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# Critique of Everyday Life

THE ONE-VOLUME EDITION



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# Contents

<b>Volume I: Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Translator's Note</i>	3
<i>Preface by Michel Trebitsch</i>	5
<i>Foreword to the Second Edition</i>	25
1 Brief Notes on some Well-Trodden Ground	123
2 The Knowledge of Everyday Life	150
3 Marxism as Critical Knowledge of Everyday Life	158
4 The Development of Marxist Thought	196
5 Notes Written One Sunday in the French Countryside	221
6 What Is Possible	248
<b>Volume II: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday</b>	<b>273</b>
<i>Translator's Note</i>	275
<i>Preface: The Moment of Radical Critique by Michel Trebitsch</i>	277
1 Clearing the Ground	295
2 The Formal Implements	394
3 The Specific Categories	474
4 The Theory of the Semantic Field	570
5 The Theory of Accumulative and Non-accumulative Processes	609
6 The Theory of Moments	634

*Contents*

<b>Volume III: From Modernity to Modernism (Towards a Metaphilosophy of Daily Life)</b>	653
<i>Preface, Presentation: Twenty Years After</i> by Michel Trebitsch	655
Introduction	677
Part One: Continuities	719
Part Two: Discontinuities	763
Conclusion: Results and Prospects	827
<i>Notes</i>	843
<i>Index</i>	887

## *The Specific Categories*

have attempted to do so? Could we have elaborated an ontology, dressed up as an anthropology and a sociology? No. The totality we have defined does not purport to exhaust man's 'being', or to define it. It does not preclude other determinations and other dimensions, i.e., other degrees of freedom. On the contrary, it invokes them; it is a necessary and non-sufficient condition for them. It will be present in every human fact, on both the level of analysis and the level of reality, and will enable us to discover supplementary determinations. Moreover, it does not coincide with any one concrete observation (and for example it would be incorrect to identify the 'family life/professional activity/leisure' triple determination with the tridimensionality we have presented above!). Let us consider *play*. It springs from the depths of spontaneous living and natural activity: animals play games, and so do children. As an attribute of the human being, it does not coincide with any of the above-mentioned dimensions. Play is part of every human activity. In a sense life in its entirety is play: a risk, a game or match lost or won. From childhood onwards there is a need to play (and moreover want and privation themselves can be acted, simulated and disguised: in asceticism, and in privation which has been accepted in order to delay fulfilment or increase pleasure). Everything becomes a pretext for playing, even effort itself; serious games and work are often very similar. And so, the relations between play and pleasure are not easy to discern. If it is part of all activity, play soon relinquishes this ambiguous role and becomes distinct: it establishes itself as something separate; it adopts forms and rules; it becomes organized socially. It is impossible to imagine mankind without play activity, or society without underlying or manifest games. Could this therefore be a fourth dimension: human time joined to the three other spatial dimensions? Why not? But let us be careful. Let us avoid straying too far into the realm of paradox. But it is certainly rather surprising that it should be our era, the era of functionalism and technology, which has discovered *homo ludens*.

## **2 The idea of reality**

This idea presents as many difficulties as the ideas we have already examined. The 'real'? It is the object and the objective of knowledge,

the fulcrum of action. We reach out to it, we try to grasp it, either to observe it, or to transform it. The real demands realism. Is there anyone who does not want to be 'realistic', to be anchored in the real, to know it and to have a hold over it?

Sadly, those empiricists and positivists who merely want to observe it are frequently satisfied with small beer. Armed with their specialized techniques, they hunt down little facts. They discover a portion of reality, and the flimsier the observation, the narrower and more precise the comment they make; the more fragmented the fact itself is, the happier they are. The more realistic the realist is, the more blinkered he becomes. It is even worse when the philosopher defines the real in advance – philosophically – either as matter or as spirit. Taken per se, and fetishized, the idea of *reality* (even when adorned by adjectives such as 'concrete' or 'human') shrinks and shrivels. The real reveals its profundities to those who wish to penetrate it in order to transform it, and who attack it with determination, and a multiplicity of implements. But whoever wishes to transform the real has apparently lost touch with it. He is tendentious. What about objectivity? And why change the real rather than merely noting it down? In whose name and for what? To what end? For common sense, in day-to-day language, whoever wants to change the real is an 'idealist'. He sets out from an idea or an ideal.

Hegel has taught us that the real is more profound than existence or what can be seen to exist; would this profundity be metaphysical? Marx has taught us that there would be no knowledge (and no need to know anything) if the apparent and the essential coincided at the heart of the real, or if they were completely (metaphysically) separate. But if this is so, why are there so many appearances in the real? Why is there so much that is abstract in the concrete, and why are there so many forms in content? Why and how is the formal also concrete, and real? Sometimes the everyday appears to be the sole reality, the reality of realists, dense, weighty and solid. At other times it seems that its weight is artificial, that its denseness is insubstantial: unreality incarnate.

To dispel these obscurities, perhaps we need to clarify the terminology and to distinguish between the *actual* and the *real*, or again, between the *present* and the *real*. Maybe then it would be easier to link them together. In any event, we should certainly dialecticize the idea of 'reality'.

## *The Specific Categories*

Let us begin by reintegrating the possible within the real. Usually a distinction is made between them – and quite rightly so – and then they are separated. The possible is seen as abstract and vague, while the real is seen as thick and weighty, as ‘being’ or ‘existing’. But the possible enters the real. It appears there: it announces and invokes its presence within it, and then sets about destroying it and negating it. As for the real, it is a possibility which has been made effective or actualized. In one way or another, and regardless of what we imagine the link to be, we must conceive of a connection between the actual and the virtual, the potential and the possible. The actual and the virtual have a dialectical relation, even in the case of natural phenomena, but even more so in the case of human phenomena, where a consciousness of what is possible always intervenes. Human actions always define themselves as choices, as a means of access to what is possible and as an option between those various possibilities, regardless of whether the actions are individual or collective. Without possibility there can be no activity, no reality, unless it be the dead reality of things in isolation, which have a single possibility: to maintain themselves as they are. If we join the category of *possibility* to it – which, like the idea of totality and the idea of structure, is a philosophical legacy – the category of social and human *reality* can be retained. It becomes dialecticized. It continues to guarantee heightened objectivity to knowledge while avoiding superficial objectivism and illusively profound ontology. It eradicates a few false and insoluble problems, notably those which come as a result of the dissociation of fact and value, and of the real and the ideal. Why change the real? Because it does change, of necessity, and if knowledge begins with what is possible it can help to direct this change, and control it. The flat realism of the immediate strives desperately to prove how spacious it is. When it is dubbed ‘materialism’, its victory over an even more abstract and shrivelled-up idealism is an easy one.

We maintain that the possible demands a choice and an act, and therefore demands a yes-or-no answer. Given the ‘real’ with its problems (its contradictions) and the solutions proposed, sooner or later we decide unequivocally for one particular solution, and act accordingly. This is why an option involves a strategy and a series of options which amount to a series of bifurcations and disjunctions. Decisions have their logic, their mathematics and their calculus.

These calculations revolve around the 'possible/real' relation, in so far as it produces a form which, despite its formal character, is part of the real. However, this statement itself runs the danger of provoking a theoretical illusion: that of the superfluity of the formal. When dealing with possibilities per se, and with the coming forth of virtualities, we cannot answer the questions they pose by a yes or a no. Possibilities, i.e., solutions to problems, are discovered and invented; contradictions within the real are themselves heightened, or are evaded. It is a history, a dialectical process of becoming. Practical action itself differs from (mathematically) formalizable series and frequencies in the following way: the stake is constantly changing, and the goal becomes modified as do the number of players. Will-power makes what is initially impossible possible, while modifying both the means and the ends. Action does not transcend calculation and form: it encompasses them by superseding them. Quantitative or qualitative (ordinal) mathematics cannot grasp the 'real' completely. However, we do not know in advance exactly what it is that eludes them. Only the philosopher believes he can draw boundaries and demarcation lines. So the new mathematical implements enable us to perceive the human 'real' more effectively, and to penetrate it. But they do not exhaust it. It is in the everyday and its ambiguous depths that possibilities are born and the present lives out its relation with the future.

Is this a reason for replacing formal logic (which is binary: true or false, inclusion and exclusion, opposition, contrariness, etc.) by a logic with more than two valencies, three for example: the true, the false and the random (or the possible)? In our opinion, no. Decision logic justifies the old formal logic, and extends it. To choose is to exclude all the possibilities except one. To opt is to act so that the impossible becomes possible, and so that things which are possible become impossible. This implies a logical 'possible/impossible' relation subordinate to a deeper dialectical relation. Logic, which is the concrete form of a set of questions which are answered by yes or no, occupies a certain level. Consequently, this level must be that of games and strategy theory, of operational research and of information theory. Dialectical reason occupies another level, which encompasses the former. This relation (which is not always easy to grasp) is part of the 'real'.



### *The Specific Categories*

Once it has been fetishized, the category of 'reality' has enormous disadvantages. It destroys specificities and differences. Under the umbrella of this concept, and with the misuse of the epithet 'concrete', the human real is considered to be on a par with nature, or the real of nature is considered to be on a par with the human real. Confusions are created, fodder for philosophical overindulgence. By dialecticizing the concept we can begin to answer questions about the *reality of consciousness*.

Consciousness does not appear to be 'real' in the way a substance or a thing is, nor does it appear 'unreal', like a reflection or an epiphenomenon, the accidental substitute for something else. Social consciousnesses are born, grow, wither away and die like individual consciousnesses do (and from which they cannot be separated). Social existence and consciousness (like every existence and every consciousness) have something *transitional* about them. They come into being and go towards something else or other than themselves. Every consciousness lights up or switches off, becomes transformed or stays the same (never for long, even when it is embodied in a work). It is born of a problem, when what has been accomplished – the 'real' in its narrow sense – has become inadequate. In this sense, it negates the 'real' concretely and specifically. It is born along with a possibility arising from the practical question the possible asks of the real, and vice versa. An appearance or an apparition, it changes itself into action, i.e., into 'reality', in so far as it resolves the problem posed. Therefore one of its conditions is the undermining of the 'reality' which has already been accomplished and structured. In the solidity and substantiality of a self-sufficient, self-satisfied 'real', consciousness falls to sleep. It 'is', and consequently it is no longer consciousness. We do not say, 'All consciousness is consciousness of something', but, 'All consciousness is consciousness of a possibility'; this is what gives it its acuity, its good luck and its misfortune. Without possibility there can be no consciousness, and what is more, no life. Presence implies what is possible in the present, and for the present; the future is an indispensable horizon and guiding light. Consciousness can never be at home in the real, in anything which has been stabilized or satisfied; and yet it seeks the real, or rather realization, as well as stability, and satisfaction.

Consciousness is born of problems, contradictions and conflicts, of

options and choices which are both necessary and free. One must choose between various possibilities: that is what is necessary. One must take risks, wager on randomness and gamble: that is what is free. Thus consciousness presents itself as a specific 'reality', but not given, and not unmediated. Self-consciousness is born in the other, of the other and by the other. It 'is', and yet it is not. It 'is' action and relation, and not substance; it 'is' the confrontation between the consequences of problems, the demand for solutions, clarity of expectation, perspective and choice between possibilities (and impossibilities). It is born in action and action brings it into being. It is born in works, and works bring it forth. It is productive, it is self-productive; it resolves the problems embedded in what it creates. It is its own work, and yet it escapes as soon as that work is accomplished. It negates and it supersedes, but cannot be defined as absolute negativity alone.

Fully real in its way (but not like a 'region' which could be described separately from the 'real'), consciousness has necessary and non-sufficient conditions in other realities, whether they be biological and physiological, or economic and historical. It cannot be reduced to these 'real' conditions. As soon as we mould the idea of reality around any thing which has substance, we become trapped in a dilemma. Either consciousness eludes the category of 'reality', something caricatured in those theories which derealize it and reduce it to pure reflection, or to pure negativity; or else it conceives of itself as a thing which has substance and which segments into (historical, psychological or sociological) processes or into (individual or collective) states and representations.

We have already criticized and rejected several confusions, notably the confusion between 'reality' and 'structure'. There is another which is no less frequent, and just as dangerous for knowledge: the confusion between *function* and *reality*. Function is seen as the criterion of reality, biologically and socially speaking. According to a certain neo-Hegelianism which is as widespread as it is unaware of its origins, one of the philosopher's famous statements could be transcribed in the following way: 'Everything which is functional is real, everything real has a function.' Rationality and functionality are seen to coincide. Function would create reality (including the sensory object with a 'reality' that would apparently bring functions into play

### *The Specific Categories*

which would vary according to the culture and the civilization involved).

These formulations define a *functionalism*, a corollary of structuralism and of various realisms in contemporary thought. Functionalism decrees a rational balance and harmony between nature, culture, and society considered as a whole. It postulates a situation whereby, in itself and by itself, representations are completely aligned to actions, and what is real is completely aligned to what is true. For a functionalist sociologist, if something does not have a function it cannot exist. At the very most it can be seen as an offshoot of a real function. Families have functions. The working class has functions. Bureaucracy has functions (especially because it is mainly composed of 'functionaries'). As for the state, it obviously possesses many functions, by definition. In other words, functionalism eliminates critical thought. According to this criterion, since anything without a function is superfluous, it must disappear. Of what use is everyday life? What is its function? It has none. If we cannot suppress this regrettable residue, at least let us cast it aside. How easy it is to pass from observations to diktats, and from ontology to the normative. And how quickly doctrinaire functionalism brings a functionalist ethic and even a functionalist aesthetic in its wake.

Critique of functionalism has important implications for what we are talking about. The new towns have demonstrated the undoubted merits and the even more undoubted shortcomings of functionalism when it tries to create the framework and conditions for an everyday life. The errors and illusions of the doctrine can be grasped in action, in the work itself. Moreover, it is a question of a general tendency, linked to the importance of technicians and to the formation of a technocratic ideology in every present-day society. Like anyone who possesses a skill and who exercises a fragmented activity, the technician has a function in an overall unit. The technocrat oversees this unit, organizing its functions and supervising them. Therefore there is a link between integral functionalism and ideological and practical technocracy.

The idea of 'function' derives from several sciences and also from social practice. As far as mathematics is concerned, it seems possible to rationalize and formalize the functional completely; it can be analysed into variables and reconstituted in objective processes. As far

as biology and physiology are concerned, they give the functional a kind of life-giving promotion. We are no longer dealing with abstract trajectories or units, but with organisms and organic totalities. So we can add the representation of utility, and of an indispensable system within an organism, to that of mathematical necessity and rigour. At the heart of every living and coherent entity, every part which is not the result of a destructive analysis of the whole and which maintains its integrality in the face of attacks from a relatively hostile 'environment' – in other words, every 'real' part – corresponds to a function and to an organ. From then on it seems impossible to dissociate function from organ and function from structure. Theoreticians may have rejected a certain simplistic organicism, but this has not led to a heightened critique of the concept of function. In so far as a society constitutes a whole and possesses a specific life, could it not be seen as a sum total, or a synthesis, or a totality of 'functions'?

This representation contains elements of truth and elements of error, and the latter predominate once the representation becomes systematized. Critical analysis discovers a mixture of fetishized determinism and of finalism, as well as an underlying tautology. Given what it is, an organism is made up of organs. Each organ perpetuates itself by acting upon the others and consequently by directing its own activity back upon itself. By definition, every organ perpetuates itself by 'functioning'. Thus every organ has more or less complex self-regulations (such as feedbacks, scannings and homeostases, to use the vocabulary of the cyberneticists who have helped to elaborate these concepts). The idea of self-regulation helps us to clarify the idea of 'function'. We imagine an organism to be a self-regulating ensemble composed of functional self-regulations which perpetuate both themselves and the organism. Thus, while changing, it maintains a stability and could be said to possess its own inner logic. This does not rule out chance or disorder, and so consequently it can become disrupted. Every self-regulation has its limits. The connections between partial self-regulations seem vague. A living organism is flexible because it is vulnerable. Complete adaptation would lead to lethargy and stagnation as surely as complete inadaptation would bring about its demise. So how can we know whether better results might not have been obtained with other adaptations or inadaptations, or other combinations of organs and functions? Perhaps a function is nothing more

### *The Specific Categories*

than a successful mistake, a non-functional element which has changed (since the conditions themselves have changed), or the result of a stroke of good luck. Today's dysfunction could be tomorrow's function. Functionalist finalism evades the issue; it is untenable.

Our objective conditions change and we change our conditions. If our consciousness can lag excessively behind these conditions, surely our body can too. The optimum would seem to be a halfway house between adaptation (indispensable but sterilizing) and maladaptation (creative, stimulating, but deadly). Exactly what is the relation between modern man and contemporary society, and the conditions they have created? How can we distinguish between the functional and the non-functional? At this point we would tend to argue that 'modern' man and society cannot go on neglecting everyday life and leaving it behind for much longer, and that its non-functionality will be transformed into supra-functionality. And perhaps this is one of those rare predictions one can make about the future without too much danger of getting it wrong.

It is quite amusing to observe the antics some highly intelligent, hyper-realistic and clear-thinking social scientists get up to in order to save functionalism. They cannot avoid admitting dysfunctions, and so surely they must accept 'survivals' or 'time lags'. This would add even more fuel to the argument against integral functionalism.<sup>3</sup> The dialectical trick (if we may call it that) is to absorb and resorb dysfunction within the functional by maintaining that dysfunction is the condition and inevitable reverse side of any function. When Merton looks at political bosses in American towns he finds they have many 'functions', including the function of attending to specific interests – the needs of their constituencies, or of the poor and the marginalized. The only means available to these wretched people is to exercise their civil rights by speaking to the local boss to obtain a few favours. In short, via its own 'dysfunctions', the political and bureaucratic machinery of American democracy can get its hands on something which might have eluded it: everyday life. It is true that the 'apparatus' and the 'machine' stifle news which might offer any encouragement. In doing so, they hinder communications, paralyse consciousness and society, and forbid any active criticism (not to mention a few other little irritants, such as gangs and rackets). Who cares? And this is the way the functional penetrates into the very heart

of the everyday, absorbing it and integrating it into society as a whole.

Merton's realist and functionalist arguments are flawless. Why criticize 'dysfunctions'? Perhaps they fill in gaps in reality, albeit badly. Why consider them as symptoms of its deficiencies? Why use them to make a critique of the 'real'? One might just as well list the functions of the liver, and then complain because it is prone to illness, exclaiming: 'Ah! If only we didn't have livers!' To put it another way, social functionalism is not without its paradoxes. These highlight the disturbing side of the doctrine. Functionalism and 'integrationalism' make ready bedfellows. In society, as in a living body, the highest functions are probably the ones which exercise control and integration from above. The ideal kind of control and integration would leave no room for the unforeseen, the marginal or the 'deviant'. It would know how to predict randomness and to absorb it per se. Finally, the real and the rational would coincide in a social truth, that is unless the dysfunctions did not intervene to bring a little disorder and creative dissymmetry into all this well-established and well-controlled order. What an unexpected stroke of luck that would be!

The amusing thing is that this functional realism avoids philosophical generalities and is unaware of its own reactionary neo-Hegelianism.<sup>4</sup> It derives from the same radical critique: the real encompasses the movement which negates it, providing it is grasped in all its profundity. The actual comprises the possible and the negative operates within it. The real is the ephemeral and superficial side of reality ('existence'); it hides the deeper forces. 'That the rational is real is contradicted by the irrational reality which at every point shows itself to be the opposite of what it asserts, and to assert the opposite of what it is.'<sup>5</sup> This fully reinstates Marxist thought and method. It is not because we want to change it that the 'real' – the everyday – eludes us. We are not setting out from another reality external to the reality we are studying. We are setting out from its inner movement, and from what is possible. Then and only then can we grasp it and know it completely.

Biologically or socially speaking, could play have a function? In our opinion, it is impossible to answer this question by yes or no. In nature, since animals play games, it would appear to correspond to the need to get rid of excess energy, to an almost pure spontaneity, free from the pressures of the immediate 'environment' (which is not

### *The Specific Categories*

to say that it is undetermined and unregulated). Could we say that play is basically useless? No. It is practice for activities; it anticipates and prepares for practical situations, or presents them as potential risks and difficulties, in a diluted form. So it is useful, very much so, and perhaps the more 'useless' it appears the more useful it really is. It is useful because it is redundant, in that it owes itself to a redundancy of vital energy, implying the relief of elementary needs and functional requirements: hunger, thirst, fatigue.

In social life, play has a use. What is it? Relaxation and entertainment, yes, but more than that, it is rediscovered spontaneity, and even more, it is activity which is not subjected to the division of labour and the social hierarchies. At first sight, humanly and socially speaking, play seems to be a minor, marginal activity, sidelined and tolerated by the important functions of industrial society. Compared with the reality of practical life and the truth of representations, it seems to be an illusion, a lie, something phoney. On closer scrutiny, the reverse is true. Play recalls forgotten depths and summons them up to the light of day. By making them stay within the everyday, it encompasses art and many other things as well. It uses appearances and illusions which – for one marvellous moment – become more real than the real. And with play another reality is born, not a separate one, but one which is 'lived' in the everyday, alongside the functional. It may seem that we are regurgitating the old apology for the *acte gratuit*, but no. We are protesting against the loss of grace and gracefulness. Play is a lavish provider of presence and presences.

One can do without it. Austerity has no time for it and social order is afraid of it. Integral functionalism tries to eliminate it (as is so clearly demonstrated in the new towns and housing estates!). And this is one of the paradoxes we must highlight. For surely it was a dialectical movement within integral functionalism itself which gave rise to the study and the rehabilitation of games, at a time when 'industrial' and 'technological' society was at full throttle.<sup>6</sup> It could be that poetry and fiction are part of the same protest against the functional, in that they liberate a need for something marvellous, fantastic and even freakish.

Functionalism finds play hard to tolerate, because the territory it occupies cannot be defined in advance. It is a domain without limits, like that of (free) critical thought or of art (when it is truly free), which

can and must appropriate matters which do not concern them from the point of view of social integration and the functional. Everything becomes play, in the theatre and in acting for example, including the most important matters and the most dramatic circumstances. Everything should be able to become a game, in the conscious simulation of tactics and strategies, in light-hearted imitation (and *homo ludens* has a host of tricks and dodges we will not mention to help him get involved in serious matters and to see them *sub specie ludis*). Games use many ancient magic, cosmic, religious and technical objects which formerly were important and serious, but they also provide a practical method for stripping anything too serious of its overimposing gravitas, and thus of its power, reducing it to the everyday by not allowing it to set up home above everyday life.

Did cathedrals have a use? Yes, and in many ways: a cathedral was a muster station in serious circumstances and a meeting place for ceremonies; it was a symbol of the community, of the medieval town and its territory; it was a politico-religious centre. Were they built functionally? No. Over and above their functions, they *presented* an image of the world and a summary of life according to a certain vision of the world and of life. The builders started from this symbolic representation (which was obsolete in itself, but vigorously spontaneous as far as they were concerned), endowing it with richness and embellishments, which are the attributes of spontaneity. Going beyond mere social function, they metamorphosed spontaneity into style. But then, through style and symbolisms, the cathedral became a monument which was always *present* in the town, active not only at exceptional moments, but also at the heart of the everyday.

Thus critique of functionalism leads us to new ideas. In the first place, the mechanisms of self-regulation in society are inadequate. Their balancing and 'structuring' mechanisms are always precarious. On the level of society as a whole, mechanisms are replaced by *representations*. The mechanisms for correcting imbalances are active on various important levels, but never on comprehensive or total ones. On the economic level, for example.<sup>7</sup> We can use the words 'function' and 'functionality' to qualify them, i.e., as processes operating through a kind of semi-awareness or even lack of awareness on the part of those who contribute to them. On the level of the state, of strategies and of society as a whole, functions are entrusted to



'apparatuses' which act by means of representations: ideologies. What is more, symbolisms introduced from elsewhere can prove very effective. Representations (ideologies) and symbols are passed off both as truths and as realities. Like symbolisms, the 'apparatuses' (which are constructed on the level of society as a whole, i.e., of the state and of political strategy) are redirected towards the everyday, grasping it in all its dereliction, and integrating it. In this way the highest level returns to the lowest (which does not stop the 'lowest' eluding it). Functionalism is itself a representation and an ideology, which consciously aims at exerting control and integration in conditions which are ipso facto given, accepted and recognized.

In the second place, we have highlighted the concept of 'poly-functionality' and, more importantly, the concept of 'transfunctionality'. Certain 'realities' have several functions in social practice, towns for example (a place of everyday life, rest, family life, non-professional relations, neighbourhoods, etc.). After separating them analytically, functionalism projects them on the ground, and the result is a parody of 'reality', even though all the elements of the 'reality' are there (and even though, by its interest in the elements of the 'real', functionalism is in advance of those theories which ignore them, voluntarily or not). With functionalism, analytic understanding takes its labours to the bitter end, and at the same time goes to the bitter end of the social division of labour. It 'institutionalizes' the results, and there they are on the ground in the new towns, implacably 'real', inert and lifeless.

What would life be like for an organism which exercised the functions of each of its organs simultaneously and in isolation? What would our lives be like if – and the idea is horrendous – we had to use our consciousness and our hands to control the functions of our stomachs, our hearts, our livers or our kidneys? Functionalism leads to a dead end, the kind of false world nightmares are made of.

The multifunctional exists, and so does the transfunctional. By the latter term we mean whatever we cannot reply to by 'yes' or by 'no' when asked the question: 'Is that useful?' Play, for example, is transfunctional, and so is art, or the work of art, because they contain a play-generating 'yeast' (which does not exhaust them and which they do not exhaust). More generally still, what distinguishes a work from a *thing*, an *object* or a *product*? An inert thing (a pebble, a piece of wood)

has no function, a product has at least one, and an object has several (for example, a chair, which helps me to do my job, to rest, to have a chat . . .). As for works, they are transfunctional; they have many uses, which they supersede.

Whether it is functional or not, an ornament – tolerated by functionalism as long as it remains ornamental – is a sorry caricature of the work of art. Whether it is durable or not, the transfunctional is a work. Play is momentary transfunctionality which consists of its own unfolding: the ephemeral work of an individual or several individuals, successful or not, perfect or not, marvellous or not. A town is durable transfunctionality. Brought off or botched, it is the work of a social group and of an overall society. Towns were no more than the vaguely conscious or even ‘misconscious’ work of everyday life. They must become a fully conscious *work*, with the purpose not of ‘integrating’ an everyday which has been cast aside at the lowest of levels, but of metamorphosing the everyday into a work, on the highest level the level of art and of freedom. Then, as social man nears a goal which today is Utopian (and consciously postulated as such), the everyday and the whole will be works which cannot be dissociated, and the real will no longer be split up into the ‘real’ and the ‘true’, in other words into ‘true’ versus ‘false’.

### **3 Alienation**

Since it was taken up again some thirty years ago, the idea of alienation has been studied many times. There would certainly be every reason to write an in-depth history of it. This history would allow us to resolve the following theoretical problem: ‘The idea of alienation is a legacy of philosophy, and perhaps its essential patrimony. In what ways can we use it as an analytic implement to help us understand the modern world? In what ways does it introduce philosophy into the social sciences?’ For the time being we will tackle the problem *per se*, rapidly and succinctly, without becoming waylaid by historical considerations.

Our first observation is that the way the idea is generally used seems quite clear: ‘man’ is alienated, torn from his self and changed into a thing, along with his freedom. However, at the same time, there