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The Culture Industry

The Enlightenment as Mass Betrayal

The sociological argument that the loss of grounding in objective religion, the dissolution of the final precapitalist residues, technical and social differentiation and the specialization of everyday life [Spezialistentum] have resulted in cultural chaos, is disproved every single day. Culture today strikes everything with similarity. Film, radio, and magazines comprise a system. Every branch chimes with itself and with all others. Even the aesthetic manifestations of political opposites sing, as it were, the praises of a steel [stählernen: pun on Stalinism, a.k.a. Steelism] rhythm. The decorative administrative and exhibition facilities of industries in the authoritarian countries can hardly be distinguished from those of other countries. Pale monumental constructs, shooting up everywhere, represent the deep-seated strategicality [Planmässigkeit: literally, “planiformity”] of nationwide firms, towards which unleashed free enterprise, whose monuments are the outlying living and business-quarters of soulless cities, was already trending. Already the older houses ringing the concrete city centers look like slums, and the new bungalows on the edge of the city sing the praises of technical progress much like the insubstantial constructs at international fairs, practically demanding to be thrown away after short-term use like tin cans. Yet the urban building projects which are supposed to perpetuate individuals in hygienic small dwellings as self-sufficient entities, as it were, subordinate them to their adversary, the total power of capital, all the more thoroughly. As residents are presented as producers and consumers in the city centers for the purpose of work and pleasure, their living-cells crystallize seamlessly into well-organized complexes. The striking unity of macrocosm and microcosm demonstrates to human beings the model of their culture: the false identity of universal and particular. All mass culture under monopoly is identical, and its skeleton, the very bones of which are fabricated from that monopoly, begins to loom in the distance. Its directors are no longer that interested in concealing this, since their power increases the more brutally they confess to it. Films and radio broadcasters no longer need to dress themselves up as art. The truth, that they are nothing but businesses, is what they use as the ideology which is supposed to legitimate the junk which they intentionally produce.

The partisans of the culture industry are happy to explain it away as technological. The participation of millions in its compulsory procedure of reproduction, which simultaneously

makes it unavoidable, causes standardized goods to be delivered to the same needs in numerous places. The technical divide between a few centers of production and dispersed reception determines the organization and planning by functionaries. Standards were originally generated by the needs of consumers: that is why they are accepted without resistance. In fact, the unity of the system is ever more tightly interwoven by a circle of manipulation and reciprocal needs. What is passed over in silence is that the grounds on which technics [Technik: tools and the skills to use them] wins power over society, is the power of those who have the most economic power over society. This latter is the compulsory character of a society alienated from itself. Autos, bombs and films hold together the whole, until its leveling element reveals the power of the injustice which it serves. At present the technics [Technik] of the culture industry are employed for standardization and serial production, thereby sacrificing the logic of works which distinguished themselves from that of the social system. This however is by no means to be blamed on the laws of motion of technics, but rather their function in society today. Today, the needs which might somehow escape from central control are suppressed from the individual consciousness. The step from telephone to radio has clearly separated the roles. The former still allowed the participant to play the role of the subject in liberal [i.e. late 19th century or Victorian-era liberalism] fashion. The latter democratically turns everyone into a listener in the same way, in order to hand them over in authoritarian fashion to radio station programs which are all the same. No apparatus of response has developed, and private broadcasts are constrained to unfreedom. These latter are limited to the apocryphal realm of “amateurs”, which are moreover organized from above. Indeed every trace of audience spontaneity in the realm of official radio is steered and absorbed by talent scouts, live competitions, and promotional events of all kind in the selective manner of experts. Talented participants belong to the company, long before they even appear: otherwise they would not be so eager to fit in. The constitution of the audience, which both in presumption and in fact favors the system of the culture industry, is a part of the system, not its excuse. If a branch of art behaves according to the same recipe as one whose medium and material is far removed from it, if the dramatic twists in the radio “soap operas” ultimately turn into pedagogical examples of the overcoming of technical difficulties, which are mastered in “jam” [sessions] just like the solos of the jazz world, or if the selfsame “adaptation” of a Beethoven movement is carried out in the same manner as the filming of a Tolstoy novel, then the recourse to the spontaneous wishes of the audience turns into an overblown excuse. The matter is better explained through explanations of the deadweight of the technical and personnel apparatus, which is indeed to be understood in every particularity as part of the economic mechanism of selection. In addition there is the agreement, or at least the common consensus, of executive authorities to produce nothing and to let nothing through which does not already resemble their charts, their concept of consumers, and above all they themselves.

If the objective social tendency in this world epoch incarnates itself in the subjectively opaque intentions of general directors, then this is most apropos to the most powerful sectors of industry – steel, oil, electricity, and chemicals. The cultural monopolies are, by comparison, weak and dependent. They must scurry to keep in the good books of the power-holders, so that their sphere of mass society, whose specific commodity character still has too much in common with sunny liberalism and Jewish intellectuals, is not subjected to a series of witch hunts. The dependency of the most powerful broadcasting companies on the electrical industry, or those of cinema on banks, characterizes the entire sphere, whose specific branches are moreover economically interconnected. Everything lies so close together, that the concentration of Spirit [Geist: spirit,

mind, intellect] achieves a volume which allows it to roll over the lines of demarcation between company names and technical divisions. The relentless unity of the culture industry testifies to the dawning one of politics. The emphatic differences between grade A and B films or the stories in magazines of various price levels, do not follow from the material itself, but serve the classification, organization and registration of consumers. Everyone is given something, so no one can opt out, differences are drilled in and disseminated. The delivery of a hierarchy of serial qualities to the audience serves only the ever more seamless quantification of this latter. Everyone is supposed to spontaneously behave in advance at a "level" determined through indexes, as it were, and to pursue the categories of mass products which have been produced for them. Consumers are divided up into income-groups, as statistical material for the maps of researchers, into red, green and blue fields, no longer any different from those of propaganda.

The schematism of this procedure is revealed by the fact that mechanically differentiated products ultimately prove to be the same, over and over again. Every child knows that the difference between a Chrysler and General Motors product line is fundamentally illusionary, even though they applaud that difference. What the discerning shopper reels off as advantages and disadvantages, serves only to perpetuate the appearance [Schein: appearance, financial note or bill] of competition and the possibility of choice. Nor is it different with the showreels of Warner Brothers and Metro Goldwyn Mayer. Even the differences between the more expensive and cheaper brands of models from the same firm are shrinking away: in cars, to the number of cylinders, engine capacity, and patent details of the gadgets [gadgets: in English in original]; in films, the number of stars, the enormity of the outlays on technics, labor and set design, and the deployment of the latest psychological formulas. The unitary standard of value consists of the dosage of conspicuous production [conspicuous production: in English in original], of the investments which have been put on display. The budgeted value-differences of the culture industry have absolutely nothing to do with the materials at hand, with the meaning of the products. Even the technical media are being driven towards an insatiable uniformity. Television, aiming at a synthesis of radio and film, was delayed only for so long as the relevant parties were not in complete unison, yet its unlimited possibilities promise to radically increase the impoverishment of the aesthetic material, so that the fleetingly masked identity of all industrial cultural products may openly triumph tomorrow, the mocking fulfillment of the Wagnerian dream of the total work of art [Gesamtkunstwerk]. The harmony of word, image and music succeeds all the more fully than in [Wagner's 1859 opera] *Tristan*, because the material elements, which record the surface phenomena of social reality without demur, have been produced according to the principle of the same technical operation and whose unity is expressed as its authentic content. This operation integrates all elements of production, from the outlines of novels which are already practically film scripts, down to the latest sound-effect. It is the triumph of invested capital. That its omnipotence causes its dispossessed employees to whole-heartedly scramble after jobs [jobs: in English in original] like those of their masters, comprises the meaning of all films, no matter which plot the production director designated.

Those with free time are supposed to orient themselves towards the unity of production. The achievement which Kant's schematism still expected from subjects, namely relating sensuous multiplicity from the outset to fundamental concepts, is stripped away from the subject by industry. It operates this schematism as its first service to the customer. A secret mechanism was supposed to act in the soul, through which immediate data was already prepared, so that it fit into

the [Kantian] system of pure reason. Today the mystery has been solved. Despite the planning of the mechanism by those who furnish the data, the culture industry is itself compelled by the inertia of a society which, in spite of all rationalization, remains irrational, thus transforming the tendency towards catastrophe in its route through the agencies of business into its very own marketwise [gewitzigte: savvy, acumen] intentionality. For the consumer, there is nothing left to classify which has not already been anticipated by the schematism of production. The dreamless art of the people fulfills that dreaming idealism, which went too far for idealism's critical branch. Everything comes from consciousness – for Malebranche and Berkeley from God – in mass art from earthly production management. Types of hits, stars, and soap operas are not just cyclically maintained as rigid invariants, but in the specific content of the production, what seems to change is itself derived from such. Details become interchangeable. The brief interval sequence which proves to be memorable in a hit tune, the provisional disgrace of the hero, which he knows how to bear as a good sport [good sport: in English in original], the wholesome beating which the powerful hand of the male star dishes out to his beloved, his crass prickliness towards the spoiled heiress, are like all details prefabricated clichés, to be used here and there as needed, and every time defined totally by the purpose accorded to it by the schema. Their entire life consists solely of confirming this last by assembling it. The film is to be viewed in order to see who is to be appropriately rewarded, punished, or forgotten, and already in the musical accompaniment the trained ear can guess at how the first bars of the hit tune will continue and feel satisfied, when it really does turn out that way. The average word-count of the short story is not to be questioned. Even gags [gags: in English in original], effects and jokes are as calculated as their delivery. They are administered by trained professionals, and their narrow diversity is essentially parceled out in offices.

The culture industry developed with the hegemony of the effect, of the tangible achievement, of technical detail over works [Werke] which were once animated by ideas and have since been liquidated along with such. To the extent the detail emancipated itself, it became rebellious and from Romanticism to Expressionism had risen up as the standard-bearer of the objection against organization, as untrammelled expression. In music, the individual harmonic effect had effaced the consciousness of the whole as form; in painting, the particular color did so vis-a-vis the pictorial composition; in the novel, psychological penetration vis-a-vis the architectonic. The culture industry has put an end to all that through totality. While no longer recognizing anything other than effects, it quashes the latter's insubordination and subjects it to the formula which replaces the work [das Werk]. It strikes the whole and the part with equal force. The whole confronts the details mercilessly and disjointedly, for example the career of someone's success story, in which everything is supposed to serve as an illustration and piece of evidence, whereas it is nevertheless nothing other than the sum of these idiotic events. The so-called all-encompassing idea is a registration map and establishes order, not context. The whole and the particularity [Einzelheit] bear the same features, without contrast or connection. Their harmony, guaranteed in advance, mocks those which were achieved by the great bourgeois works of art. In Germany, even the most exuberant films of the democratic era were tinged with the sepulchral quiet of the dictatorship.

The whole world is strained through the filter of the culture industry. The oft-noted experience of the filmgoer, who perceives the streets outside as the continuation of the screening [Lichtspiel] which they just left behind, because this latter wishes to reproduce the everyday world of

perception, has become the guiding principle of production. The more densely and seamlessly its empirical techniques duplicate empirical objects, the easier does it succeed in casting the illusion that the world outside is merely the seamless extension of what one got to know during the screening [Lichtspiel]. Since the lightning-fast introduction of sound film, mechanical diversification has completely and totally served this plan. According to this tendency, everyday life is not supposed to be distinguishable anymore from the sound film. Going far beyond the theater of illusion, it leaves no more dimension for the imagination of the audience, in that it indulges itself within the framework of the film-work and is nonetheless untrammelled by its exact conditionality [Gegebenheit] and can digress, without losing the thread, it schools those who it is aimed at to identify it immediately with reality. Today's withering of the power of conceptualization [Vorstellung] and the spontaneity of the cultural consumer need not be reduced to psychological mechanisms. The products themselves, above all the most characteristic of them all, the sound film, cripple their capabilities through their objective constitution [Beschaffenheit]. They are so constructed that their adequate conception requires precisely the alacrity, perceptivity, and well-versedness prohibited to the thinking activity of observers, if they do not wish to miss the facts rushing on by. The effort is indeed so ingrained that it need not even be actualized in the specific case and nonetheless suppresses the power of imagination. Those who are so absorbed by the cosmos of the film, by the gestures, images and words, that they are incapable of adducing just how it was turned into a cosmos, does not necessarily need to be preoccupied by the specific achievements of the machinery during the moment of the performance. Above all, they have become so well acquainted with other films and other cultural fabrications that they carry out the required effort of attentiveness automatically. The power of industrial society impinges on human beings as one for all. The products of the culture industry can count on the fact that even in conditions of distraction, the consuming will happen alertly. However each one is a model of the gargantuan economic machinery which keeps everyone breathless from the get-go, at work and during the recuperation so similar to it. In every popular sound film, in every popular radio broadcast one can discern a kind of effect which cannot be ascribed to any individual, but to everyone together in society. Every individual manifestation of the culture industry irresistibly reproduces human beings as what the totality has made of them. All of its agents, from the producer [producer: in English in original] to the women's associations, are on guard to prevent the process of the simple reproduction of the Spirit [Geist: spirit, mind] from leading to a more expanded one.

The complaints of the art historians and advocates of cultural concerning the extinction of style-generating energy in the West are horribly unfounded. The stereotypical translation of everything, even that which has not yet been thought up, into the schemata of mechanical reproducibility surpasses the stringency and validity of every actual style, whose concept the partisans of educational culture explained in terms of the precapitalist past. No Palestrina could have tracked down unforeseen and unresolved dissonances more puristically than the jazz orchestrators who do so with every phrase which does not fit exactly into the jargon. When they jazz up Mozart, they do not merely transform the latter where it is too difficult or earnest, but also in the melody, even where this is harmonized more simply than is customary today. No medieval master-builder could have sorted through the dossier of church windows and busts more suspiciously than the studio hierarchies do to material by Balzac or Victor Hugo, before it receives the imprimatur of a passing grade. No church cloister could arrange the devilish faces and cries of the damned more carefully within the ordo [Latin: social order] of the love of the

Almighty than the production director arranges the torture of the hero or the height of the hem of the leading lady [leading lady: in English in original] in the litany of the blockbuster film. The expressive and implicit, exoteric and esoteric catalogue of what is forbidden and what is tolerated reaches so far, that it does not merely circumscribe the realm of what is free but administers it. Even the uttermost particularities are modeled after it. The culture industry positively establishes its own language, like its opponent, advanced art, through prohibitions, with syntax and vocabulary. The permanent compulsion to adopt the latest effects, which nevertheless remain tied to old schemata, merely multiplies, like additional rules, the power of what has been already produced, which every single effect would like to escape. Everything which appears [Erscheinende: that which appears] is so thoroughly stamped, that well-nigh nothing can occur which does not already bear the trace of jargon, which does not at first glance show itself to be approved. However the matadors, producing and reproducing, are those who speak the jargon so easily, freely and happily, that it is as if this latter were the language which it itself had long since silenced. This is the ideal of what is natural in the sector. It asserts itself all the more magisterially, the more the perfected technics [Technik] diminishes the tension between what is produced [Gebilde] and everyday existence [Dasein]. The paradox of routine travestied as nature can be discerned in all expressions of the culture industry, and is glaringly obvious in many. A jazz musician who has to play a piece of serious music, even the simplest Beethoven minuet, involuntarily syncopates it and deigns to start on the beat only with a tongue-in-cheek grin. Such nature, complicated by the ever more contemporary demands of the specific medium, which constantly push beyond themselves, defines the new style as “a system of non-culture, to which one might grant a certain 'unity of style', but solely in the sense that we are discussing a stylized barbarism”.¹

The universal validity of this stylization may have already surpassed that of its official prescriptions and proscriptions; a hit song is more readily scrutinized as to whether it maintains the thirty-two bar beat or the compass of the ninth chord, than as to whether it brings the most secret melodic or harmonic detail which falls outside the idiom. All the transgressions committed by Orson Welles against the customs of the profession are pardoned, because as calculated wilding [Unarten: bad habits, vices] they strengthen the validity of the system all the more eagerly. The compulsion of the technically conditioned idiom which stars and directors must produce as nature, so that the nation can make it their own, relates to such fine nuances that they almost achieve the subtlety of the means of a work of the avant-garde, through which this latter serves, in contrast to the former, the truth. The uncommon capacity to meticulously comply with the requirements of the idiom of that which is natural [Natürlichkeit] in all branches of the culture industry, turns into the measure of know-how [Könnerschaft: insider expertise]. What is said in everyday speech and how it is said, is supposed to be verifiable, as in logical positivism. The producers are experts. The idiom demands the most astonishing productive power, absorbs it and throws it away. It has rendered the culturally conservative distinction between genuine and artificial styles satanically obsolete. To be sure, a style which is distinguished on the outside by impulses contrary to the form could still be called artificial. In the culture industry, however, the material originates, down to its smallest element, in the self-same apparatus as the jargon in which it is immersed. The bargain struck between artistic specialists and sponsors and censors, which ends up in all too unbelievable lies, does not testify so much to internal-aesthetic tension than to the divergence of interests. The reputation of specialists, which for the time being finds succor in a final bit of material [sachlicher] autonomy, clashes against the business policy of the

church or of the company which produces cultural goods. The matter however is, according to its own nature, already palpably reified before it even comes to an open conflict. Even before Zanuck hired her, the saintly Bernadette gleamed in the viewing-field of her scriptwriter as an advertisement for all interested consortiums. This is what has become of the impulses of the entirety [Gestalt: the whole as form]. That is why the style of the culture industry, which no longer needs to test itself against resisting material, is simultaneously the negation of style. The reconciliation of the general and the particular, in whose fulfillment alone style wins content, is void, because no tension exists between the antipodes: the opposites which are supposed to attract pass over into opaque identity, the general can replace the particular and vice versa.

Nonetheless this distorted picture of style denotes something about the past genuine one. The concept of genuine style becomes transparent in the culture industry as the aesthetic equivalent of domination. The conception of style as mere aesthetic nomothetism [Gesetzmäßigkeit: lawfulness] is a reactionary Romantic fantasy. In the unity of style, not only that of the Christian middle ages but also that of the Renaissance, what was expressed was the various structures of social authority [Gewalt], not the opaque experience of those who were ruled, in which the universal was hidden. The great artists were never those who embodied style the most seamlessly and completely, but those who perceived style in their work as a harshness against the chaotic expression of suffering, as negative truth. In the style of the work, the expression won the energy without which everyday existence [Dasein] melted away unheard. Those specifically which are called classics, like Mozart's music, contain objective tendencies which have intentions which differ from the style in which they are incarnated. All the way until Schönberg and Picasso, great artists have been distrustful of style and at the decisive point have been influenced less by such than by the logic of the material [Sache]. What the Expressionists and the Dadaists meant polemically, the untruth of style as such, triumphs today in the song-jargon of the crooner, in the high-bred grace of the film star, indeed even in the mastery of the photographic shot of the miserable shacks of farmworkers. In every work of art, its style is a promise. By dissolving through style into the dominating form of the generality, into which the musical, visual, and verbal language dissolves, what is expressed is supposed to be reconciled with the idea of the just generality. This promise of the work of art, to establish the truth through the shaping of the entirety [Gestalt] into socially traduced forms, is as necessary as it is dissembling. It sets forth the real forms of what exists [Bestehenden] as absolute, by purporting to anticipate in advance fulfillment in its aesthetic derivatives. To that extent the claim of art is always ideology. Art finds expression for suffering in no other manner however than in its dispute with the tradition in which it expresses its style. The moment in a work of art when it goes beyond reality, is in fact not to be separated from style; indeed it consists not in the achieved harmony, in the dubious unity of form and content, the inner and the outer, the individuated [Individuum: individuated, individual] and society, but in those features which show discrepancies, in the necessary failure of the passionate exertion for identity. Instead of exposing themselves to this failure, in which the style of the great works of art has since time immemorial negated itself, the lesser ones have always constrained themselves through similarity to others, through the surrogacy of identity. The culture industry has finally positioned imitation as an absolute. As nothing other than style, it reveals its secret, obedience towards social hierarchy. Aesthetic barbarism today is completing what has threatened intellectual [geistigen: spiritual, intellectual] constructs [Gebilde], ever since they were brought together as culture and neutralized. To even speak of culture was always contrary to culture. The general denominator of culture already virtually contains the

constitution, cataloguing, and classification, by which culture is taken into the realm of administration. Solely what has been industrialized and consequently subsumed wholly accords to this concept of culture. By subordinating all branches of intellectual [geistigen] production for a single purpose in the same manner, by keeping the senses of human beings from their departure from the factory in the evening to their arrival by the alarm bell the next morning preoccupied with the seal of that mode of labor, which they must perform over the course of the day, the concept of a unitary culture which the philosophers of personality wielded against massification is mockingly fulfilled.

The culture industry, the most uncompromising style of them all, thus proves itself to be the logical terminus of precisely that liberalism which is reproached for its lack of style. It is not merely that its categories and contents were generated by the liberal sphere, in domesticated naturalism as well as in the operetta and the revue: modern cultural firms are economic locations wherein a chunk of a circulation-sphere otherwise in steep decline can, just like their corresponding entrepreneurial types, still survive. There you can ultimately achieve a measure of happiness, insofar as you don't look too closely at the matter, but allow yourself to go along with things. Those who resist, can survive only by being incorporated. Once your differences with the culture industry are registered, they already belong to it, just like land-reformers to capitalism. Reality-based outrage is the trademark of those who wish to offer a new idea to the company. The public sphere of contemporary society does not permit any other perceptible complaint to appear, than those whose tone does not already whisper to the sharp-eared about the prominent figures, under whose signum the outraged ones are reconciled. The more immeasurable the gap between the chorus and the leader, the more certainly a place is reserved amongst the latter for those who through well-organized conspicuousness proclaim their superiority. What thereby survives in the culture industry is the tendency of liberalism to guarantee free rein to the most proficient. To open up to these can-doers [Könnern: those who are capable] is still the function of the otherwise thoroughly regulated market, whose freedom consisted even during its glory days, in art just as elsewhere, of letting the stupid ones starve. It is not for nothing that the system of the culture industry originated in the liberal industrial nations, just as indeed all of their characteristic media, including cinema, radio jazz and magazines, triumph there. Their progress however arises from the universal law of capital. Gaumont and Pathé [French film studios], Ullstein [German publisher] and Hugenberg [German publisher and film studio] did not follow the international trend to their detriment; the economic dependence of the [European] Continent on the USA after the war and the inflation also contributed its share. The belief that the barbarism of the culture industry was a consequence of "cultural lag" [original lag: in English in original], of the retrogression of American consciousness behind the state of technics [Technik] is wholly illusionary. Prefascist Europe had lagged behind the tendency towards cultural monopolies. Yet it was precisely to such retrogression that the Spirit [Geist: spirit, mind, intellect] owed a remnant of independence, and its most recent upholders their very existence, however straitened. In Germany, the insufficient penetration of life with democratic checks had paradoxical effects. A great deal remained outside of that market mechanism, which had been unleashed in the western countries. The German educational system, including the universities, theaters of artistic significance, the great orchestras, and the museums stood under protection. The political powers, states and townships which inherited such institutions as a legacy from absolutism, also endowed them with a bit of that independence from overt relationships of domination of the market, which the princes and feudal lords had granted until the 19th century.

This strengthened the backbone of more recent art against the verdict of supply and demand and increased its resistance far beyond the actual protection. On the market itself, the tribute to unvalorizable and not yet accepted quality was transmuted into purchasing power: that is why upstanding literary and musical publishers could cultivate authors, who did not bring in much more than the attention of experts [Kenners]. It was only the relentless compulsion, under the most drastic threat, to incorporate themselves as aesthetic experts into business affairs that ultimately curbed artists. Formerly they signed letters, like Kant and Hume, with “your most obedient servant” and undermined the foundations of throne and altar. Today they call leading politicians by their first names and their every aesthetic impulse submits to the judgement of their illiterate sponsors.

The analysis written by Tocqueville a hundred years ago has in the meantime fully materialized. Under the private monopoly of culture it is true that “tyranny releases the body and gets immediately to work on the soul. The master no longer says, you will think like me or die. He says: you're free to think differently from me, your life, your belongings, you can keep everything, but from this day on you are a stranger among us.”² Those who do not conform, is assaulted with an economic powerlessness, which parallels the intellectual [geistigen] kind of the loner. Excluded from business, they are easily convicted of inadequacy. While today the mechanism of supply and demand is crumbling in material production, it acts in the superstructure as a check in favor of the rulers. The consumers are workers and employees, farmers and professionals [Kleinbürger]. Capitalist production has so enclosed their body and soul, that they unresistingly fall prey to what they are offered. However just as those who are ruled over always took the morality which came to them from the rulers more seriously than the rulers themselves, today the deluded masses fall prey to the mythos of success even more than these success stories themselves. They have their dreams. They stubbornly insist on the ideology, through which they are enslaved. The unholy love of the people for what was done to them, outdoes even the cleverness of the authorities. It surpasses the rigor of the Hays Office [informal censorship body of Hollywood], just as in heroic times it fueled the larger authorities directed against it, the Terror of the tribunals. Mickey Rooney is called for rather than the tragic Garbo and Donald Duck instead of Betty Boop. The industry follows the vote it itself conjured up. The faux frais [French: incidental costs] due to a contract with a fading star, which companies cannot fully exploit, are legitimate costs for the entire system. Through the arrant sanctioning of the demand for junk, it inaugurates total harmony. Expertise [Kennerchaft] and informed knowledge [Sachverständnis] fall foul of the presumptuousness of those who style themselves superior to others, whereas culture is to share its privileges democratically to all. In the view of this ideological truce, the conformism of the customers, like the shamelessness of the productions which the former keep going, maintains its good conscience. Both are contented with the reproduction of what is always the same [Immergleichen].

That which is always the same [Immergleichheit] governs the relationship to what is past, too. What is new about the mass-cultural period in comparison to the late-liberal one is the exclusion of the new. The machine rotates around the same position. While it already determines consumption, it also eliminates what is untested as a risk. Film people look with mistrust at any manuscript which is not already an assured bestseller. Thus the constant talk of idea, novelty and surprise [idea, novelty, surprise: in English in original], of what is simultaneously all too familiar and what has never existed. Tempo and dynamics pace it. Nothing may remain what it was,

everything must operate ceaselessly, must be in motion. For only the universal victory of the rhythm of mechanical production and reproduction augurs that nothing changes, nothing comes out which does not fit in. Additions to the time-tested cultural inventory are too speculative. The frozen formal types such as the sketch, the short story, the social reform film, and the blockbuster are the normatively conscious, threateningly imposed average of late-liberal taste. The power-brokers of the cultural agencies, who are in accord as only managers are with others, no matter whether they came from the rag trade or college, have long since sanitized and rationalized the objective spirit [Geist: spirit, mind, intellect]. It is as if an omnipresent authority had scrutinized the material and issued the authoritative catalog of cultural goods, succinctly listing the models for delivery. Ideas are written into the heavens of culture, where Plato had already counted them, indeed were determined to be numbers themselves, immutable and unchanging.

Amusement [amusement: in English in original], all the elements of the culture industry, existed long before this latter. Now they are set in motion from above and brought up to date. The culture industry can brag about how energetically it carried out the frequently clumsy transposition of art into the consumption-sphere, raised this to a principle, divesting amusement of its importunate naivete and improving the make of commodities. The more total it becomes, the more mercilessly it compels every outsider [outsider: in English in original] into bankruptcy or into syndication, the more subtle and sophisticated it simultaneously becomes, until it finally culminates in the synthesis of Beethoven and the Casino de Paris [classic music-hall of Paris]. Its victory is twofold: the truth it extinguished outside, can be internally reproduced at will as a lie. "Light" art as such, distraction, is not a form of decay. Those who accuse it of betrayal of the ideal of pure expression, harbor illusions about society. The purity of bourgeois [i.e. 19th century middle-class] art which is hypostatized as the realm of freedom in contradistinction to material praxis, was purchased from the very beginning by the exclusion of the under-classes, whose concern [Sache], a just universality, was precisely what art held faith to through the freedom from the goals of the false universality. Serious art has always withheld itself from those to whom the necessity and pressure of everyday existence [Dasein] made a mockery of seriousness, and who were happy enough to use the time they did not have to spend standing on the assembly-line in just drifting along. Light art accompanied the autonomous kind as its shadow. It is the social bad conscience of the serious kind. The truth this latter had to omit on the grounds of its social prerequisites, gives the former the appearance [Schein] of objective justice [sachlichen Rechts]. This split is itself the truth: at the very least, it expresses the negativity of the culture, to which these spheres add up. The antithesis is least of all to be reconciled by absorbing the light kind into the serious, or vice versa. This however is what the culture industry strives for. The eccentricity of the circus, the panopticon and the bordello vis-a-vis society is as embarrassing to it as that of Schönberg and Karl Kraus. That is why jazz directors like Benny Goodman must appear with the Budapest string quartet, rhythmically more pedantic than any philharmonic clarinetist, while the quartet for its part plays as flatly vertical and cloyingly as Guy Lombardo [bandleader and violinist]. What is noteworthy is not the crude lack of education, stupidity and inelegance. The dross of yesteryear was abolished by the culture industry through its own perfection, through the prohibition and domestication of what is dilettantish, although it ceaselessly commits the gross blunders, without which the elevated level could not even be conceived. However what is new is that the unreconciled elements of culture, art and distraction are transformed through their subordination under the goal of a single false formula: the totality of the culture industry. It consists of repetition. The fact that its characteristic innovations consist

entirely of mere improvements of mass reproduction, is not extrinsic to the system. The interest of countless consumers is fixated on technics [Technik], and not on the rigidly repeated, hollowed-out and half-abandoned content, for good reason. The social power adored by the audience is attested to more effectively by the omnipresence of the stereotypes compulsorily produced by technics [Technik], than by the stale ideologies which the ephemeral content has to vouchsafe.

Nevertheless the culture industry remains the business of amusement. Its leverage over consumers is mediated through amusement [Amusement: in English in original]; this is not to be dissolved through sheer diktat, but through the deep-seated hostility of the principle of amusement against that which would be more than itself. Yet since the incarnation of all tendencies of the culture industry in the flesh and blood of the audience comes about through the entire social process, the survival of the market in the industry still supports the former tendencies. Demand has not yet been replaced with simple obedience. The large-scale reorganization of film shortly before WW I, the material prerequisite of its expansion, was indeed the conscious alignment towards the needs of the audience as registered by the box office proceeds, which no one during the pioneering days of the silver screen had to take into account. To the captains of the cinema, who set store solely on the basis of the more or less phenomenal hit, and wisely never on the counter-example, the truth, this is how things appear even today. Their ideology is business. What is true about this is that the power of the culture industry lies in its unity with the produced need, not in simple opposition to such, even if it were that of omnipotence versus powerlessness. – Amusement is the extension of labor under late capitalism. It is sought by those who wish to escape the mechanized labor-process, so that they can once again deal with this latter. Simultaneously, however, mechanization has such power over those with free time and their happiness, it determines so thoroughly the fabrication of entertainment-commodities, that the latter cannot experience anything other than after-images of the labor-process. The presumed content is mere faded foreground; what leaves an impression is the automated succession of standardized performances. The labor-process of the factory and office can be evaded only by alignment towards it in idleness. This is what hopelessly ails all amusement. Entertainment freezes into boredom, because in order to remain entertainment, it should cost no effort and thus move strictly within extended tracks of association. The audience doesn't need to think for themselves: the product anticipates every reaction, not through its objective [sachlichen] framework (this disintegrates, as soon as one begins to think), but through signals. Every logical connection which presupposes an intellectual breathing-space is meticulously avoided. Developments are preferably to unfold directly from the immediately preceding situation, but not from the idea of the whole. There is no storyline [Handlung: action, plot, storyline] which could resist the keenness of the production crew to extract whatever can be gotten from each individual scene. Ultimately, even the overall schemata seems dangerous, insofar as it had established a framework of meaning, be it ever so paltry, where only meaninglessness can be accepted. Often the storyline [Handlung] spitefully rejects the continuation demanded by the characters and concerns of the previous schemata. Instead, the next step is typically selected by the writers as the superficially most compelling invention in the given situation. Mindlessly-hatched, too-clever-by-far surprises implode the storyline [Handlung]. The tendency of the product to fall back malevolently on pure nonsense, the nonsense which popular art has had its legitimate share of, down to the antics and clowning of Chaplin and the Marx Brothers, appears most conspicuously in the less developed genres. While

the Greer Garson and Bette Davis films [Garson starred in the British WW II drama *Mrs. Miniver* (1942), Davis starred in the Welsh coal village drama *The Corn is Green* (1950)] derive their reasonably solid storyline [Handlung] from something like the unity of the social-psychological case study, the former tendency has pushed itself through completely in the text of the novelty song [novelty song: in English in original], in the crime film and in cartoons. Thought itself is massacred and chopped into pieces, like the objects of comedy and of horror. Novelty songs have always lived on the scorn for meaning, which they reduce, as the forerunners and successors of psychoanalysis they indeed are, to the monotony of sexual symbolism. In the crime and adventure films, the audience is no longer even indulged a ringside seat in the process of the explanation [Aufklärung]. Even in nonironic productions of the genre, they must put up with the fright of situations which are hardly ever connected in any necessary way.

Animated films were once exponents of the imagination against rationalism. They granted the animals and things electrified via their technics [Technik] a measure of justice, by allowing those who have been mutilated a second life. Today they merely confirm the victory of technological reason over the truth. A few years ago they had consistent screenplays, which only dissolved into the chaos of the chase during the final minutes. In this their mode of conduct resembled the longstanding traditions of slapstick comedy [slapstick comedy: in English in original]. Now however the time-relations have been deferred. The motif of the screenplay is revealed precisely during the very first scenes of the animated film, so that destruction can rain down on it during the continuation: under the catcalls of the audience, the leading figure is thrown around like a sack of potatoes [Lump]. The quantity of organized amusement thereby recoils into the quality of organized cruelty. The self-selected censors of the film industry, its family relations, watch over the length of the atrocity which has been expanded into a hunt. The hilarity cuts off that pleasure which the moment of the embrace could presumably have guaranteed, and delays satisfaction until the day of the pogrom. To the degree that animated films achieve anything more than familiarizing the senses to the new tempo, they hammer the hoary wisdom into everyone's brain, that the continuous walloping, the breaking of all individual resistance, is the condition of life in this society. Donald Duck in the cartoons and unfortunates in reality get their beatings, so that the audience can get used to their own.

The enjoyment of the power [Gewalt: power, violence, authority] inflicted on those who are being portrayed crosses over into power [Gewalt] against the audience: distraction, into exertion. Nothing which the requisite experts have not dreamt up as a stimulant may escaped the weary gaze, noone is allowed to be ignorant of the ingenuity of the performance at any moment, everyone has to follow along everywhere and even summon up that speed, which the performance itself showcases and disseminates. It is thus doubtful as to whether the culture industry still fulfills the function of diversion which it itself openly proclaims. If the greater part of the radios and cinema halls were closed, consumers would probably not be missing too much. The step from the street into the cinema hall is in any case not the pathway to dreams, and as soon as the utilization of these institutions was no longer obligatory due to their sheer existence [Dasein], then there would scarcely be any great urge to use them. Such a shutdown would not be any sort of reactionary machine-wrecking. Those left empty-handed would not be so much the enthusiasts but those who always end up paying the price anyway, those left behind. The darkness of the cinema hall grants the housewife an asylum in spite of the film which is supposed to further integrate her, an asylum where she can lounge around for a couple of hours,

unpoliced, as she formerly did by looking out the window, when there were still home-spaces and holiday evenings. The jobless of the big cities can find coolness in summer, warmth in winter in facilities with air-conditioning. Otherwise the bloated entertainment apparatus does not make life any more humane for human beings, even according to the measure of what exists today [Bestehenden]. The thought of the “exhaustion” of given technical possibilities, of the complete utilization of the capacities of aesthetic mass consumption, belongs to an economic system which refuses to utilize those capacities, as soon as it involves the abolition of hunger.

The culture industry perpetually swindles its consumers of what it perpetually promises them. The bill [Wechsel] of pleasure, which the screenplay [Handlung] and the staging display, is endlessly deferred: the promise, which in actuality comprises the whole show, indicates maliciously that it won't happen, that the dinner-guest is supposed to be satisfied by the reading of the menu. The longing which all the glittering names and pictures are supposed to elicit ultimately becomes the mere apologetics for the gray everyday life, which they wanted to escape. Works of art, too, did not consist of sexual exhibitions. However by casting renunciation as something negative, they took back the abasement of the drive, as it were, and rescued what was forsaken as what was mediated.

That is the secret of aesthetic sublimation: to represent fulfillment as something broken. The culture industry does not sublimate, but rather suppresses. By exposing what is desired over and over again, breasts in sweaters and the naked torso of the athletic hero, it incites the unsublimated proto-pleasure [Vorlust], which has long since been mutilated into the masochistic kind through familiarization with renunciation. There is no erotic situation which does not accompany insinuation and provocation with the firm indication that things will never ever get that far. The Hays Office merely confirms the ritual that the culture industry has long since instituted: that of Tantalus. Works of art are ascetic and shameless, the culture industry is pornographic and prudish. Thus the latter reduces love to romance. And once reduced, plenty is permitted, even libertinage as an unexceptional specialty, as per the ratings and with the trademark “daring” [daring: in English in original]. The serial production of what is sexual [Sexuellen] automatically achieves its suppression. The film stars you are supposed to fall in love with are, in their ubiquity, their own copies from the outset. Every tenor singer now sounds exactly like a Caruso record, and the natural-born faces of girls from Texas already resemble those of the latest models, according to which the former would be typecast in Hollywood. The mechanical reproduction of what is beautiful, which is to be sure rendered only that much more inescapable by the reactionary culture-boosters with their methodical deification of individuality, leaves no more leeway for the unconscious idolatry, in whose consummation [Vollzug] the beautiful was bound. The triumph over what is beautiful is carried out with humor, the schadenfreude [glee over someone else's misfortune] over any successful renunciation. There is laughter over the fact that there is nothing to laugh at. Laughter, the reconciled kind as well as the terrifying kind, has always accompanied the moment when fear vanishes. It indicates liberation, be it from mortal danger, be it from the trap of logic. Reconciled laughter resounds with the echo of having escaped from power [Macht], the bad kind masters fear, by crossing over to the authorities which are to be feared. It is the echo of power [Macht] as something inescapable. Fun [fun: in English in original] is a bath of steel. The entertainment industry prescribes it ceaselessly. In it, laughter turns into the instrument of betrayal of happiness. Moments of happiness know nothing of this, only operettas and later films portray sexuality [Sexus] with gales of laughter. However

Baudelaire is as humorless as perhaps only Hölderlin. In the wrong society, happiness has fallen ill from laughter and is dragged down into its despicable totality. Laughing [Lachen: laughter] about something is always laughing at something [Verlachen: ridicule], and the life therein which according to Bergson breaks through the hardened crust, is in truth the onrushing barbaric kind, the self-preservation which dares to celebrate its emancipation from scruples in polite company. The collectivity of those who laugh parodies humanity. They are monads, wherein each gives themselves to pleasure, at the cost of everyone else, and with the backing of the majority, are ready to do anything. In such harmony they offer a caricature of solidarity. What is devilish about false laughter is the fact that it compulsively parodies even what is best, reconciliation. Pleasure [Lust] however is stringent [streng]: *res severa verum gaudium* [Latin: “true joy is a serious thing”, aphorism from Seneca in: *L. Annaei Senecae ad Lucilium Epistulae XXIII*]. The ideology of the monastery, that not asceticism but the sexual act would signify the renunciation of attainable bliss, is confirmed negatively by the seriousness of lovers, who stake their lives with foreboding on every fleeting second. The culture industry puts jovial renunciation in place of the pain, which is present in euphoria as much as asceticism. The prime directive is that they should at no price get what is theirs, and thus are they supposed to have their fun, with a smile on their face. The permanent renunciation which civilization compels is once more inflicted and unmistakably demonstrated to those under its control in every showplace. To offer them something and thereby keep it from them is the same. That is the achievement of erotic bustle [Betriebsamkeit: bustle, business]. Precisely because it can never happen, everything revolves around coitus. For a film to admit to an illegitimate relationship without having the instigators face punishment is even more strictly tabooed than for the prospective son-in-law of the millionaire to be involved in the labor movement. In contrast to the liberal era, industrialized culture can indulge itself in as much outrage at capitalism as the folk-based [völkische: folkish, but also a reference to the Nazi populist ideology of the “Volk” or race] kind; but cannot however refrain from the threat of castration. This latter exemplifies its entire nature [Wesen]. It outlasts the organized loosening of mores in regards to those in uniform, in the merry films produced for them and finally in reality. What is decisive today is not merely puritanism, although it still makes itself felt in the shape of women's organizations, but rather the necessity which lies within the system of not letting the consumers go, of not giving them even the slightest inkling of the possibility of resistance. The principle requires that whereas on the one hand all needs should be portrayed as fulfillable by the culture industry, on the other hand these needs should be arranged in advance so that they experience themselves only as eternal consumers, as objects of the culture industry. It is not merely that this latter talks them into believing their betrayal would actually be the satisfaction, but it also indicates to them beyond this, that they must be satisfied with whatever is on offer, no matter what it is. With the flight from the everyday world, which the entire culture industry in all its branches promises to take care of, things are arranged like the elopement of the daughter in the American cartoon: the father is the one holding the ladder in the darkness. The culture industry offers as paradise the self-same everyday all over again. Escape like elopement [escape, elopement: in English in original] are determined from the start to lead back to the point of departure. Entertainment promotes the resignation, which wants to forget itself in the former.

Amusement, entirely unchained, would not merely be the opposite of art but also the extremity, which the latter touches. The Mark Twain-style absurdity, which the American culture industry flirts with at times, could signify a corrective on art. The more serious this latter takes the

contradiction to everyday existence [Dasein], the more it resembles the seriousness of everyday existence [Dasein], its opposite: the more labor it expends on developing purely from its own law of form, the more it demands labor once again as understanding [Verständnis], whereas it wanted precisely to negate the burden of that labor. In many revue films, above all in the grotesque ones and in the funnies [funnies: in English in original, cartoon comedies], the possibility of this negation momentarily flashes. Its realization is to be sure not permitted to happen. Pure amusement in its stringency, the relaxed giving over of oneself to colorful associations and madcap nonsense [glücklichen Unsinn], is cut off by the prevailing form of amusement: it is spoiled by the surrogate of a meaning which sets the framework, which the culture industry is bent on granting to its productions and at the same time mistreats, with a wink, as a mere pretext for the appearances of stars. Biographies and other fables patch together scraps of nonsense into a simple-minded storyline [Handlung]. What jingles is not the belled cap of the fool, but rather the keychain of capitalist reason, which even in its images yokes pleasure to the purpose of progress. Every kiss in the revue film must contribute to the resume of a boxer or some other one-hit wonder, whose career is thereby glorified. It is not merely that the culture industry custom-orders amusement which constitutes the swindle, but that it spoils the fun through a business-oriented incapacity to avoid the ideological clichés of a culture in the process of liquidating itself. Ethics and taste cut short untrammelled amusement as “naive” – naivete is regarded as something as bad as intellectualism – and constrict even the technical potential of such. The culture industry is depraved, not as a hotbed of vice but as a cathedral of elevated entertainment. At all of its levels, from Hemingway to Emil Ludwig [best-selling German writer of biographies], from Mrs. Miniver to the Lone Ranger, from Toscanini to Guy Lombardo, the untruth of the spirit [Geist: spirit, mind, intellect] clings to that which art and science have churned out. The culture industry preserves the trace of what is better in the features which approximate those of the circus, in the obstinately meaningless know-how [Könnerschaft] of riders, acrobats and clowns, in the “defense and justification of corporeal art as opposed to intellectual [geistiger: spiritual, intellectual] art.”³ But the refuge of soulless artistry, which represents what is human against the social mechanism, is being mercilessly uprooted by a strategizing reason, which compels everything to legitimate itself through significance and effect. It is causing the disappearance of what is meaningless in lesser works of art as drastically as meaning in the greater.

Today's fusion of culture and entertainment is realized not merely in the degradation of culture, but to an equal extent in the compulsory spiritualization [Vergeistigung: spiritualization, intellectualization] of amusement. This is signified by the fact that the latter is innervated only as a copy [Abbild], as the cinematic photograph or the radio recording. In the epoch of liberal expansion amusement lived on the unyielding belief in the future: everything would stay the same but nevertheless get better. Today even the belief has been spiritualized [vergeistigt]; it has become so wispy, that it has lost sight of any goals and exists solely in the golden pigmentation [Goldgrund: reference to gold-flecked pigments used in panel paintings of 15th and 16th centuries], which is projected behind what is real. It pulls itself together from the flourishes of meaning with which, paralleling life itself, the show grants to the splendid fellow, the engineer, the proper young girl, the character who is barely-disguised ruthlessness, the sports hero and finally the autos and cigarettes, even where the entertainment does not come from the ad-budget of the corresponding manufacturer but from that of the system as a whole. Amusement itself is classified as an ideal, it stands in place of the elevated goodness of heart which it completely

drives out of the masses, by repeating that goodness even more stereotypically than privately-paid advertising jingles. That which is innervated [Innerlichkeit], the subjectively restricted form of truth, was always more subordinate to the external masters than it could know. It has been remodeled by the culture industry into an open lie. It is still experienced only as sanctimonious prattle, which people tolerate in religious bestsellers [bestsellers: in English in original], in psychological films, and in women serials [women serials: in English in original] as an embarrassingly delectable ingredient, in order to be able to master every human impulse in life with all the more surety. In this sense amusement achieves the purgation of affect which Aristoteles formerly ascribed to tragedy, and Mortimer Adler currently to film. Just as with style, the culture industry discloses the truth about catharsis.

The more secure the position of the culture industry becomes, the more summarily it can proceed with the needs of consumers, producing them, channeling them, disciplining them, even withdrawing the amusement: no bounds there on cultural progress. But the tendency thereto is itself immanent to the principle of amusement, as something bourgeois-enlightened. If the need for amusement was in large part created by industry, which sold the work to the masses through the thematic topic [Sujet], the chromolithograph through the tidbits it depicted and conversely the pudding mix through the visual rendering of a pudding, then amusement always bore the markers of something commercially oriented, of the sales talk [sales talk: in English in original], of the call of the hawker at the fairground. However the original affinity between business and amusement is revealed by its selfsame meaning: of apologetics for society. To be entertained means to be in accord. It is possible only by sealing itself off from the totality of the social process, dumbing itself down and nonsensically sacrificing from the very outset the inescapable claim of any work, even the most trivial: that of reflecting the whole in its delimitation. Amusement always means: the forgetting of suffering, not having to think about it, even where it is displayed. At its heart is powerlessness. It is in fact flight, but not, as it claims, flight from the bad reality, but from the ultimate thought of the resistance which still remains in such. The emancipation which amusement promises, is from thinking as that from negation. The shamelessness of the rhetorical question, 'What do people want to have!' consists of the fact that it appeals to these selfsame people as thinking subjects, when its specific task consists of weaning them away from subjectivity. Even where the audience occasionally rebels against the entertainment industry, it is that non-resistance, which the latter itself instilled in them. Nonetheless it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep them in line. The progress of dumbing down is not allowed to remain behind the corresponding progress of intelligence. In the age of statistics the masses are too savvy to identify with the millionaire on the silver screen, and too dull-witted to deviate even slightly from the law of large numbers. Ideology conceals itself in the calculation of probabilities. Not everyone gets to find happiness, but rather the one who draws the lottery ticket, or rather the one designated by a higher power – mostly by the entertainment industry itself, which is portrayed as ceaselessly on the prowl. Those figures who are ferreted out by the talent scouts and then largely built up by the studios are ideal types of the new dependent middle strata [Mittelstands]. The female starlet [starlet: in English in original] is supposed to symbolize the office-worker, to the point that the former seems to be destined to wear the evening dress, in contrast to the latter. For the female spectator, this does not merely emphasize the possibility that she herself could appear on the silver screen, but more insistently still the distance. Only one can draw the winning ticket, only one becomes famous, and even if everyone has the same mathematical chance, this latter is nevertheless so minimal for every individual,

that it would be best for you to just write it off and be happy for the good fortune of another, who could just as easily be you and nonetheless never is. Where the culture industry still invites the naïve identification, this latter is immediately remanded. No one can lose themselves anymore. Formerly, film spectators saw their own wedding in the weddings of others. Now the onscreen happy pair are specimens of the same species as everyone in the audience, but in this sameness stands the insurmountable separation of human elements. The complete and utter similarity is the absolute difference. The identity of the species forbids that of the specific cases. The culture industry has maliciously fulfilled humanity as species-essence [Gattungswesen]. Everyone is only someone who can be replaced by someone else: fungible, a specimen. They themselves, as the individuated [Individuum], is what is absolutely replaceable, pure nothingness, and they come to feel this when their similarity is lost over time. This changes the inner composition of the religion of success, which is by the way strictly adhered to. In place of the path of “per aspera ad astra” [Latin: through adversity, to the stars], which presupposes deprivation and exertion, prizes appear more and more. The element of blindness in the routinized decision as to which song can be a hit, which extra can be a heroine, is celebrated by ideology. Films emphasize contingency. By mandating essential sameness on their characters through the exclusion of countervailing physiognomies, for example those like Garbo, who doesn't look like you could greet her with a “hello sister” [in English in original] – the villains are the exception here – the life of the audience is at first made easier. They are assured that they need not be any different than what they are, and they could succeed just as easily, without them having to take on anything they know they couldn't do. But at the same time they are given the hint that the effort would be of no avail anyway, because not even bourgeois [19th century middle-class] happiness has any connection with the calculable effect of their own labor. They get the hint. Basically, everyone recognizes the contingency through which one realizes happiness as the other side of planning. Precisely because the [productive] forces of society have developed so far towards rationality, that anyone can become an engineer and manager, the issue of who the society invests educational experience in and trust in for such functions has become completely irrational. Contingency and planning become identical, because in sight of the sameness of humanity, the happiness or unhappiness of individuals, even those at the top, loses any economic significance. Contingency itself becomes planned; it is not that it will affect this or that specific individual, but rather that it is given credence. It serves as an alibi for the planners and gives the impression that the web of transactions and measures into which life has been transformed, would leave room for spontaneous, immediate relations between human beings. Such freedom is symbolized in the various media of the culture industry by the arbitrary scooping up of average cases. In the detailed magazine reports covering the reasonably luxurious tourist trip arranged by the publication for the lucky winner, preferably a stenotypist who won the lottery on the basis of their connections with the local bigwigs, the powerlessness of everyone is mirrored. They are so very much material, that the functionaries can take up one of them into their heaven and then cast them out again: their rights and their labor can take a hike. Industry is interested in human beings solely as its customers and employees and has in fact rendered humanity as a whole just like each of its elements down to this exhaustive formula. In the ideology, plan or contingency is emphasized according to whichever aspect is indeed decisive, technics or life, civilization or nature. As employees they are reminded of rational organization and thereby constrained to fit themselves in with sound common sense. As customers they are offered the freedom of choice, the appeal of what has not yet been encompassed, as current affairs [menschlich-privaten Ereignissen], whether on the silver screen or in the press. In any case they remain objects.

The less the culture industry has to promise, the less it can explain life as something meaningful, the emptier the ideology it disseminates necessarily becomes. Even the abstract ideals of the harmony and human kindness of society are too concrete for the epoch of universal advertising. You learn to identify even abstractions as targeted advertising. Language which appeals solely to truth, awakens only the impatience to get down to the business which it in truth pursues. Words which are not a means appear as something senseless, different ones as fiction, as untrue. Value judgements are perceived either as advertising or as chatter. Nevertheless the ideology thereby driven into vague disconnectedness does not become more transparent and also not weaker. Precisely its vagueness, the almost scientific aversion to laying claim to something which cannot be verified, functions as an instrument of domination. It turns into the emphatic and strategic announcement of what it is. The culture industry has the tendency to turn itself into the embodiment of the minutes recorded at a meeting and precisely thereby into the irrefutable prophet of what exists [Bestehenden]. It wends its way masterfully between the crags of specifiable information and public truth, by faithfully replicating the appearance [Erscheinung: appearance, phenomenon] whose density imprisons the insight, and which posits the seamless ubiquitous appearance [Erscheinung] as ideal. Ideology is split into the photography of obdurate existence [Dasein] and the naked lie about its meaning, which is not expressed but rather suggested and hammered in. What is actual [Wirkliche] is always cynically repeated as a demonstration of its divinity. Such photological evidence is indeed not stringent, but overwhelming. Whoever has doubts in view of the power of monotony, is a fool. The culture industry knocks down the objection against itself as easily as the one against the world, which it aimlessly duplicates. Your only choice is to play along or to remain in the sticks: the provincials who attack cinema and radio on behalf of eternal beauty and amateur theater are already political precisely where mass culture is now driving its audience. It is hardened enough to pour scorn on the old pipedreams, those of the patriarchal ideal not less than those of unconditional sentiment, as ideology while also playing with them as need be. The new ideology has the world as such as its object. It makes use of the cult of factuality, by restricting itself to elevating the bad existence [Dasein] through the most exact depiction in the realm of the factual. Through this translation, existence [Dasein] itself becomes a surrogate of meaning and justice. What is pretty is whatever the camera reproduces. The disappointed hope that you yourself could have been the employee who won the trip around the world, corresponds to the disappointing sight of the exhaustively photographed districts through which that trip could lead. What is offered is not Italy, but rather visual confirmation that it exists. The film can afford to show the Paris, in which the young American woman thought to pacify her longing, as a desolate wasteland, in order to drive her that much more inexorably into the arms of the smart American boy she might have gotten to know anyway at home. That things keep going, that the system even in its most recent phase reproduces the life of those who constitute it, instead of outright abolishing them, is credited as its meaning and merit. The keep-on-going [Weitergehen] and the carrying-on [Weitermachen] become the justification for the blind continuation of the system, even for its irrevocability. What is repeated, is what is sound [gesund: healthy, sound], circulation in nature and industry. The same babies grin from the magazines, the jazz machine pounds eternally. Through all the progress of the technics of portrayal, of rules and specialties, through all the bubbling activity, the bread which the culture industry feeds human beings remains the stone of stereotype. It feeds on the circulation, on the to be sure well-founded astonishment that mothers in spite of everything still have children, that the wheels have not yet stopped turning [reference to classic

German slogan, “wenn dein starker Arm es will, alle Räder stehen still”, “if your mighty arm commands, all the wheels will stop”, i.e. workers united have the power to shut down the factory]. The irrevocability of social relations are hardened thereby. The swaying corn-fields at the end of Chaplin's film on Hitler [*The Great Dictator* (1940)] disavow the anti-Fascist speech on freedom. They resemble the blond hair-strands of the German maidens, whose outdoor summer camp life was photographed by Ufa [Ufa: Universum Film AG, largest German film studio]. By being grasped by the social mechanism of domination as the benevolent antithesis of society, nature is thereby drawn into the malevolent one and sold off. The pictorial affirmation that trees are green, the sky blue and the clouds are sailing, already turns them into cryptograms of factory chimneys and gas stations. Conversely wheels and machine-parts flash expressively, debased to the conveyances of tree and cloud-filled souls.

This is how nature and technics [Technik] are mobilized against the old guard, the falsified memorial picture of liberal society, wherein you supposedly hung around in humid velvet rooms, instead of partaking of asexual open air baths as is customary today, or suffered traffic accidents in prehistoric models of Daimler Benz, instead of heading at the speed of a rocket from where you are, anyway, to where things are no different. The triumph of the gigantic corporation over entrepreneurial initiative is celebrated by the culture industry as the eternity of entrepreneurial initiative. What is being fought against is the enemy which has already been beaten, namely the thinking subject. The resurrection in Germany of *Hans Sonnenstösser* [mid-1930s play by Mark Lothar, who had a successful musical career in Germany both during the Nazi era and afterwards], enemy of the reactionary middle-class [spießferfeindlichen], and the coziness with respect to *Life With Father* [at the time, a series of US short stories, later made into a 1947 film and 1953-1955 TV series] all have the same meaning.

There is one respect to be sure in which the hollowed-out ideology does not joke around: everyone is taken care of. “Noone is allowed to starve or freeze to death; anyone doing so, ends up in the concentration camp”: the joke from Hitler's Germany could shine as a logo above every door of the culture industry. It presupposes with naïve cleverness the situation which characterizes today's society: that it knows quite well who it can count on. Everyone's formal freedom is guaranteed. Noone has to officially account for what they think. For that, everyone is enclosed early on by a system of churches, clubs, professional associations and other relationships, which serve as the most sensitive instruments of social control. Whoever does not want to avoid ruin, must take care not to weigh too little on the scales of this apparatus. Otherwise they will fall behind in life and will eventually go to pieces. The fact that in every professional career, above all those in the freely-chosen professions, expert knowledge is usually connected with a proscriptive sensibility, can easily create the illusion that the expert knowledge did everything alone. In truth it is a part of the irrational strategicality [Planmäßigkeit] of this society, which to some extent reproduces the life of those loyal to it. The stepwise scale of living standards corresponds quite precisely to the inner connectedness of layers and individuals with the system. You can rely on the managers, even the most insignificant employee, the Dagwood who lives in the pages of the comics and in reality, is reliable. Whoever starves and freezes, even if they once had good prospects, is marked. They are outsiders, and apart from capital crimes, the worst sin is being an outsider. In film they are, in the best case scenario, the original, the object of malicious forbearing humor; but usually to the villain [villain: in English in original], who is identified as such during the very first appearance, long before the storyline has gotten anywhere,

so that not even the slightest suspicion is aroused that society might turn against those who are of good will. In fact a kind of welfare state has been created at the higher social levels. In order to maintain your own position, you keep an economy going, wherein due to the most extreme expansion of technics, the masses are already superfluous as producers inside their own country. The workers, the actual breadwinners, are given their bread – this is the ideological appearance [Schein] – by the directors of the economy, those who are bread-takers. The position of the individual thus becomes precarious. In liberalism the poor were deemed lazy, today they are automatically deemed suspicious. Anyone who doesn't take care of themselves out there, belongs in a concentration camp, in any case in the hell of the worst jobs and the slums [slums: in English in original]. The culture industry however reflects the positive and negative welfare for those under administration, as the immediate solidarity of human beings in the world of can-doers. No one is forgotten, there are neighbors everywhere, social welfare counselors, Dr. Gillespies and self-styled philosophers with their hearts in the right place, who through well-meaning, one-on-one interventions turn socially perpetuated misery into ameliorable individual cases, to the extent that the personal depravity of the client in question allows for this. The corporate-scientific obligation of mutual aid, which practically every factory sets up in order to increase production, brings even the last private impulses under social control, by rendering the appearance of the relationships of human beings in production immediate, by reprivatizing them. This spiritual winter aid [Winterhilfe: welfare program under Nazi Germany] campaign casts its placating shadow over the visual and acoustic reels of the culture industry long before the former crosses over from the factory to society in totalitarian fashion. The great helpers and benefactors of humanity, whose scientific achievements have to be polished up by writers as acts of compassion, in order to confer a fictitious human interest upon them, function as placeholders for the Leaders of the Folk [Führer: reference to Hitler's title], who ultimately decree the abolition of compassion and can forestall every infection, by eradicating the last of the chronically ill.

The emphasis on the heart of gold is how society confesses to the suffering it has created: everyone knows that they can no longer help themselves in the system, and ideology has to account for this. Far from simply concealing suffering under the guise of improvised camaraderie, the culture industry stakes its company reputation on looking it in the eye and admitting it in a solemn, composed manner. The pathos of the composure justifies the world which makes such necessary. Thus life is indeed difficult, but for that reason so wonderful, so sound [gesund]. The lie does not shrink back from tragedy. Just as the total society does not abolish the suffering of its members, but registers and plans it, so too does mass culture behave with tragedy. That explains the persistent borrowing from art. The latter delivers the tragic substance which pure amusement cannot manufacture by itself, but which it nevertheless requires if it wishes to stay at all true to the principle, of exactly duplicating the appearance [Erscheinung]. Tragedy, turned into a calculated and laudatory moment of the world, rings it into a blessing. It shields itself from the reproach that you are not being careful enough with the truth, while you are nonetheless cynically and regretfully appropriating the latter. It makes the dullness of censored happiness interesting and the interestedness available. It offers consumers who have seen culturally better days the surrogate of depth abolished long ago, and to regular visitors the leftovers of education which they can utilize for the prestige purposes. It grants to everyone the solace that a strong, genuine human destiny would still be possible and whose whole-hearted depiction is absolutely essential. The seamlessly enclosed existence [Dasein], in whose duplication ideology arises today, acts all the more splendidly, masterfully and mightily, the more

thoroughly it is turned into necessary suffering. It assumes the aspect of destiny. Tragedy is leveled down to the threat [Drohung] to annihilate anyone who does not go along, while its paradoxical meaning once consisted of hopeless resistance against mythical danger [Drohung: threat, danger]. Tragic destiny crosses over into the justified punishment which bourgeois aesthetics has since time immemorial had the longing to transform it into. The morals of mass culture are those which have sunk down from yesterday's children's books. In the top-tier productions the villain is typically dressed up as the female hysteric, who in a study of allegedly clinical precision seeks to swindle her more reality-based opposite number of her lifelong happiness, and who herself meets an entirely untheatrical death. Admittedly, things go this scientifically only for the upper crust. Lower down the scale, the expenses are less. There tragedy has its fangs drawn without the social psychology. Just as every honest Hungarian-Viennese operetta must have its tragic finale during the second act, leaving nothing left for the third act aside from patching up the misunderstandings, so too does the culture industry assign tragedy its fixed place in routine. The public existence of ticket receipts suffices by itself to allay the concern, that the tragedy might be untamed. The description of dramatic formula by any housewife: getting into trouble and out again [getting into trouble and out again: in English in original] encompasses the entire mass culture from the simple-minded women serial [women serial: in English in original] to the top tier production. Even the worst ending, which at one time meant better, only confirms the social order and corrupts tragedy, be it that the forbidden lover pays with her brief happiness with death, or be it that the sad ending in the frame causes the irrepressibility of factual life to glow all the brighter. The tragic spectacle is truly turning into a moral improvement house. The masses who are demoralized by existence through systemic coercion, who display civilization only in cramped, drilled-in modes of conduct, through which rage and unruliness shine on all sides, are supposed to be brought to order by the glimpse of inexorable life and by the model behavior of those affected. Culture has always contributed to the restraining of revolutionary as well as barbaric instincts. The industrialized kind adds something more. It rehearses the conditions under which you can eke out the inexorable life. The individual [Individuum] is supposed to devalue their general surfeit into a driving force, giving themselves up to the collective power, which regards them as surfeit. The permanent situation of despair, which grinds the audience down every day, turns into restitution, you don't know how, into the promise that you may continue to exist. You only need to innervate your own nullity, to subscribe to your own downfall, and then you belong to it. Society is one of the desperate and therefore the prey of rackets. In several of the most significant German novels of the era prior to Fascism, such as [Alfred Döblin's 1929] *Berlin Alexanderplatz* and [Rudolf Ditzen's 1929] *Little Man, What Now?*, the tendency was as dramatically visible as in the run-of-the-mill films and in the mode of conduct of jazz. Basically, the issue everywhere was the self-ridicule of a man. The possibility of becoming an economic subject, an entrepreneur, a property-owner, is completely liquidated. The independent enterprise on whose management and inheritance the bourgeois families and the position of its head was founded, ends up in hopeless dependence, down to the local grocery store. Everyone turns into an employee, and in a civilization of employees, the dignity of the father, dubious anyway, ends. The behavior of individuals towards the racket, whether business, profession or party, whether before or after admission, the antics of the leaders [Führers] in front of the masses, of the lover before the object of desire, is taking on peculiarly masochistic features. The attitude to which everybody is compelled, in order to prove their moral fitness for this society all over again, is reminiscent of those boys who, under the blows of the priests, circle around and smile stereotypically during the induction into the lineage [Stamm:

house, tribe, lineage]. Existing in late capitalism is a permanent initiation-ritual. Everybody has to show that they identify unreservedly with the power which assaults them. This lies in the principle of jazz syncopation, which at the same time derides the stumble and raises it to a norm. The eunuch-like voice of crooners on the radio, the good-looking beau of the heiress, who falls into the swimming pool in their tuxedo, are prototypes of human beings who are supposed to make themselves into what the system breaks them down into. Everybody can be like almighty society, everybody can become happy, if they only deliver themselves over to it body and soul, ceding the claim to happiness.

In their weakness, society recognizes its own strength once more and gives them some of it. Their lack of resistance qualifies them as a sure thing. Tragedy is thus abolished. At one time the opposition of the individual to society was its substance. It glorified “the courage and freedom of sentiment in the face of a powerful enemy, in the face of a sublime hardship, in the face of a problem that elicited horror”.⁴ Today tragedy has melted into the nothingness of that false identity of society and subject whose horror becomes momentarily visible precisely in the nullified appearance of what is tragic. The miracle of integration, however, the permanent clemency of the functionaries who take on the ones who don't resist, who swallow their defiance, this means fascism. It is a storm brewing in the humanity, with which Döblin grants his Biberkopf [protagonist of *Berliner Alexanderplatz*] sanctuary, just as much as in socially minded films. The capacity to wriggle through and hide, the survival of one's own downfall, which has made tragedy obsolete, is that of the latest generation; they can do any job, because the labor-process does not allow them to affix themselves to any. It is reminiscent of the sad flexibility of the home-coming soldiers who had no part of war, of the day-laborers, who eventually joined underground groups and paramilitary organizations. The liquidation of tragedy confirms the abolition of the individuated [Individuum].

The individuated [Individuum] is illusionary in the culture industry not merely due to the standardization of its mode of production. The former is tolerated only insofar as its unqualified identity with the universal is beyond question. From the normalized improvisation in jazz to the original film personality, who has to have a strand of hair hanging over their brow, in order to be recognized as such, pseudoindividuality dominates. What is individual reduces itself to the capacity of the universal, to stamp what is contingent so thoroughly that it can be held fast as one and the same. Even the spiteful reticence or the refined appearance of individuals are manufactured in serial fashion like Yale [pin-tumbler] locks, which differ by fractions of a millimeter. The peculiar nature of the self is a socially conditioned monopoly property [Monopolygut] which is faked as something natural. It is reduced to the mustache, to the French accent, the deep voice of the lady of the night, the Lubitsch touch: to fingerprints, as it were, on the otherwise identical IDs into which the lives and faces of all individuals, from the film star to those who have been incarcerated, are transformed by the power of the universal. Pseudoindividuality is a prerequisite for the apprehension and detoxification of tragedy: it is only because individuals are indeed nothing of the sort, but mere traffic junctions of universal tendencies, that it is possible to revoke them seamlessly into the universality. Mass culture thereby discloses the fictitious character which the form of the individuated [Individuum] always took during the bourgeois epoch [i.e. liberal or Victorian-era capitalism], and does an injustice to this latter only to the extent that it boasts about such an opaque harmony between the universal and the particular. The principle of individuality was contradictory from the beginning. In the

past it never actually came to individuation. The class-based form of self-preservation held everyone at the level of mere species-being [Gattungswesen]. Every bourgeois character expressed the same thing, in spite of its deviation and precisely in this latter: the harshness of a society of competition. The individual, on whom society is based, bore the latter's stigma; in its apparent freedom, it was the product of the latter's economic and social apparatus. Power has always called on the prevailing relationships of power, when it obtained the ruling [i.e. juridical sentence] of those affected by it. Simultaneously, the course of bourgeois society also developed the individuated [Individuum]. Against the will of its directors, technics has turned human beings from children into persons. Every aspect of such progress of individuation however came at the cost of the individuality, in whose name it was carried out, and left nothing other than the decision, to pursue nothing except your own goals. The citizens whose life was split into business and private life, and private life into representation and intimacy, and intimacy into the sullen community of marriage and the bitter solace of being completely alone, falling apart from within and falling out with everyone else, are virtually already the Nazis who are simultaneously enthused and grumbling, or the city residents of today, who can comprehend friendship only as "social contact" [social contact: in English in original], as the social clasping [Berührung: contact, touch] of someone innately unclaspable [Unberührter]. That the culture industry can run rings around individuality so successfully, is only because the fragility of society reproduces itself in the former. In the pattern-made faces of film heroes and private persons stitched together on magazine covers, something apparent [Schein] melts away, in which no one believes anymore anyway, and the love for such model heroes feeds on the secret satisfaction that you could dispense with the exertion of individuation thanks to the admittedly more breathless one of copying. Idle is the hope that the person, contradictory in itself and disintegrating, could not last for generations, that the system ought to break apart due to such psychological rifts, that human beings would find the deceptive foisting of stereotypes for what is individual unbearable all by themselves. The unity of personality was something seen through as appearance [Schein] since Shakespeare's Hamlet. What is forgotten in today's synthetically produced physiognomies, is that there once even existed the concept of human life. For centuries society has been preparing for [rugged Hollywood star] Victor Mature and [child Hollywood star] Mickey Rooney. By dissolving such, it ends up fulfilling it.

The heroization of what is average is part of the cult of what is cheap. The highest-paid stars resemble ad placards for unnamed market goods. It is not for nothing that they are frequently selected from throngs of commercial models. The dominant taste draws its ideal from the ad, from the customized beauty [Gebrauchsschönheit]. Thus has Socrates' saying, that what is beautiful is what is useful, ironically fulfilled itself in the end. The cinema promotes the cultural corporation as totality, the radio hawks the individual commodities for whose sake the cultural property [Kulturgut] exists. For fifty cents, you see a million-dollar film, for ten cents you get some chewing gum, behind which stands all the wealth of a world which is thereby increased by the sale. In absentia [Latin: in absence], albeit through assent at the ballot box, funding is renewed for the army, without to be sure allowing prostitution away from the frontline. The best orchestras in the world, which are nothing of the sort, are delivered for free direct to the home. All of this sneeringly resembles the land of milk and honey [Schlaraffenland: Cockaigne, land of milk and honey], just as much as the folk-community [Volksgemeinschaft: Nazi term for German national community] does a human one. Everyone gets a serving. The comment of the provincial visitor to the old Berlin Metropol Theater, that it was indeed astounding what can be done for the

money, has long since been taken up by the culture industry and raised to the very substance of the production. It is not merely that this latter is always accompanied by the triumph over the fact that it is indeed possible, it is to a large extent this triumph itself. To put on a show [show: in English in original] means to display to everyone what you have and can do. Today it is still a fairground, only incurably ailing from culture. Just as people lured by the voice of the hawker try to hide their disappointment in the booth with a rueful smile, because they ultimately knew all along, so do filmgoers behave, with understanding for the institution. However, with the cheapness of serial luxury products and its complement, the universal swindle, are paving the way to a transformation in the commodity-character of art itself. It is not something new: it is only that today it explicitly confesses it, and that art recants its own autonomy, lining up proudly among consumer goods, is what constitutes the attraction of newness. For art to be a separate realm was possible only for the bourgeois kind. Even its freedom, as the negation of social purposiveness [Zweckmäßigkeit], as it pushed itself through the market, remains fundamentally tied to the prerequisite of the commodity economy. Pure works of art, which negated the commodity character of society solely by following their own law, were always simultaneously commodities: to the extent that clients protected artists from the market until the 18th century, they were subordinate to the clients and their purposes. The purposelessness of great contemporary art-works lives on the anonymity of the market. Its requirements are so multiply mediated, that artists are excused from the specific unreasonable demand, to be sure only to a certain extent, for their autonomy, as something merely tolerated, was adjoined throughout the whole of bourgeois history by a moment of untruth, that ultimately developed into the social liquidation of art. Beethoven on his deathbed tossed aside a novel by Walter Scott with the cry, “The guy just writes for money”, and at the same time showed himself to be a thoroughly experienced and tenacious businessman during the commercial negotiations over the final quartets, provides the most magnificent example of the unity of the opposites market versus autonomy in bourgeois art. Those who fall prey to ideology, are those who hide the contradiction, instead of taking it into the consciousness of their own production like Beethoven: he had improvised the “Rage over the Loss of a Penny” [Rondo alla ingharese quasi un capriccio in G major, Op. 129] after the fact into that metaphysical It Must Be, which attempts to aesthetically sublimate the compulsion of the world by taking this latter on itself, deducing it from the demand of the household maid for her monthly wage.

The principle of idealist aesthetics, of purposiveness without purpose, is the converse of the schemata which bourgeois art socially obeyed: purposiveness for the purposes, which the market declared. Ultimately, the realm of purposelessness has been devoured by purpose in the demand for entertainment and relaxation. Yet as the claim of the exploitability of art becomes total, a shift begins to evince itself in the inner economic framework of cultural goods. Specifically, what is useful [Nutzen] in the art-work which is promised to human beings in antagonistic society, is for the most part precisely the existence [Dasein] of what is unutilizable [Nutzlosen], which is nevertheless abolished through the complete subsumption under what is useful. By aligning itself wholly with necessity, the art-work betrays humanity in advance of precisely that liberation from the principle of usefulness [Nützlichkeit] which it is supposed to realize. What you could call the use-value of the reception of cultural goods, is replaced by exchange-value, pleasure accedes to being with it and being in the loop, expert knowledge with prestige boosts. Consumers become the ideology of the entertainment industry, whose institutions they cannot escape. You have to see *Mrs. Miniver*, just like you have to subscribe to *Life* and *Time*.

Everything is perceived only from the perspective of whether it can serve something else, however vague this other might be seen. Everything has value only insofar as you can exchange it, not insofar as it is something itself. To them the use-value of art, its being, counts as a fetish, and the fetish, its social estimation, which they mistake for the quality of the art-work, turns into their only use-value, the only quality they enjoy. Thus the commodity character of art disintegrates, by completely realizing itself. It is a commodity-species, arranged, processed, aligned with industrial production, purchasable and fungible, but the commodity-species of art, which lived on being sold and nevertheless being unsaleable, turns wholly into something hypocritically unsaleable, as soon as business is not its superficial intent but its only principle. The Toscanini performance on the radio is to a certain extent unsaleable. You hear it for nothing, and every note of the symphony is provided as it were with the sublime advertisement, that the symphony will not be interrupted by advertising – “this concert is brought to you as a public service” [this concert is brought to you as a public service: in English in original]. The deception is realized indirectly through the profits of all the combined auto and soap manufacturers, whose payments underwrite the radio stations, and naturally through the increased sales of the electrical industry as the producer of radio sets. Radio broadcasting, the progressive latecomer to mass culture, draws the logical consequences, which the pseudomarket for film rejects, for the time being. The technical structure of the commercial radio system makes it immune to the liberal deviations which the film industrialists can still permit themselves inside their own realm. It is a private enterprise, which already represents the sovereign whole, thereby giving it a leg up on other specific corporations. Chesterfield is merely the cigarette of the nation, the radio however is its mouthpiece. In the total imbrication of cultural products into the sphere of commodities, radio refrains above all from delivering its cultural products as commodities straight to the customer. In America it does not collect any fees from the audience. It thereby garners the deceptive form of a disinterested, nonpartisan authority, which fits Fascism like a glove. In the latter, the radio became the universal maw of the Leader; his voice on the public loudspeakers converges with the howling panic proclaimed by [air-raid] sirens, from which modern propaganda is difficult to distinguish anyway. The National Socialists [Nazis: the full party name was National Socialist German Workers Party] themselves knew that the radio gave their movement credence just like the printing-press to the Reformation. The Leader's metaphysical charisma, invented by the sociology of religion, ultimately proved to be the mere omnipresence of his radio speeches, which demonically parodied the omnipresence of the Holy Spirit. The gigantic fact that the speech was drilled in everywhere, replaced its content, just as the good deed of the Toscanini performance does vis-a-vis its content, the symphony. No listener can grasp its true context anymore, while the Leader's speech is a lie anyway.

To hold the human word as absolute, the false commandment, is the immanent tendency of radio. The recommendation turns into the command. The promotion of commodities, always the same, under various brand names, the scientifically founded praise of the laxative in the smooth voice of the announcer between [Verdi's 1854 opera] *La Traviata* and the [Wagner's 1840 opera] *Rienzi* overtures, has become unbearable if only due to its foolishness. Finally the diktat of production, once concealed through the appearance of the possibility of choice, can cross over into the specific advertisement, into the open command of the Leader. In a society of fascistic giant rackets, which are in agreement with each other on how much of the social product to distribute to the needs of the people, it would finally appear anachronistic to invite people to use a specific soap-powder. The Leader orders the genocide just like arranging the garbage disposal, in a more

modern, direct fashion, without any complications.

Today art-works, just like political slogans, and correspondingly played up, are already being directed by the culture industry onto a resistant audience at reduced prices, their enjoyment is becoming as accessible to ordinary people as parks. However the dissolution of their genuine commodity character does not mean that they would be sublated into the life of a free society, but rather that henceforth the very last protection against their degradation to cultural goods has collapsed. The abolition of the privilege of education [Bildung: education, cultivation] through selling out does not lead the masses to the realms which they were previously excluded from, but serves, under the prevailing social conditions, only the disintegration of education, the progress of barbaric disconnectedness. Those who paid money to see a play or listen to a concert in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, gave the performance at least as much heed as the requisite money. The bourgeois citizen [Bürger] who wanted to have something to show for this, might sometimes have sought some connection to the work. The so-called guidebooks on Wagner's musical dramas, for example, and the commentaries of *Faust* attest to this. They point in the direction of the biographical patina and the other practices, which the art-work is subjected to nowadays. Even in the youthful bloom of the business, exchange-value did not drag along use-value as a mere appendix, but developed it as its own prerequisite, and socially this was all to the good of works of art. Art kept the bourgeois citizens [Bürger] somewhat in check, so long as it was expensive. That's all over with. Its boundless proximity to those exposed to it, no longer mediated by money, completes the alienation and both come to resemble each other under the sign of triumphal thingliness [Dinglichkeit: thingliness, the materiality of things]. Criticism disappears in the culture industry just like respect: the former is inherited by mechanical expertise, the latter from the forgetful cult of hype. For consumers, nothing is expensive [teuer: expensive, dear] anymore.

Nonetheless they have an inkling that the less something costs, the less something can be given to them. The double-sided mistrust against traditional culture as ideology, intermixes with the one against the industrialized kind as swindle. Turned into mere extras, debased art-works are secretly discarded by their lucky consumers, together with the junk which the medium causes them to resemble. These latter are supposed to be happy over the fact that there is so much to see and hear. Actually, everything is available. The screeners and vaudevilles in film, the competitions in musical recognition, the free booklets, rewards and gift articles handed out to the listeners of certain radio programs, are not mere accidents, but continue what is taking place in cultural products themselves. The symphony is becoming the prize for even bothering to listen to the radio, and its technics had its way, film would already be delivered to apartments like its model, radio. It is heading towards the "commercial system" [commercial system: in English in original]. Television points the way to a development, which could easily enough drive Warner Brothers into the position, certainly unwelcome for them, of studio theater artists and cultural conservatives. The giving of prizes has however already made its mark on the behavior of the consumers. By portraying culture as a giveaway, whose private and social beneficial nature stands beyond question, its reception turns into the awareness of chances. They push forwards because they are afraid of missing something. What, precisely, remains unclear, but in any case only those who do not exclude themselves have any chance. What Fascism hopes for, however, is to reorganize those trained to receive gifts by the culture industry into its normal compulsory retinue.

Culture is a paradoxical commodity. It stands so completely under the law of exchange that it can no longer be exchanged; it is so blindly put to use, that you can't use it anymore. That is why it melts into advertising. The more meaningless the latter appears under monopolies, the more all-powerful it becomes. The motives are economic enough. It is all too certain that you could live without the entire culture industry, that it generates too much satiation and apathy among consumers. By itself, it can do little against this. Advertising is its elixir of life. Since its product ceaselessly reduces the pleasure [Genuß], which it promises as a commodity, to the mere promise, it itself ultimately converges with the advertisement it requires, due to its own unpalatability [Ungenießbarkeit]. In the society of competition, it provided the social service of orienting customers in the market, made it easier for them to choose and helped the more efficient, lesser-known suppliers to get their goods to the right destination. It did not merely cost labor-time, but also saved the latter. Today, with the free market [i.e. liberal, Victorian-era capitalism] coming to an end, the domination of the system is entrenching itself in such. It reinforces the bond which binds consumers to the giant corporations. Only those who can keep up with the exorbitant fees charged by the advertising agencies, above all by radio itself, and therefore those who already belong banking and industrial capital or are coopted by the mandates of such, are permitted to enter the pseudomarket as vendors. The costs of advertising, which ultimately flow back into the pockets of corporations, save them from the laborious task of outcompeting unwelcome outsiders; they guarantee that the decisionmakers keep things to themselves; not dissimilar to those economic committees, through which the foundation and continuation of companies is overseen in totalitarian states. Today advertising is a negative principle, a shut-off device: anything which does not bear its stamp, is economically suspect. All-encompassing advertising is by no means necessary for human beings to get to know the brands, to which the supply is limited. It boosts sales only indirectly. The loss of a current advertising account to a single corporation means a loss of prestige, in truth an affront against the discipline which the ruling clique imposes on those of its ilk. During the war, there was advertising for commodities which were no longer available, merely for the sake of showcasing industrial might. The subsidization of ideological media is more important than the repetition of the name. Inasmuch as every product deploys, under the compulsion of the system, the technics of advertising, this latter has marched into the idiom, the "style" of the culture industry. Its victory is so complete, that in the decisive positions it does not even need to be expressed: the monumental buildings of the heavyweights, stone-encased advertisements in floodlights, are ad-free and nonetheless put the initials of the business on display at their pinnacles, in glowing lapidary form, dispensing with self-congratulation. The houses which survived the 19th century, by contrast, whose architecture still bears the embarrassing marks of usability as a consumer product, of the purpose of residence, are covered from basement to rooftop with notices and signs; the landscape turns into a mere background for signs and symbols. Advertising turns simply into the art which Goebbels presciently classified it as, l'art pour l'art [French: art for art's sake], advertising for its own sake, the pure portrayal of social power. In the leading American magazines *Life* and *Fortune*, at first glance the advertising pictures and texts can scarcely be distinguished anymore from those of the editorial section. What is editorialized is the enthusiastic and unpaid pictorial spread covering the lifestyle and personal upkeep of celebrities, which supplies the latter with new fans [fans: in English in original], while the advertising pages depend on photographs and information which are so matter-of-fact [sachliche] and true to life, that they depict the ideal of information which the editorial text aspires to. Every film is the

preview of the next, which promises to yet again reunite the same heroic pair under the same exotic sun: whoever arrives too late, doesn't know whether they are witnessing the preview or the feature itself. The montage character of the culture industry, the synthetic, conducted manner of the manufacture of its products, factory-certified not merely in the film studio but already virtually in the compilation of cheap biographies, journalistic novels, and hit songs, reconciles itself in advance to advertising: inasmuch as the individual moment becomes replaceable, interchangeable, alienated from every framework of meaning, including technically, hands itself over to purposes external to the work. The effect, the trick, the isolated and reproducible single achievement have always been complicit with the exhibition of goods for the purpose of advertising, and today every closeup of the female film star has become an advertisement for her name, every hit song a plug [plug: in English in original] for its melody. Technically as well as economically, advertising and the culture industry are melting together. Here as there [i.e. in democratic as well as totalitarian states], what is the same [Gleiche] appears in numerous places, and the mechanical repetition of the selfsame cultural product is already the selfsame propaganda slogan. Here as there, technics under the command of reality turns into psychotechnics, into a procedure for the management of human beings. Here as there, what is taken as the norm is what is conspicuous and yet known by heart, what is easy and yet irresistible, what is well-versed and yet simple; it is all done to overpower the distracted or resistant-minded customers in question.

Through the language these latter speak, they contribute their own share to the advertisement-character of culture. Indeed the more completely language converges with communication, the more that words turn from substantive bearers of meaning into symbols empty of qualities; the more purely and transparently they mediate what is meant [Gemeinte], the more impenetrable they simultaneously become. The demythologization of language recoils, as an element of the entire process of enlightenment, back into magic. The word and the content were distinct from each other and inseparable boon companions. Concepts like melancholy, history, even life itself, were recognized in the word which raised them up and preserved them. Its form simultaneously constituted and reflected them. The definitive separation, which declared the phraseology as contingent and the relation to the object as arbitrary, cleared away the superstitious admixture of the word and the thing. Whatever in a fixed sequence of letters went beyond the correlation to the event, was banished as unclear and as word-metaphysics. With this, however, the word which can only indicate and is not allowed to mean anything, is affixed to the matter [Sache] so that it freezes into a formula. This affects language and the object in equal measure. Instead of turning the object into the experience, the purified word showcases it as the case of an abstract moment, and everything else, cut off by the compulsion of pitiless clarity from the expression, for if this last no longer exists, it also withers away in reality. The left midfielder in soccer, the black shirt, the Hitler Youth and its ilk are nothing other than what they say. If the word, before its rationalization, had unleashed the lie along with longing, the rationalized kind has become more of a straitjacket for longing than for the lie. The blindness and muteness of the data to which positivism reduces the world, crosses over into language itself, which restricts itself to the registration of that data. Thus the indicators become themselves impenetrable, they retain a force of impact, a power of adhesion and expulsion, which resembles that of its polar opposite, the magic spell. It has an effect once more as a kind of practice, whether as the name of the studio diva which is cobbled together by statistical research, or the welfare state which is exorcised by tabooed names such as "bureaucrats" and "intellectuals", or nastiness justifying itself through the name of the homeland. The very name, to which magic principally binds itself, is undergoing a

chemical transformation nowadays. It is being transformed into the arbitrary and easy-to-manage indicators, whose effect is indeed calculable, but precisely for that reason is just as high-handed as those of the archaic kind. First names, those archaic remnants, are brought up to date by either have them stylized as advertising brands – for film stars even the last names are also first names – or collectively standardized. In comparison the bourgeois kind sounds obsolete, the family name which, instead of being a commodity sign, individualized the bearer by relating them to their own prehistory. In Americans, it provokes a strange awkwardness. In order to gloss over the uncomfortable distance between specific human beings, they name themselves Bob and Harry, like interchangeable members of teams [teams: in English in original]. Such a code of conduct diverts the interrelations of human beings to the brotherhood of the sports audience, which protects them from the real kind. The signification, the solitary achievement which semantics grants to the word, realizes itself in the signal [Signal]. Its signal-character is reinforced by the rapidity by which models of language are put into circulation from above. Whether the folk song is named, justly or unjustly, as the downgraded cultural property of the upper crust, its elements have in any case taken on their popular form through a long, manifoldly mediated process of experience. The dissemination of popular songs [popular songs: in English in original] by contrast occurs lightning-quick. The American expression “fad”, for fashions which spread like epidemics – specifically ignited by highly concentrated economic powers – pointed to the phenomenon, long before totalitarian advertising magnates pushed through the corresponding general lines of culture. If the German fascists launched a word like “unbearable” on the loudspeaker on one day, the day after the entire people would say “unbearable”. According to the selfsame schemata, the nations against which the German blitzkrieg [lightning-war] was directed, have adopted it into their jargon. The universal repetition of the symbols for the measures taken makes these latter deeply familiar, as it were, just as during the era of the free market [i.e. liberal, Victorian-era capitalism] having the brand name on everyone's lips increased sales. The blind and rapidly expanding repetition of designated words connects advertising to the totalitarian slogan. The layer of experience, which made words into those of the human beings who made them, who spoke them, has been handed over, and in the prompt appropriation, language takes on that coldness which was hitherto native to street posters and in the advertising section of newspapers. Myriads use words and expressions which they either no longer understand in the slightest, or use only for their behavioristic status, just like trademarks, which ultimately attach themselves all the more compulsively to their objects, the less their linguistic meaning is apprehended. The Minister of Public Education talks ignorantly about dynamic forces, and the hit songs sing unceasingly about reverie and rhapsody [reverie, rhapsody: in English in original], basing their popularity precisely on the magic of what is unexplainable, like the shudder of some higher life. Other stereotypes, like memory [memory: in English in original], are gotten to some extent, but allow the experience which they could fulfill to slip out of grasp. They reach into the spoken language like enclaves. On the German radio of Flesch and Hitler, they can be recognized by the affected standard German of the announcer, which pronounces “Goodbye”, or “This is the voice of the Hitler youth”, and even “the Leader”, to the nation in a cadence which becomes the mother-tongue of millions. In such phrases, the last bond between sedimented experience and language, which in the 19th century still exerted its reconciling effect in dialect, is cut through. For the editors, whose flexible cast of mind allowed them to rise to the forefront of German letters, German words freeze solid, becoming alien to their very hands. In every word, you can discern how deeply it has been violated by the fascist folk-community [Volksgemeinschaft: Nazi populist ideology]. Subsequently to be sure such

language has become all-encompassing, totalitarian. You can no longer hear the violence [Gewalt] which the words were subjected to. It is not necessary for radio announcers to speak affectedly; they would not exist if their cadence differed from that of the designated audience of listeners. This is why however the language and gestures of listeners and viewers, including nuances which no existing research methods can yet grasp, are even more powerfully determined by the schemata of the culture industry than ever before. Today the latter has taken the place of the civilizing legacy of the frontier-democracy and entrepreneur-democracy, whose appreciation [Sinn: sensibility] for intellectual [geistige] deviations was never too finely developed. Everyone is free to dance and have fun, just as, since the historical neutralization of religion, they are free to join any of the countless sects. However the freedom in the choice of the ideology, which constantly radiates back economic coercion, proves to be in all realms the freedom of what is always the same [Immergleichen]. The manner in which a young girl accepts the obligatory date [date: in English in original] and goes out, the cadence on the telephone and in the most intimate situations, the choice of words in a conversation, indeed the entire inner life, parceled up by a rundown depth-psychology via a scale of social concepts, testifies to the attempt to turn itself into an apparatus conducive to success, which corresponds all the way down into its driving impulses to the model presented by the culture industry. The most intimate reactions of human beings have become so completely reified even against themselves, that the idea of something which genuinely belongs to them can only subsist in the most extreme abstraction: personality [personality: in English in original] means hardly anything more to them than dazzling white teeth and freedom from sweaty armpits and emotions. That is the triumph of advertising in the culture industry, the compulsory mimesis by consumers of the cultural commodities which they simultaneously see through.

Note 1: Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations. Collected Works*. Large octavo edition. Vol 1. Leipzig 1923. Pg 187.

Note 2: A. de Tocqueville, *On Democracy in America*. Paris 1854. Vol. 2. Pg 151.

Note 3: Frank Wedekind. *Collected Works*. Vol 9. Munich 1921. Pg 426.

Note 4: Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Gods. Works*. Vol 8. Pg 136.