#### \*\*Trigger warning: This K will discuss non-explicit mentions of 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.

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

#### Thousands of spinoff movies, branded advertisements, CNN and Fox materially proves the cultural industry effects everyone. It alienates consumption from life erasing the real human into an active producer and passive consumer that’s not even free to consume anything which challenges the system. That replaces culture with commodity and makes everything into fungible objects of exchange.

Ahmed 08 Saladdin Said Ahmed (Department of Philosophy, Brock University, Canada <https://philpeople.org/profiles/saladdin-ahmed>), "Culture Industry, Fascism." Kritike Volume Two Number One, June 2008. <http://www.kritike.org/journal/issue_3/ahmed_june2008> SJMS

According to Adorno, the “industry” in the “culture industry” should not be taken literally. The term refers more to the standardization and techniques of distribution than to the process of production and actual creation.1 However, he seems to focus more on the manipulative character of culture industry as a system run by dominant groups. In fact, he says, “the culture industry intentionally integrates its consumers from above.”2 He rejects the idea that masses are the only source of mass culture and that is why the term “culture industry” is so crucial for him.3 This common interpretation of culture industry has been taken too far. This interpretation of the culture industry has become more like a kind of conspiracy theory that claims the masses as victims of a minority that dominates them from above through controlling the media and monopolizing all other canals of mass culture and ideology. Adorno himself is aware of this possible misunderstanding. For example, he and Horkheimer state, “the mentality of the public, which allegedly and actually favors the system of culture industry, is a part of the system not an excuse for it.”4 Culture is an embodiment of mentality in its collective form. It cannot simply be a product created by elites. Dominant groups can modify elements of popular culture, but they cannot determine its boundaries and content because the popular mentality has its own filters and internal processes. Mass media can observe the conditions of what becomes a part of popular culture and accordingly put their own agenda to work within the culture industry, but they cannot alone be held responsible for the “production” of the culture. Mass media can make a philosopher relatively popular, but they cannot make philosophy a popular field. The mass mentality is attracted to certain things and distracted by others, and the culture industry functions accordingly. In a consumer society, happiness is sought in commodities. There is always at least one more thing claiming to bring a consumer happiness, and since, of course, this is a psychological obsession, the chain of alienations and frustrations increases continually, which makes the consumer more submissive to the addictive system of consumption. Commercials have one major message for their obsessed subjects: this new item in particular is the key to your lost happiness; this item is unlike anything we have offered you before. Commercialism and commodity fetishism turn the mass individual into an apolitical individual who serves the system of advanced capitalism even in his or her “free time”. In “Culture Industry Reconsidered,” Adorno writes, “the masses are not the measure but the ideology of the culture industry, even though the culture industry itself could scarcely exist without adapting to the masses.”5 He also says, “the entire practice of the culture industry transfers the profit motive naked onto cultural forms.”6 Culture industry makes every cultural item just another commodity that subscribes to the principles of the capitalist market. The masses play a crucial role in the system of culture industry though that role is passive. Masses are the target and medium of commercialism. They sustain the system of culture industry with their passive apolitical role just as they sustain the bigger capitalist system of domination. Masses attract more masses and are used for that purpose in the capitalist society that is shaped by the dynamics of the market. Mass culture is market-based, fetishism is its driving power, and it is a major venue for commercials that persuade the mass individual to become a submissive consumer of endless commodities. Culture industry does not have a specific agenda to stupidize the mass individual; rather, it invests in the mass individual’s fetishistic attitude towards commodities.

#### Pessimistic claims that progress is impossible also reproduce totalizing histories.

LaCouter 17 Travis LaCouter (Campion Hall, University of Oxford), “Competing Accounts Of Progress: The Redemptive Purpose Of Memory In J.B. Metz And Theodor Adorno,” The Heythrop Journal, 2017. <https://www.academia.edu/35521584/Competing_Accounts_of_Progress_The_Redemptive_Purpose_of_Memory_in_Adorno_and_Metz> Brackets in original.

Against any such linearity Adorno insists on the discontinuity of history, ‘not only in that it contains disparate circumstances and facts, but also because it contains structural disparities’.20 But how Adorno navigates these disparities is telling. He does not assert a form of historical absurdism or Spenglerian declinism; in fact, he dismisses such accounts as no less deterministic than the natural histories they criticize. Such accounts actually reinforce the status quo, denying the possibility of true ‘spontaneity’ and thus of true human agency: ‘History is not an equation [and] to think of it this way is to exclude from the very outset the possibility of anything qualitatively different.’21 Preserving the possibility of anything qualitatively different is necessary for the interruption of the ‘fatally rectilinear succession of victory and defeat’ characteristic of natural history.22 But importantly, Adorno does not see the source of this newness as having anything to do with transcendence or redemption—which would repeat the teleological (and thus totalitarian) pretences of theology. Instead, every instance of genuine progress must be placed in its proper historical, cultural, temporal context and then guarded against the constant risk of abstraction and ontologization. Critical Theory’s innovation, therefore, is to emphasize the continuous discontinuity of history as it actually unfolds, seeing this discontinuity as a safeguard against mythical narrativity. The price of this approach to history is constant vigilance by critically aware subjects.

#### Any resolution of difference that is not negative in a negative world is merely ideology.

Bonnet 09 Alberto R. Bonnet. “Antagonism and Difference: Negative Dialectics and Post-Structuralism in View of the Critique of Modern Capitalism,” Chapter Four 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. 41-78 2009. Print. SJMS Bracketed for grammar.

So let us set out the arguments. Adorno and Deleuze both recognise that this reduction of difference to negation, an operation which is inherent in any dialectics, involves violence against difference. “Contradiction is nonidentity under the aspect of identity; the dialectical primacy of the principle of contradiction makes the thought of unity the measure of heterogeneity” (Adorno 1990: 5). “On what condition is difference traced or projected on to a flat space? Precisely when it has been forced into a previously established identity, when it has been placed on the slope of the identical which makes it refl ect or desire identity, and necessarily takes it where identity wants to go – namely, into the negative” (Deleuze 1995a: 51). The two begin to diverge when Adorno decisively rejects any effort to emancipate difference from negativity in the sphere of thought as long as this emancipation has not occurred in the sphere of reality, and Deleuze tries, no less forcefully, to do precisely that. The object and its concept cannot be reconciled in the sphere of thought – as Hegelian dialectics set out to do – but neither can this difference between the two be emancipated in the sphere of thought from its reduction to negativity, as the Deleuzian philosophy of difference claims. This tension aspires to harbour in thought the antagonistic character of the thought reality, the antagonism which is inherent in capitalist social relations and is constitutive of Adornian negative dialectics. “On its own, by conceptual dispositions, it [consciousness] cannot eliminate the objective contradiction and its emanations. It can comprehend it; everything else is idle protestation. … Dialectics need not fear the charge of being obsessed with the fixed idea of objective conflict in a thing already pacified; no single thing is at peace in the unpacified whole. The aporetical concepts of philosophy are marks of what is objectively, not just cogitatively, unresolved” (1990: 152–3). However, in this precise tension also lies the critical character of negative dialectics. For if this tension is constitutive of Adornian negative dialectics, as we have said, its resolution in the sphere of thought – whatever the direction of this resolution, i.e. whether it is towards the unity of a system which is identical to itself or towards a multiplicity of differences – is constitutive of the Adornian [Adorno’s] notion of ideology.

#### They'll say that they embrace negativity but their understanding of how to resolve difference is centered on the potential of relationality with the dead. That still endorses a system that treats difference as fundamentally mediated by a positive act of creation. Specifically, this ends up indirectly affirming the liberal system that created the necropolis through the imposition of Black death by affirming that position.

#### The affirmative attempts to avoid questions of epistemological foundations in favor of a pragmatic distancing from all foundations and embrace of relationality in itself. But this ends up just recreating the university's praise of critical pragmatism and the exclusion of dialectical ways of thinking as unprofessional.

Moten and Harney 4 Fred Moten, Stefano Harney (Fred Moten is an American cultural theorist, poet, and scholar whose work explores critical theory, black studies, and performance studies. Stefano Harney is Professor of Strategic Management Education at Singapore Management University.), “The University and the Undercommons: Seven Theses,” Social Text, 79 (Volume 22, Number 2), Summer 2004, pp. 101-115. <http://cq5publish.ou.edu/content/dam/Education/documents/the%20university%20and%20the%20undercommons.pdf> SJMS

The mode of professionalization that is the American university is precisely dedicated to promoting this consensual choice: an antifoundational critique of the University or a foundational critique of the university. Taken as choices, or hedged as bets, one tempered with the other, they are nonetheless always negligent. Professionalization is built on this choice. It rolls out into ethics and efficiency, responsibility and science, and numerous other choices, all built upon the theft, the conquest, the negligence of the outcast mass intellectuality of the Undercommons. It is therefore unwise to think of professionalization as a narrowing and better to think of it as a circling, a circling of war wagons around the last camp of indigenous women and children. Think about the way the American doctor or lawyer regard themselves as educated, enclosed in the circle of the state’s encyclopedia, though they may know nothing of philosophy or history. What would be outside this act of the conquest circle what kind of ghostly labored world escapes in the circling act, an act like a kind of broken phenomenology where the brackets never come back off and what is experienced as knowledge is the absolute horizon of knowledge whose name is banned by the banishment of the absolute. It is simply a horizon that does not bother to make itself possible. No wonder that whatever their origins or possibilities, it is theories of pragmatism in the United States and critical realism in Britain that command the loyalty of critical intellectuals. Never having to confront the foundation, never having to confront antifoundation out of faith in the unconfrontable foundation, critical intellectuals can float in the middle range. These loyalties banish dialectics with its inconvenient interest in pushing the material and abstract, the table and its brain, as far as it can, unprofessional behavior at its most obvious.

#### That fungibility 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.

#### 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.

#### Negative dialectics contains a non-totalizing utopian potential in its micrological method. Negative Utopianism is better than total pessimism because calling attention to the false promises of the world is a better way of rallying people to the realization of how bad it is

Tillar 1 Elizabeth K. Tillar (At the time the article was written: St. Anselm College. Currently Plymouth State University Teaching Lecturer in Philosophy), “The Influence of Social Critical Theory on Edward Schillebeeckx’s Theology of Suffering for Others,” *Heythrop Journal, 42(2)*, 2001. Pgs. 148-172. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1468-2265.00167> Bracketed inserts mark quotations, the first from Adorno the second from David Toole. SJMS Quotes by Adorno and Toole marked by bracketed inserts

As a social critique, Adorno’s negative dialectics is predicated on the notion that nothing positive can be said about the ideal form human society should take. In his view, hope for the future of humankind lies in the non-identity of the utopian concept and the realization of such a concept, which precludes affirmation of Marxism or any totalizing system as the solution to the problem of exploitation, oppression and suffering. Significantly, however, he also maintains that non-identity implicitly contains identity: [QUOTE] Living in the rebuke that the thing is not identical with the concept is the concept’s longing to become identical with the thing. This is how the sense of nonidentity contains identity. [END QUOTE] The supposition of identity is indeed the ideological element of pure thought, all the way down to formal logic; but hidden in it is also the truth moment of ideology, the pledge that there should be no contradiction, no antagonism. In the simple identifying judgment, the pragmatist, nature-controlling element already joins with a utopian element.62 Since the linguistic formulation of an imagined utopia necessarily delimits the envisioned society (because of the non-identity of subject and object), the actual identity of any conceptualized object remains forever elusive. At the same time, the ‘longing of the concept to become identical with the thing’ creates the tension that drives the process of society’s becoming. In his article on Adorno and Deleuze, David Toole makes explicit the potentiality of utopia implicit in the tension of the non-identity of subject and object: [QUOTE] Utopia can exist, then, only as the reserve of possibility harbored within things. Hence, the micrology of negative dialectics ends neither in despair nor in utopia, but rather recognizes that the latter emerges from the former as something vital to thought. This dialogue between despair and utopia, between an inconclusive reality and an inextinguishable possibility has profound implications for negative dialectics: ‘It lies in the definition of negative dialectics that it will not come to rest in itself, as if it were total. This is its form of hope.’63 [END QUOTE]

#### Identity logic and ontology claims create rhetorical barriers to productive critical debate. Dialectically unraveling it allows us to challenge power structures.

Buck-Morss 03 Susan Buck-Morss (Susan Buck-Morss is an American philosopher and intellectual historian. She is currently Professor of Political Science at the CUNY Graduate Center, and professor emeritus in the Government Department at Cornell University, where she taught from 1978 to 2012.) “A Global Counter-Culture,” Chp. 3 in Thinking Past Terror: Islamism and Critical Theory of the Left, Verso. Pgs. 63-74. 2003. Print. https://books.google.com/books?id=9o4idJ9XUiEC&pg=PA64&lpg=PA64&dq=%22It+is+not+easy+to+make+this+point,+based+as+it+is+on+a+philosophical+distinction+between+ontology%22&source=bl&ots=d5jX89R75t&sig=ACfU3U0kJZ7Kx6OrMuEU9PNkmvY-9jsdxA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiVhJrLmr32AhWYkGoFHXjVDZcQ6AF6BAgCEAM#v=onepage&q=%22It%20is%20not%20easy%20to%20make%20this%20point%2C%20based%20as%20it%20is%20on%20a%20philosophical%20distinction%20between%20ontology%22&f=false SJMS

It is not easy to make this point, based as it is on a philosophical distinction between ontology (being) and epistemology (knowing) – in a certain sense, between Heidegger and Adorno – and on a further distinction, made by dialectical logic, which involves an inversion of subject and predicate, and which Feuerbach deployed in a socially critical mode. But let me try to use concrete examples rather than philosophical jargon. We can consider two variants of political discourse, examining the logical claims on which they are based. The first is exemplified in the statement: 1. Because the US does not violate human rights, it is a civilized nation. This is an epistemological description, and it allows for judgments of truth and falsity – truth understood in the modest sense of what is factually the case. It allows for critical theorists – or just plain citizens – to make a compelling argument in protest should a violation of human rights occur, i.e., that knowledge of such a violation robs the legitimacy of the nation to its claim to be civilized. Language here is not compromised. To put the argument in syllogistic form: a) Civilized nations do not violate human rights. b) The US does not (or does) violate human rights. c) Therefore, the US is (or is not) a civilized nation. But now, look what happens with a seemingly small change in the language structure – the reversal of subject and predicate that involves a dialectical transformation of meaning, turning epistemology into ontology. Here is the second variant: 2. Because the US is a civilized nation, it does not violate human rights. The implication in this example is that whatever the US does as a nation by definition cannot be a violation of human rights – even if the same action done by an uncivilized nation would be a violation. Here the truth-claim has left the (epistemological) realm of judgement and moved to the (ontological) realm of identity. To be the United States is to be civilized (the ontological claim); therefore US actions – no matter what they are – cannot be called uncivilized. Or, another example: because I am American (the ontological claim), I am ready to die for my country – whatever it does, right or wrong (suspension of judgment, hence of any need for epistemological justification). I die as a consequence of my identity, my very being. Or yet another example: because my struggle is Jihad, a Holy struggle, however I struggle – whatever violence I employ – cannot be unholy. Another: Imperialism is clearly undemocratic, but Israel is a democracy; therefore Israeli occupation of Palestine for 35 years is not imperialist, but, rather, the defense of democracy. In the ontologically defined terrain, to criticize US state actions is to be unpatriotic; to criticize Islamist violence is to be jahili (pagan); to criticize the Israeli state is to be anti-Semitic. Now this kind of argument, which is increasingly pervasive in political rhetoric today, in fact eliminates the very possibility of critical thinking, without which democratic debate becomes impossible. Its logic is so clearly flawed (and its unprincipled justification of power is so blatant) that one would assume we could all recognize the fallacy easily and not fall into its trap.

#### 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.