



Theodor W. Adorno - **Essays on Music**

Selected, with Introduction, Commentary, and Notes by Richard Leppert. Translations by Susan H. Gillespie and others **Contents**

Preface and Acknowledgments

Translator's Note

Abbreviations

Introduction by Richard Leppert

1. LOCATING MUSIC: SOCIETY, MODERNITY, AND THE NEW

Commentary by Richard Leppert

Music, Language, and Composition (1956)

Why Is the New Art So Hard to Understand? (1931)

On the Contemporary Relationship of Philosophy and Music (1953)

On the Problem of Musical Analysis

The Aging of the New Music (1955)

The Dialectical Composer (1934)

2. CULTURE, TECHNOLOGY, AND LISTENING

Commentary by Richard Leppert

The Radio Symphony (1941)

The Curves of the Needle (1927/1965)

The Form of the Phonograph Record

Opera and the Long-Playing Record (1969)

On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening (1938)

Little Heresy (1965)

3. MUSIC AND MASS CULTURE

Commentary by Richard Leppert

What National Socialism Has Done to the Arts (1945)

On the Social Situation of Music (1932)

On Popular Music [With the assistance of George Simpson] (1941)

On Jazz (1936)

Farewell to Jazz (1933)

Kitsch (c. 1932)

Music in the Background (c. 1934)

4. COMPOSITION, COMPOSERS, AND WORKS

Commentary by Richard Leppert

Late Style in Beethoven (1937)

Alienated Masterpiece: *The Missa Solemnis* (1959)

Wagner's Relevance for Today (1963)

Mahler Today (1930)

Marginalia on Mahler (1936)

The Opera *Wozzeck* (1929)

Toward an Understanding of Schoenberg (1955/1967)

Difficulties (1964, 1966)

Bibliography

Introduction

Richard Leppert

Life and Works

Adorno was a genius; I say that without reservation. . . . [He] had a presence of mind, a spontaneity of thought, a power of formulation that I have never seen before or since. One was unable to grasp the emerging process of Adorno's thoughts; they emerged, as it were, finished. That was his virtuosity. . . . When you were with Adorno you were in the movement of his thought. Adorno was not trivial; it was denied him, in a clearly painful way, ever to be trivial. But at the same time, he lacked the pretensions and the affectations of the stilted and "auratic" avant-garde that one saw in George's disciples. . . . By all notable standards, Adorno remained anti-elitist. Incidentally, he was a genius also in that he preserved certain child-like traits, both the character of a prodigy and the dependence of one "not-yet-grownup." He was characteristically helpless before institutions or legal procedures.

Jürgen Habermas, "A Generation Apart from Adorno"

Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno was born in Frankfurt am Main on 11 September 1903.¹ He died from a heart attack just short of his sixty-sixth birthday on 6 August 1969 while on vacation in Switzerland.

Adorno's father, Oskar Wiesengrund (1870-1946), was a wine merchant and an assimilated Jew who converted to Protestantism at about the time of his son's birth. The family was well off. Adorno was an only child whose youth was as sheltered as it was happy. As Martin Jay put it, "His childhood provided him a model of happiness whose memory served as a standard against which he would measure all subsequent disappointments."² His mother, Maria Calvelli-Adorno della Piana (1864-1952), was Catholic, and it was her family name that Adorno exchanged for Wiesengrund in 1938.³ Also living in the household throughout Adorno's childhood was his mother's unmarried sister, Agathe Calvelli-Adorno (1868-1935). Adorno referred to both as Mother. Maria had been a very successful professional singer, her career ending with her marriage; Agathe had been a successful professional pianist; she had accompanied singer Adelina Patti in numerous recitals.

Adorno's intellectual training was rigorous and came early. By age fifteen, he began a long period of study—occupying Saturday afternoons—of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* mentored by family friend Siegfried Kracauer (1889-1966), who at the time was editor of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. By Adorno's own account, the Kant study sessions went on "for years." By 1923 Kracauer and Adorno were studying Goethe's *Elective Affinities* and, thereafter, the first draft of Walter Benjamin's essay on this work.⁴ Hauke Brunkhorst states the impact of the Kant studies as "the key work in Adorno's intellectual development. The idea of a negative dialectic, which is Adorno's most unique philosophical contribution, owes much to it."⁵ Adorno himself acknowledged as much: "I am not exaggerating in the slightest when I say that I owe more to this reading [of Kant] than to my academic teachers."⁶

Leo Lowenthal (1900-1993), later the distinguished sociologist of literature, whom Adorno met in 1921, also studied with Kracauer. In a letter to Lowenthal of 4 December 1921, Kracauer mused about their mutual friend: "Something incomparable puts him in a position over both of us, an admirable material existence [referring to Adorno's family's wealth] and a wonderfully self-confident character. He is truly a beautiful specimen of a human being; even if I am not without some skepticism concerning his future, I am surely delighted by him in the present." Lowenthal, late in life, described Adorno at eighteen in more personal terms as "a delicate, slender young man. Indeed, he was the classical image of a poet, with a delicate way of moving and talking that one scarcely finds nowadays. We would meet either at a coffee house—mostly at the famous Café Westend at the opera, where intellectual *enfants terribles* met—or at one or at the other of our parents' places. Naturally, I knew Adorno's parents well, also his aunt Agathe. It was an existence you just had to love—if you were not dying of jealousy of this protected beautiful life—and in it Adorno had gained the confidence that never left him his entire life."⁷

With Kracauer's guidance Adorno notes that he experienced Kant "from the beginning not as mere epistemology, not as an analysis of the conditions of scientifically valid judgments, but as a kind of coded text from which the historical situation of spirit could be read, with the vague expectation that in doing so one could acquire something of truth itself." No less important, Adorno noted that "What pressed for philosophical expression in [Kracauer] was an almost boundless capacity for suffering: expression and suffering are intimately related. Kracauer's relationship to truth was that suffering entered into the idea—which usually dissipates it—in undistorted, unmitigated form; suffering could be rediscovered in ideas from the past as well."⁸ The question of suffering, and the responsibility of both philosophy and art to address it, remained with Adorno his entire career.

In 1921, at age seventeen, Adorno entered Frankfurt's Johann Wolfgang Goethe University where he studied philosophy, sociology, psychology, and music. He completed a doctorate in philosophy just three years later at age twenty-one. During these years he met and formed friendships with two men of particular importance to his later professional and intellectual life, respectively: in 1922 Max Horkheimer (1895-1973), eight years Adorno's senior; and in 1923 Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), eleven years older. By the late 1920s Adorno was also acquainted with a number of other heterodox Marxists, including Ernst Bloch, Bertolt Brecht, Herbert Marcuse, and Kurt Weill.

As an adolescent, Adorno's musical training included piano lessons from Bernhard Sekles, also the teacher of Hindemith. As a young man he seriously entertained the possibility of a career as a composer and concert pianist. He acted on this ambition in January 1925 with a move to Vienna, after having been deeply affected by excerpts from Berg's *Wozzeck*, prior to the opera's world premiere, played at a concert in Frankfurt, where he also met Berg. Berg accepted him as a composition student and gave him lessons twice weekly.⁹ Adorno also took additional piano training from Eduard Steuermann, a champion of twentieth-century piano works, who like Berg was part of the Schoenberg circle.

Adorno did not find Vienna to his liking. Moreover, the Schoenberg "circle," which he hoped to join, turned out to be not much of one. Schoenberg himself was remote personally and inaccessible physically, having moved outside the city to Mödling following his second marriage; and in 1926 Schoenberg moved to Berlin. Not least, Schoenberg and Adorno did not hit it off, despite Adorno's admiration for the composer's music. Adorno returned to Frankfurt in the summer of 1925, though he traveled back to Vienna on and off until 1927, maintaining his contacts and publishing music criticism, notably in the music journals *Pult und Taktstock* and *Anbruch*; for the latter he acquired an editorial position with Berg's help in 1929 which he retained until 1932.¹⁰ Both journals championed new music. Adorno's career in music journalism in fact predated his Vienna experience—and vastly exceeded his publication in philosophy, the first philosophical essay appearing only in 1933. Between 1921, while still a teenager, and 1931 he published dozens of opera and concert reviews, reviews of published new music, as well as essays on aesthetics, and heavily favoring new music.¹¹ Thus in 1922, at nineteen, he praised in print Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire* (1912) in the *Neue Blätter*

für Kunst und Literatur. During the late 1920s and early 1930s he and Ernst Krenek carried on in-print debates about free tonality and serialism, and problems of musical form and genre; he also collaborated with violinist Rudolf Kolisch on developing a theory of musical performance.¹²

Returning to Frankfurt at twenty-four, Adorno began his association with the Institute of Social Research, founded in 1923, with which Horkheimer was already connected—only after the Second World War was the Institute's work referred to as the "Frankfurt School." Adorno's first publication for the Institute came in 1932, with the essay "On the Social Situation in Music," included in this volume; it appeared in the first issue of the Institute's journal, *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*. Adorno formally joined the Institute only in 1938, during its American exile.

The right to teach in German universities depends on the *Habilitationsschrift*, a kind of second dissertation. Adorno's first attempt ("The Concept of the Unconscious in the Transcendental Theory of Mind") in 1927 was rejected by his advisor, philosopher Hans Cornelius. His second effort, successful, concerned Kierkegaard ("Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic") and constituted one of the early critiques of Existentialism. Paul Tillich, the theologian, was Adorno's official advisor to this project, since Cornelius had left the university, emigrating to Finland. Adorno's Kierkegaard study was published in 1933, on the very day that Hitler assumed office.

The Marxist orientation of the Institute of Social Research was well known and in no sense disguised; moreover, its members were almost exclusively Jewish. On 30 January 1933, the day of Hitler's ascendancy, the house shared by Horkheimer and Friedrich Pollock in a Frankfurt suburb was seized by Hitler's SS.¹³ The Institute itself was searched and closed by the police on 13 March. In July the Gestapo office in Berlin sent notice of the confiscation of "Communist property," charging that the Institute "has encouraged activities hostile to the state."¹⁴ Most of its sixty-thousand-volume library was confiscated. (The Institute's substantial private endowment had been transferred to Holland two years earlier and was later moved again to the United States, thereby protecting it from seizure.) In September, on his thirtieth birthday, Adorno's right to teach, the *venia legendi*, was revoked by the Nazi government, and he moved, briefly, to Berlin.¹⁵ (To that point in his career Adorno had principally supported himself, however poorly, by journalistic music criticism, rather than teaching.)¹⁶

Horkheimer, who had assumed the directorship in 1931, and his colleagues initially moved the Institute to Geneva, where a branch office had been established the same year as Horkheimer became director—until the start of the war there were also branch offices in Paris and London. In May 1934 Horkheimer traveled to New York and secured an affiliation for the Institute with Columbia University. Soon thereafter, Horkheimer was joined by Leo Lowenthal, Herbert Marcuse, and Friedrich Pollock.

In 1934 Adorno left Germany for England, dividing his time between London and Oxford where he studied at Merton College. (His entry to Merton was supported by references from philosopher Ernst Cassirer and musicologist Edward Dent; Adorno had written to Alban Berg for the favor of intervening with Dent, whom Adorno had met through the International Society for New Music.)¹⁷ Thereafter, Adorno made numerous trips back to Germany, some quite extended, in particular to see Gretel Karplus (1902-1993) in Berlin, whom he married in 1937. It was possible for Adorno to return to Germany more or less freely for two reasons. First, he was not politically active, nor was he a member of the Institute; second, he was, as Rolf Wiggershaus puts it, "'only' a 'half-Jew'"¹⁸; the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 treated *Mischlinge* like Adorno more leniently than "full" Jews.¹⁹ Leo Lowenthal accounts for Adorno's reluctance to leave Germany as typical of the assimilated German-Jewish middle class, the upper middle class especially. "Adorno had such an incredibly hard time finally leaving Germany (we had to drag him almost physically); he just couldn't believe that to him, son of Oskar Wiesengrund, nephew of aunt Agathe, and son of Maria, anything might ever happen [i.e., so secure and happy was his childhood], for it was absolutely clear that the bourgeoisie would soon become fed up with Hitler. This kind of naïve unfamiliarity with the real world—particularly that of Germany and the at-first complicated and then not-so-complicated relations of Christians and Jews—must be borne in mind if one is to fully understand Adorno's personal history."²⁰

In June 1937 Adorno briefly visited the United States for the first time, at the urging of Horkheimer. Adorno and Gretel emigrated in February 1938, thanks to a part-time position established for him by Horkheimer in the music division of the Princeton University Radio Research Project.²¹ Adorno remained in New York until November 1941, when he moved to Los Angeles, following Horkheimer who had gone West for health and climate reasons several months earlier.²² Adorno's nearly eight-year California exile was intellectually highly productive. Indeed, in a 1957 letter to Lowenthal he confided that "I believe 90 percent of all that I've published in Germany was written in America."²³

Major works written during this period include *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944) written with Horkheimer at the beginning of his stay, and, at the end, *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), a multi-person collaboration with Adorno the senior author.²⁴ *The Authoritarian Personality*, by far the largest monograph Adorno wrote in English, was part of a series of projects that fell under the heading *Studies in Prejudice*, sponsored by the American Jewish Committee, which had hired Horkheimer to direct its Department of Scientific Research. Between these two major collaborative projects came *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life* completed by 1946 but published only in 1951. Dedicated to Horkheimer, it is Adorno's most personal book, an often deeply moving analysis of late modernity viewed through the condition of exile. At about the same time, he collaborated with Hanns Eisler on *Composing for the Films* (1947), the first monograph on film music. *Philosophy of Modern Music* (Adorno's German title is more accurately rendered "New Music"), a highly influential—and controversial—account of music by Schoenberg and Stravinsky, appeared in 1949, though part of it was written several years earlier. *In Search of Wagner*, parts of which he had published in essay form in 1939, appeared in 1952.

During the war years, Adorno came into close contact with fellow émigré Thomas Mann, then writing his great novel *Doctor Faustus: The Life of the German Composer Adrian Leverkühn as Told by a Friend*, a sustained critique of Nazism using the fictional composer's biography and work as a metaphor for Germany's cultural decline. In 1943 Mann read both Adorno's Wagner manuscript, and the Schoenberg essay that constitutes the first part of *Philosophy of Modern Music*. Mann, much impressed, informally secured Adorno's services as de facto principal musical advisor to the novel, which among other things, involved Adorno's coaching Mann on Schoenberg's twelve-tone technique,²⁵ for which he received Mann's public expression of gratitude in his monograph account of the writing of the novel, *The Story of a Novel: The Genesis of Doctor Faustus*.²⁶ Mann's reaction to reading Adorno's Schoenberg essay: "Here indeed was something important. The manuscript dealt with modern music both on an artistic and on a sociological plane. The spirit of it was remarkably forward-looking, subtle and deep, and the whole thing had the strangest affinity to the idea of my book, to the 'composition' in which I lived and moved and had my being. The decision was made of itself: this was my man. . . . His knowledge of tradition, his mastery of the whole historical body of music, is enormous. An American singer who works with him said to me: 'It is incredible. [Adorno] knows every note in the world.'"²⁷

During the late 1940s Horkheimer, Pollock, and Adorno gradually reached a decision to return to Frankfurt and reestablish the Institute. Horkheimer made a brief exploratory visit in April 1948, and for a longer time during the spring and summer of 1949. In 1950 Horkheimer, together with Pollock, resettled there, though he made a number of return visits to the United States in subsequent years. The Institute's new home, located near the ruins of its prewar structure, officially reopened in 1951. Adorno's first return to Germany since his departure in 1938 came in November 1949; he was now forty-six. The Germany, and the university, to which Horkheimer, Pollock, and Adorno returned was profoundly different from what they had experienced before the war, as Wiggershaus summarizes:

They saw themselves as Jews, as left-wing intellectuals and as critical sociologists in an environment which had been more or less completely purged of people like themselves, and in which all the signs had long since been pointing clearly to the restoration of the old order. The unique symbiosis represented by German-Jewish culture [whose liberal traditions had been a marked feature of Frankfurt University prior to Nazism] had been irreversibly destroyed. Apart from Horkheimer and Adorno, none of the distinguished lecturers or professors from the heyday of Frankfurt University—the last years of the Weimar Republic—returned. Horkheimer, Adorno and Pollock could count on being met with patience and good intentions precisely because they were, and remained, the exceptions.²⁸

Indeed, there was resentment toward the returned Jewish émigrés. In 1953 Adorno was given a tenured faculty position, but as a special case—the precise title was "Extraordinary Chair of Philosophy and Sociology"—as a form of compensation and restitution. But Adorno's position, even in official university language, came to be called the "Compensation Chair," the very name of which in German

(*Wiedergutmachungslehrstuhl*) is rendered absurd by the extraordinary length of the coinage.²⁹ Indeed, Adorno was never granted a regular appointment, despite his qualifications—or, for that matter, fame. He was finally granted a full professorship in 1957.³⁰

Between October 1952 and August 1953, Adorno was (unhappily) back in Los Angeles—after which he never again returned to the United States, although at the time of his death he was preparing to deliver a series of lectures at Princeton. Horkheimer had signed a research contract with the Hacker Foundation, the brainchild of Friedrich Hacker, a Viennese-born psychiatrist who had opened a clinic in Beverly Hills. The matter was mutually beneficial. Hacker "hoped to gain an academic reputation and advertising for his clinic through collaboration with the leading members of the Institute of Social Research",³¹ and the Institute's principal figures needed the funding that Hacker was able to provide. Adorno was sent to fulfill the contract; he also needed to return to the United States, else lose his American citizenship which was in fact subsequently surrendered. Under sponsorship from the Hacker Foundation, Adorno produced two studies on popular culture, "The Stars Down to Earth," a monograph-length essay on popular astrology, and the much shorter foray into television, "How to Look at Television."

In his essay "On the Question: 'What Is German?'" originally a radio lecture delivered in 1965, Adorno moved from a broad critique of national identity and its collectivizing tendencies to a much more personal account, in the second half, of his decision after the war to return to Germany. He acknowledges that "At no moment during my emigration did I relinquish the hope of coming back. . . . I simply wanted to go back to the place where I spent my childhood, where what is specifically mine was imparted to the very core. Perhaps I sensed that whatever one accomplishes in life is little other than the attempt to regain childhood."³² But of course the reasons were more complicated. Adorno played up the ordinary European disdain for American commercialism "because it has produced nothing but refrigerators and automobiles while Germany produced the culture of the spirit." But this polemical remark was actually one he intended to undercut. The issue was not America or its commercialism. Indeed, in America, he pointed out, "there also flourishes sympathy, compassion, and commiseration with the lot of the weaker. The energetic will to establish a free society—rather than only apprehensively thinking of freedom and, even in thought, degrading it into voluntary submission [i.e., as he sees European experience]—does not forfeit its goodness because the societal system imposes limits to its realization. In Germany, arrogance toward America is inappropriate. By misusing a higher good, it serves only the mustiest of instincts."³³

Adorno made abundantly clear that his American experience was fundamentally, if not surprisingly, shaped by his life before exile, just as his life's work after his return to Germany was reshaped by his years in America.³⁴ High among his reasons for returning to Germany was the desire to be immersed in his native language, not least due to frustrations with American academic publishing. He relates a particularly telling experience involving an American editor, "incidentally a European emigrant," who wanted to publish a portion of *Philosophy of Modern Music* in English translation, a draft of which Adorno prepared for him to consider. The result was rejection on grounds that it was "badly organized." And also he relates a tale about an essay, "Psychoanalysis Revised," that was virtually rewritten by copy editors of an American professional journal in an effort to achieve stylistic uniformity in the issue ("The entire text had been disfigured beyond recognition").³⁵

From 1955 until his death in 1969, Adorno's publication proceeded at an astounding pace. Taken as a whole, the sheer quantity of his oeuvre is staggering. The German Collected Edition (twenty volumes, printed in twenty-three) comprises more than ten thousand pages, of which more than four thousand concern music; put differently, if pedantically, something over three million words in all, of which a million concern music. And much more remains to be published. The *Nachlass*, slowly appearing, is estimated to equal the length of the *Gesammelte Schriften* when complete.³⁶ Besides *In Search of Wagner* and *Philosophy of Modern Music*, which concerns Schoenberg and Stravinsky, Adorno wrote monographs on Berg (1956) and Mahler (1960). He left unfinished a virtually career-long project on Beethoven—first published more than twenty years after his death and only recently translated into English—*Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*. He supervised publication of six essay collections devoted solely to music: *Dissonanzen* (1956), *Sound Figures* [1959, *Klangfiguren*], *Der getreue Korrepetitor* (1963), *Quasi una fantasia* (1963), *Moments musicaux* (1964), and *Impromptus* (1968). The collection *Prisms* appeared in 1955, containing several important music essays in addition to others on a variety of subjects. He also published a loosely structured monograph on musical sociology, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music* (1962). The range of these collections is noteworthy: composers from Bach to Boulez, but focusing on the nineteenth century, Beethoven especially, and on the twentieth century up to the 1960s; specific musical works; the institution of early music (leading the way into the "authenticity debates" of the 1980s); compositional procedure; musical form; radio music; jazz; and

kitsch; chamber music; opera; new music; popular and light music; conductors and conducting; musical nationalism; the role of the critic; recording technology; types of musical conduct; a theory of listening and listeners; and music pedagogy to touch on only some of the most important *topoi*.³⁷ Besides performance reviews and reviews of published music, he also published book reviews between 1930 and 1968.³⁸ Adorno also composed music much of his adult life, beginning before he went to Vienna in 1925 to study composition with Alban Berg and continuing through the 1930s and 1940s, during his exile in both England and the United States. In 1926 Berg confided to Schoenberg in a letter that he found "Wiesengrund's work *very good* and I believe it would also meet with your approval, should you ever hear it. In any event, in its seriousness, its brevity, and above all in the absolute purity of its entire style it is worthy of being grouped with the Schönberg school (and nowhere else!)."³⁹ Thomas Mann noted that Adorno was composing music during their association in Southern California during the 1940s.⁴⁰

Adorno's position as an advocate of avant-garde music was at once reflected and secured by his frequent participation, whether as a composition course director or discussant, in the Darmstadt International [Summer] Vacation Courses on New Music which he attended over nine summers between 1950 and 1966.⁴¹ *Philosophy of Modern Music*, published in Germany in 1949, had a significant impact on the postwar generation of avant-garde composers active at Darmstadt—one reflection of which was that Adorno's own compositions were performed with some regularity during this period, though in fact most were written before 1945. And this despite the fact that Adorno was highly critical of the canonic status that serial compositional procedures attained in the aftermath of Schoenberg and Webern, a critique which was, in fact, explicitly voiced in *Philosophy of Modern Music* and later in "The Aging of the New Music," included in this volume. Indeed, Adorno welcomed aleatoric composition, exemplified in 1957 by Karlheinz Stockhausen (*Klavierstück XI*)⁴² and Pierre Boulez (his lecture "Alea," that is, "Dice"), each breaking with his earlier serialist phase.⁴³

Following Horkheimer's retirement in 1958, Adorno assumed directorship of the Institute for Social Research (he had been Horkheimer's co-director since 1955), a post he retained until his death. Between 1958 and 1965, Adorno produced four volumes of essays on a broad array of literary topics, *Notes to Literature I-IV*. His philosophical monographs from this period include *Against Epistemology: A Metacritique* (1956), a critique of Husserl and phenomenology; and *The Jargon of Authenticity* (1964), attacking Heidegger and other proponents of Existentialism. *Negative Dialectics*, a sustained critique of canonic Western philosophy and metaphysics from Kant and Hegel to Husserl, Heidegger, and Sartre, appeared in 1966. Not quite finished at the time of his death was *Aesthetic Theory*. And there is much more that I have not mentioned, including several other essay collections, and many single essays.

Often lost sight of in American consideration of Adorno, likely due to the difficulty of his major philosophical works, is that he was in every sense a public intellectual. Thus between 1950 and 1969 he was heard on more than 160 radio programs on highly varied subjects, including music. Other topics included matters of general political interest, such as the state of German public education and the question of historical memory in the light of National Socialism. He spoke about philosophy, his experiences as an émigré in America, and even free time (leisure and "hobbies," a word he spoke in English, and which he disparaged). Often Adorno revised the radio lectures for publication, principally in popular journals, and later collected them in paperback editions. As Henry W. Pickford notes, "His engagement in the mass media was a logical consequence of his eminently practical intentions to effect change."⁴⁴

Adorno's regular lectures at his university were widely attended, some filling lecture halls seating one thousand. And of course he often lectured at other German academic institutions. In short, he was a major intellectual force in both academic and public spheres. In the words of his friend Leo Lowenthal—who chose to remain in the United States after the war and achieved a notably distinguished career at Berkeley—Adorno was "Germany's most prominent academic teacher and outstanding citizen of the Western-European avant-garde."⁴⁵

The left student movement of the late 1960s produced a dramatic change in Adorno's fortune among the very students much influenced by his philosophical and sociological writings. Adorno had refused to join the student protests in Frankfurt in 1969. Worse, on 31 January he had called in the police to end what he mistakenly thought was a student occupation of the Institute (in fact, the seventy-six students arrested had merely been looking for a place to meet). Matters came to a final head in April when three women activists of the SDS interrupted Adorno's philosophy lecture ("An Introduction to Dialectical Thinking") by surrounding him at the podium, bearing their breasts, simulating caresses, and "attacking" him with flowers. As Martin Jay described it, "Adorno, unnerved and humiliated, left the lecture hall with the students mockingly proclaiming that 'as an institution, Adorno is dead.'"⁴⁶ His physical death from a heart attack followed four months later.

Critical Theory

Whoever doesn't entertain any idle thoughts doesn't throw any wrenches into the machinery.

Theodor Adorno, "Meaning of Working through the Past"

Critical Theory—the designation comes from Adorno's friend and mentor Max Horkheimer in an essay published in 1937⁴⁷—is constituted as a loose amalgamation of philosophical principles rather than as either a neatly packaged system or a methodological recipe.⁴⁸ In what follows I lay out the defining issues and the social and cultural stakes to which these principles respond. To be sure, Frankfurt School Critical Theory evolved over time and was never regarded as a seamless entity. Nonetheless, some basic parameters are clear and well established.

Horkheimer's lengthy essay, "Traditional and Critical Theory" (1937), is a good place to start. He opens the text with a question: "What is 'theory'?" and immediately proceeds to provide the "traditional" answer, articulated as an outgrowth of scientific method employed in the natural sciences but also adopted by the social sciences—for which, as he will argue, traditional theory is sorely inadequate. "Theory for most researchers is the sum-total of propositions about a subject, the propositions being so linked with each other that a few are basic and the rest derive from these. The smaller the number of primary principles in comparison with the derivations, the more perfect the theory. The real validity of the theory depends on the derived propositions being consonant with the actual facts."⁴⁹ The inadequacy of traditional theory, Horkheimer argues, lies in its "assiduous collecting of facts"—not in the facts themselves but the invisibility and even irrelevance of the historicity of facts, and of the fact-perceiving human subject: "The facts which our senses present to us are socially preformed in two ways: through the historical character of the object perceived and through the historical character of the perceiving organ. Both are not simply natural; they are shaped by human activity, and yet the individual perceives himself as receptive and passive in the act of perception."⁵⁰

Horkheimer's intention is not to attack scientific method but to delineate its inadequacy in theorizing the social, cultural, and political realms of human experience. Stated simply, traditional theory cannot address the fact and problem of the social totality precisely because the social totality develops less from the relation of fact to fact and more from the relation of fact to value. Further, fact and value are invariably history-laden, and the "facts" of history become facts not as the result of some natural order but because they are made so, indeed even willed so, by the social orders that prevail in a given time and place, which is to suggest that a social or cultural "fact" is not necessarily either permanently or universally so regarded. Moreover, the thinking subject—who will produce or define social "facts"—is never external to the processes for which explanation is sought. The scholar-subject is not autonomous; to assume autonomy is blindly to accept as "natural" fact the ideology of the Cartesian ego itself (the mind "is not cut loose from the life of society; it does not hang suspended over it").⁵¹ In short, as Christoph Menke accounts for this issue, "The limits that Horkheimer sees imposed on traditional theory derive from the fact that it cannot grasp itself—its own functioning—as theory: it is not reflexive."⁵²

Horkheimer provides an example in the modern intellectual division of labor: "In society as it is, the power of thought has never controlled itself but has always functioned as a nonindependent moment in the work process, and the latter has its own orientation and tendency."⁵³ Thought in modernity is fundamentally instrumental. And further, thought is marked by social privilege; it bears the mark of society's lack of equality. That some individuals are intellectuals occurs in relation to the denial of the intellectual practice to others, and this social fact affects thought itself. Expressed in more global language, the happiness of some comes about via the denial of happiness to others; it is this crucial mediation of happiness that is erased unless the "fact" of happiness is examined in relation to value and history.

The Marxian insight that drives Horkheimer's concern is the demand for equal justice. But unlike Marx he does not see a rising up of the proletariat (neither did Adorno). That the poor and oppressed deserve, or for that matter might even demand, justice does not constitute its guarantee. Indeed, Horkheimer notes that the situation of social degradation and domination is "no guarantee of correct knowledge." Accordingly, he insists on the responsibility of the intellectual to "be a critical, promotive factor in the development of the masses."⁵⁴

The critical theoretician's role is to help change society by explaining it—but all the while remembering that his or her own position of relative intellectual privilege ironically exemplifies the very problem for which redress is sought.

Horkheimer acknowledges the utopian character of Critical Theory; its goal is not the perpetuation of present society but society's transformation.⁵⁵ Or, as he expressed it elsewhere, "The real social function of philosophy lies in its criticism of what is prevalent."⁵⁶ Nonetheless the extreme difficulty of effecting progressive change was recognized by Horkheimer, not least in light of Stalinism and National Socialism. Salvaging the possibility of thought itself appeared to be an enormous challenge: anti-reason seemed to drive modernity toward dystopian fulfillment. As he pointed out, "the first consequence of the theory which urges a transformation of society as a whole is only an intensification of the struggle with which the theory is connected."⁵⁷ Adorno, in *Negative Dialectics*, voiced what he saw as an increasing prohibition on thought itself: "When men are forbidden to think, their thinking sanctions what simply exists. The genuinely critical need of thought to awaken from the cultural phantasmagoria is trapped, channeled, steered into the wrong consciousness. The culture of its environment has broken thought of the habit to ask what all this may be, and to what end; it has enfeebled the question [of] what it all means—a question growing in urgency as fewer people find some such sense self-evident, as it yields more and more to cultural bustle."⁵⁸

Critical Theory, responding to the specific historical circumstances of Western modernity, constitutes a Marxian-indebted critique of exchange economy and its impact on the subject and society—though Adorno's critical-theoretical practice, by contrast with most of his Frankfurt School compatriots, involved socio-cultural rather than socio-economic critique. Here is Horkheimer's summary statement: "The critical theory of society is, in its totality, the unfolding of a single existential judgment. To put it in broad terms, the theory says that the basic form of the historically given commodity economy on which modern history rests contains in itself the internal and external tensions of the modern era; it generates these tensions over and over again in an increasingly heightened form; and after a period of progress, development of human powers, and emancipation for the individual after an enormous extension of human control over nature, it finally hinders further development and drives humanity into a new barbarism."⁵⁹ The "point" of Critical Theory develops from the presupposition of freedom, even to the extent that general freedom does not yet exist.⁶⁰ As Horkheimer states near the end of his essay, Critical Theory "has no specific influence on its side, except concern for the abolition of social injustice."⁶¹

Critical Theory stands in opposition to closed philosophical systems—Hegel's is a prime example—precisely because of the idealism that governs such systems' operation. That is, Critical Theory opposes philosophical systems designed to achieve a "logical" closure or absolute truth without necessary reference to the reality that stands outside thought itself. Thus the "totality" achieved in Hegel's dialectical overcoming of contradiction is at heart false to the extent that its philosophical logic fails to address actual social contradiction. Critical Theory by contrast draws attention to social contradiction—material existence—expressed as antagonism and suffering, not only by what it attends to and "says" but also by how it speaks: in fragments, aphorisms, short forms, in a word, anti-systematically, and by formulating a negative dialectics, in opposition to the (positive) dialectics of the Hegelian model, a topic I'll pursue later. Critical Theory seeks to conjoin philosophy with social analysis, the practice governed by a materialist, as opposed to idealist, dialectics, the ultimate concern being human happiness.⁶²

Now to Adorno. The parameters that define his thought are several, and their principal features have been mapped by Martin Jay:⁶³ Marxism of a distinctly heterodox variety; aesthetic modernism; what Jay names "mandarin cultural conservatism," in particular reference to Adorno's writing on mass culture (Jay's position here is, in my judgment, too baldly stated, as I shall discuss later); a "Jewish impulse," particularly notable after the onset of the war and the horrors of the Holocaust—the first sustained discussion by Adorno of anti-Semitism appears in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*; and, finally, what Jay names "Deconstructionism," as much as anything, I think, reflecting the moment Jay's Adorno monograph was written.⁶⁴

Finally, Adorno's thought reflects his reading of Freud,⁶⁵ and the place he defined for psychology in his social theory, notably pertinent in light of what Jay has termed "the unexpected rise of an irrationalist mass politics in fascism, which was unforeseen by orthodox Marxists."⁶⁶ In point of fact, Adorno's principal interest in psychoanalysis was its de facto delineation of social trauma. To mark social trauma constituted a step toward the healing of the individual within society, to the extent that diagnosis precedes cure. But this is not to suggest that Adorno's interest was with psychoanalytic therapy, which addressed the individual psyche and whose healing remained distinct from the social whole. The diagnosis Adorno sought was social not individual, though the specific detail of individual psychosis could in turn inform social diagnostics. As he put it in the Dedication of *Minima Moralia*, "society is essentially the substance of the individual."⁶⁷ (Adorno's

social psychology is in fact much governed by a study of the family, as a kind of middle ground between the individual and the larger society.)⁶⁸ More important for Adorno, Freudian psychoanalysis, ahistorical and based on a biological premise, nonetheless "expressed, at least metaphorically, one aspect of the nonidentity of man in an unreconciled totality."⁶⁹

During the early 1940s, while living in Southern California, Adorno and Horkheimer jointly authored a text they first named *Philosophical Fragments* in a 1944 mimeographed edition, and later *Dialectic of Enlightenment* when the text was formally published in a revised version in Amsterdam in 1947; the book first appeared in English only in 1972.⁷⁰ Douglas Kellner comments that *Dialectic of Enlightenment* "provides the first critical questioning of modernity, Marxism and the Enlightenment from within the tradition of critical social theory," thereby anticipating by several decades postmodernism's critique of modernity.⁷¹ The book is unconventionally structured and in a way that reflects the function of writing as Adorno understood it, though it might likewise be argued that the text is something of a hybrid, perhaps the result of an amalgamation of two quite different narrative styles: Horkheimer's distinctly the more conventional, organized in standard essay or chapter format; Adorno's the opposite, markedly more constellational, fragmented, and aphoristic. Elements of both are replete throughout the text.

The book opens conventionally, with an introduction, followed by a chapter on "The Concept of Enlightenment." Thereafter, chapter organization is interrupted by two paired sections called "Excursus," each of chapter length and on topics seemingly far removed from an investigation of (modern) enlightenment: *The Odyssey* and the Marquis de Sade. What follows next is still more jarring in light of the immediately preceding excursions, namely, the much cited chapter on "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," followed in turn by a chapter on anti-Semitism. At the end the text fragments radically in a lengthy section simply named "Notes and Drafts," organized as a series of twenty-four aphorisms, similar to those in *Minima Moralia*, which Adorno was beginning to write at the time. The book's organization, philosophically and socially grounded, is anti-philosophical to the extent it abandons any model of closed systematic investigation in its attempt to understand modernity. Nonetheless, it is fundamentally philosophical within the context of Critical Theory's critique of traditional philosophical practice. As regards both its narrative structure and its stance on history, the book is of singular importance for understanding Adorno. The Marxian foundation of Critical Theory is shifted away from class conflict to what Adorno and Horkheimer regard as something more fundamental, namely, the subject's historical relation to nature as one of conflict which turns the subject against others and, ultimately, against the self. "What men want to learn from nature is how to use it in order wholly to dominate it and other men."⁷² That is its only aim. Ruthlessly, in despite of itself, the Enlightenment has extinguished any trace of its own self-consciousness." And later: "Enlightenment is totalitarian."⁷³ This, in essence ultimate, conflict, in other words, long predates capitalism. As Adorno and Horkheimer (in)famously argue, the fundamental forms of domination that organize modernity have their roots in the primordial efforts of human beings to survive in a nature—primordial totality—of which they are at once a part yet deeply alienated from and fearful.

And yet human subjects lament the very separation from nature upon which their subjectivity is ultimately grounded. Thus by the principle Adorno and Horkheimer articulate, the designation of national parks which first occurred during the heyday of the Industrial Revolution—itsself signaling a kind of final triumph over nature—directly responded to the fractured relation of the subject to nature; the setting aside of small and as yet "untamed" geographies signified less a nostalgic return to nature than a material acknowledgment of the permanence of the fracture, in the same way that salvage anthropology in essence picks among the graves and ruins to remember what "advanced man" has destroyed to become advanced. In this sense, of course, charity—compassionate conservatism—falls in line as a substitute for justice, not to alter the foundation of domination⁷⁴ but to make injustice more tolerable to some people's stomachs and other people's conscience. The driving theme of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is the ironic regression of enlightenment, reason's alleged goal, into myth, whose deadly consequences at the level of the subject and society were so dramatically enacted in the Aryan myths of the Third Reich. The book's "purpose" was to produce a critique that made visible enlightenment's internal contradictions, the recognition of which would necessarily constitute the first step in rescuing enlightenment from itself—from its unrecognized debased form. In this regard, for all its often cited pessimism, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is at heart utopian.

The fundamental rhetorical device of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is exaggeration, embodied in the vast historical sweep from Homer to the movies, in an implicitly unbroken historical thread, as exemplars of domination to the point of self-domination—a gesture narratologically as effective as it was grist for subsequent criticism.⁷⁵ As Susan Buck-Morss points out: "The polemical, iconoclastic intent of the study is the reason why it focused on two sacred cows of bourgeois rational thought, the harmonious age of ancient

Greece and the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. These moments of an idealized past were juxtaposed to the most barbaric, most irrational phenomena of the present in order to demythologize the present and the past's hold over it."⁷⁶ Not the least of the book's intent is the effort to dismantle the self-satisfied ideology that structures the heart of historicism, the myth of history as progress, which itself underwrites the ideological ground of modernity as the supposed realization of the Enlightenment.

Though both Adorno and Horkheimer were modernists to the core, they attack the degree to which modern enlightenment is defined in terms of technological achievement. Neither was nostalgic for a supposed lost Golden Age, whether that of Homeric myth or the progressive moment of the bourgeois revolution in the early decades of the nineteenth century ("The task to be accomplished is not the conservation of the past, but the redemption of the hopes of the past").⁷⁷ Technological achievement as such is a neutral element in their critique. Rather, it is the fetishization of technological achievement, and how technology comes to made a fetish, that locates their concern. The real issue is instrumental reason and its function in domination: "Reason itself has become the mere instrument of the all-inclusive economic apparatus. It serves as a general tool, useful for the manufacture of all other tools, firmly directed towards its ends, as fateful as the precisely calculated movement of material production, whose result for mankind is beyond all calculation. At last its old ambition, to be a pure organ of ends, has been realized."⁷⁸ That is, reason instrumentalized is reason not concerned with social truth and its implications for social justice, but reason of the bottom line, whether in economics or cultural politics—reason degraded to wit, smarts, and especially cunning,⁷⁹ which functions as a tool on behalf of the self, not the other. Instrumental reason serves as agent in the subject's war on nature, broadly understood. Reason's "cunning [*List*] consists in turning men into animals with more and more far-reaching powers, and not in establishing the identity between subject and object."⁸⁰

Adorno and Horkheimer argue that the dilemma of instrumental reason functions as a defining principle in Western history as far back as written records survive. Instrumental reason, the determinate agent in domination—so they scandalously argue—determines the primordial hero of Western history, Odysseus himself, in essence the First Modern Man, the hero as relentless Can-Do specialist of the ancient world. His cunning defeats Polyphemus, and by techniques of wanton cruelty;⁸¹ his wit saves him from the Sirens, but only at the expense of his men whose ears he orders stopped up with wax to render them deaf to the Sirens' song, whose pleasure he denies them not for their own good, to avoid being drawn thereby to the rocks, but so that he can hear the song without risk to himself. Good planner, he buys himself some insurance by ordering his men to tie him securely to the mast, a gesture that also "pays" for the pleasure through a gesture of self-renunciation. Odysseus's ears are unstopped; he hears the song, but cannot act on the desires thereby lavishly produced. Lashed to the mast, he is at once the simulacrum of phallic power and self-rendered impotence.⁸² Desire for desire is a recurring trope, as is desire's defeat through seemingly perpetual deferral, the Weberian Protestant work ethic *avant la lettre*. "The history of civilization is the history of the introversion of sacrifice. In other words: the history of renunciation. Everyone who practices renunciation gives away more of his life than is given back to him: and more than the life that he vindicates."⁸³

Fear, and fear's resentment, is the dominant trope of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*: Polyphemus is feared hence blinded; the self is feared and disciplined; the Jew Other is feared and destroyed. Put differently, humankind's long "modernity" is constituted by a radical act of othering, in which each instance of the other exists either to serve or be destroyed.⁸⁴ Fear's causes are real. The human being in a primordial state confronts the world at once as provider and threat. Language initiates the process of ordering nature's apparent randomness and, worse, chaos. Myth narrates an order, via an already advanced form of reason—but not advanced enough. The language-act of myth is a device for coping with nature, not controlling it. The subject (in actuality not yet a subject) functioning under the order of myth only "imagines himself free from fear when there is no longer anything unknown." Enlightenment supplants myth, itself a lesser form of enlightenment but enlightenment nonetheless: "Enlightenment is mythic fear turned radical." Enlightenment supersedes myth, by means of which the subject controls nature absolutely. Enlightenment is determined by the need for nothing to escape its insight: "Nothing at all may remain outside, because the mere idea of outsideness is the very source of fear."⁸⁵ But to banish fear, through enlightenment, leads as well to the banishment of pity. Enlightenment is relentless, its demands total. The world must be rationalized, myth banned for its sin of fiction. The elimination of "outsideness" demands the identification of the Other, all others, and by whatever means necessary, the most efficient of which is reason instrumentalized, reason put to the task of naming, labeling, identifying. The modern forms of identification numbers—whether registered on magnetic disk or tattooed on one's arm—mark the outer limits of the territory. This is the form of rationality that conjoins Odysseus and Sade, whose accounts of the body involve systematically cataloguing its orifices and demonstrating their functionality for others' pleasure with imaginative—yet disciplined—concentration.⁸⁶ a modernity of sex in

which the subject effectively others itself in the most fearsome manner that the human mind can envision—fully codified, a systematic law of outrage. Reason reverts, reasonably, under the circumstances, to its own other: Cartesian duality is enacted without mercy, the mind and body⁸⁷ in an embrace defined by hatred via the allegory of rape. The exchange principle is here worked out in an economy of hungry and degraded flesh, and the world is organized into binary principles: strong and weak, agents and their victims. "Enlightenment has relinquished its own realization."⁸⁸ And yet the antidote to instrumentalized reason is reason—the paradox and contradiction at the heart of the dialectic of enlightenment. As Adorno pointed out in *Negative Dialectics*, "Today as in Kant's time, philosophy demands a rational critique of reason, not its banishment or abolition."⁸⁹

To summarize: enlightenment and domination are co-dependent. And in the end, the survival that accrues by othering nature produces at the same moment an othering of the self: "As soon as man discards his awareness that he himself is nature, all the aims for which he keeps himself alive—social progress, the intensification of all his material and spiritual powers, even consciousness itself—are nullified, and the enthronement of the means as an end, which under late capitalism is tantamount to open insanity, is already perceptible in the prehistory of subjectivity. Man's domination over himself, which grounds his selfhood, is almost always the destruction of the subject in whose service it is undertaken."⁹⁰

Adorno's position on natural beauty, which deeply informs both his social and aesthetic theory, is anchored in these concerns. "Nothing in the world is worthy of attention except that for which the autonomous subject has himself to thank."⁹¹ In this regard, nature is lacking. Yet human subjects, by nature *of* nature, thereby are constituted by a lack of their own making. Adorno argues that authentic artworks silently hail natural beauty, which, like nature, is not directly available to us to the extent that "nature" is both pre-determined and pre-structured by history (just as language itself is historical). (Our longing for nature—for example, ecological regard, wilderness preservation, but also art, in Adorno's argument—is a projection of a lack that develops alongside our separation from and domination of nature.) Adorno suggests that the lack of interest in natural beauty in nineteenth-century aesthetics is part and parcel of the larger historical separation he critiques.⁹² "The concept of natural beauty rubs on a wound."⁹³ Art is called upon to answer for natural beauty, in effect to substitute for it; art—wholly artificial, that is, literally unnatural—by this means enacts or perpetuates the attack on nature. And yet art does more, for it acknowledges the natural beauty that the subject has otherwise degraded yet nonetheless desires in its nonexistent "perfect" state, and it reflects on this fact. Art, as Adorno put it, "want[s] to keep nature's promise. . . . What nature strives for in vain, artworks fulfill."⁹⁴ Natural beauty, he insists, is "the trace of the nonidentical in things under the spell of universal identity."⁹⁵

Dialectics

The true nihilists are the ones who oppose nihilism with their more and more faded positivities, the ones who are thus conspiring with all extant malice, and eventually with the destructive principle itself. Thought honors itself by defending what is damned as nihilism.

Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*

Adorno's critique of philosophy was isomorphic with his critique of society. The truth of modern society, for Adorno, was its falseness through and through. Modernity was structured around the commodity fetish and a commodified subjectivity which together functioned in a deadly, mutually self-sustaining embrace. Philosophy's role—in effect, philosophy's social and ethical responsibility—was to conceptualize this condition: "Conscience," Adorno wrote in *Negative Dialectics*, "is the mark of shame of an unfree society."⁹⁶ But philosophy's ability in so doing was doubly compromised; first, by its own history, which in the West was fundamentally idealist with its idealism in turn systematically totalizing and self-referential; second, philosophy, an act of language, failed to reveal the truth that it claimed, a principal cause of which was philosophy's conventionalized practice of treating language—hence thought itself—as a transparent mechanism, in essence autonomous from its own historical contingency. Under present conditions in particular, Adorno argued, thought—notably including his own—was deeply compromised by the forces driving modernity, as he acknowledged at the very beginning of *Negative Dialectics*, his greatest

philosophical work: "No theory today escapes the marketplace. Each one is offered as a possibility among competing opinions; all are put up for choice; all are swallowed. There are no blinders for thought to don against this, and the self-righteous conviction that my own theory is spared that fate will surely deteriorate into self-advertising."⁹⁷ Today the awful phrase "marketplace of ideas" rarely provokes critique, so second-nature is the reduction of human activity to the metaphor of consumerism. The truth or falsity of ideas is collapsed under the myth that free subjects may simply pay their money and make a choice, presumably because our self-engendered consumer-alert function will guide us to choose wisely. Adorno's point is that the social reality determining the marketplace metaphor, and myriad others like it, locates itself in the very soul of language, and by this means corrupts the ability to think beyond the parameters thereby established. In *Negative Dialectics* Adorno acknowledged the impact on thought of a society governed by the fetish of the bottom line: "We like to present alternatives to choose from, to be marked True or False. The decisions of a bureaucracy are frequently reduced to Yes or No answers to drafts submitted to it; the bureaucratic way of thinking has become the secret model for a thought allegedly still free. But the responsibility of philosophical thought in its essential situations is not to play this game."⁹⁸

Truth is the result of an immense struggle against multiple levels of self-deceit: in particular, the self-defeating notion of a non-contradictory form of subjecthood, founded on the ideology of personal autonomy, together with the self-deceitful belief that one can unproblematically think outside the mediating impact of general falsehood, though the urgent social need to do so was philosophy's justification.⁹⁹ Indeed, for Adorno, the practice of philosophy represented an explicitly personal struggle against instrumental reason. Philosophy, in other words, was necessary to Adorno as a condition for his own subjecthood.

The challenge he set for himself was to write a philosophy that did not replicate that which the practice otherwise sought to confront: general and seemingly overwhelming falsehood. Borrowing from a distinction that had a lengthy history in German philosophy (Kant and Hegel, notably), Adorno distinguished between two forms of reason: *Verstand* and *Vernunft*. The former, essentially, refers at best to something like common sense, though in its darker forms it degenerates into cunning; it provides the foundation for instrumental reason—reason of the bottom line. *Vernunft*, the higher form, is coterminous with Adorno's sense of dialectical thought. Dialectics, for Adorno, was a language-act by means of which suppressed details were made visible, palimpsests read, and otherness articulated instead of subsumed. Dialectics retrieved leftovers—particulars—from the universalizing tendencies of concepts that conventionally determine philosophical practice. "The name of dialectics says no more, to begin with, than that objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder, that they come to contradict the traditional norm of adequacy."¹⁰⁰ The goal of dialectics was utopian, reflecting the effort to preserve the *promesse de bonheur*, a phrase borrowed from Stendhal, through self-reflexive thought that confronted social contradiction. Dialectics attempted to preserve nonidentity in the face of a seemingly overwhelming identity—that is, to preserve difference in the face of its increasingly pervasive abolition.¹⁰¹

Dialectics' "agony is the world's agony raised to a concept. . . . Dialectics serves the end of reconciliation."¹⁰² Adorno held that the domination of nature—nature broadly understood as that other which stands apart from the subject, and upon which the possibility of the subject ironically depends—is, in the end, destructive of both humankind and nature ("No universal history leads from savagery to humanitarianism, but there is one leading from the slingshot to the megaton bomb").¹⁰³ The rupture from nature that produced "Man" (in Foucault's sense: man as a cultural construct)¹⁰⁴ will in the end be man's undoing, unless a reconciliation can be staged. For this to occur two connected premises must guide thought: first, that the subject is also an object, that is, part of the very nature over which the subject claims dominion; second, that the object—nature, the object world external to the self—ultimately stands outside the totality of the subject's conceptual grasp, as it were, as a *remainder*. To recognize this ungraspable leftover, and indeed to think the self in the context of the object, marks the first step toward a possible reconciliation of subject and object, the subject and its other.¹⁰⁵ Adorno's concern was to retain in thought the object's fundamental particularity against its universal analogue captured in concepts.¹⁰⁶

Hegel's pursuit of philosophical truth recognized contradiction as a component part of the whole. His dialectics articulates *thesis* as a category of preliminary affirmation and unification which recognizes apparent unity. But every thesis contains its own *antithesis*—contradiction—defined by a negation of the affirmation, as well as differentiation. Whereas the first stage, thesis, is dogmatic (as it were received wisdom), antithesis is skeptical, and structured by "negative reason." In *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) Hegel speaks of negative dialectic's skepticism as

a moment of self-consciousness, to which it does not *happen* that its truth and reality vanish without its knowing how, but which, in the certainty of its freedom, *makes* this other which claims to be real, vanish. What Skepticism causes to vanish is not only objective reality as such, but its own relationship to it, in which the "other" is held to be objective and is established as such, and hence, too, its *perceiving*, along with firmly securing what it is in danger of losing, viz. *sophistry*, and the truth it has itself determined and established. Through this self-conscious negation it procures for its own self the certainty of its freedom, generates the experience of that freedom, and thereby raises it to truth.¹⁰⁷

Hegel advances a third stage, *synthesis*, wherein the dialectic turns positive once more, though reconfigured in light of the skeptical second stage. Ultimately, negation is philosophically overcome and a resolution achieved. It is at the level of this third stage where Adorno parts company with Hegel, precisely due to the fundamental idealism of the exercise, where a *philosophical* truth has no necessary connection to the truth of material reality. Accordingly, whereas Hegel could claim that "The True is the whole,"¹⁰⁸ Adorno countered in *Minima Moralia* that "The whole is the false."¹⁰⁹ That is, the truth about totality was its actual falseness, resolution to which could not be achieved in idealist pronouncement as an act of language, or, in Buck-Morss's words, "reason and reality did not coincide. . . . Because the contradictions of society could not be banished by means of thought, contradiction could not be banished from thought either."¹¹⁰ Not coincidentally, in Adorno's aesthetic theory contradiction lies at the heart of any art which has any claim to truth. "A successful work," he pointed out, "is not one which resolves objective contradictions in a spurious harmony, but one which expresses the idea of harmony negatively by embodying the contradictions, pure and uncompromised, in its innermost structure."¹¹¹

In 1960 Herbert Marcuse published "A Note on Dialectic" as a new preface to the second edition of *Reason and Revolution* (1941). He opens the text by expressing the hope that his book will contribute to the revival of a mental faculty "in danger of being obliterated: the power of negative thinking,"¹¹² almost certainly a wry reference to the then-popular Sunday affirmations of the radio preacher Reverend Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, whose signature phrase was "the power of positive thinking," a line about strictly personal do-it-yourself self-fulfillment.¹¹³ The ethical claim of negative thought, by contrast, is determined by a fundamentally social purpose. "The negation which dialectic applies to ['facts'] is not only a critique of conformist logic, which denies the reality of contradictions; it is also a critique of the given state of affairs on its own grounds—of the established system of life, which denies its own promises and potentialities."¹¹⁴ Marcuse's concern, mirroring Adorno's, is to connect objective fact to social-subjective value, to insist on the defining impact of one on its other, and, not least, to foreground the historicity of the relationship. Dialectical thought begins with a social concern, namely, "the experience that the world is unfree; that is to say, man and nature exist in conditions of alienation, exist as 'other than as they are,'"—to which Marcuse appends a corollary: "Any mode of thought which excludes this contradiction from its logic is a faulty logic."¹¹⁵

Marcuse identifies a central component of negative dialectics, what Adorno called "immanent criticism": the critical power of negative dialectics was not the result of applying philosophical categories from the outside, so to speak, but the result of critiquing facts and concepts on the very basis of their own terminology and established processes. Further, as Adorno expressed the point in *Minima Moralia*, "the dialectic advances by way of extremes, driving thoughts with the utmost consequentiality to the point where they turn back on themselves, instead of qualifying them."¹¹⁶

The function of dialectical thought, Marcuse summarizes, "is to break down the self-assurance and self-contentment of common sense, to undermine the sinister confidence in the power and language of facts, to demonstrate that unfreedom is so much at the core of things that the development of their internal contradictions leads necessarily to qualitative change: the explosion and catastrophe of the established state of affairs."¹¹⁷ He ends his remarks with an implicit homage to Adorno: "No method can claim a monopoly of cognition, but no method seems authentic which does not recognize that these two propositions are meaningful descriptions of our situation: 'The whole is the truth,' and the whole is false."¹¹⁸

If philosophy was at the heart of Adorno's effort to imagine a subject worthy of the name, his philosophical practice functioned against philosophical tradition—which tradition, he argued, ultimately promoted the untruth against which he struggled. The immanent difficulty of succeeding at this practice was not lost on

him. The penultimate aphorism in *Minima Moralia*, in effect, looking back over the 151 preceding fragments, reviews the anti-philosophical philosophical practice the book engages and issues a "*Warning: not to be misused.*" Dialectical thought has served historically as "a refuge for all the thoughts of the oppressed, even those unthought by them," he insists, but dialectical thought also has the capacity to poison itself. "As a means of proving oneself right [dialectical thought] was also from the first an instrument of domination, a formal technique of apologetics unconcerned with content, serviceable to those who could pay: the principle of constantly and successfully turning the tables. Its truth or untruth, therefore, is not inherent in the method itself, but in its intention in the historical process."**119**

Adorno is haunted by the potential for untruth in the pursuit of untruth's truth, tinged not least with the fact that thinking itself is always already in modernity marked by cultural and economic privilege. Earlier in *Minima Moralia*, in an aphorism titled "Bequest," he tempers his enthusiasm for dialectic's socially progressive potential: "Dialectical thought is an attempt to break through the coercion of logic by its own means. But since it must use these means, it is at every moment in danger of itself acquiring a coercive character: the ruse of reason would like to hold sway over the dialectic too."**120**

Adorno frequently voiced this concern in later years, whenever the project of philosophy came under his scrutiny. Thus in the essay "Why Still Philosophy?" first given as a radio lecture, he expands the caveat:

A philosophy that would still set itself up as total, as a system, would become a delusional system. Yet if philosophy renounces the claim to totality and no longer claims to develop out of itself the whole that should be the truth, then it comes into conflict with its entire tradition. This is the price it must pay for the fact that, once cured of its own delusional system, it denounces the delusional system of reality. . . . After everything, the only responsible philosophy is one that no longer imagines it had the Absolute at its command; indeed philosophy must forbid the thought of it in order not to betray that thought, and at the same time it must not bargain away anything of the emphatic concept of truth. This contradiction is philosophy's element. It defines philosophy as negative.¹²¹

The last aphorism of *Minima Moralia*, no. 153, is named "Zum Ende."¹²² I want to risk quoting the entire aphorism, since it decisively marks Adorno's commitment alike to negative dialectics and to the social stakes that determine the necessity of this philosophical choice. The aphorism aptly, and gracefully, demonstrates Adornian dialectics at work.¹²³ Movingly, the aphorism is saturated with Benjamin's utopian projection of social redemption, personally ironic to Adorno, without question, as regards his friend's then-still-recent politically motivated suicide. "Zum Ende" recapitulates the critical themes of *Minima Moralia*: the history of damaged life, but not a life relinquished; life clinging to hope in the face of catastrophe via the lifeline of critical thought: the insistence on thinking critically—negatively—to think something better. Adorno reiterates the image of enlightenment, and its corollary, philosophical intentionality. And in the process of defining one last time the necessity of negativity, he retains, at the end of "Zum Ende," negativity itself. There is, in the end, no ultimate escape in thought from the conditions that destroy thought. Such is the condition for thought's possibility. The only philosophy which can be responsibly practised in face of despair is the attempt to contemplate all things as they would present themselves from the standpoint of redemption. Knowledge has no light but that shed on the world by redemption: all else is reconstruction, mere technique. Perspectives must be fashioned that displace and estrange the world, reveal it to be, with its rifts and crevices, as indigent and distorted as it will appear one day in the messianic light. To gain such perspectives without velleity or violence, entirely from felt contact with its objects—this alone is the task of thought. It is the simplest of all things, because the situation calls imperatively for such knowledge, indeed because consummate negativity, once squarely faced, delineates the mirror-image of its opposite. But it is also the utterly impossible thing, because it presupposes a standpoint removed, even though by a hair's breadth, from the scope of existence, whereas we well know that any possible knowledge must not only be first wrested from what is, if it shall hold good, but is also marked, for this very reason, by the same distortion and indigence which it seeks to escape. The more passionately thought denies its conditionality for the sake of the unconditional, the more unconsciously, and so calamitously, it is delivered up to the world. Even its own impossibility it must at last

comprehend for the sake of the possible. But beside the demand thus placed on thought, the question of the reality or unreality of redemption itself hardly matters.

History: Walter Benjamin

The need to lend a voice to suffering is a condition of all truth.

Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*

Corollary to Adorno's dialectics is his concern to connect philosophy to history—but history of a particular kind, one which chooses to remember what is conventionally forgotten: in essence, history's victims. Adorno's sense of the writing of history registers the influence of Walter Benjamin, whose views are encapsulated in his "Theses on the Philosophy of History," a series of eighteen aphorisms drafted shortly before his death in 1940.¹²⁴

Benjamin attacks historicism, the doctrine of history as progress, which he regards at best as highly selective, socially regressive remembering. His concern is that history all too conventionally conforms to tradition, choosing to remember only that which responds to the requirements of the elite and powerful. The danger to the truth of history, he noted, is that history largely belongs to the victors, in whose interest the past is normalized and, in effect, made to affirm the here and now. "Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that *even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he wins. And this enemy has not ceased to be victorious."¹²⁵ The task of the historian, Benjamin insists, is "to brush history against the grain."¹²⁶

Benjamin, devoted to art, quickly turns his eye to culture to argue his point. Long enjoying a kind of ideological free ride as the ultimate mark of European bourgeois social distinction and achievement, as it were the sign of the mature subject, art—or to be more precise, what he polemically calls "the spoils"—is scrutinized for the immanent social inequality that stains its soul. "Cultural treasures," he suggests, are viewed by the historical materialist "with cautious detachment"; their origin cannot be contemplated "without horror. They owe their existence not only to the efforts of the great minds and talents who have created them, but also to the anonymous toil of their contemporaries. There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism."¹²⁷

Above all, "it is the sufferings of men that should be shared," Adorno wrote in *Minima Moralia*, a responsibility that constituted a principal function of art.¹²⁸ He later made this same point by way of a rhetorical query: "But then what would art be, as the writing of history, if it shook off the memory of accumulated suffering."¹²⁹ This is the ending of Adorno's last, and unfinished, major work, *Aesthetic Theory*. Reason can conceptualize suffering but, Adorno noted, it cannot express its experience.¹³⁰ That responsibility falls to art, which can "anticipate emancipation, but only on the basis of a solidarity with the current state of human existence."¹³¹ In the late essay "Why Still Philosophy?" (1962), Adorno summarized the urgency that drove his practice: "Philosophy must come to know, without any mitigation, why the world—which could be paradise here and now—can become hell itself tomorrow. Such knowledge would indeed truly be philosophy."¹³²

The Culture Industry

Mass culture is a kind of training for life when things have gone wrong.

Adorno, "The Schema of Mass Culture"

Adorno distrusted any concept of culture that forgot its tainted origins in social inequality, and he further held that to celebrate culture only for its transcendence of, and autonomy from, material concerns undercut culture's critical and progressive potential. He insisted that Culture and culture alike bore the scars of modernity, though the social impact on subjects of "high" culture and "low" were often significantly different. He further argued that within the guise of modern technological society all culture, high and low, was profoundly marked by mass culture. These general concerns focused Adorno's attention throughout his career,

but his first sustained discussion of the topic was the essay, included in this volume, "The Social Situation in Music" (1932), followed later by the famous chapter from *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,"¹³³ written with Max Horkheimer while living next to Hollywood in the early 1940s, and reflecting their earlier experience in Weimar Germany as well as their current situation in California.¹³⁴

The principles that organize the "Culture Industry" (CI) argument fundamentally shape virtually all of Adorno's subsequent thought, especially his later essays on mass and popular culture, although near the end of his life he modified his original position to some degree, as I will discuss later. Given the centrality of this essay to Adorno's lifelong study of culture generally, especially the tension between high culture and popular/mass culture, and the essay's centrality to popular culture studies to this day (whether praised or condemned, it is not ignored), I want to take some care in delineating the essay's most important claims. First the name. Adorno and Horkheimer consciously substituted "culture industry" for mass (or popular) culture, terms already then current, on the grounds that "mass" and "popular" were strictly ideological (that is, false consciousness), that these terms disguised the true nature that lay behind them: a culture that was administered from above, rather than one emerging from below. Mass culture, as they saw it, was fundamentally imposed, not chosen ("Whoever speaks of culture speaks of administration as well").¹³⁵ Adorno and Horkheimer mince no words about their theory of total administration; in the opening paragraph they refer to its possessing a steel-like rhythm [*strählernen Rhythmus*], as though functioning in stiff and perpetual motion. The essay itself, however, as Frederic Jameson has pointed out, is "not a theory of culture but the theory of an *industry*, of a branch of the interlocking monopolies of late capitalism that makes money out of what used to be called culture. The topic here is the commercialization of life,"¹³⁶ in effect the integration of the individual into the exchange principle.¹³⁷

The essay's lengthy opening paragraph, seldom remarked upon in any critical literature, does not concern mass culture in the ways we have come to expect. Instead, it's structured as a kind of urban allegory using architecture and urban development, housing especially, as the defining trope. That is, whereas "culture" is conventionally understood at once as superstructural and spiritual/immaterial to the extent that its appeal is to the mind and spirit, Adorno and Horkheimer conversely—perversely—talk about the mundane and notably material: where people live. They cite the power of international capital to define cities and the people in them: monumental gleaming business towers juxtaposed to slums, and on the outskirts flimsily built bungalows (with which Adorno was personally familiar in the new development where he lived in Brentwood), which they liken to the stage-set buildings of world (trade) fairs functioning to praise technical progress, and thereafter to be discarded "like empty food cans." Not least, they cite planned housing projects, said to promote the ideal of the autonomous (private) individual, yet defined by mass-production, monotony, cookie-cutter dwellings, with the strictest economy of permissible living space, and convenient to the centers of production (work) and consumption (leisure, pleasure), both determined by the labor of the projects' inhabitants. Macrocosm and microcosm mirror one another in a model of culture that advertises the subject (individuality), whose particular identity nonetheless is intended to merge perfectly with the general, thereby promoting identity solely as a mirage. These striking Marxian images emphasize a homology between the material and the cultural: "Under monopoly all mass culture is identical."**138**

The CI essay is organized around a central paradox: "To speak of culture was always contrary to culture."¹³⁹ In modernity, culture rendered self-reflexive is culture for sale; culture "spoken of" has regressed to its own advertising, functioning spatially as a terrain for maximizing economic development and the social structures to achieve it. Once named, in other words, culture is transformed from a process to a product. Culture becomes business,¹⁴⁰ and as such it requires administration at once to render it "safe" for consumption, and so that it will in fact be consumed.¹⁴¹

The account of the CI is principally a critique of mass entertainment—movies, music, radio, magazines, etc.—to whose impact, Adorno and Horkheimer argue, no one remains immune. Film more than any other form of mass entertainment constitutes the material for their ensuing critique. Adorno and Horkheimer dismiss the claim that the entertainment industries simply give people what they want, that they are (democratically) sensitive to general needs. They argue that the CI instead acts as a "circle of manipulation and *retroactive* need."¹⁴² In *Minima Moralia* Adorno reiterated the point: "The culture industry not so much adapts to the reactions of its customers as it counterfeits them. It drills them in their attitudes by behaving as if it were itself a customer."¹⁴³ The result, they argue, is the shaping of human identity by cultural "products" that are fully standardized, ever the same. Identity itself, formed in the image of the CI's products, tends toward the identical. The industry "robs the individual of his function. Its prime service to the customer is to do his schematizing for him."¹⁴⁴ The products of the CI, including by implication the human subjects shaped by the

CI, lose all relation to spontaneity; as much as possible, even the reactions to mass art are as pre-planned, however imperfectly, as the cityscape described in the essay's opening paragraph. And planned first for profit: business (the word the industry uses to describe itself, just as it describes its production as product—to this day both films and recordings are thus conventionally referred to).

However, they did not mean to suggest that every "product" is literally the same. On the contrary, they argued that difference is structured into and explicitly manifested by the products but often only as a marketing technique endlessly promising claims for the new, commonly without providing it. Adorno and Horkheimer point to the CI's differential catering to the various social-class sectors—what they name "obedience to the social hierarchy."¹⁴⁵ Thus, in terms of our own time, a Chevy is not a Buick; a tabloid is not *Newsweek*. But nor are they as utterly different as their respective advertising claims might suggest. Given models of the Chevy and Buick share the same chassis; and the sensational celebrity features of *National Enquirer* are commonly matched, if slightly dressed up, in the "respectable" weekly news magazine's stories. None of this is left to chance nor can it be, given the demands of the bottom line. Consumer "choice" and market research are conjoined in a perpetual embrace. "Consumers appear as statistics on research organization charts, and are divided by income groups; . . . the technique is that used for any type of propaganda."¹⁴⁶ (Marcuse once sarcastically noted that "choice" meant the freedom to choose between brands of toilet paper.)¹⁴⁷ The true "value" of the consumer is to consume what's offered. Adorno and Horkheimer attack the sameness and standardization in the products of the CI and the identification by subjects with what is offered, invariably in the name of free choice: the invitation to conceptualize one's subjecthood as the replication of the identical which, to be sure, claims to be different. The CI "consists of repetition."**148**

Critics of this position have conventionally argued on two complementary fronts: first, that the claim is inappropriately totalizing; second, in almost inevitable linkage, that Adorno (principally Adorno) directly or indirectly asserts an offensively elitist apologia for high culture—a charge often linked to his biography as an upper bourgeois German—a particularly reductive charge based on the accident of birth. Clearly, the limitations of Adorno and Horkheimer's sweeping critique of mass culture are real. But that reality is woefully inadequate as grounds for the dismissal of the critique's substantive principal claims. Too often ignored is the centrality of the mass-culture critique of high art itself mounted by Adorno throughout his career; as Fredric Jameson has pointed out: "The force of the Adorno-Horkheimer analysis of the culture industry . . . lies in its demonstration of the unexpected and imperceptible introduction of commodity structure into the very form and content of the work of art itself."¹⁴⁹ The distinction Adorno maintained between art and mass culture is that whereas artworks are *also* commodities, the products of the CI are commodities through and through.¹⁵⁰ Much of the essay addresses pleasure as a component form of happiness. Its authors argue that the pleasure proffered by the CI is entertainment (not enlightenment), and specifically amusement, which under prevailing conditions in the industrialized world they regard as "the prolongation of work," that is, at once an escape device from the mechanized work process (the factory assembly line is their prevailing metaphor) and a momentary but administered means of getting oneself ready to go back for more. But worse, and this is their principal point, CI amusements replicate in overdetermined fashion the semiotic codes upon which the work life itself depends, albeit in aestheticized form. "What happens at work, in the factory, or in the office can only be escaped from by approximation to it in one's leisure time."**151**

Pleasure, as they put it, "hardens into boredom because, if it is to remain pleasure, it must not demand any effort and therefore moves rigorously in the worn grooves of association. No independent thinking must be expected from the audience: the product prescribes every reaction: not by its natural structure (which collapses under reflection), but by signals. Any logical connection calling for mental effort is painstakingly avoided."¹⁵² In the end, "The culture industry perpetually cheats its consumers of what it perpetually promises." The promise of pleasure remains just that, an illusory spectacle. "All it actually confirms is that the real point will never be reached, that the diner must be satisfied with the menu."**153**

Adorno remarked in *Minima Moralia* that "Every visit to the cinema leaves me, against all my vigilance, stupider and worse."¹⁵⁴ What does he intend by this notably provocative statement? The CI essay condemns the disconnect between the bought pleasure of the movie palace and the life led upon exit from the theater. "The unemployed in the great cities find coolness in summer and warmth in winter in these temperature-controlled locations." Good. But not enough. "Otherwise, despite its size, this bloated pleasure apparatus [i.e., the entertainment machine] adds no dignity to men's lives."¹⁵⁵ Adorno often commented that modernity possesses the technical means to reduce, if not eradicate, human suffering, yet modernity's technological accomplishments were used more commonly to promote regressive ends, for profit above all else. His point is that the "pleasure" of the entertainment is coterminous with the physical comfort purchased by the price of the ticket. The physical benefit is temporary; the mental/spiritual benefit is nonexistent. The entertainment

aesthetically replicates life, or as life would be if life's mysteries had deemed differently. (Adorno had of course watched the classic escapist Depression-era Hollywood movies, often comedies, that stylishly celebrated wealth in the midst of general misery.) With rare exceptions actual external social conditions are at best lamented through their film simulacra rather than critiqued. (Even in films like John Ford's social epic *The Grapes of Wrath* [1940], the blind force of weather is as much the culprit as the law enforcement acting on behalf of landowners and banks; indeed, economic forces, while directly referenced, are nonetheless strikingly mystified by explanations that suggest that reality is driven by blind fate, with no one to be blamed).¹⁵⁶ In short, lament is passively internalized, as in the commonplace bumper sticker that reads "Shit Happens"—never to be found on new vehicles but on what are known to the trade as "transportation thrifties"—as opposed to the non-stoical and implicitly less preconditioned "Shit is Caused,"¹⁵⁷ which bumper sticker to my knowledge does not exist. The former mirrors perfectly the smiley face, the automatic-response and semiotically empty "Have a nice day," and the tuneful proclamation "Don't Worry, Be Happy"—what Adorno called the "'keep smiling' attitude."¹⁵⁸ Or the ironic reverse, government sponsored, in the form of the advertising slogan for the State Lottery: "It could happen," a promise commonly bought with a substantial portion of their minimum-wage earnings by the desperate poor trying to improve the 85,000,000-to-1 odds of winning. "Pleasure promotes the resignation which it ought to help to forget."**159**

Adorno and Horkheimer, following Marx, argue that consumption is organized by exchange value (not use value), especially through advertising commodities that gain fetishistic hold over subject-consumers,¹⁶⁰ creating a psychological dependency on false needs, in regard to which Adorno and Horkheimer borrowed Leo Lowenthal's now-famous expression that the CI functioned as "psychoanalysis in reverse," that is (as Lowenthal put it), as a device "to keep people in permanent psychic bondage."¹⁶¹ Advertising's surface-level semiotics are driven by the endless effort to promote individuality, promising the opportunity for the consumer to stand separate from everyone else, hence repeating in radical form the claims to individual uniqueness that define the idealized modern subject. Yet the uniqueness promised by advertising will ultimately succeed only if that individuality is acquired, via purchase, by masses of other "individuals" (if the product doesn't sell in sufficient numbers, it is withdrawn, hence cannot be acquired). Accordingly, the very notion of modern identity, structured by consumerism—identities bought—is built on a spurious foundation. The appeal, by definition necessarily renewed endlessly, is to what we are *not* but want with increasing desperation to be: truly individual. But if we consume in the manner intended we become less like what is promised—we tend toward those around us, whose very likeness we are attempting to be different from: the crowd (anti-subjects, as it were). Not surprisingly, the stakes perpetually get raised, evident, for example, in recent trends in body art, where multiple tattooing and multiple piercing, a process of radical addition, becomes the perfect premise of the ideology that itself drives the multiple economies of modernity: more. More of *this* will make me more of Me and less of Them. And so on.¹⁶²

Charlie Chaplin—whose work Adorno admired¹⁶³—in *Modern Times* (1936) comically represented the mind-numbing repetition of modern life via the well-worn metaphor of the assembly line, where the Little Tramp in the climactic shop-floor scene pretty much literally is made a cog in industry's wheel. The work day extends limitlessly in the film. The lunch break constitutes an opportunity for an experiment with an automatic (worker) feeding machine, which of course goes completely haywire. Chaplin's character himself goes haywire late in a day entirely spent tightening large nuts with two huge wrenches that are virtually appendages of his own hands; even when he leaves the assembly line he continues attempting to tighten anything that looks remotely like a nut—as though he were an extension of a perpetual motion machine in spite of himself. Outside the factory, seeing a buxom woman coming toward him whose dress has strategically placed (bosom) buttons, he makes a move, as if unconscious, to tighten them, comically much to her horror.

Modern Times illustrates the functionality of twin concepts in Adorno's thinking about the relation between the commodity and the subject: productive forces and relations of production, both described in his essay "Is Marx Obsolete?" (1968). He points out that modern (implicitly First World) societies' productive forces are industrial through and through, and tend "towards a totality" extending well beyond the realm of labor into "what is called culture." Compartment generally imitates an industrial model in its relations of production; mimetically, subjects are "appendages of machinery . . . compelled as they are to adjust themselves and their innermost feelings to the machinery of society, in which they must play their rôles and to which they must shape themselves with no reservation."**164**

Identification with the commodity form, fundamental to the theory driving the CI essay, manifests itself in our own rather more advanced state of technological postmodernity in the recent spate of game shows, whether on the major networks or cable. What passes for knowledge are facts and only facts—an obvious given—but

what facts: mostly about the products of the CI itself. A perfect circle. Facts external to entertainment are introduced usually only at the higher levels, where some real cash might be given away. There is of course an alternate form, the higher-class variety such as "Jeopardy" or, still classier, the original, though rigged, "Twenty-One." But the only fundamental difference is the "higher-class" of facts themselves—questions about literature and the other arts, science, politics, etc. The point is that knowledge by default is defined as a storehouse of raw data, otherwise unrelated, and for the most part concerning mass entertainment. If this is what you know, it may well be worth something, worth calculated as cash-on-the-spot payments literally waved in front of contestants on shows like ABC's "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire" and Fox Television's "Greed." The issue in question is not whether high-class facts are better than their low-class cousins. Adorno and Horkheimer argue that both forms of culture so hailed are degraded in the process. Put differently, the fragmentation that has gained status as a defining characteristic of the postmodern condition is mirrored in the epistemology of the television quiz show: factual, fun, good for a laugh, and maybe riches. But the knowledge gained from the effort to reach quiz-show candidacy (to pass the considerable hurdle of the auditions) is useful for precisely and only that purpose, a knowledge that leads full circle but does not break out, the human mind as data bank for high-stakes Trivial Pursuit.¹⁶⁵ As Adorno elsewhere put it, "However useful it might be from a practical point of view to have as much information as possible at one's disposal, there still prevails the iron law that the information in question shall never touch the essential, shall never degenerate into thought."¹⁶⁶

Adorno and Horkheimer conclude by noting that the triumph of advertising occurs despite the fact that consumers "see through" what's offered to them.¹⁶⁷ Thereby acknowledged is the potential agency that remains available to the consumer-subject: seeing through—often tinged with irony and cynicism—is not a trivial "remainder" but neither is it sufficient to sustain, let alone produce, subjecthood. The resistant consumer is still interpellated into the cultural framework defined by the CI.¹⁶⁸ To be sure, not all subjects are the same, nor are all products of the CI. Adorno and Horkheimer recognize this fact, despite the rhetorical polemic they self-reflexively engage for strategic reasons. But their principal point underlying the hyperbolic claim is not easily dismissed: namely, that modern society is characterized by a general if hardly universal stunting of critical interest and intelligent engagement on the part of the subject, on the one hand, and by the promulgation of social lies on the part of the CI, on the other. Popular-resistance theory that emerged from British Cultural Studies made a responsible and necessary contribution when it insisted on human agency in the face of its appropriation by mass culture.¹⁶⁹ But we sometimes lose track of the fact that such resistance is simultaneously severely compromised, not only by the socioeconomic and political forces against which resistance acts, but also by the degree to which subjects who resist are nonetheless always already defined by that against which they struggle. Subjects defined by the principles of markets and consumption are not free agents. As Martin Jay aptly notes: "The culture industry may well not be as totalitarian as Horkheimer and Adorno assumed in their bleaker moments. But whether it allows more than pockets of what one commentator has called 'artificial negativity' remains very much to be seen."¹⁷⁰ Whatever autonomy subjects possess is markedly circumscribed in precisely the same way that Adorno understood aesthetic autonomy. Both bear the wound.

"All objectification is a forgetting" [Alle Verdinglichung ist ein Vergessen]; so they remarked in the aphorism "*Le prix du progrès*" in the "Notes and Drafts" section of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.¹⁷¹ Borrowing Lukács's notion of reification,¹⁷² Adorno and Horkheimer acknowledge a double objectification in the CI exposé, one of history and the other of the subject in history. Both become thing-like: facts—valorized principally for their "universal informational character."¹⁷³ As a corollary, the masses themselves are treated as an "object of calculation; an appendage of the machinery"¹⁷⁴—the social stakes of which Adorno drives home in the conclusion to his late essay "Culture Industry Reconsidered" (1963): "If the masses have been unjustly reviled from above as masses, the culture industry is not among the least responsible for making them into masses and then despising them, while obstructing the emancipation for which human beings are as ripe as the productive forces of the epoch permit."¹⁷⁵

In his 1960 essay "Culture and Administration," first delivered as a radio lecture, Adorno returned to the question of human agency set against the forces of the CI. While insisting on the reified nature of culture, rendered thing-like, itself a commodity, and on the reification of the human subjects under the administration of mass culture, Adorno pointed out that culture and administration alike ultimately refer back to living subjects. He insisted on the objective fact that human consciousness was not wholly in the grips of administered culture. Consciousness retained a degree of spontaneity: "For the present, within liberal-democratic order, the individual still has sufficient freedom within the institution and with its help to make a modest contribution to its correction."¹⁷⁶ Adorno elsewhere suggested, along somewhat similar lines, that

subjects constitute what he termed "the ultimate limit of reification," and that on that account mass culture could never afford to relax its grip. "The bad infinity involved in this hopeless effort of repetition is the only trace of hope that this repetition might be in vain, that men cannot wholly be grasped after all."¹⁷⁷

Adorno's monograph-length analysis of the *Los Angeles Times* astrology column, "The Stars Down to Earth," one of the two studies he produced for the Hacker Foundation during his final visit to the United States in 1952-53, provides detailed access to his critique of the CI, characterizing what he regards as the CI's impact on subjectivity and the social stakes that accrue.¹⁷⁸ He based his analysis on a collection of roughly three months of the daily columns (November 1952-February 1953), written by Carroll Righter, "Astrological Forecasts."¹⁷⁹

First the general theme. Adorno recapitulates an argument advanced in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, likening astrology to myth as a not-entirely-irrational effort to put the chaos of reality into order. Adorno names astrology a "secondary superstition": people "know" better but consult it anyway. Astrology is "pseudo-rational," providing what he terms "calculative though spurious adaptation to realistic needs."¹⁸⁰ Adorno suggests that belief in the stars as determinants of human happiness posits life as inscrutable and beyond our control, except for the avenue of compliance to its dictates—which happen to replicate the way things are anyway. Adorno thereby signals an unexpected dialectical reversal: the astrology column (unwittingly) describes a truth about the prevailing irrationality of society and the concomitant de-rationalization of society's subjects. Astrology fictionalizes—or, let us say, aestheticizes—social relations, but its celestial narrative, a faceless cosmic ventriloquism, uncannily replicates what its receiver already knows and experiences as social reality. The aesthetics in other words are always already shabby. What astrology promises with one hand, it takes back with the other. Its truth is its lie, which its advice matches: "'To be rational' means not questioning irrational conditions, but to make the best of them from the viewpoint of one's private interests."¹⁸¹ All advice is proffered to an imagined solitary individual; it is never social. To the extent that social interaction is authorized, it occurs solely as an opportunity to advance oneself. "Friends" are reified as a means to achieve one's own ends. Sociability, in other words, is reduced to instrumental and private practicality. Life is best led by cutting a deal with the stars; implicitly, life is getting ahead by using others for this purpose. All of which is ordained by the cosmos: the universe, as it were, decrees the logic of capitalism, the achievement of profit, the survival of the economic fittest.¹⁸²

The column's presentation of objective difficulties lays their cause at the doorstep of the individual whose task it is to overcome that for which he himself bears responsibility.¹⁸³ The advice proffered, geared to the individual, "implies that all problems due to objective circumstances such as, above all, economic difficulties, can be solved in terms of private individual behavior or by psychological insight, particularly into oneself, but also into others."¹⁸⁴ The stars, put differently, have birthed Dale Carnegie: *How to Win Friends and Influence People*¹⁸⁵ had been a best-selling tract since its first publication in 1937 and, by the 1950s, was a major staple in self-marketing and getting ahead. The book treats intersubjective relationships as a means to an end and little more, an early example in the long history of such books, which continue to find their way onto best-seller lists.

Adorno repeatedly critiques the lack of human spontaneity presumed—and, indeed, prescribed—by astrology-column advice. He centers the discussion on the interface between private life and public, organized around the bi-phasically divided day: the day designated for work and the night for family and leisure, as determined by the stars. As Adorno wryly notes, the bi-phasic approach to life promotes the perfect circularity of the economic system: a man's life "falls into two sections, one where he functions as a producer and one where he functions as a consumer."¹⁸⁶ And in the end, pleasure has no justification for its own sake; if properly had, it will lead to "practical advantages."

Accompanying this outline for future achievement is what Adorno names "the monotonously frequent advice to 'be happy.'"¹⁸⁷ Addressed to men (though, as Adorno presumed, more likely read by women), the column counsels on relationships, especially marriage, and is designed to keep happy the at-home wife, the better to further the husband's economic goals. Marriage is a calculation. Spousal closeness is transformed into an economic ritual, an interpersonal investment: Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, birthday. "Togetherness is rationalistically promoted just as a further means of smoothing out things and keeping the partners together while the actual basis for their common *joie de vivre* seems to have gone. . . . The idea that one has to send flowers to one's wife not because one feels an urge to do so, but because one is afraid of the scene she makes if one forgets the flowers is mirrored by the empty and meaningless nature of the family activities which the columnist sets in motion."¹⁸⁸

The column's rhetorical address plays off the mythology of the subject, with subjecthood treated as spectacle: "Display that keen mind of yours"—in essence, by repeatedly making a gesture of assent: "Yes, I will." The

appeal to anxiety—the column's first principle—is the social truth that things are not what they should be. Like advertising, astrology rejects the past, finds inadequacy in the present, and points to a future. As such, it references the utopian by taking advantage of utopia's own mythic value. Further, the dissatisfaction that astrology invokes is real. If one follows astrology's dictates, all futures—like all fortune cookies—promise benefits. Astrology immanently certifies that "Shit happens," and it ascribes a cause: the failure of the isolated self. Astrology cannot address the social, only the personal. And the charge to the person is: adapt yourself, manipulate others; be in tune; be cunning. And not least, submit to the stars—whose motions guarantee the prevailing terrestrial (social) order. Be dependable—by being dependent.¹⁸⁹

In his late essay "Free Time" (1969), much of it addressing the issue of "hobbies," Adorno turns his gaze to the body, specifically the body on the beach, and the cultural politics of people preparing themselves to be looked at. He connects such bodies to the advertising for the cosmetics and leisure industries, and to the inculcation of a form of self-desire and drive. The example is tanning. "An exemplary instance is the behavior of those who let themselves roast brown in the sun merely for the sake of a tan, even though dozing in the blazing sun is by no means enjoyable, even possibly physically unpleasant, and certainly makes people intellectually inactive. With the brown hue of the skin, which of course in other respects can be quite pretty, the fetish character of commodities seizes people themselves; they become fetishes to themselves. . . . The state of dozing in the sun represents the culmination of a decisive element of free time under the present conditions: boredom."¹⁹⁰ Boredom, he clarifies, is a social phenomenon; it is "objective desperation"—an objective condition of Western subjectivity.¹⁹¹

Writing

For a man who no longer has a homeland, writing becomes a place to live.

Adorno, *Minima Moralia*

Adorno was a supremely careful writer. Rolf Tiedemann, Adorno's assistant during the early 1960s, reported that Adorno invariably carried a small notebook in which he jotted down ideas, and which he later used as a source for dictation. The dictated pages were typed double-spaced and with wide margins. Sentences were often incomplete. "He then revised the typed pages, sometimes until none of the typed material was left and everything had been replaced with handwriting. This process was repeated sometimes up to four times."¹⁹² Though famously difficult, a great deal of Adorno's writing is in short form;¹⁹³ many examples, pointedly aphoristic, are not more than a few pages long. The 153 aphorisms constituting *Minima Moralia*, for example, vary in length from a single brief paragraph to as many as six pages (most are one or two pages); and much the same is true for the last section ("Notes and Drafts") of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Adorno's free-standing essays seldom exceed thirty pages and are often shorter. At the opposite end of the spectrum are the two late monographs, Adorno's longest, *Negative Dialectics* and *Aesthetic Theory*. The former is organized, conventionally, into three large parts, two of which are further subdivided into chapter-like sections. The nearly four hundred pages of *Aesthetic Theory*, more extreme, appear entirely without chapter division.¹⁹⁴ Adorno's writing intentionally thwarts effortless reception by passive readers—which not coincidentally parallels his understanding of the resistant quality of socially "true" music.¹⁹⁵ In particular, it resists the "logic" of systematized argument, defined by the expectation that point A leads directly and inevitably to point B. In the words of Ben Agger: "Critique must wrestle with the mystifications of ordinary and disciplinary language in order to wrest language from its straitjacket in the straightforward."¹⁹⁶ Nowhere is this more evident than in Adorno's use of paratactical devices as a principal means by which to organize argument at the level of paragraphs, some of which may consist of only a few sentences, though lengthy paragraphs, often several pages long, are more characteristic.¹⁹⁷ Of whatever length, both Adorno's individual sentences and paragraphs are commonly organized by parataxis, that is, an internal arrangement that avoids the use of either coordinating or subordinating elements. The result, as Susan H. Gillespie aptly explains, "is a grammatical trope that, like the 'broken-off parables' [in Kafka], creates a kind of disjunction and nonspecificity that undermine logical clarity and causality, leaving room for a certain vagueness, and for interpretation."¹⁹⁸

The anti-systematic impulse evident in Adorno's use of parataxis reflects his critique of Western philosophical discursive traditions, to be sure, but at a more fundamental level it constitutes a reaction to the general

instrumentalization of language in modernity. Defiance of society," he once remarked, "includes defiance of its language."¹⁹⁹ Adorno employed two closely related organizational principles in his writing to accommodate this goal: force-field (*Kraftfeld*) and constellation. By the former he meant, in the words of Martin Jay, "a relational interplay of attractions and aversions that constituted the dynamic, transmutational structure of a complex phenomenon." By the latter, an astronomical term that he borrowed from Walter Benjamin, he meant "a juxtaposed rather than integrated cluster of elements that resist reduction to a common denominator, essential core, or generative first principle."²⁰⁰ The astronomical constellation posits a relation on the basis of observable proximity. But at the same time, the relation has a certain metonymic or even arbitrary quality (why link *these* stars and not those?). Nonetheless, once the relation is demonstrated something heretofore invisible becomes apparent, and an insight is produced.²⁰¹ (Terry Eagleton: "Every sentence of [Adorno's] texts is thus forced to work overtime; each phrase must become a little masterpiece or miracle of dialectics, fixing a thought in the second before it disappears into its own contradictions.")²⁰² Exaggeration, central to Adorno's writing, brought dialectical tensions into bold relief as component parts of a force-field or constellation, rather than smoothing them over—the use of which harbors what Max Paddison describes as "a quite deliberate irritation value. [Adorno's] intention is not to restore an illusory equilibrium, wherein all tension . . . between the extremes is conveniently neutralized."²⁰³ In one of the most trenchant sentences in *Minima Moralia*, Adorno remarked, "The splinter in your eye is the best magnifying-glass,"²⁰⁴ an aphorism which itself constitutes a two-element constellation: eye, and magnifying glass used to improve seeing, but here a shattered lens whose shard is stuck in the eye. The result is a new form of "seeing." Whereas the conventional usage is instrumental, eye *and* magnifying glass combined as a tool, in Adorno's constellation this usage is provoked, contradicted, and rendered paradoxical. Seeing now is not a matter of optical mechanics but insight, the driving force behind which in this instance is pain, made more urgent by the metaphor's strong affiliation with both somatic experience and, in essence, history.²⁰⁵ The essay form, Adorno's favorite, permits spontaneity and even (intellectual) play, that is, thought and writing that in their own form replicate both the spirit of emancipation and a constitutive part of the realized subject. Anti-dogmatic, the essay's "method" is to proceed "unmethodically."²⁰⁶ As a structure for philosophical thought, the essay is not predetermined by a philosophical first principle; the thought it reflects arises more directly from the material it studies and less from the concepts that precede the material and which always threaten to overwhelm it. (The essay does not reject concepts; indeed, it cannot do without them. But concepts must be interwoven with experience "as in a carpet.")²⁰⁷ The essay—in a sense *ideally* unsystematic, spontaneous, fragmented—formally constitutes itself less as a magnifying glass, more as a splinter in the eye. Its tendency is critical, its purpose "to move culture to become mindful of its own untruth."²⁰⁸

Adorno's writing is often peppered with foreign words, and their use was of sufficient significance that he produced two essays on the matter, both published in *Notes to Literature*: "On the Use of Foreign Words" and "Words from Abroad."²⁰⁹ In the first of these essays Adorno outlines what he terms "a determined defense of the use of foreign words." What he seeks is "to release their explosive force: not to deny what is foreign in them but to use it."²¹⁰ Foreign words serve to explode the supposed transparency of language itself, to remind the reader of the history, contingency, and difference that language subsumes. Thus in *Minima Moralia* he comments that "German words of foreign derivation are the Jews of language,"²¹¹ which is to suggest that language assimilates difference (the other) which it then uses for its own purpose. Adorno, by using unassimilated foreign words, seeks to promote the otherness of language, and to re-historicize their use rather than promote a supposedly natural transparency. Foreign words constitute for Adorno "the incursion of freedom" into writing; they have legitimacy "as an expression of alienation itself, and also as the transparent crystals that may at some future time explode human beings' dreary imprisonment in preconceived language."²¹²

Adorno's enemy is the language of "communication," today perhaps best encapsulated in the common urge to "get to the point," or "indicate the bottom line"—writing in the service of instrumentality, of time-is-money "practicality." His position hinges on the insight that the extreme forms of "communication" ideology defining the goals of "plain" usage have been fully incorporated not only into the practice of writing but into language itself. Thought takes too long. Profit cannot wait on discourse—not the least explanation for the now ubiquitous phenomena of television sound bites, "factoids," and print-media sidebars: "information" at a glance.²¹³

Adorno's attraction to foreign words develops from their promise of "escape from the sphere of what is always the same, the spell of what one is and knows anyway."²¹⁴ Adorno sees the foreign word as effecting a "beneficial interruption of the conformist moment of language,"²¹⁵ upon which claims of its "natural"

character depend. The foreign word momentarily de-naturalizes language. Adorno's writing explicitly, and carefully, attempts to make us self-reflexive about what Nietzsche referred to as the prison-house of language²¹⁶—the degree to which language, with its historical immanence, speaks us. The greater the self-reflexivity as to the fundamentally *interested* nature of language, the greater chance the subject has to use language against its naturalized perpetuation of falsehood and the promulgation of domination. That language is increasingly defined by the functions and purpose of the CI, as Adorno saw it, made his own radical usage more urgent.²¹⁷

Herbert Marcuse once confessed in an interview that there were many things in Adorno's writing that he didn't understand. But in the same breath Marcuse defended his friend's writing: "Ordinary language, ordinary prose . . . expresses so much the control and manipulation of the individual by the power structure, that in order to counteract this process you have to indicate already in the language you use the necessary rupture with conformity. Hence [Adorno's] attempt to convey this rupture in the syntax, the grammar, the vocabulary, even the punctuation. Now whether this is acceptable or not I don't know. The only thing I would say is that there lies an equally great danger in any premature popularization of the terribly complex problems we face today."²¹⁸

Praxis

The limitations of art proclaim the limits of politics.

Adorno, *Quasi una fantasia*

Georg Lukács: "A considerable part of the leading German intelligentsia, including Adorno, have taken up residence in the 'Grand Hotel Abyss,' which I described in connection with my critique of Schopenhauer as 'a beautiful hotel, equipped with every comfort, on the edge of an abyss, of nothingness, of absurdity. And the daily contemplation of the abyss between excellent meals or artistic entertainments can only heighten the enjoyment of the subtle comforts offered.'"²¹⁹ Lukács's oft-quoted rejoinder agonistically echoes a chorus of similar critiques of Critical Theory on grounds of its purported absence of a social agenda. The Frankfurt intellectuals, so the story goes, recognized suffering, and Adorno, their most famous postwar "spokesman," responded with aesthetics. Lukács adds a nasty twist: Adorno and his crowd enjoyed the good life while philosophically savoring the pessimism triggered by the misery they recognized. Lukács in other words virtually makes the accusation of *Schadenfreude*.²²⁰

Critical Theory's lack of a social program for change was attacked from within as well, notably of course by Adorno's most famous student, Jürgen Habermas. And since Adorno's death this issue in particular has been endlessly invoked. Hans-Jürgen Krahl sums up the usual argument: "Adorno's inability to confront the problem of organization points to an objective inadequacy in his theory, which nevertheless assumes social praxis as a central category in epistemology and social theory."²²¹

Student movement protests, the dramatic social flash point as regards widespread public critique of Critical Theory and Adorno, began in Germany in 1966, focused on federal school and social reform, but reached crisis proportions in June 1967 when a student, Benno Ohnesorg, was killed by a plainclothes policeman during a protest in Berlin over a visit of the Shah of Iran. Shortly after Ohnesorg was shot, Adorno publicly demanded a thorough inquiry—as Rolf Wiggershaus describes it, "This was virtually the only 'intervention' of this sort that he engaged in during his whole career as a professor."²²² Adorno's refusal thereafter to become directly involved was seen by some as an ivory tower response, or worse, a betrayal of the ideals underlying Critical Theory, which had provided students with their intellectual training in social justice and cultural critique. Critical Theory seemed to fail in practice.²²³

The "problem" was not merely some sort of psychic incapacity or other personal failing on Adorno's part to "get involved"; his position mirrors the history, and historical moment, of Critical Theory generally. By the 1930s it was quite apparent to members of the Institute that progressive political change was out of the question. Europe was under the sway of two equally abhorrent models: one fascist, the other Stalinist, both murderous. In America, as they would soon discover, with the grips of the Depression still evident but loosening, liberal democracy marked by the impact of the CI hardly suggested to them a hopeful alternative. And they had long since given up on Marx's notion of a class-based proletarian revolution. In short, Critical Theory became an address to an uncertain future—what Adorno called "*Flaschenposten*," or "messages in

bottles," tossed out to sea in hopes of their later being found.²²⁴ Critical Theory moved away from a critique of political economy in favor of a critique of instrumental reason, in an effort to protect at all costs the ideals—as opposed to the actuality—of the Enlightenment and so as to refuse the ultimate debasement, rationality, which guaranteed cataclysm.

As Irving Wohlfarth remarks, "The implacable logic of world-historical disaster is always counterpointed in Adorno's thinking by the conviction that it could be otherwise."²²⁵ It was art that for Adorno posited an "otherwise" to the present. He expressed it, very much focused on the question at hand, in the essay "Commitment" (1962): "As pure artifacts, products, works of art . . . are instructions for the praxis they refrain from: the production of life lived as it ought to be."²²⁶ A truly "committed" art is not, for Adorno, agitprop. Indeed, his own stance against political art is politically grounded, as Simon Jarvis has pointed out: "The danger for politically committed art is that it will end up as bad art without becoming good politics either."²²⁷ Adorno insisted that art's function is practical only to the extent that it constitutes a resistance indirectly through its aesthetic comportment;²²⁸ in *Aesthetic Theory*, with Brecht clearly in mind, he suggested that artworks which strive to intervene politically have the effect of—as he put it in English—"preaching to the saved," then adding, "Artworks exercise a practical effect, if they do so at all, not by haranguing but by the scarcely apprehensible transformation of consciousness; in any case agitative effects dissipate rapidly."²²⁹

In 1979 Leo Lowenthal commented on Lukács's witty "Grand Hotel Abyss" jab at the comfortable existence of Adorno and company: "I have never heard that miserable living conditions and substandard nutrition are necessary prerequisites for innovative thought. If Marx and Nietzsche at times suffered insults of material deprivation, their theoretical creativity survived, not because of but despite such painful conditions. I might also add that Georg Lukács found his own ways of comfortable survival in a political environment where many other heretic Marxists, who were not privy to Lukács's strategy of adaptive behavior, had their heads chopped off."²³⁰ In this memoir Lowenthal staunchly defends Adorno's position, in the short run, in opposition to the demands that he join the student protest and, in the long run, as regards the function of Critical Theory. He sums up his position on both counts with a comment about Marx: "Imagine for a moment Marx dying on the barricades in 1849 or 1871: there would be no Marxism, no advanced psychological models, and certainly no Critical Theory. The call to arms the ultraradical disciples directed at their teachers—legitimate as their intentions may have been—has merely produced excesses, the consequences of which have become only too obvious in the troubled state the New Left finds itself in today."²³¹

In *Negative Dialectics* Adorno several times addressed the theory-praxis relation, stressing the primacy of thought, and acknowledging the need for praxis, but refusing to link one to the other, especially in light of the commonplace demand that theory serve practice: "The call for unity of theory and practice has irresistibly degraded theory to a servant's role, removing the very traits it should have brought to that unity. The visa stamp of practice which we demand of all theory became a censor's placet. Yet whereas theory succumbed in the vaunted mixture, practice became nonconceptual, a piece of politics it was supposed to lead out of; it became the prey of power. . . . The recovery of theory's independence lies in the interest of practice itself."²³² In the face of the student attacks on what they regarded as his quietism, Adorno wrote a brief essay at the end of his life, "Resignation" (1969), in which he staked out one last time the argument for a position that he had in essence maintained his entire career. He summarized the charges against him: "One should join in. Whoever only thinks, removes himself, is considered weak, cowardly, virtually a traitor."²³³ In the course of the essay he reiterates the arguments I have outlined above, drawing from earlier writings. He concludes with the following, returning to a concern that lies at the heart of Critical Theory, human happiness: "The happiness that dawns in the eye of the thinking person is the happiness of humanity. The universal tendency of oppression is opposed to thought as such. Thought is happiness, even where it defines unhappiness: by enunciating it. By this alone happiness reaches into the universal unhappiness. Whoever does not let it atrophy has not resigned."²³⁴

A social theory that so distinctly foregrounds and valorizes the aesthetic is hardly one bound to please subjects shaped by the thoroughly saturated *Realpolitik* of the Cold War and its aftermath and a century's worth of more or less global mass culture imperiously linked to the modes and values of advertising. Aesthetics, except for aestheticized politics in its myriad forms, is hardly regarded as a Midas horde by either the political right or left. The radical quality of Adorno's aesthetic theory is that it redefines the enterprise of aesthetics by insisting on its link not to beauty as such but to the "beauty" of human emancipation.²³⁵

Tradition

Art today is scarcely conceivable except as a form of reaction that anticipates the apocalypse.

Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*

What in the end has Adorno handed down? What is the "state" of his work today? There is no simple response to these questions. In the decade following his death in 1969 it's fair to say that Adorno's life's work in philosophy, sociology, music, and aesthetics was eclipsed in Germany in large part by the work of Jürgen Habermas, his former student, and also by historical realities in the Federal Republic. Whereas students in the late 1960s had attacked Adorno for what they perceived as his political quietism (from their point of view, in essence, his conservatism), within a very few years, posthumously, he was discredited by the political right as an intellectual father to the radical, and violent, left that emerged in Germany during the 1970s.²³⁶ Adorno's "politics," by which his oeuvre as a whole was implicitly judged seemed either out of date or dangerous, or both.

Though a very major figure in new music circles extending out from the Darmstadt Summer Courses, Adorno's position in German musicology was something else again. In a discipline somewhat noted for aesthetic and epistemological conservatism, Adorno's sociology of music was distasteful to the degree that he cast his unrelenting critical gaze especially at the German musical canon—for which in other circles he has since been criticized for his seeming blindness to the non-German—and did so by means alien to the established traditions of German musicology. His work was anti-positivistic, dialectical, and relentlessly hermeneutical—in a word, philosophical; it was fundamentally qualitative, hence set against a resolutely established quantitative disciplinary practice.

Adorno's sociology worked from both the outside and the inside of musical works. "Outside" musical texts, he looked at social practices, but here he upset musicological convention by his relative lack of interest in empirical research, though Adorno knew well the "basic facts" of music history, to be sure. But he insisted on the inadequacy of musical facts as such to the understanding of music—precisely the argument in musicology that emerged in full-blown form only in the mid 1980s, but was nonetheless foreshadowed during the last decade of Adorno's life in his critique of positivism, especially as represented by British philosopher Karl Popper.²³⁷ "Inside" the musical text, Adorno committed to what he named "immanent criticism," analyzing objective musical details in relation to one another, that is, to musically specific compositional procedures, and also interrogating them as objectively subjective engagements with the reality external to the musical text, a kind of musical hermeneutics that the discipline of musicology only slowly accepted as legitimate, and not without continuing controversy. Stated forthrightly, Adorno work pursues music's meaning as produced through the complicated interplay of the work's own specificity—which develops in response to the demands of its musical material, the outgrowth of society and history—and meaning that results from the social-historical site the music occupies, both in the time of its making and in the ever-changing present.

Adorno refused the academic separation of history, sociology, philosophy, and aesthetics, though he obviously experienced their actual institutional disciplinary division. He was a member of a sociology department; he didn't train musicologists. Within the academy of postwar Germany, aesthetics, an overriding concern to Adorno, was not precisely a hot topic, and from Adorno's point of view for very good reason, as he polemically wrote in the "Draft Introduction" to *Aesthetic Theory*: "Philosophical aesthetics found itself confronted with the fatal alternative between dumb and trivial universality on the one hand and, on the other, arbitrary judgments usually derived from conventional opinions. . . . The reason for the obsolescence of aesthetics is that it scarcely ever confronted itself with its object."²³⁸ It was precisely the failures of philosophy and aesthetics that led Adorno in pursuit of both—and at the end of his life at a time when the academy was losing both faith and interest in these subjects.

On its appearance in 1970, a year after Adorno's death, *Aesthetic Theory* failed to attract the kind of attention that would likely have occurred had it appeared perhaps five years earlier. A clear sense of the decline in Adorno's intellectual stock is particularly notable by the mid-1970s, the flavor of which can be gleaned from a strident and dismissive review of the 1973 English translation of *Negative Dialectics* published in the British left-wing journal *Newsociety*, titled "Frankfurters."²³⁹ "Is the Frankfurt school really in fashion?," D. G. MacRae, the author, rhetorically asks. The valence of "intellectual fashion" is forthright; MacRae dismisses

the body of work as a whole as "too historically specific, too local, too incidental, to be accessible other than as an object of historical attention," to which he immediately adds that it wasn't even "intrinsically good enough for the effort [of studying it as a historical phenomenon] to be worthwhile." But then MacRae qualifies himself as he launches into the review proper. What he really means by "Frankfurters" is Adorno, whose book he characterizes as "preposterous." "To be a disciple of Frankfurt in 1974, in south London or Newcastle, is as silly as trying to be a Viking or an imperial Chinese bureaucrat." *Negative Dialectics* is directly assessed in two brief paragraphs. Especially notable is the reviewer's venom toward Adorno personally and his lack of hesitation to engage in an ad hominem appraisal in a book review. MacRae met Adorno once and found him "the most arrogant, self-indulgent (intellectually and culturally) man I had ever met. Some 20 years later, I can think of additional claimants for that position, but I doubt if they are serious rivals." In the end, MacRae grudgingly attributes to *Negative Dialectics* "some merits," but "mainly," he closes, "there is intellectual narcissism and self-indulgence, mitigated by a not unattractive statement of Adorno's own posture," presumably an acknowledgment of Adorno's self-reflexivity as a philosopher. Suggesting that *Aesthetic Theory* is "not worth the effort," he ends: "this book conveys a dreadful, negative truth about the vanities of the learned mind in our century." By MacRae's account, the small extent to which Adorno seemed interesting was solely as an historical figure whose time had passed.

Critical Theory—by the late 1960s coterminous with Adorno—seemed to have one foot firmly planted at the door of irrelevance and the other at the door of political regression by default. Adorno's comedown, which came about less by dealing with him than deciding, in the words of MacRae, that he just wasn't any longer "worth the effort," was exacerbated in the English-speaking world by few translations, poor translations, and, not least, Adorno's dependence on the German intellectual and philosophical tradition, which was little known and less appreciated in the UK and, especially, North America. At least as problematic was his dialectical, constellational, and intentionally hyperbolic writing, and, of course, his unremitting enmity (or so it appeared) toward popular culture, as that position began to be known via the first major work translated into English (1972), *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, and its since endlessly anthologized chapter on the Culture Industry. Adorno's CI critiques became widely available in English at precisely the moment that popular culture studies came into their own in the British and American academy. Adorno was greeted as the devil.

Adorno's vast corpus of musical writings hardly had an impact outside Germany, apart from the notable exception of his frequent appearances at Darmstadt, where his work on new music was widely received by an international body of composers. The nearly total absence of English translations of Adorno's work at the time of his death began to be rectified, slowly, in the course of the 1970s, principally in the journal *Telos*, and slightly later, in *New German Critique*; both journals included key music essays among those they published. The major philosophical works were translated first in a trickle, a bit faster in the 1980s, and quite dramatically in the 1990s—to the point where the earliest translations, often lamentably flawed, of major monographs are now being retranslated. The translation of Adorno's music writing has followed a similar trajectory, especially in the past decade. The demand for Adorno in English is clearly related to the qualitative (as opposed to the long-established quantitative) tendency in musicology that emerged in the 1980s, together with a new-found respect for music criticism (in regard to both, musicology followed the literary disciplines by nearly a generation; indeed, literary theory played a significant role in producing the changes that have occurred in musicology). Adorno's insistence on aesthetics generally, and music especially, as social discourses—as social agents—provided music scholars with a means to rethink the very purpose of their practice—a means by which to address a discipline that seemed increasingly to be of little interest to anyone besides themselves (for reasons, to be sure, by no means solely the fault of musicology's then-dominant intellectual paradigms, as would be clear from any reading of Adorno on the nature of modernity and the general dominance of the commodity form on all life, including the life of the mind). Simply stated, Adorno's musical thought constituted an engaged praxis that precisely attempted to understand how music itself functions as praxis. He defined his life's work, in other words, around pertinent questions about modern Western musical life, seemingly in perpetual crisis, the varying accounts of which are almost limitless: the death of classical music, the still-birth of new music, the colonization of all music by its commodification as "cultural product," the loss of audience, the decline of musical education in the schools, etc. Indeed, even Adorno's severe attacks on popular musics spurred important debate; he perceived earlier than virtually any other major scholar the social and cultural impact of popular art, and he developed a theoretical language for delineating the matter. Unlike musicology, in other words, Adorno did not ignore the popular but wrote extensively about it a full fifty years before popular music made its way into the academy as a legitimate object of study.

In music studies, Adorno's "star" has risen higher now than at any time during his life, his Darmstadt influence notwithstanding, in light of which I return to the first question I posed at the beginning of this section: What, in the end, has Adorno handed down? My response develops from a reading of Adorno's short essay, "On Tradition" (1966).²⁴⁰ Adorno opens with etymology: *tradere*, to hand down, an implicit reference to generational continuity, physical proximity, and immediacy—virtually a familial relation. His purpose, as Eva Geulen notes, is to inquire into the tradition of tradition;²⁴¹ he immediately renders the term paradoxical: "Tradition is opposed to rationality, even though the one took shape in the other. Its medium is not consciousness but the pregiven, unreflected and binding existence of social forms—the actuality of the past; unintentionally this notion of binding existence was transmitted to the intellectual/spiritual sphere."²⁴² In this sense, tradition has a kind of social-aesthetic dimension to the extent that it binds person to person; it acts as a force of reconciliation. But in modernity tradition is out of its element; it is "incompatible with bourgeois society," where the exchange principle has rendered tradition itself little more than an instrumentally rationalized advertising ploy. Adorno points to the loss of temporal continuity in common experience, wherein history is reduced to the Now of seasonal fashion. Tradition is invoked as a form of reassurance that nothing really has changed in the face of the myriad and fundamental social disruptions that define late modernity, or, conversely and perversely, tradition's loss is invoked but ironically blamed on social and political resistance to modernity's disruptive and regressive change—the Family Values slogans of the 1980s were a perfect manifestation. The very fact that tradition, in certain nostalgic and mythic forms, is the mantra of the political right marks the self-consciousness with which tradition must now be remembered, as opposed to being experienced or lived.²⁴³ Under the social, cultural, and historical impact of the commodity form, tradition in its "classic" definition can only be advertised and, in a sense, literally purchased. Tradition's soul inhabits products: Brady-Bunch remakes, "That 70s Show"; retro designs for here and now, including model-year 2000 automobiles made to look like 1930s sedans (Chrysler's PT Cruiser), otherwise known only from old black-and-white movies; remakes of the '60s VW Beetle, with the genteel addition of a tasteful bud vase bracketed to the dashboard in homage to the Flower Power youth of its presumed, nostalgia-ridden middle-aged buyers. Etc.

And yet: "To complain [about the loss of tradition] and to recommend tradition as a cure is entirely useless. This contradicts the very essence of tradition. Utilitarian rationality—the consideration of how nice it would be to have a tradition in a world allegedly or actually lacking any coherence—cannot prescribe what it invalidates."²⁴⁴ Lost tradition cannot be reproduced aesthetically, though Adorno insists this is precisely what society attempts.

In its assigned task to assure us that we really are who we claim to be, tradition also engages difference: it works to extinguish otherness and is appealed to as a kind of universalized value. Thus, in extreme form, the otherness of the Jew is "overcome" by appeal to mythic Aryan "tradition": cultural solidarity, as national product, achieved by erasure. A society structured on a foundation of extreme inequality attempts to suture its gaps by the claim to oneness, by which means otherness is renamed. Accordingly, publicly to reference the increasingly obscene gap between the richest 5 percent of Americans and the rest of the population is anti-traditional: it flies in the face of the myth of the Melting Pot, the ultimate tradition that defined "us."²⁴⁵ The temerity to mention radical inequality is to "engage in class warfare" and is hence un-American, anti-traditional.

And so with the aesthetic. "Society applies tradition systematically like an adhesive; in art, it is held out as a pacifier to soothe peoples' qualms about their atomization, including temporal atomization. . . . Manipulated and neutralized by the bourgeois principle, tradition eventually turns into a toxin. As soon as genuine traditional aspects of culture—significant art works of the past—are idolized as relics they degenerate into elements of an ideology which relishes the past so that the present will remain unaffected by it, at the cost of increasing narrowness and rigidity."²⁴⁶ The appeal by artists to the past is fraught with danger precisely to the extent that modernity has rendered tradition a thing, ore to be mined for future product. "False tradition," Adorno warns, "wallows in false wealth,"²⁴⁷ a principle that defines Adorno's sustained critique of musical neo-classicism which he derides as the fabrication of "arts and crafts," ready-made procedures, pre-molded. Adorno's larger point is that "tradition" rendered thing-like constitutes a self-conscious act of remembering in order to forget, in which the need to remember is trumped by the double appeal of nostalgia and nostalgia's commodity value. In aesthetics, the end result is not *l'art pour l'art* but something worse: art for sale and explicitly under false pretense, an art which fails to engage the present by pretending an idealized "past" (a never-never past) impotent to shape the future except to the extent that it authorizes the modernity (or postmodernity) against which it otherwise supposedly acts.

And yet: the market-driven appeal to tradition recognizes, and of course appeals to, an acute sense of loss that is real. The dominant here-and-now of a society increasingly divided economically and culturally is, after all, the constituent result of its own set of traditions: truly traditional to the extent that they are so deeply entrenched, naturalized, and non-reflexive. But they are not traditional insofar as the traditional ethical import of the word "tradition" conventionally presupposes; hence, the appeal to a false tradition rendered ideological through and through. "Thus tradition today poses an insoluble contradiction. There is no tradition today and none can be conjured, yet when every tradition has been extinguished the march toward barbarism will begin."²⁴⁸ The dialectical paradox of tradition replicates the dialectics that organize modernity generally. Adorno describes a condition of modern aporia that can neither be wished away nor passively accepted. Tradition must be confronted "with the most advanced stage of consciousness." He insists that there is no permanent canon [*keinen ewigen Vorrat*]: "But there is a relation to the past which, though not conservative, facilitates the survival of many works by refusing to compromise."²⁴⁹ What does this mean? Adorno remarks that what he called the "critical approach to tradition" does not turn its back on the past as no longer interesting, thereby reducing the past to the mere forebear of the here and now, the by-product of historicism, yesterday's news. What principally interests him about the past is that which has been "left along the way," that which has been forgotten or dismissed as outdated—what he elsewhere names as "scars."²⁵⁰ New art does not ignore the past, as though "starting from scratch" but engages it via a "determinate negation" (which constitutes the basis of his position on Beethoven, Mahler, Schoenberg and Berg); thereby new art transforms tradition, working to collapse tradition's affirmative character, and remakes the meaning of past and present alike.²⁵¹ But the artist's relation to tradition necessarily remains fundamentally dialectical: "Tradition goes against the grain of every artist irritated by its ornamental character and its fabrication of meaning where there is none. Each remains true to this meaning by refusing to be deceived by it."²⁵² Adorno reiterates this theme in the essay's last sentence: "Only that which inexorably denies tradition may once again retrieve it."²⁵³ In *Minima Moralia* he states the matter still more succinctly, and with specific regard for its implications for the human subject: "One must have tradition in oneself, to hate it properly."²⁵⁴ Neil Lazarus comments that this aphorism's conceit "represents a uniquely illuminating and enabling rubric under which to think in a politically engaged fashion about intellectual and cultural practice today."²⁵⁵ He continues, in what I take to be as sound an argument as I can imagine for the continued relevance, indeed urgency, of Adorno's work:

The point for Adorno . . . is that while the tradition of European bourgeois humanism has always insisted upon its civility, has always gestured toward—even made a promise of—a universalistically conceived social freedom, it has never delivered on this promise, except, arguably, to the privileged few, and even then only on the basis of the domination of all the others. To hate tradition properly is in these terms very different from championing this exclusive (and excluding . . .) tradition; on the contrary, it is to keep faith with true universality, with the idea of a radically transformed social order, and to oppose oneself implacably to the false universality of modern (bourgeois) sociality. It is to use one's relative class privilege to combat all privilege, to shoulder the responsibility of intellectualism by "mak[ing] the moral and, as it were, representative effort to say what most of those for whom [one] say[s] it cannot see."²⁵⁶

End Notes

1. For additional information concerning Adorno's biography, see Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973); Martin Jay, *Adorno* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984); Gerhard Knapp, *Theodor W. Adorno* (Berlin: Colloquium, 1980); Hartmut Scheible, *Theodor W. Adorno: Mit Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowolt, 1989); Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, trans. Michael Robertson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995); and

Rolf Wiggershaus, *Theodor W. Adorno* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1987). This last study is principally an introduction to Adorno's thought, though some biographical information is also provided. I have drawn, in part, on all of these texts for many of the biographical details reported in what follows.

2. Jay, Adorno, p. 25.

3. Concerning a degree of controversy about the name change, see Jay, Adorno, p. 34. Hannah Arendt judged the decision, in Jay's words, as "evidence of an almost collaborationist mentality." But Adorno's friend Friedrich Pollock "has claimed that it was on his initiative that the name change took place" (p. 34).

4. Leo Lowenthal, "Recollections of Theodor W. Adorno" (1983), trans. Sabine Wilke, in *An Unmastered Past: The Autobiographical Reflections of Leo Lowenthal*, ed. Martin Jay (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), p. 205. Martin Jay, "Adorno and Kracauer: Notes on a Troubled Friendship," in *Permanent Exiles: Essays on the Intellectual Migration from Germany to America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 218, describes the early friendship as "rooted in a Platonically erotic attraction." The friendship was complicated by intellectual disagreements already by the 1930s. See also, in the same volume, Jay, "The Extraterritorial Life of Siegfried Kracauer," pp. 152-97. Though the two remained friends most of their lives (Kracauer died in 1966), during the last few years the very serious differences that emerged over each other's work in the end put a serious strain on the relationship, which Jay outlines in detail, principally based on extensive notes Kracauer wrote concerning his last two face-to-face meetings with Adorno in 1960 and 1964, both of which ended badly. Further, Kracauer took offense at Adorno's somewhat backhanded seventy-fifth birthday tribute, first given as a radio lecture in 1964 and soon thereafter published: "The Curious Realist: On Siegfried Kracauer," *NL*, vol. 2, pp. 58-75. Jay reports, "Adorno and Kracauer," p. 235, that Kracauer attached the following note to his copy of the Adorno text: "this emotionally laden, slanderous article of TWA who does not shrink from telling falsehoods." Kracauer's reaction is overwrought, though he correctly recognized Adorno's between-the-lines critique of his one-time mentor.

5. Hauke Brunkhorst, "Theodor W. Adorno: Aesthetic Constructivism and a Negative Ethic of the Non-Forfeited Life," trans. James Swindal, in *The Handbook of Critical Theory*, ed. David M. Rasmussen (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 307-08.

6. Adorno, "Curious Realist," p. 58.

7. Lowenthal, "Recollections of Theodor W. Adorno," p. 203.

8. Adorno, "Curious Realist," pp. 58-59.

9. For an hilarious account of an early encounter between Berg and Adorno at the composer's home in Vienna in 1925—the young and awe-struck Adorno vastly overstaying his welcome, even to the point of following Berg and his wife to a concert and joining them, uninvited, in their box, all the while talking incessantly at the patient but exhausted Berg—see Christopher Hailey, "Defining Home: Berg's Life on the Periphery," in *The Cambridge Companion to Berg*, ed. Anthony Pople (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 15-16.

10. For a list of the essays Adorno published in these journals during this period, see Max Paddison, *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 333-36. Paddison points out (p. 23) that during this time Adorno was in direct contact with a number of composers besides Berg and Schoenberg, including Webern, Hindemith, Eisler, Weill, and Krenek. Concerning his important letter exchanges with Krenek, especially during the 1920s and 1930s, over twelve-tone music and the concept of musical material, see pp. 81-97; Adorno and Ernst Krenek, *Briefwechsel* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974); and Adorno and Ernst Krenek, "Arbeitsprobleme des Komponisten: Gespräch über Musik und soziale Situation" (1930), *GS*, vol. 19, pp. 433-39.

11. See *GS*, vol. 19.

12. Max Paddison, *Adorno, Modernism and Mass Culture: Essays on Critical Theory and Music* (London: Kahn and Averill, 1996), p. 3. For the *Pierrot lunaire* review, see *GS*, vol. 19, pp. 11-14.

13. Richard Wolin, *The Terms of Cultural Criticism: The Frankfurt School, Existentialism, Poststructuralism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p. 47.

14. Cited in Wiggershaus, *Frankfurt School*, p. 128.

15. Gillian Rose, *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), p. 9.

16. Evelyn Wilcock, "Adorno's Uncle: Dr. Bernard Wingfield and the English Exile of Theodor W. Adorno, 1934-38," *German Life and Letters* 49 no. 3 (July 1996), p. 327.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 330-31.

18. Wiggershaus, *Frankfurt School*, p. 128.

19. See further Wilcock, "Adorno's Uncle," p. 338; and Evelyn Wilcock, "Alban Berg's Appeal to Edward Dent on Behalf of Theodor Adorno, 18 November 1933," *German Life and Letters* 50 no. 3 (July 1997), pp. 365-68.
20. Lowenthal, "Recollections of Theodor W. Adorno," p. 204.
21. Adorno later succeeded in getting his parents out of Germany, but not before both had been arrested. His father's offices were destroyed and his property seized. See CC, p. 298, letter from Adorno to Benjamin, written from New York, 1 February 1939, describing his parents' incarceration and subsequent release. His parents emigrated to Cuba shortly thereafter, and to the United States early in 1940.
22. Adorno's distinctly modest house, which he rented, is at 316 S. Kentor Avenue, in Brentwood. Horkheimer lived nearby in a bungalow, no longer standing, at 13524 D'Este Drive. For a map to the homes of the émigrés, see the exhibition catalogue by Stephanie Barron, with Sabine Eckmann, *Exiles + Emigrés: The Flight of European Artists from Hitler*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997), pp. 358-61. In the immediate area (Brentwood, Santa Monica, and Pacific Palisades) lived Hanns Eisler, Ernst Toch, and Thomas Mann, who resided in two different houses during his California years; Arnold Schoenberg, whose house is just down the block from the site where formerly stood the house belonging to O. J. Simpson; and Bertolt Brecht, who occupied two different houses about a block apart in Santa Monica. Stravinsky, in West Hollywood, was a bit farther away, and in any event not part of the German Jewish community. Rachmaninoff and Artur Schnabel lived in Beverly Hills, as did Bruno Walter. For an account of Adorno's Southern California experience as read through MM, see Nico Israel, "Damage Control: Adorno, Los Angeles, and the Dislocation of Culture," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 10 no. 1 (Spring 1997), 85-113.
23. Quoted in Martin Jay, "The Frankfurt School in Exile," in *Permanent Exiles: Essays on the Intellectual Migration from Germany to America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 41.
24. For an overview of this project, see Wiggershaus, *Frankfurt School*, pp. 408-30. See also David Norman Smith, "The Beloved Dictator: Adorno, Horkheimer, and the Critique of Domination," *Current Perspectives in Social Theory* 12 (1992), pp. 195-230.
25. Schoenberg—living in the same neighborhood—was not amused, taking particular umbrage at the lack of attribution of the compositional procedure to himself. This complaint was in turn responded to by Mann in the first American edition, *Doctor Faustus: The Life of the German Composer Adrian Leverkühn as Told by a Friend*, trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), p. [512]. Following the novel's last page, Mann added the following text as an "Author's Note": "It does not seem supererogatory to inform the reader that the form of musical composition delineated in Chapter XXII [pp. 185-94], known as the twelve-tone or row system, is in truth the intellectual property of a contemporary composer and theoretician, Arnold Schönberg. I have transferred this technique in a certain ideational context to the fictitious figure of a musician, the tragic hero of my novel. In fact, the passages of this book that deal with musical theory are indebted in numerous details to Schönberg's *Harmonielehre*."
26. Thomas Mann, *The Story of a Novel: The Genesis of Doctor Faustus*, trans. Richard Winston and Clara Winston (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961). See especially the references to Adorno on pp. 40-48, 63, 94-95, 102-03, 150-56, 221-23.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 45. Mann not only read Adorno's work on Wagner and Schoenberg but also from his Beethoven aphorisms, part of a book never completed and published posthumously as a lengthy fragment. Mann acknowledges the incorporation of Adorno's Beethoven commentary (pp. 46-48). Adorno also played for Mann the entire Sonata op. 111 "in a highly instructive fashion," following which, over a period of three days, Mann revised his discussion of the sonata in the novel (chapter 8, pp. 49-69). "Into the poetic little illustrative phrases I wrote for the arietta theme I slipped Adorno's patronymic, Wiesengrund (Meadowland), by way of showing my gratitude" (p. 48).
28. Wiggershaus, *Frankfurt School*, p. 431.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 466. Wiggershaus points out that "restitution and compensation to the victims of the Nazi regime had been forced on the Federal Republic by the Western Allies." Regarding anti-Semitic responses to returning Jews, see p. 467.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 467: Adorno "had never had an offer of a chair from any other university, which would have strengthened his position at Frankfurt. Nor did he ever receive such an offer later on. Once again, Adorno suffered the old Jewish experience of being simultaneously privileged and nevertheless stigmatized and vulnerable."
31. *Ibid.*, p. 456.

- 32.** Adorno, "On the Question: 'What Is German?'" CM, pp. 209-10. Adorno is, of course, playing off the title of Wagner's essay "What Is German?" in Richard Wagner's *Prose Works*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (1895; reprint New York: Broude Brothers, 1966), vol. 4, pp. 149-69. See also Thomas Y. Levin, "Nationalities of Language: Adorno's Fremdwörter, An Introduction to 'On the Question: What Is German?'" *New German Critique* 36 (Fall 1985), pp. 111-19; and Russell A. Berman, *Modern Culture and Critical Theory: Art, Politics, and the Legacy of the Frankfurt School* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), p. 184.
- 33.** Adorno, "On the Question: 'What Is German?'" p. 210.
- 34.** Lydia Goehr, "Music and Musicians in Exile: The Romantic Legacy of a Double Life," in Reinhold Brinkmann and Christoph Wolff, eds., *Driven into Paradise: The Musical Migration from Nazi Germany to the United States* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), p. 70, notes what she terms the duality of home and estrangement, "less in mutually excluding than in doubling terms. Estrangement (linked to freedom, reflectiveness, and openness) and home (linked to understanding, identity, and involvement) capture in their mutual mediation a complex and constructive modernist attitude that persons may take in relation to the society in which they live." And she points to the duality as productive: "This dual perspective, in other terms, allows us to see past a polarization that forces us to conclude either that creativity demands estrangement or that it demands home, and allows us to conclude instead that, if it demands either, then it most likely demands both."
- Martin Jay, "Adorno in America," *New German Critique* 31 (Winter 1984), pp. 157-82, provides an excellent overview of Adorno's alienation from American culture during his years in the United States, but also a clear indication of the powerful intellectual impact of this experience subsequent to his return to Germany, p. 165: "In summary, although it might be said that while in America, Adorno tended to interpret his new surroundings through the lens of his earlier experience, once back home, he saw Germany with the eyes of someone who had been deeply affected by his years in exile. Negatively, this meant an increased watchfulness for the signs of an American-style culture industry in Europe. Positively, it meant a wariness of elitist defenses of high culture for its own sake, a new respect for the value of democratic politics, a grudging recognition of the emancipatory potential in certain empirical techniques, and a keen appreciation of the need for a psychological dimension in pedagogy." Jay provides a useful history of Adorno's reception in the United States up to the early 1980s. See also Martin Jay, "The Permanent Exile of Theodor W. Adorno," *Midstream* 15 (December 1969), pp. 62-69, written shortly after Adorno's death and serving as a kind of personal account of Jay's brief acquaintance with Adorno as well as introduction to his work for English readers at a time when none of the major monographs was available in English, apart from *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), itself a collaborative project and distinctly atypical of Adorno's corpus taken as a whole. Harvey Gross, "Adorno in Los Angeles: The Intellectual in Migration," *Humanities in Society* 2 no. 4 (Fall 1979), pp. 339-51, includes a memoir of a personal encounter with Adorno in 1948, and otherwise reads parts of MM against his life in exile.
- 35.** Adorno, "On the Question: 'What Is German?'" p. 211. The remainder of the essay discusses German as a philosophical language—not to promote it as such but, rather, to explain what German allows Adorno as a native speaker that he cannot gain access to via a foreign tongue. For other comments by Adorno on the exile experience, see Stephen Hinton, "Hindemith and Weill: Cases of 'Inner' and 'Other' Direction," in Reinhold Brinkmann and Christoph Wolff, eds., *Driven into Paradise: The Musical Migration from Nazi Germany to the United States* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 276-77 n. 56, summarizing a lecture Adorno read to the Jewish Club of Los Angeles on 27 May 1945 entitled "Fragen an die intellektuelle Emigration." In a letter to Benjamin, 13 March 1934, CC, p. 32, Adorno comments: "I am spending a great deal of time learning English. Learning a foreign language when you are an adult must count amongst the strangest of experiences"; see also p. 54, a letter to Benjamin, 6 November 1934, in which Adorno, proffering advice to his friend, stresses the importance of writing in one's native language.
- 36.** For details, see "Editorisches Nachwort," GS, vol. 20.2, pp. 826-28.
- 37.** Adorno's concerns were almost exclusively Western European, and he rarely investigated music prior to Bach. His Eurocentrism has often been noted. See, for example, Edward W. Said, *Musical Elaborations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. xviii-ix, 54-55.
- 38.** For a complete list of his opera and concert reviews, see GS, vol. 19, pp. 648-50; the book reviews, on pp. 341-430.
- 39.** Berg was specifically discussing Adorno's First String Quartet. Alban Berg and Arnold Schoenberg, *The Berg-Schoenberg Correspondence: Selected Letters*, ed. Juliane Brand, Christopher Hailey, and Donald Harris, trans. Juliane Brand and Christopher Hailey (New York: Norton, 1987), p. 355.

40. Mann, *Story of a Novel*, p. 39. On Adorno, the composer, see René Leibowitz, "Der Komponist Theodor W. Adorno," in *Zeugnisse: Theodor W. Adorno zum sechzigsten Geburtstag* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1963), pp. 355-59; Sigfried Schibli, *Der Komponist Theodor W. Adorno* (Frankfurt am Main: Frankfurter Bund für Volksbildung, 1988); Dieter Schnebel, "Einführung in Adornos Musik," in *Adorno und die Musik*, ed. Otto Kolleritsch (Graz: Universal Edition, 1979), pp. 15-19; and, especially, Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn, eds., *Theodor W. Adorno: Der Komponist Musik-Konzepte 63-64* (Munich: Text + Kritik, 1989). This last volume comprises twelve essays concerning Adorno's compositions, including songs; pieces for female chorus; his *Kinderjahr*, an arrangement for small orchestra of six pieces from Schumann's *Album für die Jugend* op. 68, for solo piano (1848); *Zwei Stücke für Streichquartett*; and *Sechs kurze Orchesterstücke*. A complete catalogue of Adorno's compositions is provided (pp. 144-46), including unpublished work. The earliest dated composition is from 1918, when Adorno was only fifteen, and the latest from 1946. Most of his compositions date from the 1920s and 1930s.

Adorno left unfinished an opera based on *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* called *Der Schatz des Indianer-Joe: Singspiel nach Mark Twain*, edited with an afterword by Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979), a facsimile of the fragments, based on his own libretto written over a ten-month period beginning in November 1932. Adorno's only completed music for the piece was "Two Songs for Voice and Orchestra," published in the two-volume edition of Adorno's music (which contains twelve works in all, most of which are multi-part collections of short pieces—lieder, especially, but also choral works, pieces for string quartet, and a few pieces for orchestra, including arrangements): *Adorno, Kompositionen*, ed. Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn (Munich: Edition Text + Kritik, 1980), vol. 2, pp. 63-72. Benjamin, notably critical of the libretto, exchanged several letters with Adorno on the matter. See CC, pp. 23-28; the letters date from late January to mid March 1934. In a letter to Benjamin, 13 March 1934, CC, p. 31, Adorno commented on his lack of success in getting his music published.

Adorno compositions employed both free tonality and serial techniques. Several compositions have recently been released on CD: (1) *Kompositionen*, Wergo WER 6173-2, currently out of print; (2) *Works for String Quartet*, DeutschlandRadio CPO 999 341-2, includes *Six Studies for String Quartet* (1920), the *String Quartet* (1921), and *Two Pieces for String Quartet* op. 2; and (3) *Schumann*, BIS-CD-1055, includes the *Kinderjahr* arrangement.

41. See Gianmario Borio, "Die Positionen Adornos zur musikalischen Avantgarde zwischen 1954 und 1966," in *Adorno in seinen musikalischen Schriften* (Rogensburg: G. Bosse, 1987), pp. 163-64, detailing Adorno's Darmstadt activities in 1950-51, 1954-57, 1961, 1965-66.

42. Though Stockhausen had been giving lectures at Darmstadt since 1953, it was only in 1957 that he was first invited to teach composition there. *Klavierstück XI* is organized so that the pianist determines its form each time it is performed.

43. See Pierre Boulez, "Alea," trans. David Noakes and Paul Jacobs, *Perspectives of New Music* 3 no. 1 (Fall/Winter 1964), pp. 42-53. Boulez speaks on behalf of a balance between composition and chance, p. 45: "Composition ought to reserve at every moment surprises and ways of its own regardless of all the rationality that must be imposed in other respects in order to attain an unquestionable solidity." He derides "pure" chance as much as he does integral serialist full-control efforts, regarding both as fetishistic. His critique of integral serialism parallels Adorno's, p. 43: "Schematization, quite simply, takes the place of invention. . . . [The result is] a fetishism of numbers, leading to pure and simple failure. We plunge into statistical lists that have no more value than other lists." Boulez taught annually at Darmstadt from 1955 to 1967. See his balanced and often appreciative commentary on Adorno, "L'informulé," *Revue d'esthétique* 8 (1985), pp. 25-29, which concludes: "Adorno, que l'on a souvent accusé d'être exagérément abscons, je le trouve, moi, un professeur de réalité, cette réalité qui annihile le dilettantisme, absolument"; and also his memorial verse following Adorno's death, "T. {ths} W. Adorno," in Pierre Boulez, *Orientations: Collected Writings* by Pierre Boulez, ed. Jean-Jacques Nattiez, trans. Martin Cooper (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 517-18. Wiggershaus, *Frankfurt School*, pp. 512-17, provides a basic account of Adorno's Darmstadt involvement and related position on the musical avant-garde. See also two recent collections: (1) Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn, eds., *Darmstadt-Dokumente I, Musik-Konzepte Sonderband: Die Reihe über Komponisten* (Munich: Edition Text + Kritik, 1999), which includes a long essay by Adorno not included in the GS, "Funktion der Farbe in der Musik," a 1966 Darmstadt lecture, and also the transcript of a 1966 planning session for a conference on the theme "Time in New Music." The participants were Adorno, György Ligeti, Rudolf Stephan, Herbert Brün, and Wol Rosenberg (pp. 313-29). Included are a number of photographs of Adorno at Darmstadt. (2) Markus Grassl and Reinhard Kapp, eds., *Darmstadt-Gespräche: Die Internationalen Fereinkurse für neue Musik in Wien* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1996). Half of the text is devoted to eleven lengthy

oral-history interviews of Darmstadt participants, and half to documents, including letters and postcards, newspaper articles, concert reviews, and new-music concert programs (1946-68); an extensive bibliography is provided. There are numerous references throughout the book to Adorno's involvement.

44. Henry W. Pickford, "Preface," CM, p. ix. See further Gerd Kadelbach, "Persönliche Begegnungen mit Theodor W. Adorno im Frankfurter Funkhaus," in *Politische Pädagogik: Beiträge zur Humanisierung der Gesellschaft*, ed. Friedhelm Zubke (Weinheim: Deutscher Studien, 1990), pp. 49-56, a memoir of Adorno's editor at Hessischer Rundfunk in Frankfurt, regarding Adorno's attention to making his radio commentaries accessible to listeners. Some sense of this may be gleaned from the published transcript of a question and answer period following a public lecture, "The Meaning of Working through the Past," CM, pp. 295-306. Adorno's "public" writing appeared in the following notably diverse venues: *Akzenten*, *Darmstädter Echo*, *FAZ*, *Deutsche Post*, *Frankfurter Heften*, *Frankfurter Neue Press*, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, *Hessischen Rundfunk*, *Merkur*, *Neue Zürischer*, *Neuen Rundschau*, *Rundfunk und Fernsehen*, *Sender Freies Berlin*, *Der Spiegel*, *Volkshochschule im Westen*, and *Die Zeit*.

45. Leo Lowenthal, "Theodor W. Adorno: An Intellectual Memoir," in *An Unmastered Past: The Autobiographical Reflections of Leo Lowenthal*, ed. Martin Jay (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 189-90.

46. Jay, Adorno, p. 55. A highly detailed and consistently fascinating documentary account of this history is contained in a recent massive study, which includes numerous photographs: *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: Von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail, 1946-1995*, ed. Wolfgang Kraushaar, 3 vols. (Hamburg: Rogner and Bernhard, 1998). Very heavy coverage is incorporated regarding the student protest movement from 1967 to 1969; Adorno's presence looms large. For briefer accounts see Wiggershaus, *Frankfurt School*, pp. 609-36; and Scheible, *Theodor W. Adorno*, pp. 141-46, which includes photographs of Adorno taken during this period.

47. Max Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory," trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays* (New York: Continuum, 1986), pp. 188-243.

48. Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and the Frankfurt Institute* (New York: Free Press, 1977), p. 65: "Critical Theory was never a fully articulated philosophy which members of the Institute applied in an identical fashion. It was far more a set of assumptions which they shared, and which distinguished their approach from bourgeois, or 'traditional,' theory."

49. Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory," p. 188.

50. *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 223.

52. Christoph Menke, "Critical Theory and Tragic Knowledge," trans. James Swindal, in *Handbook of Critical Theory*, ed. David M. Rasmussen (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 59. Frederic Jameson, "Introduction to T. {ths} W. Adorno," in *The Legacy of the German Refugee Intellectuals*, ed. Robert Boyers (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), p. 141, makes a similar point, noting that what Adorno regarded as dialectical thinking involved the "attempt to think self-consciously about our own thought while we are in the act of thinking about some object, to be both conscious and self-conscious at the same time."

53. Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory," p. 212.

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 213-14.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 218. David M. Rasmussen, "Critical Theory and Philosophy," in *Handbook of Critical Theory*, ed. David M. Rasmussen (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 12: "The ancient assumption that the purpose of reflection was for knowledge itself, allied with the further assumption that pure contemplation was the proper end of the human subject, was replaced by another end of reflection also to be derived from classical thought, but with its own peculiarly modern twist; theory when allied with praxis has a proper political end, namely, social transformation." Rasmussen's essay traces the history of Critical Theory from its origins in classic German philosophy through Jürgen Habermas.

56. Max Horkheimer, "The Social Function of Philosophy," in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Continuum, 1986), p. 264.

57. Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory," p. 219.

58. ND, pp. 85-86.

59. Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory," p. 227.

60. Cf. Adorno, "Why Still Philosophy?" CM, p. 10: "If philosophy is still necessary, it is so only in the way it has been from time immemorial: as critique, as resistance to the expanding heteronomy, even if only as thought's powerless attempt to remain its own master and to convict of untruth, by their own criteria, both a

fabricated mythology and a conniving, resigned acquiescence on the other of untruth. It is incumbent upon philosophy . . . to provide a refuge for freedom."

61. Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory," p. 242.

62. See further Jay, *Dialectical Imagination*, pp. 41-85. For a good account of Adorno's critique of philosophy, see Peter Uwe Hohendahl, *Prismatic Thought: Theodor W. Adorno* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), pp. 217-42.

63. Jay, Adorno, pp. 15-23.

64. Fredric Jameson, *Late Marxism: Adorno, or, the Persistence of the Dialectic* (London: Verso, 1990), p. 247, argues against Adorno's reputed postmodernism *avant la lettre*—while acknowledging that Adorno "included a place for the possible emergence of postmodernism." Jameson aptly, if bitterly, comments on Adorno in light of the postmodern condition: "The question about poetry after Auschwitz has been replaced with that of whether you could bear to read Adorno and Horkheimer next to the pool" (p. 248). Tetsuo Kogawa, "Adorno's 'Strategy of Hibernation,'" *Telos* 46 (Winter 1980-81), pp. 147-53, parses Adorno's restatement in ND of the Auschwitz comment, "All post-Auschwitz culture, including its urgent critique, is garbage" (p. 367) as a "strategic critical gesture within the context of the culture industry" (p. 151). See also on Adorno's supposed relation to postmodernism Lambert Zuidervaart, *Adorno's Aesthetic Theory: The Redemption of Illusion* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), pp. 248-74; Ben Agger, *A Critical Theory of Public Life: Knowledge, Discourse and Politics in an Age of Decline* (London: Falmer, 1991), pp. 19-42; Rainer Nägele, "The Scene of the Other: Theodor W. Adorno's Negative Dialectic in the Context of Poststructuralism," in *Postmodernism and Politics*, ed. Jonathan Arac (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), pp. 91-111; Albrecht Wellmer, *The Persistence of Modernity: Essays on Aesthetics, Ethics, and Postmodernism*, trans. David Midgley (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991); Joel Whitebook, "From Schoenberg to Odysseus: Aesthetic, Psychic, and Social Synthesis in Adorno and Wellmer," *New German Critique* 58 (Winter 1993), pp. 45-64; and Christopher Rocco, "Between Modernity and Postmodernity: Reading Dialectic of Enlightenment against the Grain," *Political Theory* 22 no. 1 (February 1994), pp. 71-97.

65. Critical Theory's linking of Marxian thought to Freudian psychoanalysis was nothing short of intellectually audacious in the late 1920s and early 1930s, when, in Germany, Freud's work was anything but commonly accepted. See Joel Whitebook, "Fantasy and Critique: Some Thoughts on Freud and the Frankfurt School," in *The Handbook of Critical Theory*, ed. David M. Rasmussen (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 287-88.

66. Jay, Adorno, p. 85.

67. MM, p. 17.

68. See Jay, *Dialectical Imagination*, pp. 76-112.

69. Jay, *Permanent Exiles*, p. 25.

70. On the specifics of the Horkheimer-Adorno collaboration, see James Schmidt, "Language, Mythology, and Enlightenment: Historical Notes on Horkheimer and Adorno's Dialectic of Enlightenment," *Social Research* 65 no. 4 (1998), pp. 807-38, including a comparison between the mimeographed first version and final published text, as well as background concerning a planned but never realized companion volume that would have served as a "positive theory of dialectics" explaining how, in Horkheimer's words, the "'{ths}' rescue of the enlightenment' might be accomplished" (p. 811); and Robert Hullot-Kentor, "Back to Adorno," *Telos* 81 (Fall 1989), pp. 7-9; regarding the problematic nature of Cumming's translation, see pp. 27-29. Hullot-Kentor has retranslated the first excursus of DE, "Odysseus or Myth and Enlightenment," *New German Critique* 56 (Spring/Summer 1992), pp. 109-41, the section

71. Douglas Kellner, "Critical Theory Today: Revisiting the Classics," *Theory, Culture and Society* 10 no. 2 (May 1993), p. 50.

72. Adorno only occasionally wrote directly on gender issues, as in MM, pp. 90-96, 169-74, and in DE, pp. 110-12, 247-50. But critics have pointed out that his conception of subjectivity is resolutely a male bourgeois model. See Sabine Wilke and Heidi Schlipphacke, "Construction of a Gendered Subject: A Feminist Reading of Adorno's Aesthetic Theory," in *The Semblance of Subjectivity: Essays in Adorno's Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Tom Huhn and Lambert Zuidervaart (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), pp. 287-308. See also Maggie O'Neill, ed., *Adorno, Culture and Feminism* (London: Sage, 1999).

73. DE, pp. 4, 6.

74. Competition is domination's twin. The necessity of the struggle for survival, and for risk-taking in the name of personal advancement, become "the postulate of a moral excuse for profit" (DE, p. 62).

75. For a particularly well-known example, see Jürgen Habermas, "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Re-Reading Dialectic of Enlightenment," trans. Thomas Y. Levin, *New German Critique* 26

(Spring/Summer 1982), pp. 13-30. For a response, in turn, to Habermas, see Karin Bauer, *Adorno's Nietzschean Narratives: Critiques of Ideology, Readings of Wagner* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), pp. 32-39. Critics of Dialectic of Enlightenment, Habermas notable among them, have not gone unanswered, however. See, for example, Peter Uwe Hohendahl, "Dialectic of Enlightenment Revisited: Habermas's Critique of the Frankfurt School," in *Reappraisals: Shifting Alignments in Postwar Critical Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 99-130; Hullot-Kentor, "Back to Adorno," pp. 5-29; and more general defenses by Jack Zipes, "Adorno May Still Be Right," *Telos* 101 (Fall 1994), pp. 157-67; and Kellner, "Critical Theory Today," pp. 43-60. For an overview of Dialectic of Enlightenment, see Simon Jarvis, *Adorno: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 20-43.

76. Buck-Morss, *Origin of Negative Dialectics*, p. 61. Cf. Robert Hullot-Kentor, "Notes on Dialectic of Enlightenment: Translating the Odysseus Essay," *New German Critique* 56 (Spring/Summer 1992), pp. 106-07, who suggests that the decision by Adorno and Horkheimer to employ the Odysseus story is rooted in the fact that since the eighteenth century, German intellectuals considered both themselves and Germany "as bearers of the Hellenic torch."

77. DE, p. xv. See Michael Löwy and Eleni Varikas, "'The World Spirit on the Fins of a Rocket': Adorno's Critique of Progress," trans. Martin Ryle, *Radical Philosophy* 70 (March/April 1995), pp. 9-15.

78. DE, p. 30.

79. The first and last aphorisms in the "Notes and Drafts" section address cunning. The first, "Why It Is Better Not to Know All the Answers" ["Gegen Bescheidwissen"], pp. 209-210, concerning "cleverness" [Gescheitsein]; and "The Genesis of Stupidity" ["Zur Genese der Dummheit"], pp. 256-58 ("Stupidity is a scar" of a child's unanswered queries and unfulfilled needs). Cf. Adorno, "Notes on Philosophical Thinking," CM, p. 132: "Stupidity is nothing privative, not simply the absence of mental ability, but rather the scar of its mutilation."

80. DE, p. 223, from the aphorism "On the Critique of the Philosophy of History."

81. *Ibid.*, pp. 64-69.

82. *Ibid.*, pp. 34, 59.

83. *Ibid.*, p. 55. Cf. p. 57: "He just pulls through; struggle is his survival; and all the fame that he and the others win in the process serves merely to confirm that the title of hero is only gained at the price of the abasement and mortification of the instinct for complete, universal, and undivided happiness."

84. Hullot-Kentor, "Notes on Dialectic of Enlightenment," p. 102. "What Dialectic of Enlightenment discerns as the reason for thought's capitulation deserves blunt statement because even if it is a discovery that everyone has made at some point it puts its finger on the origins of conformist thinking with rare candor: thought conforms out of fear. And it is not just that thought balks at disturbing insights but that thought itself develops as an organization of fear that progressively conforms to what it would master." Cf. DE, p. xiv: "The dutiful child of modern civilization is possessed by a fear of departing from the facts which, in the very act of perception, the dominant conventions of science, commerce, and politics— cliché-like—have already molded; his anxiety is none other than the fear of social deviation."

85. DE, p. 16.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 88: "Sade realized [the affinity between knowledge and planning] empirically more than a century before sport was conceived. The teams of modern sport, whose interaction is so precisely regulated that no member has any doubt about his role, and which provide a reserve for every player, have their exact counterpart in the sexual teams of Juliette, which employ every moment usefully, neglect no human orifice, and carry out every function."

87. Regarding the love-hate relationship with the body, see the aphorism "The Importance of the Body," DE, pp. 231-36.

88. DE, p. 41.

89. ND, p. 85.

90. DE, p. 54.

91. AT, p. 62.

92. Adorno is thus bluntly positioning himself against Hegel, whose disregard for nature is well known. On this point, see AT, pp. 63, 75-77; and Richard Wolin, "Utopia, Mimesis, and Reconciliation: A Redemptive Critique of Adorno's Aesthetic Theory," *Representations* 32 (Fall 1990), p. 42.

93. AT, pp. 61-62. See also Heinz Paetzold, "Adorno's Notion of Natural Beauty: A Reconsideration," in *The Semblance of Subjectivity: Essays in Adorno's Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Tom Huhn and Lambert Zuidervaart (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), pp. 213-35.

94. AT, pp. 62, 65-66. "Under its optic, art is not the imitation of nature, but the imitation of natural beauty" (p. 71).
95. Ibid., p. 73.
96. Ibid., p. 275.
97. Ibid., p. 4.
98. Ibid., p. 32.
99. Ibid., p. 18: "The freedom of philosophy is nothing but the capacity to lend a voice to its unfreedom."
100. Ibid., p. 5.
101. Ibid.: "Dialectics is the consistent sense of nonidentity."
102. Ibid., p. 6.
103. Ibid., p. 320.
104. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Senses* (New York: Vintage, 1970).
105. ND, p. 183.
106. Buck-Morss, *Origin of Negative Dialectics*, p. 77: "Crucial to 'negative dialectics' was not only the object's nonidentity with itself, but its nonidentity with the knowing subject, the mind and its logical processes. . . . this level of [the object's] nonidentity found expression in [Adorno's] term 'unintentional truth.' {ths}"
107. G. {ths}W. {ths}F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. {ths}V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 124.
108. Ibid., p. 11.
109. MM, p. 50.
110. Buck-Morss, *Origin of Negative Dialectics*, p. 63; and p. 189: "The whole point of his relentless insistence on negativity was to resist repeating in thought the structures of domination and reification that existed in society, so that instead of reproducing reality, consciousness could be critical, so that reason would recognize its own nonidentity with social reality, on the one hand, and material nature's nonidentity with the categorizing consciousness that passed for rationality, on the other."
111. Adorno, "Cultural Criticism and Society," PR, p. 32.
112. Herbert Marcuse, "A Note on Dialectic," in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, ed. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (New York: Continuum, 1982), pp. 444-51.
113. Peale's tag line has more recently been adapted by television evangelist Reverend Robert H. Schuler as "possibility thinking." Both preachers connect affirmation to a popular form of religious existentialism, whose secular analogue Adorno critiqued in *The Jargon of Authenticity* as both supremely idealist, self-serving, and asocial. Adorno's argument hinged on the point that the authentic self was impossible in the face of general inauthenticity, which could not be escaped, as it were, by either thought or self-will, and which was structured on a degraded model of the bourgeois subject—a self-promoting individuality. As he put it in MM, p. 39, "Wrong life cannot be lived rightly."
114. Marcuse, "A Note on Dialectic," p. 445. Cf. ND, pp. 144-45: "To proceed dialectically means to think in contradictions, for the sake of the contradiction once experienced in the thing, and against that contradiction. A contradiction in reality, it is a contradiction against reality."
115. Marcuse, "A Note on Dialectic," p. 446.
116. Cf. MM, p. 86. The next sentence reads: "The prudence that restrains us from venturing too far ahead in a sentence, is usually only an agent of social control, and so of stupefaction."
117. Marcuse, "A Note on Dialectic," p. 447.
118. Ibid., p. 451.
119. MM, p. 244.
120. Ibid., p. 150.
121. Adorno, "Why Still Philosophy?" p. 7. In MM, pp. 26-27, on the related matter of the practicing philosopher, Adorno commented, "He who stands aloof runs the risk of believing himself better than others and using his critique of society as an ideology for his private interest. While he gropingly forms his own life in the frail image of a true existence, he should never forget its frailty, nor how little the image is a substitute for true life. . . . His own distance from business at large is a luxury which only that business confers. This is why the very movement of withdrawal bears the features of what it negates. . . . Private existence, in striving to resemble one worthy of man, betrays the latter, since any resemblance is withdrawn from general realization, which yet more than ever before has need of independent thought. There is no way out of entanglement. The only responsible course is to deny oneself the ideological misuse of one's own existence,

and for the rest to conduct oneself in private as modestly, unobtrusively and unpretentiously as is required, no longer by good upbringing, but by the shame of still having air to breathe, in hell."

122. MM, p. 247. Edmund Jephcott has translated this as "Finale," which carries rather too much a valence of finality and neat conclusion, clearly not intended by Adorno. At the same time, however, Jephcott's choice of word appropriately acknowledges the notable importance of musical referents scattered throughout MM and, at least as important, the quasi-musical structure of many aphorisms, where narrative design recalls, variously, theme and variations and the kind of sonata structure found in Beethoven—even second developments.

123. Terry Eagleton, "Art After Auschwitz: Theodor Adorno," in *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 342: "All Marxist philosophers are supposed to be dialectical thinkers; but with Adorno one can feel the sweat and strain of this mode alive in every phrase, in a language rammed up against silence where the reader has no sooner registered the one-sidedness of some proposition than the opposite is immediately proposed."

124. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), pp. 253-64. The essay was first published in 1950. Benjamin gave the manuscript to Hannah Arendt shortly before his death.

125. *Ibid.*, p. 255, original emphasis.

126. *Ibid.*, p. 257. In a later section, p. 262, Benjamin provides a still more vivid image: "The historical materialist leaves it to others to be drained by the whore called 'Once upon a time' in historicism's bordello. He remains in control of his powers, man enough to blast open the continuum of history." Cf. Adorno, "Why Still Philosophy?" p. 17: "Whatever wants nothing to do with the trajectory of history belongs all the more truly to it. History promises no salvation and offers the possibility of hope only to the concept whose movement follows history's path to the very extreme." See also the excellent discussion of Benjamin's "Theses" by Rolf Tiedemann, "Historical Materialism or Political Messianism? An Interpretation of the Theses 'On the Concept of History,' {ths}" in *The Frankfurt School: Critical Assessments*, ed. Jay Bernstein (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), vol. 2, pp. 111-39.

127. Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," p. 256. The impact of this passage on Adorno is striking, typical indications of which include the following: MM, p. 111: "Every work of art is an uncommitted crime"; AT, p. 187: "Greatness is the guilt that [art] works bear, but without this guilt they would remain insufficient"; and p. 234: "Artworks are, a priori, socially culpable, and each one that deserves its name seeks to expiate this guilt."

128. MM, p. 26.

129. AT, p. 261.

130. See further Rainer Forst, "Justice, Reason, and Critique: Basic Concepts of Critical Theory," in *Handbook of Critical Theory*, ed. David M. Rasmussen (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 151.

131. Rasmussen, "Critical Theory and Philosophy," p. 30.

132. Adorno, "Why Still Philosophy?" p. 14. Cf. the opening of ND, p. 3: "Philosophy, which once seemed obsolete, lives on because the moment to realize it was missed."

133. DE, pp. 120-67. See also an earlier essay by Max Horkheimer, "Art and Mass Culture," *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* 9 (1941), pp. 290-304, published in English in the final issue of the Institute's journal following the move to New York. The bibliography on the Culture Industry essay is very large; among the most useful studies are David Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory: Horkheimer to Habermas* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 77-109; Jay, *Dialectical Imagination*, pp. 173-218; Jarvis, *Adorno*, pp. 72-89; and in particular the recent monograph by Deborah Cook, *The Culture Industry Revisited: Theodor W. Adorno on Mass Culture* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996).

Adorno's work subsequent to the Culture Industry essay often repeats its principal arguments. A volume of Adorno essays, edited by J. {ths}M. Bernstein, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture* (London: Routledge, 1991), collects several of the most important: "The Schema of Mass Culture," "Culture Industry Reconsidered," "Culture and Administration," "How to Look at Television" (a somewhat unusual essay to the extent that Adorno directly states a pedagogical intent for the medium's improvement; as he puts it at the start, "our approach is practical"), "Transparencies on Film," and "Free Time," besides several others. Other related essays include "Prologue to Television," and "Television as Ideology," both in CM; and "Theory of Pseudo-Culture," trans. Deborah Cook, *Telos* 95 (Spring 1993), pp. 15-38.

134. Martin Jay, "Mass Culture and Aesthetic Redemption: The Debate between Max Horkheimer and Siegfried Kracauer," in *On Max Horkheimer*, ed. Sela Benhabib, Wolfgang Bonss, and John McCole (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), pp. 365-66, points out that mass culture debates emerged in Germany

immediately after World War I, if not before. See also on this point John Willett, *The New Sobriety, 1917-1933: Art and Politics in the Weimar Period* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978). For an account of the historical, political, cultural, and intellectual situation in the U.S. at the time of Adorno's emigration, see Hohendahl, *Prismatic Thought*, pp. 21-44.

135. This is the opening line from Adorno's 1960 essay "Culture and Administration," p. 93. Adorno accounted for the decision to use the phrase "culture industry" in DE in the essay "Culture Industry Reconsidered," p. 85: "In our drafts we spoke of 'mass culture.' We replaced that expression with 'culture industry' in order to exclude from the outset the interpretation agreeable to its advocates: that it is a matter of something like a culture that arises spontaneously from the masses themselves, the contemporary form of popular art. From the latter the culture industry must be distinguished in the extreme."

136. Jameson, *Late Marxism*, p. 144, original emphasis. Adorno, "Culture Industry Reconsidered," pp. 87-88, commented that the phrase "culture industry" should not be "taken too literally," that it referred to two interrelated factors, the standardization of the CI products and the rationalization of the CI's distribution techniques (advertising is the classic driving force) but not to the production process properly speaking, where, despite the obvious impact of industrialized production, the continued existence of individual forms of production remained evident.

137. In the 1970s, Senate Watergate Hearing chairman, North Carolina's Senator Sam Ervin, lionized by the media for his down-home, plainspoken fairness and integrity, made fungible each of these assets. Not long after the conclusion of the hearings, he was among the first, in what would become a long line of celebrities, to sell himself to the "Don't leave home without it" American Express Card advertising campaign. Along similar lines, the Pope's January 1999 visit to Mexico City, proclaimed as an opportunity to critique the widening gap between rich nations and poor, was underwritten by Pepsi and two dozen other corporations—with no apparent irony—whose logos were prominently displayed around Mexico City and at the Pope's appearance sites. Potato-chip snack-packs included ten different images of the Pope and the Virgin of Guadalupe printed on stamps that could be put into an album, separately purchased. The story was very widely reported. See, for example, Andrew Downie, "Papal Visit: Vatican's Endorsement Deal Leaves Many Mexicans Uneasy," *The Houston Chronicle*, 22 January 1999, p. 18; and Michael McCaughan, "Pope's Visit Gives Some a Chance for Financial Gain," *The Irish Times*, 21 January 1999, p. 13.

138. DE, p. 121.

139. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

140. Leo Lowenthal, "The Left in Germany Has Failed" [interview with Peter Glotz], trans. Benjamin Gregg, in *An Unmastered Past: The Autobiographical Reflections of Leo Lowenthal*, ed. Martin Jay (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), p. 253: "What we've been calling mass culture, or as Adorno and Horkheimer more appropriately dubbed it, the culture industry, is a business. Whether the business is run by parties or warehouses or chemical concerns is irrelevant. It is not the advancement of new knowledge that counts, but the introduction of products into the market."

141. DE, p. 131: "Culture as a common denominator already contains in embryo that schematization and process of cataloging and classification which bring culture within the sphere of administration. And it is precisely the industrialized, the consequent, subsumption which entirely accords with this notion of culture."

142. *Ibid.*, p. 121, emphasis added.

143. MM, pp. 200-01, aphorism 129, "Service to the Customer" ["Dienst am Kunden"].

144. DE, p. 124. Cf. p. 127: "The might of industrial society is lodged in men's minds. . . . The culture industry as a whole has molded men as a type unfailingly reproduced in every product."

145. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

146. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

147. Cook, *Culture Industry Revisited*, p. 123.

148. DE, p. 136. A year 2000 national print-media and television advertisement for Dodge cars and trucks is staged around a single word: "Different." Cf. Adorno, "Prologue to Television," p. 55: "The culture industry grins: become what you are, and its deceit consists precisely in confirming and consolidating by dint of repetition mere existence as such, what human beings have been made into by the way of the world. The culture industry can insist all the more convincingly that it is not the murderer but the victim who is guilty: that it simply helps bring to light what lies within human beings anyway."

149. Fredric Jameson, "Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture," *Social Text* 1 (1979), p. 132. Zipes, "Adorno May Still Be Right," p. 158, with reference to the charge that Adorno was an elitist because he somehow denounced not only mass culture but the masses as well, points out that Adorno in fact wrote on the masses' behalf, "for he wanted to make everyone aware of what the masses have become and to prompt his readers not

to succumb to the culture industry. In short, Adorno spoke out in behalf of individuality, originality, uniqueness, and particularism. . . . As far as he was concerned, anyone could belong to the masses, and practically everyone did, while thinking they were actually distinct and original." This essay addresses the role played by the CI in the socialization of children for lives of consumption and cultural obeisance.

150. Adorno, "Culture Industry Reconsidered," p. 86.

151. DE, p. 137.

152. Ibid.

153. Ibid., p. 139.

154. MM, p. 25.

155. DE, p. 139, translation modified.

156. The film opens with the following text that frames the subsequent narrative: "In the central part of the United States of America lies a limited area called 'The Dust Bowl,' because of its lack of rain. Here drought and poverty combined to deprive many farmers of their land. This is the story of one farmer's family, driven from their fields by natural disasters and economic changes beyond their control [in reference to large-scale mechanized farming that supplants sharecropping] and their great journey in search of peace, security, and another home." Adorno and Horkheimer acknowledge that films conventionally, and very directly, treat the subject of human deprivation and the plight of the poor; they argue that this trope provides the opportunity to present society's alleged underlying "heart of gold." See DE, pp. 149-52.

157. Adorno, "Schema of Mass Culture," p. 83: "The neon signs which hang over our cities and outshine the natural light of the night with their own are comets presaging the natural disaster of society, its frozen death. Yet they do not come from the sky. They are controlled from earth. It depends upon human beings themselves whether they will extinguish these lights and awake from a nightmare which only threatens to become actual as long as men believe in it."

158. Ibid., p. 82.

159. DE, p. 142.

160. Sut Jhally, "Advertising as Religion: The Dialectic of Technology and Magic," in *Cultural Politics in Contemporary America*, ed. Ian Angus and Sut Jhally (New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 221-22: "The fetishism of commodities consists in the first place of emptying them of meaning, of hiding the real social relations objectified in them through human labor, to make it possible for the imaginary/symbolic social relations to be injected into the construction of meaning at a secondary level. Production empties. Advertising fills. The real is hidden by the imaginary. . . . The hollow husk of the commodity-form needs to be filled by some kind of meaning, however superficial. This is why advertising is so powerful."

161. Lowenthal, "Theodor W. Adorno," p. 186.

162. Culture itself is a commodity; fully subject to the law of exchange, it "amalgamates with advertising." And "advertising becomes art and nothing else" (DE, pp. 161, 163). In advance of the phenomenon, Adorno and Horkheimer accounted for the bizarre logic that stirs millions of television viewers to devote particular attention to the high-end ads produced annually for the Super Bowl—which not coincidentally are treated as national news stories. Indeed, the degree to which advertising has become naturalized in our consciousness as an homology to other forms of mass entertainment is evident in the Clio Award-winning ads shown in retrospectives by contemporary art museums.

Rose Rosengard Subotnik shared the following anecdote in a private communication: "I date a turning point in the culture back to the summer of 1965, when I was a counselor for prepubescent kids—say 10-12, at Camp Peter Pan, in Foxboro, Mass. Though I'd been at camps, first as a camper then as a counselor, all my life, it was in that setting that I saw kids, for the first time, act out commercials in games of Charades. In fact the change was very sudden: they didn't just include commercials as one of many mediums (such as book titles, movie titles, etc.)—commercials were the ONLY medium they used; it seemed suddenly to be the only medium they had in common. The ex. that sticks in my mind was some product that came hurtling through like a White Tornado—or conceivably like a White Knight, since the hero was supposed to be on horseback waving a sword. The kids laughed uproariously at that one; they loved it. I was baffled, as in those days—I was in graduate school—I didn't watch television."

163. See Adorno, "Chaplin Times Two," trans. John Macay, *Yale Journal of Criticism* 9 no. 1 (Spring 1996), pp. 57-61.

164. Adorno, "Is Marx Obsolete?" trans. Nicolas Slater, *Diogenes* 64 (Winter 1968), p. 7. See also the discussion in Rose, *Melancholy Science*, pp. 118-20; and Paddison, *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music*, pp. 124-28, 187-213.

165. In regard to which the high-culture data lists published in recent years by E. {ths}D. Hirsch, among others, something of a small industry, bear no fundamental difference; see E. {ths}D. Hirsch, Jr., *What Every American Needs to Know* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987); and, with Joseph F. Kett and James Trefil, *The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, 2d ed. rev. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993).

Regarding Adorno's view of this phenomenon as a form of psychological re-infantalization, see his "Analytical Study of the NBC Music Appreciation Hour," *Musical Quarterly* 78 no. 2 (Summer 1994), pp. 374-75 n. 18. See also Miriam Hansen, "Mass Culture as Hieroglyphic Writing: Adorno, Derrida, Kracauer," *New German Critique* 56 (Spring/Summer 1992), p. 51: "Horkheimer and Adorno ascribe the effectivity of mass-cultural scripts of identity not simply to the viewers' manipulation as passive consumers, but rather to their very solicitation as experts, as active readers. The identification with the stereotype is advanced by the appeal to a particular type of knowledge or skill predicated on repetition" (original emphasis).

166. Adorno, "Schema of Mass Culture," p. 73. Adorno continues, p. 74: "The curiosity which transforms the world into objects is not objective: it is not concerned with what is known but with the fact of knowing it, with having, with knowledge as a possession. . . . Wrenched from all context, [facts are] detached from thought, they are made instantly accessible to an infantile grasp." And as if in anticipation of later television quiz shows: "The more participation in mass culture exhausts itself in the informed access to cultural facts, the more the culture business comes to resemble contests, those aptitude tests which check suitability and performance, and finally sports."

167. DE, p. 167. See Cook, *Culture Industry Revisited*, pp. 51-53. In "Culture Industry Reconsidered," p. 89, Adorno expands on this phenomenon: "It may also be supposed that the consciousness of the consumers themselves is split between the prescribed fun which is supplied to them by the culture industry and a not particularly well-hidden doubt about its blessings."

168. Alan Tomlinson, "Introduction: Consumer Culture and the Aura of the Commodity," in *Consumption, Identity, and Style: Marketing, Meanings, and the Packaging of Pleasure*, ed. Alan Tomlinson (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 13: "If we think we are free when our choices have in fact been consciously constructed for us, then this is a dangerous illusion of freedom. . . . There is a double danger in this illusion of freedom. First, consumer choice is highly constructed. Second, millions unemployed by anyone and uninvited by Visa are, simply and brutally, excluded from the sphere of freedom. Freedom of goods for some goes hand-in-hand with subordination for others." Or in the parlance of a recent MasterCard advertising campaign, "There are some things in life that money can't buy; for everything else there's MasterCard." The stuff that can't be charged is precisely, and only, those "things" that are literally immaterial—nonetheless still referenced in the ads as commodities.

169. See, for example, Stuart Hall, and Tony Jefferson eds., *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (London: Hutchinson, 1976); Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen, 1979); and John Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989); *Reading the Popular* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989); and, with John Hartley, *Reading Television* (London: Methuen, 1978). For a critique of the critique, centered on Fiske, see Jim McGuigan, *Cultural Populism* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 70-75. For an example of a notably strident critique of the CI essay, see Jim Collins, *Uncommon Cultures: Popular Culture and Post-Modernism* (New York: Routledge, 1989), who misreads the CI chapter as a nostalgic apologia for a lost high-cultural "best that has been thought and said" (see pp. 141-42). For a rather more nuanced assessment, which incorporates a critique of Collins, see Hohendahl, *Prismatic Thought*, pp. 119-48. For recent examples of work closer in spirit to Adorno's mass-culture critique, see Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (New York: Viking, 1985); Stuart Ewen, *All Consuming Images: The Politics of Style in Contemporary Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); and Stuart Ewen and Elizabeth Ewen, *Channels of Desire: Mass Images and the Shaping of American Consciousness* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982).

Andreas Huyssen, "Adorno in Reverse: From Hollywood to Richard Wagner," *New German Critique* 29 (Spring/Summer 1983), pp. 8-38, provides a thoughtful discussion of shortcomings of the CI essay, arguing that the "black-hole theory of capitalist culture" Adorno and Horkheimer advance is "both too Marxist and not Marxist enough. It is too Marxist in that it rigorously applies a narrow reading of Marx's theory of commodity fetishism (the fetish as a mere phantasmagoria) to the products of culture. It is not Marxist enough in that it ignores praxis, bypassing the struggles for meaning, symbols, and images which constitute cultural and social life even when mass-media try to contain them" (p. 15).

Huyssen further suggests that Adorno's theory wipes out the specificity of cultural products just as it imagines the consumer in a state of passive regression. (On balance, Adorno and Horkheimer argue against the consumer's passivity.) He further notes that if cultural products were only commodities and nothing more, and

if their sole value were exchange value, "they would no longer even be able to fulfill their function in the processes of ideological reproduction" (reminding of the happiness that we don't have; by the lie immanent to their very form, in other words, they reveal the truth that they function to keep us from knowing—as Adorno himself remarked from time to time). Huyssen argues that the CI does fulfill public functions: "it satisfies and legitimizes cultural needs which are not all per se false or only retroactive; it articulates social contradictions in order to homogenize them. Precisely this process of articulation can become the field of contestation and struggle" (p. 15). Huyssen readily acknowledges that Adorno and Horkheimer's critical analysis of mass culture as a means of social control "ripped to shreds that mystifying veil cast over the culture industry by those who sell it as 'mere entertainment,' or, even worse, a genuinely popular culture" (p. 17).

170. Jay, "Mass Culture and Aesthetic Redemption," pp. 380-81. The source for the phrase "artificial negativity" is Paul Piccone, "The Crisis of One-Dimensionality," *Telos* 35 (Spring 1978), p. 45. Cf. Ben Agger, "On Happiness and the Damaged Life," in *On Critical Theory*, ed. John O'Neill (New York: Seabury, 1976), p. 23: "One-dimensional society contains no sensible criterion of unfulfilled actuality because reality contains every illusion and promise made by the ideology of limitless liberation. Adorno's particular genius was to have recognized the phenomenology of one-dimensionality in its most insidious and abstracted socio-cultural forms." See also Mike Wayne, "Television, Audiences, Politics," in *Behind the Screens: The Structure of British Broadcasting in the 1990s*, ed. Stuart Hood (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1994), pp. 43-64.

For more on Adorno's position as regards agency—its reality and its limitations—under sway of the CI, see Stephen Crook, "Introduction: Adorno and Authoritarian Irrationalism," *SDE*, pp. 24-25. Relative to his discussion of the Los Angeles Times astrology column, Adorno recognized that its readers would delineate a gap between their own lives and the smooth life promised and, further, that readers may not actually even believe in astrology. But as Crook puts it, p. 16: "The fact that people do not 'believe in' astrology no more prevents them from attending to [the astrology] column than the fact that they do not 'believe in' advertising prevents them from functioning as consumers." Crook further points out, p. 25, that "the 'sense' people make is rarely within their entirely conscious control: sense-making puts into play a complex of background assumptions and motivations. Adorno's case is that the messages of propaganda and commodified culture work by resonating with those background factors so that the 'sense' which is made will typically tend towards dependency and conformism. To put it another way, for Adorno it would be a stupendous analytical naivety to take anyone's 'tastes and pleasures' at face value as a simple datum."

Finally, Schmidt, "Language, Mythology, and Enlightenment," pp. 814-17, describes a car trip taken by Horkheimer across the West in 1940 during which, while traveling between Kansas and Colorado, he heard a Hitler speech on his car radio. As Schmidt relates, the experience crystallized for Horkheimer the unique relationship between language and mass communications systems at the heart of fascism. "Radio had an inherent tendency to reduce its audience to a passive and anonymous mass" (p. 815). Radio made Hitler's voice into that of a god. The propositional elements of his speeches were irrelevant; what mattered was his speeches' ritual character.

171. DE, p. 230. Rose, *Melancholy Science*, p. 48: "To say that consciousness is 'completely reified' is to say that it is capable only of knowing the appearance of society, of describing institutions and behaviour as if their current mode of functioning were an inherent and invariant characteristic or property, as if they, as objects, 'fulfil their concepts.' Therefore, to say that consciousness of society is completely reified implies that no critical consciousness or theory is possible."

172. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971), pp. 83-110. See also Ferenc Feher, "Rationalized Music and Its Vicissitudes (Adorno's Philosophy of Music)," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 9 no. 1 (Spring 1982), pp. 54-55. Lukácsian reification designated, among other things, the virtual spiritualization of objects through a process of commodity fetishism, as well as the disintegration of human relations in favor of what Jameson, *Late Marxism*, p. 180, calls "thing-like ones (money, the 'cash-nexus')." In *AT Adorno*, contrarily, promotes a positive form of reification. Speaking on behalf of the object-nature of artworks (as the specific results of human labor), which to be sure coincides with their actual involvement in the commodity form under prevailing social conditions, art's materiality must be used against the spiritualization, hence mystification, that lies at the heart of commodification. Jameson, pp. 180-81: "What results, therefore, is a restless series of transfers whereby reification—for Adorno absolutely essential to the work of art—changes its valences as it passes from the social to the aesthetic (and vice versa)."

173. Adorno, "Schema of Mass Culture," p. 70.

174. Adorno, "Culture Industry Reconsidered," p. 85.

175. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
176. Adorno, "Culture and Administration," p. 113.
177. Adorno, "Schema of Mass Culture," p. 80.
178. SDE, pp. 34-127; the second study is "Television as Ideology," in which Adorno has relatively little to say about the visual medium itself; the study is a script and plot analysis of thirty-four television shows which Adorno describes as "of various genres and quality" (p. 59). Though he does not explicitly name any of the programs, one is obvious, "Our Miss Brooks," concerning which see pp. 61-62. See also Adorno, "Scientific Experiences of a European Scholar in America," trans. Donald Fleming, in *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1930-1960*, ed. Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 365-66, Adorno's memoir of the writing of these essays.
179. Crook, "Introduction," suggests that the "Stars" essay suffers from two methodological flaws: "the rhetorical materials are treated as windows on the psychology of their audience, and the psychology of the audience is 'read off' from rhetorical materials. In addition, there is little evidence of any systematic sampling technique: . . . extracts from the column have been selected to illustrate themes whose representative character is not established." Crook acknowledges that these flaws are not due to Adorno's naïveté but instead reflect his suspicion of American empirical audience-research methods. "He came to believe that such research isolated a single moment of subjective response from the objective totality while privileging the conscious over the unconscious reaction" (p. 19). However, Adorno himself points out that "our results must by necessity be regarded as tentative. They provide us with formulations, the validity of which can and should only be established by reader research. . . . We must therefore be cautious not to treat our material dogmatically as a mirrored reflection of the reader's mind" (p. 40), something well beyond the scope of the project as funded by the Hacker Foundation, whatever Adorno's position on American empirical research methods.
180. SDE, p. 37.
181. *Ibid.*, p. 43; see also pp. 44, 97-98, 116-17.
182. *Ibid.*, pp. 49, 102-08.
183. *Ibid.*, p. 58: "The constant appeal of the column to find fault with oneself rather than with given conditions . . . is only one aspect of the ideal of social conformity, promoted throughout the column and expressed by the implicit, but ubiquitous rule that one has to adjust oneself continuously to commands of the stars at a given time"; and pp. 59-60: "The adage 'be yourself' assumes an ironical meaning. The socially manipulated stimuli constantly aim at reproducing that frame of mind which is spontaneously engendered by the status quo itself" (original emphasis).
184. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
185. Dale Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1937). The book remains in print and is also currently available on audiocassette and CD. Adorno clearly knew the book to which he makes passing, sarcastic reference in CF, p. 53: "It is as though the process of rationalization of art and the conscious command of its resources were diverted by social forces from the real purpose of art, and directed merely toward 'making friends and influencing people.'{ths}"
186. SDE, p. 71.
187. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
188. *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61, 100-01. The quotation is from p. 100. Cf. DE, p. 155.
189. Pete Brush, "Telephone Psychics See Money in Their Futures," *Los Angeles Times*, 28 March 1997, p. D7: Described in 1997 as the "anchor of the 1-900 industry," telephone psychics at the time were estimated to be a \$300-million-a-year business, helping to fill the coffers of long distance carriers like AT&T and MCI, as well as the psychic networks proper. Founded in 1990 by Michael Lasky, "Psychic Friends" by 1997 was fielding between 7,500 and 10,000 calls per day, according to the *Times* report. Despite the hard-sell promise, replete with testimonials, of good things happening to those who call (invest) by spokeswoman Dionne Warwick, the late-night cable infomercials carried the expected legal disclaimer "for entertainment purposes only."
190. Adorno, "Free Time," pp. 170-71.
191. *Ibid.*, p. 171.
192. Wiggershaus, Frankfurt School, p. 598. Pickford, "Preface," pp. x, 315 n. 5, points out that most of the essays in Adorno's late collection *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords* (1963; 1969) exist in three to seven typescript versions, and notes that Adorno often reworked an essay as many as a dozen times.
193. Many of Adorno's radio lectures, revised for later publication, are notably "straightforward" and present few reading challenges. Adorno's name has been invoked in recent debates focused on academic writing, and

by proponents on opposing sides; a defining issue centers on scholars' responsibilities to the larger public. The basic positions are well outlined by James Miller, "Is Bad Writing Necessary? George Rowel, Theodor Adorno, and the Politics of Language," *Lingua Franca* 9 no. 9 (December/January 2000), pp. 33-44.

194. Unfortunately, English translations of both monographs undercut Adorno's purpose by inserting headings, as readers' guides, throughout the texts. However, a recent second English translation of *Aesthetic Theory*, by Robert Hullot-Kentor, published in 1997, duly restores Adorno's original. Robert Hullot-Kentor, "Translator's Introduction," *AT*, p. xiv, comments on the 1984 translation of *Aesthetic Theory*: "Paragraph indentations were distributed arbitrarily throughout, completing the image of a monodirectional sequence of topic sentences that could be followed stepwise from chapter 1 through chapter 12. This subordinated the text's paratactical order to a semblance of progressive argumentation that offered to present the book's content conveniently. This device provided a steady external grip on the book's content while causing it to collapse internally." On the challenge of translating Adorno, see the aptly named introduction by Samuel Weber, "Translating the Untranslatable," *PR*, pp. 9-15.

195. Paddison, *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music*, p. 18, points out that Adorno's "tendency to proceed by means of tersely constructed, mutually contradictory assertions [is] designed in part to disrupt normal reading habits and to 'shock' the reader into an active relationship with the text."

196. Agger, *Critical Theory of Public Life*, p. 83.

197. Robert Hullot-Kentor, "The Philosophy of Dissonance: Adorno and Schoenberg," in *The Semblance of Subjectivity: Essays in Adorno's Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Tom Huhn and Lambert Zuidervaart (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), p. 312: "He spoke by starting at the top of a full inhalation, which he followed down to the last oxygen molecule left in his lungs, and his written style perfected dozen-page paragraphs hardened to a gapless and sometimes glassy density, as if the slightest hesitancy for an inhalation or any break for a new paragraph would have irretrievably relinquished the chance for completing the thought."

198. Susan H. Gillespie, "Translating Adorno: Language, Music, and Performance," *Musical Quarterly* 79 no. 1 (Spring 1995), p. 57. Gillespie further suggests that Adorno's writing is musical, though not in the acoustic sense, and she cites Adorno's lengthy essay on the late work of Friedrich Hölderlin, which Adorno greatly admired, describing the poet's "musiclike" use of parataxis. See Adorno, "Parataxis: On Hölderlin's Late Poetry," *NL*, vol. 2, pp. 109-49.

199. Adorno, "The George-Hofmannstahl Correspondence, 1891-1905," *PR*, p. 225.

200. Jay, *Adorno*, pp. 14-15. Adorno's objection to philosophical idealism's notion of a "generative first principle" is its erasure of history. See further Zuidervaart, *Adorno's Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 46-48.

201. Zuidervaart, *Adorno's Aesthetic Theory*, p. 61, notes that "Constellations let concepts interrelate in such a way that both the sociohistorical essence of phenomena and their unique identities can emerge." Cf. Buck-Morss, *Origin of Negative Dialectics*, p. 96: Adorno's "central effort was to discover the truth of the social totality (which could never be experienced in itself) as it quite literally appeared within the object in a particular configuration" (original emphasis). For a detailed discussion of Adorno's constellational writing, see pp. 96-110; and Jarvis, *Adorno*, pp. 175-92.

202. Eagleton, "Art after Auschwitz," p. 342. For Adorno's own comments on the uses of exaggeration, see "Meaning of Working through the Past," p. 99; and "Opinion Delusion Society," p. 108: "All thinking is exaggeration, in so far as every thought that is one at all goes beyond its confirmation by the given facts."

203. Paddison, *Adorno, Modernism and Mass Culture*, p. 84.

204. *MM*, p. 50, aphorism 29, "Dwarf Fruit."

205. David Martin, "Dr. Adorno's Bag of Tricks," *Encounter* 47 no. 4 (October 1976), p. 70, points out that Adorno's work is neither philosophy nor sociology but belongs rather "to a class of philosophical reflection on society and on social fact that rejects both reflection and fact conceived in themselves. Merely to reflect on the given is simply to reflect the given; merely to reflect (i.e., mirror) the given is to leave everything as it is and claims to be. Philosophy conceived as pure reflection may achieve a systematic, rounded exposition, and science as the mirror of the given may also achieve systematisation. But the complicated reflexives of the critical dialectic have to work backwards, forwards, and across themselves, making every partial truth less partially true in light of its negation and in further light of a negation of that negation."

206. Adorno, "The Essay as Form," *NL*, vol. 1, p. 13. The essay is among Adorno's most important concerning writing. See further Shierry Weber Nicholsen, *Exact Imagination, Late Work: On Adorno's Aesthetics* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), pp. 105-10; and Rose, *Melancholy Science*, pp. 14-15.

207. Adorno, "Essay as Form," p. 13.

208. *Ibid.*, p. 20. Martin, "Dr. Adorno's Bag of Tricks," p. 70, refers to Adorno's writing as a process of unmasking, achieved in large part by his fragmentary form of writing. "Nothing is as it seems, and truth is

paradoxically layered. You can only break through to truth by exposing the paradoxes and masquerades at each layer and setting them against other masquerades and paradoxes."

209. Adorno, "On the Use of Foreign Words," NL, vol. 2, pp. 286-91; and "Words from Abroad," NL, vol. 1, pp. 185-99. See also NicholSEN, *Exact Imagination*, pp. 84-89.

210. Adorno, "On the Use of Foreign Words," p. 286.

211. MM, p. 110.

212. Adorno, "On the Use of Foreign Words," p. 289.

213. NicholSEN, *Exact Imagination*, p. 67: "Communication serves as a form of social control in which human beings are treated as potential customers."

214. Adorno, "Words from Abroad," p. 187. He continues: "National groups who want one-dish meals even in language find this response hateful. It is from this stratum that the affective tension that gives foreign words their fecund and dangerous quality arises, the quality that their friends are seduced by and their enemies sense more readily than do people who are indifferent to them."

215. *Ibid.*, p. 189.

216. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke*, ed. Karl Schlechta (Munich: C. Hanser, 1954-65), vol. 3, p. 862, from the Nachlass of the 1880s. My thanks to Jochen Schulte-Sasse for locating this phrase for me. Adorno, "Words from Abroad," p. 189, paraphrasing Nietzsche, comments that the foreign word reminds us that language "imprisons those who speak it."

217. Adorno was sensitive to the potential for a kind of elitist one-upmanship incorporated into the use of foreign words. He made clear that foreign words are only justified when a native word cannot substitute. On both points, see "Words from Abroad," p. 192.

218. Herbert Marcuse, "Marcuse and the Frankfurt School: Dialogue with Herbert Marcuse" [interview with Bryan Magee], in *Men of Ideas* by Bryan Magee (New York: Viking Press, 1978), p. 73. Thanks to Christopher Swift for drawing my attention to this comment. Lowenthal, "Recollections of Theodor W. Adorno," pp. 206-07, with warm humor, repeats a story from Kracauer, who, during Adorno's youth, imagined that if Adorno ever declared his love to a young woman, she would have little chance of understanding him unless she had read all of Kierkegaard."

219. Georg Lukács, *Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*, trans. Anna Bostock (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971), p. 22. For a concise account of the intellectual gulf separating Adorno from Lukács, especially as regards the relation of theory to praxis, see Irving Wohlfarth, "Hibernation: On the Tenth Anniversary of Adorno's Death," *Modern Language Notes* 94 no. 5 (December 1979), pp. 967-70. Adorno himself produced a lengthy critique of Lukács; see "Extorted Reconciliation: On Georg Lukács' Realism in Our Time," NL, vol. 1, pp. 216-40. Adorno admired much in Lukács's early work (*Soul and Form*, *The Theory of the Novel*, and *History and Class Consciousness*) and unrelentingly attacked the writings from the early 1920s and thereafter, "when Lukács' objectivism yielded, not without initial conflicts, to official communist doctrine" (p. 216). Adorno's disdain centers on Lukács's attack on modernist art, and his stance toward socialist-realist art, which Adorno regarded as agitprop kitsch. See the discussion in Eugene Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism: An Historical Study of Lukács, Brecht, Benjamin and Adorno* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 130-31 ("Lukács's position [on literature] came close to a dignified, sophisticated version of Soviet party doctrine," p. 131).

220. Hullot-Kentor, "Back to Adorno," p. 11, has responded: "The charge of pessimism is more pessimistic than any pessimism it claims to perceive. Even pessimism is dialectical, and especially in Adorno's case the relentlessness of his life's work can hardly be attributed to a lack of hope for change, but only to the most naïve optimism, which was continually transformed—by the refusal to compromise—into an instrument of cognition." He continues: "This dialectic of pessimism was opaque to a whole group of people who worked with Adorno at the Institute for Social Research, and who commented often on how strange it was that someone who wrote 'like that,' who worked with such intense seriousness, could at other times be so albern (silly, absurd)."

221. Hans-Jürgen Krahl, "The Political Contradictions in Adorno's Critical Theory," *Telos* 21 (Fall 1974), p. 165. Russell Berman, "Adorno, Marxism and Art," *Telos* 34 (Winter 1977-78), p. 158: Adorno's "aesthetic theory must be understood as a camouflaged social theory in self-imposed exile." Berman's reading is highly critical: "The truth is not the whole, Adorno knew, yet for him the artwork's truth was wholly negative. Nothing could bind art more fundamentally to the forces of domination. . . . Huddled in its monadicity, Adorno's artwork becomes an embellishment of corporate liberalism because it refuses to risk contamination. Yet precisely that wager is the prerequisite of emancipation" (p. 166).

222. Wiggershaus, Frankfurt School, p. 620. For a detailed account of these events, see pp. 609-36.
223. The literature on the theory-praxis relation in regard to Critical Theory is substantial. For a summary of the various positions, see Zuidervaart, *Adorno's Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 20-22, 134-41, and 146-49. Michael Sullivan and John T. Lysaker, "Between Impotence and Illusion: Adorno's Art of Theory and Practice," *New German Critique* 57 (Fall 1992), pp. 87-122, provide a particularly effective defense of Adorno and his "turn" toward aesthetics, on the ground that his aesthetic theory defines how artworks preserve the tension between subject and object, and by that means challenge the dominating tendencies of the dialectic of enlightenment. Buck-Morss, *Origin of Negative Dialectics*, pp. 24-42, 82-85, provides a nuanced account of Adorno's position. See Agger, *Critical Theory of Public Life*, for an attempt to rethink the lessons of Critical Theory in light of the postmodern condition, especially as regards political and social praxis.
224. MM, p. 209. The source for the aphorism seems to be the following anecdote told by Hanns Eisler. At the beginning of the war some of the émigré Institute members were on the beach in Southern California when suddenly Adorno, overcome with melancholy, said: "We should throw out a message in a bottle." To which Eisler responded—with sardonic humor—that the message should read: "I feel so lousy." From Leo Lowenthal, "The Utopian Motif in Suspension: A Conversation with Leo Lowenthal," interview by W. Martin Lüdke, trans. Ted R. Weeks, in *An Unmastered Past: The Autobiographical Reflections of Leo Lowenthal*, ed. Martin Jay (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), p. 237. Wolin, *Terms of Cultural Criticism*, p. 28: "The wager on Critical Theory's future as a potential revolutionary avant-garde seems both self-serving and grandiose. But it is this conception of Critical Theory as a refuge of truth in an era in which the objective social situation had repulsed the 'true' by failing to 'realize philosophy' that increasingly defined its self-understanding."
225. Wohlfarth, "Hibernation," p. 961.
226. Adorno, "Commitment," NL, vol. 2, p. 93.
227. Jarvis, Adorno, p. 121; see further pp. 188-92.
228. Adorno, "Commitment," pp. 79-80.
229. AT, pp. 242-43.
230. Lowenthal, "Theodor W. Adorno," p. 191.
231. *Ibid.*, p. 193.
232. ND, p. 143; see also p. 408. As Rose Rosengard Subotnik has conveyed to me, "one could perhaps say that Adorno's praxis lay in the very disinterestedness that kept alive the notion, and thereby the possibility, of freedom in the aesthetic (as defined initially by Kant)" [private communication]. Cf. Adorno, "Why Still Philosophy?" p. 14: "Praxis, whose purpose is to produce a rational and politically mature humanity, remains under the spell of disaster unless it has a theory than can think the totality of its untruth. It goes without saying that this theory should not be a warmed-over idealism but rather must incorporate societal and political reality and its dynamic." See similar remarks made during an interview in *Der Spiegel* following the student protests. The English translation of this interview was published as: "Of Barricades and Ivory Towers," *Encounter* 33 no. 3 (September 1969), pp. 63-69. Adorno, "Marginalia to Theory and Praxis," CM, pp. 277-78, noted that the wide circulation of his books such as *The Authoritarian Personality* and *Dialectic of Enlightenment* exerted "practical influence," despite their being written without practical intentions. In the same essay, p. 261, he comments, "Thinking is a doing, theory a form of praxis; already the ideology of the purity of thinking deceives about this. Thinking has a double character: it is immanently determined and rigorous, and yet an inalienably real mode of behavior in the midst of reality."
233. Adorno, "Resignation," CM, p. 290.
234. *Ibid.*, p. 293.
235. Richard Wolin, "Benjamin, Adorno, Surrealism," in *The Semblance of Subjectivity: Essays in Adorno's Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Tom Huhn and Lambert Zuidervaart (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), p. 94: Emancipation isn't simply a matter of changing the means of production but is instead one of the "transformation of life in its totality, that is, in its cultural, psychological, and everyday aspects, as well as its economic and political forms" (original emphasis). Wolin, "Utopia, Mimesis, and Reconciliation," p. 43, notes that "Art is the utopian reenchantment of radically disenchanting social totality. It serves as irrefutable proof of the fact that the existing universe of facts is not all there is." Recognizing the dangers of postmodernism, not least its anti-historicity and foundation in markets, advertising, and fashions of myriad sorts, Wolin nonetheless posits its potential in what he terms a "democratized" aesthetic sensibility to the extent that this sensibility, functioning at the level of everyday experience, has incorporated "an aesthetics of rupture, discontinuity, defamiliarization, and disenchantment—in sum, the 'ideology-critical' function Adorno attributes to authentic works of art" (p. 47).

236. See Hohendahl, *Reappraisals*, pp. 75-80.
237. Agger, *Critical Theory of Public Life*, p. 24: Adorno regarded positivism as "a worldview of adjustment. Positivism suggests that one can perceive the world without making assumptions about the nature of the phenomena under investigation. Its notion that knowledge can simply reflect the world leads to the uncritical identification of reality and rationality. One experiences the world as rational and necessary, thus deflating attempts to change it. Instead, the critical theorists attempt to develop a mode of consciousness and cognition that breaks the identity of reality and rationality, viewing social facts not as inevitable constraints on human freedom. . . . but as pieces of history that can be changed." On the positivism dispute with Karl Popper, see Wiggershaus, *Frankfurt School*, pp. 566-82.
238. AT, p. 333.
239. D. {ths}G. MacRae, "Frankfurters," *Newsociety* 27 no. 59 (28 March 1974), p. 786.
240. Adorno, "On Tradition," *Telos* 94 (Winter 1993-94), pp. 75-82.
241. Eva Geulen, "Theodor Adorno on Tradition," in *The Actuality of Adorno: Critical Essays on Adorno and the Postmodern*, ed. Max Pensky (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 187.
242. Adorno, "On Tradition," p. 75.
243. Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence*, vol. 2 of *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), p. 12, points out that in traditional societies, "especially in small oral cultures, 'tradition' is not known as such, because there is nothing that escapes its influence and, therefore, nothing with which to contrast it." Tradition in other words is a phenomenon of history and modernity.
244. Adorno, "On Tradition," p. 76.
245. In MM, pp. 102-03, Adorno comments: "Abstract utopia is all too compatible with the most insidious tendencies of society. That all men are alike is exactly what society would like to hear. It considers actual or imagined differences as stigmas indicating that not enough has yet been done; that something has still been left outside its machinery, not quite determined by its totality. . . . An emancipated society, on the other hand, would not be a unitary state, but the realization of universality in the reconciliation of differences." He ends this aphorism, "Mélange," with the following: "The melting-pot was introduced by unbridled industrial capitalism. The thought of being cast into it conjures up martyrdom, not democracy."
246. *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77. Cf. Herbert Marcuse, "Remarks on a Redefinition of Culture," in *Science and Culture: A Study of Cohesive and Disjunctive Forces*, ed. Gerald Holton (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p. 225: "Culture is redefined by the existing state of affairs: the words, tones, colors, shapes of the perennial works remain the same, but that which they expressed is losing its truth, its validity; the works which previously stood shockingly apart from and against the established reality have been neutralized as classics; thus they no longer preserve their alienation from the alienated society" (emphasis added).
247. Adorno, "On Tradition," p. 77.
248. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
249. *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.
250. AT, p. 35: "The traces to be found in the material and the technical procedures, from which every qualitatively new work takes its lead, are scars: They are the loci at which the preceding works misfired. By laboring on them, the new work turns against those that left these traces behind." By this last remark Adorno means that the truth content of the artwork emerges from its dialectical relation to other artworks; as he puts it, "each artwork is the mortal enemy of the other."
251. *Ibid.*, p. 22: "Aesthetic reflection, however, is not indifferent to the entwining of the old and new. The old has refuge only at the vanguard of the new; in the gaps, not in continuity. Schoenberg's simple motto—If you do not seek, you will not find—is a watchword of the new."
252. Adorno, "On Tradition," pp. 80-81.
253. *Ibid.*, p. 82. Cf. AT, pp. 20-21: "The attitude of contemporary art toward tradition, usually reviled as a loss of tradition, is predicated on the inner transformation of the category of tradition itself." For the implications of this argument for philosophy, as Adorno understood it, see Jarvis, *Adorno*, pp. 150-53.
254. MM, p. 52.
255. Neil Lazarus, "Hating Tradition Properly," *New Formations* 38 (Summer 1999), p. 10.
256. *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11. The internal quotation is from ND, p. 41. See also Seyla Benhabib, "Critical Theory and Postmodernism: On the Interplay of Ethics, Aesthetics, and Utopia in Critical Theory," in *The Handbook of Critical Theory*, ed. David M. Rasmussen (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 327-31.

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Adorno	T.W.	On the Problem of Musical Analysis	Music Analysis	Volume 1, Number 2, July 1982
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