2 Nature and Revolution

The novel historical pattern of the coming revolution is perhaps best reflected in the role played by a new sensibility in radically changing the "style" of the opposition. I have sketched out this new dimension in An Essay on Liberation; here I shall attempt to indicate what is at stake, namely, a new relation between man and nature—his own, and external nature. The radical transformation of nature becomes an integral part of the radical transformation of society. Far from being a mere "psychological" phenomenon in groups or individuals, the new sensibility is the medium in which social change becomes: an individual need, the mediation between the political practice of "changing the world" and the drive for personal liberation.

What is happening is the discovery (or rather, rediscovery) of nature as an ally in the struggle against the exploitative societies in which the violation of nature aggravates the violation of man. The discovery of the liberating forces of nature and their vital role in the construction of a free society becomes a new force in social change.

What is involved in the liberation of nature as a vehicle of the liberation of man?

This notion refers to (1) human nature: man's primary impulses and senses as foundation of his rationality and experience and (2) external nature: man's existential environment, the "struggle with nature" in which he forms his society. It must be stressed from the beginning that, in both of these manifestations, nature is a historical entity: man encounters nature as transformed by society, subjected to a specific rationality which became, to an ever-increasing extent, technological,
instrumentalist rationality, bent to the requirements of capitalism. And this rationality was also brought to bear on man's own nature, on his primary drives. To recall only two characteristic contemporary forms of the adaptation of primary drives to the needs of the established system: the social steering of aggressiveness through transferring the aggressive act to technical instruments, thus reducing the sense of guilt; and the social steering of sexuality through controlled desublimation, the plastic beauty industry, which leads to a reduction of the sense of guilt and thus promotes "legitimate" satisfaction.

Nature is a part of history, an object of history; therefore, "liberation of nature" cannot mean returning to a pre-technological stage, but advancing to the use of the achievements of technological civilization for freeing man and nature from the destructive abuse of science and technology in the service of exploitation. Then, certain lost qualities of artisan work may well reappear on the new technological base.

In the established society, nature itself, ever more effectively controlled, has in turn become another dimension for the control of man: the extended arm of society and its power. Commercialized nature, polluted nature, militarized nature cut down the life environment of man, not only in an ecological but also in a very existential sense. It blocks the erotic cathexis (and transformation) of his environment: it deprives man from finding himself in nature, beyond and this side of alienation; it also prevents him from recognizing nature as a subject in its own right—a subject with which to live in a common human universe. This deprivation is not undone by the opening of nature to massive fun and togetherness, spontaneous as well as organized—a release of frustration which only adds to the violation of nature.

Liberation of nature is the recovery of the life-enhancing forces in nature, the sensuous aesthetic qualities which are foreign to a life wasted in unending competitive performances: they suggest the new qualities of freedom. No wonder then that the "spirit of capitalism" rejects or ridicules the idea of liberated nature, that it relegates this idea to the poetic imagination. Nature, if not left alone and protected as "reservation," is treated in an aggressively scientific way: it is there for the sake of domination; it is value-free matter, material. This notion of nature is a historical a priori, pertaining to a specific form of society. A free society may well have a very different a priori and a very different object: the development of the scientific concepts may be grounded in an experience of nature as a totality of life to be protected and "cultivated," and technology would apply this science to the reconstruction of the environment of life.

Domination of man through the domination of nature: the concrete link between the liberation of man and that of nature has become manifest today in the role which the ecology drive plays in the radical movement. The pollution of air and water, the noise, the encroachment of industry and commerce on open natural space have the physical weight of enslavement, imprisonment. The struggle against them is a political struggle; it is obvious to what extent the violation of nature is inseparable from the economy of capitalism. At the same time, however, the political function of ecology is easily "neutralized" and serves the beautification of the Establishment. Still, the physical pollution practiced by the system must be combated here and now—just as its mental pollution. To drive ecology to the point where it is no longer containable within the capitalist framework means first extending the drive within the capitalist framework.*

The relation between nature and freedom is rarely made explicit in social theory. In Marxism too, nature is predomi-

nantly an object, the adversary in man’s “struggle with nature,”
the field for the ever more rational development of the produc-
tive forces.* But in this form, nature appears as that which
capitalism has made of nature: matter, raw material for the ex-
panding and exploiting administration of men and things. Does
this image of nature conform to that of a free society? Is na-
ture only a productive force—or does it also exist “for its own
sake” and, in this mode of existence, for man? 

In the treatment of human nature, Marxism shows a simi-
lar tenacity to minimize the role of the natural basis in social
change—a tendency which contrasts sharply with the earlier
writings of Marx. To be sure, “human nature” would be dif-
f erent under socialism to the degree to which men and women
would, for the first time in history, develop and fulfill their own
needs and faculties in association with each other. But this
change is to come about almost as a by-product of the new so-
cialist institutions. Marxist emphasis on the development of po-
liticial consciousness shows little concern with the roots of
liberation in individuals, i.e., with the roots of social relation-
ships there where individuals most directly and profoundly ex-
perience their world and themselves: in their sensibility, in
their instinctual needs.

In An Essay on Liberation, I suggested that without a
change in this dimension, the old Adam would be reproduced
in the new society, and that the construction of a free society
presupposes a break with the familiar experience of the world:
with the mutilated sensibility. Conditioned and “contained” by
the rationality of the established system, sense experience
tends to “immunize” man against the very unfamiliar ex-
perience of the possibilities of human freedom. The development
of a radical, nonconformist sensibility assumes vital political
importance in view of the unprecedented extent of social con-
trol perfected by advanced capitalism: a control which reaches
down into the instinctual and physiological level of existence.
Conversely, resistance and rebellion, too, tend to activate and
operate on this level.

“Radical sensibility”: the concept stresses the active, con-
stitutive role of the senses in shaping reason, that is to say, in
shaping the categories under which the world is ordered,
experienced, changed. The senses are not merely passive,
receptive: they have their own “syntheses” to which they sub-
ject the primary data of experience. And these syntheses are
not only the pure “forms of intuition” (space and time) which
Kant recognized as an inexorable a priori ordering of sense
data. There are perhaps also other syntheses, far more con-
crete, far more “material,” which may constitute an empirical
(i.e., historical) a priori of experience. Our world emerges not
only in the pure forms of time and space, but also, and simul-
taneously, as a totality of sensuous qualities—object not only of
the eye (synopsis) but of all human senses (hearing smelling,
touching, tasting). It is this qualitative, elementary, uncon-
scious, or rather preconscious, constitution of the world of ex-
perience, it is this primary experience itself which must change
radically if social change is to be radical, qualitative change.

The subversive potential of the sensibility, and nature as a field
of liberation are central themes in Marx’s Economic and Philo-
scopic Manuscripts. They have been reread and reinterpreted
again and again, but these themes have been largely neglected.
Recently, the Manuscripts served to justify the concept of “hu-
manistic socialism” in opposition to the bureaucratic-authori-
tarian Soviet model; they provided a powerful impetus in the
struggle against Stalinism and post-Stalinism. I believe that in
spite of their “pre-scientific” character, and in spite of the previ-
ous neglect, they remain a source of inspiration and challenge.
cence of Feuerbach’s philosophic naturalism, these writings expose the most radical and integral idea of socialism, and that precisely here, “nature” finds its place in the theory of revolution.

I recall briefly the principal conception of the Manuscripts. Marx speaks of the “complete emancipation of all human senses and qualities” as the feature of socialism: only this emancipation is the “transcendence of private property.” This means the emergence of a new type of man, different from the human subject of class society in his very nature, in his physiology: “the senses of the social man are other than those of the non-social man.”

“The emancipation of the senses” implies that the senses become “practical” in the reconstruction of society, that they generate new (socialist) relationships between man and man, man and things, man and nature. But the senses become also “sources” of a new (socialist) rationality: freed from that of exploitation. The emancipated senses would repel the instrumentalist rationality of capitalism while preserving and developing its achievements. They would attain this goal in two ways: negatively—inasmuch as the Ego, the other, and the object world would no longer be experienced in the context of aggressive acquisition, competition, and defensive possession; positively—through the “human appropriation of nature,” i.e., through the transformation of nature into an environment (medium) for the human being as “species being”; free to develop the specifically human faculties: the creative, aesthetic faculties.

“Only through the objectively unfolded richness of man’s essential being is the richness of subjective human sensibility (a musical ear, an eye for beauty of form)—in short, senses ca-


**Ibid., p. 141.

*p Ibid., p. 141.

**Ibid., p. 139.

† “The sun is the object of the plant . . . just as the plant is an object for the sun . . . .” Ibid., p. 181.

†† Ibid., p. 139.

§ “For the sake of the thing”—an illustration: In Yugoslavia, they sell wooden cutting boards which, on one side, are painted with very colorful, pretty flower patterns; the other side is unpainted. The boards bear the imprint: “don’t hurt my pretty face, use other side.” Childish anthropomorphism? Certainly. But can we perhaps imagine that the people who had this idea, and those users who pay attention to it, have a quite natural, instinctual aversion against violence and destruction, that they have indeed a “human relation” to matter, that matter to them is part of the life environment and thus assumes traits of a living object?
since taboo in Western science. Nature as object per se fitted all too well into the universe of the capitalist treatment of matter to allow discarding the taboo. It seemed entirely justified by the increasingly effective and profitable mastery of nature which was achieved under this taboo.

Is it true that the recognition of nature as a subject is metaphysical teleology incompatible with scientific objectivity? Let us take Jacques Monod's statement of the meaning of objectivity in science:

What I have tried to show . . . is that the scientific attitude implies what I call the postulate of objectivity—that is to say, the fundamental postulate that there is no plan, that there is no intention in the universe.*

The idea of the liberation of nature stipulates no such plan or intention in the universe: liberation is the possible plan and intention of human beings, brought to bear upon nature. However, it does stipulate that nature is susceptible to such an undertaking, and that there are forces in nature which have been distorted and suppressed—forces which could support and enhance the liberation of man. This capacity of nature may be called "chance," or "blind freedom," and it may give good meaning to the human effort to redeem this blindness—in Adorno's words: to help nature "to open its eyes," to help it "on the poor earth to become what perhaps it would like to be." **

Nature as subject without teleology, without "plan" and "intention": this notion goes well with Kant's "purposiveness without purpose." The most advanced concepts of the Third

Critique have not yet been explored in their truly revolutionary significance. The aesthetic form in art has the aesthetic form in nature (das Naturschöne) as its correlate, or rather desideratum. If the idea of beauty pertains to nature as well as to art, it is not merely an analogy, or a human idea imposed on nature—it is the insight that the aesthetic form, as a token of freedom, is a mode (or moment?) of existence of the human as well as the natural universe, an objective quality. Thus Kant attributes the beautiful in nature to nature's "capacity to form itself, in its freedom, also in an aesthetically purposive way, according to chemical laws. . . ." *

The Marxian conception understands nature as a universe which becomes the congenial medium for human gratification to the degree to which nature's own gratifying forces and qualities are recovered and released. In sharp contrast to the capitalist exploitation of nature, its "human appropriation" would be nonviolent, nondestructive: oriented on the life-enhancing, sensuous, aesthetic qualities inherent in nature. Thus transformed, "humanized," nature would respond to man's striving for fulfillment, nay, the latter would not be possible without the former. Things have their "inherent measure" (inhärentes Mass): ** this measure is in them, is the potential enclosed in them; only man can free it and, in doing so, free his own human potential. Man is the only being who can "form things in accordance with the laws of beauty." †

Aesthetics of liberation, beauty as a "form" of freedom: it looks as if Marx has shied away from this anthropomorphist, idealistic conception. Or is this apparently idealistic notion rather the enlargement of the materialistic base? For "man is directly a natural being; he is a corporeal, living, real, sensuous,

† ibid.
objective being" who has "real, sensuous objects" as the objects of his life.* And his senses ("like those organs which are directly social in their form")** are active, practical in the "appropriation" of the object world; they express the social existence of man, his "objectification." This is no longer Feuerbach's "naturalism" but, on the contrary, the extension of Historical Materialism to a dimension which is to play a vital role in the liberation of man.

There is, however, a definite internal limit to the idea of the liberation of nature through "human appropriation." True, the aesthetic dimension is a vital dimension of freedom; true, it repels violence, cruelty, brutality, and by this token will become an essential quality of a free society, not as a separate realm of "higher culture," but as a driving force and motive in the construction of such a society. And yet, certain brute facts, unconquered and perhaps unconquerable facts, call for skepticism. Can the human appropriation of nature ever achieve the elimination of violence, cruelty, and brutality in the daily sacrifice of animal life for the physical reproduction of the human race? To treat nature "for its own sake" sounds good, but it is certainly not for the sake of the animal to be eaten, nor probably for the sake of the plant. The end of this war, the perfect peace in the animal world—this idea belongs to the Orphic myth, not to any conceivable historical reality. In the face of the suffering inflicted by man on man, it seems terribly "pre-nature" to campaign for universal vegetarianism or synthetic foodstuffs; as the world is, priority must be on human solidarity among human beings. And yet, no free society is imaginative which does not, under its "regulative idea of reason," make the concerted effort to reduce consistently the suffering which man imposes on the animal world.

Marx's notion of a human appropriation of nature retains something of the hubris of domination. " Appropriation," no matter how human, remains appropriation of a (living) object by a subject. It offends that which is essentially other than the appropriating subject, and which exists precisely as object in its own right—that is, as subject! The latter may well be hostile to man, in which case the relation would be one of struggle; but the struggle may also subside and make room for peace, tranquility, fulfillment. In this case, not appropriation but rather its negation would be the nonexploitative relation: surrender, "letting-be," acceptance . . . But such surrender meets with the impenetrable resistance of matter; nature is not a manifestation of "spirit," but rather its essential limit.

III

Although the historical concept of nature as a dimension of social change does not imply teleology and does not attribute a "plan" to nature, it does conceive of nature as subject-object: as a cosmos with its own potentialities, necessities, and chances. And these potentialities can be, not only in the sense of their value-free function in theory and practice, but also as bearers of objective values. These are envisaged in such phrases as "violation of nature," "suppression of nature." Violation and suppression then mean that human action against nature, man's interrelation with nature, offends against certain objective qualities of nature—qualities which are essential to the enhancement and fulfillment of life. And it is on such objective grounds that the liberation for man to his own humane faculties is linked to the liberation of nature—that "truth" is attributable to nature not only in a mathematical but also in an existential sense. The emancipation of man involves the recognition of such truth in things, in nature. The Marxian vision recaptures the ancient theory of knowledge as recollection: "science" as the rediscovery of the true Forms of things, distorted and denied in the
established reality, the perpetual materialistic core of idealism. The "idea," as the term for these Forms, is not a "mere" idea, but an image illuminating what is false, distorted in the way in which things are "given," what is missing in their familiar perception, in the mutilated experience which is the work of society.

Recollection thus is not remembrance of a Golden Past (which never existed), of childhood innocence, primitive man, et cetera. Recollection as epistemological faculty rather is synthesis, reassembling the bits and fragments which can be found in the distorted humanity and distorted nature. This recollected material has become the domain of the imagination, it has been sanctioned by the repressive societies in art, and as "poetic truth"—poetic truth only, and therefore not much good in the actual transformation of society. These images may well be called "innate ideas" inasmuch as they cannot possibly be given in the immediate experience which prevails in the repressive societies. They are given rather as the horizon of experience under which the immediately given forms of things appear as "negative," as denial of their inherent possibilities, their truth. But in this sense, they are "innate" in man as historical being; they are themselves historical because the possibilities of liberation are always and everywhere historical possibilities. Imagination, as knowledge, retains the insoluble tension between idea and reality, the potential and the actual. This is the idealistic core of dialectical materialism: the transcendence of freedom beyond the given forms. In this sense too, Marxian theory is the historical heir of German Idealism.

Freedom thus becomes a "regulative concept of reason" guiding the practice of changing reality in accordance with its "idea," i.e., its own potentials—to make reality free for its truth. Dialectical materialism understands freedom as historical, empirical transcendence, as a force of social change, transcending its immediate form also in a socialist society—no: toward ever more production, not toward Heaven or Paradise, but toward an ever more peaceful, joyful struggle with the inexorable resistance of society and nature. This is the philosophical core of the theory of the permanent revolution.

As such force, freedom is rooted in the primary drives of men and women, it is the vital need to enhance their life instincts. Prerequisite is the capacity of the senses to experience not only the "given" but also the "hidden" qualities of things which would make for the betterment of life. The radical redefinition of sensibility as "practical" desublimates the idea of freedom without abandoning its transcendent content: the senses are not only the basis for the epistemological constitution of reality, but also for its transformation, its subversion in the interest of liberation.

Human freedom is thus rooted in the human sensibility: the senses do not only "receive" what is given to them, in the form in which it appears, they do not "delegate" the transformation of the given to another faculty (the understanding); rather, they discover or can discover by themselves, in their "practice," new (more gratifying) possibilities and capabilities, forms and qualities of things, and can urge and guide their realization. The emancipation of the senses would make freedom what it is not yet: a sensuous need, an objective of the Life Instincts (Eros).

In a society based on alienated labor, human sensibility is blunted: men perceive things only in the forms and functions in which they are given, made, used by the existing society; and they perceive only the possibilities of transformation as defined by, and confined to, the existing society.* Thus, the existing society is reproduced not only in the mind, the consciousness of men, but also in their senses; and no persuasion,

* For the following see my An Essay on Liberation (Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1969), pp. 36 ff.
no theory, no reasoning can break this prison, unless the fixed, petrified sensibility of the individuals is "dissolved," opened to a new dimension of history, until the oppressive familiarity with the given object world is broken—broken in a second alienation: that from the alienated society.

Today, in the revolt against the "consumer society," sensibility strives to become "practical," the vehicle for radical reconstruction, for new ways of life. It has become a force in the political struggle for liberation. And that means: the individual emancipation of the senses is supposed to be the beginning, even the foundation, of universal liberation, the free society is to take roots in new instinctual needs. How is this possible? How can "humanity," human solidarity as "concrete universal" (and not as abstract value), as real force, as "praxis," originate in the individual sensibility; how can objective freedom originate in the most subjective faculties of man?

We are faced with the dialectic of the universal and the particular: how can the human sensibility, which is principium individuationis, also generate a universalizing principle?

I refer again to the philosophical treatment of this problem in German idealism: here is the intellectual origin of the Marxian concept. For Kant: a universal sensorium (the pure forms of intuition) constitutes the one unified framework of sense experience, thus validating the universal categories of the understanding. For Hegel: reflection on the content and mode of my immediate sense certainty reveals the "We" in the "I" of intuition and perception. When the still unreflected consciousness has reached the point where it becomes conscious of itself and its relation to its objects, where it has experienced a "trans-sensible" world "behind" the sensuous appearance of things, it discovers that we ourselves are behind the curtain of appearance. And this "we" unfolds as social reality in the struggle between Master and Servant for "mutual recognition."

This is the turning point on the road that leads from Kant's effort to reconcile man and nature, freedom and necessity, universal and particular, to Marx's materialistic solution: Hegel's Phenomenology breaks with Kant's transcendental conception: history and society enter into the theory of knowledge (and into the very structure of knowledge) and do away with the "purity" of the a priori; the materialization of the idea of freedom begins. But a closer look shows that the same tendency was already present in Kant's philosophy: in the development from the First to the Third Critique.

1) In the First Critique, the freedom of the subject is present only in the epistemological syntheses of the sense data; freedom is relegated to the transcendental Ego's pure syntheses: it is the power of the a priori by virtue of which the transcendental subject constitutes the objective world of experience; theoretical knowledge.

2) In the Second Critique, the realm of praxis is reached with the stipulation of the autonomy of the moral person: his power to originate causation without breaking the universal causation which governs nature: necessity. The price: subjection of the sensibility to the categorical imperative of reason. The relation between human freedom and natural necessity remains obscure.

3) In the Third Critique, man and nature are joined in the aesthetic dimension, the rigid "otherness" of nature is reduced, and Beauty appears as "symbol of morality." The union of the realm of freedom and that of necessity is here conceived not as the mastery of nature, not as bending nature to the purposes of man, but as attributing to nature an ideal purposiveness "of its own: a purposiveness without purpose."

But it is only the Marxian conception which, while preserving the critical, transcendental element of idealism, uncovers
the material, historical ground for the reconciliation of human freedom and natural necessity; subjective and objective freedom. This union presupposes liberation: the revolutionary praxis which is to abolish the institutions of capitalism and to replace them by socialist institutions and relationships. But in this transition, the emancipation of the senses must accompany the emancipation of consciousness, thus involving the totality of human existence. The individuals themselves must change in their very instincts and sensibilities if they are to build, in association, a qualitatively different society. But why the emphasis on aesthetic needs in this reconstruction?

iv

It is not just in passing and out of exuberance that Marx speaks of the formation of the object world "in accordance with the laws of beauty" as a feature of free human practice. Aesthetic qualities are essentially non-violent, non-domineering (I shall come back to it in Chapter 3)—qualities which, in the domain of the arts, and in the repressive use of the term "aesthetic" as pertaining to the sublimated "higher culture" only, are divorced from the social reality and from "practice" as such. The revolution would undo this repression and recapture aesthetic needs as a subversive force, capable of countering the dominating aggressiveness which has shaped the social and natural universe. The faculty of being "receptive," "passive," is a precondition of freedom: it is the ability to see things in their own right, to experience the joy enclosed in them, the erotic energy of nature—an energy which is there to be liberated; nature, too, awaits the revolution! This receptivity is itself the soil of creation: it is opposed, not to productivity, but to destructive productivity.

The latter has been the ever more conspicuous feature of male domination; inasmuch as the "male principle" has been the ruling mental and physical force, a free society would be the "definite negation" of this principle—it would be a female society. In this sense, it has nothing to do with matriarchy of any sort; the image of the woman as mother is itself repressive; it transforms a biological fact into an ethical and cultural value and thus it supports and justifies her social repression. At stake is rather the ascent of Eros over aggression, in men and women; and this means, in a male-dominated civilization, the "feminization" of the male. It would express the decisive change in the instinctual structure: the weakening of primary aggressiveness which, by a combination of biological and social factors, has governed the patriarchal culture.

In this transformation, the Women's Liberation Movement becomes a radical force to the degree to which it transcends the entire sphere of aggressive needs and performances, the entire social organization and division of functions. In other words, the movement becomes radical to the degree of which it aims, not only at equality within the job and value structure of the established society (which would be the equality of dehumanization) but rather at a change in the structure itself (the basic demands of equal opportunity, equal pay, and release from full-time household and child care are a prerequisite). Within the established structure, neither men nor women are free—and the dehumanization of men may well be greater than that of women since the former suffer not only the conveyor belt and assembly line but also the standards and "ethics" of the "business community."

And yet, the liberation of women would be more sweeping than that of men because the repression of men has been constantly fortified by the social use of their biological constitution. The bearing of children, being a mother, is supposed to be not only their natural function but also the fulfillment of their "nature"—and so is being a wife, since the reproduction of the species occurs within the framework of the monogamous.
patriarchal family. Outside this framework, the woman is still predominantly a plaything or a temporary outlet for sexual energy not consummated in marriage.

Marxian theory considers sexual exploitation as the primary, original exploitation, and the Women's Liberation Movement fights the degradation of the woman to a "sexual object." But it is difficult to overcome the feeling that here, repressive qualities characteristic of the bourgeois-capitalist organization of society enter into the fight against this organization. Historically, the image of the woman as sexual object, and her exchange value on the market, devalue the earlier repressive images of the woman as mother and wife. These earlier images were essential to the bourgeois ideology during a period of capitalist development now left behind: the period where some "inner-worldly asceticism" was still operative in the dynamic of the economy. In comparison, the present image of the woman as sexual object is a desublimation of bourgeois morality—characteristic of a "higher stage" of capitalist development. Here, too, the commodity form is universalized; it now invades formerly sanctified and protected realms. The (female) body, as seen and plastically idealized by Playboy, becomes desirable merchandise with a high exchange value. Disintegration of bourgeois morality, perhaps—but cui bono? To be sure, this new body image promotes sales, and the plastic beauty may not be the real thing, but they stimulate aesthetic-sensual needs which, in their development, must become incompatible with the body as instrument of alienated labor. The male body, too, is made the object of sexual image creation—also plasticized and deodorized... clean exchange value. After the secularization of religion, after the transformation of ethics into Orwellian hypocrisy—is the "socialization" of the body as sexual object perhaps one of the last decisive steps toward the completion of the exchange society: the completion which is the beginning of the end?

Still, the publicity with the body (at present, the female body) as object is dehumanizing, the more so since it plays up to the dominant male as the aggressive subject for whom the female is there, to be taken, to be laid. It is in the nature of sexual relationships that both, male and female, are object and subject at the same time: erotic and aggressive energy are fused in both. The surplus-aggression of the male is socially conditioned—as is the surplus passivity of the female. But beneath the social factors which determine male aggressiveness and female receptivity, a natural contrast exists: it is the woman who "embody," in a literal sense, the promise of peace, of joy, of the end of violence. Tenderness, receptivity, sensuousness have become features (or mutilated features) of her body—features of her (repressed) humanity. These female qualities may well be socially determined by the development of capitalism. The process is truly dialectical.* Although the reduction of the concrete individual faculties to abstract labor power established an abstract equality between men and women (equality before the machine), this abstraction was less complete in the case of women. They were employed in the material process of production to a lesser extent than men. Women were fully employed in the household, the family, which was supposed to be the sphere of realization for the bourgeois individual. However, this sphere was isolated from the productive process and thus contributed to the women's mutilation. And yet, this isolation (separation) from the alienated work world of capitalism enabled the woman to remain less brutalized by the Performance Principle, to remain closer to her sensibility: more human than men. That this image (reality) of the woman has been determined by an aggressive, male-dominated society does not mean that this determination must be re-

* This dialectic is the center of Angela Davis's paper Marxism and Women's Liberation (not yet published). Written in jail, this paper is the work of a great woman, militant, intellectual.
jected, that the liberation of women must overcome the female "nature." This equalization of male and female would be regressive: it would be a new form of female acceptance of a male principle. Here too the historical process is dialectical: the patriarchal society has created a female image, a female counter-force, which may still become one of the gravediggers of patriarchal society. In this sense too, the woman holds the promise of liberation. It is the woman who, in Delacroix' painting, holding the flag of the revolution, leads the people on the barricades. She wears no uniform; her breasts are bare, and her beautiful face shows no trace of violence. But she has a rifle in her hand—for the end of violence is still to be fought for . . .

3 Art and Revolution

". . . certain periods of highest development of art stand in no direct connection with the general development of society nor with the material basis and the skeleton structure of its organization." Marx

Cultural Revolution: the phrase, in the West, first suggests that ideological developments are ahead of developments at the base of society: cultural revolution but not (yet) political and economic revolution. While, in the arts, in literature and music, in communication, in the mores and fashions, changes have occurred which suggest a new experience, a radical transformation of values, the social structure and its political expressions seem to remain basically unchanged, or at least to lag behind the cultural changes. But "Cultural Revolution" also suggests that the radical opposition today involves in a new sense the entire realm beyond that of the material needs—nay, that it aims at a total transformation of the entire traditional culture.

The strong emphasis on the political potential of the arts which is a feature of this radicalism is first of all expressive of the need for an effective communication of the indictment of the established reality and of the goals of liberation. It is the effort to find forms of communication that may break the oppressive rule of the established language and images over the mind and body of man—language and images which have long since become a means of domination, indoctrination, and deception. Communication of the radically nonconformist, new historical goals of the revolution requires an equally noncon-