



A Critical Theory-Praxis for Contemplative Studies

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Abstract

Faith has an important role in the early Theravāda Buddhism. The Theravāda Pali Canon lists faith as one of seven treasures (dhāna), one of five spiritual faculties (indriyas), and one of the spiritual powers (balas). There are also other lists of virtues in which faith is included; faith is described as an important quality in some stream-enterers, a state preceding enlightenment. In standard descriptions of people going forth (taking ordination as a monk), faith is usually mentioned as an important motivation. Faith in the sense of a trustful confidence – a quality more of the heart than a cognitive belief – has an important role in Buddhism, albeit generally not as central as in some religions. Faith both leads to calm and encourages one to seek to attain the stages of spiritual perfection. This paper aims to search for current problems on Faith to the Saṅgha Community, to analyze their cause and effects.

Keywords: Community, Faith, Saṅgha, Theravada Buddhism, Vinaya Rules.

Introduction

This paper will adopt the lens of critical theory to understand how internal and external tensions appear in the commoditization of meditation through its mediation in the culture industry and science. I will use critical theory to argue that meditation is defined by a repressive rationality functioning within Happy Consciousness and scientific operationalism. Finally, I will offer hopeful remarks about the future of contemplative studies by offering a unity of theory and praxis that attempts to transcend the social context in which meditation is currently thought and practiced.

Happy Consciousness

The pursuit of happiness has become the abiding ideology of our time. It is a collective dream that captures our imagination, a shared fantasy that transforms our “desires and anxieties into socially-defined structures of thought.”¹ However, Happy Consciousness is distinguished from genuine wellbeing, because it defines individual happiness and productive development as values to be realized in a repressive society.² Individuals confront one another as “commander and commanded,”³ always looking inward and blaming themselves for the cause of their own suffering.⁴ The progress of civilization depends upon this “introversion of sacrifice”⁵ in an economy where “the commandment to ‘be happy’ amounts to a form of insidious social control.”⁶

Today, the cult of positive psychology says you can be whoever you want to be, and it’s your own fault if you’re not happy. Its “systematic promotion of positive thinking

¹Richard A. Koenigsberg, “Analysis of Metaphor: Methodology for the Psychological Interpretation of Culture,” *Library of Social Science*, accessed 28 April 2015, <http://www.libraryofsocscience.com/essays/koenigsberg-analysis-of-metaphor.html>

²Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973), 108.

³Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination*, 153.

⁴Paul Moloney, “Unhappiness is Inevitable,” *The Guardian*, August 27, 2006, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2006/aug/28/comment.mainsection1>

⁵Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, edited by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, translated by Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 43.

⁶Moloney, “Unhappiness is Inevitable.”

and doing”⁷ creates an affirmative culture that negates anything outside one-dimensional thought and behavior. As Herbert Marcuse says, “The Pleasure Principle absorbs the Reality Principle,”⁸ and our happiness becomes “deprived of the claims which are irreconcilable with the established society.”⁹ Happy Consciousness opposes political engagement and deep thinking.¹⁰ It pursues happiness individually and disregards collective suffering in favor of an atomistic view of mental health and bodily well-being.

In the media, the culture industry enforces conformism through ever more effective means.¹¹ It provides us with one-dimensional images of a happy life that translate unconscious fantasies into socially accepted realities. Its images and metaphors produce false needs that are “products of a society whose dominant interest demands repression.”¹² The media persuades individuals to identify the satisfaction of their unconscious desires with these false needs, and since people associate personal gratification with the satisfaction of false needs, they also identify their personal wellbeing with the wellbeing of the one-dimensional society.

As a result, individual wellbeing comes to serve productive development, as people “identify themselves with the existence which is imposed upon them” and “the ‘false consciousness’ of their rationality becomes the true consciousness.”¹³ People forfeit genuine happiness for its false advertisement, and they seek enjoyment in mass diversions that defuse their discontent and sublimate their libidinal drives, while heightening their sense of guilt¹⁴ and enforcing their obedience to the social totality.¹⁵ Happy Consciousness thus “generates

⁷Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1964), 88.

⁸*Ibid.*, 75.

⁹*Ibid.*, 79.

¹⁰Steven Poole, “The Wellness Syndrome by Carl Cederström and And   Spicer- Exploitation with a Smiley Face,” *The Guardian*, January 22, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/jan/22/the-wellness-syndrome-carl-cederstrom-andre-spicer-persuasive-diagnosis>.

¹¹Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination*, 172, 216.

¹²Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 7.

¹³*Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁴Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (Buckinghamshire, England: Chrysoma Associates Ltd, 2000-2005 [1929]).

¹⁵Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination*, 1973, 57.

submission and weakens the rationality of protest”¹⁶ by offering to satisfy the desires which it creates and with which people come to identify in their own wellbeing.¹⁷

Happy Myths in the Science of Meditation

In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno say that “Relief is provided by the dire conventicles and panaceas which put on scientific airs while cutting off thought.”¹⁸ In today’s ‘mindful moment,’ the culture industry offers meditation as the preferred cure-all for business elites and soccer moms alike. It has become “integrated into work and public relations” through a process of “institutionalized desublimation” that “made [meditation] more susceptible to (controlled) satisfaction.”¹⁹ The “transcending factors” of Buddhist enlightenment have been removed through their scientific quantification and operationalization, so that meditation could be re-packaged and sold in an economy of approved desires, sublimating libidinal drives into pacified moments of mindful sex, mindful eating, and mindful parenting.

Framed through Marx and Freud, mindfulness may be viewed as a secular religion sublimating the sigh of the oppressed into an opiate for raising Happy Consciousness. As long as mindfulness is defined as “moment-to-moment, non-judgmental awareness,”²⁰ it becomes a kind of “privatized spirituality,” resulting in “a ‘spiritually correct’ form of passivity, quietism and dissociation from societal malaise.”²¹ It places the responsibility of stress on the individual, “focuses the attention ‘inward,’ and situates the causes of suffering in reactivity rather than material conditions.”²²

¹⁶ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 78.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹⁸ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 162.

¹⁹ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 78.

²⁰ Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Coming to Our Senses* (New York, NY: Hyperion, 2005), 108.

²¹ Ron Purser and David Forbes, “Search Outside Yourself: Google Misses a Lesson in Wisdom 101,” *Huffington Post*, March 5, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ron-purser/google-misses-a-lesson_b_4900285.html

²² Sean Feit, “Mindfulness the Google Way: Well-intentioned Saffron-washing?” *nadalila.org*, February 22, 2014, <http://www.nadalila.org/mindfulness-the-google-way-well-intentioned-saffron-washing/>

Today's culture industry spreads false consciousness in the images of Time magazine's beautiful, white blonde 'Mindfulness Revolution,'²³ and it sells mindfulness "both as a product and as a source of almost endless product spinoffs"²⁴ in schools, prisons, the military, high-level sports, corporations, and healthcare industries. This dramatic growth in the popularity of mindfulness has largely been legitimized by a parallel growth in the science of mindfulness. The number of research papers on mindfulness grew from 12 articles in 1990 to 3,403 articles by the end of November, 2014— 1,000 of which were published in the last two years. Since 1979, the mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) program created by Jon Kabat-Zinn at the University of Massachusetts has treated more than 20,000 patients, certified 1,000 mindfulness instructors, and spread "programs in about 720 medical settings in more than 30 countries."²⁵ Yet the public's enthusiasm for mindfulness has largely outpaced scientific evidence and promises about the efficacy of mindfulness are based more on faith in science than on the science itself.²⁶

Instead, the explosion of factual information on mindfulness has been framed by popular myths expressing the images and metaphors of Happy Consciousness, and the science of meditation has been constrained in its development to serve those myths. According to Herbert Marcuse, the methodology used to investigate science is essentially locked in an ideological framework that excludes "the unrealistic excess of meaning" beyond a specific "range of judgement" within which "the established society validates and invalidates propositions."²⁷ The science of meditation similarly follows "a logical *mimesis* which formulates the laws of thought in protective accord with the laws of society."²⁸ Its investigation

²³ Joanna Piacenza, "TIME's Beautiful, White, Blonde 'Mindfulness Revolution,'" Huffington Post, January 29, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/joanna-piacenza/time-mindfulness-revolution_b_4687696.html

²⁴ Mary Sykes Wylie, "How the Mindfulness Movement Went Mainstream - And the Backlash That Came With It," Alternet, January 29, 2015, <http://www.alternet.org/personal-health/how-mindfulness-movement-went-mainstream-and-backlash-came-it>.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ronald Purser and Andrew Cooper, "Mindfulness' 'Truthiness' Problem: Sam Harris, Science and the Truth about Buddhist Tradition," Salon, December 6, 2014, http://www.salon.com/2014/12/06/mindfulness_truthiness_problem_sam_harris_science_and_the_truth_about_buddhist_tradition/

²⁷ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 119.

²⁸ Ibid., 143.

thus becomes “circular and self-validating,”²⁹ such that it will never allow transcendence of the established reality, because “the system is posited as the thing itself.”³⁰

In other words, the science of meditation encourages one-dimensional thought and behavior, because it restricts meditation to “the representation of particular operations and behavior”³¹ within Happy Consciousness. The Enlightenment’s demystification of religion³² reappears in science’s own myth-making project to establish a universal, materialistic basis for translating meditation into a set of operational values that fit within the rationality of the established society. The traditional meaning and value of meditation in religious contexts is relegated to the subjective dimensions of the unscientific past,³³ and the new operational values reduce meditation to its commodity exchange value.

Consequently, meditation forfeits “the greater part of its truth” in its transformation from higher culture to material culture.³⁴ It becomes “religion and philosophy with commercials”³⁵ - a lowest common denominator whose “modes of protest and transcendence are no longer contradictory to the status quo.”³⁶ Finally, its containment within a fixed frame of scientific quantification and analysis “assumes a political function,” in so far as the “therapeutic character of the operational concept” constrains conceptual thought and dictates the improvement of existing social conditions within a repressive society.³⁷

Under these circumstances, the administration of popular 8-week meditation programs for stress-reduction and labor productivity conquers the subversive and transcendent aspects of meditation in alternative contexts. In *One-Dimensional Man*, Marcuse had already lamented that Zen was “quickly digested by the status quo as part of its healthy

²⁹ Ibid., 119.

³⁰ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 159.

³¹ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 14.

³² Eduardo Mendieta, “Religion as Critique: Theology as Social Critique and Enlightened Reason,” in *The Frankfurt School of Religion: Key Writings by the Major Thinkers*, edited by Eduardo Mendieta (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), 8.

³³ Purser and Cooper, “Mindfulness’ ‘Truthiness’ Problem.”

³⁴ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 61.

³⁵ Ibid., 60-61.

³⁶ Ibid., 16.

³⁷ Ibid., 110.

diet.”³⁸ Scientifically, the practical import of modern meditation has been safeguarded by research agencies, which only fund projects that “develop hypotheses around the effects of meditation... that promise to deliver the answers we want to hear.”³⁹ This limited view of meditation was likely promulgated by Buddhist leaders as much as Western scientists, because the consensus between Buddhists and scientists was historically productive—it allowed Buddhism to spread in a modern, secular, and scientific context by appearing positive, non-threatening, and compatible with Western culture.

Today, however, small pockets of gen-Y and gen-X Buddhists are beginning to reject the grand narrative that meditation is a supreme good. For example, a new study led by Willoughby Britton, called “The Varieties of Contemplative Experience,” maps the spectrum of meditative experiences across religious traditions in a way that deconstructs modern myths about meditation’s purported social value. The study’s preliminary findings indicate that practitioners experience significant moments of distress during meditation. Classical Buddhist texts in the vipassana tradition have long recognized that challenges may be a sign of progress during stages, called the *dukkha ñanas*, where distress is a “natural response to the layer of mind being exposed.”⁴⁰ Until now, however, the Buddhist contextual understanding of meditation has been systematically removed so that science could operationalize meditation in terms of socially beneficial outcomes confined to its own myth of progress within the Happy Consciousness.

The neurological proofs of meditation’s benefits have thus encouraged one-dimensional “means-to-an-end thinking” which disregard that Buddhist meditation was intended to be “subversive and deconstructive of all the reasons that initially brought us to it.”⁴¹ In the Buddhist context, meditation is a portal to awakening through the understanding of deep suffering, but in today’s ‘mindful moment,’ it provides relief from suffering in a way that cuts off critical thought and critical action. Through a series of reductions, science removed the transcendent elements of meditation in order to “better understand its essence,” but in

³⁸ Ibid., 16.

³⁹ Anna North, “The Mindfulness Backlash,” *The New York Times*, June 30, 2014, <http://op-talk.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/06/30/the-mindfulness-backlash/>.

⁴⁰ Jeff Warren, “Enlightenment’s Evil Twin,” *Psychology Tomorrow*, January 2014, <http://www.psychologytomorrowmagazine.com/enlightenments-evil-twin/>.

⁴¹ Matt Bieber, “Everyone Comes to Meditation Practice for the Wrong Reason: A Conversation with Psychoanalyst Barry Magid,” [mattbieber.net](http://www.mattbieber.net), March 3, 2014, <http://www.mattbieber.net/magid/>.

relegating religion to the subjective domain, the established rationality negates meditation's capacity to subvert the repressive social values which come to define it. As Linda Heuman says, we "reinforce the very things that are problematic about ourselves and our society that the teachings are meant to subvert."⁴² Enlightened rationality thus transforms a liberating practice into a tool for our oppression.

Restoring Transcendence to Meditation

Through the course of modernity, the Enlightenment's disenchantment of the world (*die Entzauberung der Welt*) demystified experiences of the unscientific past and in their place, reified the mythical traces of mathematical thinking⁴³ as the only form of valid knowledge.⁴⁴ Mathematical equations asserted their own transcendent truth in a Platonic realm separate from the world of language and representation. As a result, the natural sciences became the proper domain of a one-dimensional reality, guarded by mathematical realism and logical positivism.

Recently, the Academy has invited the natural sciences to legitimize all fields of study to save itself from the death of intellectual traditions and the crisis of faith in the humanities.⁴⁵ The imperialism of neuroscience has taken over traditions in the humanities which had formerly resisted the repressive onslaught of scientific quantification. Every discipline has been re-imagined as a neuro-discipline. The transcendent impulses of higher culture, implicit within ethics, aesthetics, music, and theology have been recast as elements of material culture in the advent of neuro-ethics, neuro-aesthetics, neuro-musicology, and neuro-theology.

Likewise, the predominance of neurobiology in contemplative studies exhibits the repressive traces of this new imperialism, as it removed transcendence from Buddhist meditation so that practical values could be imported into mindfulness. As public enthusiasm

⁴²Linda Heuman, "A New Way Forward," *Tricycle*, Spring 2015, <http://www.tricycle.com/feature/new-way-forward>.

⁴³Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination*, 69.

⁴⁴Max Horkheimer, *Between Philosophy and Social Science Selected Early Writings Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought*, translated by G. Frederick Hunter, Matthew S. Kramer, and John Torpey (Cambridge, MA MIT Press, 1993), 376.

⁴⁵Arthur Krystal, "The Shrinking World of Ideas," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 21, 2014, <http://www.chronicle.com/article/The-Shrinking-World-of-Ideas/150141/>.

for meditation has outpaced the development of its science, neuro-mania has also captured the public's attention in such a way that "explanations with logically irrelevant neuroscience information were more satisfying than explanations without."⁴⁶ The neuroscience of meditation has achieved mythic status.

But as New York Time columnist Adam Frank says, "The deployment of new technologies tends to create their own realities and values." He warns that "If we treat minds like meat-computers, we may end up in a world where that's the only aspect of their nature we perceive or value."⁴⁷ In order to restore transcendence to meditation, contemplative studies must transcend the repressive context in which meditation is quantifiably and objectively fixed to specific social functions.

The recent incorporation of phenomenology into contemplative studies may provide avenues for transcending that context by inviting religious symbolism and subjective experience back into conversation with scientific methodology. As Marcuse warned, "science establishes a field of knowledge that could not transform its own internal logic of universals and quantified identities, because it excludes that one element of reality that changes"⁴⁸—namely, subjective experience. At the very least, phenomenology offers contemplative studies one way to broaden its evaluation of meditation beyond cold, objective rationality.

However, as long as the major funding agencies in contemplative studies (NIH and Mind and Life) continue to preferentially sponsor projects in the neurosciences, then industrial production techniques will continue to dominate scholarly activities and efforts to incorporate values, meaning, and purpose through phenomenological lenses will succumb to the mimetic impulse as the emasculated byproducts of a 'neuro-phenomenology.' Max Horkheimer already noticed phenomenology's submission to the dominant rationality when he said, "the so-called human studies (*Geisteswissen-scMften*) have had but a fluctuating market value and must try to imitate the more prosperous natural sciences whose practical

⁴⁶Deena Skolnick Weisberg, Frank C. Keil, Joshua Goodstein, Elizabeth Rawson, and Jeremy R. Gray, "The Seductive Allure of Neuroscience Explanations," *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 20, no. 3 (2008): 470–477. doi: 10.1162/jocn.2008.20040, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2778755/>.

⁴⁷Adam Frank, "Dreaming in Code: Michio Kaku's 'Future of the Mind,'" *The New York Times*, March 7, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/09/books/review/michio-kakus-future-of-the-mind.html>.

⁴⁸Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 168.

value is beyond question.”⁴⁹ Today, Mind and Life awards a dozen grants each year for projects in contemplative studies, but only one grant is awarded to a project in the humanities, and only then is it awarded if the project is considered methodologically rigorous, which typically requires the incorporation of social science methodologies.⁵⁰ Clearly, contemplative studies is dominated by the so-called hard sciences.

Philosophical Flights of Transcendence

So far, I have argued that the science of meditation has established fixed categories of thought and behavior according to the dominant rationality, so that the “‘conquest of transcendence’ achieved by the one-dimensional society”⁵¹ will specifically allow it to market meditation as a palliative for raising Happy Consciousness. In the remainder of this paper, I will explore how contemplative studies may critically engage philosophy to restore the transcendent dimensions of meditation by integrating theory and praxis into a new scientific-technological rationality.

As Horkheimer and Adorno lamented, “practically fruitful scientific enterprises call for an unimpaired capacity for definition, for shutting down thought at a point designated by social need.”⁵² The separation of philosophy from science was a historic anomaly that allowed science to operate in this way without being challenged by deep conceptual thought. As Daniel Dennett says, however, “There is no such thing as philosophy-free science, just science that has been conducted without any consideration of its underlying assumptions.”⁵³ Ulterior to the need for alternative qualitative methodologies like phenomenology, contemplative studies requires philosophic flights of conceptual thought (and *feeling*) to transcend meditation’s fixed operational context.

Generally speaking, the critical importance of philosophy is to obstruct one-dimensional thought by restoring reason to a closed philosophical system. “The greatest

⁴⁹Max Horkheimer, “Traditional and Critical Theory,” in *Critical Sociology: Selected Readings*, edited by Paul Connerton (Harmondsworth: Penguin, [1937] 1976), 191.

⁵⁰Wendy Hasenkamp, personal communication at the Mind and Life Summer Research Institute, June 19, 2014.

⁵¹Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 82.

⁵²Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 161.

⁵³Daniel C. Dennett, *Intuition Pumps and Other Tools for Thinking* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014), 20.

failing of the Enlightenment,” according to critical theory, was “its systematic elimination of negation from language.”⁵⁴ As long as science continues to separate the subjective and objective domains of knowledge, philosophy must be “driven by the principle of negation to attempt to salvage relative truths from the wreckage of false ultimates.”⁵⁵ It must reside “in the ‘force field’ between subject and object”⁵⁶ and it must “strive, by way of the concept, to transcend the concept.”⁵⁷

In order to transcend one-dimensional thinking, contemplative studies should employ philosophic reasoning to negate “the functionalized, abridged and unified language” that identifies meditation with its function as more real than meditation itself.⁵⁸ The reification of meditation through the extension of images, either scientific or cultural, contains within it the repression of conceptual thought. The principle of negation which is the proper function of both philosophy and meditation must be restored to liberate contemplative studies from its servitude within the Happy Consciousness.

Practically speaking, the meditative experience should be reinterpreted through critical philosophical reflections on the relevance of traditional Buddhism in contemporary contexts. The 2014 Buddhism and Cognitive Science conference in Berkeley, California initiated one of the most serious discussions on the importance of philosophy for contemplative studies. To succeed in this endeavor, contemplative studies must also respond to Laurie Zoloth’s recent exhortation at the 2014 American Academy of Religion by implementing its own “holistic thinking, multidisciplinary education and cross-cultural communications,”⁵⁹ so that scholarly activities are not contained by disciplinary boundaries that produce an “intellectual division of labor”⁶⁰ and extreme hyper-specialization.⁶¹ In this way, contemplative studies may also

⁵⁴ Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination*, 263.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 263.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁵⁷ Mendieta, “Religion as Critique,” 7.

⁵⁸ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 98.

⁵⁹ James Miller, “Turning Students into Citizens, Religious Studies Edition,” *Religion Dispatches*, December 15, 2014, <http://religiondispatches.org/turning-students-into-citizens-religious-studies-edition/>.

⁶⁰ Mendieta, “Religion as Critique,” 6.

⁶¹ David Fideler, “Putting the World Back Together: The Future of Education and the Search for an Integrated Worldview,” *The Cosmopolis Project*, accessed April 28, 2015, <http://www.cosmopolisproject.org/2015/01/07/putting-the-world-back-together-the-future-of-education-and-the-search-for-an-integrated-worldview/>.

benefit from its engagement with critical theory, which builds an “inter-disciplinary, critical and philosophically informed social research” program that attempts to liberate reason “from the church of positivism and the theology of the market.”⁶²

The Qualitative Break

As it becomes a greater part of contemplative studies, philosophy can introduce values, meaning, and purpose back into scientific methodology. The fixed conceptual framework within which positivism defined meditation in terms of its socially acceptable functions was in large part the result of “the abdication of reflection... the absolutizing of ‘facts’ and the reification of the existing order,” following “the positivists’ pretension to have disentangles facts from values.”⁶³ Science cannot escape particular value orientations, just as it cannot escape philosophy.

In reality, scientific-technical rationality only separated values out from the objective reality by regarding them as subjective in nature.⁶⁴ As Eduardo Mendieta said, “positivism contributed to concealing the way in which science and technology are informed by values,”⁶⁵ but because “the quantification of nature... separated the true from the good, science from ethics,”⁶⁶ values ultimately became subjective, non-threatening moral and religious ideals, whose “concrete, critical content evaporates into the ethical or metaphysical atmosphere.”⁶⁷

The instrumentalization of meditation is a product of contemplative science, not because of its imposing any positive or negative value, but because its value-neutrality establishes an a priori “formalization and functionalization”⁶⁸ of meditation for the purposes of social control.⁶⁹ The “internal instrumentalist character of this scientific rationality”⁷⁰ is

⁶² Mendieta, “Religion as Critique,” 2.

⁶³ Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination*, 62.

⁶⁴ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 151.

⁶⁵ Mendieta, “Religion as Critique,” 4.

⁶⁶ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 150.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 160-161.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 161-162.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 161-162.

what Marcuse calls “the Logos of technics” by which “the liberating force of technology - the instrumentalization of things - turns into a fetter of liberation; the instrumentalization of man.”⁷¹ The essence of operationalism is “the theory and practice of *containment*,”⁷² and yet the great contradiction of any qualitative break with the past “involves a change in the technical basis on which this society rests.”⁷³ The cherished unity of theory and praxis does not appear as a complete negation of science, a return to traditional values, or even a dialogue between science and religion. In the final analysis, theory and praxis may be united by “the translation of values into technical tasks—the materialization” or “quantification of values.”⁷⁴

As Marcuse argues, society must adjust (rather than transcend) scientific-technological rationality through the reconstruction of “the technical base” of science, because it still depends on this base to free us from poverty and toil.⁷⁵ The incorporation of values and the integration of philosophy into science can provide the critical theory-praxis whereby Enlightened-rationality comes to complete satisfaction and breaks through itself. In the conclusion of *One-Dimensional Man*, Marcuse states that the value-neutrality of science and technology becomes “a historical phase which is being surpassed by its own achievements,” at the moment in which “formerly metaphysical ideas of liberation may become the proper object of science.”⁷⁶ Positivism has always maintained its dominance in the current social order by specifically separating facts from values and by “invalidating the cherished images of transcendence by incorporating them into its omnipresent daily reality.”⁷⁷ Now, the transcendent dimensions of experience which are part of the irrational, unscientific past may be part of a new scientific-technological rationality through the quantification of values and purpose.

Fortunately, the new rationality is slowly being applied to the contemplative sciences in recent work on the quantification of ethical values and transcendence. For instance, Tania Singer and colleagues are using empirical research on pro-social behavior to redefine standard

⁷¹ Ibid., 163-164.

⁷² Ibid., 19.

⁷³ Ibid., 20.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 237.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 236.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 237.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 70.

economic calculus beyond the rationality of self-interested individuals.⁷⁸ The Dalai Lama's desire to scientifically validate and spread a secular ethics has inspired programs like Call to Care, which teach children social-emotional competence, while organizations like the Nalanda Institute for Contemplative Science are dedicated to providing a comprehensive education on the science of meditation oriented toward liberation. Within the scientific community, Jared Lindahl has proposed that scientists, scholars, practitioners, and clinicians all "work together to operationalize candidate theories" on traditional mindfulness from Buddhist theory and practice,⁷⁹ and Dave Vago has begun to re-imagine the science of meditation so that it validates self-transcendence⁸⁰ and enlightenment.⁸¹ On his website, Vago says that the operationalization of mindfulness must "consider the historical and cultural context from which the term arises and [it must] clearly distinguish it from common, everyday usage, and from secular descriptions of psychological constructs that are often conflated with mindfulness."⁸²

The intent of these projects is to prevent the systematic removal of meditation's truth content in its transformation from higher culture to material culture. If contemplative studies follows Horkheimer's repeated assertion that the truth is derived from "whatever fosters social change in the direction of a rational society,"⁸³ then perhaps the contemplative sciences will not ignore their own social role.⁸⁴ If it is successful, the translation of meditation's subjective and symbolic meaning can help establish meditation as a practice of pure negation - one which supports greater well-being through a perpetual upsetting of the Happy Consciousness.

⁷⁸Tania Singer and Matthieu Ricard, eds., *Caring Economics: Conversations on Altruism and Compassion, Between Scientists, Economists, and the Dalai Lama* (New York: Macmillan, 2015).

⁷⁹Jared R. Lindahl, "Why Right Mindfulness Might Not Be Right for Mindfulness," Springer Link, December 28, 2014, <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12671-014-0380-5/fulltext.html>.

⁸⁰David R.V. and D.A. Silbersweig, "Self-awareness, Self-regulation, and Self-transcendence (S-ART): A Framework for Understanding the Neurobiological Mechanisms of Mindfulness." *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 25, no. 6 (2012): 296. doi: 10.3389/fnhum.2012.00296.<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23112770>.

⁸¹Jake H. Davis and David R. Vago. "Can Enlightenment Be Traced to Specific Neural Correlates, Cognition, or Behavior? No, and (a Qualified) Yes." *Frontiers in Psychology* 4 (2013): 870. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2013.00870.

⁸²Dave Vago, "What is Mindfulness?," *Contemplative Mind in Life*, accessed April 28, 2015, <https://contemplativemind.wordpress.com/what-is-mindfulness/>.

⁸³Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination*, 63.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 27.

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