does not smell of smoke, leather and shaving cream, particularly women, which is why they, precisely, find him irresistible. For him the ideal form of human relations is the club, that arena of a respect founded on scrupulous unscrupulousness. The pleasures of such men, or rather of their models, which are seldom equalled in reality, for people are even now better than their culture, all have about them a latent violence. This violence seems a threat directed against others, of whom such a one, sprawling in his easy chair, has long ceased to have need. In fact it is past violence against himself. If all pleasure has, preserved within it, earlier pain, then here pain, as pride in bearing it, is raised directly, untransformed, as a stereotype, to pleasure: unlike wine, each glass of whisky, each inhalation of cigar smoke, still recalls the repugnance that it cost the organism to become attuned to such strong stimuli, and this alone is registered as pleasure. He-men are thus, in their own constitution, what film-plots usually present them to be, masochists. At the root of their sadism is a lie, and only as liars do they truly become sadists, agents of repression. This lie, however, is nothing other than repressed homosexuality presenting itself as the only approved form of heterosexuality. In Oxford two sorts of student are distinguished, the tough guys and the intellectuals; the latter through this contrast alone, are almost automatically equated with the effeminate. There is much reason to believe that the ruling stratum, on its way to dictatorship, becomes polarized towards these two extremes. Such disintegration is the secret of its integration, the joy of being united in the lack of joy. In the end the tough guys are the truly effeminate ones, who need the weaklings as their victims in order not to admit that they are like them. Totalitarianism and homosexuality belong together. In its downfall the subject negates everything which is not of its own kind. The opposites of the strong man and the compliant youth merge in an order which asserts unalloyed the male principle of domination. In making all without exception, even supposed subjects, its objects, this principle becomes totally passive, virtually feminine.

is intellectual experience, that is declared non-transferable and un- naturalizable. Anything that is not reified, cannot be counted and measured, ceases to exist. Not satisfied with this, however, reification spreads to its own opposite, the life that cannot be directly actualized; anything that lives on merely as thought and recollection. For this a special rubric has been invented. It is called 'background' and appears on the questionnaire as an appendix, after sex, age and profession. To complete its violation, life is dragged along on the triumphal automobile of the united statisticians, and even the past is no longer safe from the present, whose remembrance of it consigns it a second time to oblivion.

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English spoken. – In my childhood, some elderly English ladies with whom my parents kept up relations often gave me books as presents: richly illustrated works for the young, also a small green bible bound in morocco leather. All were in the language of the donors: whether I could read none of them paused to reflect. The peculiar inaccessibility of the books, with their glaring pictures, titles and vignettes, and their indecipherable text, filled me with the belief that in general objects of this kind were not books at all, but advertisements, perhaps for machines like those my uncle produced in his London factory. Since I came to live in Anglo-Saxon countries and to understand English, this awareness has not been dispelled but strengthened. There is a song by Brahms, to a poem by Heyse, with the lines: O Herzeleid, du Ewigkeit! Selbster ist Seligkeit. In the most widely used American edition this is rendered as: 'O misery, eternity!/But two in one were ecstasy.' The archaic, passionate nouns of the original have been turned into catchwords for a hit song, designed to boost it. Illuminated in the neon-light switched on by these words, culture displays its character as advertising.


To them shall no thoughts be turned. – The past life of emigrés is, as we know, annulled. Earlier it was the warrant of arrest, today it
those émigrés who, by discipline and a sharp separation of spheres of influence, performed the feat of representing the German mind, shows what is to be expected of a happy reconstruction: the introduction of Broadway methods on the Kurfürstendamm, which differed from the former in the Twenties only through its lesser means, not its better intentions. Those who oppose cultural Fascism should start with Weimar, the ‘Bombs on Monte Carlo’ and the Press Ball, if they do not wish to finish by discovering that equivocal figures like Fallada¹ spoke more truth under Hitler than the unambiguous celebrities who successfully transplanted their prestige.

36

The Health unto Death,² - If such a thing as a psycho-analysis of today’s prototypical culture were possible; if the absolute predominance of the economy did not beggar all attempts at explaining conditions by the psychic life of their victims; and if the psycho-analysts had not long since sworn allegiance to those conditions—such an investigation would needs show the sickness proper to the time to consist precisely in normality. The libidinal achievements demanded of an individual behaving as healthy in body and mind, are such as can be performed only at the cost of the profoundest mutilation, of internalized castration in extroverts, beside which the old renunciation of identification with the father is the child’s play as which it was first rehearsed. The regular guy, the popular girl, have to repress not only their desires and insights, but even the symptoms that in bourgeois times resulted from repression. Just as the old injustice is not changed by a lavish display of light, air and hygiene, but is in fact concealed by the gleaming transparency of rationalized big business, the inner health of our time has been secured by blocking flight into illness without in the slightest altering its aetiology. The dark closets have been abolished as a troublesome waste of space, and incorporated in the bathroom. What psycho-analysis suspected, before it became itself a part of hygiene, has been confirmed. The brightest rooms are the secret domain of faeces. The verses: ‘Wretchedness remains. When all is said, / It cannot be uprooted, live or dead. / So it is made invisible instead’, are still more true of the psychic economy than of the sphere where abundance of goods may temporarily obscure constantly increasing material inequalities. No science has yet explored the inferno in which were forged the deformations that later emerge to daylight as cheerfulness, openness, sociability, successful adaptation to the inevitable, an equable, practical frame of mind. There is reason to suppose that these characteristics are laid down at even earlier phases of childhood development than are neuroses: if the latter result from a conflict in which instinct is defeated, the former condition, as normal as the damaged society it resembles, stems from what might be called a prehistoric surgical intervention, which incapacitates the opposing forces before they have come to grips with each other, so that the subsequent absence of conflicts reflects a predetermined outcome, the a priori triumph of collective authority, not a cure effected by knowledge. Unruffled calm, already a prerequisite for applicants receiving highly-paid posts, is an image of the stifled silence that the employers of the personnel manager only later impose politically. The only objective way of diagnosing the sickness of the healthy is by the incongruity between their rational existence and the possible course their lives might be given by reason. All the same, the traces of illness give them away: their skin seems covered by a rash printed in regular patterns, like a camouflage of the inorganic. The very people who burst with proofs of exuberant vitality could easily be taken for prepared corpses, from whom the news of their not-quite-successful decease has been withheld for reasons of population policy. Underlying the prevalent health is death. All the movements of health resemble the reflex-movements of beings whose hearts have stopped beating. Sarcely ever does an unhappily furrowed brow, bearing witness to terrible and long-forgotten exertions, or a moment of patich stupidity disrupting smooth logic, or an awkward gesture, embarrasingly preserve a trace of vanished life. For socially ordained sacrifice is indeed so universal as to be manifest only in society as a whole, and not in the individual. Society has, as it were, assumed the sickness of all individuals, and in it, in the pent-up lunacy of Fascist acts and all their innumerable precursors and mediators, the subjective fate buried deep in the individual is integrated with its

¹. Hans Fallada (1893–1947): social novelist of repertorial realism, whose works enjoyed great popular success in the last years of the Weimar period, and who continued to write novels in Germany under the Nazi regime.
². Inversion of the title of Kierkegaard’s work *The Sickness unto Death.*
visible objective counterpart. And how comfortless is the thought that the sickness of the normal does not necessarily imply as its opposite the health of the sick, but that the latter usually only present, in a different way, the same disastrous pattern.

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This side of the pleasure principle. – The repressive traits in Freud have nothing to do with the want of human warmth that business-like revisionists point to in the strict theory of sexuality. Professional warmth, for the sake of profit, fabricates closeness and immediacy where people are worlds apart. It deceives its victim by affirming in his weakness the way of the world which made him so, and it wrongs him in the degree that it deviates from truth. If Freud was deficient in such human sympathy, he would in this at least be in the company of the critics of political economy, which is better than that of Tagore or Werfel. ¹ The fatality was rather that, in the teeth of bourgeois ideology, he tracked down conscious actions materialistically to their unconscious instinctual basis, but at the same time concurred with the bourgeois contempt of instinct which is itself a product of precisely the rationalizations that he dismantled. He explicitly aligns himself, in the words of the Introductory Lectures, with 'the general evaluation . . . which places social goals higher than the fundamentally selfish sexual ones'. As a specialist in psychology, he takes over the antithesis of social and egoistic, statically, without testing it. He no more discerns in it the work of repressive society than the trace of the disastrous mechanisms that he has himself described. Or rather, he vacillates, devoid of theory and swaying with prejudice, between negating the renunciation of instinct as repression contrary to reality, and applauding it as sublimation beneficial to culture. In this contradiction something of the Janus-character of culture exists objectively, and no amount of praise for healthy sensuality can wish it away. In Freud, however, it leads to a devaluation of the critical standard that decides the goal of analysis. Freud's unenlightened enlightenment plays into the hands of bourgeois disillusion. As a late opponent of hypocrisy, he stands ambivalently between desire for the open emancipation of the oppressed, and apology for open oppression. Reason is for him a mere superstructure, not – as official philosophy maintains – on account of his psychologism, which has penetrated deeply enough into the historical moment of truth, but rather because he rejects the end, remote to meaning, impervious to reason, which alone could prove the means, reason, to be reasonable: pleasure. Once this has been disparagingly consigned to the repertoire of tricks for preserving the species, and so itself exposed as a cunning form of reason, without consideration of that moment in pleasure which transcends subservience to nature, ratio is degraded to rationalization. Truth is abandoned to relativity and people to power. He alone who could situate utopia in blind somatic pleasure, which, satisfying the ultimate intention, is intentionless, has a stable and valid idea of truth. In Freud's work, however, the dual hostility towards mind and pleasure, whose common root psycho-analysis has given us the means for discovering, is unintentionally reproduced. The place in the Future of an Illusion where, with the worthless wisdom of a hard-boiled old gentleman, he quotes the commercial-traveller's dictum about leaving heaven to the angels and the sparrows,¹ should be set beside the passage in the Lectures where he damns in pious horror the perverse practices of pleasure-loving society. Those who feel equal revulsion for pleasure and paradise are indeed best suited to serve as objects: the empty, mechanized quality observable in so many who have undergone successful analysis is to be entered to the account not only of their illness but also of their cure, which dislocates what it liberates. The therapeutically much-lauded transference, the breaking of which is not for nothing the crux of analytic treatment, the artificially contrived situation where the subject performs, voluntarily and calamitously, the annulment of the self which was once brought about involuntarily and beneficially by erotic self-abandonment, is already the pattern of the reflex-dominated, follow-my-leader behaviour which liquidates, together with all intellect, the analysts who have betrayed it.


even look at it, let alone think about it – that is, the objective. Just how vacuous the formal objection to subjective relativity is, can be seen in the particular field of the latter, that of aesthetic judgements. Anyone who, drawing on the strength of his precise reaction to a work of art, has ever subjected himself in earnest to its discipline, to its immanent formal law, the compulsion of its structure, will find that objections to the merely subjective quality of his experience vanish like a pitiful illusion: and every step that he takes, by virtue of his highly subjective innervation, towards the heart of the matter, has incomparably greater force than the comprehensive and fully backed-up analyses of such things as 'style', whose claims to scientific status are made at the expense of such experience. This is doubly true in the era of positivism and the culture industry, where objectivity is calculated by the subjects managing it. In face of this, reason has retreated entirely behind a windowless wall of idiosyncrasies, which the holders of power arbitrarily reproach with arbitrariness, since they want subjects impotent, for fear of the objectivity that is preserved in these subjects alone.

For Post-Socrates. – Nothing is more unfitting for an intellectual resolved on practising what was earlier called philosophy, than to wish, in discussion, and one might almost say in argumentation, to be right. The very wish to be right, down to its subllest form of logical reflection, is an expression of that spirit of self-preservation which philosophy is precisely concerned to break down. I knew someone who invited all the celebrities in epistemology, science and the humanities one after the other, discussed his own system with each of them from first to last, and when none of them dared raise any further arguments against its formalism, believed his position totally impregnable. Such naivety is at work wherever philosophy has even a distant resemblance to the gestures of persuasion. These are founded on the presupposition of a universitas litterarum, an a priori agreement between minds able to communicate with each other, and thus on complete conformism. When philosophers, who are well known to have difficulty in keeping silent, engage in conversation, they should try always to lose the argument, but in such a way as to convict their opponent of untruth. The point should not be to have absolutely correct, irrefutable, water-tight cognitions – for they inevitably boil down to tautologies, but insights which cause the question of their justness to judge itself. – To say this is not, however, to advocate irrationalism, the postulation of arbitrary theses justified by an intuitive faith in revelation, but the abolition of the distinction between thesis and argument. Dialectical thinking, from this point of view, means that an argument should take on the pungency of a thesis and a thesis contain within itself the fullness of its reasoning. All bridging concepts, all links and logical auxiliary operations that are not a part of the matter itself, all secondary developments not saturated with the experience of the object, should be discarded. In a philosophical text all the propositions ought to be equally close to the centre. Without Hegel's ever having said so explicitly, his whole procedure bears witness to such an intention. Because it acknowledges no first principle, it ought, strictly speaking, to know of nothing secondary or deduced; and it transfers the concept of mediation from formal connections to the substance of the object itself, thereby attempting to overcome the difference between the latter and an external thought that mediates it. The limits to the success of such an intention in Hegelian philosophy are also those of its truth, that is to say, the remnants of prima philosophia, the supposition of the subject as something which is, in spite of everything, 'primary'. One of the tasks of dialectical logic is to eliminate the last traces of a deductive system, together with the last advocacy gestures of thought.

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'How sickly seem all growing things'. – Dialectical thought opposes reification in the further sense that it refuses to affirm individual things in their isolation and separateness: it designates isolation as precisely a product of the universal. Thus it acts as a corrective both to manic fixity and to the unresting and empty drift of the paranoid mind, which pays for its absolute judgements by loss of the experience of the matter judged. But the dialectic is not for this reason what it became in the English Hegelian school and, still more

1. Wie scheint doch alles Werdende so krank: line from Georg Trakt'1's poem Heiterer Frühling.
done to him and can never be made good? Is there not concealed in all persecution by human beings, who, with the little dog, set the whole of nature on the weak, the hope to see effaced the last trace of persecution, which is itself the portion of nature? Would not the beggar, driven out of the gate of civilization, find refuge in his homeland, freed from exile on earth? 'Have now peaceful mind, beggar home shall find.'

As long as I have been able to think, I have derived happiness from the song: 'Between the mountain and the deep, deep vale': about the two rabbits who, regaling themselves on the grass, were shot down by the hunter, and, on realizing they were still alive, made off in haste. But only later did I understand the moral of this: sense can only endure in despair and extremity; it needs absurdity, in order not to fall victim to objective madness. One ought to follow the example of the two rabbits; when the shot comes, fall down giddily, half-dead with fright, collect one's wits and then, if one still has breath, show a clean pair of heels. The capacity for fear and for happiness are the same, the unrestricted openness to experience amounting to self-abandonment in which the vanquished rediscovers himself. What would happiness be that was not measured by the immeasurable grief at what is? For the world is deeply ailing. He who cautiously adapts to it by this very act shares in its madness, while the eccentric alone would stand his ground and bid it rave no more. He alone could pause to think on the illusoriness of disaster, the 'unreality of despair', and realize not merely that he is still alive but that there is still life. The ruse of the dazed rabbits redeems, with them, even the hunter, whose guilt they purloin.

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Service to the customer. — The culture industry piously claims to be guided by its customers and to supply them with what they ask for. But while assiduously dismissing any thought of its own autonomy and proclaiming its victims its judges, it outdoes, in its veiled autocracy, all the excesses of autonomous art. The culture industry not so much adapts to the reactions of its customers as it counterfeit them. It drills them in their attitudes by behaving as if it were itself a customer. One might suspect that the whole ideal of adjustment which it also professes to obey, is ideology; that people aspire more to adapt to others and to the whole, the more they are intent, by exaggerated equality, the public oath of social impotence, on having a stake in power and so subverting equality. 'Music does the listening for the listener,' and the film perpetrates on trust-scale the odious trick of grown-ups who, palming something off on children, belabour the recipients with the language it would suit them to hear from them, and present the usually dubious gift with the expressions of lip-smacking delight that they wish to elicit. The culture industry is geared to mimetic regression, to the manipulation of repressed impulses to copy. Its method is to anticipate the spectator's imitation of itself, so making it appear as if the agreement already exists which it intends to create. It can do so all the better because in a stabilized system it can indeed count on such agreement, having rather to reiterate it ritualistically than actually to produce it. Its product is not a stimulus at all, but a model for reactions to non-existent stimuli. Hence in the picture-house the enthusiastic music-titles, the idiotic nursery-talk, the winking siness; even the close-up of the start seems to shout: how super! With these techniques the cultural apparatus assails the spectator with the frontal force of the express-train coming towards him at the climax of cinematic tension. But the tone adopted by every film is that of the witch handing food to the child she wants to enchant or devour, while mumbling horribly: 'Lovely, lovely soup. How you're going to enjoy it!' In art this kitchen-fire witchcraft was invented by Wagner, whose linguistic intimacies and musical spices are forever tasting themselves, and he also, with a genius's compulsion to confess, laid bare the whole process in the scene of the 'Ring' where Mime offers Siegfried the poisoned potion. But who is to strike off the monster's head, now that it has itself lain long, with its fair locks, under the linden tree?

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Grey and grey. — Even its bad conscience cannot help the culture industry. So objective has its spirit become that it slaps its own subjects in the face, so that they, its agents all, are in the know and attempt, by means of mental reservations, to distance themselves
from the mischief they cause. The admission that films disseminate ideologies is itself disseminated ideology. It is accommodated administratively in the rigid distinction between synthetic daydreams on one hand, vehicles of refuge from everyday life, 'escape'; and on the other well-meaning products that spur us on to correct social behaviour, 'convey a message'. Their prompt subsumption under escape and message expresses the untruth of both types. The scorn for escapism, the standardized indignation at superficiality, is nothing but the pitiful echo of the old-established ethos that culminates against gambling because in the dominant practice it cannot play the game. It is not because they turn their back on washed-out existence that escape-films are so repugnant, but because they do not do so energetically enough, because they are themselves just as washed-out, because the satisfactions they fake coincide with the ignominy of reality, of denial. The dreams have no dream. Just as the Technicolor heroes do not allow us to forget for a second that they are normal people, type-cast public faces and investments, so under the thin tinsel of schematically produced fantasy emerges in unmistakable outline the skeleton of cinema-ontology, the whole obligatory hierarchy of values, the canon of the undesirable or the exemplary. There is nothing more practical than escape, nothing more fervently espoused to big business: we are abducted into the distance only to have the laws of empiricist living hammered from afar, unhampered by empirical possibilities of evasion, into our consciousness. The escape is full of message. And message, the opposite, looks what it is: the wish to flee from flight. It reifies the resistance to reification. One need only hear experts praising a celluloid masterpiece for having, beside other merits, moral seriousness, in the same tone as a glamorous actress is certified as having personality too. The executive conference could easily decide to include in the escape-film, along with more expensive extras, an ideal: the Goethean call that man should be noble, helpful and kind. Severed from the immanent logic of the work, its subject matter, this ideal becomes itself a piece of matter, to be provided from stock, therefore at once palpable and null, amounting to no more than reform of remediable abuses, glorified social work. The favourite theme of such films is the rehabilitation of drunkards, whose miserable intoxication they envy. When society, now petrifying according to anonymous laws, is presented as if good-will were enough to remove its faults, it is defended even where it is honestly attacked. A kind of Popular Front of all right-thinking men is invoked. The practical spirit of the message, the tangible demonstration of how things can be improved, joins forces with the system in the fiction that a subject encompassing the whole of society, such as does not at present exist, can put everything right if only everyone will sit down together and make up their minds about the root of the trouble. It is very agreeable to be able thus to prove one's capacities. Message becomes escape: he who sets about cleaning up the house he lives in energetically enough, forgets the foundation it is built on. Escape in earnest, an image of revulsion from the whole, down to its formal constituents, could become a message without expressing one, indeed just because of its unbending asceticism towards practical proposals.

Wolf as grandmother. – The strongest argument in the arsenal of apologists for the cinema is the crudest, its mass-consumption. They declare it, this drastic medium of the culture industry, popular art. Their independence of the norms of the autonomous work is supposed to relieve films of aesthetic responsibility, such standards proving in their case reactionary, just as all intentions to ennoble films artistically do indeed look awry, falsely elevated, out of keeping with the form – imports for the connoisseur. The more pretensions a film has to art, the more bogus it becomes. The protagonists of the cinema can point to this and, moreover, as critics of an inwardness now become kitsch, can picture themselves, with their coarse outward kitsch, as the avant-garde. If one is once drawn onto this ground, such arguments, fortified with technical experience and professional fluency, become almost irresistible. The film is not a mass art, but merely manipulated to deceive the masses? But through the market the wishes of the public are ceaselessly asserted; collective production by itself guarantees the film's collective nature; only someone out of touch with reality could suspect its producers of being sly string-pullers; most lack talent, to be sure, but where the necessary gifts do come together, then, despite all the limitations of the system, success is possible. The mass taste with which the film complies is not that of the masses themselves, but foisted on them? But to talk of a different mass taste than that
which the masses actually display is absurd, and everything that has ever been called folk art has always reflected domination. Only in the competent adaptation of production to given needs, not in orientation to an utopian audience, can the unformulated general will, by this logic, be given form. The film is full of lying stereotypes? But the stereotype is of the essence of folk art; fairy-tales are as familiar with the rescuing prince and the devil as the film with the hero and the villain, and even the barbaric cruelty that divides the world into good and evil the film has in common with the greatest fairy-tales, which have the stepmother dance to death in red-hot iron shoes.

All this could be answered only by reflecting on the basic concepts presupposed by the apologists. Bad films cannot be put down to incompetence; the most gifted are broken by the business set-up, and that the untalented flock to it is due to the affinity between lying and the swindler. The mindlessness is objective; improved personnel could not find a folk art. Its concept arose out of agrarian relationships or an economy of simple commodity production. Such relations and the characters expressing them are those of masters and servants, gainers and losers, but in an immediate, not wholly objectified form. Of course they are no less seamed with class distinctions than late industrial society, but their members are not yet encompassed by the total structure, which first reduces the individual subjects to mere moments, in order then to unite them, impotent and discrete, in the collective. That there is no longer a folk does not mean, however, as the Romantics propagated, that the masses are worse. Rather, it is precisely in the new, radically alienated form of society that the untruth of the old is first being revealed. The very traits which the culture industry claims as the heritage of folk art, become, through the industry itself, suspect. The film has a retroactive effect: its optimistic horror brings to light in the fairy-tale what always served injustice, and shows dimly in the reprimanded miscreants the faces of those whom integral society condemns, and to condemn whom has from the first been the dream of socialization. For this reason the demise of individualist art is no justification for one that deports itself as if its subject and its archaic reactions were natural, whereas its real subject is the syndicate, unconscious certainly, of a few big firms. Even if the masses have, as customers, an influence on the cinema, it remains as abstract as the box-office returns which have replaced discriminating applause: the mere choice between Yes and No to what is offered, an integral part of the disproportion between concentrated power and dispersed impotence. The fact, finally, that in the making of a film numerous experts, and also simple technicians, have a say, no more guarantees its humanity than decisions by qualified scientific advisory boards ensure that of bombs and poison gas.

The rarified talk about the film as an art doubtless befits hacks wishing to recommend themselves; but the conscious appeal to naivety, to the servants' obtuseness that has long since permeated the thoughts of the masters, is equally worthless. The film, which today attaches itself inescapably to men as if it were a part of them, is at the same time remotest of all from their human destiny, which might be realized from one day to the next; and apologetics for it are sustained by resistance to thinking this antinomy. That the people who make films are in no way schemers is no counter-argument. The objective spirit of manipulation asserts itself in experiential rules, appraisals of the situation, technical criteria, economically inevitable calculations, the whole specific weight of the industrial apparatus, without any special censorship being needed, and even if the masses were asked they would reflect back the ubiquity of the system. The producers no more function as subjects than do their workers and consumers, but merely as components in a self-regulating machinery. The Hegelian-sounding precept, however, that mass-art should reflect the real taste of the masses and not that of carping intellectuals, is usurpation. The film's opposition, as an all-encompassing ideology, to the objective interests of mankind, its interlacement with the status quo of profit-motivation, bad conscience and deceit can be conclusively demonstrated. No appeal to an actually existent state of consciousness could ever have the right to veto insight which transcended this state of consciousness by discerning its contradiction to itself and to objective conditions. It is possible that the German Fascist professor was right and that real folk-songs already lived on cultural values that had sunk down from the upper stratum. Not for nothing is all folk art fissured and, like the film, not 'organic'. But between the old injustice, in whose voice a lament is audible even where it glorifies itself, and alienation proclaiming itself togetherness, insidiously creating an appearance of human closeness with loud-speakers and advertising psychology, is a difference equal to that between the mother telling her child, to allay its terror of demons,
the fairy-tale in which the good are rewarded and the bad punished, and the cinema product which forces the justice of each and every world order, in every country, stridently and threateningly into the audience’s eyes and ears, in order to teach them anew, and more thoroughly, the old fear. The fairy-tale dreams, appealing so eagerly to the child in the man, are nothing other than regression organized by total enlightenment, and where they put the onlooker most confidentially on the shoulder, they most thoroughly betray him. Immediacy, the popular community concocted by films, amounts to mediation without residue, reducing men and everything human so perfectly to things, that their contrast to things, indeed the spell of reification itself, becomes imperceptible. The film has succeeded in transforming subjects so indistinguishably into social functions, that those wholly encompassed, no longer aware of any conflict, enjoy their own dehumanization as something human, as the joy of warmth. The total interconnectedness of the culture industry, omitting nothing, is one with total social delusion. Which is why it makes such light work of counter-arguments.

Expensive reproduction. — Society is integral even before it undergoes totalitarian rule. Its organization also embraces those at war with it by co-ordinating their consciousness to its own. Even those intellectuals who have all the political arguments against bourgeois ideology at their fingertips, undergo a process of standardization which — despite crassly contrasting content, through readiness on their part to accommodate themselves — approximates them to the prevalent mentality to the extent that the substance of their viewpoint becomes increasingly incidental, dependent merely on their preferences or the assessment of their own chances. What they subjectively fancy radical, belongs objectively so entirely to the compartment in the pattern reserved for their like, that radicalism is debased to abstract prestige, legitimation for those who know what an intellectual nowadays has to be for and what against. The good things they opt for have long since been just as accepted, in numbers just as restricted, in their hierarchy of values just as fixed, as those of student fraternities. While they inveigh against official kitsch, their views, like dutiful children, are allowed to partake only of pre-selected nutrition, clichés against clichés. The habitations of such young bohemians resemble their intellectual household. On the walls the deceptively faithful colour reproductions of famous Van Goghs like the ‘Sunflowers’ or the ‘Café at Arles’, on the bookshelf the boiled-down socialism and psycho-analysis and a little sexology for libertines with inhibitions. Added to this the Random House edition of Proust — Scott Moncrieff’s translation deserved a better fate, cut-price exclusivity even in its appearance, the compactly economical ‘omnibus’ shape, a mockery of the author whose every sentence put out of action some received opinion, while now as a prize-winning homosexual he fills a similar need for youth as do the books about forest animals and the North Pole expedition in the German home. Also the gramophone with the Lincoln-cantata of some stalwart spirit deeply concerned with railway stations, together with the duly marvelled-at Oklahoma folklore and a few noisy jazz records that make you feel at once collective, audacious and comfortable. Every opinion earns the approbation of friends, every argument is known by them beforehand. That all cultural products, even non-conformist ones, have been incorporated into the distribution-mechanisms of large-scale capital, that in the most developed country a product that does not bear the imprimatur of mass-production can scarcely reach a reader, viewer, listener at all, denies deviationary longings their subject matter in advance. Even Kafka is becoming a fixture in the sub-let studio. The intellectuals themselves are already so heavily committed to what is endorsed in their isolated sphere, that they no longer desire anything that does not carry the highbrow tag. Ambition aims solely at expertise in the accepted stock-in-trade, hitting on the correct slogan. The outsiderliness of the initiates is an illusion, they are merely biding their time. To see them as renegades is to assess them too high; they mask mediocrity faces with horn-rimmed spectacles betokening ‘brilliance’, though with plain-glass lenses, solely in order to better themselves in their own eyes and in the general rat-race. They are already just like the rest. The subjective precondition of opposition, unco-ordinated judgement, is dying out, while its gesticulations continue to be performed as a group ritual. Stalin only needs to clear his throat and they throw Kafka and Van Gogh on the rubbish-heap.