimer's influence. The difference in their attitude towards the centrality of labor meant that Marcuse hesitated to implicate Marx in his critique of instrumental rationality, in the way that Horkheimer, Adorno, and more recent members of the Frankfurt School were to do.[179] He was also kinder to Marx's successors than they were. Only Bernstein's brand of revisionism came in for criticism; Plekhanov and Lenin were praised for trying to preserve the "critical import of the Marxian doctrine," [180] and Kautsky and the Second International were practically ignored. Moreover, *Reason and Revolution* contained no distinction between Engels's "historical materialism" and the dialectical materialism at the root of Critical Theory. Finally, Marcuse

was not as concerned with the conformist, theodicy-like elements in Hegel's identity theory as Horkheimer had been in several of his early essays, a lack of concern perhaps related to his relative indifference to the theological premises of Hegel's thought, which several of his critics were quick to note.[181]

On the whole, however, *Reason and Revolution* was a fitting valedictory for Marcuse, whose association with the Institut was to lessen in the forties as his involvement with governmental service grew. Working with the OSS and the State Department was not precisely what the Frankfurt School had meant when it advocated revolutionary *praxis,* a point that its detractors on the left were to make in subsequent years. Still, like other members of the Institut who worked with the government during the war, Marcuse was faithful to the observation that the unity of theory and practice was only a utopian hope. In the light of the existing alternatives, aiding the war effort against Hitler while maintaining the purity of one's theoretical commitment can scarcely be called a dishonorable compromise. (Later, of course, continuing to work for the American government became increasingly problematical, but Marcuse remained until the Korean War.) The role of the intellectual, the Institut came to believe with growing certainty, was to continue thinking what was becoming ever more unthinkable in the modern world.

If the separation of mental and physical labor could not be overcome by a philosopher's fiat, at least there was useful theoretical work to be done to help bring about the day when the unification of the two might occur (or perhaps to explain why it would not). Although its ultimate relevance to political action was never to be denied, Critical Theory now had to devote itself solely to an examination of social and cultural reality. As a method of social research, however, it would have to be very different from its traditional counterpart. These points were made by Horkheimer in 1937 in one of the most significant of his articles in the *Zeitschrift*, "Traditional and Critical Theory." [182] The objective of traditional theory, he asserted, had always been the formulation of general, internally consistent principles describing the world. This had been true whether they were generated deductively, as in Cartesian theory, inductively, as in the work of John Stuart Mill, or phenomenologically, as in Husserl's philosophy. Even Anglo-Saxon science with its stress on empiricism and verification sought general propositions to test. The goal of traditional research had been pure knowledge, rather than action. If it pointed in the direction of activity, as in the case of Baconian science, its goal was technological mastery of the world, which was very

different from *praxis.* At all times, traditional theory maintained a strict separation of thought and action.

Critical Theory differed on several counts. First of all, it refused to fetishize knowledge as something apart from and superior to action. In addition, it recognized that disinterested scientific research was impossible in a society in which men were themselves not yet autonomous; the researcher, Horkheimer argued, was always part of the social object he was attempting to study. And because the society he investigated was still not the creation of free, rational human choice, the scientist could not avoid partaking of that heteronomy. His perception was necessarily mediated through social categories above which he could not rise. In a remark that answered Marshall McLuhan thirty years before McLuhan's recent popularity, Horkheimer wrote, "Let the sentence that tools are extensions of men's organs be turned around, so that organs are also extensions of men's tools," [183] an injunction addressed even to the "objective" social scientist, whether positivist or intuitive. Related to this argument was Horkheimer's objection to Dilthey's methodology of the cultural sciences mentioned above. The historian could not reexperience in his mind that which had never been made by fully autonomous, conscious action.

In discussing the possibility of prediction, Horkheimer used the same argument. Only when society was more rational would it be possible for the social scientist to foretell the future. Vico's insight into the ability of man to understand his history because he made it had yet to be realized, because men do not make their history in the current era. The chances for scientific prediction were thus determined as much socially as methodologically.[184]

In the present society, then, it would be a mistake to see intellectuals as *freischwebende* (free-floating), to use the term Mannheim had taken from Alfred Weber and popularized. The ideal of a "free-floating" intellectual above the fray was a formalistic illusion, which should be discarded. At the same time, it would be equally erroneous to see the intellectual as entirely *verwurzelt,* rooted in his culture or class, as had *völkisch* and vulgar Marxist thinkers.[185] Both extremes misconstrued subjectivity as either totally autonomous or totally contingent. Although definitely a part of his society, the researcher was not incapable of rising above it at times. In fact, it was his duty to reveal those negative forces and tendencies in society that pointed to a different reality. In short, to maintain the formalistic dualism of facts and values, which traditional theories of the Weberian kind so strongly emphasized, was to act in the service of the status quo.[186] The researcher's values necessarily influenced his work; indeed they

should consciously do so. Knowledge and interest were ultimately inseparable.

In addition to objecting to the goal of pure knowledge, which informed traditional theory, Horkheimer also rejected the ideal of general principles and verifying or falsifying examples. The general truths Critical Theory dealt with could not be verified or falsified by reference to the present order, simply because they implied the possibility of a different one.[187] There must always be a dynamic moment in verification, one that pointed to the "negative" elements latent in the current reality. Social research must always contain a historical component, not in the rigid sense of judging events in the context of "objective" historical forces, but rather seeing them in the light of historical possibilities. Dialectical social research was receptive to insights generated from man's prescientific experience; as mentioned earlier, it recognized the validity of the aesthetic imagination, of fantasy, as a repository of genuine human aspirations. All valid experience for the social theorist, it held, ought not to be reduced to the controlled observation of the laboratory.

While always keeping the totality of present contradictions and future possibilities in mind, Critical Theory refused to become too general and abstract. It often attempted to grasp the whole as it was embodied in concrete particulars. Not unlike Leibniz, it saw universals present in specific historical phenomena, which were like monads, at once universal and particular. At times its method seemed to emphasize analogy more than cause and effect in the traditional sense. Benjamin's remark that "the eternal is more like lace trimmings on a dress than like an idea," [188] stripped of its theological underpinnings, might have served as a model for Critical Theory, if not for its practitioners' equally strong insistence on the necessity of conceptual explanation. Characteristic of much of the Institut's writing, and Adorno's in particular, was a sometimes dazzling, sometimes bewildering juxtaposition of highly abstract statements with seemingly trivial observations. This is perhaps explained by the fact that unlike traditional theory, which equated "concrete" with "particular" and "abstract" with "universal," Critical Theory followed Hegel, for whom, as George Kline wrote, " 'concrete' means 'many-sided, adequately related, complexly mediated' . . . while 'abstract' means 'one-sided, inadequately related, relatively unmediated.' " [189] By an examination of different concrete phenomena from all the different fields mastered by the Institut's members, it was hoped that mutually fruitful insights could be gained that would help illuminate the whole.

Underlying everything, however, was the goal of social change. In relating research to *praxis,* the Institut was careful to distinguish its

approach from that of the pragmatists. This Horkheimer and Adorno made clear in several critiques of the strongly entrenched pragmatist tradition that the Institut encountered in America.[190] Their antipathy towards pragmatism remained strong throughout the rest of their stay in this country. As late as December 21, 1945, Horkheimer could write to Lowenthal:

> You can see from my quotes that I have read not a few of these native products and I have now the feeling to be an expert in it. The whole thing belongs definitely into the period before the First World War and is somehow on the line of empiriocriticism, but much less cultivated than our old Cornelius.

Both pragmatism and positivism, he wrote in a subsequent letter, "share the identification of philosophy and scientism." [191] Although the pragmatists were correct in relating truth to human activity, their understanding of the relationship was too simple, too undialectical:

> The epistemological teaching that truth is life-enhancing, or rather that all 'profitable' thought must also be true, contains a harmonistic deception, if this epistemology does not belong to a totality containing tendencies really leading to a better, life-enhancing condition. Separated from a definite theory of the entire society, every epistemology remains formal and abstract.[192]

Pragmatism ignored the fact that some theories contradict the present reality and work against it, yet are not "false." The implications of pragmatism were thus more conformist than critical, despite its pretensions; like positivism, it lacked a means of going beyond the existing "facts." In making this critique, Horkheimer was performing a valuable service, in that Marxism had been incorrectly reduced to a variant of pragmatism by Sidney Hook and others in the thirties. Yet, as Lowenthal and Habermas were later to note, he missed the dialectical potential in certain strains of the pragmatic tradition.[193]

Dialectical materialism, Horkheimer argued, also had a theory of verification based on practical, historical testing: "Truth is a moment in correct *praxis;* he who identifies it with success leaps over history and becomes an apologist for the dominant reality." [194] "Correct *praxis*" is the key phrase here, indicating once again the importance in the Institut's thinking of theory as a guide to action, as well as a certain circularity in its reasoning. In the desire to unify theory and *praxis,* however, the distance that still necessarily separates them, Horkheimer warned, should not be hastily forgotten. This gap was

most clearly shown in the relationship between philosophy and the proletariat. To Marx and Engels, the working class was to be the sole catalyst of the new order. "The *head* of this emancipation is *philosophy,* its *heart* is the *proletariat.* Philosophy cannot be made a reality without the abolition of the proletariat, the proletariat cannot be abolished without philosophy being made a reality." So Marx wrote in his *Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of Right.* But in the twentieth century, Horkheimer argued, material conditions were such that the working classes in advanced industrial societies were no longer automatically suited for this role. The intellectual who slavishly echoed whatever the proletariat seemed to desire was thus abdicating his own true function, which was persistently to stress possibilities transcending the present order. In fact, tension between intellectuals and workers was currently necessary in order to combat the proletariat's conformist tendencies.[195] Thus, Critical Theory did not see itself simply as the expression of the consciousness of one class, which indicated its distance from more orthodox Marxists like Lukács, who consistently stressed class consciousness, even when "imputed" from afar. Instead, it was willing to ally itself with all "progressive" forces willing "to tell the truth." [196]

If the verification of Critical Theory could only come through its relation to "correct *praxis,*" what could this mean when the only class that Marxism declared fit for revolutionary action proved incapable of fulfilling its historical role? In the 1930's the Institut had not fully confronted this problem, although doubts were beginning to appear. "Today," Marcuse wrote in 1934, "the fate of the labor movement, in which the heritage of this philosophy [critical idealism] was preserved, is clouded with uncertainty." [197] As we shall see, the uncertainty continued to grow, except for one dramatic moment during the war when Horkheimer returned temporarily to the optimism of his *Dämmerung* aphorisms.[198]

In the meantime, the Institut began to direct most of its attention towards an effort to understand the disappearance of "negative," critical forces in the world. In effect, this meant a turning away from material (in the sense of economic) concerns, although in the work of Pollock, Grossmann, and others they were not entirely neglected. Instead, the Institut focused its energies on what traditional Marxists had relegated to a secondary position, the cultural superstructure of modern society. This meant concentrating primarily on two problems: the structure and development of authority, and the emergence and proliferation of mass culture. But before such analyses could be satisfactorily completed, a gap in the classical Marxist model of sub-

structure and superstructure had to be filled. The missing link was psychological, and the theory the Institut chose to supply it was Freud's. How the unlikely integration of Marxism and psychoanalysis was brought about is the subject of the next chapter.

III

The Integration of Psychoanalysis

> In psychoanalysis nothing is true except the exaggerations.
>
> — THEODOR W. ADORNO

> If fear and destructiveness are the major emotional sources of fascism, *eros* belongs mainly to democracy.
>
> — the authors of *The Authoritarian Personality*

In the 1970's it is difficult to appreciate the audacity of the first theorists who proposed the unnatural marriage of Freud and Marx. With the recent resurgence of interest in Wilhelm Reich and the widespread impact of Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization*, the notion that both men were speaking to similar questions, if from very different vantage points, has gained credence among many on the left. A generation ago, however, the absurdity of such an idea was rarely disputed on either side of the Atlantic. Although Trotsky had been sympathetic to psychoanalysis, his voice was no longer heard in orthodox Communist circles after 1923, when a taboo descended on Freud and his followers and Pavlovian behaviorism became the new orthodoxy. Within the psychoanalytic movement itself, Siegfried Bernfeld, Otto Fenichel, and Paul Federn had expressed interest in the integration of the two systems, but with little success.[1] Reich, its most vociferous proponent in the late twenties and thirties, met with general ridicule;[2] and by the mid-thirties he had been unceremoniously drummed out of both the Communist Party and the psychoanalytic movement. Conservatives and radicals alike agreed that Freud's basic pessimism about the possibilities for social change were incompatible with the revolutionary hopes of a true Marxist. As late as 1959 Philip Rieff could write: "For Marx, the past is pregnant with the future, with the proletariat as the midwife of history. For Freud, the future is pregnant with the past, a burden of which only

the physician, and luck, can deliver us. . . . Revolution could only repeat the prototypal rebellion against the father, and in every case, like it, be doomed to failure." [3]

The Institut für Sozialforschung's attempt to introduce psychoanalysis into its neo-Marxist Critical Theory was thus a bold and unconventional step. It was also a mark of the Institut's desire to leave the traditional Marxist straitjacket behind. In fact, one of the basic divisions between the Grünberg-Grossmann generation of Institut members and their successors, led by Horkheimer, was the contrast in their respective attitudes towards psychology. And in later years, as we shall see, Franz Neumann's general indifference towards psychology was one of the factors preventing his being fully accepted by the Institut's inner circle. When Neumann did finally become interested in Freud, it was near the end of his life, too late to achieve a successful integration of the two traditions.[4]

In contrast, Horkheimer's interest in Freud had extended back into the 1920's. His concern was partly stimulated by Leo Lowenthal, who was actually analyzed by Frieda Fromm-Reichmann in the mid-twenties. In addition, the relationship between psychology and socialism was a topic often discussed in the Frankfurt of those years. A figure of some importance in left-wing university circles after 1929 was the Belgian socialist Hendrik de Man, whose *On the Psychology of Marxism* (1927)[5] attempted to replace economic determinism with a more subjectively grounded activism. De Man attacked the utilitarian, interest-oriented psychology he attributed to Marx, stressing instead the irrational roots of radical action. It was rumored at the time that de Man was brought to the Frankfurt faculty as a professor of social psychology to provide a counterweight to the Institut's more orthodox Marxism.[6] Whatever the reason, his coming did not win Horkheimer and the others over to an irrationalist position, which was clearly incompatible with Critical Theory; de Man's later flirtation with fascism would seem to confirm their distrust. What they did share with him, however, was a desire to go beyond the instrumental utilitarianism that permeated vulgar Marxism.

As early as 1927, Adorno, with Horkheimer's encouragement, wrote a lengthy paper in which he related psychoanalysis to Cornelius's transcendental phenomenology.[7] Among the parallels between them that he noted were their shared stress on the connected, symbolically linked structure of the unconscious and their common attempt to start with contemporary experiences to reach those in the past.[8] In the following year, Horkheimer, who had been personally interested in analysis for some time, decided to undergo it himself, selecting as his psychiatrist Karl Landauer, who had been a student

of Freud. After a year, the one problem that seriously bothered Horkheimer, an inability to lecture without a prepared text,[9] was resolved and the analysis, which was really more an educational than a therapeutic exercise, ended. Landauer, however, was persuaded to form the Frankfurt Psychoanalytic Institute as a branch of the Southwest German Psychoanalytic Study Group, itself a recent creation in Heidelberg.[10] Opened on February 16, 1929, the Frankfurt Psychoanalytic Institute became the first avowedly Freudian organization to be tied, even indirectly, to a German university. It also maintained a loose connection with Horkheimer and his colleagues, who had been instrumental in securing university approval for the new "guest institute," as it was called. Freud himself wrote two letters to Horkheimer to express his gratitude.[11]

Joining Landauer as permanent members were Heinrich Meng, Erich Fromm, and Fromm's wife, Frieda Fromm-Reichmann.[12] In the first few months of the Psychoanalytic Institute's existence, public lectures were delivered by such luminaries of the movement as Hanns Sachs, Siegfried Bernfeld, Anna Freud, and Paul Federn. Georg Groddeck was also a frequent visitor. Of the four permanent members, Fromm, who had been Lowenthal's friend for over a decade, and who was introduced by him to the Institut, soon established himself as its most important figure. Only he rejoined the Institut für Sozialforschung after its emigration to America, where he soon established himself as one of the most prominent of the so-called Neo-Freudian revisionists. His wife also came to America, but had little to do with the Institut. Landauer went to Amsterdam instead, where he unwisely resisted until it was too late the entreaties of his former colleagues to leave Europe; he died in Belsen during the war. Meng was more fortunate, leaving Frankfurt for Basel, where he established himself as an expert on mental hygiene. It was thus primarily through Fromm's work that the Institut first attempted to reconcile Freud and Marx.

Born in Frankfurt in 1900, Fromm was brought up in an intensely religious milieu. During his adolescence he became strongly attracted to the messianic strains in Jewish thought. "More than anything else," he was later to write, "I was moved by the prophetic writings, by Isaiah, Amos, Hosea; not so much by their warnings and their announcement of disaster, but by their promise of the 'end of days.' . . . The vision of universal peace and harmony between nations touched me deeply when I was twelve and thirteen years old." [13] In his early twenties, Fromm, along with Lowenthal, joined the circle around Rabbi Nobel. He was also instrumental in the formation of

the celebrated Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus, with Georg Salzberger and Franz Rosenzweig. Although Fromm lost the outward trappings of his orthodoxy in 1926 after he was analyzed for the first time in Munich, what might be called an attitude of religiosity remained with him in all his later work.

What he absorbed from his Jewish antecedents was, however, very different from that apparently taken by Horkheimer and Adorno from theirs. Instead of stressing the nonrepresentational quality of truth and the impossibility of defining the essential man, Fromm affirmed the notion of a philosophical anthropology. Like Martin Buber and others in the Lehrhaus circle, he understood man's nature as something created through relatedness to the world and interaction with others. This was to appear most vividly in his later works after his departure from the Institut, but at all times Fromm affirmed the reality of a human nature. It was, however, not a fixed concept like the Roman *natura,* but rather an idea of man's potential nature, similar to the Greek *physis.* Accordingly, Fromm always put great emphasis on the anthropological implications of Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts.*[14] Here he was closer to Marcuse, at least before Marcuse's entry into Institut affairs, than to Horkheimer and Adorno. Of those associated with the Frankfurt School, Fromm most often employed Marx's notion of alienation, especially in his post-Institut work.[15] In attempting to ground his vision of a perfected man in man's essential nature, Fromm sought glimpses of that nature in the work of such thinkers as Spinoza[16] and Dewey. And in the 1940's he attempted to go beyond psychology, to an ethical system also based on human nature. Behind the humanistic veneer of his ethics, which were most completely expressed in *Man for Himself* (1947), there lurked a naturalism that some critics found difficult to sustain.[17]

By the forties, Fromm had left not only the Institut behind, but his orthodox Freudianism as well. This did not, of course, mean that he had abandoned all aspects of his earlier position. "I have never left Freudianism," he was later to write,

> unless one identifies Freud with his libido theory. . . . I consider the basic achievement of Freud to be his concept of the unconscious, its manifestations in neurosis, dreams, etc., resistance, and his dynamic concept of character. These concepts have remained for me of basic importance in all my work, and to say that because I gave up the libido theory I gave up Freudianism is a very drastic statement only possible from the standpoint of orthodox Freudianism. At any rate, I never gave up psychoanalysis. I have never wanted to form a school of my own. I was removed by the Interna-

tional Psychoanalytic Association from membership in this Association to which I had belonged, and I am still [1971] a member of the Washington Psychoanalytic Association, which is Freudian. I have always criticized the Freudian orthodoxy and the bureaucratic methods of the Freudian international organization, but my whole theoretical work is based on what I consider Freud's most important findings, with the exception of the metapsychology.[18]

To other observers, however, the jettisoning of the libido theory and other crucial elements in Freud's original thought, such as the Oedipus complex, meant that Fromm had moved far enough away from the essential elements in orthodox theory to justify calling him a thoroughgoing revisionist. Fromm's distinction between Freud's clinical findings and his metapsychology — by which he meant not only Freud's admittedly controversial speculations about instincts of life and death, but also his more widely accepted theory of the libido — did not satisfy those who saw a more intimate connection between the two, including his Institut colleagues.

Although Fromm never entirely ceased his efforts to merge psychoanalysis and Marxism, his later attempts relied less on certain aspects of Freud's work and increasingly on psychological insights that Marx himself had anticipated.[19] When he came to write his intellectual autobiography in 1962, he considered Marx a far more important figure in his own development. "That Marx is a figure of world historical significance," he wrote, "with whom Freud cannot even be compared in this respect hardly needs to be said." [20] The prophetic notion of universal peace that he had learned in his youth led him to appreciate the similar note struck by Marx and to turn away from the less affirmative implications of Freud's thought, although he remained faithful to many Freudian concepts.

Thirty years earlier, however, when Fromm came to the Institut, his attitude towards Freud was very different. After his studies at the universities of Heidelberg, Frankfurt, and Munich, he obtained psychoanalytic training at the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute. Here he was analyzed by Hanns Sachs and received instruction from such prominent Freudians as Theodor Reik. In 1926 he began to practice clinically himself, although like Sachs and many of the early analysts he was never medically trained as a doctor. The contact he began to have with actual patients was always, so Fromm claimed, an invaluable stimulus to his speculative work, one that the other members of the Institut lacked.[21] Shortly after, his first articles began to appear in orthodox psychoanalytic journals, such as the *Zeitschrift für psychoanalytische Pädagogik*, edited by A. J. Storfer, and Freud's own house organ, *Imago.*

Although his topics often reflected his religious background (for example, a study of the Sabbath),[22] Fromm also displayed an early interest in the development of a social psychology. An article he wrote for *Psychoanalytische Bewegung* in 1931, "Psychoanalysis and Politics," caused considerable controversy in analytic circles. Even more indicative of his desire to enrich his Freudianism with Marxist insights was his first extensive study, *The Development of the Dogma of Christ*,[23] which was stimulated by Theodor Reik's treatment of the same problem. Where Reik had gone wrong, Fromm argued, was in homogenizing the early Christians as a single group with a uniform psychic reality. In doing so, Reik was not unlike theologians such as Harnack: "[Reik] overlooks the fact that the psychological subject here is not a man and is not even a group possessing a relatively unified and unchanging psychic structure, but, rather, is made up of different groups with different social and psychic interests." [24] To Fromm, the basic change in Christian dogma — from the first-century Adoptionist idea of a man becoming God to the fourth-century Homoousian notion of God becoming man — was a product of social change. Only the earlier formulation expressed the rebellious hostility of the first Christians towards authority, the authority of the father. The doctrinal change corresponded to the acceptance of God's authority and a redirection of resentment inwardly, onto the Christians themselves. "The cause for the development," Fromm argued, "lies in the change in the socio-economic situation or in the retrogression of the economic forces and their social consequences. The ideologists of the dominant classes strengthened and accelerated this development by suggesting symbolic satisfactions to the masses, guiding their aggression into socially harmless channels." [25]

In arguing for a sensitivity to the differences between specific social groups, rather than a blanket attribution of ideological doctrines to universal psychic needs, Fromm was asserting in psychological terms what Horkheimer and Marcuse, after his break with Heidegger, were saying about the abstract notion of "historicity." Where he introduced a specifically Freudian component was in his use of psychoanalytic mechanisms as the mediating concepts betwen individual and society — for example, in talking about hostility to authority in terms of Oedipal resentment of the father. This was in fact the use the Institut later made of many of Freud's concepts. In the first issue of the *Zeitschrift* Borkenau was selected to write a review of *The Development of the Dogma of Christ*, which he approvingly called the first concrete example of the integration of Freud and Marx.

In that same issue, Fromm attempted to spell out the basic ground

rules for a social psychology.[26] He began by criticizing the notion that psychology applied only to the individual, singling out the early work of Wilhelm Reich for espousing this view.[27] Although attacking the idea of a group or mass soul, Fromm felt that individuals were never entirely isolated from their social situation. The real task was to supplement and enrich the basic Marxist framework, which he accepted as a given. Marxism, he argued, had incorrectly been charged with having a simplistic psychology of acquisitiveness; here he pointed an accusing finger at Bertrand Russell and Hendrik de Man for wrongly seeing economic self-interest as the basis of Marx's view of man. In fact, he argued, Marx's psychological premises were few — fewer than Fromm was later to assert himself. Man to Marx has certain basic drives (hunger, love, and so forth), which seek gratification; acquisitiveness was merely a product of specific social conditions. Marxism was, however, in need of additional psychological insights, which such Marxists as Kautsky and Bernstein, with their naive, idealistic belief in inborn moral instincts, had failed to provide.[28] Psychoanalysis could provide the missing link between ideological superstructure and socio-economic base. In short, it could flesh out materialism's notion of man's essential nature.[29]

Fromm, however, had a very definite idea of what constituted the most fruitful aspects of psychoanalysis for a social psychology. At the very beginning of his article,[30] he made clear his rejection of Freud's life and death instinct theory, which he dismissed as an injudicious mixture of biology and psychology. Instead, Fromm adhered to the earlier Freudian dichotomy of erotic and self-preservation drives. Because the former were capable of being displaced, sublimated, and satisfied in fantasies (for example, sadism could be gratified in a number of socially acceptable ways), while the latter could not (only bread could relieve hunger), sexuality was more adaptable to social conditions.[31] The task of an analytical social psychology was to understand unconsciously motivated behavior in terms of the effect of the socio-economic substructure on basic psychic drives. Childhood experiences, Fromm argued, were especially important, because the family was the agent of society. (Fromm's stress on the family remained with him throughout his career, although he was later to modify the orthodox Freudian stress on childhood by arguing that "the analyst must not get stuck in the study of childhood experiences, but turn his attention to the unconscious processes as they exist now."[32] But in the early thirties, he was still close enough to orthodox psychoanalysis to focus on children's formative years.)

Each society, he continued, has its own libidinal structure, a com-

bination of basic human drives and social factors. A social psychology must examine how this libidinal structure acts as the cement of a society and how it affects political authority. Here, it should be added, Fromm was speaking from practical experience. The project to examine workers' authority patterns, which had been announced in Horkheimer's inaugural lecture, was under way, with Fromm directing most of the empirical work. Presupposed in this study, as he explained in the article, was a rejection of the bourgeois norms that most psychologists erroneously absolutized. The prevalent tendency to universalize the experience of the present society, he argued, was most clearly shown in the extension of the Oedipus complex to all human development, when in fact it was restricted to "patriarchal" societies alone.[33] A valid social psychology must recognize that when the socio-economic base of a society changed, so did the social function of its libidinal structure. When the rate of change between the two varied, Fromm argued at the end of the article, an explosive situation might well be created. This was a point that he was to develop at some length in his next major work, *Escape from Freedom*, a decade later.

To give substance to the generalizations of his first *Zeitschrift* essay, Fromm turned his attention next to the problem of character typology.[34] Here again, his basic orientation remained Freudian. For the most part he accepted the psychoanalytic notion of character as the sublimation or reaction formation of fundamental libidinal drives. Building on the ideas of Karl Abraham and Ernest Jones, he began by outlining the oral, anal, and genital character types. Of the three, Fromm expressed a preference for the genital character, which he associated with independence, freedom, and friendliness.[35] He hinted at the hostility towards nongenital character types that marked all his later work and set him apart from Marcuse, who had very different ideas about pregenital "polymorphous perversity." [36] Here, it should be noted, Fromm was closer to Wilhelm Reich, whose own work on character typology was being done at the same time.[37] He also agreed with Reich on the liberating effect of nonrepressed genital sexuality, although never seeing it as sufficient in itself. In later years, however, Fromm's reservations about Reich's views were strengthened; for the Nazis, he came to believe, demonstrated that sexual freedom does not necessarily entail political freedom.[38]

Having established the importance of the basic libidinal roots of character types, Fromm then proceeded to emphasize once again the influence of social factors as mediated through the family. As an example he used the impact of excessively repressive sexual mores,

which might prevent the development of a healthy genital sexuality, thus fostering pregenital character types. On the whole, however, he adhered to a fairly orthodox Freudianism: "Since the character traits are rooted in the libidinal structure, they also show relative stability." [39] In concluding the essay, Fromm focused on the relationship between the "capitalist spirit" and anality. Using arguments that have since become commonplace, but that were novel at the time, he related bourgeois rationality, possessiveness, and puritanism to anal repression and orderliness.[40] These traits, he argued, have lasted into the twentieth century, most prominently in petit-bourgeois circles and even in certain proletarian ones, because of a lag between ideology (in the broad sense, which included character types) and socio-economic change. The relation between the two was one to which Fromm returned in his later study of the Reformation, in *Escape from Freedom.* By then, however, his attitude towards anality and Freud's libido theory in general had undergone a very marked transformation. Although the clinical description of the anal type was unchanged in the later work, Fromm's interpretation was significantly altered.

The change was due almost exclusively to his clinical observations, as mentioned earlier. But there was an intellectual source as well, which helped him to articulate his new perspective. In the mid-twenties, Fromm first encountered the work of the nineteenth-century Swiss anthropological theorist Johann Jacob Bachofen. Bachofen's studies of matriarchal culture, which first appeared in the 1860's, had suffered a relative eclipse in the two decades after his death in 1887. The anthropological speculations of Freud, for example, were primarily derived from Sir James Frazer's studies of totemism. Before the decline in interest, however, Bachofen and other theorists of matriarchy, such as Lewis Morgan, were very influential in socialist circles; Engels's *The Origin of the Family* (1884) and Bebel's *The Woman and Socialism* (1883), for example, were both heavily indebted to them.

In the 1920's, matriarchal theory aroused renewed excitement in several different quarters. Antimodernist critics of bourgeois society on the right, such as Alfred Bäumler and Ludwig Klages, were attracted to it for its romantic, naturalistic, anti-intellectual implications. Several of Stefan George's former disciples, repudiating his misogyny, left the George circle in search of the eternal feminine. This was, as E. M. Butler has pointed out,[41] an almost exact repetition of the French St.-Simonians' quest for the "Mystic Mother" almost seventy years before. In more orthodox anthropological circles, in England, Bronislaw Malinowski's studies of matriarchal culture in

Sex and Repression in Savage Society (1927) were used to undermine the universality of Freud's Oedipus complex. Simultaneously, Robert Briffault's *The Mothers: A Study of the Origins of Sentiments and Institutions* (1927) aroused considerable interest.

In psychoanalytic circles, matriarchal theory was also being given new consideration. Wilhelm Reich was among the first to do so. By 1933 he was able to write in *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* that matriarchy was the only genuine family type of "natural society."[42] Fromm was also one of the most active advocates of matriarchal theory. In 1932 he introduced Briffault to the German public in a long review of *The Mothers* in the *Zeitschrift*, which followed an article in English by Briffault himself entitled "Family Sentiments."[43] Fromm was especially taken with Briffault's idea that all love and altruistic feelings were ultimately derived from the maternal love necessitated by the extended period of human pregnancy and postnatal care. Love was thus not dependent on sexuality, as Freud had supposed. In fact, sex was more often tied to hatred and destruction. Fromm also praised Briffault's sensitivity to social factors. Masculinity and femininity were not reflections of "essential" sexual differences, as the romantics had thought. They were derived instead from differences in life functions, which were in part socially determined. Thus, monogamy was economically fostered by the tending of herds, which necessitated movement and the hegemony of the male shepherd. Briffault, Fromm concluded, had gone beyond mere ethnological concerns to enter the tradition of historical materialism itself, as evidenced by his article in the *Zeitschrift* on the importance of economic factors for the development of the family.

In the next issue of the *Zeitschrift* Fromm dealt directly with Bachofen himself.[44] He began by carefully delineating the different elements in matriarchal theory that appealed to right- and left-wing critics of bourgeois society. Bachofen's own confused nostalgia for the past struck a respondent chord on the right. So too did his romanticized view of nature, to which man should submit himself as an infant to its mother.[45] Like the romantics, but unlike Briffault, he absolutized the spiritual differences between man and woman (which, Fromm admitted, did express a legitimate protest against the Enlightenment's "liberation" of women to the status of bourgeois men). Bäumler, Klages, and the other *völkisch* theorists reacted only to Bachofen's naturalistic metaphysics, turning it in the direction of mystical *Schwärmerei* (gushing rapture). What they ignored were his psychosocial insights.

These, on the other hand, were the source of his appeal to the left. Matriarchal society stressed human solidarity and happiness. Its

dominant values were love and compassion, not fear and subordination. Both private property and repressive sexuality were absent from its social ethic. Patriarchal society, as Engels and Bebel had interpreted it, was related to class society: both stressed duty and authority over love and gratification. Understood in a certain way, Bachofen's philosophy of history was similar to Hegel's. The advent of patriarchal society corresponded to the break between spirit and nature, the victory of Rome over the Orient.

To Fromm, as might be expected, the socialist reading of Bachofen was more congenial. The importance of studying matriarchal societies, he argued, was not for their historical interest — indeed, their actual existence in the past was not demonstrable — but for the vision they offered of an alternative reality. Like Malinowski, Fromm used matriarchal theory to deny the universality of the Oedipus complex. The strength of this complex in patriarchal societies, he asserted, was partly a result of the son's role as inheritor of the father's property and his position as provider for the father in his old age. This meant that the early education of the son was directed less towards happiness than towards economic usefulness. The love between father and son might well develop into hatred because of the son's fears of failure. The contingency of the love thus produced might well lead to a loss of spiritual security and the reinforcement of duty as the focus of existence.

Maternal love, on the other hand, was unconditional and less responsive to social pressures. In contemporary society, however, the strength of the real mother had eroded. No longer was she seen as the protectress, but rather as someone in need of protection herself. This, Fromm argued, was also true of maternal substitutes, such as the country or *Volk*.[46] Original motherly trust and warmth had been replaced by paternal guilt, anal repression, and authoritarian morality. The advent of Protestantism had increased the sway of the father, as the security of medieval Catholicism with its womb-like church and cult of the Virgin Mother receded in effectiveness.[47] The psychic foundations of capitalism were clearly patriarchal, although paradoxically capitalism had created the conditions for a return to a truly matriarchal culture. This was so because of the abundance of goods and services it provided, which might allow a less achievement-oriented reality principle. Socialism, Fromm concluded, must preserve the promise of this return.

With Fromm's growing interest in Bachofen came a lessening of his enthusiasm for orthodox Freudianism. In 1935 he spelled out the sources of his disillusionment in the *Zeitschrift*.[48] Freud, he argued, was a prisoner of his bourgeois morality and patriarchal values. The

emphasis in psychoanalysis on childhood experiences, he went on, served to divert attention from the person of the analyst himself. In a case where the analyst uncritically shared the values of the society, and where the patient's desires and needs were contrary to those values, he tended to arouse the patient's resistance. Theoretically, of course, analysts were supposed to be value-neutral and tolerant of their patient's morals; but in fact, Fromm argued, the ideal of tolerance historically had had two faces.

Fromm's discussion of tolerance[49] is worth examining in some detail, because it expressed an attitude shared by other Institut members, which was later to be repeated in one of Marcuse's most controversial and influential essays.[50] Initially, Fromm wrote, the bourgeois struggle for toleration was directed against social oppression. But when the middle class became socially dominant, tolerance was transformed into a mask for moral laissez-faire. In reality, it was never extended to protect serious threats to the prevailing order. As epitomized in Kant's work, it was applied to thought and speech rather than action. Bourgeois toleration was always self-contradictory: it was consciously relativistic and neutral, but subconsciously designed to preserve the status quo. Psychoanalysis, Fromm suggested, shared the two-faced character of this type of tolerance; the facade of neutrality was often a cover for what Fromm expressly called the doctor's implicit sadism.[51]

Fromm did not, however, take the next step, which Marcuse was later to do. ("Liberating tolerance," Marcuse wrote in 1965, "would mean intolerance against movements from the Right, and toleration of movements from the Left.") [52] Instead, he concentrated on exposing other facets of Freud's patriarchalism. The goal of orthodox psychoanalysis, he argued, was the ability to work, procreate, and enjoy. Freud, however, had stressed the first two over the third, seeing an irreconcilable contradiction between civilization and gratification. His attitude towards political radicals who wanted to construct a society in which gratification was more fully possible was unremittingly hostile. All they were doing, Freud thought, was acting out their Oedipal aggressions towards their fathers.[53] In fact, neurosis had been defined by Freud in terms of the inability to accept bourgeois norms. Further evidence of Freud's inability to transcend his background was his insistence on monetary payment for all therapy. And finally, Fromm argued that in his own person Freud was a classical patriarchal type, authoritarian to both students and patients.[54]

As superior alternatives to Freud, Fromm suggested Georg Groddeck and Sandor Ferenczi. What made them better was their therapeutic innovation of having the analyst face the patient in a one-to-

one, more egalitarian relationship. Fromm's abandonment of the Oedipus complex meant that the role of transference was greatly minimized in the technique he now favored. Groddeck and Ferenczi were also less rigid on the question of payment, which they sometimes waived. In contrast to Freud's patricentric, authoritarian, inhumane "tolerance," they offered a therapy that went beyond the short-sighted goal of adjustment to the moral inhumanities of contemporary society. Fromm expressed great regret over the loss to psychoanalysis caused by Ferenczi's early death. In later years he sought to rescue his reputation from the distortions of Ernest Jones, who had described Ferenczi as having become psychotic at the end of his life.[55] Fromm and his wife also remained friends with Groddeck, despite Groddeck's political naiveté — at one time he hoped to get Hitler, whose anti-Semitism he doubted, to sponsor some of his work, only to be disappointed when Hitler came to power.[56]

At the same time as Fromm's disillusionment with Freud grew, so did his estrangement from the other members of the Institut. After contributing a psychological analysis of authority to the *Studien über Autorität und Familie*, a joint research project by the Institut staff published in 1936, Fromm wrote only one more article for the *Zeitschrift*, a study of the feeling of impotency in modern society.[57] In 1939 his connection with the Institut was severed, and he devoted himself more extensively to clinical work, increasingly pursuing the non-Freudian train of his thought. Two years later, *Escape from Freedom*, perhaps his most widely read book, was published. As an explanation of the authoritarianism America was about to fight in the war, it received considerable attention and in time became a classic in its field. Because of the treatment it has received elsewhere,[58] it will be discussed here only for the evidence it provides of Fromm's development away from Freud and the Institut.

As in his earlier *Zeitschrift* articles, Fromm began by accusing Freud of cultural narrowness: "The field of human relations in Freud's sense is similar to the market — it is an exchange of satisfaction of biologically given needs, in which the relationship to the other individual is always a means to an end but never an end in itself." [59] More strongly than ever, he denounced Freud's pessimism and his notion of the death instinct. Here he equated the death instinct with the need to destroy, an interpretation that Marcuse was later to challenge. By so understanding it, Fromm was able to write: "If Freud's assumptions were correct, we would have to assume that the amount of destructiveness either against others or oneself is more or less constant. But what we observe is to the contrary. Not only does the weight of destructiveness among individuals in our culture

vary a great deal, but also destructiveness is of unequal weight among different social groups." [60]

Fromm also continued his denigration of Freud's libido theory, while retaining his clinical descriptions. In doing so, he explicitly repudiated the interpretative part of his own work in *The Dogma of Christ*[61] and the libido-oriented character typology he had championed in 1932 in the *Zeitschrift*.[62] His discussion of sado-masochism, one of the central concepts of his theory of irrational authority, sought to purge the concept of any erotic elements. In fact, in his next work, *Man for Himself*, he developed his own typology along very different lines.[63] For the first time in print he acknowledged the similarities between his own thinking and that of Karen Horney and Harry Stack Sullivan,[64] who were revising Freud in a parallel direction. Once again he pointed to the influence of social factors based on the inescapable imperatives of the self-preservation drives. In an appendix he elaborated the concept of "social character" suggested in his earlier works, a concept that he would come to consider his "most important contribution . . . to the field of social psychology." [65] "The social character," he wrote, "comprises only a selection of traits, the *essential nucleus of the character structure of most members of a group which has developed as the result of the basic experiences and mode of life common to that group* [Fromm's italics]." [66]

In all this, Fromm was on familiar ground, which he had covered in one way or another in his earlier articles. What was new in *Escape from Freedom*, however, was a more general interest in what might be called man's "existential" condition. To Fromm, "the main theme of this book" was "that man, the more he gains freedom in the sense of emerging from the original oneness with man and nature and the more he becomes an 'individual,' has no choice but to unite himself with the world in the spontaneity of love and productive work, or else to seek a kind of security by such ties with the world as destroy his freedom and the integrity of his individual self." [67] The notion of alienation, which Fromm had found so suggestive in Marx's early writings, was clearly at the root of his new approach. Isolation and relatedness were now the two poles of his thinking. Neurosis came increasingly to be defined in terms of certain types of interpersonal relations; sadism and masochism, for example, ceased being sexually derived phenomena and became instead strivings that "tend to help the individual to escape his unbearable feelings of aloneness and powerlessness." [68] Their real aim was "symbiosis" [69] with others, which meant the loss of self-integrity and individuality through the dissolution of the self into the other.

In *Escape from Freedom* Fromm distinguished between the iso-

lated atomization of a negative "freedom from" and the "spontaneous activity of the total, integrated personality," [70] of the positive "freedom to." Although taking pains to mention the socio-economic change that would be necessary to end the alienation of "freedom from" and achieve positive "freedom to," he did not lay great stress on the difficulties of this transformation. Increasingly, he came to see the problem of change in optimistic, even moralistic, terms. If there were no inborn drive to destroy, then the dream of the Hebrew prophets, that "vision of universal peace and harmony between nations" that had moved the young Fromm so deeply, might be achieved. In his subsequent writings Fromm emphasized the integration of ethics and psychology. In *Man for Himself* he went so far as to say: "Every neurosis represents a moral problem. The failure to achieve maturity and integration of the whole personality is a moral problem." [71] And in later years he came to appreciate the spiritual teachings of the East, especially the masters of Zen Buddhism,[72] as well as the West.

To be fair to Fromm, however, it should be acknowledged that this was a change in emphasis in his thinking and not an absolute transformation of his position. Reacting to the charge that he had become a Pollyanna, Fromm angrily replied: "I have always upheld the same point that man's capacity for freedom, for love, etc. depends almost entirely on the given socio-economic conditions, and that only exceptionally can one find, as I pointed out in *The Art of Loving*, that there is love in a society whose principle is the very opposite." [73] It is difficult, however, to read his later works without coming to the conclusion that in comparison with Horkheimer and the other members of the Institut's inner circle, who were abandoning their tentative hopes of the twenties and thirties, Fromm was defending a more optimistic position.

Horkheimer and the others had been in general agreement with Fromm's initial contributions to the *Zeitschrift*, even agreeing with his first criticisms of Freud. In fact, Fromm remembers that Karen Horney and Horkheimer were on friendly terms during their first few years as emigrés in New York.[74] Moreover, the Institut had embraced Fromm's hopes for the merger of psychoanalysis and Marxism. In an article entitled "History and Psychology" in the first issue of the Institut's new journal, Horkheimer had argued for the urgency of a psychological supplement to Marxist theory. The motivations of men in contemporary society, he contended, must be understood as both "ideological," in Marx's sense, and psychological. The more society becomes rational, to be sure, the less both these conceptual ap-

proaches will be needed to make sense of social reality. But for the present psychological explanation is needed to understand the staying power of social forms after their objective necessity had passed. This must be an individual psychology, Horkheimer agreed with Fromm. No mass soul or group consciousness really exists, although social factors do influence the formation of individual psyches: "Not only the content, but also the strength of the eruptions of the psychic apparatus is economically conditioned." [75]

During the first years of emigration Horkheimer shared Fromm's distaste for the death instinct. As late as 1936, in "Egoism and the Movement for Emancipation," [76] he attacked the resignation it implied. Freud's earlier work, Horkheimer argued, was more dialectical, his later, more biological and positivistic; his belief in a destructive drive was like the medieval attribution of evil to a mythical devil. By missing the historical component in oppression, Freud had absolutized the status quo and become resigned to the necessity of a permanent elite to keep the destructive masses down.

By the late thirties, however, Fromm and the other Institut members began to go along separate paths. The patriarchal-matriarchal distinction Fromm so heavily stressed was never fully accepted by the others. Only Walter Benjamin, who had never met Fromm and was not really a member of the Institut's inner circle, expressed great interest in Bachofen's work.[77] The others were wary of Fromm's dismissal of Freud as a representative of patriarchal thinking. In looking back at the break, Fromm remembers it in terms of Horkheimer's having discovered a "more revolutionary Freud." [78] Because he spoke of sexuality, Horkheimer thought Freud was more of a real materialist than Fromm. Lowenthal, on the other hand, remembers the split as having been produced by Fromm's changed approach, symbolized by the two different parts of *Escape from Freedom*, the social and the "existential." [79] In addition, it is likely that personal differences also played a role. From his writings alone it seems evident that Fromm's sensibility was less ironic than that of the other members of the inner circle, his approach to life less colored by the aesthetic nuances shared by both Horkheimer and Adorno. Adorno's full entry into Institut affairs at about the time Fromm was leaving signified a crucial shift in the tone of the Frankfurt School's work.

Whatever the cause of Fromm's departure, his work became anathema to his former colleagues in the 1940's. After his break, the Institut did not spend much time in its publications discussing the theoretical problems of psychoanalysis. In an article in 1939[80] Horkheimer compared Freud favorably to Dilthey, but without any

extensive explanation of the reasons for his preference. Although psychoanalytic categories were used in much of the Institut's work during and after the war, it appears that Horkheimer and the others were less than anxious to publicize their involvement with Freudian theory. In October, 1942, Lowenthal was approached by the eminent ego-psychologist Ernst Kris, who asked him about the Institut's attitude towards Freud. Lowenthal wrote to Horkheimer for advice on how to reply. Horkheimer, who by that time had moved to California, wrote back in an extremely illuminating way. His answer is worth quoting at some length:

I think you should be simply positive. We really are deeply indebted to Freud and his first collaborators. His thought is one of the Bildungsmächte [foundation stones] without which our own philosophy would not be what it is. I have anew realized his grandeur during the last weeks. You will remember that many people say his original method was particularly adequate to the Viennese sophisticated middle class. This is, of course, totally untrue as a generality, but there is a grain of salt in it which does not do any harm to Freud's work. The greater a work, the more it is rooted in the concrete historical situation. But if you take a close look at this connection between liberalistic Vienna and Freud's original method, you become aware of how great a thinker he was. With the decline of middle-class family life, his theory reached that new stage as expressed in "Jenseits des Lustprinzips" and the following writings. That turn of his philosophy proves that he, in his particular work, realized the changes pointed out in the chapter of the article on Reason [probably part of Horkheimer's "Reason and Self-preservation"] devoted to the decline of the family and the individual. Psychology without libido is in a way no psychology and Freud was great enough to get away from psychology in its own framework. Psychology in its proper sense is always psychology of the individual. Where this is needed, we have to refer orthodoxically to Freud's earlier writings. The set of concepts connected with the *Todestrieb* [the death instinct] are anthropological categories (in the German sense of the word). Even where we do not agree with Freud's interpretation and use of them, we find their objective intention is deeply right and that they betray Freud's great flair for the situation. His development has led him to conclusions not so far from those of the other great thinker of the same period, Bergson. Freud objectively absented himself from psychoanalysis, whereas Fromm and Horney get back to commonsense psychology and even psychologize culture and society.[81]

Expressed in this letter were several fundamental differences of opinion with Fromm. First, Horkheimer denied the accusation that the bourgeois elements admittedly present in Freud's thinking were unequivocally unfortunate. As he had argued in "Traditional and Critical Theory," [82] no thinker can escape his social origins entirely.

"The greater the work, the more it is rooted in the concrete historical situation," he wrote Lowenthal. Thus, Freud's notion of the death instinct had an "objective intention" that was "deeply right," not because it corresponded to a biological universal, but because it expressed the depth and severity of modern man's destructive urges. Second, Freud's putative blindness to the role of the family as agent of society, which Fromm so strongly stressed and which played a part in the Institut's early work on authority, was really a reflection of his sensitivity to the decline of the family in modern life. This was a change that Horkheimer was to discuss at some length in his subsequent work. And finally, Freud had realized that psychology was necessarily the study of the individual. Thus the libido, which implied a stratum of human existence stubbornly out of reach of total social control, was an indispensable concept. It was thus a mistake to sociologize the individual. By the same token, the revisionists were wrong in trying to "psychologize culture and society." Underlying Horkheimer's refusal to collapse psychology into sociology or vice versa was that stress on nonidentity so central to Critical Theory. Not until contradictions were socially resolved could they be methodologically reconciled, a critical point to which Adorno was to return much later in a discussion of "Sociology and Psychology." [83]

It was in fact Adorno who first spelled out in public the Institut's differences with its revisionist former member. On April 26, 1946, he delivered a paper in Los Angeles entitled "Social Science and Sociological Tendencies in Psychoanalysis." [84] It is interesting both for what it says about the Frankfurt School's attraction to Freud and as an anticipation of Marcuse's more widely known castigation of revisionism in *Eros and Civilization.* Adorno addressed himself specifically to Karen Horney's *New Ways in Psychoanalysis* and Fromm's "The Social Limitations of Psychoanalytic Therapy," which had appeared in the *Zeitschrift* eleven years before. Written directly after the war, the paper revealed a bitterness of tone very different from that of the Institut's work in the past.

Adorno began by examining the revisionists' attack on Freud's instinct theory. Instinctivism, he argued, can mean either a mechanical division of the human soul into fixed instincts or a flexible deduction of the psyche from pleasure and self-preservation strivings, with almost infinite variations. Freud's was the latter. The revisionists were thus incorrect in accusing him of being mechanistic, when in fact it was their hypostatization of character types that really deserved that epithet. For all their stress on historical influences, they were less attuned than Freud to the "inner history" of the libido. By overstressing the importance of the ego, they ignored its genetic interaction

with the id: "Concretely, the denunciation of Freud's so-called instinctivism amounts to the denial that culture, by enforcing restrictions on libidinal and particularly on destructive drives, is instrumental in bringing about repressions, guilt feelings, and need for self-punishment." [85]

Furthermore, by minimizing the role of childhood experiences (*Erlebnisse,* which were not the same as *Erfahrungen*),* especially the traumas that so strongly affect personality development, the revisionists had constructed a totalistic theory of character. Freud's sensitivity to the importance of traumatic shocks in forming the modern disjointed personality had been lost in the revisionists' work.[86] "The stress on totality," Adorno wrote, "as against the unique, fragmentary impulses, always implies the harmonistic belief in what might be called the unity of the personality, [a unity that] is never realized in our society. It is one of the greatest merits of Freud that he has debunked the myth of this unity." [87] To categorize character types the way Fromm had done was to accept the existence of integrated characters, which was no more than "an ideological cloak for the psychological status quo of each individual." [88]

More generally, the revisionists' vaunted sociological "correction" of Freud really amounted to little more than the smoothing over of social contradictions. By removing the biological roots of psychoanalysis, they had transformed it into a kind of *Geisteswissenschaft* and a means of social hygiene. Their desexualization was part of a denial of the conflict between essence and appearance, of the chasm between true gratification and the pseudohappiness of contemporary civilization. Fromm, Adorno argued, was very wrong to deny the sexual basis of sadism just when the Nazis were displaying it so blatantly. The implications of the revisionists' work, despite their disclaimers, were ultimately conformist; this was especially demonstrated in their increasing moralism. There was no excuse for absolutizing moral norms, Adorno pointed out angrily, when they had been suspect ever since Nietzsche's critique of their psychological roots.

The revisionists, he continued, were also naive in their explanations of the sources of social disorder. To claim as they did that competitiveness was a major cause of conflict in bourgeois society was fatuous, especially in face of the acknowledgment in *Escape from Freedom* that the spontaneous individual had all but vanished. In

* *Erfahrungen* implied a type of integrated experience, which included a sense of the past and expectations of the future — in other words, experience mediated through cultural awareness. The distinction between *Erlebnisse* and *Erfahrungen* played an important role in the Institut's work on mass culture, as we shall see in Chapter 6.

fact, "competition itself never was the law according to which middle-class society operated." [89] The true bond of bourgeois society had always been the threat of bodily violence, which Freud more clearly perceived: "In the age of the concentration camp, castration is more characteristic of social reality than competitiveness." [90] Freud, Adorno argued, belonged to the Hobbesian tradition of bourgeois theorists, whose pessimistic absolutization of the evil in human nature reflected the prevailing reality much better than the affirmative optimism of the revisionists. Freud was not unlike Schopenhauer in identifying civilization with fixation and repetition. The revisionists were once again too sanguine in thinking that true change could explode the repetitive continuum of Western civilization.

Finally, Adorno objected to the stress on love in the revisionists' work. Fromm had attacked Freud for his authoritarian lack of warmth, but true revolutionaries are often called hard and cold. Social antagonisms cannot be wished away; they must be consummated, which inevitably means suffering for someone: "It may well be that our society has developed itself to an extreme where the reality of love can actually be expressed only by the hatred of the existent, whereas any direct evidence of love serves only at confirming the very same conditions which breed hatred." [91] Adorno finished the article with a phrase reminiscent of Walter Benjamin's often quoted remark from his study of Goethe's *Elective Affinities*, "It is only for the sake of the hopeless that we are given hope." [92] "I suspect," Adorno wrote, "that Freud's contempt for men is nothing but an expression of such hopeless love which may be the only expression of hope still permitted to us." [93]

This then was the Institut's attitude towards Freud and Fromm in the 1940's. It was no accident that increased pessimism about the possibility of revolution went hand in hand with an intensified appreciation of Freud's relevance. In a society in which social contradictions seemed unbridgeable and yet paradoxically were becoming more obscured, the antinomies of Freud's thought appeared as a necessary bulwark against the harmonistic illusions of the revisionists. And not only Freud's thought, but its most extreme and outrageous aspects were the most useful. In *Minima Moralia* Adorno expressed this when he wrote in one of his most celebrated phrases, "in psychoanalysis nothing is true except the exaggerations." [94]

In much of the Institut's work during the forties — *The Authoritarian Personality, Dialektik der Aufklärung (Dialectic of the Enlightenment),* Lowenthal's *Prophets of Deceit* — Freud's sobering influence was clearly evident. After the Institut's return to Germany, this influence continued to play a meaningful role in both its theoretical

and its empirical work.[95] In 1956 the Institut expressed its appreciation to Freud on the anniversary of his hundredth birthday with a special volume in its new series of *Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie (Frankfurt Contributions to Sociology).*[96] It was, however, left to the member of the Institut's inner circle who had had the least to do with the psychological speculations of the American period to attempt once again to reconcile Freud and Marx in an optimistic direction. In *Eros and Civilization*, Herbert Marcuse sought to rescue that "revolutionary Freud" whom Fromm had dismissed as a myth and whom Horkheimer and Adorno had turned into a prophet of gloom. Although it falls outside the chronological framework of this study, *Eros and Civilization* is a continuation of Critical Theory's earlier interest in Freud, and as such deserves a brief excursus at this point in our narrative.

2

Unlike the other core members of the Institut, Marcuse did not acquire a serious interest in psychoanalysis until he came to America. The early Marcuse was perhaps too much of a rationalist to find anything of great appeal in the murky world of the unconscious. Stressing as he did the potential reconciliation of subject and object, in a way that Horkheimer and Adorno with their emphasis on nonidentity never did, Marcuse was interested less in individual psychology than in the social totality. In the contribution he made to the Institut's early study of authority,[97] he avoided acknowledging the role of the family as agent of society, which Fromm had so strongly advocated and the others had not yet questioned.

And yet, as Paul Robinson has argued,[98] there were subtle adumbrations of his later interest in Freud in much of the work he did in the thirties. For example, in granting the validity of the hedonistic moment in the dialectical totality of reason and happiness, Marcuse had protested against the ascetic tendencies of idealism. In general, sexual repression had been included in his critique of exploitation, which gave it political significance beyond its merely psychological dimension. Furthermore, Marcuse had criticized the bourgeois ideology of love, which raised duty and fidelity above pleasure. He also had attacked the idealist's notion of "personality" [99] in a way anticipating Adorno's later denunciation of the revisionists' idea of character. As early as 1937 he had pointed to the sensual, corporeal element in true happiness, seeing in the most extreme reification of the body an "anticipatory memory" [100] of genuine joy. And finally, Marcuse had recognized the relation between repressed sexuality and

aggression, which was to play such a crucial role in *Eros and Civilization*, in his article on hedonism.[101]

It was not, however, until the disturbing implications of the Spanish Civil War and the Moscow purge trials that Marcuse began to read Freud seriously.[102] A growing dissatisfaction with Marxism, even in its Hegelianized form, led him as it had Horkheimer and Adorno to examine the psychological obstacles in the path of meaningful social change. Whereas in their cases it strengthened a deepening pessimism and helped foster a retreat from political activism, in his, it led to a reaffirmation of the utopian dimension of his radicalism. When, after a long period of incubation, *Eros and Civilization* appeared in 1955, it went far beyond the earlier efforts of Critical Theory to merge Freud and Marx. Unlike Horkheimer and Adorno, who used Freud's insights into the profound contradictions of modern man to support their arguments about nonidentity, Marcuse found in Freud, and the later, metapsychological Freud to boot, a prophet of identity and reconciliation. Unlike Fromm, who had basically abandoned the orthodox Freud as an enemy of a new reality principle, Marcuse tried to uncover those elements in psychoanalysis that did in fact look beyond the present system.

It would be beyond the scope of this excursus to deal exhaustively with *Eros and Civilization*, a book of great complexity and richness, but certain observations about its relation to the Institut's previous work can still be made. The first section of it to appear — published separately in *Dissent* in the summer of 1955 — was an attack on the revisionists. Here Marcuse picked up the thread where Adorno had put it down a decade earlier. He began by acknowledging Wilhelm Reich's work as a precedent for his own, but quickly pointed to its inadequacies. To Marcuse, Reich's inability to distinguish between different types of repression prevented him from seeing the "historical dynamic of the sex instincts and of their fusion with the destructive impulses."[103] As a result, Reich was led to a simplistic advocacy of sexual liberation as an end in itself, which finally degenerated into the primitive delusions of his later years.

After curtly dismissing Jung and the psychoanalytic "right wing," Marcuse turned to the neo-Freudians. He opened his discussion of their work with praise for the insights of Fromm's early *Zeitschrift* articles. Marcuse expressed agreement with Fromm's opposition to patriarchal society (he used "patricentric-acquisitive," Fromm's later term for the same phenomenon), comparing it to his own attack on the "performance principle." This he defined as the specific reality principle of the current society under whose rule "society is stratified

according to the competitive economic performances of its members." [104] But by the time of Fromm's departure from the Institut, Marcuse argued, the critical edge of his earlier work had been lost. The crucial change came with that increasing devotion to clinical practice that Fromm had so frequently singled out for commendation. In lobbying for the type of happiness-oriented therapy developed by Ferenczi and Groddeck, Fromm had succumbed to the ideology that true happiness could be achieved in this society. But, Marcuse asserted, "in a repressive society, individual happiness and productive development are in contradiction to society; if they are defined as values to be realized within this society, they become themselves repressive." [105]

What Marcuse was saying about psychoanalytic theory and therapy was very similar to what he and the other members of the Institut had so often said about theory and *praxis.* At this stage in Western civilization the two could not be entirely reconciled, although they were not fully independent of one another. To collapse theory completely into *praxis* (or therapy) was to lose its negative, critical quality. By assimilating speculative imagination into therapeutic practice the revisionists were very much like the pragmatists and positivists so disliked by Critical Theory; they were doing what Hegel's successors had done to him, as Marcuse had described in the second part of *Reason and Revolution.* They carried out the assimilation on two fronts. First, they discarded Freud's most daring and suggestive hypotheses: the death instinct, the primal horde, and the killing of the primal father. The archaic heritage that the revisionists mocked was meaningful, Marcuse was to write in his main text, for its "*symbolic value.* The archaic events that the hypothesis stipulates may forever be beyond the realm of anthropological verification; the alleged consequences of these events are historical facts. . . . If the hypothesis defies common sense, it claims, in its defiance, a truth which common sense has been trained to forget." [106] And second, as Adorno had argued in 1946, the revisionists flattened out the conflicts between individual and society, and between instinctual desires and consciousness. In thus returning to pre-Freudian consciousness psychology, they became conformists despite themselves.

Marcuse also repeated Adorno's attack on the revisionists' notion of an integrated personality. In contemporary society, he argued, the possibility of genuine individualism was practically nil: "The individual situations are the derivatives of the *general* fate, and, as Freud has shown, it is the latter which contains the clue to the fate of the individual." [107] Related to this was the inadequacy of the revisionists' moralism: "Freud destroys the illusions of idealistic ethics: the 'per-

sonality' is but a 'broken' individual who has internalized and successfully utilized repression and aggression." [108]

With great vehemence, Marcuse attacked the revisionists' mutilation of Freud's instinct theory. Its inner direction, he argued, was originally from consciousness to the unconscious, from the adult personality to childhood experiences, from ego to id, and from individual to genus. In stressing the libido, Freud had developed a materialistic concept of gratification that was opposed to the spiritual and ultimately repressive ideas of the revisionists. In returning to the sexual roots of Freud's theory, Marcuse had once again to consider the Oedipus complex, which Fromm had castigated from his earliest days with the Institut. In the text of *Eros and Civilization* Marcuse mentioned the Oedipus complex infrequently and without according it much importance.[109] But in the *Dissent* article, which served as his epilogue, his attitude was very different. Fromm's attempt to "translate it from the sphere of sex into that of interpersonal relations" [110] was a reversal of the critical thrust of Freud's thought. To Freud, the Oedipal wish was not merely a protest against separation from the child's mother and the painful, alienated freedom it signified to Fromm. It also expressed a profound craving for sexual gratification, for freedom from want, for the mother as woman, not merely as protectress. In fact, Marcuse argued, "it is first the 'sexual craving' for the mother-woman that threatens the psychical basis of civilization; it is the 'sexual craving' that makes the Oedipus conflict the prototype of the instinctual conflicts between the individual and his society." [111] To ignore the libidinal roots of the Oedipus complex, whether it was universal or merely a symbolic expression of this society's deepest problem, was to smooth over the fundamental antagonisms to which it referred.

But even more basic to Marcuse's argument was his protest against the revisionists' rejection of the other instinct of Freud's metapsychological period, Thanatos, the death instinct. It was here that Marcuse went beyond Adorno and Horkheimer as well, and once again sought a utopian integration of Freud and Marx. They had understood the death instinct as a symbolic representation of Freud's sensitivity to the depth of destructive impulses in modern society. Marcuse accepted this interpretation, pointing to the persistence and even intensification of destructive activity which accompanied civilization and which the revisionists tended to minimize. Freud's death instinct captured the ambiguous nature of modern man far more perceptively than the revisionists' implicit faith in progress.

But Marcuse did not end his argument in pessimism as had

Adorno and Horkheimer. The death instinct, as he understood it, did not mean an innate urge to aggression, as it had so often been seen.[112] Freud "did not assume that we live in order to destroy; the destruction instinct operates either against the life instincts or in their service; moreover, the objective of the death instinct is not destruction *per se* but the elimination of the need for destruction." [113] In the text of *Eros and Civilization* Marcuse elaborated on his understanding of the true nature of Thanatos. The real aim of the death instinct was not aggression but the end of the tension that was life. It was grounded in the so-called Nirvana principle,[114] which expressed a yearning for the tranquility of inorganic nature. In this desire, it was surprisingly similar to the life instinct: both sought gratification and the end of desire itself. If the goal of the death instinct was the reduction of tension, then it would cease to be very powerful once the tension of life was reduced. This was the crucial assumption that allowed Marcuse to turn the seemingly pessimistic conclusions of the later Freud in a utopian direction. As he argued, summarizing this point, "if the instinct's basic objective is not the termination of life but of pain — the absence of tension — then paradoxically, in terms of the instinct, the conflict between life and death is the more reduced, the closer life approximates the state of gratification. Pleasure principle and Nirvana principle then converge." [115] In so reasoning, most orthodox adherents of Freud would agree, Marcuse was as much a revisionist as Fromm or Horney, albeit in a different direction.

Thus Marcuse attempted to historicize Thanatos in the best tradition of Critical Theory. Death need not have dominion if life were liberated through the nonrepressive re-eroticization of man's relations to man and nature. This would require, Marcuse argued, a breakdown of the sexual tyranny of the genitals and a return to the "polymorphous perversity" [116] of the child. Here he distinctly went beyond both Freud and Reich, not to mention all three of his former colleagues at the Institut. Only if the entire body were re-eroticized, he argued, could alienated labor, which was grounded in the reification of the nongenital areas of the body, be overcome. A changed society, no longer based on the repressive and antiquated "performance principle," would end historically rooted "surplus repression," thus freeing the individual from his tension-producing alienated labor. Aestheticized play would replace toil; the Nirvana principle and the destruction its inhibition aroused would cease to dominate man's life. Resulting would be the "pacification of existence," [117] the psychological correlate of the identity theory, which, as discussed in the last chapter, was at the root of Marcuse's philosophy.

As was to be expected, Marcuse's bold attempt to read Freud as a revolutionary utopian did not sit well with his former colleagues.[118] Adorno and Horkheimer maintained a tactful silence, but Fromm attempted a rebuttal in subsequent issues of *Dissent.*[119] His line of attack took place on two levels. First, he tried to show that Marcuse had misunderstood Freud and that he lacked any practical experience with psychoanalysis. As he had argued earlier, Fromm claimed that Freud was far more a prisoner of nineteenth-century bourgeois nondialectical materialism than a protester against it. He also sought to discredit Marcuse's understanding of the revisionists, rejecting his tendency to lump them all together without distinguishing the basic differences among them. Fromm claimed, for example, that his own notion of the "productive character" was much more of a challenge to the current society than Marcuse allowed. He further chided Marcuse for being undialectical in his insistence that absolutely no integrated personalities could be produced under present conditions.

The second level of Fromm's rebuttal was more fundamental. Here he tried to restore the unavoidable conflict between sexual gratification and civilization, which Freud himself had so frequently stressed. It was nonsense, Fromm suggested, to think that certain sexual perversions included in Marcuse's advocacy of "polymorphous perversity" could be reconciled with any real civilization. Sadism and coprophilia, to name two, were sick under any circumstances. The goal of complete and immediate gratification that Marcuse sought would make the individual into a system of easily manipulated desires and stimulations, as in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World.*[120] Love, as apart from sexuality, was not simply ideological, as Marcuse (and Adorno) had suggested, although admittedly its appearance in contemporary society was rare. The negative implications of Marcuse's thinking led to nothing more than nihilistic rejection of the world.

As is often the case with intellectual controversies between former friends and colleagues, the debate went through yet another series of rebuttals and counterrebuttals.[121] And as frequently happens, minor points of difference assumed greater importance than the larger areas of agreement. Marcuse accepted Fromm's charge that he was a nihilist, arguing that the nihilism of the "Great Refusal" [122] was perhaps the only true humanism allowed in the present world. This brought him once again nearer to Horkheimer and Adorno. But the basic thrust of *Eros and Civilization* was clearly in an ultimately affirmative direction. Marcuse's interpretation of the Nirvana principle was really not that far from the sentiment Fromm had expressed

years before in *Escape from Freedom* when he wrote: "The drive for life and the drive for destruction are not mutually independent factors but are in a reversed interdependence. The more the drive towards life is thwarted, the stronger is the drive towards destruction; the more life is realized, the less is the strength of destructiveness. *Destructiveness is the outcome of unlived life.*" [123] Marcuse, to be sure, believed that the two instincts could be ultimately reduced to one, whereas Fromm remained a more cautious dualist. Yet in Fromm's dualism the death instinct or the need to destroy was understood solely as a product of the frustration of the life instinct. Later, in *The Heart of Man*, Fromm would formulate his position in the following way:

> This duality . . . is not one of two biologically inherent instincts, relatively constant and always battling with each other until the final victory of the death instinct, but it is one between the primary and most fundamental tendency of life — to persevere in life — and its contradiction, which comes into being when man fails in this goal.[124]

Thus, despite both men's insistence that their positions were miles apart, they seemed to converge on at least the one question of the strength and durability of an instinct to die. Marcuse's most utopian book ended on a note of yea-saying tempered only by an argument Horkheimer had made several decades earlier, concerning the impossibility of redeeming the suffering of those who had died before.[125] Aside from this, it expressed a sanguine confidence far removed from the dark ironies of the other masters of Critical Theory.

IV

The Institut's First Studies of Authority

> The family in crisis produces the attitudes which predispose men for blind submission.
> — MAX HORKHEIMER

While the Institut enjoyed the benefits of Nicholas Murray Butler's generosity after 1934, its heart still remained in Europe for several years more. This was demonstrated in a variety of ways. Although returning to Germany was obviously impossible after the Nazi take-over, the rest of the Continent was still accessible until the war. Personal and professional ties drew most of the Institut's members back for occasional visits. The most frequent traveler was Pollock, who made several trips to attend to Institut affairs. The Geneva office, which he had directed until coming to New York, remained open, first under the administrative leadership of Andries Sternheim and then after his return to Holland, under Juliette Favez. The London branch, directed by Jay Rumney, survived only until 1936, but its Parisian counterpart, headed by Paul Honigsheim and Hans Klaus Brill, lasted until the war. One of its chief functions was to act as liaison between the central office in New York and the Librairie Félix Alcan, which continued to publish the *Zeitschrift.* Paris was also important as a way-station for Institut members who were reluctant to leave Europe. Grossmann spent a year there and another in London before coming to New York in 1937. Otto Kirchheimer, a student of politics and law whose contribution to the Institut's work will be discussed in the next chapter, was affiliated with the Paris office for three years after 1934. Gerhard Meyer, the economist, was there from 1933 to 1935; Hans Mayer, the Marxist literary critic, for several years after 1934. Adorno, although spending most of his time in England during the mid-thirties, often took vacations in Paris, where he was able to see an old friend he had introduced to the Institut, Walter Benjamin. Benjamin, as we shall see, had chosen Paris both as the site of his exile and as the controlling metaphor of his

work. In the six years he spent there, he developed an attachment to the city that proved fatal in the end.

In addition to its continued personal and institutional links with Europe, the Institut refused to alter its original notion of the audience for whom it was writing. As mentioned in the first chapter, German remained the *Zeitschrift*'s major language until the war. As late as 1940 Horkheimer was able to chide other refugees for their rapid Americanization: "That the German intellectuals don't need long to change to a foreign language as soon as their own bars them from a sizeable readership, comes from the fact that language already serves them more in the struggle for existence than as an expression of truth." [1] Because of the Institut's financial independence, Horkheimer and his colleagues could remain above the "struggle for existence" forced on many of the other emigrés. But Horkheimer's desire to keep the Institut self-consciously German was also rooted in a serious appreciation of the need to maintain a link with Germany's humanist past, a link that might help in the future reconstruction of a post-Nazi German culture. To this end, the Institut's members remained impervious to the entreaties of their new colleagues at Columbia to integrate their work into the American social-scientific mainstream.

On occasion, of course, the *Zeitschrift*'s pages were opened to distinguished American scholars, including Margaret Mead, Charles Beard, and Harold Lasswell.[2] In general, however, the *Zeitschrift* remained a forum for the Institut's own ideas and the findings of much of its empirical work. When new figures appeared, they were usually fellow refugees to whom the Institut had extended a helping hand. In at least one case, that of Ferdinand Tönnies,[3] this was done to aid a distinguished scholar in trouble at the end of a long career. But on the whole the Institut followed a policy that was expressed in one of its mimeographed histories in 1938. Ironic in the light of subsequent events, the statement reads: "It may be said that the Institute has no 'outstanding names' on its staff. The reason for this lies in the belief of the Institute that famous German scholars would easily find positions in American institutions. The case of the younger German refugees is quite different. The Institute has been chiefly concerned with them." [4] Although the Institut's funds were less extensive than some of its disgruntled petitioners imagined, support was extended to some two hundred emigrés. Although a full list has not yet been made public, such names as Fritz Sternberg, Hans Mayer, Paul Lazarsfeld, Fritz Karsen, Gerhard Meyer, and A. R. L. Gurland would be on it. In the ten years after 1934, approximately $200,000

was distributed among 116 doctoral candidates and 14 postdoctoral students.[5] According to Pollock,[6] the methodological or political inclinations of the recipients played no real part in determining the award. The only firm criterion was fervent anti-Nazism. Even positivists like Edgar Zilsel were given support without any attempt being made to coerce them to the Institut's way of thinking.

This is not to say that the Institut indiscriminately accepted the work of people with whom its members disagreed. Ludwig Marcuse, for example, was commissioned in 1938 to write a piece on Father Jahn, the early nineteenth-century romantic sponsor of gymnastic societies. The results of his work were unsatisfactory, so he remembered in his autobiography, for ideological reasons:

> [Horkheimer] was a Hegelian and militant sociologist, believing in the objective spirit, and had expected a study from me which would have worked on Jahn as an illustration of the Left Hegelian science of society. I, on the other hand, belonged at an early age to the diverse opposition: the early Romantics, Stirner, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche. . . . I had a warm inclination towards Pollock and Horkheimer, a high respect for their *Zeitschrift* and their collective volume, *Authority and Family*, which their Institut had published — and was sad not to be able to work with them.[7]

Other refugees such as Henry Pachter[8] have a more bitter recollection of the Institut's process of selecting those it would support, claiming that promises were made that were broken. This the Institut resolutely denies, as it does the accusations made in recent years about the influence allegedly exercised on one beneficiary of a stipend, Walter Benjamin.[9] The validity of these latter allegations will be treated in a subsequent chapter.

Along with the Institut's continued institutional and personal ties to Europe, its reluctance to publish in English, and its concern for other refugee scholars went a strong desire to preserve its own identity apart from the academic structure of Columbia, as it had maintained its independence in Frankfurt. After 1936 the Institut did give courses in the Extension Division and sponsored guest lectures by European scholars such as Harold Laski, Morris Ginsberg, and Celestin Bouglé, which were open to the university community. Still, off in its own building on 117th Street provided by Columbia, the Institut was able to pursue its own work without any pressure from the department with which it was most naturally associated, sociology. This meant that although it maintained friendly ties with Columbia's

sociologists, it did not become seriously embroiled in the controversy between the partisans of Robert MacIver and those of Robert Lynd, which split the department in the late thirties.[10] In fact, after the war, when concrete proposals were made to integrate the Institut into the sociology department or Paul Lazarsfeld's newly constituted Bureau of Applied Social Research, they were politely declined. As Horkheimer wrote to Lowenthal in 1942, "Scientific institutions here exercise a constant pressure on their junior members which cannot be compared in the least with the freedom which has reigned in our Institute. . . . People don't want to understand that there can be a group of scholars working under a director not responsible to big business or to mass-culture publicity." [11]

Most importantly, of course, the Institut's European outlook was demonstrated in its work. As to be expected, Critical Theory was applied to the most pressing problem of the time, the rise of fascism in Europe. As Henry Pachter has pointed out,[12] many emigrés without prior political interests or training were compelled by events to study the new totalitarianism. Psychologists like Ernst Kris examined Nazi propaganda, philosophers like Ernst Cassirer and Hannah Arendt probed the myth of the state and the origins of totalitarianism, and novelists like Thomas Mann wrote allegories of Germany's disintegration. Here the Institut was uniquely equipped to make an important contribution. Well before the forced emigration, it had turned its attention to problems of authority. Critical Theory was developed partly in response to the failure of traditional Marxism to explain the reluctance of the proletariat to fulfill its historical role. One of the primary reasons for Horkheimer's early interest in psychoanalysis had been the help it might give in accounting for the psychological "cement" of society. Accordingly, when he assumed the reins of the Institut in 1930, one of the first tasks he announced was an empirical study of the mentality of workers in the Weimar Republic.[13]

Although never actually completed to Horkheimer's satisfaction this was the first real effort to apply Critical Theory to a concrete, empirically verifiable problem. Erich Fromm was the project's director; in later years, Anna Hartock, Herta Herzog, Paul Lazarsfeld, and Ernst Schachtel all contributed to the attempt to complete the study. Approximately three thousand questionnaires were distributed to workers, asking their views on such issues as the education of children, the rationalization of industry, the possibility of avoiding a new war, and the locus of real power in the state. Adolf Levenstein had been the first to use an interpretive questionnaire in 1912,[14] but Fromm's psychoanalytic training allowed him to develop a more

sophisticated characterology based on the modified Freudian types he developed in the *Zeitschrift*.[15]

Perhaps the key innovation of the study was the way in which the questionnaire itself was conducted. The answers were taken down verbatim by the interviewers and then analyzed, the way a psychoanalyst listens to the associations of a patient. Certain key words or recurrent patterns of expression were interpreted as clues to the underlying psychological reality beneath the manifest content of the answers. This technique, it might be noted in passing, was very different from that employed in the Institut's collaborative project, *The Authoritarian Personality*, as we shall see when examining that work in Chapter 7. Fromm himself, however, was to turn back to it many years later in the analysis of *Social Character in a Mexican Village*,[16] which he and Michael Maccoby conducted in the late fifties and early sixties.

In general, the interviews disclosed a wide discrepancy between avowed beliefs and personality traits. Approximately 10 percent of the 586 respondents exhibited what was called an "authoritarian" character, a personality syndrome the Institut was to spend much of its subsequent time and energy exploring. Another 15 percent expressed a psychological commitment to antiauthoritarian goals and were thus deemed likely to live up to the revolutionary rhetoric of the left, if circumstances demanded it. The vast majority, however, were highly ambivalent. As a result, the Institut concluded that the German working class would be far less resistant to a right-wing seizure of power than its militant ideology would suggest.

Despite the prescience of its conclusions — the German working class was, in fact, to accept Nazism without any real resistance — the study was never actually published by the Institut. As late as 1939 plans were still afoot to have it appear as *The German Workers under the Weimar Republic*,[17] but with Fromm's departure from the Institut went a major reason for its publication. In later years, Pollock suggested that it was never published because too many of the questionnaires were lost in the flight from Germany.[18] Fromm, however, disputed this claim and argued that Horkheimer and he differed over the value of the work, a quarrel that, in fact, contributed to their break.[19] Some of the project's findings were, however, worked into subsequent studies of authoritarianism, such as *Escape from Freedom*.[20] And the questionnaire it had developed was incorporated into the next major Institut project, the *Studien über Autorität und Familie (Studies on Authority and Family)*.

Before embarking on a discussion of this mammoth work, the fruit of Horkheimer's first five years as director, certain of the theoretical

presuppositions of the Institut on the question of authority should be made clear. First, Critical Theory's holistic, syncretic outlook prevented it from developing a theory of specifically *political* authority. To do so would have implied a fetishization of politics as something apart from the social totality. "A general definition of authority," Horkheimer wrote, "would be necessarily extremely empty, like all conceptual definitions which attempt to define single moments of social life in a way which encompasses all of history. . . . General concepts, which form the basis of social theory, can only be understood in their correct meaning in connection with the other general and specific concepts of theory, that is, as moments of a specific theoretical structure." [21]

Reflecting its roots in Marxism, Critical Theory tended to see politics as more epiphenomenal than the socio-economic substructure. Although the Frankfurt School had already begun to question the derivative nature of culture assumed by mechanistic Marxists, it was slower to do the same for politics. Even with the introduction of political scientists such as Franz Neumann and Otto Kirchheimer into the Institut, there was little impetus for the development of an autonomous theory of politics. In fact, only after they left the Institut did Neumann and Kirchheimer develop a sensitivity to the "primacy of politics" in the twentieth century.[22] Until then, they shared an underestimation of the political sphere with the other Institut members, which had been a hallmark of almost all nineteenth-century thought from Marx to the classical economists.[23] Only in the late thirties, when Pollock developed a notion of "state capitalism" that stressed the role of governmental control, did the Institut begin to investigate the political component in political economy. On the whole, however, as Marcuse was later to write, "If there was one matter about which the author of these essays [*Negations*] and his friends were *not* uncertain, it was the understanding that the fascist state was fascist society, and that totalitarian violence and totalitarian reason came from the structure of existing society, which was in the act of overcoming its liberal past and incorporating its historical negation." [24] Because the Institut saw "society" [25] as the fundamental reality, it perceived no need to develop a discrete theory of political authority or obligation. When in fact it did examine such theories, as in the case of Marcuse's analysis of Carl Schmitt,[26] it did so largely to unmask their ideological character. One of the ironies of the Institut's slowness to acknowledge the new primacy of politics was that at this very time, the orthodoxy in the Soviet Union itself had shifted in that direction, stressing political voluntarism rather than objective condi-

tions. Stalin, who was responsible for the theoretical change, was merely ratifying the reality of Soviet practice.[27]

Critical Theory did, however, have an implicit theory of political authority, which was ultimately grounded in its philosophical assumptions. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Hegelian notion of the identity of subject and object, particular and universal, essence and appearance played a key role in the genesis of Critical Theory. Reason, the guiding principle of the Institut's thinking, meant essentially the synthesis of these opposites, the reconciliation of social as well as political antagonisms. In Marcuse's work, identity theory played a greater role than in Horkheimer's. Adorno was at the other end of the spectrum from Marcuse, but still within a Hegelian framework based on the utopian reconciliation of contradictions. Translated into political terms, this meant the classical notion of "positive freedom," combining an end to political alienation with adherence to universally valid rational laws. "The democratic state," Horkheimer wrote in 1942, "should be like the idea of the Greek polis without slaves." [28] Accordingly, the alternative idea of "negative freedom," most often identified with Christian and liberal theorists, was anathema to the Institut. Freedom, as Fromm argued in *Escape from Freedom*,[29] meant "freedom to," not merely "freedom from." And in Marcuse's words, "We know that *freedom is an eminently political concept.* Real freedom for individual existence (and not merely in the liberalist sense) is possible only in a specifically structured polis, a 'rationally' organized society." [30]

There was therefore a type of political authority that might be called legitimate: the authority of reason. It might be noted in passing that insofar as Fromm agreed with this notion, John Schaar's critique of his work, entitled *Escape from Authority*, is misnamed. In an ideal political system, the individual would obey his government because it would truly represent his interests. In fact, the distinction between governed and government would tend to disappear, thereby realizing Marx's withering away of the state as an external apparatus to coerce men. The perfect democracy, or isonomy, which Rousseau among others had espoused, would thus be realized when men followed their own reason. In his more utopian moments Horkheimer went so far as to question all political power. The question of what one should do with power, he wrote during the war, "presupposes the condition which is supposed to disappear: the power of disposition over alienated labor." [31]

In the interim, however, he and the other Institut members were careful to warn against the premature dissolution of political author-

ity. More than once they attacked the anarchists for their impatience.[32] Until a true social transformation occurred, they stressed the necessity of rational authority similar to that exercised by an educator over his pupils. This, however, had been more a possibility during the liberal era than in the present.[33] In the current age of monopoly capitalism, both the free entrepreneur and the autonomous political subject were threatened with liquidation. Thus, the vaunted pluralism of the liberal democracies of the West had degenerated into little more than an ideology. "True pluralism," Horkheimer wrote, "belongs to the concept of a future society." [34] Increasingly, the political authority that dominated modern man was becoming irrational.

In so arguing, it should be noted, the Institut had taken a position very different from that assumed by Max Weber, whose idea of the rationalization of authority came to dominate much American social scientific thinking at about the same time. In *Economy and Society*[35] Weber had developed his well-known tripartite typology of imperative coordination (or legitimate authority): charismatic, traditional, and rational-legal. In general, he saw the ascendancy of rational-legal authority as the secular trend of Western civilization. By rationalization, however, Weber meant something very different from what the Institut did. Briefly, to Weber, rational-legal authority signified obedience to an abstract, consistent system of rules established by agreement or imposition and implemented by a bureaucratic staff. Obligation was to laws, not men. The bureaucracy was composed of officials chosen by regular procedures on the basis of administrative competence. Calculability, efficiency, and impersonality were the basic characteristics of this pattern of authority.

The Frankfurt School did not deny the trend towards bureaucratic rationality and legal formalism (although writing during the era of rising fascism, they could appreciate, as Weber could not, the fragility of the latter). What they did find inadequate was the reduction of rationality to its formal, instrumental side. More Hegelian than Weber, who was schooled in neo-Kantianism, they argued for a substantive rationalism involving ends as well as means. Although Weber had recognized the distinction between formal and substantive rationality,[36] he did not feel, as the Institut did, that socialism would resolve the conflict between them. If anything, so Weber thought, socialism would tighten the screws on the "iron cage" of rationalization. Moreover, by pointing to the frequent incursion of charisma into even the most rationalized systems of authority, Weber demonstrated his sensitivity to the dangers of that combina-

tion of rationalized means and irrational ends which was so characteristic of fascism.

The Frankfurt School could be in agreement with this latter observation but not with the former. Where Weber also failed in their eyes was in hypostatizing the distinction between ends and means, a false dichotomy that was further reflected in his belief in the possibility of a "value-free" social science. In addition, the Institut rejected Weber's contention that capitalism was the highest form of socio-economic rationality. As Marxists, they repudiated the notion that an unplanned economy without socialized means of production could be anything but irrational. Accordingly, political authority in a capitalist society could not be rational in the substantive sense of reconciling particular and general interests.[37]

In fact, it was their belief that capitalism in its advanced, monopolistic stage actually decreased the rationality of political authority. The formal, legal rationality that Weber had described corresponded more closely to conditions during the liberal phase of bourgeois society, which were characterized by belief in the *Rechtsstaat* (constitutional state). As capitalism had evolved in a monopolistic direction, liberal political and legal institutions were increasingly replaced by totalitarian ones. Those that remained were little more than the facade for new types of irrational authority. Rationality was itself severely threatened. "The fascist order," Horkheimer wrote during the war, "is the reason in which reason reveals itself as irrational." [38]

However, the transformation from liberalism to totalitarianism was more organic than liberal theorists acknowledged. As Marcuse wrote in his first essay in the *Zeitschrift*: "The turn from the liberalist to the total-authoritarian state occurs within the framework of a single social order. With regard to the unity of this economic base, we can say it is liberalism that 'produces' the total-authoritarian state out of itself, as its own consummation at a more advanced stage of development." [39] In short, fascism was intimately related to capitalism itself. In one of his most frequently quoted phrases, Horkheimer wrote in 1939, "he who does not wish to speak of capitalism should also be silent about fascism." [40] As we shall see, however, when we discuss Franz Neumann's *Behemoth*, the Institut was never fully in agreement about what this relation really was.

Marcuse's article "The Struggle against Liberalism in the Totalitarian View of the State" is worth examining in detail because of the number of points he makes that were subsequently developed in other works by the Institut. The essay is also a model of dialectical thinking, treating totalitarianism as both a reaction to and a continu-

ation of certain trends in liberalism. Originally, Marcuse argued, the totalitarian world view began as a response to the regimenting rationalization of life and the desiccating intellectualization of thought in the nineteenth century. The "anemia" of bourgeois existence was countered by an ideology of heroic vitalism. The arid, brittle quality of nineteenth-century philosophy, both materialist and idealist, produced its corrective in *Lebensphilosophie.* But by the twentieth century the valid insights of Dilthey and Nietzsche had degenerated into a mindless irrationalism, whose function, as Horkheimer often noted,[41] was as a justification for the status quo. Similarly, Marcuse argued, the traditional liberal emphasis on inwardness, its "privatization of reason," [42] and the reduction of freedom to its "negative" dimension gave rise to a universalistic reaction, in which the totality — in Germany, the *Volk* — was made superior to the individual. The facade of a classless society, the ideological *Volksgemeinschaft,* was thus erected on the foundation of continued class rule by the capitalists.

Both a reaction to liberalism and a continuation of one of its assumptions was the totalitarian apotheosis of nature. Liberal economics, Marcuse pointed out, had always been based on the premise of "natural laws." "Here," he wrote, "in the center of the liberalist system, society is interpreted through its reduction to 'nature' in its harmonizing function: as the evasive justification of a contradictory social order." [43] What was new in totalitarianism, however, was the combination of naturalism with irrationalism. Nature had been elevated in *völkisch* thought to a mythic status; the *Volk* was transformed into the central natural reality. Nature, with all its brutality and incomprehensibility, was transformed into the "great antagonist of history," [44] absolutizing the irrationalities of the present order. One of its results was the ethic of self-sacrifice and ascetic denial characteristic of heroic realism.

In attempting to justify this perverse condition, totalitarian theory, as demonstrated in the work of Carl Schmitt, could offer only one solution: "That there is a state of affairs that through its very existence and presence is *exempt* from all justification, i.e., an 'existential,' 'ontological' state of affairs—justification by mere existence." [45] Marcuse's trenchant discussion of political existentialism gave evidence of the distance he had traveled since joining the Institut in 1932. He now argued that Heidegger's position before *Being and Time* was "philosophy's furthest advance" [46] in regaining the concrete subject denied by abstract rationalism from Descartes to Husserl. What followed, however, was a reaction in which abstract anthropology replaced concrete history in order to justify the natu-

ralistic ideology of heroic realism. Marcuse then quoted from Heidegger's notorious pro-Nazi inaugural speech of 1933, "The Self-Assertion of the German University," to show how far existentialism had joined forces with irrational naturalism in glorifying earth and blood as the true forces of history.

The more self-consciously political variation of existentialism, as exemplified by Schmitt, was even more sinister to Marcuse. By reducing politics to existential relationships unencumbered by ethical norms, Schmitt and his ilk had carried the notion of sovereignty to its extreme. "Sovereign," Schmitt had written, "is he who decides on the state of emergency." [47] Sovereignty was thus rooted in the right to make decisions, which was granted to the state. The individual, who had been rescued by earlier *Lebensphilosophie*, was now made subservient to the state. "With the realization of the total-authoritarian state," Marcuse wrote, "existentialism abolishes itself — rather it undergoes abolition." [48] What began philosophically as a protest thus ended politically in capitulation to the dominant forces of society.

There was in all of this one small consolation: "In consciously politicizing the concept of existence, and deprivatizing and deinternalizing the liberalist, idealist conception of man, the totalitarian view of the state represents progress — progress that leads beyond the basis of the totalitarian state, propelling the theory beyond the social order that it affirms." [49] Still, Marcuse stressed, it ought to be recognized that the ideological reconciliation of interests in the *völkisch* state should not be confused with the real reconciliation promised by Marx. As Horkheimer was to write during the war, the fascist *Verstaatlichung* (nationalization) was the opposite of the Marxist *Vergesellschaftlichung* (socialization).[50] It was also a betrayal of the Hegelian notion of the state as the reconciliation of contradictions. In fact, Marcuse argued, anticipating his more extensive discussion in *Reason and Revolution*, the Nazis and Hegel were fundamentally incompatible, despite the popular assumption to the contrary. Critical idealism and existentialism were in reality polar opposites.

In any event, the clearest implication of Marcuse's essay, and one that was shared by other Institut members,[51] was that liberalism along with the economic base that had sustained it was irretrievably dead. The future held only the totalitarian authoritarianism of the right or the liberating collectivism of the left. That a third possibility, what Marcuse was later to call "one-dimensional" society, would emerge from the polarization of the thirties was only dimly perceived by the Institut in the years before the war. Nor did the Frankfurt School allow for the possibility of a retention of certain elements of

liberal society in the post-market economy world. By stressing the continuities between liberalism and fascism, which, to be sure, had been ignored by those who saw the latter as a right-wing, reactionary movement instead of the middle-class extremism it was,[52] they tended to minimize the very real differences that separated them. To see the irrationalism of fascist ideology as little more than an affirmation of the status quo was to miss those elements of that status quo — the formal legal safeguards, civil liberties, and so on — which were challenged by that abandonment of rationality. Fascism and liberalism may have been "within the framework of a single social order," but the framework proved large enough to encompass very different political and legal systems.

With these assumptions about the nature of political authority in mind, the *Studien über Autorität und Familie* can now be discussed. Although, as Horkheimer made clear in his introduction,[53] the problem of authority and the family was not at the center of a theory of society, it still deserved serious study because of the family's crucial role in mediating between material substructure and ideological superstructure. In fact, it is not surprising that the Institut's neo-Hegelian Marxism should have led it to an examination of familial relations. For Hegel, the family had been the central ethical institution on which the community was ultimately based.[54] Marx, of course, had had a very different evaluation of the family as it concretely appeared in the society he examined. The bourgeois family, he had argued in *The Communist Manifesto*, was a monument of dehumanized alienation. Unlike Hegel, he felt that a civil society fostering egoistic, exchange-value dominated motivations had invaded the family and distorted its "ethical" side. The reality of the bourgeois family, Marx argued, was its commodity nature; that of the proletarian family was its dissolution through external exploitation. The Institut's own approach, as we shall see, mediated between these two perspectives, although tending increasingly towards Marx's more pessimistic one. It also combined the genetic concerns characteristic of most nineteenth-century students of the family, such as Le Play, Maine, and Bachofen, with the interest in the current function of the family displayed by their twentieth-century successors.[55]

The *Studien* was the product of five years of work carried out by the combined Institut staff, with the exception of Grossmann and Adorno (who did not become an official member until after its completion). In its dedication, it remembered the Institut's major benefactor, Felix Weil, who had helped persuade his father to endow the Institut in the early twenties. It was the first real fruit of the plan an-

nounced at Horkheimer's inauguration as professor at Frankfurt to enrich its theoretical perspective with empirical investigations. Although all the information used, with one or two exceptions, was gathered in Europe under the direction of Andries Sternheim, the *Studien* acknowledged the influence of an American forerunner, Robert Lynd's *Middletown*, published in 1929. Horkheimer edited the first part, which consisted of theoretical essays; Fromm the second, devoted to empirical studies; and Lowenthal the third, composed of separate investigations of various related problems. These were followed by extensive bibliographical essays and abstracts in English and French.

Appropriately, in view of the Institut's adherence to the primacy of theory, the initial section of the *Studien* was given over to three long speculative essays by Horkheimer, Fromm, and Marcuse. A fourth, prepared by Pollock on the economics of authority relations, was not finished in time because of his administrative duties. Horkheimer set the tone for the entire volume in his "General Section." He began by establishing the rationale for so closely examining the cultural side of modern society. Although not rejecting the Marxist stress on the centrality of the material substructure, he argued for the reciprocal interaction that inevitably existed between it and the superstructure. Using as examples Chinese ancestor worship and the Indian caste system, he explored the "cultural lag" [56] that often obtains after the original socio-economic cause has disappeared. Ideas and behavioral patterns may have lost their objective — that is, material — justification, but still persist because men are subjectively and emotionally committed to them. Only with this understood could the subtleties of authority relations be adequately appreciated.

The second section of Horkheimer's essay dealt with the historical development of authority in the bourgeois world. Here he expatiated on many of the ideas treated elsewhere in the Institut's work. Horkheimer laid special emphasis on the disparity between the bourgeois ideology of antiauthoritarianism and the increasing submission of the individual to the reified authority of an irrational socio-economic order. He was careful, however, to argue against the total antiauthoritarianism of Bakunin and other anarchists who misunderstood the material preconditions necessary for true freedom. Only when general and particular interests were reconciled would the formalistic opposition of authority and reason hypostatized by the anarchists be finally overcome. "Anarchism," Horkheimer wrote, "and authoritarian statism both belong to the same cultural epoch." [57]

With this as a background, Horkheimer turned to the function of

the family in the process of socialization. Here he drew a distinction between the family in the era of bourgeois liberalism and its contemporary counterpart. In the former, the father enjoyed the authority that accompanied his objective role as economic provider, in addition to his other sources of authority, such as physical superiority over his children. To this extent, he was both the natural and the rational head of his household. With the undermining of his objective social power in the late capitalist era, however, his authority had become increasingly ideological and irrational. The working class family was particularly susceptible to this crucial change because of its precarious economic condition. With the decline of the father's authority went a transfer of his "metaphysical" aura to social institutions outside the family. These institutions now enjoyed the immunity from criticism that the early bourgeois father had to some extent earned. Misfortune was thus blamed on personal inadequacy or natural causes rather than on social ones. Acceptance of impotence as inevitable, rather than active self-assertion, was the result.[58]

This part of Horkheimer's analysis was in the same spirit as Marx's critique of the bourgeois family, although it was enriched by a more developed psychological understanding of interpersonal relations. However, Horkheimer did not entirely reject Hegel's alternative notion of the family as a preserve of ethical resistance against social dehumanization. Where he criticized Hegel was for his shortsighted hypostatization of the opposition between family and civil society. Antigone's relationship to her brother, which Hegel interpreted as a symbol of the inevitable antagonism between family and society, was to Horkheimer a foretaste of the rational society of the future.[59] He did, however, agree with Marx's observation that the "negative," critical thrust of familial life and conjugal love had been seriously eroded in bourgeois society more than Hegel had grasped. In the twentieth century this trend was even more pronounced. For example, simply to oppose a matriarchal principle in Bachofen's sense to the current patriarchal society would be to ignore the subtle transformation of the woman's role in modern life. As Strindberg and Ibsen had illustrated in their plays, so Horkheimer argued, the emancipation of women in bourgeois society proved less of a liberation than once assumed. Women in most cases had adapted to the system and become a conservative force through their total dependence on their husbands. In fact, children learned to obey the prevailing order at their mother's knee, despite the potential for an alternative social system implicit in the traditional matriarchal ethic of warmth, acceptance, and love.

In short, Horkheimer recognized a dialectical relationship between

family and society, at once reinforcing and contradictory, but with the negative element on the decline. Thus the essay ended on a pessimistic note: "The education of authoritarian characters . . . does not belong to transient appearances, but to a relatively lasting condition. . . . The dialectical totality of generality, particularity, and individuality proves now to be the unity of mutually reinforcing forces." [60] The major implication of his essay, and that of the *Studien* as a whole, was the transformation of the family's role in the process of socialization. Because of the decline of the "negative," countersocial function of the family, individuals were more directly socialized by other institutions in the society. As we shall see when examining the Institut's discussion of mass culture, these alternative agents of socialization were instrumental in creating a type of "authoritarian personality" more subtle and resistant to change than any in premodern societies. The crisis of the family was to be a topic appearing again and again in subsequent work by Institut members and others, such as the psychologist Alexander Mitscherlich,[61] who were influenced by them.

The second essay in the theoretical section of the *Studien*, Fromm's "Social Psychological Section," also had considerable resonance in future Institut work. In the mid-thirties, as explained in Chapter 3, Fromm's attitude towards orthodox psychoanalysis was very much in flux. As a consequence, his essay expressed a certain ambivalence towards Freud. It began with the acknowledgment that Freud's theory of mass psychology and the superego was the best starting point for a general psychological analysis of authority. Having said this, however, Fromm quickly pointed to the shortcomings he saw in psychoanalytic theory. Freud, he argued, sometimes assigned the reality principle to the rational ego, sometimes to the superego, whereas in a healthy society it ought to belong only to the former. Freud was also too simplistic in his notion of identification as the primary source of the superego, although identification was a useful analytical tool.[62] He was especially wrong, Fromm continued, in basing the child's identification with his father solely on the Oedipus complex and fear of castration. There were other specifically socio-economic factors, he argued, which also affected the authority relationship.

In fact, the progress of society itself was a major influence on the relative strength of the ego and superego in repressing the socially dangerous impulses of the id. With the development of the productive powers of mankind, human control of nature, both within and outside man, had grown. This meant the increase of man's capacity to create a rational society ruled by his ego, rather than by his tradi-

tionally formed superego. Freud, however, had neglected the active side of ego development and overstressed its adaptive quality.[63] With a strengthened ego, Fromm continued, freedom from irrational anxiety would be maximized and authority derived from the superego lessened. If, on the other hand, social conditions were out of phase with the productive powers, the development of a strong ego would be hindered, leading to a regression to irrational authority rooted in the superego. As Ferenczi had demonstrated, the loss of ego in hypnotic situations led to an authority relation between therapist and patient that was clearly irrational.

Fromm, however, was not completely satisfied with the loss of ego as an explanation of the ardor with which some people embraced authority. Nor was he willing to accept an innate drive for subordination, such as that postulated by McDougall or Vierkandt.[64] Instead, he attempted to integrate his historical causation with psychosexual concepts derived largely from Freud. Anticipating his later argument in *Escape from Freedom*, he offered the sado-masochistic character as the core of the authoritarian personality. In 1936 he grounded it primarily in sexuality, whereas in his later formulation it was based on the "existentialist" categories of alienation and symbiotic relatedness.[65]

Fromm agreed with Freud that both masochism and sadism were part of a unified character syndrome, adding that authoritarian societies based on hierarchy and dependency increased the likelihood of its appearance. Masochism in such societies, he argued, manifested itself in the passive acceptance of "fate," the force of "facts," "duty," "God's will," and so on.[66] Although difficult to explain fully, the pleasures of inferiority were derived negatively from its liberation of the individual from his anxiety, positively from his feeling of participation in power. They were also related, Fromm argued, to a weakening of heterosexual, genital sexuality and a regression to pregenital, especially anal, libidinous stages. Homosexual identification with the powers above, more often spiritual than corporeal, was another characteristic of sado-masochistic authoritarianism. This latter aspect of the syndrome was especially pronounced in patriarchal cultures in which men were presumed to be inherently superior to women and were thus transformed into the objects of masochistic love.

Fromm concluded his essay by discussing types of reactions against authority. Here he distinguished between "rebellions," which simply replace one irrational authority with another without signifying a real change in underlying character, and "revolutions," which did reflect such a change. The latter, which Fromm admitted were

far less frequent, implied an ego strong enough to withstand the blandishments of irrational sado-masochistic authority. In rational, democratic societies, the leaders who did emerge enjoyed an authority based on capability, experience, and disinterestedness rather than metaphysical, innate superiority. Therefore, not all antiauthoritarian impulses were justified. "Rebellions" were pseudo-liberations in which the individual was really seeking a new irrational authority to love, even when he seemed most antagonistic to all authority. The resentful anarchist and the rigid authoritarian were thus not as far apart as they might appear at first glance. This accounted for the sudden embrace of authority that often characterized the seemingly libertarian anarchist.

Fromm's contribution to the *Studien*'s theoretical section struck an optimistic note in its support for the possibility of reconciling a strong individual ego, mature heterosexual genital sexuality, and a rational, democratic society. As discussed in the previous chapter, his adherence to this position in the following years, combined with his diminution of the importance of sexuality, increasingly distanced him from other Institut members. Horkheimer and Adorno, as we shall see, began to question the nature-dominating, rational ego that Fromm had so strongly supported. And Marcuse, as we have already seen, rejected the notion of heterosexual genitality as the standard of psychic health most compatible with the good society. In the thirties, however, all Institut members accepted the general contours of Fromm's psychosocial utopia with little qualification.

Marcuse, who was to become Fromm's most outspoken opponent in the fifties, was not yet a serious student of Freud. The essay that he contributed to the *Studien*'s theoretical section was a rather straightforward intellectual history of theories of authority. This and the bibliographical essay he also wrote for the volume[67] demonstrated not only his indifference to psychology, but also his noninvolvement with the Institut's empirical work based on psychological categories. Of all the members of the Frankfurt School, Marcuse was least empirically inclined, a fact that his critics in later years never tired of rehearsing.[68]

In his "Intellectual Historical Section," Marcuse developed many of the points made elsewhere in *Zeitschrift* articles. He began by stressing once again the intrinsic connection between freedom and authority, which bourgeois theorists had so often failed to acknowledge. Instead, he pointed out, they posited the notion of negative freedom, most characteristically formulated by Kant, which meant the separation of inner and outer selves. Internal autonomy was preserved at the cost of external heteronomy. The antiauthoritarian pre-

tensions of bourgeois theory masked the metaphysical sanction it gave to the prevailing social order. And under capitalism this order remained inevitably irrational.[69]

In the series of brief intellectual historical sketches that followed, Marcuse outlined the classic forms of negative freedom as they appeared in the thought of the Reformation and of Kant. Missing, however, were such theorists in between as Hobbes, Locke, Hume, and Rousseau, whose thinking rarely appeared in any of the Institut's discussions of "bourgeois" theory.[70] What followed instead were sections devoted to challengers of the bourgeois notion of freedom from both the left and right: Hegel, Burke, Bonald, de Maistre, Stahl, and Marx himself. Marcuse finished by turning to the transformation of the liberal ideas of freedom and authority into their totalitarian successor. Here he focused on the work of Sorel and Pareto, whose theories of elitism, he argued, anticipated both the fascist "leader principle" and the Leninist notion of the party. The core of totalitarian theory, Marcuse continued, was irrational formalism. The source of authority was no longer grounded in universal law or social preeminence, but was understood instead to be derived from "natural" or racial right. The substance of totalitarian theory was entirely without positive content; all its concepts were counterconcepts, such as antiliberalism or anti-Marxism. The bourgeois preserve of internal, "negative" freedom had been liquidated, leaving only obedience to heteronomous authority.

All three of the essays in the theoretical section were obviously prepared in coordination with each other. All posited the increasing irrationality of the social order and the concomitant decline of rational authority, political or otherwise. All expressed, on the other hand, a certain confidence in the possibility of a social order in which general authority and particular interest might be reconciled. And finally, all shared the dismay, most strongly voiced in Horkheimer's essay, that the family was rapidly ceasing to be an agent on the side of this possibility.

To add weight to these conclusions, the *Studien* next presented a report of the Institut's empirical work. Although a source of reinforcement and modification, these investigations were never really the essential justification for the Institut's theoretical speculations. Critical Theory, as we have explained earlier, was unremittingly hostile to pure induction as a methodology. "Moreover," Horkheimer and the others explained, "as our experience in this field was limited and the answering of questionnaires meets with special difficulties in Europe, these empirical investigations took on largely the character of an experiment. Nowhere have the results been generalized. The

questionnaires were not considered numerous enough to be statistically conclusive. They were intended only to keep us in contact with the facts of daily life and were destined to serve primarily as material for typological conclusions." [71] Fromm, to be sure, felt more positively about their validity,[72] but Horkheimer's views prevailed.

Yet, fragmentary and inclusive as the empirical studies were, they provided valuable methodological experience, which aided the Institut in all its subsequent investigations of authority. Except for a brief preliminary report on the psychic state of the unemployed in America, all the empirical work discussed in the *Studien* had been done in Europe, directly before the expulsion from Germany or immediately thereafter in other countries. The most extensive was based on the questionnaires Fromm had developed to test the psychological status of workers and clerical employees. Although, as mentioned before, some 586 of the three thousand original questionnaires were salvaged, there seemed sufficient variation to support a tripartite division of psychological types: authoritarian, revolutionary, and ambivalent. (Significantly, the antithesis of the "authoritarian" type was called "revolutionary". By the time of *The Authoritarian Personality*. after the Institut had been in America for over a decade, it had changed to the "democratic," a shift of emphasis that reflected the dampening of the Institut's revolutionary fervor.) The quantitative generalizations drawn from the material by Fromm and Lazarsfeld were not, however, published nor was an attempt made to correlate it with the subsequent performance of the German working class when the Nazis came to power.

Other studies were similarly modest in their conclusions. Only a third of the answers to a survey of German physicians' attitudes towards sexual morality, conducted in 1932, were received. Thus, although representative examples were given, followed by some observations from Holland by Karl Landauer, no attempt was made to generalize the material. Caution was also displayed in analyzing a dual study of youthful authority patterns, although here the evidence was more extensive. Surveys had been conducted both of experts on youth in various countries and of adolescents themselves. The former were summarized by Andries Sternheim and a new member of the Institut's junior staff, Ernst Schachtel, who had been a friend of Fromm's since their student days in Heidelberg.[73] Jay Rumney added a brief description of a separate study of English experts conducted by the London branch of the Institut, which was still in progress. These were followed by reports on surveys of adolescents in Switzerland, France, and England. Käthe Leichter directed the Swiss investigations, with the methodological advice of a refugee from

Vienna who was soon to become more deeply involved in Institut affairs, Paul Lazarsfeld. Less complete were the investigations made in Paris, reported by Jeanne Bouglé and Anne Weil, and London, described once again by Rumney. The final contributions to the *Studien*'s empirical section were reports of preliminary studies of the effects of unemployment in France and America, which anticipated a later work by Mirra Komarovsky to which we shall soon return.

From his own project on the workers' authoritarianism, Fromm was able to draw certain methodological conclusions.[74] First was the necessity of treating the totality of answers, rather than isolated ones, as the basis for analysis. The goal, as stated earlier, was the uncovering of the respondents' underlying character types, which were revealed only through the complete set of their answers and in comparison with other sets. This, however, required something more than inductive generalization. In Fromm's words, "as much as the formation of types is influenced and should be permanently differentiated by the material of the investigation, the types cannot be exclusively acquired from classification, but presuppose a developed psychological theory." [75] The sado-masochistic character he had described earlier was the product of such a theory. To correlate the evidence from the questionnaires with a theoretical model, Fromm admitted, required interpretive skill, but if done with sufficient deliberation it need not lead to distortions of the material. Other supporting evidence, even graphology, which Schachtel attempted to use with mixed results, might be adduced with effect.

Once correlations between certain specific answers and the more general character types could be established, these might be related to other data such as social class or religious belief. The important point, however, was that behind all the empirical operations there must be a global theory. The most fruitful, Fromm implied, was of course Critical Theory. In fact, as Schachtel was to argue at some length in a subsequent *Zeitschrift* article,[76] American personality tests were inadequate precisely because of their antitheoretical basis. Besides this more general conclusion, more specific ones followed, but clearly the Institut's empirical efforts were still at a relatively primitive stage, at least in comparison with its later work, where content analysis and projective tests were introduced to good advantage.

The *Studien*'s third section, edited by Lowenthal, included sixteen studies, many of almost monographic length.[77] Because of lack of space in the volume itself, which still totaled more than nine hundred pages, many of these were presented as abstracts, and because of a similar problem here they cannot be treated separately. Several of the essays dealt specifically with the effects of economics on the fam-

ily, which had been neglected in the theoretical section. Others treated legal questions involving familial relations in various countries. Strikingly absent in this section, as in the *Studien* as a whole, was a study of anti-Semitism and its relation to authoritarianism. This was perhaps a reflection of the Institut's general minimization of the Jewish problem, which has been noted earlier. Pollock, when questioned about it, replied "one didn't want to advertise that." [78] It perhaps also corresponded to the Institut's unwillingness to draw unnecessary attention to the overwhelmingly Jewish origins of its members. Whatever the cause, the neglect was not long-lived. In 1939 Horkheimer published an essay on "The Jews and Europe," [79] one of his most despairing, and the Institut began to draw up plans for a major study of anti-Semitism. Although never completed as initially conceived, this plan served as a forerunner of the "Studies in Prejudice" directed in part by the Institut in the forties, several of which dealt with the problem of anti-Semitism. The objective that the Institut's founders had used to help persuade Hermann Weil to endow the Institut in the early twenties was thus not really achieved until two decades later, long after the Institut had first attempted to explore authoritarianism in the *Studien.* Yet without the experience provided by the first collaborative effort of the Institut, it is unlikely that its subsequent work on this question, as on many others, would have proceeded in quite the same way.

Although the *Studien* was an important link in the Institut's own development, its impact on the outside world was mixed. Largely because of its appearance in German, the American academic community was slow to assimilate its findings and methodology. This process was not abetted by the extremely hostile review the work received in the New School's journal, *Social Research,* at the hands of Hans Speier.[80] Not only did the Institut's Marxist tinge arouse the New School's ire, but so did its enthusiasm for Freud. Max Wertheimer, the founder of Gestalt psychology, was the doyen of the New School's psychologists from 1934 until his death in 1943. His disdain for psychoanalysis was echoed in Speier's disparaging review. As noted in the previous chapter, the integration of Marx and Freud was still a butt of ridicule in the 1930's, and not only at the New School. The reception of the *Studien* suffered accordingly.

The Institut's interest in the issue of authoritarianism did not, however, wane following the completion of the *Studien.* As the Nazi threat grew, so did the intensity of the Institut's attempt to understand it. The results were of sufficient richness to warrant a discussion of their own, which will occupy us in the next chapter. Before

focusing on the German case, however, the full range of the Institut's explorations of authoritarianism must be made clear. In fact, one of the key elements in the Institut's interpretation of Nazism was the belief that the phenomenon could not be isolated from general trends in Western civilization as a whole.

Even more ambitiously, the Institut attempted to situate the crisis of Western civilization in a global context. Here it relied on its experts in non-European affairs to broaden the scope of its work. The methodology that they used, however, tended to diverge from that employed in the *Studien.* This was especially true of the work of Karl August Wittfogel, whose distance from Critical Theory has already been stressed. Despite the gap between his approach and Horkheimer's, his studies of China appeared in the *Zeitschrift* during the 1930's with some regularity.[81] Enriched by almost three years of research in the Far East after 1935, Wittfogel's work continued to be based on more orthodox Marxist premises than those of the Institut's inner circle. Although sponsored in his research by the Institut, he also received support from the Rockefeller Foundation and the Institute of Pacific Relations. In the forties Wittfogel became increasingly independent of the Institut, both ideologically and financially. But in the several years after his return from China, his connection was prized as a link to the American academic world. The Institut's short historical accounts of those years always included extensive mention of his work, and he was prominently featured in the Institut's lecture series at Columbia's Extension Division. After his third marriage in 1940 to Esther Goldfrank, however, his role in the Institut diminished gradually, until it finally withered away in 1947.

The other major contributor to the Institut's non-European studies of authority was one of its founders, Felix Weil. Although Weil never broke with the Horkheimer group on ideological or political grounds, he too was little affected by Critical Theory. In 1944 his *Argentine Riddle*,[82] an analysis of the country he had known from birth, was published in New York, although not under Institut auspices. As in Wittfogel's more formidable studies of Chinese history, there was little evidence of the effect of the *Studien*'s methodology.

The first American study to show the Institut's methodological influence was Mirra Komarovsky's *The Unemployed Man and His Family*,[83] published in 1940. An outgrowth of research conducted in Newark in 1935–1936, it was a collaborative effort with Paul Lazarsfeld's Research Center of the University of Newark.[84] Lazarsfeld, who had received Institut support for sponsoring the project, wrote the introduction and helped with the typological classifications, which he had previously outlined in the *Zeitschrift.*[85] The project

used qualitative rather than quantitative techniques to explore the effects of the Depression on familial life.

Substantively, the study dealt with the impact of unemployment on fifty-nine families recommended by the Emergency Relief Administration. Various members of the family were subjected to a series of interviews designed to reveal changes in familial relationships. On the whole, the results confirmed the *Studien*'s argument about the decline of the contemporary family's authority. They also implied the increased atomization of man in mass society, for, as Miss Komarovsky wrote, "the unemployed man and his wife have no social life outside the family. The extent of the social isolation of the family is truly striking." [86] Still, her interpretation of the implications of these changes was less gloomy than those of subsequent Institut studies in the forties. Miss Komarovsky articulated her own viewpoint more than that of Horkheimer and the other central Institut figures when she wrote: "Even a partial breakdown of parental authority in the family as an effect of the depression might tend to increase the readiness of coming generations to accept social change." [87] The longer the Institut remained in America, the more it became convinced that the opposite was true. Whether or not they or Miss Komarovsky will be proved right in the long run, the crisis in familial relations, more recently popularized as the "generation gap," was to become an increasing object of scholarly study and popular concern. Here, as in so many other instances, the Frankfurt School anticipated later issues of widespread interest.

Before we discuss the empirical work in the forties supporting the Institut's growing pessimism, which we shall do in Chapter 7, other Institut treatments of authority that had a less empirical perspective should be mentioned. Particularly suggestive were the analyses of cultural phenomena by Adorno, Benjamin, and Lowenthal, which appeared in the *Zeitschrift* in the thirties. Of the three, Lowenthal's approach was most closely related to the *Studien*, partly because he was involved with its preparation, while the others were not. Although echoes of its conclusions appear in Benjamin's and Adorno's articles — for example, in Adorno's discussion of Wagner[88] — the aesthetic theories that informed their work are sufficiently idiosyncratic to deserve separate treatment, which they will receive in a subsequent chapter. Lowenthal's work, on the other hand, was rooted in a more straightforward sociology of literature, which allowed him to discern traces of many of the patterns of authority explored in the *Studien*.

From 1928 until 1931 Lowenthal had been engaged in a lengthy study of nineteenth-century German narrative literature, which was entitled *Narrative Art and Society: The Social Problematic in the German Literature of the Nineteenth Century.*[89] Levin Schücking's writings on the sociology of taste, the criticism of Georg Brandes, and most importantly Georg Lukács's *The Theory of the Novel* were among the few models Lowenthal chose to emulate. Included in the study were essays on Goethe, the Romantics, Young Germany (especially Gutzkow), Eduard Mörike, Gustav Freytag, Friedrich Spielhagen, Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, and Gottfried Keller. Close textual critiques alternated with analyses of the psychological and sociological influences on the various authors. Although Lowenthal avoided a reductionist approach, he did attempt to situate the literature in its historical context. Thus, for example, the Young Germans were interpreted as the first real representatives of bourgeois class-consciousness, fighting as they did for the intellectual equivalent of the *Zollverein* with its lack of restrictions on competition.[90] In opposition to their Romantic predecessors, they wrote works in which men were securely at home in their world, a trend that would intensify in the novels of the mid-century realists and culminate in Freytag's *Debit and Credit*, the "most unidealistic and unromantic book of the nineteenth century." [91]

Lowenthal, however, considered the work unfinished, and with the pressure of his new duties as managing editor of the *Zeitschrift*, he was unable to prepare it for immediate publication. Instead, several selections from it were included in subsequent collections.[92] The opening essay, a study of the methodology he had used, was published in the initial issue of the *Zeitschrift.*[93] In it he outlined the tasks of a sociologist of literature.

In so doing, he attempted to walk a thin line between the literary criticism of orthodox Marxists such as Franz Mehring and the idealistic alternative most recently posed by the New Criticism. Although the critic, so he argued, must not reduce art to a simple reflex of social trends, he may legitimately see in art the indirect reflection of a society. To treat works of art as isolated, extra-social phenomena would be to understand them poetically, not critically. Historical analysis, on the other hand, must be enriched by a Diltheyan *Verstehen* (understanding) of the artist's purpose, although qualified by a materialist situating of the artist in his socio-economic milieu. At the same time, a valid literary criticism must be open to the psychology of the artist as a mediating factor between the society and the finished work of art. Here psychoanalysis, despite its relatively rudimentary state, had something to offer.[94] Employing as examples such

writers as Balzac, Zola, Stendhal, and Gutzkow, Lowenthal then attempted to demonstrate the usefulness of his method in analyzing literary form, recurrent motifs, and actual thematic content. The article ended with the mention of yet another area for a materialist critic to investigate: the social effect of literary works. Lowenthal's general theme, as might be expected, was that a sociology of literature must itself be part of a general critical theory of the social totality.

In a series of articles in subsequent *Zeitschrift* issues, Lowenthal put his ideas into practice. As with much of the work of other Institut members, these demonstrated the integrated quality of the Frankfurt School's thought. The first of his critiques dealt with the heroic view of history in Conrad Ferdinand Meyer's fiction.[95] Here many of the themes developed the following year in Marcuse's article "The Struggle against Liberalism in the Totalitarian View of the State" were demonstrated in a different context. History in Meyer's novellas, Lowenthal argued, was reduced to the stage of heroic deeds. Like his Swiss compatriot, the historian Jacob Burckhardt, Meyer sought heroes in the past as anticipations of the great men of the present. In addition, nature in Meyer's work served as the continuation of history by other means; it too was the backdrop for heroic actions. Although stressing individualism, Meyer's stories lacked a developed psychological sense. His heroes were ultimately ineffable; the milieu in which they operated appeared mythical and irrational. What resulted was an implicit ideology of the strong man not unrelated to the Bismarck cult, which flourished at the same time and which Meyer in fact supported in his expository writings.

Lowenthal continued by arguing that despite the patrician elements in Meyer's background, he was closer in some ways to the mentality of the National Liberal industrial magnates. In fact, the patrician-bourgeois mixture in his writings mirrored the actual alliance of the German ruling classes in the Second Reich. "In Germany," Lowenthal wrote, "there was never an actual liberalism as the expression of the class-consciousness of a leading class, but rather a union of large agrarians, businessmen, and the military originating in certain economic and political conditions and extraordinarily susceptible to a heroic irrationalism." [96] In short, what Lowenthal attempted to do was to unmask a historical philosophy based on the rule of great men, which corresponded to a certain phase in Germany's development.

If history had been mythicized in Meyer's work, it was even more severely distorted in the cultural phenomenon that Lowenthal next treated: the reception of Dostoyevsky in Germany before the First

World War.[97] By examining the some eight hundred pieces of critical literature on Dostoyevsky in German, Lowenthal attempted what was really a pioneer study of readers' reactions.[98] In later years, he would admit that the methodology was still relatively crude:

> Had I known at the time about advanced methods of opinion research and projective psychology, I would probably have never designed this study, for it attempts to accomplish the same ends as these methodologies in a primordial fashion. It assumes that the works of a writer serve as projective devices for the display, through widely published commentaries, of hidden traits and tendencies typical for broad strata of a population. In other words, it studies readers' reactions indirectly through the medium of printed material, which is inferred to represent typical group reactions.[99]

However primitive the method, the results tended to confirm the Institut's analysis of authoritarianism. Whereas Meyer's readership had consisted primarily of moderately prosperous members of the middle class, Dostoyevsky, on the other hand, was most widely read by the less successful petite bourgeoisie. His appeal to this most confused and frightened segment of the German population, Lowenthal argued, was derived largely from the consolation his works offered them. In addition, the mythicizing of his personal life contributed to the general acceptance of personal suffering as ennobling and inevitable. *Völkisch* theorists such as Arthur Moeller van den Bruck were particularly drawn to the spiritual reconciliation advocated in his work, to its nationalist transcendence of class conflict and ideology of universal love. Dostoyevsky himself contributed to this reading of his novels by his failure to develop a belief in the possibility of earthly happiness, which was also reflected in his hostility towards political and social radicalism. The emphasis on love and pity that he substituted for political activism was not unlike the *völkisch* distortion of matriarchal theory, leading once again to passivity and dependence.

Unlike Meyer, however, Dostoyevsky did offer a sensitive exposition of internal psychological reality. But paradoxically, this proved one of his major attractions at a time of indecision in German history, between the rising and declining periods of bourgeois power. As his work was interpreted in prewar Germany, *Innerlichkeit* (inwardness) replaced social interaction as the crucial focus of cultural life. Fascination with the disturbed and criminal mentalities that Dostoyevsky so skillfully portrayed expressed a genuine interest in alienation, but one that was ideologically distorted by its blindness to the social origins of this condition.[100] In general, then, so Lowen-

thal argued, the enormous popularity of Dostoyevsky's novels in certain sectors of the German populace betokened an increasing flight from a harsh reality and the growing acceptance of irrational authority. It was thus not surprising that after the war Dostoyevsky was linked to Kierkegaard as a prophet of social resignation.

There were, however, exceptions to the ideological implications of the literature of the late bourgeois period; certain authors, Lowenthal recognized, were able to pierce through the facade of false reconciliation promised by bourgeois culture to expose the less attractive reality beneath. One such writer was the subject of his next *Zeitschrift* study, Henrik Ibsen.[101] To Lowenthal, Ibsen was both a true liberal and one of the most spirited critics of the late liberal era. Although not writing self-conscious "social drama," Ibsen probed the decline of liberalism where it was seemingly most invulnerable: in the sphere of private life and the family. By portraying so vividly the unattainable promise of individual self-realization in an age of destructive competition, Ibsen exploded the liberal myth of personal happiness. "Competition," Lowenthal wrote, "turns out to be not only a struggle for social and economic success among various individuals; it is also an inner struggle in which the individual must drastically curtail certain sides of his own being, his personality, in order to realize his personal ambitions." [102]

Furthermore, by depicting the decline of the family, Ibsen exposed the social penetration of the private sphere through the specialization of roles. "The position of husband, wife, friend, father, or mother," Lowenthal wrote, "is seen as a form of existence at odds with the prerogatives of the individual himself as well as with those of the other members of the family." [103] The families in Ibsen's plays corroborated the conclusions the *Studien* had reached about the decreasing function of the family as a preserve of human interaction: the only truly human relationships in the plays seemed to occur at the moment of a character's death, when society's bonds were finally transcended. In place of the optimism that characterized art in an earlier bourgeois era, Ibsen's dramas radiated despair and disillusionment. To Lowenthal, Ibsen offered no way out: "Two parallel themes run throughout Ibsen's works: the one shows an effort to live up to established social values and ideals only to meet with defeat, and the other shows the defeat of those who reject these values and have nothing to put in their place." [104]

The one exception, Lowenthal admitted, might be seen in Ibsen's female characterizations. Here, he argued, were echoes of the matriarchal alternative Fromm had discussed in the *Zeitschrift*. "The clash between the self-seeking world of men and the love and humanity

represented by women is crucial in Ibsen's dramas." [105] Female egotism as it was depicted by Ibsen expressed a legitimate demand for material happiness, unlike the empty idealism of many of his male characters. Yet the reality of feminine existence in the late nineteenth century, which Ibsen's plays also showed, betrayed the principles his female characters espoused. Their negation of the prevailing reality remained entirely without consequence.

The same, Lowenthal pointed out, might be said of another of the metaphors of protest frequently found in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century literature: nature as a superior alternative to society. In perhaps his most insightful essay, Lowenthal turned to the distortion of this counterimage in the novels of the Norwegian Knut Hamsun.[106] When in 1934 Lowenthal first argued that Hamsun's works contained only a pseudonegation of the status quo, he was met with skepticism by other members of the Institut.[107] *Hunger*, *Pan*, *The Growth of the Soil*, and other of Hamsun's works were understood as genuine protests against the alienation and emptiness of modern life. Lowenthal, however, had the satisfaction of having his counterargument "proved" a few years later when Hamsun joined Quisling's collaborators in Norway. This explicit confirmation of the trends Lowenthal had discerned under the surface of Hamsun's novels was one of the most unambiguous successes of the Institut's program.

It was, in fact, in his treatment of nature that Lowenthal had seen anticipations of Hamsun's authoritarianism. In later years, Horkheimer and Adorno would call for a reconciliation of man and nature, but, as we shall see, in a way very different from that depicted in Hamsun's novels. Unlike the romantic idea of nature, most cogently expressed in Rousseau's work, Hamsun's no longer had a critical, progressive edge. In his novels, man was not reconciled with nature; rather, he surrendered to its power and mystery. The traditional liberal goal of mastering nature (which Horkheimer and Adorno were to question in *Dialectic of the Enlightenment*, but which Lowenthal did not criticize here) was abandoned in favor of passive capitulation. "To Hamsun," Lowenthal wrote, "nature means peace, but a peace which has lost its spontaneity and its will to know and to control. It is a peace based on submission to every arbitrary power, a pantheism which offers an escape from the gloomy framework of history. Nature comes to mean the solace of the unchangeable and the all-pervasive." [108] The characteristically Kantian pride in human autonomy was replaced by the acceptance of natural brutality. In Hamsun's work, sentimentality and ruthlessness were combined in a

way typical of Nazism (Goering, for example, was the head of the German version of the ASPCA). The timeless, repetitive rhythms of nature replaced the possibility of human *praxis,* a phenomenon the Institut was later to call "mimesis." "The social counterpart to the law of natural rhythm," Lowenthal wrote, "was a blind discipline." [109] In all of this, he concluded, there was ample evidence of the sado-masochistic character type Fromm had described in the *Studien.*

Further manifestations of Hamsun's authoritarianism included his hero-worship, his glorification of the peasant and traditional life, and his reduction of women to their reproductive and sexual functions alone. All these symptoms, it should be added, were to be found in German *völkisch* literature as well,[110] along with the denigration of urban life and rabid anti-intellectualism of Hamsun's work. As early as 1890 and *Hunger,* Hamsun had shown that vulgarization of *Lebensphilosophie* to which Horkheimer had so often alluded in the *Zeitschrift.* What began as a protest had clearly been turned into a defense of the status quo. As in the reception of Dostoyevsky in Germany, consolation for misery was the message of Hamsun's novels, but a consolation that "turns against those consoled," who "must accept life as it is, and that means the existing relations of domination and subordination, of command and serve." [111] In Hamsun, the exhaustion of European liberalism was complete, the capitulation to totalitarianism blatantly manifest. In the last part of his essay, omitted from the version in *Literature and the Image of Man,* Lowenthal discussed the reception of Hamsun's work in Europe after the war. Whereas before that time he had been criticized for his resignation by socialist commentators and even a few bourgeois ones, after it he was universally hailed. Both *Die Neue Zeit* and Alfred Rosenberg's Nazi bible, *The Myth of the Twentieth Century,* sang his praises after 1918, evidence of the growing paralysis of authoritarian behavior.

As we have noted previously, the Institut's main concern in the thirties was the exposure, analysis, and combatting of the fascist threat. Although set within the context of the more general investigation of authoritarianism discussed in this chapter, the Institut's efforts were primarily focused on the German variant its members had experienced at first hand. Italian fascism, it should be noted parenthetically, was practically ignored in the *Zeitschrift* and the *Studien.* Although Paolo Treves occasionally reviewed Italian books from Milan, no Italian emigré scholar ever wrote for Institut publications, evidence of the lack of communication between the two ref-

ugee communities. The Institut's preoccupation was clearly with Nazism as the most significant and frightening manifestation of the collapse of Western civilization. The richness and variety of its contributions to the analysis of Nazism require a separate discussion, which is the task of the following chapter.