

## Reason, Massive Consciousness, and Socialization


Mehmet Ş. Çağmar<sup>1</sup>  0000-0001-9962-5278,  mcagmar@yahoo.com.

### Abstract





This study examines the relationship between massification and consciousness reason in modern societies, drawing on the thought of Theodor Adorno. It argues that in contemporary social conditions the subject has largely lost its capacity to transform society, while the social increasingly shapes and determines the subject. Within this framework, reason functions not as a tool of emancipation but as a mechanism that reinforces existing structures of domination. The analysis focuses on Adorno's critique of the Enlightenment, which historically aimed to replace myth and tradition with rational thought and intellectual autonomy. Although the Enlightenment represented a radical break from earlier forms of thought, Adorno contends that its emphasis on rationality ultimately produced instrumental reason contributed to new forms of domination. In this process, reason becomes irrational in the social sphere by facilitating conformity, standardization, and massification. As a result, consciousness loses its individuality and becomes increasingly shaped by social conditions. The study therefore argues that under the dominance of instrumental reason, consciousness enters a "sick" state that aligns with existing power structures, allowing individuals to be collectively directed. By examining the relationship Enlightenment rationality, massification, and consciousness, this study explores how the instrumentalization of reason undermines the autonomy of the subject in modern societies.

### Keywords

Adorno, instrumental reason, Enlightenment, culture industry, Critical Theory

<sup>1</sup>  Department of Philosophy and Religious Sciences, Sirnak University, Sirnak, Türkiye

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## Introduction

The fundamental thing about the period we have arrived at is that the subject has lost its capacity to transform the social. Instead, the social transforms the subject. Reason is a tool for achieving this. According to Adorno, reason has become something that directs people with a mass of thought to consolidate the dominance of powers in modern societies. Therefore, what is noteworthy in this guidance is that, along with changing ways of thinking, ways of life and behavior also change accordingly. For this reason, according to Adorno, a direct relationship between massification and consciousness.

Discussions between massification and consciousness are generally made through the lens of how reason has become a form of dominance in modern societies, easily guiding individuals towards the desired direction (s). In this sense, all of Adorno's discussions of reason are grounded in a critique of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment, as a historical process, refers to a period that developed starting in the 18th century. Essentially based on rational thought, the Enlightenment aimed to replace old, immutable, and traditional thinking with an intellectual development that fostered acceptance of all new knowledge, free from prejudice and ideology. Therefore, it actually represents a break from the intellectual world that preceded it.

The presence of a break is not unique to the Enlightenment. Every new thought always inherently contains a certain break from the preceding world of thought; sometimes a complete break, and sometimes a thought structure that emerges by only setting aside certain things from the preceding world of thought and adding new ones in their place. However, in both cases, every new thought stands at a different point compared to the preceding thought structure. However, the break experienced by the Enlightenment has a different characteristic according to thinkers like Adorno. For these thinkers, who see this break as the abandonment of the mythological way of understanding the world and the prioritization of reason, the Enlightenment, unlike other intellectual movements, radically criticized previous ways of thinking while simultaneously constructing its own system of thought based on this critique. The fundamental critique in this system of thought is that reason has become irrational in the social sphere. However, this critique is carried out in conjunction with existing discussions about consciousness. As Adorno states, in an environment that has become irrational, any imposition on thought simultaneously diminishes people's confidence in their own conscious activity. However, the fundamental point for Adorno is that such consciousness experiences a kind of "sick" state. This "sick consciousness" is in harmony with the existing imposition. It has been subjugated under various social conditions. These conditions, along with sociality, have led everything towards one-dimensionality, eliminating the individuality of consciousness and transforming it into something that can be directed collectively. This study will demonstrate that with the Enlightenment, reason became irrational and instrumentalized, and in such an environment, the individuality of consciousness lost its meaning, becoming controllable under social conditions.

## 1. Reason and Consciousness

According to Adorno, in modern societies, reason has become instrumentalized, transforming into a mode of operation for power. In this mode of operation, reason is subjected to logical formalism for all existing things, at the cost of directly submitting to the dictates of what is given (Adorno and Horkheimer 2017, 32). Because in the modern era, reason has become a tool for the social to transform the subject, rather than a tool for the subject to transform the social (Soykan and Dellaloğlu 2003, 45). Therefore, in the modern era, reason is the agent of society in the subject, or in other words, a prosthesis attached to the subject. This prosthesis is also a tool of modern power (Dellaloğlu 2003, 21).

There is only one criterion by which instrumental reason can be accepted as a measure. This criterion is that it only fulfills the predetermined purposes. It has no other function. Therefore, for instrumental reason, achieving what is expected to be achieved is also considered a suitable condition. Otherwise, the logic of instrumental reason, because it functions as a tool for society to transform the subject, leads to the use of collective violence as a means of sanction (Adorno and Horkheimer 2017, 35). As a result, the subject itself has disappeared. A self-operating mechanism has taken its place. The subject's self-awareness has been erased, and meaning has been lost. This is because the subject's rationality has become merely an auxiliary tool of the economic apparatus, a universally applicable function for everything. As a result, people are presented with two options: survival or extinction (39). However, "ultimately, the preservation of one's self-existence has been automated; those who direct production, those who claim their inheritance, and those who fear those deprived of that inheritance have sidelined reason" (41). Thus, a person who wishes to "survive" is forced to live within this system where reason has been sidelined.

In what Adorno calls this system, "reason is reduced to its pure form, thus reconciling subjective thought, which carries the potential for objectification and separation from the Self, with the validity of logical forms that are excluded from the formation of the pure form of subjective thought, but are only possible through subjective thought" (Adorno 2004, 237). Therefore, in its current state, reason is "scarce." "This reason not only remains the unity in the midst of diversity, but also imposes itself as a unity over something, as an attitude adopted towards reality." (312) As this imposition, the individual will be freed from oppression and gain greater

confidence in their own consciousness and experience (42). However, Adorno believes that this reciprocal relationship between reason and consciousness cannot evolve to a positive point. Because, as mentioned in the earlier parts of the argument, the existence of a reflective reason cannot be discussed in a fundamentally irrational environment. This is why, “everything that manages to escape its domination turns into a delirium bordering on madness in its face” (172).

Within this delirium, “reason is pathological; only when purged of this pathology will it truly be reason” (Adorno 2004, 172). However, according to Adorno, who believes that reason cannot be freed from this pathology, in the current process, due to the existing social conditions, “the division of labor that arises with the social development of domination serves to preserve the essential existence of the governed whole. Nevertheless, this situation, with the operation of the whole as a whole and the reason inherent in it, necessarily transforms into the imposition of the particular’s own interests. Domination also confronts the individual as universally valid, in other words, as reason in reality.” (Adorno and Horkheimer 2017, 41). However, according to Adorno, domination is only possible for this reason to operate in reality by a change in the truth of consciousness itself. In this sense, according to him, consciousness can only serve the existence of the existing domination by losing its current functioning and becoming “sick” (207).

A sick consciousness (*kranken bewußtseins*) is fundamentally a “regressed” consciousness. The essential characteristic of such a consciousness is its tolerance of an environment where the power of thought has been lost. Whether existing forces create this environment under specific conditions or not, whether such conditioning is necessary or not in both cases where the act of thinking is lost, consciousness tolerates this environment (Adorno 2001, 172). This creates a fundamental problem. Because, first and foremost, such a consciousness has surrendered to the existing will. Everything that this will produce is now aimed at maintaining the existing state of affairs. Therefore, “instead of seeing society and its problems as a network of mediating interactions, we accept it as it has shaped us and do not make any effort to change this reality” (Au 2019, 56-57).

According to Adorno, we cannot say that the existing reality is always entirely a problem for the individual and society. However, when people lose their capacity for thought through various manipulative means, the conditions for changing the existing reality become necessary. Adorno believes we are in a period where such a change is a necessary condition. Because, as it stands, the “tendency” of our time is the most advanced position of consciousness available to us in our given historical situation. Essentially, there is a state of distancing from a certain state of consciousness. However, for Adorno, defining this as an unconscious, which would be considered the complete opposite of consciousness, would not be sufficient to understand the state of consciousness. In this sense, if we consider consciousness from two different perspectives, this issue will be better understood. In its first aspect, for Adorno, consciousness is understood as a historical process with its own internal and opposing tendencies, and these tendencies are considered together with a situation that expresses the individual’s participation through their own interests. According to Adorno, this state of consciousness is its “pure,” “real,” and ought-to state. However, Adorno conflicts with the other state of consciousness, which he describes as the loss of its purity and reality. According to Adorno, this state represents a “paralyzed consciousness.” This state of consciousness has a certain content. The transformative power of the phenomena he experiences cannot transcend this content either, because a certain state of transcendence has taken away his freedom (Adorno 2004, 95).

As Adorno states here, at the root of “paralyzed consciousness” lies a weakness of the ego. However, according to Adorno, this ego weakness was only possible with the dismantling of the ideology of “personality”. Essentially, according to psychoanalysis, personality serves an intermediary role. This role lies between the individual’s instincts and their adaptation to reality. According to Adorno, adaptation is entirely rationalized. However, in this rationalized adaptation, the individual’s intellectual autonomy is sacrificed in the name of rationalization through a call to “surrender” (Adorno 2005, 64).

In the rationalization mechanism that surrounds the individual, consciousness can recognize the deception. For Adorno, the deception is the transformation of rationalization into mythology through error. This transformation is rationally perceptible. However, it regresses to irrationality when it fails to see that, “in the inevitable course of rationality, even if the ground itself is diluted—even if it has completely disappeared—it is its own product, the product of its own abstraction. Because if thought unconsciously obeys its own laws of motion,...that which prevents the escape of subjective aims takes precedence over what has been thought.” (Adorno 2004, 149). As a result, thinking becomes nothing, condemned to “stupidity” and “primitiveness.” Therefore, according to Adorno, the problem, which we can fundamentally express as the regression of consciousness, is precisely a product of the lack of self-reflection as a consequence of this situation (149).

The fundamental characteristic of regressing consciousness becomes apparent in what it focuses on. Instead of taking the risk of making mistakes and thinking about “important” things, it stubbornly seeks the truth of what is “unimportant” (Adorno 2004, 170). According to Adorno, this is the most fundamental symptom of regressing consciousness. Although the world before it may be complex and problematic, consciousness sometimes expresses its satisfaction with that world by “speaking to it in its own terms,” and sometimes by remaining silent. It never allows the world in the background to disturb it in any way. In this respect, although consciousness does not want to be disturbed in any way, according to Raymond Guess, it always remains a part of the social field in some way, without remaining detached from various relationships, and operates in conjunction with a situation where “social practices support or justify relations of exploitation, hegemony, or domination” (Guess 1981, 15). However, as Guess also states, there is an important distinction between supporting a hegemony and legitimizing it. According to him, for a mass of people to accept and adopt a certain social practice, it must be presented to them with a justification. However, although the justification itself always needs to be questioned, presenting things to people with certain justifications under the domination of various tyrannical regimes can also become a dangerous tool. Hitler’s fascism is one of the best examples of this in history.

Undoubtedly, the Holocaust against Jews under Hitler’s fascism was also justified by starting with “us” and “them,” using pretexts such as “being a communist” or “being an enemy of the people.” Therefore, the fact that a belief is shared by large numbers of people for various reasons does not make it justified (Guess 1981, 15).

Whether or not these relationships are “justified” is not fundamentally a problem for a consciousness that “affirms hegemony.” What matters to him is the performance of an act of consciousness that affirms hegemony. Indeed, “all arrangements that lead society to destruction are acts of unrestrained self-preservation, but also unconscious actions of society in the face of suffering” (Adorno 2004, 203). According to Adorno, unconscious actions facilitate the operation of hegemony’s condition for existence.

Essentially, while “conscious phenomena are integrated into the phenomena of the conscious individual,” (Adorno 2004, 253-254) hegemony depends on the condition for existence of the unconscious activities of the conscious individual that affirm it. This condition for existence is far removed from the very idea of truth. Because, according to Adorno, the more consciously an action is performed, the closer it comes to truth itself (Adorno and Horkheimer 2017, 60). Since the search for the conscious nature of action as an endeavor to find truth forms the general basis of Adorno’s philosophy, Habermas argues that Adorno’s philosophy should be fundamentally understood as a philosophy of consciousness (Habermas 1982, 460). The reason for viewing Adorno’s philosophy as a philosophy of consciousness is actually hidden in this quote of his: “With the maturation of the mind, the individual and his relations with other individuals are also enchanted. The individual is diminished until he becomes the intersection point of the habitual responses and functions objectively expected of him.” (Adorno and Horkheimer 2017, 34)

As we have touched upon above, Adorno’s definition represents the final stage in the individual’s

transition from the conceptual framework offered by mythologies to that of the Enlightenment. However, for Adorno, the most important observation is that the individual's autonomous conditions are set aside and their behavior is transformed into "habitual responses." Adorno argues that this should be seen as a major problem, and according to him, habitual responses stem from systemic pressure on the act of thinking. He believes that as this pressure on thinking decreases, people will have more confidence in their own consciousness and experiences (Adorno 2004, 42). The fact that his philosophy, in a sense, deals with how consciousness in general is processed through experience justifies defining Habermas's philosophy of consciousness.

## 2. Individual Consciousness and Sociality

The objective nature of the reactions expected from the individual. Essentially, the individual's reactions are their own conscious experiences. This conscious experience, in other words, expresses the individual's own empirical consciousness, and empirical consciousness, as Adorno states, is not independent of the consciousness of the *Self* (Adorno 2004, 186). As Adorno defines it, this constitutes individual consciousness. However, the objective nature of individual reactions, as detailed in the quote, is something beyond individual consciousness. Because individual consciousness itself possesses a unique quality no conscious being can experience a conscious experience in place of another person. Therefore, according to Adorno, the objectivity of reactions depends on a shared conscious experience that enables a certain group of people to produce a customary reaction and expresses something beyond uniqueness. This conscious experience is the social response, in which each individual starts from their own conscious experience and reaches a consensus. The distinction between the individual and the social aspects of consciousness plays a significant role in Adorno's work. This point fundamentally concerns the function of consciousness in general. When discussing consciousness, Adorno defines it as the function of the living subject (185). Furthermore, he argues that any formation of consciousness is dependent on the image of the subject.

This foundation, with Adorno viewing consciousness entirely as "the function of the living subject", leads us to believe that we should only seek it within the conditions of individual experience. Essentially, we can divide the conditions of experience into two categories: *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*. *Erlebnis* means the process of bringing individual experience to a conscious level (Jay 1973, 93-94). In other words, it can be expressed as the recall of certain things under a certain condition of will, and the occurrence of impressions and stimuli at a certain level of consciousness. *Erfahrung*, on the other hand, refers to the functioning of impressions independently of consciousness, involuntary recall that has not reached consciousness, and can be associated with shock (94). To summarize the difference between these two experiences, we use *Erlebnis* to describe what is possessed, "isolated" and "categorical". In contrast, *Erfahrung* describes the accumulated experience of what we are exposed to (94). In this sense, Benjamin, who shares Adorno's ideas also attempts to investigate "real experience" within tradition, primarily through the work of Proust, Bergson, and Freud, using the concepts of *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung* in his text "On Some Motives in Baudelaire" (94-95). In this sense, experience was actually a problem of tradition, both in collective existence and in private life. Experience was not so much the product of facts firmly embedded in memory, but rather the product of the convergence of accumulated and often unconscious data in memory. Adorno, like Benjamin, also strived to reveal "real experience" in many of his texts (Benjamin 2006, 315). Because, according to him, real experience has been damaged in modern life.

"True experience" arises when the individual "takes control of their own uniqueness, that is, their being for themselves" (Adorno and Horkheimer 1972, 44). This situation not only enables the individual to be the very object of their own conscious activity but also constitutes their individual consciousness. However, it will be useful to focus on the individual in this sense. For Adorno, the definition of the individual is, first and foremost, as follows: "Whoever differentiates themselves from the interests and efforts of others, whoever becomes substance themselves, whose existence and development become established as a norm, that person becomes an individual." (44-45) However, this thought suggests that Adorno keeps the individual within

the boundaries of their own existence and conceives of them as a being entirely separate from sociality; yet, in Adorno's view, the individual reaches their own consciousness through a certain social mediation. Because, according to Adorno, it should not be forgotten that "the content and structure of all individualities, with their specific laws, are indebted to society as a structure" (47-48). Fundamentally, the individual is a singular biological being. For Adorno, this is an acceptable situation for the individual. However, if we consider the individual's biological singularity as their primary state, then we must accept their sociality as secondary. However, according to Adorno, the expression of biological singularity alone is insufficient to define the individual. It must be explained in conjunction with social mediation (44).

While Adorno believes that the individual should be considered not solely in terms of biological singularity but also through the mediation of sociality, he also considers that sociality itself has become an inextricably problematic aspect for the individual. For him, the individual "reveals how easily they can deflect attention from what is to come when they are horrified by the increasingly rich areas of life being overshadowed by organizations, and when they oppose this overshadowing on behalf of the individual, or as it is said nowadays, on behalf of humanity" (Adorno 1972, 440). The fundamental reason for this lies in the relationship between the individual and social institutions. Each social institution is beyond the power of individual citizens. Moreover the individual, because they possess a power that is debatable in the face of this power, is fundamentally powerless. According to Adorno, the existence of an individual is only possible within the complex web of social relations (Adorno and Horkheimer 1972, 39). When these relations are placed at the service of certain purposes, all possibilities that ensure the individual's freedom are suppressed, and obedience is enforced. It is also important to remember that obedience itself becomes possible when the power that controls social relations becomes absolutely binding on the individual. According to Adorno, the insurmountable force that social relations exert on the individual is fundamentally possible through the occupation of individual consciousness by social relations, and this occupation itself has already occurred in many ways under the conditions we find ourselves in (Adorno 1972, 445). As Kulak puts it, "from politics to culture, from religion to law, the consciousness of individuals is under open occupation. Individuals are not allowed to think based on their own experiences. Rationalization, which determines what and how they should think, intervenes in the consciousness of subjects and repeatedly regulates how and in what way they should enter social relations." (Kulak 2017, 87).

This entire new order, while causing destruction to everything that happens, "defeats the individual not by fully satisfying him, but by completely erasing him as a subject" (Adorno and Horkheimer 2017, 215). In this state, individual consciousness is of little importance. Because social relations have enveloped everything to such an extent that they leave no room for the individual's freedom. Although individual consciousness is fundamentally possible only by setting aside the supra-individual understanding, according to Adorno, the situation has changed in our current circumstances (Adorno 2004, 36). For an individual view to have meaning, it has become necessary to "deduce what is its origin from the socially necessary appearance" (36). This situation, which raises the issue of individual freedom in terms of the consequences it creates, shows that, in general, "freedom, which is the product of man himself, is not given any opportunity within this structure" ([Versal 2005, 121]). The absence of freedom is complex. Because, according to Adorno, everything imposed by social relations operates on a flexible ground that can present itself as "democratic" in individual beings. Opposing it will only be possible through the mental resistance of those who do not wish to fit into the framework it offers. Adorno, seeing this dialectically, argues that each social condition is actually structured in a way that facilitates the easier operation of domination. However, he notes that alongside social conditions, the mental process is also a crucial element, and that, according to Adorno, this mental process, in the context of declining educational conditions, leads to both a lack of imagery and a condition that could be described as a disease (Adorno 2004, 41).

This "disease" essentially numbs individuals. It fundamentally attempts to force individuals to

fulfill the roles they have assumed unquestioningly. Adorno considers this a kind of attack on consciousness, arguing that individuals cannot even make a conscious choice within the molds offered for these roles. Because everything is pre-arranged and planned, “city planning projects that should perpetuate the individual as an independent person in hygienic small apartments, thus placing them further under the yoke of the total power of capital, their adversary” (Adorno and Horkheimer 2017, 128). As a result, it becomes easier to direct all individuals conscious activities toward the desired form, based on the actual conditions of the power they are in (Adorno 2005, 117-118).

As Adorno states, each individual is fundamentally a subject. However, they owe their subjectivity to the objectification of both themselves and the unity of their experiences in their individual consciousness (Adorno 2004, 46). Adorno attempts to gather this objectification under the umbrella of generality. According to him, a person’s individual experiences are not entirely separate from each other. Each forms a generality within itself with the individual’s other individual experiences. The more dependent an individual experience is on generality, the greater a generality it forms within itself. But epistemological reflection is also like this; everything is like a logical generality that exists together. According to Adorno, both individual experience and the logical generality of epistemological reflection are not very distinct. Both mutually require each other. “But this is not only true for the subjective-formal aspect of individuality. Every content of individual consciousness is transmitted to the owner of consciousness by him and for his own preservation, and can reproduce itself with him. Individual consciousness can free itself from this by reflecting on itself” (46). Indeed, according to Adorno, the root of the problem here lies in the tendency of generality to establish dominance over individual consciousness.

In his work “On Benjamin”, where he presents his thoughts on Benjamin, Adorno addresses the relationship between the publication of Benjamin’s works by the Institute for Social Research and the concept of consciousness. According to him, the Institute operates in a way that differs from the classical, rigid style of scientific work. This working style is a general characteristic of the Institute. However, Adorno believes that their working characteristics stem from their different approach to the concept of consciousness. In this sense, according to him, “this kind of division of labor expresses a consciousness in which everything is reduced to the concrete, and the social conditions that create this consciousness oppose it” (Adorno 1970, 75). In this sense, consciousness can not oppose social conditions. Because, according to Adorno, consciousness is too weak to oppose social conditions. As a result of this weakness, the only thing he can do is try to conform to the values of society (Adorno 2004, 95).

Adaptation always has a one-sided direction, tending from individual consciousness towards the social. “If someone thinks, or believes, that people gather around a round table and, in good faith, collectively decide what can be done to save the inner world of the individual, to give spirit to the organization, or for the sake of similar lofty and distant goals, then that person remains alienated from the world.” (Adorno 1972, 454) Society is the sole competent subject that transforms and decides everything. Adorno points to a “tragedy” at this point. According to him, in such an environment, expecting an individual, whose power has been completely taken away, to take care of themselves with an awareness of their own powerlessness would be “shameless” (454). Because, in its current state, individual consciousness does not remain individual today; it transforms into a state that “captures the general in the logical conclusions of thought” (454-455). According to Adorno, keeping individual consciousness within the condition of the existence of the general is society imposing its priority on the individual. This expresses a necessary misconception and at the same time “expresses only negative things about society” (Adorno 2004, 126). Because, as Erich Fromm, a prominent member of the Frankfurt School, stated, society, with all its characteristics and structures, always uses its energy to maintain itself by not leaving individuals to their purely conscious activities, but rather by keeping them within certain frameworks and directing them, to a point where it tolerates nothing outside of itself (Fromm 2008, 77).

Indeed, according to Adorno, when social structures are entrenched, the individual’s tendencies

gradually dissolve within society. This is because individual tendencies are always powerless under the pressure of social structures, their freedom taken away. In this sense, the individual is forced to accept the pressure. According to Adorno, the individual actually has no option but to accept it. Even all the options the individual could construct for themselves are under this pressure. After a certain point, this pressure makes the abnormality fade into the background, so that everything that happens seems normal and is accepted as such (Adorno 1998, 12-13).

According to Adorno, the individual can realize, through their own experience, that this “normality” is problematic. Because, for him, experience is, above all, something that hinders the unity of consciousness, revealing all the contradictions. Adorno expresses this obstacle through the following example: “For instance, the contradiction between the determination the individual sees as his own and the role imposed upon him by society and needed for his survival cannot be reduced to unity without the fine-tuning that eliminates fundamental differences through the intervention of wretched overarching concepts.” (Adorno 2004, 152) However, according to Adorno, although experience stands as an obstacle to this unity, the existing social order confronts the individual with two contradictory situations: on the one hand, the “principle of exchange” that increases the forces of production, and on the other hand, the threat of destroying society. Having no other option, the individual is forced to choose in all their conscious activities through the mediation of this existing social order. According to Adorno, individual consciousness adopts a stance in the face of two situations: “either it will sterilize this contradictory course of events in such a way as to make it acceptable, and even though it knows it is wrong, it will submit to it from the outside, or it will stubbornly cling to its own determination, ignoring the course of the world and perishing within it.” (152)

According to Adorno, these two options facing individual consciousness are not limited to just two; his philosophy, in general, focuses on this contradiction. To better understand this, we can begin by elucidating the second option: Adorno argues that, as mentioned above, individual consciousness is weakened. Such a consciousness cannot oppose the condition of existence. Therefore, rather than being a determinant, it is itself in a state of being determined. For this reason, Adorno believes that the second option is hardly possible under the current conditions. However, regarding the first option, Adorno’s fundamental concern is that individual consciousness absorbs all kinds of contradictions within the society as whole, and that these contradictions can only be subdued by a weakened consciousness. In summary, under current conditions, social forces eliminate individuality, representing the anxieties of the whole as consciousness in the individual. The individual, with this consciousness, becomes so compliant that they cannot even raise objections, leaving them with only the first option. Although Adorno places sociality at the root of the problems, he also makes an important distinction. According to him, we must consider the individual as a “representative” of society. Because, first and foremost, while there is a tendency towards individualization in humans, socialization is equally an undeniable reality (Adorno 2004, 258). However, the problematic point of these two naturally accepted tendencies in Adorno’s view is the resistance they create against each other. Adorno summarizes resistance with these words: “Consciousness can know its Other only insofar as it resembles it, not by completely flattening it with this resemblance. What remains after the interruption performed by the subject is a primitive imitation of objectivity. This objectivity is the schema into which the subject includes its own *Other*, a schema that is not self-conscious. The less tolerant this schema is of proximity to things, the more ruthless the connection of identification becomes.” (270) Adorno believes that what constitutes the schema is sociality. If we recall his famous slogan, “the whole is false” (2005, 50), according to him, “the individual is itself an element of that society; the selfhood attributed to him has been taken away by society” (2004, 264). Because “individual consciousness, which is the general counterpart of the individual, is intertwined with objectivity, which is supra-subjective” (279) This causes the experience of the self to become, through sociality, also the experience of the non-self. Referring to Adorno’s analysis, Žižek also cites Adorno, stating that “the fundamental characteristic of contemporary society is the irreconcilable antagonism between totality and individuality” (Žižek 2008, 127). Žižek’s relationship with Adorno extends beyond this analysis. As Butler and Stephens state, “Žižek owes his non-theological, open-ended

dialectical understanding—though he rarely acknowledges it—to Adorno” (Butler and Stephens 2005, 357). Continuing to focus on what Adorno refers to as irreconcilability, according to him, the conflict between the fundamentally different ways of thinking, understanding, and rationalizing among individuals with individual consciousness and the uniformity in society is the root cause. According to him, while eliminating this contradiction in its current state seems impossible, it has resulted in the individual consciousness being stripped of its individuality and treated collectively under certain social conditions.

### 3. Conclusion

According to Adorno, in modern societies, people have been divided into categories of consciousness from the very beginning, aided by cultural and industrial elements. Under the necessary conditions of sociality, these categories of consciousness inevitably lead to the satisfaction of people’s needs through standardized products in countless places, through reproduction. This situation, after a certain point, motivates people, imposing and reinforcing the perception that this consciousness is directed towards real needs. Ultimately, within the conditions where this technique justifies itself, individual consciousnesses are also suppressed by central control.

With the suppression of individual consciousness, the absence of consciousness in an ontological sense does not disappear, but it changes direction. Because consciousness, in one aspect, expresses singularity. In this sense, one person cannot experience consciousness in place of another. Therefore, if we leave consciousness aside, we will have to leave the individual aside as well. For this reason, suppressed individual consciousness always points to a transformation into something that can be directed on a mass scale. This corresponds to a massified consciousness within the culture industry. However, massified consciousness is fundamentally a part of motivation. It loses its individuality and acts only with the social. Adorno, with his concept of mass consciousness, actually took consciousness to a different point in the history of philosophy. Before him, the concept of consciousness in the history of philosophy was treated simply as a distinction between consciousness and unconsciousness.

With his concept of mass consciousness, Adorno eliminated the distinction between consciousness and unconsciousness in the history of philosophy. Because the classical concept of consciousness in Adorno corresponds to individual consciousness. However, unconsciousness, rather than the complete disappearance of consciousness, manifests itself as a state of consciousness it directs. With this distinction, Adorno fundamentally showed that consciousness, by becoming mass-produced, is experienced as both consciousness and unconsciousness. Consciousness, in which the unconscious reflects itself as a state of consciousness, has already lost its power from the very beginning. Because it has a content within itself. The power of change of none of the phenomena it experiences can exceed this content. Therefore, consciousness, as something deprived of its freedom, is in a state of “paralysis” in its current state. In this state, it has lost its current functioning. It only serves the dominion to which it has submitted. As a result, it always endures an environment in which the power of thought has been lost. Although the existing forces initially create certain conditions for endurance, a weakened consciousness, after a certain point, imposes itself without needing any further conditioning. This imposition can only take root among people through a weakened consciousness—that is, a consciousness that has become mass-based by submitting to existing social conditions and impositions.

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