#### \*\*Trigger Warning – This K will have non-explicit mentions to anti-Semitic violence\*\*

# 1

#### Identity thinking generalizes objects under categories assuming it’s capturing the object in full thereby ignoring the inherent commitment of the non-identical. Therefore, all non-negative dialectical modern thinking fails.

Freyenhagen 13 Fabian Freyenhagen [University of Essex], 2013, “ADORNO’S PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY Living Less Wrongly” Cambridge University Press, ISBN: 978-1-107-03654-3, <https://www.cambridge.org/us/academic/subjects/philosophy/twentieth-century-philosophy/adornos-practical-philosophy-living-less-wrongly?format=HB&isbn=9781107036543> SJMS

iii The whole is untrue 2 (modern thought forms) However, it is not just capitalism (and its nominally socialist rivals) which are wrong for Adorno – modern thought forms are also problematic.39 Adorno paints a basically Kantian picture of modern thought forms. Thus, he suggests that empirical cognition is a composite of concepts and sensory input, such that the latter is subsumed under the former. This process of synthesis involves bringing something specific and particular (the manifold given to us via the senses) under something general (concepts). In effect, cognition becomes thereby a process of identification, of assigning the particular to a general class into which it falls. This means that we never cognise the thing in itself as such, but only how it appears to us, mediated by our spatio-temporal frame of reference (Kant calls this our‘forms of intuition’) and our conceptual scheme (that is, in Kant, the twelve categories). However, unlike Kant, Adorno does not think of this conceptual scheme as unchangeable or a priori.40 Instead, he historicises the Kantian idea (following the work of the early Lukács).41 For Adorno, as for Horkheimer, the conceptual schemes with which we operate are what might be called ‘historical a priori’ – given the historical and social setting we grow up and live in, we approach the world and think of it in certain ways.42 Society is always already inside human beings and their experiences.43 Both the object of experience and the way we experience it are shaped by the society we inhabit.44 These ways of structuring our experience take on a necessary and universal character within a social world, but, at least historically speaking, human beings have been subject to a series of incommensurable frameworks, such that Kant’s claim to a stronger form of necessity and universality comes out false. Kantians would reply that our conceptual scheme is not just a reflection of a particular society or stage in human history, but inherent in thought and experience as such. Perhaps human societies differ in terms of certain specifics – in their empirical concepts – but certain basic categories are necessarily operative in each of these variations. I cannot resolve this disagreement here, but merely note that, even if Adorno is right and our conceptual scheme is not necessary in any transhistorically strong sense, this does not mean that we could do without any conceptual scheme whatsoever. Adorno himself notes that to think is to use concepts and thereby to identify,45 and, hence, ‘identity thinking [Identitätsdenken]’, of which Adorno speaks frequently and critically, seems to be the only thinking there could be. However, what Adorno means by talking about identity thinking is more than just emphasising the inevitable fact that thinking is conceptual.46 While all thinking has this latter characteristic, only some forms of thinking – albeit the dominant ones in the modern world – are based on the assumption that the synthesis performed by subsuming the sensible manifold under concepts actually captures this manifold in full (or in its essential properties). We need to be careful here. Adorno is not just worried about which concept is used in a particular case – it might well be that we often do not use the most suitable concept in a given case and that this has to be corrected. (Perhaps Pluto is actually not a planet, but better conceptualised as an asteroid, despite a long tradition that thought otherwise.) What Adorno complains about is something more fundamental. It is the thought that any subsumption under concepts, even the most apt one, misses something about its object and if this mismatch is not reflected upon, then thought does injustice to the object.47 Instead of saying what something is, ‘identity thinking says what it falls under, what it is an example or representative of, what it consequently is not itself’. 48 What is missed in the object is called variously ‘the non-identical’ [das Nichtidentische] or ‘the non-conceptual’ [das Nichtbegriffliche] by Adorno. This central idea in Adorno’s work is difficult to make sense of. This is partly for philosophical reasons – that which escapes our conceptual schemes is inherently and unsurprisingly hard to grasp. Given that language is based on concepts, we struggle to express it. Still, some of the difficulty also stems from having to interpret Adorno’s texts and statements on this issue, which are far from easy and often give the impression of presenting a contradictory or otherwise problematic picture. The way to unlock some of these difficulties is to consider the following puzzle. If all thinking uses concepts, which are general rules, under which particulars are meant to be subsumed, then it is an open philosophical question how genuine experience of these particulars is possible. After all, the particular objects we encounter in experience are not concepts or mental entities (or at least we tend to presume that they are not) and how can something completely different in character – thought – have access to them? Call this the ‘Problem of Missing Affinity’. This problem is probably as old as philosophy and Adorno is very well aware of this and the traditional philosophical answers to it. His thesis is that these traditional answers all tend towards idealism – even where they are avowedly materialist – in the following sense: they all work on the basis of the assumption that we can capture the world in the conceptual framework we bring to it (or, at least, the best version of it, once we have worked that out). Putting it in terms of Hegel’s philosophy, traditional philosophy thinks that the world is rational, as long as we look at it in a sufficiently rational way.49 The danger in this assumption is, however, that instead of cognising the world, we cognise only what we bring to it – instead of knowledge of something other than thought and its categories, we might be settled with a big tautology. Empirical cognition would be like recognising that bachelors are unmarried men. In this sense, Kant’s talk of the inaccessible thing in itself at least acknowledged the problem, while Hegel’s absolute idealism extinguished all traces of it.50 Thus, the mistake of identity thinking is not that it involves identification and concepts – all thinking does this inevitably – but the mistake is that it rests on the assumption, whether explicitly or not, that the world is fundamentally accessible in full to thought.51 This assumption is problematic because it loses from view that there might be something in the object (or even the object as a whole) which is incompatible with, or inaccessible by conceptual thought. It does not sufficiently attend to the fact that identifying always involves disregarding what is non-identical and incommensurable in the particular object of our cognition. It thereby violates a commitment inherent in its conception of concepts itself: concepts are directed towards capturing what they are not; in Adorno’s terminology: concepts, incarnation of identity, aim at the nonconceptual, the non-identical.52

#### The resolution the aff defends asks us to use the state for the working class’s strikes movement but working within the state is epistemically flawed – the IDEA OF STATE POWER co-ops any movement

Zadnikar 09 Quoting Holloway Darij Zadnikar (Assistant Professor for Philosophy of Education at University of Ljubljana). “Adorno and Post-Vanguardism,” Chapter Five in: *Negativity and Revolution: Adorno and Political Activism*. Edited by John Holloway, Fernando Matamoros and Sergio Tischler. Instituto de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. Pgs. 79-94 2009. Print. SJMS Extended quote from Holloway marked by brackets.

Although the Marxist revolutionary movements understood the state in the context of broader social transition, the reality was a total fetishisation of state power. They understood their “historic” task in terms of taking state power (by elections or revolution, social democrats and communists alike) as an instrument for social change. So they had to build militaristic and bureaucratic parties. [QUOTE] The induction into the conquest of power inevitably becomes an induction into power itself. The initiates learn the language, logic and calculations of power; they learn to wield the categories of a social science, which has been entirely shaped by its obsession with power. … Manipulation and manoeuvring for power become a way of life. (Holloway 2002: 15–16) [END QUOTE] The result was a profound impoverishment of emancipatory goals and methods and their subordination to state-oriented ends. The disciplinary society was built on the model of the factory. The hierarchical organisation of political life has been conceived as the proper rational basis of society itself, as though society were just an extended factory. Politics became engineering and bureaucratic administration. With such a mentality the members of old-fashioned trade unions and parties cannot adapt themselves to the dynamic and chaotic ways of contemporary social movements. They miss the meetings with appointed delegates, agendas, minutes, speakers, etc. They want order and clear instructions. All the plurality of resistant multitudes and their ways of expressing rebellion is seen as a childish charade. They are solemn. They act like church dignitaries. They know. They are respectable and this shows in their ties and clothes. They do not have dreadlocks, piercings or tattoos.

#### Stipulating what the world would look like under a “just government” is an act of positive utopianism

Geuss 5 (Raymond Geuss, Emeritus Professor in the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Cambridge, is a political philosopher and scholar of 19th and 20th century European philosophy.) “Art and Criticism in Adorno’s Aesthetics,” Chapter 10 in Outside Ethics, Princeton University Press. Princeton, New Jersey. 2005. Print. https://books.google.com/books?id=u-a3TUddXYsC&pg=PA172&lpg=PA172&dq=%22A+further+reason+that+specifically+modern+art%22&source=bl&ots=32CgovDHbf&sig=ACfU3U2JpVMfTJqY-6\_SDz6rWy5vD\_M4GA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiMzemn7O\_zAhWomWoFHRJYCjkQ6AF6BAgDEAM#v=onepage&q=%22A%20further%20reason%20that%20specifically%20modern%20art%22&f=false SJMS

A further reason that specifically modern art can present only a negative rather than a positive utopian vision (in the second sense) is that there has been a historical shift in the function of utopias: to the extent to which they do still exist at all, they have become dangerous in a way they were not before. Traditional art contained positive and contentful utopian elements, such as the vision of freedom, justice, and solidarity at the end of Fidelio or of community at the end of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. Now, in the early twenty-first century, such positive utopian elements must be treated with the most extreme caution, because we have the technological powers to try to realize them fully all at one go. In fact they should be avoided altogether because of our experience that attempts at the full implementation of them in the twentieth century have been a series of nightmares: the Nazi ideal of a perfectly homogenous ethnic community or the Soviet ideal of a classless society. In our historical period, then, it is appropriate for us to return to and strictly enforce the biblical prohibition of “graven images,” that is, not to elaborate in detail any positive image of a utopian society.20

#### 2 Impacts:

#### [1] Identity thinking reproduces Auschwitz

Freyenhagen 2 Fabian Freyenhagen [University of Essex], 2013, “ADORNO’S PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY Living Less Wrongly” Cambridge University Press, ISBN: 978-1-107-03654-3, <https://www.cambridge.org/us/academic/subjects/philosophy/twentieth-century-philosophy/adornos-practical-philosophy-living-less-wrongly?format=HB&isbn=9781107036543> SJMS Bracketed for gendered language.

However, for Adorno, Auschwitz was not a unique set of events, standing out from history and unlike anything which came before or after. In many ways, almost the opposite is the case for him: Auschwitz is an exemplification of the general tendencies of the age.3 In particular, it is an extreme example of two (interrelated) central tendencies of modern social reality: (a) the elimination of all individuality to the point of indifference towards individual life (which includes the objectification and depersonalisation of human beings); and (b) the inversion of means and ends (which includes the subordination of human beings to their own creations). The victims of Auschwitz were not just murdered but the perpetrators also attempted to erase any sense of being a unique, irreplaceable individual in them. In Primo Levi’s words, the aim was ‘to annihilate us first as men in order to kill us more slowly afterwards’. 4 The actions of the perpetrators thereby mirrored something fundamental in the workings of modern society and rationality (according to Adorno): the elimination of particularity, such that everything and everyone becomes fungible – just another instance of a general category; one which can easily be expended or discarded, since others could take its place. Those actions foreshadowed a tendency, according to which differences matter, if at all, as inefficiencies or stopgaps to be eliminated. Auschwitz expresses also the inversion of means and ends typical of modern society (and thought forms), albeit in an extreme form: the modern means of industrialisation, transport, and bureaucratic administration (as well as technical-instrumental rationality) are not just decoupled from human ends, but actually turned against the most basic of such ends, survival. Notably, capitalism has replaced human ends and needs with its own telos – production for production’s sake or (what comes to the same thing for Adorno) the maximisation of profit – and satisfies these ends and needs, if at all, incidentally and even then in a distorted and incomplete manner. In this way, the events for which the name ‘Auschwitz’ stands were not something which went against the trend of civilisation. Rather, these events were intimately connected to some of the main tendencies of the path which civilisation has taken and to the structure of modern society and thinking in particular. The lesson of Auschwitz – at least, according to Adorno – is not that culture was replaced by a momentary fallback into a barbaric state; the lesson is that culture itself failed.5 If Auschwitz was possible in a country with an advanced economy and high culture (‘a land of poets and thinkers’, as Germany is known); if it happened despite the fact that moral theories reached into the minds of perpetrators (in the way Eichmann claimed that he had lived his whole life according to Kant’s categorical imperative of which he seemed to have a decent grasp);6 if it was carried out not so much by monsters, but ordinary men (and women) [people];7 if they thought of themselves not as acting against morality and civilisation, but as men of integrity who have taken on a heavy burden to protect them, remaining in their own eyes, with few exceptions, decent and respectful of human life (as Himmler described the work of the SS in his October 1943 speeches at Posen); and if it was not the act of a small group of people, but if a whole society contributed, in one way or another, to it;8 then it seems not altogether far-fetched to come to Adorno’s pessimistic conclusion that Auschwitz was not an accident, but an indication of a deep-seated problem of modern society, civilisation, and culture. If this view is defensible,9 then it suggests also another conclusion: as long as our modern culture – its thought forms and the social world underpinning it – continues unchanged, the reoccurrence of events such as Auschwitz remains a real possibility.

#### [2] Enlightenment is not merely a period in 18th century Europe – because of fear of the unknown, through identity thinking, enlightenment is a process of radicalizing mythical fear in the name of demythologiziation. This all-consuming fear of the unknown maintains global systems of exploitation and oppression.

Zuidervaart 15 Zuidervaart, Lambert (Lambert Zuidervaart is Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto. He is the author of Adorno's Aesthetic Theory (MIT Press), Artistic Truth, Social Philosophy after Adorno, Religion, Truth, and Social Transformation, and other books.), "Theodor W. Adorno", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2015/entries/adorno/>. SJMS Ellipses in original.

According to Horkheimer and Adorno, the source of today's disaster is a pattern of ~~blind~~ domination, domination in a triple sense: the domination of nature by human beings, the domination of nature within human beings, and, in both of these forms of domination, the domination of some human beings by others. What motivates such triple domination is an irrational fear of the unknown: “Humans believe themselves free of fear when there is no longer anything unknown. This has determined the path of demythologization … Enlightenment is mythical fear radicalized” (DE 11). In an unfree society whose culture pursues so-called progress no matter what the cost, that which is “other,” whether human or nonhuman, gets shoved aside, exploited, or destroyed. The means of destruction may be more sophisticated in the modern West, and the exploitation may be less direct than outright slavery, but ~~blind~~, fear-driven domination continues, with ever greater global consequences. The all-consuming engine driving this process is an ever-expanding capitalist economy, fed by scientific research and the latest technologies. Contrary to some interpretations, Horkheimer and Adorno do not reject the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. Nor do they provide a negative “metanarrative” of universal historical decline. Rather, through a highly unusual combination of philosophical argument, sociological reflection, and literary and cultural commentary, they construct a “double perspective” on the modern West as a historical formation (Jarvis 1998, 23). They summarize this double perspective in two interlinked theses: “Myth is already enlightenment, and enlightenment reverts to mythology” (DE xviii). The first thesis allows them to suggest that, despite being declared mythical and outmoded by the forces of secularization, older rituals, religions, and philosophies may have contributed to the process of enlightenment and may still have something worthwhile to contribute. The second thesis allows them to expose ideological and destructive tendencies within modern forces of secularization, but without denying either that these forces are progressive and enlightening or that the older conceptions they displace were themselves ideological and destructive.

#### The Alternative is to use negative dialects to confront the non-identical - this resolves the crisis posed by your violence – it understands the subordinate needs of an object come before our concepts.

Freyenhagen 3 Fabian Freyenhagen [University of Essex], 2013, “ADORNO’S PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY Living Less Wrongly” Cambridge University Press, ISBN: 978-1-107-03654-3, <https://www.cambridge.org/us/academic/subjects/philosophy/twentieth-century-philosophy/adornos-practical-philosophy-living-less-wrongly?format=HB&isbn=9781107036543> SJMS

In fact, on Adorno’s view it is only through the external intervention of the subject that objects can fully unfold their potential. Whatever is contained in the objects themselves requires human subjectivity to be voiced.75 This cannot merely consist in copying the object or perceiving it. Objects require interpretation and this, in turn, requires the subject to move beyond them – not to the fixed categorisation of identity thinking, but to the more fluid forms of (the already mentioned) constellations or force fields of concepts.76 In this way, the subject can help to unlock the historical, dynamic, and relational character of the objects they cognise.77 Still, there are no guarantees here: interpretations can miss their object or fail to be illuminating; only the successful ones realise the difficult balancing act of achieving ‘bindingness [Verbindlichkeit] without system’. 78 Along with the rigid nature of identity thinking, certainty has to be given up too, and fallabilism takes its place.79 This lack of certainty is particularly acute within late modernity: within a wrong social life and against the background of the dominance of identity thinking, the objects themselves are deformed and cannot reveal their true nature.80 Instead, we have to engage in ‘negative dialectics’, that is, we have to engage in constant questioning of our thought forms and the confrontation of them with the experiences of non-identity. Such a dialectics is negative in the sense that it incorporates the denial of two assumptions: (1) the denial of the assumption that identity of our conceptual scheme with the world can be achieved; and (2) the rejection of the assumption that the conclusions of dialectics can move beyond the wrong state of the world and the wrong thought forms dominating within it.81 Negative dialectics is a reflection of this state and these thought forms, and if they were eventually overcome, then it would come to an end too.82 In that sense, it is not an eternal truth or orientation either.

#### The Role of the Ballot is to vote for the debater who best embraces Adorno’s education after Auschwitz – this means using the debate space as an educational space to instill distance of violence and atrocities

Freyenhagen 4 (Quoting Adorno) Fabian Freyenhagen [University of Essex], 2013, “ADORNO’S PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY Living Less Wrongly” Cambridge University Press, ISBN: 978-1-107-03654-3, <https://www.cambridge.org/us/academic/subjects/philosophy/twentieth-century-philosophy/adornos-practical-philosophy-living-less-wrongly?format=HB&isbn=9781107036543> SJMS Quotes from Adorno marked by bracketed inserts.

In his essay ‘Education after Auschwitz’, Adorno draws a distinction between the subjective conditions that made Auschwitz possible and could contribute to its reoccurrence, on the one hand, and the objective conditions, on the other: [Quote] Since the possibility of changing the objective – namely, societal and political – conditions is extremely limited today, attempts to work against the repetition of Auschwitz are necessarily restricted to the subjective dimension. By this I also mean essentially the psychology of people who do such things. I do not believe it would help much to appeal to eternal values, at which the very people who are prone to commit such atrocities would merely shrug their shoulders. I also do not believe that enlightenment about the positive qualities possessed by persecuted minorities would be of much use. The roots must be sought in the persecutors, not in the victims, who are murdered under the paltriest of pretences. What is necessary is what I once called the turn to the subject. One must know the mechanisms that render people capable of such deeds, must reveal the mechanisms to them, and strive, by general awareness of those mechanisms, to prevent people from becoming so again. 86 [End Quote] With changes to the objective conditions highly unlikely, Adorno here concludes that we should concentrate on understanding the (psychological) mechanisms which make people commit atrocities. In this sense, he wants education as ‘an education toward critical self-reflection’. 87 This should proceed both via encouraging reflection and criticism from early childhood onwards, and by fostering it via public awareness campaigns about the (psychological) mechanisms in question.88 Adorno also thinks that instilling a sense of distaste for, or shame about, violence into children (and, if possible, adults) would be important to prevent Auschwitz repeating itself.89 He even makes a few suggestions about the form and content a post-Auschwitz education could have, such as recommending a focus on the concrete forms of resistance against the social horrors committed under Nazism or the opposition to parts thereof (for example, the euthanasia programme) among the German population.90 On a social level, he also suggests reminding people of the catastrophic results – authoritarianism, war, suffering – which the fascist regimes had for their own populations and reminding them that fascist revivals would come at similar costs, something which might present more of a counterweight than reminders about the (even worse) suffering of others.91 What is most important is Adorno’s insistence that this subjective dimension can at best improve the chances of people refraining from participating in such atrocities and thereby reduce the number of those carrying out the murders (though not necessarily the number of the people working in the bureaucratic machine behind the atrocities who Adorno calls ‘desktop murderers’).92 Encouraging reflection from early on and public awareness campaigns will not transform the objective conditions. Still, it might influence the ease with which people might be led by these conditions to the most barbaric excesses. As Adorno puts it in his conclusion of the essay: [Quote] Even if rational enlightenment, as psychology well knows, does not straightaway eliminate the unconscious mechanisms, then it at least reinforces in the preconscious certain counter-impulses and helps prepare a climate that does not favour the uttermost extreme. If the entire culture really became permeated with the idea of the pathogenic character of the tendencies that came into their own in Auschwitz, then perhaps people would better control those tendencies.93 [End Quote] The mere knowledge of how things go wrong may not be sufficient to stop them from going wrong, but it may, so to speak, strengthen the immune system of individuals or even whole societies against the objective tendencies towards depersonalisation, means-end reversal, and disregard of individuals.

# 2

#### There is a distinction between models of normativity that distinguish between better and worse and those which distinguish between bad and less bad. The second denies the possibility of positive obligations and values, even though it allows normative evaluation.

Freyenhagen 5 Fabian Freyenhagen (Fabian Freyenhagen is a British philosopher and Professor of Philosophy at the University of Essex. He is known for his expertise on critical theory and Kantian ethics.) “No right living,” Chapter 2 in *Adorno’s Practical Philosophy: Living Less Wrongly.* Cambridge University Press. 2013. Pgs. 65-66. <https://www.cambridge.org/us/academic/subjects/philosophy/twentieth-century-philosophy/adornos-practical-philosophy-living-less-wrongly?format=HB&isbn=9781107036543>. SJMS Bracketed inserts mark quotations from Adorno.

However, and this is the fifth and final element, there are not better and worse forms of living for Adorno. In Aphorism No. 18, he comments: [QUOTE] The best mode of conduct, in the face of all this, still seems a non-committal, suspended one: to lead a private life, as far as the social order and one’s own needs will tolerate nothing else, but not to attach weight to it as to something socially substantial and individually appropriate.28 [END QUOTE] **Adorno** recommends a suspended way of living; and, thus, he **seems to be committed to the view that there continue to be evaluative differences between ways of living**. **Even if the wrong life cannot be lived rightly, it can be lived more or less wrongly**. (I take this up in more detail in Chapters 5–6.) In summary, **Adorno’s thesis** ‘Es gibt kein richtiges Leben im falschen’ **is a claim about the problematic state of private life**. It expresses the view that within this sphere we are faced with practical antinomies which are irresolvable in the **current social order**. It also expresses the view that however we justify our personal behaviour we will get caught in ideologies. Moreover, the No Right Living Thesis contains the further claims that (a) we continuously reproduce the badness of the world around us, and (b) that one cannot really speak of ‘living’ in respect to our lives (because they are so impoverished as forms of existence and because we are not capable of autonomously directing them). In this way, **neither the good, nor the right life, nor any genuine living is possible within our social world**. Yet, Adorno’s thesis that there is no right living leaves open the possibility that there are forms of living the wrong life which are preferable to others. It is important to note **that the No Right Living Thesis is both descriptive and evaluative in nature**.29 **It is descriptive insofar as it expresses Adorno’s analysis of the manifold ways in which (right) living has become problematic** for individuals. **It is** evaluative (or **normative**) **in a twofold sense: (a) it is morally wrong that right living is blocked, and (b) some forms of living are less bad than others**. Moreover, the descriptive and evaluative aspects are inextricably linked: it is not necessary to add a moral premise in order to read off the moral implications of what Adorno is saying. Rather, the analysis is at once descriptive and evaluative; **by describing how right living is not possible for us, Adorno condemns our current forms of living** and he prescribes striving to live less wrongly to us.30

#### Demonstrating that there aren’t positive obligations negates because the resolution [and plan text] uses the word “ought” which 3 dictionary definitions denotes as a proactive duty to do something.

<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/ought#:~:text=(used%20to%20express%20duty%20or,He%20ought%20to%20be%20punished>.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ought>

https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/ought?fbclid=IwAR2kzGxdqveJRcA\_rSwKikkYopIWhW4ZMg9QJHLFfq282qxA\_b0UlIjIUVI

#### Prefer

#### [1] Textuality

#### [a] “To negate[[1]](#footnote-1),” means “to deny the truth of,” which means any argument that renders affirming false is sufficient to negate. If an assumption the AC makes is false, the resolution is also false.

#### [b] “Resolved” means to be “Firmly determined to do something.” [[2]](#footnote-2) So the aff needs to prove a proactive obligation

#### [2] It’s not just a word game – it’s a substantive issue. Your AC claims that there is positive value in your advocacy so you must be prepared to defend the existence of positive value in a fallen world.

#### [a] That negates under truth-testing because you can’t prove the resolution true if there is no positive value.

#### [b] It negates under comparative worlds because I show your world is not desirable.

#### [c] It negates under plan focus because the plan is not “a good idea” even if it’s the least bad option.

#### [3] It turns the AC [and links into the K] because by acting as if you can live rightly in a wrong world, you only obscure the moral failings of the world.

Freyenhagen 6 Fabian Freyenhagen (Fabian Freyenhagen is a British philosopher and Professor of Philosophy at the University of Essex. He is known for his expertise on critical theory and Kantian ethics.) “No right living,” Chapter 2 in *Adorno’s Practical Philosophy: Living Less Wrongly.* Cambridge University Press. 2013. Pgs. 59-60. <https://www.cambridge.org/us/academic/subjects/philosophy/twentieth-century-philosophy/adornos-practical-philosophy-living-less-wrongly?format=HB&isbn=9781107036543>. SJMS Bracketed inserts mark quotations from Adorno.

The No Right Living Thesis encompasses at least four other elements. To see what the second element is, recall the (purported) fact that without private property we face need and dependency in the current world. Adorno accepts that this is a fact about our current social world. At the same time, he thinks that whenever this fact is actually employed in a defence of holding on to one’s possession, then it becomes ideological. By this, Adorno means to say the following. The fact that we currently need ownership rights to survive is used either, at the individual level, to justify holding on to our possessions substantially beyond the level necessary to survive (such that holding on to them would need a different justification, especially in the face of other people’s lacking the necessities of life); or, at the social level, to justify the very property system which makes it both the case (a) that those who can survive within it need ownership rights to do so and (b) that many of the people who could survive and even flourish under a different system are excluded from the goods necessary to do so. There is again a general point here: Adorno suggests that we inescapably get entangled in ideological claims when trying to get on in our social world – this is the second element of the No Right Living Thesis that I want to highlight. Roughly, to say that we are prone to being caught up in ideologies is to say that we are prone to hold a set of beliefs, attitudes, and preferences which are false or distorted in ways that benefit the established social order (and the dominant social group within it) at the expense of the satisfaction of people’s real interests. The structure of our social world is such that by defending our behaviour or social position, we have to defend what should be criticised, namely, this social world or central elements thereof (such as its property system). Even where we do not attempt to justify our way of life, we tend to fall prey to ideological distortions, so that we accept social arrangements as they are, instead of changing them as we should (this is often true even of those who are most disadvantaged by these arrangements). In fact, everything can become ideology in the wrong life – even what is the right thing to think and do, if viewed in isolation, turns into false consciousness when employed, under the pressure of social structures, for particular purposes or interests.14 Thus, either by endorsing or by unreflectively accepting distorted truths or half-truths, we entrench the social status quo that ought to be changed radically. To return again to the example from Aphorism No. 18: if we only look at what is necessary within our current property system, it turns out to be true that having private property is necessary for survival; at the same time, this claim is false, if we take a wider view, which does not just assume our current property system.15 However, according to Adorno, our social world is such that this wider view is difficult to take – this world presents itself as a self-contained, natural order and incentivises people to present half-truths as the whole truth or to suppress the truth altogether.

#### Negate:

#### [1] Practical antinomies make right living impossible – there is no right choice

Freyenhagen 7 Fabian Freyenhagen (Fabian Freyenhagen is a British philosopher and Professor of Philosophy at the University of Essex. He is known for his expertise on critical theory and Kantian ethics.) “No right living,” Chapter 2 in *Adorno’s Practical Philosophy: Living Less Wrongly.* Cambridge University Press. 2013. Pgs. 56-59. <https://www.cambridge.org/us/academic/subjects/philosophy/twentieth-century-philosophy/adornos-practical-philosophy-living-less-wrongly?format=HB&isbn=9781107036543>. SJMS Bracketed for clarity.

The first particular way in which private life is problematic is the following. As we have seen, Adorno argues in Aphorism No. 18 that we are faced with a practical paradox, or antinomy, in respect to our property and living arrangements. Presumably, this is meant to imply that private life in general is characterised by practical antinomies. That Adorno thinks that this is a general problem is confirmed in other passages in which he directly links the No Right Living Thesis to practical antinomies. Most notably, each of us faces a practical antinomy when choosing which of two fundamental ethical frameworks we should adopt as our personal moral outlook.4 On the one hand, we could adopt an ‘ethics of disposition [Gesinnungsethik]’, that is, an ethics which makes moral worth depend only on intentions. On the other hand [or], we could orientate ourselves with the help of an ‘ethics of responsibility [Verantwortungsethik]’, that is, an ethics which places the main focus on actual consequences.5 These two moral outlooks are in competition, but for Adorno the problem is that neither side is in the right against the other and that a reconciliation of the two positions is also currently unavailable.6 The details of why Adorno thinks so, need not interest us at this point (we return to this later in this chapter and in Chapter 4). What is important for our current purposes is that whichever of the two moral outlooks we adopt as our personal morality, we go wrong, according to Adorno. Indeed, he concludes his discussion by saying that ‘There is no right way of living the wrong life, for a formal ethics [of disposition] cannot underwrite it, and the ethics of responsibility ... cannot underwrite it either’. 7 This brings out well the first element of the No Right Living Thesis, the antinomical nature of private life. We are faced with conflicts which are practical antinomies in the sense that neither side can give an adequate grounding for (morally) right living. We get here the first indication why Adorno is a critic of both moral theory and practice. Moral theory cannot help us out of the practical dilemmas in our current predicament, and the fact that we face these dilemmas means that moral practice is precarious – whatever we do, we will act wrongly in one way or another. Adorno’s scepticism about moral theory and practice does not apply to all social circumstances. Firstly, he differentiates the modern social world from the closed societies of the pre-modern past. The latter were characterised by much higher levels of certainty and agreement about moral theory and practice, such that people within these societies took themselves to know what was morally required of them.8 Still, Adorno thinks that no right living was possible in these past societies either – for individuals would be truly capable of practising morality only in a free society,9 and these past societies were not free (I return to this later). The difference between past and modern times, in Adorno’s view, is rather that modern times are characterised by a higher level of complexity, a greater number of antinomical structures, and more uncertainty, which make moral theory and practice precarious in a way they used not to be. This is a contentious claim, but it is important to note that Adorno is not saying that pre-modern times were completely free of moral complexities and antinomies (any Greek tragedy would tell against such a claim). Instead, his claim is that these challenges have typically become more pervasive and intense in modern times. Secondly, and more importantly, Adorno does not exclude the possibility that morally right living might finally materialise properly (in a free society), and that as a consequence moral practice would become less precarious – no longer undermined by inner and outer repression; no longer afflicted by antinomies (to the same degree); but instead enabled by a more transparent and collectively controlled social structure. As we see throughout this study, there are numerous other practical antinomies that Adorno claims we face in our modern social world – concerning, for example, the responsibility and punishment of individuals (see Chapter 3); the fact that we are faced with moral demands, but do not seem to be able to discharge them (see Chapters 3 and 5); the choice between liberal democratic societies in the West and nominal socialist regimes in the East; and the pitfalls of compassion. By way of further illustration, I here briefly take up the latter – the practical antinomy in respect to whether or not one should be compassionate (see also Chapter 4). According to Adorno, compassion mitigates existing injustices, but does not change them. Rather, it (often) inadvertently helps to cement them. Hence, it might seem that we should not be compassionate, but rather expose the injustices for what they are and try to overcome them once and for all. However, if we are not compassionate, then there will be more suffering, at least in the short-run, and we would be guilty of the moral failure of not showing a proper regard for those affected by such suffering, many of whom could not be helped in time even if we were to succeed in changing social structures so as to eradicate poverty and its consequences in the future. Consider humanitarian aid as an example: when faced with a humanitarian disaster (say a crop failure and subsequent famine), it seems natural to extend all the aid one can muster to help people in need. However, the problem is that such intervention often has negative effects on the local economy and on food production (such as changing people’s diets and undercutting the livelihoods of local farmers), so that, for example, famines and humanitarian crisis become more frequent, requiring repeated intervention and leading to dependency.10 Similarly, the structural causes of the famine – unaccountable governments, conflict and war, global institutional arrangements, production of cash crops at the expense of staple food items due to unequal property relations and market power, and so on – are left untouched or are even reinforced. On the other hand [however], many of the people facing the humanitarian disaster need help immediately and might not survive, unless it is delivered now. So, we are torn between not helping those in dire need and preventing future disasters and occurrences of dire need. The difficulties involved in practical antinomies, such as the one regarding compassion, are not just due to a lack of imagination or planning, but to the social structures in which we find ourselves. In fact, while Adorno would admit that tragic conflicts exist in all societies, he would argue that at least some of the antinomies we face today only occur because of the social world we live in. Indeed, returning to the example of famine, it could be argued that the problem often originates from the absence of accountable political structures and that their absence in turn is connected to certain unjust features of the international order.11 Adorno might accept such analyses but argue that the absence of accountable political structures and the existence of an unjust international order are not accidental to, but engendered by and, ultimately, unavoidable in our current social world. This world has produced the technical means and know-how (in Marxist terms, the forces of production) that would allow us here and now to eradicate all hunger, but its social, political, and economic structures are such that this eradication is neither a priority, nor in fact feasible without radical transformation.12 As indicated earlier, this contrasts with both closed societies of the pre-modern past, which did not face (as many) conflicts of this sort, and a possible free society of the future, in which the practical antinomies that block right living today would not exist. Thus, the pervasive existence of practical antinomies in modern society is the first reason why life in this social world is wrong and why right living is blocked.13

#### [2] Guilt context – Everything we do sustains our evil world there is no right living

Freyenhagen 8 Fabian Freyenhagen (Fabian Freyenhagen is a British philosopher and Professor of Philosophy at the University of Essex. He is known for his expertise on critical theory and Kantian ethics.) “No right living,” Chapter 2 in *Adorno’s Practical Philosophy: Living Less Wrongly.* Cambridge University Press. 2013. Pgs. 61-62. <https://www.cambridge.org/us/academic/subjects/philosophy/twentieth-century-philosophy/adornos-practical-philosophy-living-less-wrongly?format=HB&isbn=9781107036543>. SJMS

Yet, as we saw in the previous chapter, this social world is deeply morally problematic, even radically evil – at least according to Adorno. If our social world really is radically evil, then the fact that we sustain it means that we cannot avoid being implicated in its evil and, hence, there can be no (morally) right living within it. As Adorno puts it elsewhere, ‘The individual ... participates in guilt, because, being harnessed to the social order, he or she has virtually no power over the conditions which appeal to the ethical [sittliche] ingenium: crying for their change.’ 16 Since it is almost impossible for us not to sustain what should be changed, namely, our radically evil social world, our moral credentials will always be tarnished by whatever we do, or refrain from doing. We are implicated in a ‘guilt context [Schuldzusammenhang]’. 17 This connects with the previous element. One reason why we tend to be caught up in ideologies is just this guilt context. Within it, we cannot fully justify our behaviour – being implicated by evil undermines any legitimacy to which we might lay claim in our behaviour. As a consequence, any justification we do offer will be ideological, at least in part. Indeed, this also brings out why – just as in Marx – it is non-accidental (‘necessary’) that people get entangled in false consciousness: if we live in a wrong world, in a guilt context of coldness that predominates us, then it is no surprise that right consciousness is hard to come by;18 that, if it can be attained at all, then it will be only by ‘unwavering exertion of critique’, not by default.19 The third element also connects to the antinomical nature of life in the modern world (the first element highlighted): one of the reasons practical antinomies arise is because our situations are already so prefigured that whichever option we choose, we contribute to the survival of a radically evil social system – in this way, antinomies are the expression of this predicament. For example, we cannot choose an ethics of disposition because the social system does not guarantee that good dispositions result in good consequences; we cannot choose an ethics of responsibility either, however, since this would make morality unduly dependent on the consequences in an evil world.20

#### [3] No autonomy – There’s no ability to live rightly due to society’s restrictions on autonomy

Freyenhagen 9 Fabian Freyenhagen (Fabian Freyenhagen is a British philosopher and Professor of Philosophy at the University of Essex. He is known for his expertise on critical theory and Kantian ethics.) “No right living,” Chapter 2 in *Adorno’s Practical Philosophy: Living Less Wrongly.* Cambridge University Press. 2013. Pgs. 64. <https://www.cambridge.org/us/academic/subjects/philosophy/twentieth-century-philosophy/adornos-practical-philosophy-living-less-wrongly?format=HB&isbn=9781107036543>. SJMS

On the other hand, when Adorno claims that life does not live, then what he means is that individuals are not actively leading their lives. Individuals are just surviving, or getting by, but they do not direct or determine their lives. As the ability to direct one’s life has traditionally been described as autonomy (or positive freedom), one might reformulate this point by saying that individuals lack autonomy. Adorno follows this usage when he asserts elsewhere that individuals are not autonomous or positively free.25 Individuals might think that they are autonomous – they might think that they choose their own projects, ends, and values – but they are wrong to think so.26 Society restricts our options so much that any choosing or life-planning, of which individuals are still capable, is insufficient for ascribing self-determination to them. Even in what look like choices contrary to society (when people behave, say, in an overly self-interested way), the individuals are actually just the ‘involuntary executioners’ of the law of value and thereby of capitalist society.27 In other words, Adorno turns Adam Smith on his head: instead of making possible a prosperous and moral society, capitalism’s invisible hand mechanisms enable a radically evil society that depletes natural and human resources to sustain itself.

1. "Negate." Def. 1. *Merriam Webser*. Web. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/negate>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/resolved [↑](#footnote-ref-2)