#### \*\*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 aff fetishizes the suffering of the working class – it says they’re suffering so, in a linear historical view, they can revolt. This just idealizes the working class and is an example of identity thinking.

Zadnikar 09 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

This organisational closeness to clergy shows a deep connection with Judeo-Christian conceptions of society and history. For them history is an explicable drama with a cathartic dénouement. History is seen as a linear progression towards this dénouement. It is measured by the criteria of industrial advance. It is more a Protestant than a Catholic version of Christianity. It is always possible to recognise the “ethics” of work in the criteria of historic progress. Work that produces surplus value, of course. There is not much scope outside these criteria. I want to stress here that a linear notion of history reduces itself to a unique criterion of progress. Such a history consists of reduced narration. It is an impoverishment that is constructed with the exclusion of plural narratives, or at least with their hierarchisation. The end of history, its dénouement or Day of Judgement, is of course the revolution, which establishes the heavenly kingdom on earth, Communism or anarchy. The question is: how to identify this file rouge of history and not miss the historic point of revolutionary dénouement. The revolutionary clergy, the party intellectuals and bureaucracy have to decipher this historical point. Following their Christian predecessors, there are some revolutionaries who patiently wait for it and others who are hatching a plot in their kitchens of history. As the narratives of contemporary global movement, the multitudes are plural, dispersed, non-centric, chaotic, anarchic, non-hierarchic, etc., and history loses its onedimensional characteristic. It loses its emphatic explicability, it becomes the stage for various scripts rather than a single truth. It does not mean we have to subject ourselves to any kind of fancy, postmodern scepticism, but it does mean we have a broader task than the revolutionary bureaucrats would like to admit. From the standpoint of grassroots multitudes and the multiplicity of their resistances, the revolution is real, it is happening right now. So the multitudes are working out their plural and divergent tasks without waiting for the proper historic time or realising an emphatic programme. The notion of revolution and of the revolutionary working class from the industrial era followed the example of the French Revolution, when the revolutionary bourgeoisie overthrew the aristocracy, so that capitalism took the place of feudalism in the “historic line.” The party revolutionaries overlooked the fact that the world of bourgeois life had already overwhelmed feudalism. The alternative now existed at the level of everyday experience. In the case of the industrial party revolution, the working class has been idealised, though it did not build much in the way of positive alternatives at the level of everyday life. And this is precisely the point of Marxist understanding of the revolutionary proletariat: it is its total social negativity, which is realised through the commodification of labour. The proletariat is the excess of alienation, the point from which you have to step out from the realm of work. The proletariat is the point of self-destruction of capitalism, it is not an idealised actor of history. It is the end of humanity. It is the standpoint from which freedom is seen only beyond work. The nomadic and contingent characteristics of the multitudes regarding the systemic imperatives of neo-liberalism are opening up the cracks in the history, the pockets of resistance, the exodus from Empire, the revolution. It is productive and inventive through its negativity. The plurality of possible different worlds is actual, but not in the sense of a gigantic historical swap. The multitudes are inconsistent and contradictory, therefore the system wants to normalise them. We have to understand them in Georges Bataille’s term heterogeneity. They have to build the practices of transgression. The actual notion of revolution, which goes through and beyond the world of capital, is comparable with composting in organic gardening. The multitudes have to decompose the system by means of a plurality of rebellious life practices into something that is suitable and worth living. I can understand the position of some British comrades (for example, Callinicos 2003) from the viewpoint of the rich tradition of the British labour movement. But what they offer us is the nationalisation of industry, which could only strengthen the state and integrate the workers into the capitalist mode of production. Still more: such a nationalised economy can function only within nationalistic and protectionist frameworks. It is no coincidence that this so often idealised working class is the social basis for right extremism. The idealisation of the working class, so foreign to the Marxian concept of the proletariat as social negativity, is consequent on the contemplative view of history as linear progress. This view needs, intellectually and from above, to identify the social actors of history, the subjects of history. History no longer emerges from the rebellious negativity of social groups, but these have to fulfil the task of history as heroes. The problem is that either they do not see this historic task, or do not care about its long-term goals: the revolution is missing its revolutionary subject. As we know, it has been substituted by “revolutionary” parties, their bureaucracies and militants and leaders. They have to bring the subject to its senses, by fair means or foul. The clerical vision of history is the birthplace of vanguardism. This vanguardism is blind to all social movements which cannot be manipulated and which express their rebellious visions by themselves. Vanguardism is the absolute realisation of representative politics. As we have said, it is manipulative and totalitarian. The dictatorship of the proletariat is in fact the dictatorship of the party vanguard, which seized state power to fulfil the task of history. As they separate themselves from the heterogeneity of negative life (creativity) they cannot see emancipated society outside the visions of factory management. The “ruling” working class becomes that which it can only be inside the factory boundaries: executors of orders. The more this class is exploited and repressed, the more its social image is idealised. They become the superheroes of work (living in poor conditions). It is similar to the idealisation of women (virgin mother) in patriarchal societies. The multitudes are useless for vanguardists. They do not accept the supreme historic task. They do not accept the representatives. They are difficult to read. They are not serious. They are networking and swarming instead of organising themselves. They are useless and therefore invisible. This vanguardism constitutes an obstacle for a lot of parties, groups and trade unionists, irrespective of their socialist, anarchist or other origins. The objectives of their struggle are defined from nineteenth- and early twentieth-century books, so they are often missing the point of today’s fight. The anarchistic standpoint towards the state is as a rule defined by old-fashioned images of state power, which have little to do with the reality of the society of control that is emerging in post-industrial societies. The socialists are dreaming of a state with full employment. The communists are discussing the differences between Leninism, Maoism, Trotskyism and other “-isms”.

#### The revolution is impossible – means your alt fails and is just utopia fiat

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

There are also other tensions, conflicts, and antagonisms inherent in capitalism. For example, there is the competition-spurred drive to develop the forces of production. In the short term, surplus-value is increased for the individual capitalist who uses a new production technique and so can lower the prices for the item produced to capture a market.29 This prospect of extraordinary economic rent (and the connected danger of being shut out of a market) is, hence, a powerful incentive to constantly innovate in terms of technology and organisation of production. The downside of this is, however, that more and more of the produced value has to be used for capital costs, thus reducing profit in the long term. Moreover, the rapid development of the productive forces leads to a point where a different use of them, one determined by the satisfaction of individual needs, becomes possible. The potential immanent in the productive forces of society comes into conflict with the relations of production, the ownership and administrative relations, which continue to be structured by the demands of capitalism. It is on this point that Adorno’s conceptions of history and of modern capitalism differ from Marx’s conceptions (or, at least, from those which Adorno ascribes to Marx). Adorno does not think that when the forces of production come into conflict with the relations of production – i.e., when the latter become fetters on the further development of the former – capitalism will necessarily collapse and the class representing the future relations of production (the proletariat) will prevail in its class struggle.30 In fact, capitalism has proved to be remarkably resilient, despite having – speaking in terms of the development of the forces of production – outlived itself. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, capitalism has been able to distribute some of the fruits of the massive technological development it spurred on to raise the living standard of the majority of the population (albeit only in a number of economically developed areas of the world). People have, consequently, more to lose than their chains, and Marx’s prediction of an ever-increasing impoverishment, which would have necessitated a revolution at some stage, has largely failed to materialise (at least as far as the economically developed world is concerned).31 Secondly, capitalism has become much more administered than Marx anticipated, cushioning some of the system-internal shocks (for example, via Keynesian demand management). This has also contributed to its survival. Important factors for Adorno in this context are the formation of monopolies and the intervention of the state apparatus in the economy (both disrupt or mitigate some of the internal tensions of capitalism, since these are often driven or at least exacerbated by the operation of the (free) market). Thirdly, and most importantly, capitalism has been able to completely reach into the individuals who unwittingly sustain it. Via social mechanisms, like the family, state-run schools and, crucially, the ‘culture industry’ (the highly administered cultural sphere that, according to Adorno, is increasingly controlling and homogenising people’s experiences), capitalist society constitutes individuals as well as their interests, their needs, and their ability to make sense of the world. This has dramatically increased the deceptive powers of capitalism. Thus, while modern humans think they follow their interests and own choices, the very way they come to form these interests and choices is guided by society’s interest (in particular, the production and maximisation of surplus-value), but the individuals do not tend to realise this. They have internalised their domination to such an extent that they have become voluntary slaves to their own creation, i.e., modern capitalist society. The result of all this is that the capitalist system has evolved into a second nature to its members – its existence and mechanisms are seen and accepted as the way the world is, as the unchangeable backdrop of human existence. This evolution itself took place as if through a natural process (namely, blindly and over the heads of the individuals), and this is why Adorno, following Marx, speaks of it in terms of ‘natural growth [naturwüchsig]’.

#### 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.

#### Negative dialects have empirically worked – the Zapatistas prove

Zadnikar 09 (Quoting a member of the Zapatistas) 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 Quote is marked by bracketed inserts.

What I am proposing is a notion of dialectics as micro-logical dialegein. It is not just approaching things but also reconstructing and restructuring them: it is in-spiralling and out-spiralling, listening and acting. This metaphor refers to the Zapatistas’ idea of the Caracol. The Zapatistas are reconstructing and recuperating their communities on the basis of encuentrismo8 and the Caracoles are the spaces of these processes. [QUOTE] They say here that the most ancient say that other, earlier ones said that the most first of these lands held the figure of the shell in high esteem. They say that they say that they said that the conch represents entering into the heart, that is what the very first ones with knowledge said. And they say that they say they said that the conch also represents leaving the heart in order to walk the world, which is how the first ones called life. And more, they say that they say that they said that they called the collective with the shell, so that the word would go from one to the other and agreement would be reached. And they also say that they said that the conch was help so that the ear could hear even the most distant word. That is what they say that they say that they said. I don’t know. I’m walking hand in hand with you, and I’m showing you what my ears see and my eyes hear. And I see and hear a shell, the “pu’y’”, as they say in their language here. (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2003) [END QUOTE] The new social praxis has to refashion its own theory, and the theory of the movements cannot come from the universities and institutes9 (or from the party and trade union offices). Even more: such a theory needs a new activist epistemology which transcends the division between subject and object. Its objectivity has to be gained by and through the constituting of rebellious subjectivity. Is this not the sense of Marx’s 11th Thesis on Feuerbach?

#### With histories guide the exploitation of capitalism can be solved without reverting to socialism or feudalism.

Freyenhagen 4 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

Following even here in Marx’s footsteps, Adorno does not offer us a worked-out alternative to capitalism. Any such proposal would be too coloured by the current wrong state of affairs. However, Adorno does make some scattered remarks, based on the analysis of what is going wrong with capitalism. Firstly, it would be necessary to end structural domination (and, indeed, personal domination). For this, humanity would have to actually control its own fate. Given the complexity and interdependence of our lives, this would require at least some forms of collective governance. However, this in turn should not take the repressive form it took in the Soviet Union and the other nominally socialist regimes.32 Secondly, the technological and organisational developments made possible by capitalism have to be put to the service of human beings and their needs. This means, first and foremost, that no one should go hungry any more.33 Yet, it also means an end to the pursuit of ever-expanding production and a radical reduction of labour-time34 – freeing people from the pressures of work and production for production’s sake (as well as protecting nature from the all-consuming human juggernaut). Finally, exchange relationships would have to be transformed35 – away from the distorting effects of making incommensurable things commensurable, but also away from the underlying exploitation implicit in what is only at the surface level an exchange of equal things – and yet we should also not return to the old injustice of direct appropriation. Solutions to these three challenges cannot be theoretically anticipated (least of all within the wrong life of capitalism), but would have to be practically solved, guided by what history has told us about what to avoid – which includes, according to Adorno, the deeply problematic world of modern capitalism.

#### Capitalism imposes rigid binaries; dialectics is the way out not a replication of it

Holloway et al 09 John Holloway, Fernando Matamoros, Sergio Tischler. “Negativity and Revolution: Adorno and Political Activism,” Chapter One 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. 2009. Print. SJMS

The second problem is the abandonment of the idea of contradiction. The argument, as we have seen, is that the idea of contradiction operates like a straitjacket, forcing the infinite richness of life and struggle into a binary antagonism. The question, however, is whether this is the result of dialectical thought, or whether dialectics is simply reporting a process of antagonistic binarism that is actually taking place in the world. Capital is the name given to this process of antagonistic binarisation. Capital is not a thing but a social relation, a forced transformation of people’s activity into labour: an alien activity shaped by the requirements of producing profit. It is not dialectics but capital that is the name of the straitjacket that forces our multiple differences into the binary antagonism of exploited labour. The immense and multicoloured richness of useful-creative doing (useful labour, as Marx calls it) is forcefully reduced to abstract, value-producing labour: that is what capital means. Difference is reduced by capital to contradiction, to an antagonism against its own suppression. In all our variety and difference we are put in prison, the prison of capitalism. Dialectics is, then, the escape plan, the thinking-against-the-prison, thinking-against-the-wrong-world, a thinking that would no longer make sense if we were outside the prison of the wrong world – but we are not. To put aside the dialectical awareness (not creation) of contradiction is to forget that we are in a prison, that we are living in a form of social organisation that daily reduces our infinite creativity to the monotonous process of producing profit. And that is in fact what happens with this line of thought: the concept of capital and capitalism fades into the background and the struggle is seen primarily not as one against capital but as a struggle for “real democracy.” This leaves out of sight the central issue of any struggle for change: the organisation of our daily doing, the struggle of doing against labour. Our doing pushes towards difference, yearns for a world free of contradiction, but for the moment it is entrapped within contradiction, within a world of coercion enforced by money. To assert difference, then, is to make an assertion against, but the possibilities and movement of this assertion against can be understood only if we understand it as the movement of a contradiction.

#### 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 5 (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.

## Case

#### Your epistemology fails because it is dominated by the totality of society and capitalism – only mine can explain the world

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

However, the ‘emancipation’ of society from its members and their interests is not easily noticeable. Society’s dominance has become so all-encompassing that there is (almost) no aspect of life that is not touched by it and which would allow an outside perspective on it. As Adorno puts it at one point, ‘all social phenomena today are so completely mediated that even the element of mediation is blocked [verstellt] by its totalising nature’. 25 Put differently, when everything is mediated economically, then this mediation is no longer clearly visible, because (a) market forces are often not seen as social relations (and hence not seen as the social relations of domination which they are);26 and (b) there is no external standpoint any more from which the mediation could be detected. In this way, society forms an all-encompassing whole, a totality. One way to express what Adorno means to say is by drawing a parallel to Hegel’s philosophy: Hegel claimed of spirit [Geist] that it will encompass everything, and something like this has indeed become reality, but in a different way from what Hegel envisaged: it is not spirit but society that is the whole, and instead of constituting absolute truth, ‘The whole is the untrue.’ 27 It is untrue both (a) in the sense that it appears different from what it is, constitutes a ‘delusional system [Verblendungszusammenhang]’; and (b) insofar as it, despite being factually true (part of reality), lacks actuality in that it is the very opposite of what a human society essentially aspires to be (a context for the protection of genuine human interests and for the unfolding of human capacities and potential).28 Capitalism forms a totality, but it is nonetheless not free from antagonisms and contradictions. For example, there is a tension in the very drive for maximising surplus-value itself. This maximisation requires that the capitalists reduce the value given to the labourers to the smallest amount possible, but at the same time, capitalism needs to keep (a sufficient number of) the labourers alive for the system to sustain itself. Surplus-value for Marx (and Adorno) arises because the average labour-time required to reproduce human labour-power is less than the time-span it can be put to use for. This means that surplus-value can be increased only either by reducing the value given to the labourers to reproduce their labour-power (i.e., by reducing their wages) or by working them longer or harder. It is, however, in the long-term interest of capital not to overdo this, since it cannot have surplus-value, unless human labour is constantly reproduced – which is endangered by too low wages or by over-working the labourers. Thus, there is an in-built tension within capitalism between the conditions of augmenting surplus-value and the conditions for surplus-value production generally. Moreover, this tension is aggravated, since labour itself fights for a bigger share of its produce. In other words, it is aggravated by the class conflict definitive of developed capitalism, namely, the class conflict between the representatives of labour and capital.