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T. W. Adorno: The Memory of Utopia.

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Abstract.

This thesis has two principal aims: to demonstrate the centrality of memory to the philosophy and aesthetics of T. W. Adorno, and to assess its philosophical significance. Although in recent years Adorno's work has been the object of increased scrutiny within Anglo-American philosophical circles, as yet little sustained attention has been devoted to the concept of memory within Adorno's *oeuvre*. However, in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* Adorno and Horkheimer proclaimed that it is "by virtue of this memory of nature in the subject" that "enlightenment is universally opposed to domination." Given that all of Adorno's work is concerned to redeem enlightenment from domination, the importance of a philosophical interpretation of the concept of memory is pivotal for an engagement with the legacy of Adorno's thought today.

It will be argued that, for Adorno, memory always operates in relation to reification. The construal of this relation enjoins the consideration of a number of significant categories within Adorno's work: notably tradition, experience, mimesis and utopia; and further, it serves to situate and distance Adorno from those thinkers - Kant, Hegel, Heidegger and Benjamin - with whom he incessantly engages. Finally, by focusing on the relation between memory and reification, one can gauge the stakes of the Habermasian critique of Adorno, for it is Adorno's understanding of reconciliation (utopia) as the "remembrance (*Eingedenken*) of nature in the subject" that is the crux of the agon between Habermas and Adorno. I will argue that it is Habermas's failure to fully engage with the ramifications of Adorno's concept of memory that vitiates his critique, and indeed, that this failure provides the means for an Adornian critique of Habermas. It will be argued that memory is not an object of Adornian thought, but rather, that it provides the utopian texture of that thought.

Introduction.

There is, ineluctably, an inescapable element of disingenuity in attempting to expound the thought of Adorno. It was, after all, Adorno's dictum that "Essentially, therefore, philosophy is not expoundable."¹ Although one should not thereby blindly take Adorno at his word, it is incontestable that his thought self-consciously designs its own formal and substantive recalcitrance before exposition. It could be argued that this recalcitrance provides the key to understanding why Adorno's critics and commentators have found themselves simultaneously acknowledging the anti-systematic character of the work under discussion whilst postulating a central concept upon which that *oeuvre* depends. Thus, Frederic Jameson argues that, "Adorno's life work stands and falls with the concept of 'totality.'"² For Gillian Rose it is "reification" which provides the "centrifuge" of his work,³ whereas for Lambert Zuidervart, "artistic truth" provides the central optic through which Adorno's aesthetic theory may be re-constructed.⁴ One could imagine an Adornian response to this aporia of exposition which would be, characteristically, aporetic. On the one hand, in line with Adorno's critique of the foundationalist pretensions of *prima philosophia*, the positing of a "key category" must inevitably arouse suspicions that an archimedean point within the totality of his work is being advocated; on the other hand, again in line with Adorno's philosophical practice, one could argue that the positing of a "key category" in fact functions less as a foundational principle, and rather as a particular through which the lineaments of the unrepresentable totality (of that thought) may be discerned. Thus aporia would issue in further aporia.

It is perhaps not insignificant that each of the commentators cited above should find a different category to be the key to interpreting Adorno's work. This plurality of interpretative ciphers, whilst reflecting the context within which each would wish to situate Adorno, also intimates the ineliminable heterogeneity of his thought. Although it would be tempting to suggest that Adorno's work has something of the quality of a palimpsest in the face of its interpretations, one must confront the elusive and mobile

quality of his thought with the very real systematic aspects of that thought. Certain rhetorical formulations re-occur with regularity, as do the dialectical inversions which intend a protest against theoretical closure whilst providing the closing formulations of essays with monotonous regularity. But above and beyond the formal and stylistic consistencies of Adorno's work, there is, as has often been noted, a remarkable substantive consistency to Adorno's work; a consistency which will be approached here through the notion of "the memory of utopia."

The principal aim of this thesis is to demonstrate the centrality and significance of memory in the philosophy and aesthetics of T. W. Adorno. Memory will be identified as the fulcrum around which Adorno seeks to critically contest reification; philosophically through a thinking in constellations and aesthetically through the development of the cognitive potential of modernist art. It will be argued that, for Adorno, memory always operates in relation to reification. The construal of this relation enjoins the consideration of a number of significant categories within Adorno's work: notably tradition, experience, mimesis and utopia; and further, it serves to situate and distance Adorno from those thinkers - Kant, Hegel, Heidegger and Benjamin - with whom he incessantly engages. Finally, by focusing on the relation between memory and reification, one can gauge the stakes of the Habermasian critique of Adorno, for it is Adorno's understanding of reconciliation (utopia) as the "remembrance (*Eingedenken*) of nature in the subject" ⁵ that is the crux of the agon between Habermas and Adorno. I will argue that it is Habermas's failure to fully engage with the ramifications of Adorno's concept of memory that vitiates his critique, and indeed, that this failure provides the means for an Adornian critique of Habermas. It will be argued that memory is not an object of Adornian thought, but rather, that it provides the utopian texture of that thought.

The construal of the configurations this aporia undergoes in Adorno's work will proceed both abstractly and concretely: Chapter One will abstractly expound the relation between reification and memory as an aporia central to Adorno's philosophy of history. Concentrating on *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and *Negative Dialectics*, the

discussion will focus on Adorno's construal of the present as a reified return of the same, in which history is critically comprehended as the perpetuation of pre-history. The key to this comprehension is Adorno's construal of the fatefulness of universal history as "the appearance of necessity". It will be argued that, for Adorno, the memory of non-identity in reified identity, which would serve to expose necessity as illusory, cannot re-constitute a lost immediacy. Rather, precisely through its mediation by tendentially universal reification, such memory figures the possibility of a utopian release from false necessity through the determinate negation of that necessity; thus the key to the memorial presentiment of utopia is identified as the mediated liberation of repressed possibility from illusory necessity.

Chapter Two traces the aporia of reification and memory more concretely through Adorno's "philosophy of language." Concentrating on the essays "On Epic Naiveté" ⁶, "Parataxis" ⁷ and *Negative Dialectics*, mimesis will be located as the key to Adorno's attempt to construe the oppositional categories of identity thinking (conceptual reification) as being indebted to an anterior non-identity that identity thinking constitutively disavows, the memory of which portends the reconciliation between universal and particular in which an emphatic concept of identity promised by the concepts of identity thinking would be realized. The precondition of such realization would be the recognition that the subject's autonomy from nature is illusory for as long as the subject fails to remember its mediatedness by nature; memory of nature in the subject operates as the memory of a constitutive, but unacknowledged non-identity of the subject with itself.

Chapter Three continues, abstractly, to develop this argument by focusing on the relation between mimesis and rationality in Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*. ⁸ The memorial moment of Adorno's aesthetics, it will be argued, lies in his retrieval of the (non)-concept of the beautiful in nature (*das Naturschöne*) from the oblivion it suffers within Hegelian aesthetics, the consequences of which will be traced through a reading of Adorno's essay on Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron*. ⁹

Chapter Four seeks to develop the aporetic relation of memory and rationalisation immanently within the trajectory of Adorno's philosophy of new music. Three essays will be central here: "Schoenberg and Progress" ¹⁰, "The Ageing of the New Music" ¹¹, and "Vers une musique informelle." ¹² In each case, the key to Adorno's concept of aesthetic modernism will be seen to involve his concept of artistic material, the historical logic of which will be comprehended as a dialectic of enlightenment that proceeds from necessity to the liberation of possibility. The liberation of possibility provides the speculative moment of identity between the memorial claims of Adorno's negative dialectic and his aesthetic theory.

Chapter Five will offer an evaluation of the philosophical implications of the various constellations in which the relation between memory and reification has been shown to operate in Adorno's work. This evaluation proceeds via an examination of the claims of Jürgen Habermas and Albrecht Wellmer to have transcended the limitations of Adorno's philosophy and aesthetics. Both argue that Adorno's concept of utopian reconciliation between the subject and nature is vitiated by an untenable conflation of materialist and theological categories. Through a reading of Adorno's "Meditations on Metaphysics" ¹³, and in particular, through attention to Adorno's aporetic re-working of Kant's concept of the "intelligible world", I will seek to demonstrate that this critique must fail insofar as its understanding of Adorno's concept of utopia fails to recognise how, for Adorno, memory operates as the pre-condition of utopian reconciliation. The notion of "the memory of utopia" will be developed in order to demonstrate the complex temporality of Adorno's "utopian materialism", a temporality to which Habermas and Wellmer remain blind.

Chapter One: Natural History, Repetition and the New.

1. Introduction:

"The means employed in negative dialectics for the penetration of its hardened objects is possibility (*Möglichkeit*) - the possibility of which their reality (*Wirklichkeit*) has cheated the objects and which is nonetheless visible in each one. But no matter how hard we try for linguistic expression of such a history congealed in things, the words we will use will remain concepts." ¹

"The name of history may not be spoken since what would truly be history, the other, has not yet begun." ²

Abstractly stated, in its philosophical intent, Adorno's work, from first to last - that is, from "The Actuality of Philosophy" (1931)³ to *Negative Dialectics* (1966) - takes the form of an aporetic engagement with idealism. Whatever the theoretical vicissitudes of the intervening three decades, Adorno's critique of the subject of idealism and its supposed autonomy from nature remains remarkably consistent. For Adorno, Kant inaugurates philosophical modernity. Intrinsic to this inauguration is Kant's raising of the concept of possibility to the status of the primary tool of critique. However, as we will see, for Adorno, Kantian possibility (in the sense of the transcendental regression to conditions of possibility) remains merely abstract possibility. Negative dialectics acknowledges that thought must begin from the concept, for pre-conceptual being can never be an object of experience; ⁴ it diverges from Kantian critique, however, insofar as it renounces the abstract opposition between form and content, upon which critique predicates itself, a renunciation which rests on the Hegelian insight that the form/content opposition is itself internally mediated. The tracing this logic of mediation is the tracing of the history "congealed within things." Thus, in Adorno's thought, the aim is to give concretion to the category of possibility by determining possibility, not as an abstract condition of the cognition of objects, but rather as the immanent experience of possibility within objects. This, Adorno claims,

gives conceptuality an axial turn, for the concept no longer operates merely as the condition for subsuming particulars under a universal term, but rather takes on a utopian function, whereby identity would not be the process of rendering what is qualitatively different quantitatively the same, but acts as a marker for the possibility that the concept might come to be, in reality, identical with its object: "Living in the rebuke that the thing is not identical with the concept is the concept's longing to become identical with the thing. This is how the sense of non-identity contains identity." ⁵ Thus, the liberation of repressed possibility, enacted by negative dialectics, would be extensionally equivalent to the utopian promise of identity posited, but as yet unrealized by, conceptuality; the corollary of this claim is the further claim that, were this promise to indeed be realized, the identity between concept and object would no longer be merely posited, but, as the realisation of the historically possible, actual.

However, in the wake of Marx and Lukács, Adorno does not pursue a meta-critical resolution of the antinomies bequeathed to modern thought by Kant, but rather discerns the truth content of these antinomies to lie in the social pre-condition of Kantian idealism, namely capitalism. Specifically, this critique discerns a formal homology between the identity logic of idealist subjectivity and capital's logic of equivalence. Both the concept and commodity exchange effect an abstract equalisation of non-identity through abstraction from, and subsumption of, particularity under universality. Again, as with conceptual identity, exchange is not to be demonised, but rather, under existing inequalities, to be critically comprehended as the abstract negation of real possibility, a real possibility of equal exchange that is implicit within the concept of exchange. This is what Adorno means when he claims that, "When we criticize the exchange principle (*Tauschprinzip*) as the identifying principle of thought, we want to realize the ideal of free and just exchange (*Tausch*). To date, this ideal is only a pretext. Its realization alone would transcend exchange." ⁶ However one should exercise a degree of caution against too quickly assimilating conceptual identity and the equivalence of commodity exchange, for in positing their identity one re-capitulates the very logic of abstract substitutability which negative dialectics seeks to undermine;

indeed the abstract attribution of a formal identity of conceptual identity and commodity exchange hides the fact that two different critical strategies are at work in the detection of the false immediacy of identity. Where the de-coding of capital's logic of equivalence pre-supposes Marx's account of commodity fetishism, the de-coding of conceptual identity relies on a quasi-"naturalistic" critique of idealism's philosophy of history. The attempt to bring these two critical strands together constitutes the difficulty of Adorno's "materialism." ⁷

In this chapter Adorno's response to the aporias of congealed history and identity thinking will be essayed initially through a consideration of the philosophical implications of his attempt to unhinge a positive concept of universal history through the concept of natural history. At the heart of this critique of a positive concept of universal history is Adorno's insistence that what such a concept represses is the "hidden" history of suffering. If there is a continuity to history, it is a continuity constituted less by progress than by the continuity of suffering. ⁸ For "what would truly be history, the other..." to begin, this continuity must be both recognised and interrupted. It will be argued that thinking this logic of interruption involves construing the continuity of universal history as necessary appearance or illusion. Adorno's concept of natural history attempts to expose this illusory necessity through an immanent critique of the abstract opposition of the concepts of nature and history.

However, for Adorno the block on bringing the illusion of necessity to self-consciousness is not simply sustained by "the metaphysics of history" ⁹, but also by the organized control of consciousness effected by advanced capitalism, an organized control which Adorno and Horkheimer engaged through the concept of the culture industry. What will be argued here is that Adorno develops a critique of the culture industry through an exposition of the parallogism of culture performed by the culture industry. Adorno's response to the reifications specific to both "the metaphysics of history" and to the culture industry, a reification which (insofar as "every reification (*Verdinglichung*) is a forgetting" ¹⁰) tendentially verges on total amnesia will be a self-consciously aporetic advocacy of remembrance (the remembrance of "the possibility of

which their reality has cheated the objects..."), an advocacy whose most emphatic demonstration is contained in negative dialectics and the philosophical interpretation of the truth content^{of} modernist art.

What emerges from these aporias is yet another aporia which circumscribes the entirety of Adorno's *oeuvre*, the aporia of rationalisation and remembrance. As will become clear, possibility can be redeemed only through remembrance of the constitutive non-identity that vitiates all claims to posit identity, but this remembrance can be actualized only by relentlessly pursuing the very rationalisation process that would, tendentially, occlude the very possibility of the remembrance of non-identity; which, for Adorno, means the occlusion of the possibility of liberating repressed possibility from the illusory immediacy of existing reality. The various configurations in which this aporia manifests itself in Adorno's work - configurations which hinge on the modal categories of possibility, existence and necessity - will be the subject of chapters 2-4. The philosophical difficulties and achievements of Adorno's negotiations of this aporia will be assessed in the final chapter.

2. Universal History and Natural History:

Famously, Adorno writes in *Negative Dialectics* that "Universal history must be constructed (*konstruieren*) and denied." ¹¹ The construction and denial of universal history acknowledges the complicity of critical thought with the accumulated violence and suffering requisite for the dominance of identity thinking whilst attempting to undermine the spurious necessity for, or purported disinterestedness of, such thinking. Thus, the present, in which construction and denial are woven together, is the key to the interpretation of history, both as "a quasi-eschatological fulfilment of past history"¹², and as the possibility for comprehending, and thus, critically undermining, the present simply as a continuation of the past. Such comprehension is to be gained through the "[I]nsight into the constitutive character of the non-conceptual in the concept [which] would end the compulsive identification which the concept brings unless halted by such reflection." ¹³ The difficulty signalled by this passage is, of course, to locate the status

of the "constitutive character" of the non-conceptual. The construction of universal history is the attempt to provide a genealogy of how and why conceptuality has come to be marked by "compulsive identification." The denial of universal history attests to the non-necessary, but deeply calcified force that such a compulsion has for us; it is the marker for an *other* history whose character cannot not be stated discursively without perpetuating its repression, but whose repression must be comprehended discursively if the repression is not to become total. This is the aporia of Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*. Conceptuality is taken to be not inherently repressive, but as having become so; and it is Adorno's wager that this history can be comprehended. Such comprehension guarantees nothing with respect to the ending of repression, but cognition of the contingent nature of domination allows for the distinction between the history of domination and history as domination.¹⁴ To collapse the first into the second is to produce a variant of the Christological narrative of history as the product of original sin that eternalizes "sinful reality" with hope placed solely within a transcendent alterity. Adorno's thought may appear to come perilously close to such a narrative. But for Adorno, negative dialectics does not "itself" offer a positive narrative of history; rather it is the immanent critique of all such constructions and concepts; an immanent critique acutely aware of its historical embeddedness, which aims to discern the layers of historical experience and practice constitutive of concepts whose reified usage rests on the forgetting of such historical sedimentation.¹⁵ Thus negative dialectics "rests on the texts it criticizes"¹⁶ in order to illuminate the historical becoming of world history. Such immanent critique is given critical purchase only in the light of a transcendent alterity - utopia - an alterity not posited, or imaged, but itself immanent to, albeit repressed by, the antagonistic totality of society.

In the *Grundrisse* Marx, writing on the uneven development of art, law, relations and modes of production notes that: "*This conception appears as necessary development. But legitimation of chance. How... (World history has not always existed; history as world history a result.)*"¹⁷ The need to both construct and deny universal history arguably could be read as Adorno's response to these notes from Marx, as well

as to the presumptive triumphalism of (at least a crude reading of) the Hegelian philosophy of history, for it involves thinking "history [as] the unity of continuity and discontinuity." ¹⁸ What I want to consider is the function and status of the temporal strategies and modalities practiced by Adorno's thought that allow for the articulation and configuration of the relation between continuity and discontinuity. What is the nature of this relation? In the terms of the quote from Marx cited above I will suggest that what Adorno is concerned to account for is the *appearance* of a continuity with the past. Arguably, and this is what I want to explore, Adorno's position might be captured by the assertion that the appearance of continuity with the past is the phantasmagoric effect of mythic repetition. What is repeated - what, that is, allows for continuity - is a structure of repetition in which what is repeated is, of necessity, illusory. It is by way of comprehending the illusion of necessity that the possibilities not admitted to the actuality of the present may come to be redeemed. ¹⁹

Adorno's early essay "The Idea of Natural History", delivered as a lecture in 1929, provides a model of the critical de-coding of the appearance of necessity. As has often been noted, this essay, although unpublished in Adorno's lifetime, casts a portentous shadow before it, formulating as it does, many of the positions and formal strategies which will appear time and again throughout Adorno's *oeuvre*. Insofar as this essay provides a model for the demythologisation of the appearance of necessity it is important to distinguish between distinct senses of necessity. Three senses come under critical scrutiny: necessity in history (history conceived as a meaningful totality, whether as progress or decline) the necessity of nature (the enlightenment conception of nature in which nature is, in principle, deemed to be entirely explicable in terms of law-like regularities) and nature as necessity (the principle of myth whereby an enchanted nature performs an eternal repetition of the same.) As has already been argued, negative dialectics operates by exposing the non-identity between concepts and the object or "reality" they purportedly conceptualise. ²⁰ Thus in this essay Adorno will seek to dialectically mediate the apparently antithetical concepts of nature and history such that

nature (understood as *myth* or repetition of the same) and history (understood as "the occurrence of the qualitatively new")²¹ "are mediated in their apparent difference."²²

Adorno, in *Negative Dialectics*, counters interpretations of historical necessity by claiming that "[T]heory cannot shift the huge weight of historic necessity unless the necessity has been recognized as realized appearance (*Schein*) and historic determination is known as a metaphysical accident. Such cognition is frustrated by the metaphysics of history."²³ What is questioned then is a conception of history in which meaning is always recuperable, and contingency always converted into necessity. In "The Idea of Natural History" the concept of appearance or semblance (*Schein*) is developed through reference to Lukács's concept of "second nature" in which what appears to be immutable or natural is in fact congealed or sedimented history.²⁴ As a critical concept, "second nature" exposes the appearance of necessity to be illusory. In *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno deploys this strategy, via a quotation from Marx²⁵, to expose the illusory necessity of commodity exchange. Arguing that the essence of the capitalist exchange process is the tendential supremacy of abstraction, a tendency encapsulated in a dialectic of appearance or semblance (*Schein*) and essence (*Wesen*) he states that, "What this implies in the real progress of life to this day is the necessity of social semblance (*Schein*). Its core is value as a thing-in-itself, value as "nature." The natural growth of capitalist society is real, and at the same time it is that semblance.²⁶ However the concept of second nature must itself be supplemented by a conception of nature as historical, or temporal, to demythologise the notion of nature as "value-in-itself." To this end, Adorno turns to Benjamin's analysis of *Trauerspiel*, in which nature is shown to be immanently temporal through the concept of "transience."²⁷ This conception of nature allows for a formulation of "first nature" not as an immutable mythic substratum "underlying" history, but rather as what passes away within history, "wherever an historical element appears it refers back to what passes away within it."²⁸

Thus Adorno's construction of the idea of natural history involves a doubling of history and nature.²⁹ History is discerned as both mythic second nature and as temporal, transient nature; nature is discerned as mythic, pre-historical givenness and as

transient, first nature. The abstract opposition of myth and history is critically undermined by the argument that history has yet to become historical insofar as it continues to repress the "first" nature that passes away within it, whereas nature is already "more" than simply mythic givenness due to its transience or passing. The hinge of this dialectical mediation is provided by the concept of passing or transience (*Vergängnis*), through which, according to *Negative Dialectics*, "nature and history become commensurable with each other."³⁰ Transience marks the site of a constitutive non-identity that traverses the concepts of both nature and history, unmasking the appearance of necessity specific to each concept. This logic of unmasking is expressed by Adorno in the following terms (the italicized part of this sentence is quoted by Adorno in his discussion of natural history in *Negative Dialectics*): "[I]f the question of the relation of nature and history is to be seriously posed, then it only offers any chance of solution if it is possible *to comprehend historical being in its most extreme historical determinacy, where it is most historical, as natural being, or if it were possible to comprehend nature as an historical being where it seems to rest most deeply in itself as nature.*"³¹ This argument formally proceeds by way on a chiasmatic inversion of its two clauses and it is the philosophical implications of this chiasmatic inversion which require elucidation.³²

The strategy of chiasmatic inversion is of course central to the argument of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. The opposition between enlightenment and myth, between progress and stasis, is, Adorno and Horkheimer argue, an opposition drawn by enlightenment itself: "...the myths which fell victim to the enlightenment were its own products."³³ The concept of natural-history comprehends and undermines this opposition in order to prepare the way for a "positive concept of enlightenment." Thus, as Adorno argues in "The Idea of Natural History" the enlightenment conception of myth as stasis is already an expression of (Platonic) Reason's misrecognition of its other. The concept of natural-history is, as we have seen, to be developed by a critique of the conception of myth as stasis.³⁴ Thus, against enlightenment's disavowal of myth, Adorno and Horkheimer argue that "myth is already enlightenment; and enlightenment

reverts to mythology." ³⁵ What is the status of this strategy of chiasmatic inversion? Adorno argues that the concept of natural history is to be conceived not as a positive concept but rather as a "change of perspective" ³⁶, a change of perspective whose principle is to be developed chiasmatically.

It would be precipitate to conclude that chiasm denotes merely a rhetorical principle; rather, for Adorno it denotes a form of thought which undermines the abstract opposition of concepts without thereby constituting a final term of conceptual unity. To be sure, in a chiasmatic inversion a moment of identity is required if the opposites are to be cognized as indeed opposites or contradictory terms, but, at least in Adorno's deployment of the chiasm, this moment of identity is not to be construed as either an underlying ground or unity for the opposition, nor as the sublated reconciliation of the opposition. Chiasm as a form of Adornian thought performs a process of mediation without reconciliation, which is to say, in short, a negative dialectic. Thus Adorno argues that "as a consciousness (*Bewußtsein*) of nonidentity through identity, dialectics is not only an advancing process but a retrograde one at the same time. To this extent, the picture of the circle describes it correctly. The concept's unfoldment is also a reaching back, and synthesis is the definition of the difference that perished, "vanished," in the concept - almost like Hölderlin's anamnesis of the doomed naturalness. Only in the accomplished synthesis, in the union of contradictory moments, will their difference be manifested." ³⁷ As such, chiasmatic thought does not thereby constitute a "master logic" through which thought would comprehend the identity of identity and non-identity, but rather a constant process of releasing the non-identity repressed by abstract oppositions, a process whose "result" is characterized not by a supposed reconciliation of thought and reality, but rather by the remembrance of the transience of repressed nature. Chiasmus denotes, therefore, a form of philosophical remembrance. ³⁸ To this extent chiasmatic thought renounces thought's traditional mastery over its object. As a "thinking against itself" ³⁹ negative dialectics is not in any sense abstracted from the inversions it practices, rather in constituting the moment of identity which releases the possibility of non-identity - possibility as non-identity - it

attests, in the medium of the concept, to what is non-conceptual, and thereby disenchant the concept.⁴⁰ Of this disenchantment of the concept Adorno states that, "In truth, all concepts, even the philosophical ones, refer to nonconceptualities, because concepts on their part are moments of the reality that requires their formation, primarily for the control of nature."⁴¹ It is with this quasi-anthropological turn of the argument that chiasmus ceases to be merely a rhetorical principle, and becomes a genealogy of reason's fatal forgetting of the nature of which it is both a part and yet which it transcends.⁴² It is the mis-recognition of the character of this transcendence that gives rise to a dialectic of enlightenment, a mis-recognition which the concept of natural history seeks both to comprehend and undermine.

3. Reason, sacrifice and the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

The tracing of this genealogy of reason is the task envisaged by Adorno and Horkheimer's dialectical account of the "proto-history" of subjectivity in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Extending beyond this particular work, this operation, exemplified in his work on Kierkegaard, Husserl, Hegel, Heidegger and resulting in *Negative Dialectics*, consists in the attempt to offer, by way of an immanent critique of idealist philosophy, an account of the 'materiality' that the idealist subject must repress in order to posit its autonomy. For Adorno, the subject can only attain *real* autonomy through an awareness of its conditionedness, that is, through a recognition of what he terms "the primacy of the object."⁴³ In tracing the "proto-history of subjectivity"⁴⁴ in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* we could say that Adorno and Horkheimer are attempting to critically undermine the bourgeois myth of progress, personified by the Protestant capitalist and philosophically underwritten through the Kantian transcendental subject.⁴⁵ Paradoxically then, the tracing of the "proto-history of subjectivity", subjectivity's emergence from undifferentiated nature, and thus the emergence of history from nature, involves tracing the formation of the transcendental itself, that is, tracing the emergence of the timeless condition for the apprehension of temporality, without thereby falling back into pre-critical metaphysics. It is, as Peter Osborne has argued⁴⁶,

the thematization of the nature-history relation that allows for a materialist concept of social history to be thought by way of "history's natural growth by history itself." ⁴⁷ Thus, accounting for the philosophical substance of this emergence of time from nature will be central to understanding Adorno's claim that "world history" operates as the appearance of necessity. Adorno's dialectic of natural history seeks to mediate the differential temporalities of natural (cyclical time) and social history (linear time) such that social history's self-conception of itself under the sign of progress (and thus linear time) can be critically comprehended as the continuation of natural history. As we will see, for Adorno, capitalist society, which is predicated upon the most emphatic self-assertion of its progressiveness and novelty, appears under the guise of the time of repetition, the eternal return of the same. With the transition from history to world history - the effective globalization of the market, and thus the simultaneization of "geographically diverse, but chronologically simultaneous times" ⁴⁸ under the concept of universal time - modernity succumbs to an inversion in which the archaic is simulated in and through the modern. This diagnosis of modernity's simulation of, and reversion to, the archaic rests on Adorno's claim that what subtends the claims of "World History" or "Metaphysics" is a perpetuated repetition of the emergence of history from nature, which constitutes less an "essence" of history, either as immanent teleology or as a forgetting of Being, than the condition for recognizing the claims of historical necessity to be both real and illusory at the same time. Real, because to the individual the totality appears to have the inexorable logic of fate; illusory, because such inexorability can be critically comprehended as the failed reconciliation between spirit and nature in and through history. History as "the continuity of suffering" ⁴⁹ is the unreflective perpetuation of nature's domination by spirit; but history's discontinuity is the perpetual breaking apart of spirit and nature ⁵⁰, subject and object, the failure of spirit to fully grasp what is non-identical to it, which portends the promise of their non-violent reconciliation.

Thus the "proto-history of subjectivity" developed in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* involves a two-fold task: to both trace the emergence of temporality

from nature and to account for the formation of the transcendental structures of idealist subjectivity. These tasks are in fact two sides of the same coin, for what is involved in both cases is the attempt to provide a materialist account of the genesis and formation of the abstractions of modern subjectivity and capitalist society. Of course the philosophical difficulty of such an operation lies in the attempt to account for these paradoxes (of a nature "prior to" time, and of the emergence of the transcendental which, by definition, cannot emerge) without reverting either to pre-critical dogmatic metaphysics or a naive anthropological materialism. The key to this two-fold task lies in the acceptance of Kant's account of the constitutive role of transcendental subjectivity in constituting nature as an object for the subject, whilst simultaneously de-coding the transcendental subject as social labour - an operation pre-figured by Marx - whereby the subject can itself be interpreted as an object ⁵¹, or more specifically, "subjectivity is grasped as the object's form." ⁵² In so doing it becomes clear that the constitution of nature as an abstract object is in fact the reification of a social relation to nature whose constitutive principle is labour. This operation can best be approached through a consideration of one of Adorno's most concise formulations of the dialectic of enlightenment.

That reason is something different from nature and yet a moment within it - that is its pre-history, which has become part of its immanent determination. As the psychic force branching out for the purposes of self-preservation, it is natural, however; once it has been split off and contrasted with nature, it also becomes the other of nature. Reason is identical and non-identical with nature, dialectical in accord with its own concept. Yet the more unrestrainedly reason is made into an absolute over against nature within that dialectic and becomes oblivious of itself in this, the more it regresses, as self-preservation gone wild, into nature. Only as nature's reflection would it be supernature. ⁵³

This passage, assembling all the essential elements of Adorno's dialectic of natural history expatiates the quintessence of his thought. The first task in expounding this dialectic is to account for the doubling of nature at work in this passage with reference to Kant's determination of nature and time. For Adorno, the primary relation of the

subject to nature is one of domination through social labour. In this respect Adorno follows Marx's inversion of idealism. In *Negative Dialectics* Adorno argues that "Pure consciousness - "logic" - has come to be; it is a validity that has submerged its genesis."⁵⁴ It should be noted that Adorno is not here arguing that one should thereby conflate validity and genesis; rather, that by accounting for the genesis of what validity is taken to be one can thereby circumscribe the rationality of "pure consciousness" to be merely instrumental rationality rather than an emphatic conception of rationality. This recognition derives from what Adorno terms the primacy of the object, the construction of which involves two distinct senses of subjectivity. On the one hand, ontologically the subject is itself an object, but epistemologically it can be conceived under the guise of "the object's form". Thus, as Peter Osborne has summarized the notion of the primacy of the object, "... while all subjects are objects, they are also more than this: distinctive kinds of "object" endowed with the possibility of *opposing themselves* to other objects (*Objekt*) and turning them into objects of consciousness (*Gegenstand*)." ⁵⁵ The epistemological sense of subjectivity as constitutive of objectivity, is construed by Adorno as a dialectical moment within a broader, ontological account of objectivity in which, to cite Osborne again, " epistemologically, subjectivity is not so much constitutive of objectivity (as is supposed by the transcendentalism of the phenomenologists) as a "block" to it: "the subjective mediation is a block to objectivity; it fails to absorb entity, which objectivity is in essence.""⁵⁶ Such insight was unavailable to Kant because he dogmatically conceived the opposition of subject and object to be a given pre-condition of thought and thus timelessly invariant. Thus nature, as object of cognition constituted by the subject can only appear as abstract matter to be pre-formed through the categories of the understanding in accordance with the pure intuitions of space and time. Nature cannot critically appear "before" its constitution by the subject because the very notion of "before" would require the subject as the condition of temporality. Adorno would agree that nature is constituted as nature *for us* only through labour; prior to the formation of the subject it is not possible to speak of nature in the sense of nature as an object standing over against the subject.

But equally the very conceptual model of abstraction and opposition between subject and object which is presupposed by Kant, that is to say, the very notion of transcendental conditions of possibility for cognition, remains dogmatically posited.

How is one to pursue a materialism without reverting to dogmatic metaphysics? Adorno, in following Marx in construing the transcendental subject as spiritualized social labour, must argue for a conception of nature as being both logically and ontologically prior to the subject. The argument as it is pursued by the early Marx has been well reconstructed by Habermas who states that:

Marx is assuming something like a nature in itself. It is prior to the world of mankind. It is at the root of labouring subjects as natural beings and also enters into their labour processes. But as the subjective nature of man and the objective nature of their environment, it is already part of a system of social labour that is divided up into two aspects of the same "process of material exchange." While epistemologically we must presuppose nature as existing in itself, we ourselves have access to nature only within the historical dimension disclosed by labour processes. Here nature in human form mediates itself with objective nature, the ground and environment of the human world. "Nature in itself" is therefore an abstraction, which is a requisite of our thought: but we always encounter nature within the horizon of the world-historical self-formative process of mankind. Kant's "thing-in-itself" reappears under the name of a nature preceding human history.⁵⁷

What then is the status of the doubling of nature in Adorno's dialectic of natural history? According to Habermas's re-construction of the status of nature in Marx, a position I am claiming Adorno is deeply indebted to, nature is doubled as both an historical object and, through a materialist re-writing of the concept of thing-in-itself, as the pre-temporal material condition of the opposition between subject and object. Of this second sense of the concept of nature, Adorno displays a deep ambivalence, an ambivalence which yields philosophical substance in the light of his dialectical construal of the relation between subjectivity and sacrifice. On the one hand, nature prior to the emergence of the subject, and therefore of temporality, signifies not an Adamic condition of harmony prior to the diremption of subject and object, for such a

conception "...is romantic a wishful projection at times, but today no more than a lie. The undifferentiated state before the subject's formation was the dread of the blind web of nature, of myth Besides, to be undifferentiated is not to be one; even in Platonic dialectics, unity requires diverse items of which it is the unity." ⁵⁸ The subject's liberation from nature, through the sacrificial process of the domination of nature is the prerequisite for both the emergence of history from myth, and for the possibility of cognizing difference or non-identity as opposed to mere indifferenciation. Conceptual thought and the domination of nature thus prove to be the agents of freedom, a freedom which is co-terminous with the possibility of history and not to be sought in any form of return to a pre-lapsarian idyll. Conceptual thought and the domination of labour become complicit with unfreedom however when reason forgets its material conditionedness and posits its autonomy from nature as total. Such autonomy can conceive nature only as an abstract raw material to be pre-formed through syntheses in which particularity is rendered fungible, of significance only insofar as it can be subsumed under a universal concept. It is against this process of conceptual reification that Adorno insists upon an alternative understanding of the pre-temporal character of nature as the thing-in-itself. According to this understanding, presented in *Negative Dialectics*, "What survives in Kant, the alleged mistake of his apologia for the thing-in-itself - the mistake which the logic of consistency from Maimon on could so triumphantly demonstrate - is the memory of the element which balks at that logic: the memory of non-identity. [...] The construction of thing-in-itself and intelligible character is that of a non-identity as the premise of possible identification; but it is also the construction of that which eludes identification." ⁵⁹ With the concept of the thing-in-itself, Kant, according to Adorno, forestalls what became, with Hegel, the philosophy of identity: namely the putative identity of spirit and nature wherein nature is nothing but spirit's own self-externalisation. Nature, on this understanding signifies a moment of irreducible opacity for subjective reason, an opacity the memory of which pre-figures the possibility of a "positive concept of enlightenment."

Before developing more fully Adorno's concept of natural history as the key to his materialism it should be noted that although Adorno follows Marx in "materialistically" de-coding the subject of idealism as spiritualized labour, he does not follow Marx's construal of history as the history of class conflict, conceiving it as tending towards an identity theory through its quasi-deification of production.⁶⁰ With the increasing implausibility of proletarian revolution, the mounting horrors of the State Socialism and the consolidation of capitalism through state management - monopoly capitalism - Marx's historical optimism was no longer viable for Adorno. In his "Reflexionen zur Klassentheorie" written in 1942 Adorno develops the argument implicit in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, namely that class conflict, far from being the motor of history, is underpinned by the domination of nature. Insofar as "[A]ll history is the history of class conflict [this is] because it has always been the same, prehistory."

⁶¹ This quote highlights the fact that Adorno's materialism can only be termed "Marxist" in a highly attenuated fashion. Indeed in providing a genealogy of the transcendental subject it is arguably to Nietzsche rather than Marx that Adorno is indebted. Adorno follows Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in arguing that formal logic is the result of an anthropological struggle for self-preservation against the physically stronger powers of nature: "After the unspeakable effort it must have cost our species to produce the primacy of identity even against itself, man rejoices and basks in his conquest by turning it into the definition of the conquered thing ..."⁶² Adorno does not argue that formal logic is merely a pragmatically useful tool; logic is rational, as is the struggle for self-preservation against "primal" nature. Where logic, subjective reason, becomes irrational is in its claim to exhaust what rationality *could be*. The abstraction of conceptual thought, and the correlative abstraction of the (logicized) nature over and against which it stands, are markers of the untruth of its claim to fully exhaust the object conceived by the concept. Thought's identifying and equalizing functions - Nietzsche's insight that logical identity is not given but imposed - betoken the sacrifice necessary in the process of the repression of its genesis. Negative dialectics acknowledges, in a two-fold sense, what transcends the subject: firstly, the social

totality whose illusory dominance cannot be demystified whilst the subject continues to conceive of itself as unmediated by its formation by that totality; and secondly, nature, which comes to be doubled, as both the abstract, logical correlative of the subject's autarky, and also as the physical suffering and evanescence of a "nature" undescrivable for discursive reason. The Nietzschean impulse behind this double acknowledgement lies in his recognition of idealism as "the belly turned mind" in which "...the august inexorability of the moral law was this kind of rationalized rage at non-identity."⁶³ So long as spirit refuses to recognize itself as part of nature and thus refuses to mourn the violence necessary for its autarky, it perpetuates the sacrifice of nature as internalized sacrifice of itself, and Enlightenment remains pathological.

The isomorphy between conceptual reification and capital's logic of equivalence that Adorno seeks to develop is thus the product of an interweaving of motifs derived from both Nietzsche and Marx. In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* it is the concept of sacrifice which bears the burden of rendering this confluence of themes productive. The excursus on Homer's *Odyssey* operates as both a thematization of the emergence of subjectivity and hence, temporality, from undifferentiated nature, and also as an allegory of "World History." Where the chapter on "The Concept of Enlightenment" sought to discern the old or archaic in the new by arguing that myth is already enlightenment, the *Odyssey* chapter discerns the new in the old, Odysseus as the "prototype of the bourgeois individual."⁶⁴ It is important to notice that in both cases neither argument rests on a first principle⁶⁵ but hinges on the concept of sacrifice which provides the key for the transition from myth to enlightenment and the reversion of enlightenment to myth, by way of a dialectical anthropology. "The Concept of Enlightenment" expounds history as second nature, enlightenment as myth, whereas the *Odyssey* chapter expounds nature as historical; natural history requires the doubling of both nature and history, the dialectic of which "prepares the way for a positive notion of enlightenment which will release it from entanglement in blind domination."⁶⁶ This emergence of history from nature is effected through sacrifice.

Sacrifice is the prototypical instrument of the rational domination and mastery of nature. As we have seen, Adorno and Horkheimer argue that myth is already enlightenment, that is, myth (or even prior to myth, animistic magic) aimed at the control and explanation of nature. Sacrifice is a process which presupposes the exchangeability or substitutability of one object for another. As such, the sacred *hic et nunc* of the particular object, its aura, is eviscerated as the object becomes a mere particular whose meaning is gained only through its subsumption under a universal concept. The object's identity is thereby a function of its abstract equivalence with other objects. This however leads Adorno to the insight that the identity constituted through sacrificial exchange is a false identity. This insight gains purchase through the claim that sacrificial exchange is predicated upon an inequality in the process of exchange, an inequality whose principle is cunning. It is this move that allows Adorno and Horkheimer to read Marx's analysis of the exchange principle that governs bourgeois society as already writ large in Odyssean cunning. In a later essay, Adorno argues that "[E]xchange is the rational form of mythical ever-sameness." But, the formal equality of legal contractual exchange relations mask the substantive inequality required for the extraction of surplus value. Formal equality is the mask of substantive injustice. Thus, he continues, "[T]hrough this injustice something new occurs in the exchange; the process, which proclaims its own stasis becomes dynamic." ⁶⁷ Allegorically, this structure is discerned in Odysseus's "rational" overcoming of mythic stasis. His encounter with the sirens is paradigmatic in this respect, for by taking the mythic deities at their word and yet cunningly having himself tied to the ship's mast, Odysseus breaks the cycle of fate and passes between Scylla and Charybdis. Dynamic time is introduced into mythic stasis as Odysseus the "proto-burgher" sacrifices present gratification for future reward (self-preservation). The price of survival is the sacrifice of present gratification, the separation of art and labour, which, internalized, presages Protestant asceticism. That something new occurs in the exchange process is dependent not simply on deceit, but also on substitutability. The triumph of exchange value over use value is

thus immanent in the overcoming of mythic fate. Particularity is abrogated by "universal fungibility." ⁶⁸

The sacrificial constitution of the identity of the subject is, simultaneously, the self-mutilation of the subject. Odysseus can out-wit Polyphemus only by denying his own identity in the name of self-preservation. Thus, the constitution of the autonomy of the subject is, from the outset, vitiated by a fatal flaw, a flaw which, for as long as it is not brought to critical self-consciousness, constitutes human history as the unconscious perpetuation of natural history: "The history of civilisation is the history of the introversion of sacrifice. In other words: the history of renunciation." ⁶⁹ Such renunciation, and the possibility of its overcoming, are conceptualized by Adorno and Horkheimer through the concept of mimesis. Mimesis is a multi-faceted concept within Adorno's *oeuvre* (which will be considered at greater length in chapters 2 and 3) but one can, for the present, distinguish within the argument of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* three distinct but related functions; anthropological, epistemological and ontological. The anthropological function of mimesis is captured under the concept of adaptation whereby the emergent subject as a natural being adapts to the physically superior force of nature for the means of self-preservation. Mimesis as self-preservation leads onto its epistemological function, which Adorno and Horkheimer denominate magic, in which the subject seeks to know nature, not as an object abstractly opposed to the subject, but through the observance of similarities and correspondences within the natural world. ⁷⁰ Such a mimetic relation to nature implies a third, ontological meaning of the concept of mimesis, in which subject and object do not stand as abstractly opposed entities, but rather (this meaning will be treated at greater length in further chapters) acknowledges the primacy of the object. Where mimesis is shown to pre-figure the emergence of subjectivity from blind, undifferentiated nature, Adorno and Horkheimer argue that Enlightenment's progressive rationalisation of mimesis portends Enlightenment's reversion to myth. Enlightenment's project of the disenchantment of nature is from the outset vitiated by the fact that the "nature" which is to be disenchanted is a myth of Enlightenment's own creating, a myth predicated on Enlightenment's disavowal of a

mimetic relation with nature. Thus they argue that "disqualified nature becomes the chaotic matter of mere classification, and the all powerful self becomes mere possession - abstract identity." ⁷¹ By treating nature as merely an object of vivisection, "Abstraction, the tool of enlightenment, treats its objects as did fate, the notion which it rejects: it liquidates them." ⁷² Thus does Enlightenment revert to mythology. Enlightenment's abstract negation of mimesis does not thereby overcome mimesis, rather mimesis turns pathological, for the other that is imitated is no longer the "natural" other of non-positing nature, but must, insofar as enlightenment reason tolerates no alterity, be the inversion of such alterity, namely pathological projection: "The *ratio* which supplants mimesis is not simply its counterpart. It is itself mimesis: mimesis unto death." ⁷³ The "proto-history of subjectivity" expounded by the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is thus a tracing of the alienation of epistemological subjectivity from its ontological pre-conditions through which nature as the mimetic correlative of emergent subjectivity is occluded by the categorially determined constitution of nature as an object of abstract subjective cognition and moral repression. The history of this alienation is the history of the forgetting of nature in the subject; all of Adorno's work aims to bring this forgetting to self-consciousness through the work of philosophical remembrance.

That Adorno and Horkheimer expound the natural history of "World Spirit" through the concept of sacrifice, that universal history is, in ironic imitation of "World Spirit's" abstractions, abstractly conceived as *nothing but* the ever ramifying consequence of mythic sacrifice, extends to their construction of universal history an *implicated* irony. The continuity of history is construed as the continuity of deceit and violence necessary to the overcoming of fear before undifferentiated alterity. The isomorphy that Adorno detects between the abstraction of modern Reason (the domination of particularity by universality) and the abstraction of universal exchange relations (the domination of use-value by exchange value) is grounded in an anthropology of sacrificial overcoming and the subsequent introversion of sacrifice, whereby Enlightenment portends its own self-destruction through the logic of self-

preservation which had initially promised Enlightenment in the first place. The trope of risking loss in order to gain, which receives its philosophical vindication in Kant's "cosmopolitan history" and Hegel's ruse of reason, and its economic rationale in entrepreneurial capitalism are discerned, allegorically, as latter day rationalisations of the mechanism of the formation of the self already at work in Homer's *Odyssey*.⁷⁴ This mechanism is the sacrifice of the present to the future, in which "perpetual peace," "absolute spirit," or luxury are perpetually deferred to rationalise a renunciation of immediate gratification through spirit's domination of nature. The economy of this movement is dynamic in the sense that what the self returns to is no longer itself, but restricted because, through sacrificial cunning (Odysseus) or ruse of reason (Hegelian spirit), the possibility of utter loss is rationally mastered. Insofar as *Dialectic of Enlightenment* formally tends towards disintegration, it acknowledges that a *Phenomenology of Spirit* can no longer be written with the confidence of expressing the movement of *Geist* as the progressive history of Reason. The very form of the work self-reflectively attests to the historical predicament it sets out to chart;⁷⁵ the question that underlies the recognition of this predicament might be expressed in terms of whether, and if so how, a non-sacrificial philosophy is possible. Kant and Hegel's philosophical self-understanding of modernity is, contend Adorno and Horkheimer, mis-understanding: "In the most general sense of progressive thought Enlightenment has always aimed at liberating men from fear and establishing their sovereignty."⁷⁶ Enlightenment has failed its own concept by surreptitiously converting the contingency of history's emergence from nature into the rational necessity of history; Spirit's domination of nature. Fear is not overcome, but comes to structure the *ratio* itself; subjectivity far from gaining sovereignty becomes armour clad against its own inner nature, and Enlightenment becomes neurotic. "To enlighten Enlightenment against itself," to attempt to figure the liberation of nature, both inner and outer, and the subject's liberation from its constitutive neurotic fear of the other, is the programmatic aim of all of Adorno's thought.

The "remembrance of nature in the subject" ⁷⁷ called for in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* would involve a non-sacrificial model of subjectivity and its relation to nature, both internal and external. Adorno refuses to posit the image of such a model of reconciliation, for he has no way to discursively state what discursive reason has repressed. The "concepts" of non-identity, nature, the body, use-value, particularity and the beautiful-in-nature are mobilized in conceptual constellations ⁷⁸ in order to expose the claims of subjective reason to fully master its objects to be constitutively flawed. In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno and Horkheimer argue that "..the institution of sacrifice itself is the occasion of an historic catastrophe, an act of force that befalls men and nature alike." ⁷⁹ Insofar as the history of subjectivity is the continuation of this catastrophe, history is indelibly marked by trauma. Reconciliation with nature would not be a return to a pre-lapsarian condition prior to this trauma. Remembrance would in this case be annulled, for it is, as we have seen, precisely this trauma of separation from the undifferentiated that is, for Adorno, the condition for temporality. Rather, as I have already alluded to - and this is what I want to develop in the following chapters - such remembrance intimates a complex temporality in which what has fallen out of, and been marginalized by historical narrative as progress, is yet to come. The present, dialectics at a standstill, whilst exposed to, and conditioned by, the course of historical development and temporal flow, cannot be reduced to either designation, but is the site for the critical configuration of the return of a nature that does not yet exist.

4. Models of time: repetition and progress; Mass Culture.

The rupture of continuous time through which dialectics comes to a standstill, releasing the history sedimented in concepts, is the hinge on which "remembrance on nature in the subject" hangs. Dialectics at a standstill, or as Adorno would later name it, negative dialectics, critiques the illusion of temporal continuity, and thus, historical necessity by way of illusion. Adorno assents to Hegel's claim that dialectics aims to know the particular by "looking on." Such cognition however, if it is not to perpetuate the illusion that the particular is immediately given must acknowledge its mediation by

the universal, without however presupposing that all immediacy is entirely "engulfed by mediation." ⁸⁰ Such immediacy - true particularity - would be a result not the immediately given. However, dialectics at a standstill no longer acknowledges confidence in Hegel's progressive movement of the dialectic. We might say that where Hegelian philosophical consciousness sees the developmental transitions from one shape of consciousness to another, Adornian philosophical consciousness, like Benjamin's Angelus Novus, can only see the "pile of debris that we call progress."

⁸¹ This lends a curious stasis to Adorno's conception of history, as though history were nothing but the increasingly monolithic advance of an initial traumatic separation of man from nature, the contingency of which has become congealed into the ever-repetitive exacerbation of this initial trauma under the sign of the domination of nature. History has not left pre-history, and thus remains a repetition of the same, mired in myth.

In the present, Adorno's present, what blocks cognition of this predicament is not simply conceptual reification but a social system which seeks to obliterate consciousness of the contradictions that are integral to societies governed by capitalist economics, a system which Adorno and Horkheimer designate the Culture Industry. Where it is possible to argue that the critique of instrumental reason propounded by the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* foreshortens its sense of historical determinacy by its extension of the critique of enlightenment to the history of civilisation *per se*, the concept of the culture industry presupposes a quite specific historical frame of reference, namely the transition from high or liberal capitalism to monopoly capitalism. This distinction, which Adorno and Horkheimer adopt from the analysis by Friedrich Pollock ⁸² argues that a fundamental shift has occurred in the relation between the forces and relations of capitalist production, a transition which Pollock dates to the period following the first world war. Liberal capitalism is defined by the relative autonomy of economy from the state, an autonomy characterized by private entrepreneurialism and minimal state involvement in which ownership of the means of production is not centralized within state hands. On an orthodox Marxist analysis, such

a system would tend towards increasing destabilisation due to the growing increase in the organic composition of capital and consequent falling rate of surplus value. In addition, the increasing immiserisation of the proletariat would lead to the development of revolutionary consciousness, such that the proletariat would constitute itself as a class for itself self-consciously determining its freedom through the revolutionary overthrow of the existing relations of production. The theory of monopoly capitalism was developed in the wake capitalism's evident ability to manage the crises of the falling rate of profit, and the unmistakable signs that, despite the revolutionary wave of 1917-1919, the Western proletariat were not, in the foreseeable future, tending towards revolutionary class consciousness. It postulates a transition within the development of capitalism in which the state plays an ever more central and integrative function in the reproduction of capitalism, an integrative function which closes the gap between economy and politics and incorporates "culture" and "leisure time" within the orbit of planned control. The key to the social effectiveness of such integration of culture and leisure time lay in the illusion that these were spheres of immediate, non-economic activity which could be freely enjoyed according to personal preference.⁸³ Thus, Hohendahl is entirely correct when he argues that "It is not the high/low [culture] opposition which defines Adorno's approach [to the culture industry] but the temporal distinction between liberal and organized capitalism."⁸⁴ Central to Adorno's analysis of the culture industry is the claim that it represents a development of capitalism in which the triumph of the universalization of exchange value comes to paradoxical fruition with the desire of commodities to posit themselves as pure use-values (culture).⁸⁵ This illusory reversal of capital's logic of equivalence postulates, as Seyla Benhabib argues, "the nostalgia for the work of one's hands, for virgin nature, simplicity, and non-artificiality." She continues, "The brutalization of nature under fascism, the seductive exploitation of nature by the mass media and culture industry, and the nostalgia for the natural and the organic, expressed by conservative culture criticism, have this in common: they manipulate the revolt of repressed nature into submission, oblivion and pseudo-happiness."⁸⁶ This "manipulation of repressed nature" is the exact opposite of

Adorno's advocacy of a "remembrance of nature in the subject." Where the culture industry posits a return to the natural and the organic, thereby implying that an unmediated access to the past is both possible and desirable, Adorno argues that the redemption of nature is possible, if at all, only through a recognition of the illusion of such a return, a recognition whose condition of possibility is a break with the illusion of continuity with the past.

Adorno's sense of the prevailing contemporary illusion of continuity *after* the discontinuity of Auschwitz and the failure of reason's actualization is constructed as the present's reversion to myth. What he argues for here is an experiential foreshortening of the capacity for temporal experience as the corollary of the weakening of personal autonomy. Again his concern is to illuminate the particular (the individual's capacity for historical experience) through its mediation by the totality (late capitalism). The key to this, for Adorno, is the concept of repetition.

Before engaging Adorno's analysis of the culture industry I would like to develop the concept of repetition through reference to an essay by Howard Caygill in which he delineates the relation between time and subjectivity, in the work respectively of Kant and Marx.⁸⁷ Thus far, we have adverted merely to a formal homology between the equalization process of conceptual reification and capital's logic of equivalence; Caygill deepens the implications of this homology by focusing the issue of Marx's "Kantianism" on the concept of "return." To paraphrase briefly, Caygill argues that Kant's analysis of time hinges on the distinction between the absolute and relative positing of time; "Time cannot be derived from the relation between events or appearances, nor may it be regarded as their frame, receptacle or horizon; it is an event of absolute position which is the 'condition' of the events and appearances of relative position (judgement)." ⁸⁸ Thus time is the schema which makes the relative positing of events and appearances possible, but which then succumbs to a transcendental illusion by which events and appearances are taken to be the conditions for measuring time. What then is the condition of this absolute positing? Caygill argues that Kant leaves us unable to provide a response to this question: "... according to the Kantian account 'we'

are not in a position to accept responsibility for the absolute positing of time: we may become aware of it in the progressive development of culture and the 'signs of history' but *qua* absolute it cannot be said to be in our power." ⁸⁹ The subject is thus co-terminous with the absolute positing of time and yet unable to assume responsibility for this positing. Time allows for the realization of the cognition of empirical reality and yet its "meaning" must remain abstract and alien to the subject. This aporia of time and subjectivity, Caygill argues, structures Marx's account of the circulation of capital. Where, for Kant, time played the role of absolute positing, on Marx's analysis it is capital which assumes this role. The duality of absolute and relative positing of time becomes the duality of capital's simultaneous return of and to itself as the totality of production and circulation (absolute positing) and capital's return as a particular circulation within this totality (relative positing). Thus, Caygill argues, "Capital performs the Kantian paralogism: it is driven to overcome its disowned absolute position of time by repeating the act of relative position, increasing the speed of turnover within the time posited by capital, an enterprise which is prone to self-destructive crisis. In this condition of crisis there is no decision regarding the absolute position of time, only an adaptation to the relative position of things and events as commodities." ⁹⁰ As with Kant's schematism, capital does not itself assume, or allow the subject to assume, responsibility for the time of capital. The meaning of absolute positing - schematism and capital - must remain opaque to the subject. As conditions of possibility for the experience of events through time, time and capital appear as necessary conditions of the actualization of appearances. The subject is inevitably subject to a logic of illusion with respect to time and capital in which it experiences the meaning of time and capital only at the level of their relative positing, that is to say, only at the level of already determined actuality. This leads to an experience of repetition in which what is experienced is the repetition of the same *through* time, rather than the return *of* time itself. It is only the repetition of time itself that would allow for the experience of the absolute position of time and capital through which time and capital could be experienced as other than (alienated) necessity. Such an experience, through which an

emphatic concept of experience could be developed through a re-negotiation of the constellation of possibility, actuality and necessity, is what is at stake in Adorno's persistent returns to the question of modern subjectivity, capital and time.

I suggest that we can apply the analysis offered by Caygill to Adorno's concept of the culture industry by considering the way in which Adorno develops an approach to the concept of repetition in an essay written for *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, but only published posthumously, entitled "The Schema of Mass Culture."⁹¹ In this essay it is precisely the constellation of time (Kantian schematism), capital and the concept of the eternal return of the same which is the object of Adorno's scrutiny. Where Kant discerned a transcendental illusion to beset our understanding of time, and Marx discerned a transcendental illusion to be endemic to the return of capital, Adorno discerns an analogous transcendental illusion with respect to culture. In the case of both transcendental time and the return of capital the exposing of this illusion did not itself force the "meaning" of time or capital to the point of crisis, for as the loci of absolute positing there is no point from "within" time or capital that would not be a relative positing. Thus, to bring a crisis of subjectivity or capital to a head would require a return not "within" time but a return "of" time. Adorno formulates this problematic by arguing that whilst the illusion of mass culture (relative positing) can be critically exposed, culture itself (absolute positing) is not able to critically reflect on its own conditions of possibility and thus cannot resolve the crisis of culture within the terms of culture.

To develop this argument further, we need to expound Adorno's understanding of the transcendental illusion perpetrated by mass culture. Adorno begins this essay by arguing that, "The commercial character of culture causes the difference between culture and practical life to disappear. Aesthetic semblance (*Schein*) turns into the sheen which commercial advertising lends to the commodities which absorb it in turn. But that moment of independence which philosophy specifically grasped under the idea of aesthetic semblance is lost in the process. On all sides the borderline between culture and empirical reality becomes more and more indistinct."⁹² One should not conclude

from this passage that Adorno views culture as ante-dating commercialism. Again and again he argues that the concept of aesthetic autonomy presupposes the liberation of art from ritual and cultic functions, a liberation consequent upon the breakdown of feudalism whose historical condition of possibility is the predominance of capitalism. For Adorno aesthetic autonomy, and the distinction between "high" and "low" art are, from the outset, conceptualisable only on the basis of the commodification of art. The distinction between high and low art hinges upon the fact that high art (unconsciously) thematises its commodified status at the level of form, whereas low art, or mass culture, accepts this commodification as a given. Thus rather than pre-supposing a "pristine" notion of culture, which the culture industry would subsequently tarnish, what Adorno claims to detect in the workings of mass culture is a detemporalization of time which serves to obliterate the "historical genesis" of capital's logic of equivalence, thereby foreclosing on the possibility of comprehending capital's perpetuation of pre-history as remediable. Thus he argues that "Mass culture is a system of signals that signals itself"⁹³ in which the illusion of newer, faster, better transmission of pre-packaged information serves to eliminate the fact that "its ahistoricity is the tedium which it affects to relieve."⁹⁴ In analyzing the schema of mass culture, Adorno is responding *avant la lettre* to his later question of whether metaphysical experience is still possible,⁹⁵ for what he is probing is the ways in which mass culture schematizes our experience, and thus posing the question of the relation of time and modern subjectivity.

It is in this context that we should read Adorno's provocative remark in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* that "Intuitively, Kant foretold what Hollywood put into practice; in the very process of production, images are pre-censored according to the norm of the understanding which will later govern their apprehension."⁹⁶ As we have already seen, Adorno (following Lukács) construes Kant's theory of determinant judgement (and the antinomies diagnosed by Kant) as the philosophical counterpart of a society dominated by capitalist exchange relations; thus determinant judgement excludes what would be emphatically different or non-identical to the concepts under which particulars are subsumed - as prefigurative of the industrial repression of memory

enacted by the culture industry. What this analogy is intended to evoke is a condition in which the tendential overcoming of all use-values (qualitative difference) by exchange values (quantitative similarity) ushers in the universal fungibility of all particulars, thereby perpetuating a false reconciliation between universal and particular. Adorno's vision of a "totally administered society" was not meant to conjure a vision of a world in which all the trains ran on time, but rather polemicize against a world that threatened to congeal into an eternal present, regressing to the mythic time of fate in which, through the atrophy of remembrance, the "...consumer is reduced to the abstract present.." ⁹⁷ But, Adorno continues, "...the trick is played upon time itself and not merely upon the viewer. Thus variety already represented the magical repetition (*die beschwörende Wiederholung*) of the industrial procedure in which the selfsame is reproduced through time." ⁹⁸ In repeating the "same through time" the culture industry does not raise the question of the meaning of this time of return, indeed the culture industry actively precludes its recipients from engaging the meaning of capital's repetition. The "meaning" of capital's eternal return is precisely what is obviated by the culture industry's perpetuation of the transcendental paralogism that culture as a commodity is really a "use-value" whose immediacy is unsullied by the universal mediation of exchange values. Thus, culture, in the guise of the culture industry, represents the apogee of abstraction whilst positing itself as natural immediacy.

Such abstraction has consequences for the philosophical construction of history. In a passage in which Adorno distils the quintessence of Benjamin's thought, he in fact distils the quintessence of his own idea of natural history: "The totality of his [Benjamin's] thought is characterized by what may be called 'natural history.' He was drawn to the petrified, frozen or obsolete elements of civilization... [...] He is driven not merely to awaken congealed life in petrified objects - as in allegory - but also to scrutinize living things so that they present themselves as being ancient 'ur-historical' and abruptly release their significance. Philosophy appropriates the fetishization of commodities for itself: everything must metamorphose into a thing in order to break the spell of things." ⁹⁹ Thus, for Adorno, one would only need to call the culture industry

by its name - to measure its actuality against the promise that inheres in the concept of culture - to expose the illusion of the culture industry. However, it is precisely the critical consciousness that would perform this exposé which the culture industry nullifies. By extending Benjamin's concept of allegory to capitalist exchange relations, Adorno argued that philosophical interpretation required the construction of models that would decipher a world constituted entirely by the petrified appearances of commodities. Thus, interpretation would not hope to grasp the reality behind the appearances, but rather immerse itself in these appearances in order to illuminate their historical nature where they appeared most natural. Such illumination would thus not aim to penetrate to a universal form behind appearances, but rather contest the apparent universal form of the commodity structure with singular images of unintentional truth.

¹⁰⁰ This problematic is well expressed in a passage (which is clearly indebted to this Benjaminian/Adornian schema) from Taussig's *Mimesis and Alterity* in which he writes that, "Obsolescence is where the future meets the past in the dying body of the commodity. Because history requires a medium for its reckoning, a temporal landscape of substance and things in which the meaning of events no less than the passage of time is recorded, in modern times it is the commodity that embodies just such a ready-reckoning of the objectification of the pathos of novelty The commodity is both the performer and the performance of the naturalization of history, no less than the historicization of nature." ¹⁰¹ Insofar as the commodity becomes the medium of time and effectuates, via the globalization of exchange relations, the transition to world history, the repetition of the same through time becomes second nature, the consummate occlusion of the transience of "first" nature, the body, use value or non-identity, all of which are, for Adorno, markers of qualitative alterity excluded by enlightenment's reversion to myth.

Capital's eternal return of the same, the return of the archaic in and through the modern, is played out by Adorno through attention to the dialectic of the new and the same. In *Minima Moralia* Adorno argues that "[T]he cult of the new, and thus the idea of modernity, is a rebellion against the fact that there is no longer anything new.... Itself

unattainable, newness installs itself in the place of overthrown divinity amidst the first consciousness of the decay of experience." ¹⁰² As Benjamin had argued in the 1930's, the paradigm of modernity's obsession with newness is fashion, in which the ideology of newer, better, faster, scarcely even bothers to hide the fact that what is fashionable is the recycling and repetition of the past. What appears as the exaltation of tradition and the past is nothing less than the commodification of the past in the present. As newness is erected into an end in itself, its negation of the past ceases to be determinate and becomes abstract, with the result that the new loses its temporal character, and congeals into an invariant "everything is new", thus repressing duration. What subtends this analysis is what would appear to contradict it, namely the ever increasing velocity of historical change, allied with, indeed conditioned by, the ever increasing velocity of the turnover cycles of capital. As the increasing speed of obsolescence becomes the index of the rate historical change, the duration of capital turnover tendentially increases towards the abolition of its temporal character, equalizing all difference in potential timelessness. Adorno, arguing from an experience of 1930's Germany links the ever increasing need for new stimulus and sensation of a population undergoing an extreme intensification of the experience of historical change, not least the experience of hyperinflation, to psychic decomposition and the incapacitation of historical time-consciousness. Thus "fascism was absolute sensation." ¹⁰³ in the sense that it could ratchet up the degrees of horror leading to an increasing desensitization to shock; but also in the sense that it could offer stability in the face of the crisis through appeals to extra-temporal ideals, both racial and geo-political, whose retroactive force served to consolidate a fictive identity against the historical memory which would have invalidated the authenticity of those ideals. Adorno's point is that in the face nihilism's devaluation of the motivating power of traditional ideals and norms, a regression to barbarism is always possible through an appeal to an extra-temporal order which would restore meaning by force.¹⁰⁴

Thus one can formulate more rigorously the implications of the culture industry's return of the same by asking, what is the character of the same that returns?

Insofar as the culture industry is the medium of commodified novelty, this does not imply that within capital's eternal return the "same thing" always recurs, but rather that novelty itself recurs as the same.¹⁰⁵ That is to say that capital's commodification of culture in the ever increasing velocity of its cyclical production of novelty perpetrates a transcendental illusion with respect to novelty by conflating the emphatic concept of the New with the reproduction of the New as the ever the same. An emphatic concept of novelty would denote a break with the continuity of the same, it would inject a linear dimension into the cyclical time of recurrence. By contrast the culture industry's return of the new as the same, under the guise of the image of linear progress in fact reproduces the cyclical time it ideologically proclaims to have negated. This re-production Adorno denotes phantasmagoria: "phantasmagoria comes into being when, under the constraints of its own limitations, modernity's latest products come close to the archaic. Every step forward is at the same time a step into the remote past. As bourgeois society advances it finds that it needs its own camouflage of illusion simply in order to subsist."¹⁰⁶ In proposing a critique of the image of progress propounded by the culture industry, Adorno is not denying the critical value of the concept of progress, nor is he denying the actuality of technical and social progress, rather by holding monopoly capitalism to its self-proclaimed apotheosis of progress, he argues that when matched against an emphatic concept of progress, the culture industry's image of progress is in fact regression.¹⁰⁷

How then is one to contest the culture industry's schematization of consciousness? How can the paralogism which the culture industry performs be brought to self-consciousness? It might be expected that Adorno would argue that culture would provide the resistance against the depredations of its concept effected by the culture industry. But significantly Adorno does not press this argument. To be sure, where the culture industry nullifies a consciousness of conflict and contradiction, culture Adorno argues, thematizes conflict at the level of form. In so doing, culture, or high art, operates with a different construal of the problematic of time. Drawing on the example of drama, in this case Ibsen, Adorno argues that, "The empty passage of

time, the meaningless transience of life was to be seized upon through form and brought into participation with the 'idea' by virtue of the totality of this form. It was precisely this thematization of time which allowed its heteronomy to be excluded from the aesthetic domain and which permitted the artist to inject into the work of art at least the appearance of a timelessness. This appearance transformed the work into the essence and pure reflection of mere existence and thus served to express transcendence. Conflict was the means by which time was overcome through sustaining intra-temporal tension within the work. Conflict concentrates past and future in the present." ¹⁰⁸ Whilst "high art's" dialectical mastery of time through aesthetic form thematizes the absolute positing of time, and thus does not merely re-duplicate empirical reality and thereby commit the transcendental illusion of time effected by mass culture, high art cannot itself challenge mass culture's return of the same through time. This inability is constitutive of "culture" itself: "The prevalent concern with the material stratum of works of art, a persistent symptom of the failure of bourgeois civilisation, also betrays something of the untruth of aesthetic autonomy itself: its universality remains allied to ideology as long as real hunger is perpetuated in hunger for the material in the aesthetic domain." ¹⁰⁹

Adorno here returns to the theme of his allegorical reading of the sirens episode in the *Odyssey*. Odysseus' subterfuge, whereby he rationally outwitted the lure of Scylla and Charibdis, of having himself tied to the mast whilst his sailors had their ears plugged with wax, provides an allegory for both the impotence of art alienated from instrumental rationality and also of the division of mental from manual labour. So long as reason is grounded in the drive for self-preservation and history remains mired in unredeemed nature, reason and art, abstract cognition and material cognition, will cleave asunder. Art can provide a presentiment of what the reconciliation between reason and nature would be, but, in its condition of alienation, cannot discursively state its intuition. Thus art remains the illusory critique of the abstract separation of reason and nature. Insofar as art operates by means of a critique of the abstract oppositions that structure both modern subjectivity and society, to abstractly oppose mass culture

and autonomous art would merely perpetuate abstraction. That a *determinate* negation of abstraction is the only critical path that would allow for the comprehension of abstraction is the intuition that underlies Adorno's oft-repeated dictum (in a letter to Benjamin) that "[B]oth [mass culture and modern art] are torn halves of an integral freedom, to which however they do not add up." As we have already seen, mass culture and modernist art are constituted as torn halves only on the basis of the commodification of culture; indeed in the sentence which precedes this one Adorno claims that "Both bear the stigmata of capitalism, both contain elements of change..."¹¹⁰ Thus, mass culture and art are torn halves, whose condition of possibility is the totality of capitalist exchange relations, a totality which cannot be positively represented as an object, but whose illusory necessity can be comprehended.

It is the transcendent perspective of an "integral freedom" which provides the critical vantage point from which to discern the coercive immanence of the totality, a perspective, however, which itself cannot be imaged without betraying it to the very immanence its postulation negates. "Integral freedom" - the speculative identification of art and knowledge, particular and universal - cannot be posited without becoming merely a further relative positing, thus performing, once again, the parallogism of "return". Rather, as the non-representable figure for the transcendence of the opposition of mass culture and modernist art, an opposition conditioned by the absolute positing of capital's eternal return, integral freedom would contest the meaning of this absolute positing, not by positing the possibility of an alternative return within capital's time, but by raising the meaning of this time as such. Capital's eternal return - the return of the same through time - remains bound to the mythic immanence it claims to have transcended, and insofar as the globalization of capital constitutes the pre-condition of world history, world history remains bound to the pre-history it claims to have negated. For history to begin the meaning of this return, whereby the new reproduces the archaic in and through the new, would itself have to be negated and transcended. Culture cannot itself perform this transcendence without abolishing its illusory distance from empirical reality, but it can - within the realm of illusion - intimate what such a

transcendence would mean. Insofar as art's alienation from cognition is predicated upon the cleavage between mental and manual labour, a "pre-historic" trauma that ramifies through the history of civilisation in the form of the history of "the introversion of sacrifice," the transcendence of this cleavage can be effected only by bringing this history of sacrifice to self-consciousness. Thus Adorno claims in *Aesthetic Theory* that "The grief that art expresses results from the fact that it realizes unreal reconciliation at the expense of real reconciliation. Art's ultimate function, then, is to grieve for the sacrifice it makes, which is the self-sacrifice of art in a state of helplessness." ¹¹¹ Art contests the meaning of culture's paralogism (predicated as we have seen on capital's absolute positing) through a mourning, or remembrance, of the sacrifice upon which its autonomy is predicated. ¹¹² In bringing this conditionedness to consciousness, art intimates the contingency of capital's illusory necessity, and thus the cognition of repressed possibility - that things could be different. Remembrance operates as the harbinger of utopia.

If it is the return of the same through time that is deemed to express the modernity's nihilism, this entails that there can be no redemption within this time, but rather redemption would have to be conceived according to a temporal model of the redemption of history as a whole. This model necessarily entails a break with history insofar as it is taken to be structured according to the temporality of the return of the same, a temporality which posits an illusory continuity with the past. ¹¹³ Thus we can perhaps re-phrase the issue by asking whether the utopian break with, and thus redemption of history articulated by Adorno, relies on a merely privative negation of the present (the postulation of another "real world"), or whether although transcendent to extant reality, utopia, through traces of alterity and "the breaks that belie identity" ¹¹⁴ is in some sense immanent to that reality. I suggest that Adorno is pressing the latter alternative, and that this immanence of the utopian within extant reality is to be approached through a correlation of remembrance and repetition.

In his essay "On the Final Scene of Faust", which itself of course dramatizes Faust's redemption, Adorno writes, "Hope is not memory held fast but the return of

what has been forgotten." ¹¹⁵ This return of what has been forgotten is mobilized against capital's return that eviscerates memory, mobilized also against the idealist subject whose conceptual thought rests on a forgetting of its formation. If, as Adorno argues, hope resides in the "breaks that belie identity", then in the face of the continuing repetition of the same (the dominance of the particular by the universal), hope cannot but appear as anachronistic. Anachronism's temporality, time's "out of jointness" might perhaps be conceived according to the "not yet" that we saw Adorno attributed to nature. In suggesting that nature does not yet exist he is arguing that because our dominant model of conceptuality is a subsumptive one, nature is always "second nature", by which he means, what is taken to be nature is always mediated (and thus dominated) through a historically produced conceptual scheme which then takes on the illusory character of eternal givenness or necessity. What has been forgotten by second nature is the formation both of the subject and its conception of objects through which processes become congealed into discrete entities. Thus the "return of what has been forgotten" would be the return of first nature, that is, the sensuous particularity repressed by the formation of the Subject whose identity is consolidated only through the repression of both inner and outer nature; as Adorno writes, "..what hope clings to is the transfigured body." ¹¹⁶ This different model of repetition we might call a transfigurative repetition *of* time. It is to this that Lyotard gestures when he writes apropos of Adorno's understanding of modernist art, that it contests the abstract repetition of novelty as the ever-same of the culture industry "... by redirecting the meaning of the "new", by turning the new, as the always repeated future-present of the culture market, toward the impossible newness of the more ancient, always new because always forgotten" ¹¹⁷ The linkage of a utopian transfiguration or redemption of the body, that is, of sensuous particularity, and the return of an always already forgotten archaic element in the new is (as will be argued in chapter's two and three) what is at stake in Adorno's deployment of the concept of mimesis. Without consideration of Adorno's conception of mimesis, his concepts of natural history and nature and thus, by extension, remembrance, must remain opaque.

Thus, to return to the quotations with which we began this chapter, the redemption of repressed possibility, the marker for history understood as a non-posed other of existing reality, requires that for history to begin, that is, for utopia to be actualized, utopia be conceived within a constellation of concepts - remembrance, repetition, nature and history; such a constellation would begin to discern the appearance of necessity which denotes history's continuity with pre-history as both real and illusory. If, as Wohlfarth observes, "Utopia stands here for the repressed "other", the "non-identical" which has so far materialized only in the tantalizingly fragmentary, above all, aesthetic form" ¹¹⁸ then what is the temporal status of utopia? Neither a plenitude that has been lost, nor an end teleologically to be reached through a temporal continuum, Adorno's point is that utopia needs to be conceived according to a break with historical time: "It is the possible, never the immediately existing, that contains locked up within itself a place for utopia (*Es ist das Mögliche, nie das unmittelbar Wirkliche, das der Utopie den Platz versperrt;*) - which is why in the midst of the actually existing it appears abstract." ¹¹⁹ Thus everything depends on how possibility is negotiated. What is taken to be nihilistic about the return of capital, occluded by the culture industry's carnival of commodities is, as J. Bernstein points out, that "[T]he effectiveness of the Culture Industry depends not on its parading an ideology, on disguising the true nature of things, but in removing the thought that there is any alternative to the status quo." ¹²⁰ The return of the ever-the-same, modernity's reversion to the cyclical time of myth, is the block on utopia that perpetuates the false reconciliation between universal and particular. If hope resides within the "the return of what has been forgotten", then what has been forgotten is already immanent within extant reality. It is the purpose of Adorno's relentless negativity to seek for traces that would keep alive the cognition of the present as conflictual and contradictory. Thus, he concludes *Minima Moralia* with the claim that "The only philosophy which can be responsibly practised in the face of despair is the attempt to contemplate all things as they would present themselves from the standpoint of redemption." ¹²¹ What is of importance here is the complex temporality of the "as they would" proposed by this

passage. A futural dimension is folded back onto the present as a means of re-thinking the claims of the past. This complex temporality intimates the aporia of Adorno's conception of utopia. For instrumental reason, redemption cannot but appear as transcendent, as a critical term it indicates a privative negation of existence, a break with historical time. Like Kant's intelligible world, Adorno's construal of utopia resists the attempt to provide an image of a reconciled state. But the transcendent nature of utopia is not to be eternalized either for otherwise it would be impossible to "contemplate all things as they would present themselves from the standpoint of redemption" thus confirming radical change as impossible. Utopia must thus immanently inform reality through the traces of alterity inherent within it and indeed within the principle of identification itself.¹²² Adorno's refusal to choose between these alternatives is both the source of the frozen character of his work and a testament to his fidelity to the conditionedness of all thought, his own included; to posit what ought to be would occlude this conditionedness, merely recapitulating instrumental reason's diremption of is and ought. Thus, as this passage continues, "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."¹²³ For, the possible, as we have seen, is what contains utopia or redemption within it, but such possibility can only intimate the meaning of utopia in the face of the devaluation of the unconditional, that is redemption theologically conceived. Hope is not conflated with truth, but rather it resides within the persistence with this aporia, an aporia that figures the difference between despair and utopia.¹²⁴

Chapter Two: Memorial Language.

"It is the possible, never the immediately existing, that contains locked up within itself a place for utopia - which is why in the midst of the actually existing it appears abstract." (*Negative Dialectics*)¹

"The rescue of the possible but not yet existent is the goal of remembrance." ("Marginalia on Mahler")²

1. Introduction

In these two passages, separated by a historical distance of thirty years, utopia and remembrance enter into a constellation around the category of possibility. It is only through remembrance that utopia will lose its transcendent appearance and be recognized as being immanent to existing reality or the present. For as long as remembrance is absent, utopia remains abstract, transcendent, merely a perpetually deferred, and thus impotent, promise. The critique of the present is utopian not through its disparagement of the present, either as a fall from "the good old days" or as a necessary temporal antechamber to the future, but rather as the locus of a possible future whose countenance can be discerned through a remembrance of the possibilities not admitted to the actuality of the present. As such, the critique of the present is a critique of the representation of the present.

The category of existence is modalized in these two passages. In the passage from *Negative Dialectics* existence, in its immediacy, blocks possibility and thus utopia through the mythic construal of the present as immutable to change. Adorno seeks to demonstrate how a negative dialectic is at work in the categories of ontology that mediates every immediacy, a mediate that by necessity reveals the categories of being to be temporal; nature itself is construed through the category of transience. In the passage from the "Marginalia on Mahler" remembrance is said to presage a future existence, the "not yet existent." Thus possibility here operates under the category of illusion; remembrance reveals the utopian possibility within the present which, in the present, can only appear as the semblance of utopian transfiguration. At work here, however minimally, is a deployment of the categories of Being and reflection from Hegel's *Logic*. What blocks comprehension of the present as the site of possibility is ideology, by which Adorno does not mean merely illusion or false consciousness.

Ideology is defined by Adorno as "socially necessary illusion." Its necessity is antinomic. The appearance of the present's immutability, *as appearance*, is illusory: its conditions can be comprehended as the working of a society fully mediated by the exchange relations of the capitalist economy. And yet this appearance has very real consequences for individuals for whom the totality of such relations must appear as opaque and irreducible to their understanding. Adorno never demurred from the thesis that modern societies were riven by their contradictions whilst at the same time appearing more and more as closed systems. Thus the thesis of the "totally administered world" cannot be taken as a merely descriptive, and therefore empirically falsifiable proposition, for it operates critically, by ironic hyperbole, in order to expose a system in which there is "disintegration by way of integration." ³ How this system may be critically comprehended is at the heart of Adorno's insistence upon the centrality of philosophical language and form.

For a philosophy that now "lives on," ⁴ it is perhaps now only possible to act as a spectre at the feast. The feast is Enlightenment's reversion to mythology, a reversion that occurs when Enlightenment forgets its own conditionedness and proclaims the autonomy of spirit from nature. The certitude that such autonomy has been achieved forecloses on the possibility of comprehending the historical entwinement of freedom and domination, necessary to achieve an initial freedom from nature, by positing such domination as absolute. Total autonomy becomes total domination through the repression of the moment of heteronomy intrinsic to freedom. As negative dialectics - which comprises *all* of Adorno's thought - philosophy abdicates its position as an organon of knowledge and acts as remembrance. Philosophy becomes memorial through the attempt to give expression to the experience of the suppressed conditionality of spirit's self-proclaimed autonomy. Such remembrance entails the end of philosophy's compulsive desire to always be right: "The very wish to be right, down to its subtlest form of logical reflection, is an expression of that spirit of self-preservation which philosophy is precisely concerned to break down." Thus a new desideratum imposes itself on philosophy: philosophers "should always try to lose the

argument, but in such a way as to convict their opponent of untruth." ⁵ The (speculative) derivation of logical form from the drive for self preservation indicates that the critique of philosophy cannot be merely satisfied with a search for more originary epistemological conditions, for the separation of epistemology from materiality is already an effect of the primary disjunction between spirit and nature, the repression of which constitutes the compulsive desire of logic towards unity and identity.

In a formulation of the dialectic of enlightenment, Adorno argues that, "...demythologization devours itself, as the mythical gods liked to devour their children. Leaving behind nothing but what merely is, demythologization recoils into mythus, for the mythus is nothing other than closed system of immanence, of that which is." ⁶ Insofar as the primary model of rational thought - identity thinking - is the propositional form in which the copula 'is' both asserts that the object is a subsumable predicate of the subject, and the interchangeability (and thus qualitative indifference) of contents under logical form, reason has demythologized myth only to become myth itself. The context of immanence of reason's myth is the context in which the subject finds only itself wherever it looks. To ensure that objects will be subsumable under concepts, to ensure, that is, that nothing will escape the web of immanence, they must be made so; this is the secret of Kant's Transcendental Deduction. ⁷ Just as processes are congealed into entities, syntheses congeal into concepts. The immutable character of concepts belies the fact that reason has become, that it is historical; and yet when reason proclaims its historicity (Hegelianism), it disavows its constitutive materiality, and thus nature remains conceived under the guise of a surreptitiously logicized "nature" and pre-arranged as the antithesis of history. It is Adorno's wager that insofar as nature is conceived merely as the logicized pre-condition for spirit's autonomy, and history is conceived merely as the history of spirit, "[H]uman history [as] the history of the progressive mastery of nature, continues the unconscious history of nature, of devouring and being devoured." ⁸ The critique of identity thinking is thus a critique of myth, not in the sense of enlightenment's project of disenchantment, which re-

capitulates the sacrificial structure of myth as reason, thus re-confirming the mythic context of immanence as the domination of subjective reason, but as the critique of reason's tendency to revert to myth. For as long as rational thought is compelled to posit identity, and thus abstraction and repetition, the critique of identity must emphasize the non-identical, the fact that concepts do not subsume their objects without remainder.

If, as Adorno and Horkheimer argue in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, "Every reification (*Verdinglichung*) is a forgetting" ⁹ then insofar as the critique of identity thinking acts as a critique of the reification of the concept, attention to the construction of philosophical language becomes the primary mode of combating reification. The question of language - its reification and possibilities for de-reification - arguably circumscribes the entirety of Adorno's thought. Most obviously, one would cite the *Notes to Literature*, the diagnosis of fascism from style in *The Jargon of Authenticity*, the concern with how to read Hegel in *Hegel: Three Studies* and the opening section of *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*. All of these works call attention to the relation between philosophy and language. However, a more oblique level of analysis is evident in Adorno's attempt to construe the art work as language, as writing. The historicity of aesthetics as the historicity of form, argued for by both Lukács and Benjamin (to whom Adorno acknowledges his debts) is construed by Adorno as the historicity of art's linguistic character. The relationship between philosophy and art is taken to be a relationship between different kinds of writing, that is, as different (conceptual and a-conceptual) modes of synthesis. And finally there is the question of Adorno's own writing, of his style. In this chapter I would like to focus on the first two levels of analysis - on philosophical and artistic language - in order to argue that Adorno has a theory of language in which not only is the dialectic of rationalisation and remembrance construed as being a dialectic inherent to language itself, but also that language is the means by which the remembrance of the (constitutively) forgotten conditionality of spirit can be experienced.

2. Constellation

The critique of identity does not rest on the disavowal of identity, rather it seeks to articulate the conditions under which identity may no longer require the subsumption of particular under general. Philosophical argument that operates by either induction or deduction presupposes this hierarchy and thus, by necessity, abstracts from the object. Fidelity to the object is to be achieved, Adorno argues, by placing concepts into constellations. He explicates the model of thought proper to constellations by an analogy with language:

The model for this conduct [constellative thinking] is the conduct of language (*Sprache*). Language offers no mere system of signs for cognitive functions. Where it appears essentially as language, where it becomes a form of presentation (*Darstellung*), it will not define its concepts. It lends objectivity to them by the relation into which it puts the concepts, centred about a thing. Language thus serves the intention of the concept to express completely what it means. By themselves, constellations represent from without what the concept has cut away from within: the "more" which the concept is equally desirous and incapable of being. By gathering around the object of cognition, the concepts potentially determine the object's interior. They attain, in thinking, what was necessarily excised from thinking.¹⁰

It is necessary to treat this passage with some care, for Adorno here implicitly distances his understanding of language from both a Saussurian model of language as a system of arbitrary signs and a Heideggerian model of language as the primordial words which express Being.¹¹ In arguing against the conception of language as a "mere system of signs," Adorno is arguing that such a conception of language is an historically conditioned model dependent upon the abstract separation of concept and thing philosophically ratified by Cartesian dualism. As will be argued later, mimesis operates as a marker for the historicity of different systems of language, and through its configuration with rationality allows for the (memorial) presentation of the old in the new. Adorno's response is not to collapse the opposition between subject and object but rather to argue that the abstract opposition between subject and object is perpetually breaking down due to the ineliminable mimetic mediation of one with the other.

Collapsing the tension between subject and object is what Adorno takes to be Heidegger's error. In speaking of language appearing "essentially" there are unmistakable Heideggerian overtones, and yet Adorno is quick to qualify this language with the notion of constellation that explicitly adopts a different stance on the copula. In his critique of Heidegger in *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno argues that Heidegger invests the copula with a significative power beyond the relation between subject and object. Adorno objects that the copula, taken in abstraction from subject and object, far from undercutting the opposition merely reifies the copula as logical connective by investing it with spurious ontological dignity. It is not my concern here to adjudicate on Adorno's response to Heidegger, nor to discuss how far this reading of Heidegger involves a fundamental mis-construal of his work. What is of interest in the present context is Adorno's claim that "Its [the copula's] generality is a promissory note on particularization, the general form in which to carry out particular acts of judgement."

¹² It is Adorno's argument that these two aspects of the copula - as general logical connective and particular form of judgement - are not to be confused as the one does not follow from the other. Rather, it is the disjunction between the two functions of the copula that allows for a configurative use of concepts to encircle the object in such a way that the non-identity between general and particular can be expressed. Far from the copula acting as a guarantee for the identity of concept and thing, subject and object, its "promissory note" is the hope that the identity posited may no longer be the result of an extorted equalization of objects but rather an affinity with them. However, whilst the copula serves to legitimize identity as spiritualized domination, its critique must take the form of a remembrance of the non-identity that vitiates identity. The "more" which haunts the concept in its desperate desire to encompass its predicates is the non-identity whose preservation through remembrance negative dialectics undertakes.

Thus constellations act as a model for philosophical remembrance, for an experience of what was "necessarily excised from thinking." In explicating this memorial experience, Adorno's use of the analogy with language, is not, I suggest, fortuitous. The object of remembrance is not, as with Plato, universal form, but rather

the particular, the monad as Adorno terms it. However the particular object of remembrance cannot be presented by discursive thought whose rationale is precisely the abstraction from the qualitative moment of particularity. Constellative thought attempts to unhinge the subsumption of the particular by universal concepts by unhinging philosophical thought in its systematic intent. Thus he argues that, "[O]nly a philosophy in fragment form would give their proper place to the monads, those illusory idealistic drafts. They would be conceptions, in the particular, of the totality that is inconceivable as such." ¹³ Adorno here re-capitulates an argument first presented in his inaugural address given in 1931 entitled "The Actuality of Philosophy." There he argued that the failure of Idealism was the failure of reason to conceive the totality (that is, a society fully mediated by capitalist exchange relations) in concepts adequate to it. Such failure was not merely accidental, but a function of the complicity of instrumental reason with the process that betokened its obsolescence. Insofar as subjective categories were taken to be adequate to processes indifferent to their meaning, these categories, for example, freedom, justice, progress, come to operate as an ideological veil for substantive injustice, unfreedom and regression. Thus Adorno claims that "[N]o justifying reason could rediscover itself in a reality whose order and form suppresses every claim to reason; only polemically does reason present itself to the knower as total reality, while only in traces and ruins is it prepared to hope that it will ever come across correct and just reality." ¹⁴ The desideratum of a philosophy that no longer feigns access to the totality is the construction of "historical images" that would act as keys to unlock the riddles and enigmas that confront reason as opaque to its solicitations. Historical images, whereby the monadic object of remembrance may be glimpsed, do not pursue subjective intention, for the illusion of reason is to believe that history and society are shaped by subjective reason. Rather, "...the historical images would at the same time be themselves ideas, the configuration of which constituted the unintentional truth, rather than the truth that appeared in history as intention." ¹⁵ Constellations, as a particular form of philosophical language, thus act as a method for conceiving natural history, the unintentional truth repressed by the intentional discourse of reason. I would like to trace

this notion of writing in terms of Adorno's construal of the concepts of "historical images," "script," and "parataxis" from his essay "On Epic Naiveté" and *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, through to "Parataxis: On Hölderlin's Late Poetry", in order to expound the memorial trajectory that runs like a thread through the entirety of his work.

3. Writing: "Epic Naiveté" and Citation.

The essay, "On Epic Naiveté", published in Adorno's *Notes to Literature* was written at the same time as *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, although not included therein. What is at issue in this essay is the question of the status of representation and its relation to memory. Further, the essay involves a consideration of the generation of time and history from mythic stasis through grammatical form, exactly the issue that is expounded in the excursus on the Odyssey in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. The significance of this argument is that history will not be conceived as operating extrinsically to language, but rather that history takes place in and through language. Adorno is not attempting to develop some variant of textual idealism here, but rather to decipher the materialist genesis of concepts from out of their reified (idealist) usage; "In truth, all concepts, even the philosophical ones, refer to non-conceptualities, because concepts on their part are moments of the reality that requires their formation, primarily for the control of nature." ¹⁶ To place concepts in constellations is the attempt to become aware of the layers of sedimented history that are the condition for, but repressed by, their instrumental usage. To bring this sedimented history to consciousness is the memorial task of writing.

Epic language, Adorno argues, contributes to the de-ciphering of the non-conceptual content of concepts through its willfully perverse concentration on particularities. Epic naiveté emerges from the dialectic of narrative form and mythic content: "[T]he amorphous flood of myth is the eternally invariant, but the *telos* of narrative is the differentiated, and the unrelentingly strict identity in which the epic subject matter is held serves to achieve its non-identity with what is simply identical,

with unarticulated sameness: serves to create its differentness." ¹⁷ As is argued in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the overcoming of mythic nature by narrative is the attempt to master fear before the undifferentiated. In mastering undifferentiated nature, nature is converted into a logicized pre-condition for the subject's unity, which reaches its philosophical apotheosis in Kant's transcendental object =X. The mimetic affinities between man and nature are reified into an abstract subject-object relation, cognition is reduced to the determination of abstract spatio-temporal relations which finds its counterpart in the supreme abstraction of the transcendental subject itself, and enlightenment reverts to a second immediacy, that is, to myth. Epic naïveté intends a protest against abstraction. It appears to relapse behind Hegel's devastating critique of sense immediacy by its dogged depiction of what occurred once and once only. But, in so doing, it enlightens enlightenment about itself, "[F]or what occurred once and only once (*das Einmalige*) is not merely a defiant residue opposing the encompassing universality of thought; it is also thought's innermost yearning, the logical form of something real that would no longer be enclosed by social domination and the classificatory thought modelled upon it: the concept reconciled with its object. A critique of bourgeois reason dwells within epic naïveté. It holds fast to a possibility of experience that is destroyed by the bourgeois reason that ostensibly grounds it." ¹⁸ In recalling the suppressed conditionedness of autonomous reason epic naïveté contains a utopian moment which, however, cannot be discursively redeemed.

This critique of bourgeois (instrumental) reason is achieved by description of a singular act, image or object, so detailed that it detaches itself from the narrative. In this movement of language the logical relationship between the image and the narrative development it is intended to exemplify threatens to collapse into meaninglessness, as the particles, "in fact", "or" etc., whose function is to effect the logical development of narrative language, are thrown into relief as indices of the rupture between form and imaged content. Adorno cites the following passage from the *Odyssey*: "These two, / after compacting their plot of a foul death for the suitors, / made their way to the glorious town. In fact Odysseus / came afterwards; Telemachos led the way..." and

singles out the particle "in fact" ¹⁹ to demonstrate that the logical development of plot signalled by it has nothing to do with the descriptive statement it is meant to be linking; he argues that "[E]ngrossed in its own meaning, the image developed in language becomes forgetful and pulls language into the image rather than making the image transparent and revealing the logical sense of the relationship." ²⁰ Thus a cleavage emerges between the syntactical and the semantical levels of the narrative. This cleavage, the site of a fragmentary transcendence of the context of mythic immanence, is denominated by Adorno as the "minimal meaninglessness (*dem minimalen Widersinn*) of this co-ordinating particle" ²¹, a meaninglessness irreducible to the intentionality of a logically progressive narrative or argument.

What must be asked of this account of language is whether what Adorno records as the break down of the coherence of syntax and semantics is a failure of discursive language, that is, a break down of a normally functioning significative system, or whether this break down is in fact the constitutive, but disavowed, condition of discursive language. I will argue that Adorno is pressing the latter alternative, but it is important not to erase the ambiguity of Adorno's concern with such paratactical models of expression. Parataxis (which receives its fullest elaboration in his essay on Hölderlin of the same name) is intended as a model to dereify discursive cognition as the seamless logical connection of concepts that would adequately identify their contents. Parataxis highlights both the forced nature of such logical progressions - without thereby sacrificing the need for them - as well as figuring the failure of concepts to fully capture the non-conceptual. The centrality of this for Adorno's conception of history is that if concepts do not simply denote, or identify their referents, but rather contain the history of experience and practices that formed them sedimented within them, a paratactical form of expression can help to unlock this history. History is contained within language to the extent that language is recognized as materiality. As Adorno argues, "It is the objective transformation of pure representation, detached from meaning, into the allegory of history that becomes visible in the logical disintegration of epic language, as in the detachment of metaphor from the course of the literal action. It is only by

abandoning meaning that epic discourse comes to resemble the image, a figure of objective meaning emerging from the negation of subjectively rational meaning." ²²

This "negation of subjectively rational meaning" begins to circumscribe the issue of memory. For Adorno, memory is not to be taken primarily as a psychological category. Indeed, time and again, Adorno is concerned to expose the increasing inability of the subjective psychological capacity of memory in the face of the shocks and speed of modern life. For Adorno, the psychological unity of the subject (if such a unity ever existed) premised upon the unity and continuity of a life expoundable through biography, is decaying. The subject is relegated to the status of a "psychological corner shop." ²³ In the face of this tendentially general amnesia, language must provide the texture of a remembrance no longer available to individuals; what language is called upon to express is the fact that the subject can no longer experience its own decrepitude and obsolescence. Adorno argues that epic naïveté provides a model for such expression: "only this kind of naïveté permits one to tell the story of the fateful origins of the late capitalist era and appropriate them for anamnesis." ²⁴ It is significant that these "fateful origins" should require "appropriation." Adorno is acutely aware that the critique of the present can all too easily succumb to an apologetic justification of the past. To appropriate "fateful origins" for anamnesis is an anticipation of the demand that "universal history must be constructed and denied." ²⁵ The past must be constructed or appropriated, for to take it as given is to confirm its fateful course, to capitulate to conservatism or nihilism. However, this also entails that one recognise the "fateful" character of the past, to recognise that is, that whilst the past has no necessity (fate), it can have the appearance of necessity. Critical thought is concerned to dispel this appearance of necessity. What is at stake then, for a critique of the present, is the construction of a relation to the past, once this relation can no longer be taken as given.

How is this relation to be constructed? One model of construction that Adorno develops is that of citation. In his early work on Kierkegaard, which hinges on an extended presentation of the notion of the historical image, Adorno writes, "For it is not as the continuously living and present that nature prevails in the dialectic. Dialectic

comes to a stop in the image and cites the mythical in the historically most recent as the distant past: nature as proto-history." ²⁶ What I will focus on here is the conjunction of image and citation, in which the moment of rupture in the flow of time allows for the citation of the past in and through the present. What is the relation between past, present and citation that Adorno is arguing for? Eva Geulen indicates the significance of this passage when she writes that "In the form of quotation the dialectic momentarily arrests the image (and its flow)...every quotation repeats its original context and yet is forever distinct from it." ²⁷ Thus this structure of citation indicates a politics of writing in which remembrance implicates and is implicated by a repetition of the past that affects both what is repeated and the "moment" of repetition. What logic of citation is Adorno expounding here? What logic governs the relation between repetition and interruption that each citation exemplifies? To cite, to re-cite invokes a context, it calls upon the past in the here and now, repeating an earlier here and now "here and now". As Hegel argues in the *Phenomenology* the here and now is always effaced in its singularity by universality. ²⁸ The singular "here and now" can never appear as such, its appearance is always mediated by that which would obviate its singularity. Adorno chastises Kierkegaard's thinking of history on the grounds that "[P]recisely what constitutes authentic history, the irreversible and irreducible uniqueness (*Einmaligkeit*) of the historical fact, is emphatically rejected by Kierkegaard." ²⁹ If the "unique" can never appear as such, and yet, it is claimed, it constitutes authentic history, how could the unique ever be redeemed by the historical image? Two questions combine here: What is the redemptive memorial power that Adorno attributes to the historical image and its logic of citation? And how could it make sense to say that such a logic could ever redeem the unique and singular fact of history? The concern, as in his account of epic naivete, is the need to preserve the qualitative and singular, what Adorno denotes as "unique" (*Einmalige*) from the increasing rationalisation which, as we have seen is marked by abstraction, substitutability and repetition; to preserve, that is, the dignity of the suffering body and the memory of the dead.

In his *Metacritique of Epistemology*, Adorno argues that dialectic, in eschewing the search for primordial origins, "is the quest to see the new in the old instead of just the old in the new. As it mediates the new, so it also preserves the old." ³⁰ Thus, the quote, the historical image, does not simply re-cite the new as a repetition of the old. If repetition is involved here, it is not to be construed as the unilateral repetition of the past in and by the present. Rather, we might say that the historical image is construed as exerting a retroactive force on the past by establishing the *appearance* of continuity between past and present, a continuity whose condition of possibility is its rupture effected with the past by citation. The quote ruptures the present as simply another "now-point" in a homogeneous temporal flow through a constellation of nature and history in which their commensurability is said to reveal itself in the "uniqueness" (*Einmaligkeit*) of a "concrete historical facticity." ³¹ Thus the quote does not cite the past as the old, neither in the sense of that which we have had done with, nor in the sense of the past *as it really was*. Rather, the quotation allows the past to appear as the new, and for the new to appear as the old.

Citation, as a model of writing, contests the meaning of the present by interruption. We might say that every citation is a determinate intervention into the present which aims at exploding the givenness of the present as a mere continuation of the past. Thus citation is brought into proximity with epic narrative for Adorno argues that "[T]hrough epic naiveté, narrative language, whose attitude to the past always contains an apologetic element, justifying what has occurred as being worthy of attention, acts as its own correction." ³² It does so by offering "...a remembrance (*Erinnerung*) of what cannot really be remembered any more... the truth about an interchangeability that is hostile to memory (*Erinnerungsfeindlichen*)." ³³ Interchangeability - reification - defines the mythic nexus of fate which enlightenment inherits, despite all demythologization in its abstraction from the particular and its concomitant restriction of cognition to causal necessity. What eludes interchangeability is the unique (*das Einmalige*), that is the non-identical particular whose redemption

would be achieved through an identity of affinity rather than subsumption with the universal.

Historical images, by citing the old in the new, open up an untimeliness within the present. This untimeliness allows for the remembrance of suppressed possibility, that is of the unique from which the concept abstracts. The unique, as the singular object of remembrance, must appear as non-identical for identity thinking, but operates as the condition for conceptuality which the universality of the concept must disavow. However, remembrance of this suppressed conditionality, of the unique, cannot operate merely by positing its primacy over universality. Adorno's reception of Marx's reification theory sensitized his thought to such positing as merely the perpetuating of ideology. In a society fully mediated by exchange relations, pure use-value (the singular in its immediacy) "...must be replaced by pure exchange value, which precisely in its capacity as exchange value deceptively takes over the function of use value." ³⁴ What appears to be exempt from exchange (universality) is merely the most insidious illusion of exchange. Thus, the singular object of remembrance cannot be posited through the negation of universality - exchange relations, conceptual reification, myth - but must emerge through its determinate negation. Conceiving remembrance as this process of determinate negation is what is at stake in Adorno's essay on Hölderlin, "Parataxis."

4. Parataxis.

As in his construal of constellations as a model of language, in which he charted a course between semiotics and Heideggerianism, so in "Parataxis: On Hölderlin's Late Poetry", Adorno attempts to wrest interpretation of Hölderlin's poetry away from the interpretative strategies of both philological exegesis and Heideggerian ontologisation of the poetic. Both imply a conception of language which Adorno contests, and his approach to language is developed through the dialectical opposition of these conceptions and their subsequent determinate negation. Indeed the passage on constellations in *Negative Dialectics*, and thus the modus operandi of *Negative Dialectics* as such, could be seen as the re-capitulation of what Adorno had sought to

demonstrate concretely through his reading of Hölderlin. Read in this light, this essay delivered to the Hölderlin Society in 1963 and published in 1964, two years before the publication of *Negative Dialectics*, is of central importance to our understanding of Adorno. But further, insofar as Adorno engages in a philosophical reflection on the truth content of works of art, which entails a reflexive consideration of the implications of this truth content for philosophy itself, the essay foreshadows the aporetic relationship of art and philosophy elaborated most trenchantly in *Aesthetic Theory*. As such, insight into the aporetic relation of *Negative Dialectics* to *Aesthetic Theory* may be gleaned from a reading of "Parataxis."³⁵

In taking philology and Heidegger as his interpretative opponents, Adorno is in effect dramatizing the relation between philosophy and literature. What is the content and status of this relation? Adorno's construction of the relation is counter-balanced against his two opponents who in effect operate by non-relation. We might say that philological interpretation is not philosophical enough, whereas Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin is too philosophical. Thus in commenting on Beissner's elucidation of "Winkel von Hardt," Adorno argues that Beissner indicates the importance of the idea of an allegorical history of nature for the poem³⁶, but that philology must "fall silent" at this point, for this idea would "require a philosophical derivation" for its consequences for poetic meaning to appear.³⁷ As a method that operates by reconstructing what the author intended, philology falls short of elucidating the "truth content" of the poem as a work of art by misconstruing the relation between subjective intention and objective artistic form. In contrast Adorno argues that, "Intention is transformed into a work of art only in exhaustive interaction with other moments: the subject matter, the immanent law of the work, and - especially in Hölderlin - the objective linguistic form."³⁸ Conversely, Heidegger in his interpretations of Hölderlin's Hymns proceeds too philosophically. Whilst investing Hölderlin's poetry with immense "metaphysical dignity" he entirely neglects to engage the poems at the level of poetic form. Thus Heidegger's interpretations, in their refusal to engage the work of art at the level of artistic form, impose a philosophical method on Hölderlin's poetry that, in effect,

evades the relation between philosophy and language by staging a non-relation. Adorno's response is as follows: "One should not set up an abstract contrast between Heidegger's method and some other method. Heidegger's is false in that, as method, it detaches itself from the matter at hand and infiltrates the aspect of Hölderlin's poetry that requires philosophy with philosophy from the outside. The corrective should be sought at the point where Heidegger breaks off for the sake of his *thema probandum*: in the relationship of the content, including the intellectual content, to the form." ³⁹ Thus, constructing a relationship between philosophy and poetry, or more broadly construed, between philosophy and art, that does not illicitly disguise a non-relation, becomes the central issue in Adorno's reading: "What philosophy can hope for in poetry is constituted only in this relationship; only here can it be grasped without violence." ⁴⁰ Such a relation between philosophy and art acts as a critique of the non-relation between philosophy (discursive reason) and its others. Thus, the interpretation of Hölderlin becomes a model for the aporetic relation between *Negative Dialectics* and *Aesthetic Theory*.

Adorno's charge against both philological and Heideggerian interpretations of Hölderlin's poetry is that they miss the truth content of the poetry. Insofar as this leads to a non-relation between philosophy and poetry, the notion of truth content presumably names this relation, but it is an aporetic relation: for whilst (in contrast to Heidegger) the truth content can only emerge from the poem itself (more specifically from the poetic form), the truth content (in opposition to philology) requires philosophical interpretation. As Adorno writes in *Aesthetic Theory* "[P]hilosophy and art overlap in the idea of truth-content. The progressively unfolding truth of a work is none other than the truth of the philosophical concept..... Truth content is not what art works denote, but the criterion which decides if they are true or false in themselves. It is this variant of truth content in art and this variant alone which is susceptible of philosophical interpretation, because it corresponds to an adequate concept of philosophical truth." ⁴¹

In Adorno's reading of Hölderlin, in terms familiar from *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, indeed familiar from the Kierkegaard book and his earliest essays, Adorno finds the truth content of Hölderlin's late poetry in the critique of myth through poetic form which was, as we have seen, what was at stake in his essay on epic naïveté. A long quote will be necessary here. Adorno focuses on Hölderlin's use of the word fate (*Schicksal*) in his poem "Friedensfeier" observing that Hölderlin appears to intend his use of the word positively in the following passage "*Schicksalgesetz ist dies, dass Alle sich erfahren, / Dass, wenn die Stille kehrt, auch eine Sprache sei*" [This is a law of fate, that all learn / That when the silence returns there shall be a language too.] But, he continues:

..fate had come under discussion two stanzas earlier: "*Denn schonend rührt des Masses allzeit kundig / Nur einen Augenblick die Wohnungen der Menschen / Ein Gott an, unversehn, und keiner weiss es, wenn? / Auch darf alsdann das Freche drüber gehn, / Und kommen muss zum heiligen Ort das Wilde / Von Enden fern, übt raubetastend den Wahn, / Und trifft daran ein Schicksal, aber Dank, / Nie folgt der gleich hernach dem gottgegebenen Geschenke*" [For sparingly, at all times knowing measure / A God for a moment only will touch the dwellings / Of men, by none foreseen, and no one knows when. / And over it then all insolence may pass, / And to the holy place must come the savage / From ends remote, and roughly fingering works out his / Delusion, so fulfilling a fate, but thanks / Will never follow at once upon the godsent gift] The fact that the key word "*Dank*", follows the word "fate" at the end of these lines, mediated by the word "*Aber*", establishes a caesura in the poem; the linguistic configuration defines thanks as the antithesis of fateWhile the poet praises fate, the poetry, on the basis of its own momentum, opposes thanks to fate, without the poet necessarily having intended this. ⁴²

The paratactical "caesura" that Adorno locates in Hölderlin's "Celebration of Peace" is pivotal to understanding not only Hölderlin's late poetry, but also Adorno's negative dialectic. For it is this caesura that interrupts the givenness of myth, its immanence, which allows for the possibility of a negative dialectic. Paratactical caesura is the key to Adorno and Horkheimer's excursus on Homer's *Odyssey*, for in documenting Homer's epic naïveté, in particular the passage on the mutilation of

Melenthus they write, "Where the account comes to a halt, however, is the caesura, the transformation of the reported into something that happened long ago, and by virtue of this caesura the semblance (*Schein*) of freedom lights up, which ever since civilization has not succeeded in extinguishing." ⁴³ Significantly, Adorno and Horkheimer speak here of memory. The paratactical interruption of mythic immanence by artistic form brings about a memorial self-consciousness: "Discourse (*Rede*) itself, language (*Sprache*) in opposition to mythic song, the possibility of remembering (*errinernd*) the disaster that has occurred, is the law of Homeric escape." ⁴⁴ Thus language becomes a medium for the memorial consciousness of non-identity, but, and this is what is crucial, non-identity (illuminated through the caesura) is to be taken here, not simply as the logical opposite of identity which would be expressed *through* language, but rather as the movement *of* language. ⁴⁵ This is why Adorno and Horkheimer oppose language (*Sprache*) to mythic song. Mythic song is of course a form of language but one which blocks memory, just as systematic philosophy and positivist science are forms of language. But what allies them both to myth is their reification of language, that is a reification of mythic content in the case of mythic song, and a reification of the concept in systematic philosophy and positivistic science. Thus both block a consciousness of their having become and in so doing preclude a recognition of language as the medium of possibility. In highlighting those moments where language appears to break down into meaninglessness as in epic naiveté, the historical image and parataxis, Adorno attempts to dereify language by bringing into view the intentionless pre-condition for logical-intentional language as a movement of language within logical-intentional language. Thus non-identity names not (or rather, not simply) the singular that escapes the universal, if by this we understand a logical relationship to which its linguistic expression is merely contingent. Rather, non-identity names the irreducibly linguistic moment of thought that ruins all systematics by tracing the material alterity which the system must either disavow or recuperate. Constellative thought, whilst aware of its complicity with reification, is the attempt to illuminate the non-identity that haunts all identity, this non-identity being nothing other than the movement of language brought

to light through form. Thus just as language, in giving the possibility of remembrance, "is the law of Homeric escape", so language as the possibility of remembrance as well as the remembrance of possibility, is also the law of Adorno's negative dialectic.

But it is important to note that what is illuminated in the paratactical caesura is not freedom itself, but the "semblance of freedom." Likewise, the caesura in Hölderlin's "Celebration of Peace" does not illuminate peace or reconciliation for this would "...violate poetry's mode of truth by violating its illusory character (*Scheincharakter*)."

⁴⁶ To persist with "poetry's mode of truth", its artistic form, is to recognise that it cannot discursively redeem its intimations of reconciliation, this is why art requires philosophical interpretation. That the separation of philosophy and art, sign (concept) and image (mimesis) betokens an historical cleavage, whose historicity can be comprehended, is one of the central arguments of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. It is as a result of this diremption that the depreciation of the cognitive potential of art issues in the relegation of art to mere appearance. The autonomy of modernist art, its freedom from religious, cultic or traditional constraints and functions is bought at the price of its impotence; its diremption from truth defined according to the norms of subjective reason and instrumental praxis. This impotence is art's guilt; but also art's promise: "The compulsion to rescue what is gone as what is living instead of using it as the material of progress was appeased only in art, to which history itself appertains as a presentation of past life. So long as art declines to pass as cognition and is thus separated from practice, social practice tolerates it as it tolerates pleasure." ⁴⁷ Whilst art remains alienated from instrumental reason, and thus whilst its cognitive claims are disavowed, these claims can only operate within an economy of illusion (*Schein*), which functions as a determinate negation of the claims of subjective reason to be reason as such; art remains the index of a wound whose victim is sensuous particularity. ⁴⁸ The temptation, the lure of art's illusory quality, is allegorically depicted as that suffered by Odysseus's sailors through the "forceful magic" of Circe "which recalls them to an idealized pre-history [which] brings about, however delusive it may be, the illusion of redemption." ⁴⁹ However, between the illusion of redemption and the redemption of illusion lies, arguably, the

most critical impulse of Adorno's entire *oeuvre*. The illusion of redemption is mythic, a return to myth in the sense of the belief in a return to a plenitudinous freedom, both aesthetic and erotic. All of Adorno's thinking militates against such redemption as it all too easily posits the image of utopia without confronting the contradictions and injustices of the present. In this Adorno follows Marx's critique of utopian socialism, made, like Adorno's, for the sake of utopia conceived of as the redemption of illusion, that is, the overcoming the diremption between the universal and the particular, conceptuality and sensuality, knowledge and art. In *Aesthetic Theory* Adorno formulates the lure that inevitably befalls art with the claim that "Art is illusion in that it cannot escape the hypnotic suggestion of meaning amid a general loss of meaning."⁵⁰ That is art, in its alienation from instrumental cognition, runs the risk of providing an illusory alternative to the general loss of meaning consequent upon the devaluation of values enacted by the triumph of instrumental reason over "ends oriented reason"; this is Adorno's charge against the culture industry. However, modernist art operates through determinate negation of its own formal parameters and of existing reality such that "Illusion is not a formal but a substantive characteristic of works of art. It is the vestige of an injury that art seeks to undo."⁵¹ Art's determinate negation of existing reality, the abrogation of myth which emerges as the truth content of Hölderlin's "Celebrations of Peace", must remain illusory so long as particularity remains dominated by universality, for as long, that is, as discursive reason remains tied to the sacrificial structure of myth, whilst keeping alive the speculative promise of their non-hierarchical identity. This speculative promise, revealed by paratactical caesura, is maintained by what Adorno will term the aesthetic-mimetic pole of language, repressed by conceptual discourse, but ineliminable from it. Mimesis comes to figure the memory of substantive rationality, and thus historically circumscribe instrumental reason. Art would cease to be illusory the moment that the aesthetic is no longer repressed by instrumental cognition but recognised as intrinsic to it. Paratactical caesura portends the end of art as the aesthetic redemption of reason.

It is in Hölderlin's use of the rhetorical figure of parataxis that Adorno finds a model of a non-hierarchical structure for the synthesizing function of language: "The paratactic revolt against synthesis attains its limit in the synthetic function of language as such. What is envisioned is a synthesis of a different kind, language's critical self-reflection, while language retains synthesis. To destroy the unity of language would constitute an act of violence equivalent to the one that unity perpetrates; but Hölderlin so transmutes the form of unity that not only is multiplicity reflected in it - that is possible within traditional synthetic language as well - but in addition the unity indicates that it knows itself to be inconclusive."⁵² Thus the paratactical disordering of logical-syntactic unity does not disavow unity, rather it reveals the non-intentional preconditions for such unity in bringing to consciousness the debt that the positing (through synthesis) of identity disavows - through "an act of violence" - to what had to be synthesized; its debt to non-identity. The paratactical model construes the aporetic relation of philosophy (conceptual synthesis) and art (a-conceptual synthesis) as a dialectical relation operative *within* language itself: "...by virtue of its significative (*signifikativen*) element, the opposite pole to its mimetic-expressive (*mimetisch-ausdruckhaften*) element, language is chained to the form of judgement and proposition and thereby to the synthetic form of the concept. In poetry, unlike music, a-conceptual synthesis turns against its medium; it becomes a constitutive dissociation."⁵³ The aporia of philosophy and art, reason and mimesis, is an aporia in and of language.

Placing concepts into constellations through the paratactical disordering of logical-syntactic hierarchy as a means to capture unintentional truth, is the *modus operandi* of negative dialectics. Earlier, I argued that non-identity should not be taken as expressing a merely logical relationship; rather, it is a movement or process in and of language. The movement of negativity, thought's anti-mythic critique of givenness, is not construed by Adorno as a (purely) conceptual movement. Rather, it is movement that takes place within the poles of a constellation, that is, between concepts and particulars within language. To construe the movement of negativity as conceptual negativity is to already pre-judge the relation between philosophy and language, to

have effectively marginalized the mimetic-expressive pole of language as being merely incidental to conceptual thought. And yet Adorno suggests that the mimetic-expressive pole of language is an ineliminable trace that haunts conceptuality: "The aesthetic moment is .. not accidental to philosophy..." because "[T]o represent the mimesis it supplanted, the concept has no other way than to adopt something mimetic in its own conduct, without abandoning itself." ⁵⁴ Thus, the desideratum of negative dialectics of using the concept to "...unseal the non-conceptual with concepts, without making it their equal" ⁵⁵ involves the tracing of non-identity as a movement of language, a movement, that is, of the inherent negativity of language.

As has been suggested earlier, Adorno should not be taken as espousing a variant of textual idealism. Non-identity is indeed inexpressible with concepts. Thus interpreting Adorno's negative dialectic as a question of language should not be taken to be pressing the claim "that everything is language", because, as Peter Hohendahl observes, for Adorno, "...there is a referent outside the semiotic system but a referent that cannot be communicated directly." ⁵⁶ Adorno once argued that philosophy was defined by the attempt to express the inexpressible, ⁵⁷ but it is only through language, and a particular construal of language at that, that the mute and inexpressible concerns of philosophy - nature, suffering, the body - can be approached. Consider the following passage from *Aesthetic Theory*:

At the present state of rationality (*Rationalität*), the subjective elaboration of art as a non-conceptual language is the only form in which something like the divine creation is reflected.....art tries to imitate an expression that is not intended by man.....Mediate nature, the truth content of art, is false when conceived as immediate nature. While nature's language is mute, art tries to make this muteness speak. In so doing art is constantly exposed to the danger of failure because of the insurmountable contradiction between the notion of teaching nature to speak - a Herculean effort - and the fact that such a result cannot be willed or intended. ⁵⁸

The "remembrance of nature in the subject" called for in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* as the pre-condition for reconciliation between spirit and nature is

essayed here through a tessellated account of language. Three languages are invoked: the language of creation, the language of art and the mute language of nature. It is perhaps not fortuitous that this schema recalls Walter Benjamin's "On Language as Such and on the Language of Man." Benjamin had argued that after the Fall, sign and image, name and named which had been one, irrevocably become dissociated. This dissociation affects the appearance of nature; "Now begins its other muteness, by which we mean the deep sadness of nature. It is a metaphysical truth that all nature would begin to lament if it were endowed with language." ⁵⁹ Nature's lamentation is twofold: first a lamentation of language, that she is speechless is a cause for lament; and secondly her lamentation makes her mute because she is named not by the divine word of God, but by the fallen languages of man. Adorno speaks of art's non-conceptual language as a reflection of "something like" divine creation. For Adorno there is no Adamic state to be invoked, the cleavage between sign and image obeys the logic of an "always already." As Hullot-Kentor observes, for Benjamin "the name is prior to the fall; for Adorno, it is part of the Fall." ⁶⁰ The name, for Adorno, is not the Adamic unity of sign and image but presages their dissociation, and therefore also both the freedom from nature and its domination. Odysseus's cunning, fateful for Western civilization, is exemplified by the dissociation in his name of sign and signified (Odysseus and no-one) in his deception of Polyphemus. Thus, Adorno's invocation of the language of theological creation remains at a distance from that of Benjamin. The theological impulse in Adorno - reconciliation and the ban on its image - is the task that falls to the language of art. Insofar as the language of nature is mute - and here Adorno agrees with Benjamin - its redemption can, for the present at least, be most emphatically intimated by art. But nature, whilst mute, has a language. Benjamin makes a point that will be pivotal for Adorno in this context when he claims that "and for the sake of her [nature's] redemption the life and language of *man* - not only, as is supposed, of the poet - are in nature." ⁶¹ The redemption of nature, achievable through remembrance, is the utopian motif that illuminates the present irrationality of reason and foreshadows its reconciliation with fallen nature.

5. Genius and the Remembrance of Nature.

"Genius would be consciousness of the nonidentical object." ⁶²

"Dialectic... reveals (*offenbart*) every image as writing (*Schrift*). It shows how the admission of its falsity is to be read in the lines of its features - a confession that deprives it of its power and appropriates it for truth." ⁶³

"...art in general is like writing (*Schrift*). Its works are hieroglyphs for which the code has been lost, and this loss is not accidental but constitutive of their essence as art works. Only as writing do artworks speak. (*Sprache sind Kunstwerke nur als Schrift*)." ⁶⁴

With this in mind we can return to "Parataxis," for there Adorno names the redemptive "anamnesis of suppressed (*unterdrückten*) nature" ⁶⁵ in Hölderlin's poetry through the category of genius. Genius denominates a configuration of mimesis and rationality, the historicity of which Adorno's aesthetics traces, as what I have argued is a dialectical configuration internal to language. The key to Adorno's concept of mimesis is its archaic provenance: "The language of expression is older than its significative counterpart but unredeemed (*Uneingelöstes*).... [A]rt possesses expression not when it conveys subjectivity, but when it reverberates with the primal history of subjectivity and ensoulment." ⁶⁶ That, as we have seen, Adorno conceives of the mimetic-expressive pole of language *as* a pole is based on an argument as to the historicity of language and the nature of mimesis. In *Dialectic of Enlightenment* Adorno and Horkheimer present the history of civilization as the increasing repression of mimesis. Initially, it is claimed, the mimetic (pre-civilizational) stage involved adaptation to threatening nature. With this stage the self begins its formation, but not yet as a subject standing over against an object. The second stage, in which we reach civilization, is the magic stage defined by "the organized control of mimesis" ⁶⁷ which is itself replaced, in historical time, by the regulation of behaviour by work, in which "uncontrolled mimesis is outlawed." ⁶⁸ This history, as we have seen, is also a history of language, in which the modern conception of language as "a system of signs" governed by the diremption of concept and image and the arbitrariness of the relation between word and thing is seen to be a historically conditioned conception. What is at work in this historical trajectory is the mutation of language from a ternary to a binary system. Mimesis, as a behavioural (non-dominative)

relation to things has been "outlawed" on and through the trajectory of rationalisation. Adorno is insistent that a return of immediate mimesis is both impossible and undesirable, such a return constituting nothing less than regression. Mimesis survives, for the present, by passing into language. In so doing it provides an unredeemed memory trace of an archaic, mimetic relation of affinity with, rather than domination of, nature. As a memory trace it is the unacknowledged cipher for cognition, the repressed supplement of subject-object reason; "Cognition itself cannot be conceived without the supplement of mimesis, however that may be sublimated. Without mimesis, the break between subject and object would be absolute and cognition impossible." ⁶⁹ The sublimation of mimesis is its sublimation into a pole of language. Thus, it becomes clear that what the aesthetic caesura of paratactical dissociation reveals is the repressed mimetic principle of reason, the acknowledgement of which, through the memory of reason's repressed conditionedness, provides the utopian moment of the dialectic of enlightenment. The memory of the mimetic supplement of reason is what gives substance to "the positive concept of enlightenment" that Adorno and Horkheimer hint at. This concept can only be hinted at whilst this mimetic supplement remains disavowed by discursive reason. The positive concept of enlightenment cannot be discursively redeemed at present; this is why art, more precisely art's linguistic character, is of such importance to Adorno.

How does the configuration of mimesis and rationality appear in Hölderlin's late poetry? As an "anamnesis of suppressed nature", genius configures mimesis and rationality around the concept of nature. Adorno reads genius in Hölderlin's late poetry as an index of the preponderance of nature in the subject, but this preponderance only appears under the relation of self-reflection, the "organon" of which is "language." ⁷⁰ Time and again, Adorno will insist that liberation from the thrall of myth (unmediated nature) can be gained only through self-reflection. Such self-reflection ineliminably involves a remembrance of the mediation of the subject by nature as well as the mediation of nature by the subject. This is not to say, however, that nature's mediation by the subject is total; nature retains an opacity irreducible to its discursive

determination as the object of thought. The configuration of mimesis and rationality does not aim to make mute nature speak, but rather to limn the limits of discursive language where the muteness of nature may come to signify more than a mere lack.⁷¹ The dialectic of mimesis and rationality gives expression to mute nature through the "enigmatic character" of the work of art. The truth content of the work of art in which art and philosophy converge towards a remembrance of their speculative unity is configured in the enigmatic character of the art work; "It is the moment that is obscure in literary works, not what is thought in them, that necessitates recourse to philosophy."⁷² If, following the argument of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, one construes unmediated mimesis with the pre-historical and the transition to history as bound up with the mediation of mimetic behaviour, for us mimesis can no longer appear as mimetic behaviour. However, the dialectic of enlightenment continues history's entanglement in pre-history through the repression of mimetic affinity with, as opposed to domination of, nature. Thus the aporia of mimesis is at the heart of the aporia of rationalisation and remembrance that traverses Adorno's thought as a whole.

This aporia however faces us with the difficulty of accounting for how mimetic experience can be both conceived and expressed if, as Adorno suggests, the history of civilization is the history of the repression of mimetic behaviour. As I have been suggesting throughout this chapter, language, more specifically the dialectic of signification and mimesis inherent to language, provides a model of remembrance that, as a critique of myth/ideology, remembers what cannot psychologically be remembered any more. Thus expression of mimetic experience can be conceived only through language. It is not that language is simply to be taken as the medium for mimetic experience, but that with the consummate repression of mimetic experience, language provides a haven for an experience that is no longer possible. Drawing on Benjamin's celebrated distinction, we might say that in late capitalism it is only through language, and especially through art's linguistic character, that experience in the sense of *Erfahrung* is preserved in the face of the tendential universalisation of experience as *Erlebnis*.⁷³ In order to substantiate this point I return to a quotation cited at the head of

this section from *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Adorno and Horkheimer there argue that "[D]ialectic.....reveals (*offenbart*) every image as writing (*Schrift*). It reveals how admission of its falsity is to be read in the lines of its features - a confession that deprives it of its power and appropriates it for truth." ⁷⁴ It is surely not fortuitous that this formulation, ostensibly of the critical process of determinate negation, recalls the allegorical gaze articulated by Walter Benjamin in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. ⁷⁵ We have already made brief reference to Benjamin's early theory of language in which the Fall recounted in Genesis is interpreted, in terms of language, as the fall from an Adamic unity of image and sign into the Babel of human languages casting mute nature into a second muteness. The issues raised by this essay are developed in Benjamin's "On the Mimetic Faculty" written in 1933. ⁷⁶ In this essay, Benjamin postulates the transmutation of the mimetic faculty from a "magical" ability to "produce similarities" and "see resemblances," that is from mimetic behaviour, to mimetic language. We might say that the historical "decay" of mimetic behaviour involves the passing of the mimetic faculty into language. Benjamin argues that language cannot simply to be seen as a semiotic system of sign and signified, that is according to a binary model, because it is "nonsensuous similarity that establishes the ties not only between the spoken and the signified but also between the written and the signified, and equally between the spoken and the written." ⁷⁷ Without pre-judging the relationship between Benjamin and Adorno yet, we should note that this claim recalls to mind a passage from Adorno quoted earlier in which he claimed that it was only on the basis of a mimetic supplement that concept and intuition could be mediated. Language becomes an archive of the mimetic ability to produce non-sensuous similarities, but, Benjamin claims, this mimetic heritage in language can "manifest itself only through a kind of bearer. This bearer is the semiotic element." ⁷⁸ This second claim brings us closer to Adorno's contention that it is only through the dialectic of significative and mimetic poles of language, or in art, between form and expression, that the truth content can be revealed. But precisely because the mimetic heritage retained in language (but suppressed by instrumental communication) can only now occur through

the mediation of its significative-semiotic counterpart, non-intentional truth, and for both Benjamin and Adorno this constituted the emphatic concept of truth, can appear only in the form of puzzles or riddle images to be deciphered as writing (*Schrift*) in which the modern and the archaic, brought into proximity, allow for the critique of the ever-the-same, progress as mythic. For both Benjamin and Adorno, language becomes the privileged site for remembrance, for it is in language that a memory of the now (tendentially) defunct act of remembrance can still be articulated.

What is it that is remembered? In a very real sense, and here I return to the quotes with which I opened this chapter, what is remembered is the "not yet existent."⁷⁹ For Adorno's concept of mimesis takes issue with the Platonic construal of mimesis as the imitation of the Ideal, and further, with any notion of truth as either correspondence or coherence. Adorno's emphatic concept of non-intentional truth is predicated on an historical ontology of non-identity in which truth would require an axial turn of the relations between subject and object extensionally equivalent to the end of the domination of nature. For both Benjamin and Adorno, the redemption of mute nature requires a concept of mimesis that departs from a Platonic construal, for the remembrance allowed for by mimesis is the remembrance of what cannot be remembered under the field of representation of constitutive subjectivity and its concomitant conception of language as a system of signs transcendently cut off from the real. The dialectic of significative and mimetic poles of language brings to a light a mimetic relation of affinity with nature anterior to the subject-object model, although redeemable only as illusion (*Schein*) for as long as instrumental reason is taken to be reason as such. Thus, the redemption of mute nature, at the present, is most urgently revealed by art. As will be argued in the following chapter, the model for this remembrance of what does not exist, is what, in *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno denominates the beautiful in nature (*Das Naturschöne*): "...art is an imitation of the beautiful in nature, rather than an imitation of nature..." because, "[N]ature does not exist..."⁸⁰

Thus the turn away from a Platonic conception of mimesis affects the nature of the object of remembrance. It is not an anamnestic recall (fateful for Western reason)

of universal forms that is envisaged, but rather the unique (*Das Einmalige*) which, as we have seen, is the memorial object of natural history. The central category of natural-historical thought is, and here Adorno is explicitly indebted to Benjamin's construal of allegory, transience. In a reading of Baudelaire's *Le Cygne*, Hans-Jost Frey has formulated in eminently Benjaminian terms the stakes of allegorical interpretation for memory that arise from this poem. He writes that the melancholic (the agent of allegorical interpretation) "...is no longer concerned with the past but rather with passing."⁸¹ The transiency of particular objects becomes a universal form for the melancholic who experiences the "...permanence of transience in the impermanence of the transient."⁸² Frey argues that there is an important distinction to be drawn between nostalgic memory which rests on a forgetting of the transiency of the past and allegorical memory. We might say that nostalgic memory, precisely by forgetting the transiency of the past takes the past as given, thus construing the object of memory as merely a recoverable object in a given flow of time. For the allegorist, the past is not defined by its givenness but rather by its passing, its transiency, which perpetually threatens the object of remembrance, indeed the past as such, with oblivion. Thus, for both Benjamin and Adorno, a relation to the past must be *constructed* rather than taken as given. The consequences of this distinction for both specific acts of memory and for remembrance in general are formulated by Frey as follows: "...remembering is only accessible through individual memories. *Something* is always remembered, and the realization of this something is memory's achievement. But in looking to individual memory, remembering itself can be lost. To regain it, we must distance ourselves from what is remembered. [.....] Memory of the act of remembering is also a memory of the fact that what is remembered is something past and that remembering itself depends on transience."⁸³ Transience, the category of the allegorical interpretation of natural history, is what allows for remembering. Writing of Benjamin's allegorical interpretation of natural history, Adorno states that, "This kind of immersion could find its limits only in the intentionless; only there would the concept, pacified, be extinguished, and for this reason Benjamin elevates the *Denkbild*, the thought-image, to the ideal."⁸⁴ The

thought-image, or what Adorno will call the enigmatic image of the work of art, closely linked to the historical image expounded in his *Kierkegaard* book, is illuminated through the constellation of concepts in which natural-history may be allegorically read. As I have tried to show in this chapter, such an allegorical reading revealed by an aesthetic caesura of the minimal meaninglessness of the co-ordinating particle in epic naïveté, or the paratactical disordering of logical-syntactic hierarchies, reveals an aesthetic-mimetic supplement, unacknowledged but central to the functioning of intentional truth. Language, which provides the locus of such caesuras, provides the condition for remembrance of the non-intentional conditions for intentional meaning. These "meaningless" interruptions of logical-syntactic order are ciphers of a mimetic pre-history to which instrumental reason is oblivious. They are markers for the movement of non-identity within constellations irreducible to the significative-logical identity thinking of instrumental reason. But such oblivion is not freedom from nature but the perpetuation of the domination of myth now "rationally" unacknowledgeable. Philosophy perpetuates its guilt context through the forgetting of its entanglement in nature, the memorial function of negative dialectics brings this entanglement to philosophical consciousness through the pursuit of an unintentional movement of language that historicizes identity-thinking and thus pre-figures its transcendence through the memory of a possible, but as yet unactualised, reconciliation between spirit and nature. The model of such transcendence is thought by Adorno under the concept of the beautiful in nature to which the following chapter will be devoted.

But in concluding this chapter, I would like to draw some of its threads together via a brief discussion of Albrecht Wellmer's important criticisms of Adorno's construal of language, and the way in which this leads him (Wellmer argues) to pre-judge the communicative potentialities inherent to discursive reason. Although Wellmer has published a series of important essays devoted to re-working Adorno's thought in the light of a broadly Habermasian perspective, I will focus here on the claims made in his essay "The Dialectic of Modernism and Postmodernism: The Critique of Reason since Adorno." ⁸⁵ We can begin with the question of mimesis on which Wellmer appears to

take a more nuanced account than Habermas who states that "Adorno and Horkheimer allow reason to shrivel down to the "unreason" of mimesis." ⁸⁶ It is one thing to dispute the status Adorno accords to the concept of mimesis, and the associated genealogy of reason through which the concept derives its status, but it another to misrepresent Adorno position when, as we have seen, mimesis is seen as a supplement *internal to* conceptuality. In *Negative Dialectics* Adorno states explicitly that, "To represent the mimesis it supplanted, the concept has no other way than to adopt something mimetic in its own conduct, without abandoning itself." ⁸⁷ It is important to note the final clause in this sentence, "without abandoning itself." It is not that conceptuality is abandoned, conflated with or reduced to mimesis, but rather that if concepts are to relate at all to their objects there must be some mediating link between them. Thus the dialectic of general and particular is staged by Adorno as a dialectic internal to language between its significative and mimetic-expressive poles. What Adorno does argue for is the claim that discursive reason, which at the present operates instrumentally towards its objects, cannot discursively account for this mimetic mediation. Whilst mimesis is not restricted solely to (autonomous) art, Adorno does argue that it is autonomous art which most clearly presents the mimetic supplement to instrumental reason, and thus that autonomous works of art are the best guides we have at present to what reconciliation could be, albeit that such reconciliation can only be presented as illusory.

Wellmer in formulating a communicative critique of Adorno operates less tendentiously than Habermas. His reconstruction of the central line of Adorno's critique of identity thinking refers not only to *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (as does Habermas), but also to *Aesthetic Theory*, which allows him to acknowledge the centrality of language in Adorno's critique of conceptual reification. The central problem that Wellmer identifies in Adorno's critique is that it remains tied to the presuppositions of the philosophy of the subject. Thus Adorno's critique of the hegemonic subject of idealism must lead to the aporias of negative dialectics, the resolution of which requires Adorno to conceive of redemption in "messianic terms." ⁸⁸ This leads Wellmer to argue that "[T]he 'mindfulness [*Eingedenken*] of nature in the subject', as demanded in the

Dialectic of Enlightenment, is not enough to demystify the idealistic philosophy of the subject. It is only through the mindfulness of *language* in the subject that we can escape the thrall of the philosophy of the subject..."⁸⁹ This communicative critique of the presuppositions of Adorno's critique of identity thinking begins by contesting the inherently identificatory function that Adorno attributes to the concept. Wellmer, like Habermas before him, traces this understanding of conceptuality back to Nietzsche's diagnosis of concepts as imposed upon chaotic matter for reasons of pragmatic and repressive control. Now Wellmer is surely right to suggest that Adorno unnecessarily restricts the functions and uses to which language can be put and that his construal of reason's inherently identificatory use of concepts may appear outmoded in the face of modern linguistic theory. The question is whether, and if so, to what extent, this prejudices the relation between identificatory reason and non-identity. Wellmer argues that because Adorno cannot construe the concept, and thus discursive reason, in terms other than repressive, non-identity must be construed as the speechless other of reason, the redemption of which must assume messianic proportions. The point is emphasized by a citation from Adorno's "Fragment on Music and Language" in which Adorno speaks of a 'true language' in which 'content itself is revealed.'"⁹⁰

What would it mean to defend Adorno against Wellmer's charges? Given Adorno's stricture, cited earlier, about "losing the argument in such a way as to convict one's opponent of untruth" the attempt to provide counter-arguments to those of the exponents of communicative rationality would be to lose sight of the claims of Adorno's thought. This is not to countenance a lack of rigour, but rather to suggest that Adorno's thought calls for a stringency that remains sensitive to discursive reason's complicity with rationalisation. The very language used by Wellmer and Habermas with respect to the need for a "change of paradigm" from Adorno's search for reconciliation between subject and nature to communicative rationality's dialogical intersubjective communication, in its derivation from the philosophy of science attests to this complicity within the structure of the argumentative framework of communicative rationality. Thus to provide a response to Wellmer, and implicitly to Habermas, will not

involve setting up an opposition of methods - negative dialectics and communicative rationality - precisely because negative dialectics is nothing but an immanent protest against method. Throughout this chapter, I have sought to highlight the moments in Adorno's work in which he discerns a breakdown of logical-intentional conceptuality. What is revealed in these moments of breakdown is intentionless particularity. The agon between Adorno and communicative rationality centres around the construal of this breakdown, that is, it centres around the construal of the relation between language and non-identity.

For Habermas and Wellmer, it might be argued that such breakdowns are to be construed as the temporary or contingent failings of a normally functioning system. Wellmer argues that "[I]t is possible to reformulate (and differentiate) Adorno's philosophy.....by understanding the 'violent' aspect of identificatory thought in the sense of *specific* blockages, pathologies or perversions of linguistic communication or social praxis." He continues, "Only if we retrieve Adorno's notion of the 'non-identical' from the world beyond language, so to speak, and place it within the horizon of intersubjective linguistic praxis, does it become clear when and in what sense the disproportionality between the general and particular *can*, in individual instances, signify a 'violation' or 'prearrangement' of the non-identical, and what specific disturbances, blockages or limitations of communication can find expression in such disproportionality." ⁹¹ For all the acuity of Wellmer's reconstruction of the aporias of Adorno's thought, his construction of the relation between identity, non-identity and language appears to be curiously undialectical. This may perhaps be due to communicative reason's reversion to a linguistically oriented Neo-Kantianism. But in so doing, I would claim that it misses something vital in Adorno's negative dialectic. For in construing non-identity as the (undialectical) obverse of communicative praxis, that is as blind intuition or particularity that can only be characterized as "speechless", Wellmer remains blind to another construal of non-identity whose significance reveals itself only in the light of Adorno's emphatic concept of truth as intentionless. Perhaps we might say that in their concern to trace Adorno's critique of identity reason exclusively back to

Nietzsche, both Habermas and Wellmer remain blind to the Benjaminian provenance of his concept of unintentional truth. Taking this element seriously is to take seriously Adorno's mode of operating by constellation rather than by argument. For, as I have tried to show in this chapter, it is through the construction of constellations that the relation between non-identity and language is to be discerned. Non-identity, on this construal, is not simply to be taken as the particularity irreducible to the identificatory act of the concept's universality, and thus as "speechless", but rather as the movement of particular and universal within constellations, that is, as a movement *within* language. It is this movement - irreducible to logical-intentional conceptuality - that provides Adorno's critique of the reification of the concept with its stringency. Wellmer is right to denominate this movement of non-identity as "speechless", but for the wrong reasons. Adorno's claim that non-identity "is opaque only for identity's claim to be total; it resists the pressure of that claim. But as such it seeks to be audible...." is of importance in this context.⁹² The movement between particulars and universals within constellations is opaque for logical-intentional language precisely because, as a movement of language "prior to" its logical-intentional determination, it is itself intentionless. As we have seen, Adorno locates these intentionless movements of language in the particle of "minimal meaninglessness" in Homer, in the "paratactical ceasurae" in Hölderlin's late poetry, and in the historical image in his reading of Kierkegaard. In each case what is revealed is not unintentional truth itself, but rather a movement of language in which the memory of the repressed mimetic supplement of instrumental reason may be discerned. Thus, Wellmer is right to assert that it is "memory of language in the subject" that presages enlightenment, nothing else has been argued in this chapter. But Wellmer's substitution of language for nature in Adorno's formulation should not be taken to be decisive. For Adorno the concept of communication, far from providing a "paradigm change" from the philosophy of the subject, is simply one more insidious confirmation of the complicity of reason and rationalization. In "Subject and Object" he writes: "If speculation on the state of reconciliation were permitted, neither the undistinguished unity of subject and object,

nor their antithetical hostility would be conceivable in it; rather, communication of what was distinguished. Not until then would the concept of communication, as an objective concept, come into its own. The present one is so infamous because the best there is, the potential of an agreement between people and things, is betrayed to an interchange between subjects according to the requirements of subjective reason." ⁹³ Thus for Adorno, reformulating communication according to the criteria of intersubjectivity leaves untouched the ontological issue of the relation of reason to objectivity. The formal and procedural character of Habermas's discourse ethics is in this respect no less impotent with regard to praxial transformation of social relations than Adorno's utopian reconciliation with nature. ⁹⁴ The concept of communication indeed carries a utopian moment, but for it to attain objectivity requires precisely the dialectical construal of the ontological moment of non-identity - its mimetic mediation - that communicative rationality castigates as "unreason." This ontological moment of non-identity, which finds expression in the movement of language within constellations, is indeed "speechless" for discursive reason, but precisely through the caesurae that beset "ordinary language" emerges the remembrance of discursive reason's repressed conditionality. That autonomous spirit emerges from undifferentiated nature not through an act of originary positing, but through violence, the consequences of which ramify throughout natural-history is the "guilt which compels us to philosophize." ⁹⁵ Remembrance of this violence marks the guilt context of philosophy's autonomy from nature; such remembrance compels philosophy to acknowledge the moment of heteronomy without which freedom remains in thrall to myth. This remembrance takes place nowhere else but in and through language. As we have seen Adorno claims that the attempt to make mute and fallen nature speak is the Herculean task of art but "that such a result cannot be willed or intended." ⁹⁶ To construct constellations that bring non-intentional pre-conditions for intentional-logical language to consciousness through remembrance is the utopian wager of negative dialectics.

Chapter Three: Aesthetics and the Beautiful in Nature.

1. Introduction:

The introduction to *The Philosophy of New Music*, which may be regarded as programmatic for Adorno's aesthetics as a whole, is prefaced by the following quote from Hegel's *Aesthetics*: "For in human Art we are not merely dealing with playthings, however pleasant or useful they may be, but ... with a revelation of truth." ¹ To say that Adorno's aesthetics stands in the shadow of Hegel's aesthetics is to state the obvious. The historicization of the concept of beauty and the move from a subjective faculty based account of taste (Kant) to the primacy of the aesthetic object ² are taken by Adorno to be the primary achievements of Hegelian aesthetics. Further, the phenomenological desideratum of "looking on", or generating theory out of the contradictions within the matter at hand rather than externally applying theory to it, is taken to be a model for aesthetic thought. At the same time, Adorno argues that Hegel fails to carry this model through with consistency for two reasons: firstly, in remaining wedded to deductive systematics, Hegel's aesthetics pre-judges the aesthetic matter at hand; and secondly, by "postulat[ing] the identity of subject and object in the totality..."³ Hegel illicitly short-circuits his own dialectic, and thus, by illegitimately deifying subjectivity, continues instrumental Reason's unreflective domination of nature. In short, Adorno's aesthetics is both inconceivable without its Hegelian underpinnings whilst continuously attempting to break free from Hegel's metaphysical legacy. It is therefore of some significance that Adorno places, in counterpoint to this passage, a quotation from Benjamin's *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*: "The history of origins viewed as the science of origins is that process which, from opposing extremes, and from the apparent excesses of development, permits the emergence of the configuration of an idea as a totality characterized by the possibility of a meaningful juxtaposition of antitheses inherent in these opposing extremes." ⁴ Whilst this passage methodologically underwrites the dialectical opposition of Schoenberg and Stravinsky as expounded in the *Philosophy of New Music*, the motif of the 'configuration of an idea' through the extremes, arguably extends beyond this particular work to Adorno's

aesthetic theory as a whole. What will be argued here is that whilst Adorno agrees with Hegel, both that art can provide a locus for an emphatic revelation of truth and also that such truth can be discerned only through the philosophical operation of determinate negation, his 'Hegelianism' is, from the outset, attenuated by a Benjaminian inflection. If one wanted to provide an appellation for these tensions within Adorno's thought, the term 'dialectical melancholy' - which Adorno himself used in his *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic* - could not be more appropriate.⁵ Insofar as the Adornian dialectic will remain negative, that is melancholic, the Idea will not be construed as returning to itself in the dialectical development of the concept, but must rather be 'configured' through a juxtaposition of extremes in which the dialectic is brought to a 'stand-still.' Of course, it is open to question whether the Benjaminian sense of 'Idea' can be brought into proximity with the Hegelian use of the term, and further whether Adorno can be said to operate unequivocally with either usage. What will be pursued in this chapter, by tracing the Benjaminian 'inflection' on Adorno's 'Hegelianism', is the fate of the relation between the 'Idea' and art 'beyond' its Hegelian determination; that is to say, 'beyond' Hegel's claim that "the form of art has ceased to be the supreme need of the spirit."⁶

For Hegel, art is now no longer the privileged locus for the revelation of truth, this of course being his, for aesthetics, ubiquitous and inescapable thesis of the 'end of art'. Or rather, the ends of art, for there are at least two ends that need to be distinguished. Firstly, there is the historical thesis of the end of art's formative role as a medium for the exhibition of the Idea, as embodied in Greek communities. This of course does not preclude the production of art-works, but rather signals the birth of autonomous art, or the birth of art as an institution. Secondly, if with Hegel, art or the aesthetic, as an aspect of absolute spirit, is defined as "the sensuous appearance of the Idea",⁷ art is determined as having an end subordinate to philosophy in so far as the Idea will return to itself in the Concept. Whilst art remains an essential moment of externalisation in the process that is Absolute Spirit, its end is already inscribed in the necessary philosophical sublation of sensuous presentation into the Concept. These two

ends - historical and phenomenological - circumscribe the aesthetic in relation to philosophy. Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* could be read as nothing but a perpetual circling around this relation in the wake of Hegel. Insofar as he demurs from Hegel's sublation of art into Absolute Knowledge, Adorno partakes of a tradition of modern thought that would comprise at least, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Derrida. It would seem that modern philosophy is haunted by Hegel's "end of art" thesis to the extent to which it remains dissatisfied with it. Adorno traverses this dual moment of attraction and repulsion through an unprecedented immersion in the development of modernist art whose logic he seeks to both delineate theoretically and perform philosophically. That art has carried on after Hegel's announcement of its demise is of course a banal point that in no way contradicts his thought; that the manner of this carrying on might pose a legitimate challenge to Hegelianism, whilst requiring (at least some of) the resources of Hegelianism for its comprehension, is perhaps what is at stake in Adorno's aesthetic theory. Thus, by the end of this preface, Adorno responds to Hegel with the pathos-laden rejoinder that reads: "In an historical hour, when the reconciliation of subject and object has been perverted to a satanic parody - to the liquidation of the subject in objective presentation - the only philosophy which still serves this reconciliation is one which despises this illusion of reconciliation and - against universal self-alienation - establishes the validity of the hopelessly alienated, for which a "subject itself" scarcely any longer speaks." ⁸ Insofar as the reconciliation of the real and the rational miscarried, it is not philosophy - which continues to outlive itself in a state of poverty or misery - but art *as alienated* which, in outliving the philosophical determination of its end, may once again be deemed to express the truth. But because art is alienated from existing reality (philosophically construed under the categories of subjective reason) its expression of the truth will be a second-order truth claim about the fate of philosophical truth as instrumental reason. It is the nature of this once again, of this return of art, that will be addressed in this chapter.

To explore this challenge I will begin from an aporia articulated by Jean-Luc Nancy in an essay entitled "The Vestige of Art." ⁹ This aporia, perhaps *the* aporia that

confronts any engagement with Hegel's aesthetics situates itself at the limit of those aesthetics. On the one hand, and here Nancy suggests that we are still on the terrain of Hegel, is the necessity of art to the process of the Idea's self-externalization in the medium of sensuousness. Art will always be necessary to the process of Spirit and thus how could it end? And yet art must have an end, both historically and phenomenologically, for it is the Idea that is to be presented as the self-presentation of actuality. There is therefore, according to Nancy, an ambiguity at the heart of the Hegelian thesis that leads on to the second moment of the aporia, a moment that exceeds Hegel's determination. I will quote Nancy's explication of this second moment at some length here:

the Idea, in presenting itself, withdraws as Idea perhaps what *remains* to us of the philosophy of the Idea, that is, what remains to us to *think*, is that sense is its own withdrawal. But that the withdrawal of sense *is not once again an unrepresentable Idea to be presented*; this is what makes of this remainder, and of its thinking, indissociably a task for art: for if this withdrawal is not an invisible ideality to be visualized, it is because it is wholly tracing itself right at the visible, as the visible in general (or as the sensible in general). A task for an art, consequently, that would no longer be an art of a presentation of the Idea, and that should be defined otherwise.¹⁰

Nancy traces the possibility of art after Hegel, art's return once again, to the withdrawal of the schema of art as a presentation of the unrepresentable Idea. Underlying Nancy's formulation is, if I have understood him correctly, the thought that Hegel's determination of art remains bound to a Platonic or ontotheological schema that regulates the relation of philosophy and art. Controlling this relation is the schema of a visible or sensible presentation of the invisible. The visible or sensible images of art are thus images *of* an ideality or *eidos* that, in its self-presentation, effectively imitates or simulates itself in a finite presentation of the infinite. The object of anamnesis will be the universal, infinite, invisible; thus anamnesis will recall, from out of sensuous illusion, the Idea back to itself. Anamnesis thereby becomes the guarantor for the maintenance of meaning, of presence, of identity; the guarantor, that is, that mimesis

will not slip its moorings in the Ideal. But if in its sensuous externalisation the Idea does not "...find [...] itself and return to itself again as the invisible ideality of the visible, [because in its sensuous externalisation] the Idea effaces its ideality so as to be what it is - [then] ...what it "is", by the same token, it is not and can no longer be." ¹¹ For Nancy, as for Adorno, the challenge of Hegel (and of metaphysics *tout court*) cannot be met with the simple inversion of the schema of ideality and sensuousness, that is, through any simplistic positing of the end of metaphysics, of the Idea, or of meaning. What is at stake is to think, not the absence of meaning but the withdrawal of meaning, a withdrawal traced in and through sensuousness (the work of art) - a work that, for Adorno, is now undertaken by modernist art. In Adornian terms, Nancy's thought could perhaps be expressed as follows: art's continuation after the Hegelian determination of its demise in no way contradicts that determination, from within Hegelian metaphysics this determination is "correct." Art's continuation attests rather, not to a repudiation of that metaphysics, but perhaps recalls to thought what that metaphysics and its determination of art repressed. Art, precisely because of its alienation from (philosophical) truth, may provoke a model of remembrance other than Platonic anamnesis or Hegelian *Erinnerung*. To understand Adorno's claims for the cognitive and memorial status of the modernist work of art will require construing both anamnesis or remembrance and mimesis other than through their Platonic-Hegelian determination.

I do not propose here to situate Adorno on either one side or the other of this aporia. Rather, I suggest that both moments of this aporia are at work in Adorno's aesthetics, which is to say that Adorno's aesthetics remains bound to Hegelian presuppositions even as he recognises the impossibility of continuing to prosecute aesthetics under the sign of Hegel. And this impossibility - or rather its exigency - derives not from philosophy but from art, from, that is, modernist art's putting into question of aesthetics. It has often been noted that Schoenberg's development of atonal, twelve-tone music analogically provides a model for Adorno's attempt to develop an a-foundational constellative mode of thought. ¹² Perhaps we could venture the

thought here that Schoenberg's uncompleted opera *Moses and Aaron* (to which Adorno devotes an essay "Sacred Fragment: Schoenberg's *Moses and Aaron*"¹³, written in 1963) provides a model for Adorno's traversal of the aporia of aesthetics which Nancy adumbrates. This, at least, is the hypothesis that I would like to develop here.

However, before approaching Adorno's reading of Schoenberg, more needs to be said about his construal of art, and of the notion of aesthetic theory. More specifically we need to explain how and why Adorno takes modernist works of art to exceed aesthetics, and thus to exceed philosophical determination, even as they require philosophical interpretation to reveal their truth content. These initial considerations will also serve to situate Adorno's understanding of the art work in relation to Hegel's definition of beauty and to raise the issue of Adorno's re-construal of the notions of mimesis and remembrance. What will be central to this re-construal is the notion of aesthetic experience. As Peter Osborne has argued, for Adorno aesthetic experience "...derives not from the subject but from the object - the work of art."¹⁴ That is to say, aesthetic experience is not taken by Adorno to be a specific form of the generic category of experience as applied to works of art, but rather the interruption of experience construed as the subsumption of particulars (intuitions) under universals (concepts) according to the rule governed work of the understanding. But if, as Adorno claims "[T]he subject matter of aesthetics is defined negatively as its undefineability. This is why art needs philosophy to interpret it. Philosophy says what art cannot say, although it is art alone which is able to say it"¹⁵, then how is philosophy to interpret the truth-claims of art? Put otherwise, if the art work is not simply to be the blind intuition to philosophy's empty conceptuality, a moment of mediation must be at work, a mediation that undermines the logic of opposition between universal and particular.¹⁶ As will become apparent this moment is denominated by Adorno as Spirit, or perhaps more rigorously, the determinate irreconcilability of rationality and mimesis.¹⁷ The fleshing out of this work of mediation is the hinge upon which the undecideability of aesthetic theory rests.

We might say that philosophy is able to interpret the truth claim of the work of art by becoming non-philosophical, which is not to say by replacing philosophy with art, for art, precisely because it continues only in a condition of alienation from instrumental reason, cannot discursively redeem its truth claims. Rather, Adorno is developing a notion of interpretation which traces philosophy's becoming other than itself, an exceeding of its concept or self-conception(s), the model for which is located in the "processual character" of aesthetic experience.¹⁸ Overcoming the opposition of concept and intuition by discerning their mediation in the constellations constitutive of the experience of works of art, both makes interpretation of works of art possible, and precludes interpretation ever being final. To claim that the interpretation of a work of art is uncompletable, does not merely involve the claim that all works of art can be submitted to a potentially infinite number of interpretations that fail to reach conceptual agreement - if by this is meant that the failure to achieve a stable meaning (understood as a desideratum) falls on the side of the object (the art work) - rather, the claim is that the very act of interpretation brings to light, through the aesthetic experience of the work of art, a structural moment of negativity unrecoverable for philosophical interpretation even as it makes that interpretation possible in the first place. The work of art will remain non-identical for discursive reason, and thus, by injecting a moment of negativity into reason, may potentially serve to enlighten discursive reason as to its irrationality.¹⁹

To make these somewhat elliptical claims more concrete more will need to be said about the dialectic of mimesis and rationality which stands at the heart of Adorno's aesthetics. We can begin from Adorno's claim that "... every work of art spontaneously aims at being identical with itself."²⁰ It is in the working out of this identity (an identity which must be categorially distinct from both the identity logic of reified conceptuality and capital's logic of equivalence if art is to serve a critical function in illuminating the irrationality of identity logic and exchange) that we can approach the notion of aesthetic experience. Adorno continues by arguing that, in contrast to the coercive logic of identification through subsumption and equivalence, "[A]esthetic identity is meant

to assist the non-identical in its struggle against the repressive identification compulsion that rules the outside world." ²¹ This identity is achievable, if at all, only through the determinate irreconcilability of mimesis and rationality. Because, in contrast to *Negative Dialectics* which attempts to unhinge the non-identical in and through the medium of the concept, *Aesthetic Theory* addresses art as the domain of sensuous particularity, mimesis, as a re-inscription of intuition or the relation of particular to particular, takes primacy. ²² Thus what may look like a Kantian opposition between intuition and concept in fact undergoes a Hegelian re-inscription through Adorno's utilization of the notion of spirit. Of mimesis, Adorno states that, "[T]he continued existence of mimesis, understood as the non-conceptual affinity of a subjective creation with its objective and non-posed other, defines art as a form of cognition and to that extent 'rational'." ²³ As such, mimesis denominates a relation of affinity (as opposed to conceptual subordination) of particulars. However if mimesis were pure or immediate, that is to say, unmediated by conceptuality, particulars would not be discriminable as such, and mimetic affinity would thus not be a relation between particulars, but a regressive assimilation into amorphousness. What allows for non-conceptual unification as opposed to undifferentiated assimilation to the other - and thus allows art to operate as "a form of cognition" - is the dialectical moment of rationality or form. Form is central to Adorno's construction of art's utopian promise insofar as "...art's opposition to the real world is in the realm of form..." ²⁴ But, again, Adorno seeks to undermine a logic of subsumption by arguing that form is not a unification imposed externally upon particulars, but rather, "sedimented content", which thus renders form intrinsically historical. The dialectic of mimesis and rationality, the mediation of one by the other, is a process that Adorno names spirit; but what separates this account from simply recapitulating Hegel is that the dialectic is one of mediation without reconciliation, that is, mimesis and rationality remain determinately irreconcilable. In order to account for the substance of this determinate irreconcilability we need to turn to Adorno's exposition of the concept of spirit contained in his remarks on artistic beauty.

"Art," Adorno argues, "is antithetical to empirical reality only as spirit, which moves toward determinate negation of the existing order of things." ²⁵ Thus it is through spirit that the work of art is determined as "more" than a merely empirical object amongst others. That is to say, at the most banal level, spirit is what makes a painting more than paint and canvas, a novel more than paper and print. It may be argued that it is the intention of the artist which achieves this transcendence of empirical reality, and yet Adorno is specifically concerned to oppose this view. Subjective artistic intention, he argues, is merely a moment amongst others in the production of a work of art, and even when the artist is responsible for imposing form upon the artistic materials, this choice is not a free one, but rather a response to the objective state of artistic material at any given time. Artistic materials are not a-historical givens, but pre-formed through the history of art and technology: "[T]he spirit of art works is the immanent mediation of sensuous instants and objective formation." ²⁶ However, Adorno also insists that spirit is not to be construed as existing "above" or "externally" to the sensuous, material elements of the work of art. Spirit is rather, "..the configuration of appearing qualities." ²⁷ The work of art is an artifact, a production from elements of existing reality, and yet as a work of art it is more than its artifactuality; it is not simply a functional totality but has meaning. This however carries the attendant danger that this "more", art's illusory quality, through which the work of art posits meaning in opposition to empirical objects, will be taken as real, that the work of art will provide an image of reconciliation that conceals the antagonistic state of existing reality. The criterion of authenticity in art is how, and to what extent, the work of art reveals these antagonisms, not through its subject matter or content, but through its form. It is in the determinate irreconcilability of mimetic and rational moments, revealed through their configuration as spirit, that the critical potential of the modernist work of art consists.

Insofar as aesthetic experience derives from the object (the work of art) and not from the subject, aesthetic experience will differ from a discursive approach to the work of art. This however does not preclude aesthetic experience from being cognitive,

rather it intimates a model of cognition and truth repressed by discursive reason. This is how we should approach Adorno's claim that, "The tension between the elements of the work of art is spiritual, issuing in a process that renders the work of art itself spiritual. To know (*erkennen*) the work of art is to grasp that process." ²⁸ Aesthetic experience is thus rendered processual to the extent that it must reconstruct the process of the art work's construction. However it is precisely because of this processual nature of aesthetic experience - the grasping of the configurations of sensuous moments in the work of art - that the work of art provides a haven for non-identity. The claims of non-identity are therefore twofold. Firstly the art work will be non-identical for discursive reason precisely because its cognitive nature, as processual, forever eludes subsumption under a concept. But, secondly, the modernist work of art will be non-identical in and for itself because its sensuous moments are not reconciled into a harmonious or organic totality. The attempt of the work of art to be identical with itself enacts both the mimetic ideal of affinity with the other, and, because of the work of art's illusory character, provides an index of the contradictions that traverse the empirical world.

It is through this double determination of non-identity that we can grasp the distance that Adorno takes from Hegelian aesthetics. As with Hegel, Adorno takes art to bear a cognitive potential and further he takes this cognitive potential to lie in the sensuous configurations enacted by spirit. Does Adorno then merely duplicate Hegel's understanding of beauty as the sensuous presentation of the Idea? Adorno seeks to differentiate his understanding of spirit from Hegel's by denying that spirit, in externalising itself into otherness (sensuousness) remains identical with this otherness. In effect this amounts to the charge that Hegel hypostasizes his conception of spirit by falsely proclaiming an identity of identity and non-identity. Adorno's claim is that in unhinging this identity of identity and non-identity, art's progressive logic of rationalisation (spiritualisation) through its domination of artistic materials can become the self-conscious bearer of what has been suppressed by the reification of spirit, the redemption of suppressed nature. The dialectic of enlightenment is internalized by modernist art in such a way that the utopian potential of an end to this dialectic may be

glimpsed, albeit only within the realm of illusion. The "concept" that marks Adorno's deviation from Hegel is the beautiful in nature (*das Naturschöne*).

Before turning to the beautiful in nature, I would like to summarize this section by commenting on a long quote in which Adorno effectively condenses his deployment of the concept of spirit:

A metaphysics of art today has to centre on the question of how something spiritual (*Geistiges*) like art can be man-made or merely posited, while at the same time being true.....[T]o ask how an artifact can be true is to pose the question of how illusion - the illusion of truth - can be redeemed. Truth content cannot be an artifact. Therefore every act of making in art is an endless endeavour to articulate what is not makeable, namely spirit. This is where the function of art as a restorer (*Wiederherstellung*) of a historically repressed nature becomes important. Nature does not yet exist. To the degree to which art pines after an image of nature, it represents the truth of non-being (which instrumental identity-positing reason reduces to a material which is called nature). This other is not some unifying concept but a manifold, for truth content in art is a manifold and not an abstract or generic concept. Thus truth content is tied up with individual works rather than with art as such. This corresponds to the plurality of things in general: they too defy identification. ²⁹

This passage brings together a number of crucial issues for the interpretation of Adorno's aesthetics. In asserting that truth is not makeable, that is in reasserting his claim to an emphatic concept of unintentional truth, Adorno is highlighting the limits to the productive power of constitutive subjectivity. Subjectivity indeed plays a role in the production of the work of art which reveals truth content, but the truth content of the work of art is not itself dependent upon subjectivity. On this account of aesthetic production, art exposes the limits of the power of the will. Art's illusory nature is perhaps the best guide that we have today to the illusory freedom of the subject of pure practical reason. For in repressing all heteronomous contaminations to the exercising of moral autonomy, the subject of pure practical reason posits a productivism of the will which formally appears as freedom whilst all too easily legitimating complicity with an economic productivism indifferent to its claims to autonomy. Thus for Adorno,

autonomy cannot be posited or willed but is possible, if at all, only through a recognition or remembrance of the heteronomy repressed by the subject. Nature is doubled as both the condition of heteronomy (empirical necessity) and the condition for possible autonomy (possible, but not yet existent freedom). Denial of the heteronomy of nature in the subject is to remain ever more deeply in thrall to it, to remain subject that is, to the dialectic of enlightenment. To acknowledge such heteronomy as the condition for autonomy (the utopian change from domination of nature to mimetic empathy with nature) is the severe and difficult task undertaken, for the present most forcefully and eloquently, by modernist art.

The second point to be made about this passage concerns what we might call aesthetic truth, or the cognitive potential of works of art. For Adorno, it is not art in general that is the locus for aesthetic truth but rather, as we saw in the previous chapter in his reading of Hölderlin, it is individual works of art that configure aesthetic truth. I say 'configure' because Adorno's claim is that aesthetic truth is not 'in' works of art, or predicable of them, but that in grasping the unfolding of the work of art we grasp its truth content. This claim entails that the way in which we experience objects directly affects the nature of the way we grasp their claims to truth. Art raises a claim to truth which is in effect a double claim³⁰: firstly, in locating truth content in the unfolding of individual works of art rather than art as such, Adorno registers the essential modernism of his position for which the forms of art are no longer taken as given, but rather the very existence of art, and *a fortiori* its truth, are what is at issue in each work of art. As will be argued in the following chapter, it is the self-conscious concern with form rather than representation which registers the historical dynamic of modernist art, a dynamic which ceaselessly interrogates the position of art in modernity. But the second claim is a meta-aesthetic claim about the nature of truth itself, a claim about the fate of truth in the wake of instrumental rationality's depreciation of the cognitive potential of art. Insofar as identity-thinking asserts truth through the abstraction from particulars enacted by conceptual synthesis and thus asserts the identity of an object with its concept, Adorno convicts identity thinking of untruth. This conviction can hold

only through the postulation of a 'utopian' moment in which the concept would not assert its identity with the object through subsumption but would, in reality, be identical with it. Negative dialectics, because it operates in the medium of the concept, can indicate this utopian moment only negatively, by showing (through a genealogy of reason) the non-identity of the object with its concept. However art, precisely because its medium is sensuous particularity can show what this identity would be - the beautiful in nature is a model of such identity - but cannot discursively redeem its showing. Insofar as empirical reality or existence is determined through the subsumption of particularity under concepts, it (the concept) represses the possibility (non-identity) contained within the concept's claim to be identical with the object. In this sense, (emphatic) truth does not exist; but its possibility can be indicated negatively by way of aesthetic illusion. Adorno demurs from the demand that he define his emphatic concept of unintentional truth, because definition, by necessity, is an integral part of the forgetting of non-identity. Art's claim to truth operates not by definition but by configuration in order to make a meta-aesthetic claim about the untruth of philosophical truth. The heeding of this claim requires a changed mode of experience. This changed mode of experience - aesthetic experience - limns the contours of non-identity in a way in which negative dialectical thinking could only approach negatively; as such aesthetic experience is Adorno's model for the experience of non-identity. Although not capable of presenting emphatic truth - which would require the ontological reconciliation of subject and object, spirit and nature - aesthetic experience provides a presentiment of emphatic truth through its tracing of the truth content of works of art.

Although, as we have seen, Adorno concurs with Hegel that art possesses a cognitive character, it remains to be asked whether Adorno's construal of this cognitive character, remains within the ambit of Hegelianism. Does Adorno remain within the first stem of Nancy's aporia by remaining wedded to Hegel's determination of beauty as the sensuous presentation of the Idea? To insist that this is the case would be to miss the Benjaminian inflection of Adorno's "Hegelianism", to miss, that is, the fact that

Adorno's emphatic concept of truth owes as much to Benjamin's determination of truth as "unintentional" - expounded in the "Epistemo-Critical Prologue" to *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* - as it does to a Hegelian conception of truth as the self-presentation of actuality.³¹ Nowhere is this inflection more evident than in Adorno's rehabilitation of the concept of the beautiful in nature (*das Naturschöne*) from its dismissal from Hegel's *Aesthetics*. Consideration of this concept will prepare the way for a construal of the constellation of truth, mimesis and remembrance in Adorno's aesthetics which - it will be argued - deviates from the Hegelian definition of beauty, and that will further allow for a consideration of Adorno's aesthetics with respect to the second moment of Nancy's aporia which will be approached through a reading of Adorno's "Sacred Fragment."

2. Das Naturschöne:

It is through the "concept" of the beautiful in nature that Adorno challenges Hegel's determination of art's sublation into the concept. But does Adorno really depart from Hegel's sublation of art into philosophy? Does not art find its philosophical end in the notion of philosophical interpretation that would discern the truth content of the work of art?³² Perhaps it might be more accurate to say that Hegel's conceptual determination of the end of art is given a utopian inflection by Adorno insofar as he argues that "If the utopia of art were actualized, art would come to an end."³³ Art's utopia, the reconciliation of nature and the subject, can be intimated but this intimation requires an altered construal of mimesis and remembrance; it is through the beautiful in nature that Adorno essays this construal.³⁴ To flesh out these claims, we will consider Adorno's "non-concept" of the beautiful in nature which provides a model for his aesthetic redemption of non-identity.

Why turn to this aesthetic category at the end of the Twentieth Century? In an age of ever expanding industrial and technological control over nature, reflections on natural beauty cannot but appear as anachronistic. Adorno is aware of this danger and

accordingly, his rehabilitation of the concept of natural beauty is not an appeal for a return to anything, but rather locates, through this concept, an historical antinomy of nature. This antinomy could be expressed as follows: while man was subject to nature, nature could not appear as an object of beauty, indeed nature could not appear as an object at all, but only as a source of fear before undifferentiated force. The sedentary, agrarian control over nature, in overcoming mythic fear, establishes nature as an object, but an object merely to be controlled in accordance with the cyclical changing of the seasons. Thus, it is precisely through the nascent industrial and technological control over nature which establishes the subject's supposed freedom from nature, that nature is freed to be an object of contemplation, and thus makes possible nature's appearance as an object of beauty. The alleged a-historicity of natural beauty is thus historical through and through. But although natural beauty appears historically, historicity does not exhaust natural beauty: "[T]he beautiful in nature is the trace (*die Spur*) of non-identity in things, in an age when they are otherwise spellbound by universal identity."

³⁵ The antinomy of natural beauty lies in the fact that it is both historically determinate and yet eludes historical representation. Adorno's chapter on the beautiful in nature is thus an attempt, self-conscious of its necessary failure, to speak what cannot be spoken in configuring this antinomy. Although such an attempt must by necessity fail - because insofar as instrumental reason is complicit with rationalisation and thus under the spell of "universal identity", natural beauty cannot be an object of rational discourse - Adorno, even whilst courting anachronism, persists with this antinomy in order to illuminate the not yet actualized, but possible, reconciliation between nature and the subject. In eluding universal identity natural beauty eludes its own conceptualisation and thus becomes and remains mute in its non-identity. Philosophy cannot redeem the beautiful in nature (indeed discursive reason is implicated in its muteness), and if, and this is by no means certain, redemption is possible, the task falls to art.

Having accounted for the antinomy of the beautiful in nature, any aesthetic reappraisal of the concept must still confront the oblivion to which Hegel's *Aesthetics* consigns it. As has already been noted, the historicisation of the concept of beauty is,

for Adorno, the primary achievement of Hegel's *Aesthetics*, but in his dismissal of natural beauty from the science of Beauty, Adorno detects not a development of the matter at hand, but rather an arbitrary and symptomatic evasion of an alterity irreducible to subjective determination. For Adorno, Hegel's rejection of the category in his *Aesthetics* remains non-decisive precisely because its supposed dialectical sublation into artistic beauty miscarries. Hegel rejects natural beauty because it "is produced neither *for* nor *out of itself* as *beautiful*.....[and thus is] ...beautiful only for another..." but, argues Adorno, "[T]his already misses the essence of natural beauty, which is the anamnesis of something that is more than just for-other." ³⁶ In pursuing a second reflection on the category of the beautiful in nature Adorno is not reneging on the Hegelian insight into the mediacy of all immediacy, it is as we will see only through subjective mediation that the beautiful in nature can emerge, but contesting the claim that subjective mediation exhausts the immediate. Thus, the beautiful in nature serves to provide an index of the "preponderance of the object in subjective experience",³⁷ the remembrance of which, according to the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, presaged freedom from the compulsion to repress and dominate nature. Adorno's rehabilitation of the concept of natural beauty from its Hegelian exile is less concerned with pursuing a Romantic agenda against Hegelian systematics than with figuring a model of non-identity for which the indeterminacy of natural beauty, which was the source of Hegel's dismissal of the concept, becomes its prime virtue. ³⁸ In so doing it will become evident that to speak of the "concept" of the beautiful in nature becomes increasingly inappropriate insofar as it is the lack of conceptuality that gives the beautiful in nature its critical potential, a critical potential through which Adorno will pursue the vicissitudes of modern art's autonomy, and through which he will seek to discern the possibility of an aesthetic redemption of reason.

The non-discursive and non-conceptual movement of language irreducible to discursive reason's logical-intentional language, which gains expression through constellations of concepts and particulars (which was argued for in the previous chapter), finds its aesthetic counterpart in the "non-concept" of the beautiful in nature

(*das Naturschöne*). Just as constellations express a remembrance of the singular object whose reconciliation with the universal resists being subjectively posited, so through art, the beautiful in nature offers a remembrance "of what rationality has erased from memory." ³⁹ Again, what is central to this remembrance of what cannot discursively be remembered is a configuration of mimesis and rationality: "The restitution of nature hinges on the emergence of something that has escaped the fatefulness of nature. The more art is structured along objective lines, independent of subjective intentions, the more articulately does it speak after the model of a non-conceptual, non-significative language." ⁴⁰ Art's mimesis of this non-conceptual, non-significative language emerges only through its rational moment, which Adorno variously designates as construction, form and spirit. But precisely because what is imitated is non-conceptual and non-significative, Adorno's aesthetics traces an aesthetic inversion of Platonic mimesis.

The beautiful in nature can operate as a model of such inversion because, "the beautiful in nature cannot be copied (*abbilden*). For natural beauty in appearing (*Erscheinendes*) is itself an image (*Bild*). Hence, to try to replicate (*Abbildung*) it is like committing a tautology. Moreover, by objectifying the appearance, replication tends to wipe out that appearing quality." ⁴¹ Adorno would appear to contradict his claim that natural beauty cannot be copied, when he later claims that, "...art is imitation (*Nachahmung*) of the beautiful in nature, rather than imitation (*Nachahmung*) of nature itself" ⁴² and further when he qualifies this claim by arguing that, "[A]rt imitates neither nature nor individual natural beauty. What it does imitate is natural beauty in itself. (*Kunst ahmt nicht Natur nach, auch nicht einzelnes Naturschönes, doch das Naturschöne an sich*)." ⁴³ The contradiction disappears however when one takes account of Adorno's distinction between copying or replicating (*Abbildung*) and imitation (*Nachahmung*), both of which are to be further distinguished from mimesis (*mimesis*). Thus the beautiful in nature can be imitated (*Nachahmung*) but not copied (*abbilden*); and insofar as copying or replication involves the replication of an image by an image, imitation will involve the production of images which do not merely mirror what exists. As will become clear, the modernist work of art imitates the beautiful in

nature by acceding to a *Bilderverbot* - a ban on graven images. The process of such accession is traced through the determinate negation of imaging what empirically exists. The imitation of what does not yet exist (the beautiful in nature) can be actualized only through the dialectical negation, by the work of art, of the image of nature as second nature. The distinction that Adorno is developing between copying, imitation and mimesis can best be brought out by reference to a passage in Walter Benjamin's "The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism". That Adorno's argument resonates with this passage will not, I suggest, be fortuitous. Benjamin, in the process of distinguishing the concepts of art criticism of the German Romantics and Goethe, suggests that a confusion in the concept of nature is evident in Goethe's theory of primal images. What must be rigorously distinguished, he argues, is "true nature" and "the appearing visible nature of the world."⁴⁴ It is only after these two senses of nature have been conceptually distinguished that:

... the problem of a deeper, essential unity of the "true" visible nature of the artwork and of the nature present in the phenomena of visible nature (present though perhaps invisible, only intuitable, *ur*-phenomenal) would be posed. And it may be that this problem would finally admit of a paradoxical resolution - namely, that the true, intuitable, *ur*-phenomenal nature would become visible after the fashion of a likeness, not in the nature of the world but *only* in art, whereas in the nature of the world it would indeed be present but hidden (that is, overshadowed by what appears).⁴⁵

Does this passage not pre-figure Adorno's discussion of the beautiful in nature? Benjamin's claim that *ur*-phenomenal nature is present but overshadowed in appearing nature, and is revealed only through its imitation by the work of art, is re-worked by Adorno as the notion that the replication of the empirical world, and thus its "objectification", "wipes out" the appearing quality of the beautiful in nature. As with Benjamin's "paradoxical resolution" the artwork does not imitate nature, if by nature is meant the phenomenal correlate of transcendental subjectivity regulated by the schematized categories of the understanding - nature as second nature. Insofar as this

appearing nature is nothing but the causal nexus from which the subject's freedom must forever be banished, how could this nature ever provide the image of possible freedom or reconciliation between nature and the subject? Thus the image of freedom may appear in art, but only insofar as art's mimesis is not taken to be the replication of appearing nature, but rather imitation of the beautiful in nature which eludes conceptual subsumption and regulation. Because what is imitated by the art-work is the beautiful in nature, rather than nature conceived of as either empirical reality determined by the categories of the understanding or as an object of labour and material reproduction, ⁴⁶ a doubling of nature is at work here (a doubling which would be played out under the categories of existence and possibility) which precludes art's imitation of the beautiful in nature being conceived of as an imitation of the Real. What Benjamin terms ur-phenomenal nature and what Adorno calls the beautiful in nature, is redeemable only in so far as its imitation by the work of art involves the determinate negation of objectified nature, and thus departs from the replication of second nature. "First" nature, or the beautiful in nature, can appear only negatively - as the trace of non-identity - through the determinate negation of second nature. The (modernist) work of art becomes a "haven for non-identity" when it responds to the prohibition on imaging existing reality, enacted by the process of the determinate negation of that reality, which exposes the traces of possibility repressed by what exists.

Aesthetic experience of the beautiful in nature, in suspending determinant judgement according to the categories of the understanding and instrumental means-end praxis, opens up the possibility of an orientation to nature - a nature which does "not yet exist" ⁴⁷ - not grounded in the dominative logic of self-preservation. For as long as our concepts and categories are complicit with the historical tendency towards the ever increasing domination of nature, the beautiful in nature will elude conceptualisation: "[N]either the - remediable - weakness of thinking nor the meagreness of the object of thinking are to be blamed for the present demise of the theory of natural beauty. Rather, natural beauty is defined by its undefineability, which is an aspect of the object as well as of the concept. As an indeterminate something, natural beauty is hostile to all

definition." ⁴⁸ Natural beauty's opacity for conceptual synthesis signifies less a deficiency of the thing itself - although for instrumental reason it must appear as a deficiency - and more a deficiency of the cognition and experience which would seek to grasp it under conceptual synthesis.

However, we should not immediately assume a homology between Benjamin and Adorno here, given that Benjamin, in proposing a "paradoxical solution" to the question of art's mimesis of nature in the context of Goethe's concept of criticism, is employing Goethe's concept of *ur*-phenomenon. Does this model not return us perilously close to a Platonic model of mimesis in which the sensuous or visible image is merely the copy of the *eidos*? And is this model of mimesis not precisely what Adorno's concept of mimesis wishes to avoid? It will be suggested here that Benjamin's doubling of nature is supplemented by Adorno with a doubling of the art-work as both material thing and as appearance - a doubling that reveals the beautiful in nature - which is at the crux of Adorno's inversion of Platonic mimesis. This is why the beautiful in nature is revealed through the mimetic aesthetic experience of the work of art, rather than through a direct experience of natural beauty - an experience which reflectively follows the work of art's construction rather than subsuming the work under categories - which Adorno locates through the dual character of the art work as both material object and as appearance. It is in this dual character, as we have seen, that Adorno finds the truth content of the work of art to be configured through the spirit of the work of art, a truth content whose telos is nothing but the redemption of nature - a nature that does not yet exist.

This dual character of the work of art is nothing other than the dialectic of mimesis and rationality, the configuration of which is what Adorno terms the "puzzle picture" (*Rätselbild*) of the work of art. ⁴⁹ To experience a (modernist) work of art is, Adorno claims, to become aware of its constitutive enigma: "[I]nterpretative understanding both dissolves and preserves the puzzle quality [of the work of art]. Its incidence depends on the spiritualisation of art and artistic experience, the principal medium of which is imagination. The way spiritualisation approaches the puzzle

picture is not through conceptual explanation but by concretizing the puzzle picture." ⁵⁰ If, as has been suggested, aesthetic experience is not to be understood primarily as subjective experience, but rather that which puts the subject in question insofar as the subject becomes aware of the primacy of the object through aesthetic experience, then the experience of the enigmatic quality of the work of art can be nothing other than the experience of the objective transcendence of the work of art from material object to the instant of its appearing as appearance. ⁵¹ The truth content of the work of art is the tracing of this objective transcendence, an objectivity that exceeds subjective categorial objectivity (under the aegis of the understanding) thereby suspending the understanding and thus releasing the free-play of the imagination; a play which itself releases nature from its construal as an object of instrumental control, or moral repression. In releasing nature from categorial objectification, nature itself does not appear, rather the trace of nature, the beautiful in nature, or possibility, is imitated by the work of art's desire to imitate itself. Insofar as the work of art posits this autarchy, it is ideological, because its monadic status cannot but be illusory in a world in which nothing is for-itself and everything is for-another, but this is precisely why the beautiful in nature is the *trace* of non-identity rather than the presence of non-identity. For the work of art as a monad also posits a non-ideological claim to identity, wherein identity would be construed as the non-repressive assimilation of a subjective creation to its other. The dialectical truth of the work of art is therefore contained in its status as a monad. As such it operates both as an illusory unity and provides the presentiment of an identity beyond subjective objectification, precisely through its non-subjective, mimetic objectification as a work of art; that is, through its objective transcendence from material object to appearance. Thus the truth content of the work of art is configured not through the imitation of an ur-phenomenon, nor through the imitation of eidos, but through the imitation of a possibility repressed, but not obliterated by, existing reality. The work of art allegorically traces the reconciliation between existence and possibility through its transcendence from artifact to appearance. Aesthetic experience is the non-subsumptive experience of this allegory of reconciliation.

It is through this dual character of the work of art that Adorno takes his distance from Hegel's definition of beauty as "the sensible presentation of the Idea." For Hegel's designation rests upon the Idealist assumption that in externalising itself in nature, Spirit remains identical with itself such that what is sensibly presented through aesthetic illusion remains discursively redeemable. This assumption might well be taken to extend beyond Hegel to metaphysics as such insofar as the sensible is programmatically taken to be the visual or intuitional presentation of the invisible. As an image of the *eidos*, the work of art mimetically presents the *eidos* sensuously. Sensibility as such has no irreducibly independent existence; art's end - in the sense of *telos* - thus remains internal to art as its discursive sublation into conceptuality. Adorno demurs from this assumption of the identity of spirit with its otherness, and thus arrests the implicit return of spirit to itself, the return that is, of images to their conceptual *telos*. As such, the object of imitation is given an axial turn for it is not the *eidos* which is to be imitated by art, but the beautiful in nature. The return of spirit to itself from its sensuous alienation is thereby constrained through the autonomy of art in such a way that spiritualisation (domination of nature) does not partake of a grander logic of the self-actualisation of the Idea, but rather, interrupts this very logic. Adorno's claim that "...the *telos* of aesthetic spiritualisation ... is to do justice to nature which has historically been suppressed" ⁵² announces the object of art's mimesis, and thus the object of art's remembrance, to be irreducible for conceptuality - the beautiful in nature.

Indeed, it becomes increasingly apparent that what is being thought under the rubric of the beautiful in nature, is what, in a different constellation of concepts, Adorno attempted to think with the concept of *caesura*. And insofar as this concept's philosophical lineage derives from Benjamin (who in turn derives the concept from Hölderlin), does this not indicate an inflection of, or perhaps rather, the deviation from, Hegel's conception of beauty? Insofar as the beautiful in nature resists sublation into artistic beauty, does not the beautiful in nature re-work Benjamin's conception of "dialectic at a standstill" ? If this is the case, then mimesis cannot but enter into a constellation of concepts foreign to Hegelian aesthetics. The point is well made by

Robert Hullot-Kentor when he writes (with reference to a different text) that, "[F]or Benjamin the idea is to its phenomena as is an expression to a face; the idea is expressive. For Adorno, likewise, the idea is not the Hegelian totality, in which expression is sublated, rather it is perceived with *θαυμαζειν*..... It is distinguished from the Platonic shock, however, in that it is the perception of a particular rather than a universal." ⁵³ If the image is no longer merely the sensible presentation of the invisible universal, and as such, no longer constrained by the logic of the universal, if, that is, the ontotheological schema of visible-invisible which links Hegel to Plato is what is no longer axiomatic for modernist art, this in turn entails a changed conception of remembrance. It is precisely because what is remembered by the art-work's mimesis of the beautiful in nature is a particular rather than a universal that Adorno's concept of remembrance departs from Platonic anamnesis just as it departs from Hegelian *Erinnerung*. For what is remembered is what was never part of Spirit's cyclical return to its self from its auto-differentiation in nature, because what is remembered by the modernist work of art is not nature, but the beautiful in nature.

For discursive reason, the beautiful in nature must remain mute. Its language - non-conceptual and non-significative - gains a voice only in the primacy of the mimetic affinity of particulars enacted by the attempt of the work of art to become identical with itself. To be sure, this attempt must fail, for, were it to succeed, the work of art would consummate nothing more than definitive ideology, for the identity thus achieved would not be a true relation of particulars in a world dominated by universal equivalency, and thus fungibility, of particulars. Beauty thus remains illusory, with the caveat that it is an illusion of what is not illusory. ⁵⁴ However, the redemption of illusion - emphatic truth - departs from Hegel's determination of art insofar as the truth to which the modernist work of art attests is the untruth of philosophy's sublation of the cognitive potential of art. It is in this sense that Adorno spoke of "Art and the Poverty of Philosophy." ⁵⁵ For the modernist work of art gives voice to the repressed particularity expunged by the ideology of universal equivalence, gives voice that is, to the cognition that "the precedence of the object in the subject" may be redeemable. It is in this light that we

should read the formulation of truth written in *Minima Moralia*, when Adorno writes that, "[H]e alone who could situate utopia in blind somatic pleasure, which, satisfying the ultimate intention, is intentionless, has a stable and valid idea of the truth." ⁵⁶ Art's telos, its *promesse du Bonheur* is less the self-actualisation of the Idea, and more accurately conceived as a promissory note upon the end of suffering, a promissory note which art alone cannot actualise.

3. "Sacred Fragment"

The second aspect of Nancy's aporia of post-Hegelian aesthetics hinges on the thought that art may exceed the philosophy of the Idea, that is, art may outlive the philosophical determination of its end in quite another fashion than merely as "carrying on." For the end that would be central here is not the end of art, but rather the end of the Idea. Thus Nancy argues that, "[I]f there is no invisible, there is no visible image of the invisible. With the withdrawal of the Idea, that is, with the event that shakes up the whole history of the last two centuries (or the last twenty five centuries . . .), the image also withdraws." ⁵⁷ That is, the image withdraws as an image *of* God, the Idea or the transcendent. ⁵⁸ Art is thus constrained, through the withdrawal of the Idea, to observe the Judaic ban on graven images which, paradoxically, releases art from the obligation to sensuously depict the divine or the invisible, thereby releasing images from their regulation by ideation. Art's mimesis is thereby set free from the function of exhibiting the auto-imitation of the Idea. It is clear that Nancy's formulation of "the event" that portends the withdrawal of the idea owes its philosophical lineage to Nietzsche's construal of nihilism. While Nietzsche's importance for Adorno cannot be over-stated⁵⁹, it is arguable that the event of "nihilism" that is all-determining in Adorno's thought is the Holocaust, an event which represents a cleavage in the conduct of human barbarism, but also a threshold whose modality of "After" ("after Auschwitz" ⁶⁰) is scarcely thinkable under the schema of the purported rationality of history. Adorno could think of this event only under the aegis of guilt, which means not merely the

personal guilt of having survived (although it undoubtedly did have this resonance) but also the guilt of thought before an event in which reason is both complicit whilst simultaneously proving insufficient to comprehend the event and thus mourn its complicity. Mourning would require acknowledgement of reason's insufficiency and thus a recognition of its originary indebtedness to that which is other than thinking - to the trace of nature. Thus the event of nihilism - problematically construed under the proper name of "Auschwitz" - returns us again to the question of memory and reification, of reason's amnesia with regard to its heteronomous origins.

Adorno's essay on Schoenberg's uncompleted opera *Moses and Aaron* takes place under the shadow of Hegel's aesthetics, an aesthetics whose granting art a place within the realm of Absolute Spirit turns on the question of whether art can express the highest normative beliefs of a people. As such the truth of art is deeply bound up with both religion and the political. The end of art denominates the end of art's ability to express and give form to these highest concerns of a people. Art's link with the community is thus no longer "substantial." Adorno prefaces his essay with a quotation from Hölderlin's *Der Mutter Erde* which reads "*Statt offener Gemeine sing ich Gesang.*" [Instead of open community, song I sing.] ⁶¹ The ambiguity of this line and its irony in relation to Schoenberg's opera should not be erased. What is the relation of the "I" to its community? Does the "I" sing because it is no longer possible to open community? Would this impossibility be an impossibility of community itself, or the impossibility of song (art) opening community? Or are either or both impossibilities in fact still possible but the "I" detaches itself from community in favour of song? Why would the "I" so demur from community, and why, in this case choose to sing? Is it even a question of choice? Or might the "I" not perhaps be one of the artists that Plato would expel from the Republic? And as such, would not this artist already post-date the Athens of which Hegel spoke in terms of the "Political Work of Art"? ⁶² On a Hegelian construal the fact that art is for us a thing of the past indicates that, through the advent of revealed religion, the divine becomes present within human communities such that art as a mode of "representing" the transcendent is superseded by communities forming

themselves through the recognition that the divine is not transcendent. Art enters into a different relation with community when community is taken to be self-determining, for then art is released from its cultic determination and becomes autonomous, and thus becomes aesthetic.

However, there is a further ambiguity in Adorno's choice of this line to frame his reading of *Moses and Aron*. For as is well known, in the opera Moses does not sing. It is Aron to whom it is given to sing, Aron who transgresses the ban on graven images, and Aron who would turn away from the severity of the Mosaic law in order to become one with his community. Thus Aron sings, and in so doing, he "open[s] community." Moses does not sing - song is not given to him - and yet he demurs from acquiescing to the profane desires of his community, in the name of a community to come, a community whose entry into the promised land he will not live to see. But the choice of a line from Hölderlin also bears significance due to the fact that Adorno's reading will be a redemptive one (in Benjamin's sense), and insofar as this redemptive critique operates through the identification of a *caesura* in the opera, the methodological significance of which, as has already been noted, derives from Hölderlin's work on tragedy via Benjamin, the aim of this reading will be to recover the truth content of this work of art (and by extension a truth of and about art). It would perhaps not be an exaggeration to suggest that the whole import of this redemptive reading is contained in Adorno's designation of *Moses and Aron* as a "Sacred Fragment."⁶³ The essay unfolds nothing less than the meaning of this appellation, a meaning whose significance will be approached "configuratively" and remains irreducible to discursive determination.

As a first approach to the question of the fragment Adorno states the following: "[I]mportant works are the ones that aim for an extreme; they are destroyed in the process and their broken outlines survive as the ciphers of a supreme, unnameable truth. It is in this positive sense that *Moses und Aron* is a fragment and it would not be extravagant to attempt to explain why it was left incomplete by arguing that it could not be completed."⁶⁴ If we set aside the pathos of this passage for the moment it becomes

clear that the appellation of fragment gains its meaning not from the empirical incompleteness of the work of art in question, but rather from the status of the sacred, that is of the Absolute. Interpreting the ciphers of "a supreme, unnameable truth" will thus be a task that enjoins the question of the fate of the absolute in modernity, and that requires in turn an interpretation of the work in the light of this fate.

Thus it is important to see that what Adorno names "important works" should not in any way be conflated with "great art", for it is precisely great art that is, for historical reasons, now impossible. Indeed it is the very impossibility of subjectively willing great art in the absence of its substantial preconditions that leads to a contradiction that traverses the opera, insofar as *Moses und Aron* takes as its content the Absolute. The term fragment thereby attains a different, if related, connotation insofar as the contradiction at the heart of the work of art is not simply reducible to a matter of subjective intention on the part of Schoenberg; but rather "[T]he impossibility we have in mind is historical: that of sacred art today and the idea of the binding, canonical, all-inclusive work that Schoenberg aspired to." ⁶⁵ This impossibility extends a contradiction into the very subject matter of Schoenberg's Biblical opera, for the story of Moses and Aron as it is presented in Exodus, deals with nothing less than the ban on graven images that the opera, by definition, would have to violate if it were to achieve the status of great art. It is not incidental in this context that Adorno will locate the "saving" caesura of the opera in the music and not in the text. ⁶⁶ However it should be recalled that the final "speech" of the libretto that Schoenberg set to music is given to Moses and reads as follows: "Inconceivable God!/ Inexpressible, many-sided idea, (*Gedanke*) / will you let it be so explained? / Shall Aaron, my mouth, fashion / this image? / Then I have fashioned an image too, / false, / as an image must be, / Thus I am defeated! / Thus, all was but madness that / I believed before, / and can and must not be given voice / O word, thou word, that I lack!" ⁶⁷ "Saving" the opera will thus involve saving it from its text - that is, from its content - and paradoxically this saving will be in accord with the words of that text, which is to say that the ban on graven images which Moses so plangently upholds against his community will enter into the

totality of the work to ensure, against the intentions of its composer, that form will not cohere with content.

In speaking of modernism in art, or of the work of art's autonomy, we acknowledge the historicisation of aesthetic norms which means that art will no longer serve the purpose of representing the absolute or the divine through tradition-bound aesthetic norms, but that each work becomes autonomous insofar as its form becomes an explicit problem for that work. The autonomy of art is art's becoming self-reflexive in the wake of the loss of a "substantial" relation to its social context. This entails an "... implicit Kantian question ... how is cultic music possible in the absence of a cult?"⁶⁸ Or, how is a sacred opera, which purports to be great art, possible in the absence of a substantial relation to society, given that such a relation is a condition of possibility for great art? If the notion of great art is taken to indicate the adequation of content (the divine) with form (sensuous presentation), then in the absence of the substantial preconditions for great art, the dissolution of this adequation will be thematized (insofar as the work of art can claim to be "important") in a dialectic of form and content. This will imply the total constructive control of the composer at the same time as the composer submits all the more completely to the historical fate of the impossibility of great art. Because the work of art can no longer serve as the means for sensuously expressing the divine, the divine must be subjectively willed by the artist; but the divine, by definition, cannot be willed. Thus the work of art must itself attempt to become the totality that it can no longer represent. Adorno's "redemptive" reading of the work shows how the work must necessarily fail to achieve the totality that it aspires to, but also how this failure dialectically serves as an index of the work's truth-content, for, by tracing the contradictions that attend this failure, its "success" as a work of art in giving expression to its own impossibility will be saved.

Thus the aporia of a sacred work in a profane time meets a further aporia in which tradition and modernism intersect. For in breaking with Wagnerian dramaturgy (it is axiomatic for Adorno that, in the case of opera, this break must be a break with Wagner) in which form and content - construction and musical vocabulary - are unified

in the ideal of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a unification possible only because Wagnerian dramaturgy takes its themes from the realm of myth, Schoenberg carries over a mythic element into his own construction; this mythic element derives from "... an illusion from which the bourgeois spirit has never been able to free itself: that of the a-historical immortality of art." ⁶⁹ It is precisely this illusion that Schoenberg's break with the musical language of tonality had exposed as a "second nature" and thus undermined. This, however entails a further aporia in the interpretation of the work of art, for to become aware of the illusion of the immortality of art would, Adorno claims, "...mean relativizing the idea of great art even though great art alone would provide the aesthetic seriousness in whose absence authentic works can no longer be written." But, just as the Absolute cannot be willed, neither can it - without contradiction - be relativised. Adorno continues:

Schoenberg has actually rendered visible one of the antinomies of art itself. The most powerful argument in his favour is that he introduced this antinomy, which is anything but peculiar to him, into the innermost recesses of his *oeuvre*. It is not to be overcome simply by an act of will or by virtue of the power of his own works. The fallacy that it is necessary to depict or negotiate the highest contents (*höchsten Gehalte*) in order to produce the greatest works of art - a fallacy which puts an end to the Hegelian aesthetics - derives from the same misconception. The elusive content is to be captured by chaining it to the subject matter which, according to tradition, it once inhabited. A futile endeavour. The prohibition on graven images which Schoenberg heeded as few others have done, nevertheless extends further than even he imagined. To thematize great subjects directly today means projecting their after-image (*Nachbild*). But this in turn inevitably means that, disguised as themselves, they fail to make contact with the work of art. ⁷⁰

What are we to make of the cursory dismissal of Hegel's aesthetics in this passage? Is there not something paradoxical about the ease with which Adorno disposes of Hegel here given that the entire essay pre-supposes this Hegelian problematic, and indeed this very passage adverts to the aporia that it is only great art that can give the "aesthetic seriousness" necessary for the production of "authentic" works of art? In determining a response to this question everything hangs on the final

sentences of this passage. In the context of opera, the impossibility of great art is (for Adorno) the impossibility of pursuing the Wagnerian project of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. This is not to say that Wagner's opera achieved the status of great art - quite the opposite; for Adorno the dream of a *Gesamtkunstwerk* represents the final hubristic *denouement* of the artistic will to totality consequent upon the end of art's being the mode of spirit adequate to exhibit the highest concerns of a people. Indeed one could argue that the lack of a substantial relation of art and community is attested by the fact that Wagner had to *create* a community for his work in the shape of the Bayreuth festival. Adorno draws the appropriate conclusions in his book on Wagner when he states that "[T]he work of art no longer conforms to the Hegelian definition that art is the sensuous manifestation of the idea. Instead the sensuous is so arranged as to appear to be in control of the idea. This is the true basis of the allegorical element in Wagner: the conjuring up of essences beyond recall." ⁷¹ It is not simply that Wagner's subject matter is mythic, nor that in the *Ring* Wagner will attempt to subjectively will the absent totality into existence, but that the musical means of achieving the total work of art rests upon the omnipresent device of the *leitmotiv*. It is precisely because what the work of art conjures up are "essences beyond recall" that the music must take over the function of memory and organise it. Thus is the "sensuous so arranged as to appear to be in control of the idea." The organization of memory - or of the productive imagination of the audience - must affect the very temporality of the work of art. ⁷² Commenting on a passage from *Tannhäuser* Adorno makes a point that could no doubt be generalized beyond this particular work: "The standing-still of time and the complete occultation of nature by means of phantasmagoria are thus brought together in the memory of a pristine age where time is guaranteed only by the stars. Time is the all-important element of production that phantasmagoria, the mirage of eternity, obscures." ⁷³ It is no accident that Adorno deploys the term "phantasmagoria" from Marx's chapter on commodity fetishism to characterize the illusory timelessness of the Wagnerian will to totality, for his interpretation anticipates the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* in attempting to show that the mythic element in Wagner's work stems from the status of autonomous

art as a commodity, and thus the mythic element in Wagner's work is a product of enlightenment. ⁷⁴ Insofar as the *Gesamtkunstwerk* can be described as phantasmagorical, Adorno is highlighting its tendency towards reification, that is, to the erasure of its status as a created product: "phantasmagoria as the point at which aesthetic appearance becomes a function of the character of the commodity." In so doing Wagner's music both reveals its status as autonomous - its liberation from cultic constraints by capital's dissolution of organic traditionalism - and occludes this autonomy in its desire to appear as pure aesthetic semblance. The mythic element in Wagner's work is therefore not an evasion of capitalist modernity but a triumphant assertion of it. The will to totality which the work of art must make if it is to posit the absolute in the wake of the "end of art", becomes mythic insofar as the work of art can no longer imitate the absolute but must itself become the absolute, and thus in imitating itself, not only occlude all traces of subjective production but also posit its mythic contents as "after-images" of a time which cannot be remembered. The work of art performatively enacts the reification of the modern world which it would seek to escape in its depiction of the archaic, but it can only do this by an extorted memory that tendentially congeals the intrinsic temporality of music into mythic timelessness. As such, reification of memory opposes remembrance: "The manipulated awakening of memory is the exact opposite of enlightenment." ⁷⁵

If Schoenberg can be said to have escaped the mythic compulsion of Wagnerian opera this claim can only be redeemed if *Moses and Aaron* carries out a determinate rather than abstract negation of the mythic elements of Wagnerian opera, a determinate negation that is revealed as a *caesura* within the work of art. As we have seen, Schoenberg's composition does not itself escape from the will to totality, but this will to totality is fissured by an objective contradiction within the work itself that allows for the possibility of "saving" the work of art, and thus revealing its truth content. Against the mythic unity of content and construction in the Wagnerian conception of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, Adorno argues that "[I]n Schoenberg the vicious circle was to be broken: the caesura was to be decisive. The rupture was to become music. The

undifferentiated unity from which the ruthless process of integration allows nothing to be exempted, comes into collision with the idea of the One itself." ⁷⁶ Where Wagner's will to totality would illegitimately re-enchant existence - thus denying history and confirming the present as immutable - Schoenberg, despite himself, continues the path of aesthetic disenchantment which, by observing formally and thematically the *Bilderverbot*, consecrates art's illusory redemption of existence as a utopian *to-come*. The work of art does not depict the absolute, for the idea of the "One itself" (the God whose worship invokes the ban on graven image) is what cannot be depicted. However this ban is not merely the subject matter of the opera but enters into its form, rendering the opera an objective contradiction. Does this mean that Schoenberg's opera, and by implication, Adorno's interpretation - no matter what he might say about Hegel - remains bound to an essentially Hegelian schema of beauty as the sensible presentation of the absolute? Does Adorno, despite everything remain bound to an ontotheological determination of art (Adorno would no doubt reject this term and its associated theoretical trajectory as too Heideggerian)? Perhaps this judgement would close the issue too quickly.

We will recall here that in the essay "Music and Language: A Fragment" Adorno wrote the following:

The language of music is quite different from the language of intentionality. It contains a theological dimension. What it has to say is simultaneously revealed and concealed. Its Idea is the divine Name which has been given shape. It is demythologized prayer, rid of efficacious magic. It is the human attempt, doomed as ever, to name the Name, not to communicate meanings Intentional language wants to mediate the absolute, and the absolute escapes language for every specific intention, leaves behind each one because each one is limited. Music finds the absolute immediately, but at the moment of discovery it becomes obscured, just as too powerful a light dazzles the eyes, preventing them from seeing things which are perfectly visible. ⁷⁷

Can this idea be thought in terms other than as either a restoration of Romanticism or as negative theology? ⁷⁸ Might Adorno not be registering the thought

that after Great art, that is art in its religious determination as a capacity of representing the divine, music traces the fact that there is (still) meaning in the absence of a metaphysical guarantee for meaning? And further, that this meaning is not reducible to intentional-logical meaning? What then would be the status of the absolute directly apprehended by music? Perhaps this; that the invisible idea, or the absolute, or the divine, is not an other to be sensibly presented, but that the absolute is an other traced within the sensible; a transcendence of the sensible that both remains immanent to the sensible and that fissures immanence. Might this not be thought according to the modal categories of existence and possibility - that is, the divine or the absolute as a (non-actualized) possibility inherent to, but repressed by, existence conceived according to the modality of necessity (myth)? Beyond the end of art, and beyond Auschwitz, might not the absolute be other than an invisible Idea to be sensibly presented? Could the events of history have affected the absolute? Of course, at one level, this makes no sense; the absolute is history coming to recognise itself *as* the Idea, and thereby to recognise the speculative identification of the Concept and the Divine. After Auschwitz however, this kind of theodicy of the concept, of metaphysical meaning, itself makes no sense, for it is unable to deal with an experience of death as the absolute loss of meaning. The speculative model of loss and retrieval of sense (I simplify of course) must assume that meaning is always at least potentially recuperable. But what if the unnameability of the Name, were not simply a necessary function of finitude, but perhaps represented the thought that the Name is *nothing other than* its unnameability? This does not, however, obviate the demand that art attempt to name the Name. How is this paradox to be understood? Perhaps in this way; that in attempting to name the Name, art imitates an identity that is denied to both the subjects and objects through the abstraction of reified thought and the equivalency of commodities. This mimesis of identity would not be the mimesis of the Idea or the absolute, but rather the mimesis of the beautiful in nature, of the trace of non-identity in an age of universal identity that is both extorted and false. Insofar as reification is forgetting - the forgetting of non-identity - the attempt to name the Name is negative theology only if we construe art's

mimesis of the beautiful in nature, whose reconciliation through an identity of particulars would be actual (rather than merely possible and illusory) if the art work were to achieve identity with itself, as posited as real rather than illusory reconciliation. In attempting (and necessarily failing) to achieve this identity, the art work engenders internal contradictions which do not thereby render the art work meaningless or a failure, but rather trace the history of the becoming-meaningless of instrumental reason and universal exchange relations. Thus nihilism, or the death of a transcendent guarantee for logical-intentional meaning, is merely the analogue of capital's practical nihilism; the fact that nothing particular can have meaning any longer, and thus that meaning is given only through abstract universality. Universality without qualitative particularity (there is of course still quantitative particularity whose only function is to be subsumed or exchanged) is consummate meaninglessness because without qualitative particularity, novelty and difference are excised from the system of abstraction which thereby engenders nothing but an eternal return of the same - which is to say, myth.

The contradictions that beset the art-work register the impossibility of a real identity of qualitative particularities in a world governed by universal exchangeability. The absolute, or the Name which the work of art attempts to name, is nothing other than the possibility of such identity (utopia) which is denied by abstract identity (existing reality experienced as necessity). The absolute is thus a figure of the possible transcendence of the illusory necessity of existing reality which is traced nowhere else but in reality (the art work as artifact). But this tracing - the configuration or spirit of the material sensuous elements of the art-work as artifact - illuminates an illusory alterity within existing reality that, doomed for as long as possibility is repressed, intimates, without subjectively positing, utopia. Utopia, literally is nowhere other than here; its possibility is the remembrance that things could be otherwise. This remembrance is configured by the work of art precisely through its contradictions of form.

Schoenberg's *Moses and Aaron* is a failure, for in its desire to be, one last time, great art, it attests to the impossibility of great art - for art no longer founds community, nor does it represent the divine; in this sense "art is for us a thing of the past." But precisely through this failure, *Moses and Aaron* illuminates the *caesura* of great art and thus reveals its truth content. The caesura of great art is the caesura of myth - which is to say, the remembrance of the qualitative difference repressed by abstract universality. Adorno concludes his essay with the following sentence: "If our epoch refuses to vouchsafe to us a sacred work of art, it does at its close give birth to the possibility of something under whose gaze the bourgeois age was ushered in." ⁷⁹ Does not the bourgeois age inaugurate the beginning of the end of great art - the inception of the 'prose of the world' as Hegel says, and therefore the sublation of art into philosophy? But what if we could no longer speculatively identify reason and the Absolute? What if reason were in some way complicit with the death of God, and thus with the death of the metaphysical guarantee of meaning which would ensure the possibility of such a speculative identification? In 1962 Adorno wrote that "...an unbroken relation to the aesthetic sphere is no longer possible. The concept of a culture after Auschwitz is illusory and nonsensical, and for this reason any creation that arises at all has to pay the bitter price. However, because the world has survived its own demise, it yet has need of art as its unconscious recording of history. The authentic artists of the present are those in whose works there shudders the aftershock of the most extreme terror." ⁸⁰ Would not then the absolute be nothing more than our attempt to name it, that is to say, would not the absolute become the Unnameable? If this is the case, then the absolute is, as Nancy suggests nothing but its withdrawal traced at the heart of the sensible. As Adorno argued in a passage cited earlier, "To thematize great subjects directly today means projecting their after-image. But this in turn inevitably means that, disguised as themselves, they fail to make contact with the work of art." If the absolute can no longer be expressed through sensuous presentation perhaps what remains to art is to project its "after-image" not in order to re-habilitate the absolute, but rather to attest to the fact that with its "withdrawal", existing reality does not exhaust what is objectively

possible; to attest, that is, to the fact that art's alienation from instrumental rationality is both comprehensible and redeemable. As the bearer of the "after-images" of the absolute, the sensible is thereby freed from the obligation to represent the divine as an invisible conceptual Idea, and freed to configure the remembrance of possibility.

As we have argued in the previous chapter, negative dialectics could be interpreted as nothing but the attempt to configure such a "remembrance of possibility" within the medium of the concept. In this respect, Adorno's reading of Schoenberg's *Moses and Aaron* proves instructive with regard to interpreting Adorno's own work, for what Adorno diagnoses as Schoenberg's "impossibility", the impossibility of an unfragmentary sacred work after the "end" of Great art, is likewise Adorno's philosophical "impossibility." From his earliest essays onwards Adorno had attempted to show that a philosophy which could no longer grasp the totality conceptually must itself become fragmentary, in order that the totality be comprehended as socially necessary illusion and simultaneously denied insofar as it continues to misrecognize such illusion to be the realization of its conceptual promise. Fragmentary philosophy, or "micrology", attempts to reveal utopia negatively such that the fragmentary can appear *as* fragmentary.⁸¹ This is what is meant by the notion that the absolute is traced at the heart of the sensible. The exigency that drives Schoenberg to complete an aesthetic totality, one last time, is the residue of myth to which (even) Schoenberg was not conscious. Adorno's interpretation of Schoenberg - and his thought as a whole - strives to bring this residue of myth to self-consciousness, and thereby to become self-conscious of the mythic trace that haunts enlightenment. In so doing, Adorno does not repeat Schoenberg's attempt to depict the absolute, but takes the thematic *Bilderverbot* of the opera as a *modus operandi* for both aesthetic and philosophical form.

The acute self-consciousness of Adorno's fragmentary style is nothing but a self-consciousness as to the fate of the Absolute, that for us, today, the Absolute can only appear "in and through the breaks or fissures".⁸² It must be both "construed and denied", a simultaneous operation which consists in nothing less than tracing utopia, through its very absence, at the heart of quotidian life. In the final, and well known

aphorism of *Minima Moralia* (previously cited in Chapter One), Adorno phrases the task of fragmentary philosophy as follows, "[T]he only philosophy which can be responsibly practised in the face of despair is the attempt to contemplate all things as they would present themselves from the standpoint of redemption. [...] 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 things, because the situation calls imperatively for such knowledge, indeed because consummate negativity, once squarely faced, delineates the mirror image of its opposite." ⁸³ The redemption of the possibilities not admitted to the actuality of the present requires that the immanence of existing reality, its claim to exhaust meaning, not be taken as the definitive arbiter of what is objectively possible. Remembrance of the forgotten requires that a transcendence of the immanence of existing reality remain at least conceivable. However, this would be a transcendence whose alterity to existing reality remains itself immanent to that reality, not by providing an image of reconciliation (the subjective positing of utopia), but through the utter negation of existing reality, thereby attesting to the objective possibility of reconciliation.

Chapter Four: Dialectic of Musical Enlightenment.

1. Introduction.

In the idea of the integral work of art, seamlessly enclosed within itself and bound solely by its immanent logic - an idea that follows from the overall tendency of the arts in the West to progressive domination of nature, or, concretely, to complete control over their material - something is missing. Art accommodates to the advances of a civilizing rationality and owes the historical unfolding of its productive forces to it, but at the same time it intends a protest against that development, a remembrance (*das Eingedenken*) of what cannot be accommodated within it and is eliminated by it - the non-identical, to which the word "deviation" alludes. ¹

It would not be implausible to suggest that this passage from Adorno's essay, "Valéry's Deviations," written in 1960, arguably provides an outline, in miniature, of his entire aesthetic thought. Formulated therein, by way of reference to the figure of deviation, which, Adorno argues, captures the dialectic of art in modernity, is the dialectic of enlightenment, and further, the aporetic relation of art and rationality that he sought again and again to configure. This aporia is not simply to be attributed to the object of Adorno's discourse, but rather it comes to reflexively entangle that discourse - to follow Adorno's dictum "we are not to philosophize about concrete things; we are to philosophize, rather, out of these things" ² - in its own aporias, aporias which negative dialectics, by definition, cannot reconcile. This passage continues, "Hence art does not fuse perfectly with total rationality, because by its very nature it is deviation; only as deviation does it have a right to exist in the rational world and the power to assert itself. If art were simply equivalent to rationality, it would disappear in it and die off. It cannot, however, evade rationality unless it wants to settle helplessly into special preserves, impotent in the face of the inexorable domination of nature and the social ramifications of that domination and, as something merely tolerated by it, genuinely in thrall to that domination for the first time." ³ Formulated in these passages is an aporia that runs to the heart of Adorno's work - an aporia that coalesces around the concept of

history - between his theory of "the most advanced forces of artistic production" and his theory that modern artworks can redeem the repressed possibilities that have been rolled over by progress.

Perhaps the most important issue in interpreting Adorno's work is the relation between his aesthetic theory and philosophy of history. Interpreting the substance of this relation faces the difficulty that Adorno had no positive concept of history, and his "aesthetic theory" ceaselessly ruminates on the very ambiguity of its title. However, we can initially begin by posing the question of whether Adorno's aesthetics, explicitly wedded as it is to modernism and the thesis of the most advanced aesthetic forces, is dependent on a certain, perhaps rather traditional (even if negative) unilateral and linear philosophy of history, or does the aesthetic theory interrupt, or perhaps rather complicate, such a philosophy of history? Put more forcefully, we might consider the verdict of Peter Osborne (following Peter Bürger) when he states that, in the context of a discussion of *Aesthetic Theory*, "[T]he basic problem stems from the *unilaterality* of Adorno's orientation to history: the one-dimensionality of his conception of the tendency towards the reification of all social relations inherent in the development of capitalism." ⁴ Osborne's suggestion is that, paradoxically, Adorno succumbs to an entirely undialectical construction of history that would require a reformulation, the resources of which are (at least in part) inherent within Adorno's own aesthetic theory. His criticism encapsulates the problem well in that it points to the aporia of rationalisation and remembrance at work in Adorno's aesthetic theory. If, as Adorno argues, "all reification (*Verdinglichung*) is a forgetting" ⁵ then the logic of his argument must insist that if rationalization is to be taken as the motor of (modern) history, its telos would be total amnesia. However modernist art, whilst partaking of this logic of rationalisation, indeed only by virtue of following this logic through to its conclusion as the utter negation of what has become of reason (its instrumentalisation), maintains the remembrance of an *other* reason: "In the eyes of the existing rationality, aesthetic behaviour is irrational because it castigates the particularity of this rationality in its pursuit not of ends, but of means. Art keeps alive the memory of ends-oriented reason.

It keeps alive also the memory of a kind of objectivity which lies beyond conceptual frameworks. That is why art is rational, cognitive." ⁶ Simply put, the issue is how, for Adorno, can art claim a redemptive memorial function in an age progressing towards tendential amnesia?

The problem can be approached by way of the concept of "progress", capturing as it does, the logic of rationalisation, and the tendential overcoming of ends-oriented reason by instrumental reason that is one strand of the dialectic of enlightenment. Indeed, we might say that it is the unfolding of the dialectic of this concept, and Adorno's philosophical ambivalence to it, that is the nimbus around which his "primal history of subjectivity" revolves. This dialectic of progress is developed most acutely in Adorno's *Philosophy of New Music* which he termed "an extended appendix" to the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. ⁷ Of course, Adorno's aesthetic theory cannot be expounded in abstraction from its historical pre-conditions. In offering a philosophy of the new music and thereafter tracing the "ageing of the new music", Adorno's aesthetics effectively acts as a series of interventions that seek to comprehend the historical logic of modernism, and thereby to judge the (aesthetic) logic of the new against its own concept. However, this entails that what Adorno discerned as the 'ageing' of new music cannot but become the ageing of his own construction of modernism. To follow this 'development' of Adorno's aesthetics three significant essays will be considered here: "Schoenberg and Progress" (1940-1: contained in the *Philosophy of New Music*, (1948)), "The Ageing of the New Music" (1955) and "Vers une musique informelle" (1961). In each case, the focus will be on Adorno's concept of musical "material"; section two will trace the fate of the musical material as it is expounded in the *Philosophy of New Music* as a logic of necessity that terminates in the indifference of the previously differentiated musical material, section three will develop this indifference as stasis in which Adorno's dialectical construction of modernism, in discerning the standing-still of the musical dialectic, itself threatens to come to a standstill, and in section four Adorno's attempt to find a way out of this stasis will be considered as the redemption of possibility from the stasis of bad immediacy

(existence). As such, Adorno's historical dialectic of modernism will be essayed through the modal categories of necessity, existence and possibility. Whilst in each section one of the categories will assume an interpretative primacy, this primacy can be developed only through a constellation with the other two categories.

It is through the concept of aesthetic "material" that Adorno will construct a logic of modernism that will allow for the aesthetic judgement of the truth content of a work of art to be decided according to the criteria of whether a particular work of art deploys the most advanced aesthetic forces of production available to the artist. Aesthetic material is the crucial operator of Adorno's aesthetic theory for it allows Adorno to construct the logic of modernism as a *necessary* analogue of the logic of societal rationalisation, whilst providing for a critique of that logic at the level of aesthetic form. Thus Adorno writes that "...the domination of material increases in a spiral movement which can only be grasped in terms of that which is lost or left by the wayside. When conceived in this way it is above all the antinomies, the necessary contradictions, which are the ferment of social cognition." ⁸ The historical development of art succumbs to the same dialectic of enlightenment that besets societal rationalisation (progress as the tendentially necessary inflation of reification) and thus, as with societal rationalisation, yields antinomies, but because the unity that works of art seek to achieve are effected through a mimesis of the particular rather than a subsumption of the particular by the universal, the (modernist) work of art potentially operates as a remembrance of the difference occluded by abstract identity. Thus, the perception that the disintegrative logic of artistic modernism that Adorno relentlessly pursues is in any way simply the elitist pre-occupation with "high art" of a cultural mandarin fails to confront the dialectical nature of Adorno's pursuit. If the modernism in literature of Baudelaire, Kafka, Proust, Joyce and Beckett, and in music of Mahler, Schoenberg, Berg and Webern is valorized, one must understand that this valorization is an attempt to critically engage the antinomies of art's relation to society in modernity. Adorno traces the "ageing" of modernism, not for its own sake, but in order to construct prismatic illuminations of the failed promises of philosophical modernism;

thus "[T]he concept of modernism is privative, indicating firmly that something ought to be negated and what it is that ought to be negated; modernism is not a positive slogan." ⁹ Rather, the determinate negation of tradition enacted by the practice of modernist art acts as the site of a difficult temporality; time's difficulty (the liberation of possibility, in and through necessity, from actuality) will be raised most insistently by modernist art.

2. "Critique of the Organic" (Necessity) - *Philosophy of New Music*.

"The method of composing with twelve tones grew out of a necessity." - A. Schoenberg.¹⁰

In the "Draft Introduction" to *Aesthetic Theory* Adorno argues that, for an aesthetic of modernism, it is Kant rather than Hegel who holds more relevance, and significantly this relevance arises, for Adorno, from the centrality of necessity in Kantian aesthetics: "Kant's theory is perhaps more relevant for today because it sought to combine in aesthetics the awareness of necessity (*Notwendigen*) with the notion that this necessity is hidden (*Verstelltheit*). Aesthetics proceeds blindly, as it were, groping in the dark and yet being guided by a certain compulsion (*Zwang*) in the object. This is the knot aesthetics must unravel, if it wants to preserve its relevance." ¹¹ The notion of "a certain compulsion in the object" will be central to understanding Adorno's concept of musical material developed most extensively in the *Philosophy of New Music*. Written in 1941 during Adorno's emigration in the United States, Adorno referred to the book as "an extended appendix to *Dialectic of Enlightenment*." ¹² However, it is possible to view the Schoenberg essay as in fact pre-figuring the analysis offered in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* extending, as it does, the notion of the sacrifice of nature intrinsic to Reason's (false) emancipation from nature that Adorno had developed from his *Kierkegaard* book onwards. As such, the fate of the musical material as it is expounded in "Schoenberg and Progress" is nothing other than a concrete working out of the dialectic of enlightenment, not as the structure of history writ large, but concentrated upon the determinate historical context of the disintegration of tonality as

"second nature", a disintegration whose origins Adorno locates in Beethoven's late works, and whose comprehension enjoins the concepts of both the autonomy of art and the shift from liberal capitalism to monopoly capitalism.

The dialectical construal of the "determinism in the object" traces the emancipation of musical language from the second nature of tonality - an emancipation enacted most trenchantly by Schoenberg - to the missed opportunity for compositional freedom that is entailed by the reduction of the newly liberated material (on the part of twelve-tone composition) to mere abstract material to be ordered in accordance with the pre-formation of the tone row in serialism. As such the concept of the musical material in Adorno's writings on music is extensionally equivalent to the concepts of nature, the body and use-value that he deploys in other contexts. This is made clear in a passage from Adorno's book on Alban Berg where he writes that "...musical material (*Material*) itself is not substance, and the first is not the original and certainly not the true nature. Rather, musical material (*Material*) is secondary nature from which freedom must first be won; that which is given is historical material (*Stoff*), in which creative power takes an inventive hand while following its dictates; so it is not creative power at all, but that which confronts it and only through resistance helps create it." ¹³ The distinction between material as abstract raw material (*Stoff*) and as historically charged sedimented content (*Material*) is the key to the dialectic of natural history that Adorno pursues in the essay on Schoenberg.

As we have seen in Chapter One, in "The Idea of Natural History" Adorno developed a dialectical construal of natural history that was to remain axiomatic for the rest of his thought. Drawing on Lukács and Benjamin, Adorno argued that historical being at its most historical was to be interpreted as nature, and natural being at its most natural was to be interpreted as historical being. The abstract opposition between the two categories being mediated through a moment of identity - passing or transience (*Vergängnis*) - which alone yields the contradiction that allows for the discrimination of the non-identity of natural history. In "Schoenberg and Progress" the same dialectic is pursued through the concept of musical material. Thus the language of tonality, a

seemingly "natural" system of harmonic relations, is revealed to be a historical product of musical rationalisation, whilst the dodecaphonic compositions of the second Viennese School in their relentless pursuit of the new, and thus utterly historical, revert to nature insofar as the pre-formation of the twelve notes of the row excises the qualitative differences that had been liberated from the second nature of tonality in the first place; thus, "[T]welve tone technique is truly the fate of music. It enchains music by liberating it. The subject dominates music through the rationality of the system, only in order to succumb to the rational system itself." ¹⁴ The logic of rationalisation that informs this analysis is, by analogy, the same logic of rationalisation that befalls the social world - the quantification and mathematical organisation and explanation of nature, means-end rationality, and the dominance of necessity over the empirical world. The historical progress "which seems to be the mere self-locomotion of the material is of the same origin as is the social process, by whose traces it is constantly permeated. [T]herefore, the altercation of the composer with his material is the same as an altercation with society...." ¹⁵ It is only on the basis of this assumption - the assumption that art is an aspect of objective spirit - that Adorno can construct a logic of modernism (the dialectic of musical material) as a dialectic of aesthetic progress, and further that he can argue for the relevance of modern music for social criticism. This assumption yields a distinctive criterion for aesthetic validity that eschews a-historical categories of aesthetic judgement in favour of a thoroughly historicized model of judgement whose critical force is derived both from tracing the immanent progress of aesthetic form and also from the extrinsic perspective afforded by the postulate of the utopian reconciliation between universal and particular, the subject and nature. This double logic of critical judgement results in a typology of works of art that responds to, and reformulates, the terms of Benjamin's "Work of Art" essay. Where Benjamin had discerned the evisceration of the work of art's aura by mechanical reproduction, Adorno posits the following typology: "The hermetic ¹⁶ work of art belongs to the bourgeois, the mechanical work belongs to fascism, and the fragmentary work, in its state of complete negativity, belongs to utopia." ¹⁷ The re-formulation Adorno aims for

attempts to redeem what he had criticized Benjamin's essay for, namely its undialectical construal of autonomous art. Having cited the dialectical relation of myth and history that, he claims, they share in common, Adorno argues against Benjamin that "...it seems to me that the centre of the autonomous work of art does not itself belong on the side of myth - excuse my topic parlance - but is inherently dialectical; within itself it juxtaposes the magical and the mark of freedom." ¹⁸ It is the "inherently dialectical" nature of the autonomous work of art, whose logic of progress is to be expounded through the concept of the rationalisation of the musical material, that provides the canon of aesthetic validity constructed by the *Philosophy of New Music*. The typology of the work of art which Adorno here adumbrates will remain implicit for all his subsequent works on aesthetics even as the dialectic of rationalisation and remembrance upon which it is predicated continues to develop.

Once one grants Adorno's assumption that the musical material has an objective historical tendency - and that this tendency, conceptualized by analogy with societal rationalisation, is to be conceived under the concept of necessity - the role and freedom of the composer inevitably undergoes an historicization too. The emancipation of the language of music from the second nature of tonality, that is the emancipation from objectively binding unreflective tradition, does not necessarily, as might be supposed, place at the disposal of the composer the full inventory of past aesthetic forms; "[T]he dissolution of everything traditionally taken for granted has not resulted in the possibility of disposing all materials and technical means according to discretion the artist has become the mere executor of his own intentions, which appear before him as strangers - inexorable demands of the compositions upon which he is working." ¹⁹ This passage brings to light the guiding assumption of Adorno's conception of the historical tendency of musical material, namely that the material or nature upon which the subject labours (composes) is in fact already socially pre-formed material or nature; the activity of labour and the apparently natural material upon which such labour acts is always socially and historically mediated: "[T]he demands made upon the subject by the material are conditioned by the fact that the "material" is itself sedimented spirit

(*sedimentierter Geist*), an element socially preformed through the consciousness of man. As a previous subjectivity - now forgetful of itself - such an objective spirit (*objektive Geist*) of the material has its own kinetic laws." ²⁰ Thus without the composer necessarily being conscious of the fact, the responses he gives to the compositional problems at hand are engagements with society. Works of art are subjectively composed solutions to objective puzzles whose objectivity resides not in the intentions of the composer but in the socially and historically mediated nature of the engagement between what is objectively possible, in accordance with the current state of musical rationalisation, and what is artistically achieved. The work of art in its alienation (autonomy) from society is a monad which contains, locked up within it, the history of its coming to be alienated. This characterization of the work of art is permissible only on the basis of Adorno's essentially Hegelian assumption that form is the precipitation of sedimented content. Insofar as the work of art is a monad it is thereby "windowless", that is, unable to discursively communicate the history (as the dialectic of form and content) stored up within itself. The work of art can express its mediate relation to society only through form, whose criterion of authenticity is whether or not it adopts the most advanced aesthetic forces of production.

In support of this claim, Adorno offers the example of the "shabbiness and exhaustion of the diminished seventh chord." That these and other compositional possibilities are inadequate means of expression and elements of composition in the present (1941) is not, Adorno insists, a matter of selective caprice or aesthetic taste, but rather a necessary outcome of the canon of prohibition enacted by the progress of objective spirit. As such, "[I]t is not simply that these sounds are antiquated and untimely, but that they are false. They no longer fulfil their function. The most progressive level of technical procedures designs tasks before which traditional sounds reveal themselves as impotent clichés. [.....] [T]he isolated appearance of chords does not in itself decide their correctness or incorrectness. They are to be judged only from the perspective of the level of technique adhered to at the present time." ²¹ Whilst the diminished seventh chord may have served a legitimate compositional function at the

beginning of Beethoven's sonata op.111 "...the historical process, through which this weight has been lost, is irreversible." ²² The logic of musical rationalisation which progresses according to the exacubatory critique of the old by the new thereby operates under a logic of necessity. It remains to characterize this logic of necessity and to assess its implications for Adorno's aesthetic theory.

Expounding the nature of this logic of necessity can best be conceived as an explanation of Adorno's typology of the work of art into hermetic, mechanical and fragmentary. As will become clear, the necessity at work here is that of the disintegration of the organic (hermetic) work of art. The mechanical and fragmentary works of art are, it would appear, the only two possible outcomes of this necessary logic of disintegration. Of the hermetic work of art, Adorno states that "[S]ince the beginning of the bourgeois era, all great music has founded its sufficiency in the illusion that it has achieved an unbroken unity and justified through its own individuation the conventional universal legality to which it is subject. This is contradicted by modern music." ²³ The organic work of art proclaims that universal and particular, part and whole, have achieved a state of reconciliation within the realm of sensuous illusion denied to the extra-aesthetic world. As autonomous, art's images of reconciliation are practically ineffective, that is, they do not intervene in non-aesthetic value spheres, and thereby have the function of being functionless. Autonomous works of art are characterised by their, to use Kant's denomination, purposiveness without purpose. However, the ideal of harmony and non-antagonistic unity becomes ideological if it is taken to be, not the illusion of reconciliation, but the image of possible reconciliation within existing reality. Modernist art, as the negation of the illusory harmony (the illusion of redemption) of the organic work of art does not thereby disavow art's promise of reconciliation, but preserves it as an ideal through determinate negation (the redemption of illusion). *Philosophy of New Music* traces the disintegration of the organic work of art through the concepts of the crisis of illusion and the dialectic of construction and expression.

The new music's determinate negation of traditional (tonal) music is the negation of the unreflective or the given. The preservation of tradition requires a moment of forgetting, of breaking with the past in order that it can become truly past and not a perpetuating present.²⁴ For as long as musical tradition remains as a given, musical subjectivity remains unreflective, taking its material as natural when in fact it is historically and socially mediated. As such, the new music's rationalisation of musical material is a process of enlightenment, demythologizing the givenness of the second nature of tonality and subjecting the newly liberated material to the principles of rational mastery and subjective control.²⁵ Thus Adorno can argue that "[W]ith the liberation of musical material, there arose the possibility of mastering it technically."²⁶ The increased rationalisation of musical material that both gives rise to the disintegration of the organic work of art and thereby increases the subjective technical control of the composer results in a crisis of illusion. Insofar as form is no longer unreflectively taken as given, but is rather what is at stake in each individual work of art - aesthetic nominalism - the negation of the harmonious reconciliation between particular and universal (sensuousness and conceptuality) cannot but result in an increase in the conceptual element of art.²⁷ The liberation of the musical material thus results in the increase of the subjective role of construction in the work of art. However this liberation of the material from unreflective necessity carries over the seeds of a further structure of necessity into the newly gained compositional freedom: "Twelve tone precision treats music according to the schema of fate, divesting itself of any implications of meaning present in the musical object itself, as if such meaning were a matter of illusion. Fate and the domination of nature are not to be separated. [.....] Man has thereby learned to become stronger than himself and to master nature, and in the process fate has reproduced itself."²⁸ The dialectic of musical enlightenment which reaches its apotheosis in the total rationalisation of Schoenberg's twelve tone compositions is not however to be lamented; for Adorno the dialectic of rationalisation is the necessary consequence of the inherent tendency of the musical material towards (tendentally) total rationalisation insofar as that tendency is part and parcel of the wider

logic of technical rationalisation that governs modern western industrial societies. Such a dialectic is not to be bewailed and Adorno insists that any attempt to evade the force of this necessity will succumb to regression - this is his charge against the mechanical work of art.

Before briefly considering the mechanical work of art we need to expound the dialectic of construction and expression which is central to the dialectic of musical enlightenment. Adorno claims that music from Monteverdi to Verdi "...presented expression as stylized communication - as the representation of the passions." ²⁹ But insofar as the new music - in following the objective tendency of its material - acts as a critique of the organic work of art, and thereby negates the aesthetic totality in which expression functions as the appearance of the passions, the function of expression must thereby change. This change occurs when the closed forms of musical second nature are broken open by the historical tendency of the material itself. Expression no longer denotes the appearance of subjective emotion but rather registers unconsciously the incapacity of the subject before an increasingly rationalised world; thus in the expressionist works of Schoenberg, "[P]assions are no longer simulated, but rather genuine emotions of the unconscious - of shock, of trauma - are registered without disguise through the medium of music." ³⁰ Expression thereby negates the illusion of harmony and reconciliation characteristic of the organic work of art. The cognitive character of the the expressionist works of Schoenberg and Berg consists in their bringing to self-consciousness the illusory claims of the organic work of art, not in order to disavow art's illusory character, but to negate the art-work's claim to have reconciled subject and object. The liberation of expression from unreflective tradition exposes the dialectical truth of the continued alienation of subject and object, that of unredeemed suffering and trauma.

This change in the function of expression leads, however, to a further dialectic of subjectivity and construction whose consequences, exposed most clearly in Schoenberg's late dodecaphonic works, are to be gauged through the fate of the medium of music itself, time. For Adorno perhaps the most significant formal device of

the bourgeois organic work of art was the sonata form, and, more specifically, the formal dynamics of theme and variation. It is of course not implausible to develop the rudiments of a correspondence between a dialectical account of subjectivity in which the subject only comes to recognise itself *as* a subject through the stages of its alienation, and, by analogy, the theme which must undergo variation and development before returning to itself in the recapitulation section of the movement.³¹ But insofar as the bourgeois subject can no longer be unproblematically conceptualized according to this dialectical schema - that is according to the model of *Bildungsroman* whose implicit assumption is the continuity of biographical time - the musical subject likewise succumbs to a revision whose full consequences are revealed, not in Schoenberg's expressionist works, but in his dodecaphonic works: "In the very moment in which the total musical material is subjected to the power of expression, expression itself is extinguished - as though it were animated only by the resistance of the material, itself "alienated" and alien to the subject. Subjective criticism of instances of ornamentation and repetition leads to an objective, non-expressive structure which - in place of symmetry and repetition - determines the exclusion of repetition within the cell, i.e., the use of all twelve tones of the chroma before the repetition of a tone from within the chroma."³² In place of the objectively binding forms of traditional forms, the modernist work of art continues the process of the disintegration of the hermetic work of art through the ever more rigorous prosecution of the process of musical rationalisation or disenchantment. No longer is music to be conceptualized as imposing universal form upon blind and undifferentiated material, but rather as objective - nominalistic - responses to the demands of the historical tendency of the material itself. However, the freedom granted to compositional technique, wherein lies the thrust of musical rationalisation, engenders its own dialectic in which the idea of a liberated relation of construction and material turns against itself recapitulating the schema of fate from which disenchantment was to have liberated music.

This dialectic is expressed by Adorno in a formulation already cited: "[W]ith the liberation of musical material, there arose the possibility of mastering it technically."³³

Sound, freed from the assumption of being merely "natural" or pre-given. is available as a resource to be pre-formed in accordance with the rules governing the construction of the twelve-tone row. As such the composition loses its anchoring in a dominant key, thereby evacuating the sense of a "first" or primary theme, precisely as dialectics operates through the critique of the mediatedness of all immediacy. This in turn has the consequence that the schema of theme and variation loses its force insofar as there is no longer a dominant theme to be developed, which itself leads to a dissociation of the schema of temporal development; "[M]usic formulates a design of the world, which - for better or for worse - no longer recognizes history." ³⁴ With this dissociation of musical time, twelve tone technique threatens to congeal into the schema of myth, the transmutation of time into space. At its most extreme divergence from the products of the Culture Industry, the most progressive modernist music recapitulates the very schema of the eternal return of the same which governs its antipode; for "[I]n the totality of transmutation there is no longer anything which undergoes change." The objective process of the disintegration of the hermetic work of art comes to its telos in the stasis of composition itself. Insofar as the introduction of a new twelve tone row no longer has any organic or necessary relation to the previous row, composition becomes the arbitrary juxtaposition of pre-arranged rows. It is at this point that the formal dynamic of the modernist work of art - the relentless pursuit of the new - yields its own antinomy, for "[T]he paradox of this compositional procedure is that in it the image of the new becomes surreptitiously tantamount to the achievement of old effects by new means." ³⁵ The rigorous prosecution of constructivism through the pursuit of the disenchantment of the hermetic work of art leads inexorably to the rational domination of musical nature becoming systematic and thereby blind to the particularity for which technique (the universal) was to have been the medium of liberation. Far from overcoming the diremption of universal and particular, musical domination confirms its hegemony as total, thereby reproducing all the more unconsciously the blind schema of necessity which obliterates the redemption of possibility in which art finds its telos. Thus, as Adorno argues, twelve tone technique, "reduces the tonal material, before it is

structured via the rows, to an amorphous substratum, totally undetermined within itself. Thereupon the commanding compositional subject imposes its system of rules and regulations." ³⁶ At the apogee of its power over the material, subjective spirit is benighted by the dialectic of enlightenment; the total control of the subject confirms a merely pyrrhic victory to the extent that the composer becomes merely a technocrat ordering the pre-formed rows in accordance with a logic which abstractly gives form to, rather than arising immanently out of, the material. The triumph of instrumental rationality achieves a merely abstract reconciliation with nature:

It is this abstract reconciliation which, in the final analysis, places in opposition to the subject the self-contained system of rules in the subjugated material as an alienated, hostile and dominating power. This degrades the subject, making of it a slave of the "material", as of an empty concept of rules, at that moment in which the subject completely subdues the material, indenturing it to mathematical logic. ³⁷

Necessity is the key to the dialectic of musical enlightenment. As Roberts emphasizes in his reading of the *Philosophy of New Music* ³⁸, the dialectic at work in Adorno's "Schoenberg and Progress" is best construed in terms of the exhaustion of the latency within organic work of art. By the exhaustion of latency is meant the process whereby art is brought to self-consciousness, and as such the process of art's becoming its own auto-critique or, put otherwise, autonomous. The progressive rationalisation of musical technique which both allows for, and responds to, the emancipation of musical material from its (enchanted) condition as second nature, is the objective criterion of musical progress. To fall behind the most advanced state of the currently available musical forces of production is, Adorno claims, to regress in terms of the criterion of objective spirit. Rationalisation as the progressive disenchantment of an unreflective model of musical material is construed (as an aspect of objective spirit) as the *necessary* exhaustion of the opacity of traditional musical material. However, this necessary logic of rationalisation carries with it the attendant danger that what the new negates is not merely the traditional work of art, but tradition as such. The negation of tradition as

such (as opposed to the determinate negation of the traditional work of art) as an operation of abstract negation severs the dialectic of composition and musical material from its historical pre-conditions and thus prepares the way for the reification of the musical material that Adorno sees foreshadowed in the late works of Schoenberg, and as brought to disastrous aesthetic fruition in the works of serialism. Adorno argues time and again that the work of art retains a critical force only insofar as its negation of tradition is determinate and not abstract. In a different essay on Schoenberg, Adorno offers the following formulation, "... artistic extremism must be held responsible for either following the logic of its subject-matter, an objectivity, however concealed, or succumbing to mere private caprice or an abstract system. It receives its legitimacy from the tradition it negates. [...] Only that which has been nourished with the life-blood of the tradition can possibly have the power to confront it authentically; the rest becomes the helpless prey of forces which it has failed to overcome sufficiently within itself." ³⁹ However, the question that haunts Adorno's interventions into the "tradition" of modernism is whether the distinction between abstract and determinate negation - as the criterion of aesthetic "authenticity" - can be rigorously separated within the very terms of his construction of aesthetic modernism.

The problem is that in the *Philosophy of New Music*, Adorno establishes the logic of aesthetic modernism as the *necessary* logic of the critique of the organic; it is only this criterion - the logic of necessity - of aesthetic judgement that allows for the discernment of Schoenberg and Stravinsky as the "extremes" whose mediation allows for the truth-content of modernism to be constructed, and further allows for the formulation of the dialectic of aesthetic progress to be formulated as a dialectic of objective spirit. However, insofar as this logic (drawing as it does on the category of natural history and the logic of the dialectic of enlightenment) issues in the *indifference* of the musical material, an indifference which yields the potential of an abstract negation of tradition as such (the culmination of the disenchantment of the material through the domination of musical nature) rather than the critically "responsible" determinate negation of tradition, what criterion can Adorno appeal to for judging one

alternative to be "authentic" and the other to be "helpless prey"? The critical goal of the *Philosophy of New Music* is to show how the most advanced aesthetic production in blindly following the dictates of the musical material and thus, by a logic of necessity, destroying the unreflective assumptions underpinning the organic work of art, can itself free music from necessity (the work of art as enchantment - myth). Only by pursuing this logic of necessity may the work of art become enlightened about its thralldom to necessity, that is, become fully autonomous; this is the critical moment of the destruction of the organic work of art. However, insofar as this logic of disenchantment is one of necessity, and this logic, by Adorno's own account, is shown to overshoot its target of the determinate negation of tradition and become the abstract negation of tradition as such, does not Adorno's construction itself stand as a hostage to the very phenomenon whose logic he was to have constructed; does not the object of critical inquiry recoil upon his subjective gaze in a manner reminiscent of the very dialectic of enlightenment it was supposed to have diagnosed? Before pursuing these questions through a reading of "The Ageing of the New Music" and "Vers une musique informelle," I would like to briefly consider Adorno's own response to the aporia of rationalisation in "Schoenberg and Progress."

The "cognitive character" of the modernist work of art emerges only through the "disintegration" of the organic work of art. Where the organic work of art proclaimed itself to be a seamless totality whose harmony was predicated upon the unreflective acceptance of tonality as second nature, and thus posited itself as a unity of sensuous illusion, the modernist work of art brings the illusory character of the organic work of art to self-consciousness. Thus, "[T]he hermetic [organic] work of art was not interested in knowledge (*Erkenntnis*), but rather allowed knowledge to vanish within itself. It designed itself as the object of mere "observation," obscuring every fissure (*Brüche*) through which thought might evade the direct actuality of the aesthetic object." ⁴⁰ The disintegration of the organic work of art is the disintegration of the posited identity of subject and object upon which the illusory character of the organic work of art rests. ⁴¹ The disintegration of this unity is revealed through its fissures

(*Brüche*) whereby the illusion of the (lost) aesthetic totality, is revealed *as an illusion* through the contradictions within the object itself. The logic of modernism is the following of these contradictions to the point at which the illusion of aesthetic second nature gives way to the "fragmentary" language of the modernist work of art, self-conscious of its autonomy. As such the ideal of the organic work of art to be an aesthetic unity itself disintegrates, to be preserved, not as an actuality, but only through its negation: "[I]t is only in a fragmentary work that is alienated from itself (*seiner selbst entäußerten*) that the critical substance is liberated."⁴² The "liberation of critical substance" occurs at the point at which the "indifference of the material itself brings about the renunciation of the identity of contents (*Gehalt*) and appearance (*Erscheinung*) in which the traditional idea of the work of art is terminated."⁴³ This indifference of substance and appearance, as the telos of aesthetic rationalisation, acts as a negation of the meaning-claim of the traditional work of art, it brings about art's enlightenment with respect to its tendency towards enchantment. As such a moment of "meaninglessness" incipient in the process of aesthetic autonomy becomes programmatic for modernist music insofar as the new *is new* only through the negation of the traditional language (and thus meaning) of music. Thus, at the apogee of its autonomy, the most progressive music comes into perilous proximity with its antipode, the products of the culture industry, for as we have seen in Chapter One, in its mimesis of capital's eternal return, the culture industry promulgates an aestheticized variant of capital's nihilism. Both mechanical and fragmentary works of art are objective responses to the break-down of the unreflective bindingness of tradition. As such, both are aspects of the process of enlightenment; but whereas the mechanical work of art responds to the break-down of tradition by schematizing with eclecticism, neo-classicism and ironic subjectivity, the fragmentary work of art continues the path of aesthetic rationalisation to the point at which enlightenment turns against itself and the work threatens to congeal into precisely the myth it was to have negated. In both cases the utopian promise of art remains unrealized, but whereas the fragmentary work of art continues the path of aesthetic necessity, the mechanical work of art assumes the role of

subjective freedom which becomes ideological all the more deeply insofar as it masks subjective unfreedom.

Thus, at the very limit of the process of rationalisation, in which the total construction of the modernist work of art threatens to overwhelm its expression of meaning, the dialectic of construction and expression is brought to a standstill to reveal its social truth content: "[T]he intense desire of the work of art to withdraw itself from the dialectic which it obeys might be viewed as its central concern. The works react differently to the affliction of dialectical compulsion (*das Leiden am dialektischen Zwang*). For art, this represents an incurable sickness caused by necessity. At the same time, however, the formal laws of the work, which arise from the dialectic of the material, cut this dialectic off. Dialectics is interrupted - interrupted, however, by no force other than the reality to which it is related - that is to say, by society itself." ⁴⁴ In following the path of necessity - the "affliction of dialectical compulsion" - to the very limit of aesthetic disenchantment, the preponderance of construction ("the formal laws of the work") over expression reveals the social truth of the logic of progress (objective spirit) - namely that the emancipation of the subject from blind nature is simultaneously a process of regression. The predominance of construction over expression is the aesthetic counter-part of the social predominance of the universal over the particular. That expression no longer denotes a medium of subjective emotion but registers, through "shock", the impotence of the subject under monopoly capitalism is the dialectical truth of expression in the modernist work of art. That the work of art does not thereby become meaningless, but gains its meaning from the dialectical negation of the forms that previously constituted aesthetic meaning, is the moment in which (second) nature - the forms and "language" of tonality - stands revealed as history, and the utterly new - twelve-tone composition - reverts to nature. For a composition to be "successful" it must crystallize these moments simultaneously as a contradiction as opposed to a mere juxtaposition of differences. This is, amongst other reasons, why the concept of an "enduring" masterpiece becomes obsolete; for the work does not stand "above" history but rather, for a fleeting instant, brings history (the dialectic of objective

spirit) to a standstill. In this evanescent moment of stasis the "meaninglessness" of the modernist work of art reveals its truth content: "The shocks of incomprehension, emitted by artistic technique in the age of meaninglessness, undergo a sudden change. They illuminate the meaningless world. Modern music sacrifices itself to this effort. It has taken upon itself all the darkness and guilt of the world. Its fortune lies in the knowledge (*erkennen*) of misfortune; all of its beauty is in denying itself the illusion of beauty." ⁴⁵ In contrast to the meaninglessness of the culture industry engendered by the automatic subsumption of the particular under the universal, the modernist work of art also subsumes the particular (expression) under the universal (construction) but raises this subsumption to the level of cognition, and in so doing, reveals the contradictions which are both immanent to the work itself, and also between the work and the reality from which it is alienated. Because the work takes part in the objective logic of rationalisation which governs this reality, it cannot but follow the path of dialectical compulsion, but in so doing, precisely through its alienation, it may reverse the domination of nature which, at the level of form, it itself must undertake. This is the moment of art's remembrance of nature, a remembrance engendered by the fact that the domination of the particular by the universal takes place in the alienated particular (the work of art).

The task of the composer, for Adorno, is no different to the task of the (dialectical) philosopher; both are puzzle-solvers. Once the idealist claim to grasp the totality in concepts (Hegel) and the musical ideal of grasping the dialectic of revolutionary subjectivity (Beethoven) stand revealed as hubris, the composer and the philosopher are confronted with a reality opaque to their solicitations. The task is not to comprehend a meaning that would stand above history, but to unlock the history concealed and sedimented in the particular. "Successful" compositions or philosophical constellations are fragile, temporary "solutions" to the objective puzzles of this opaque reality, which fasten onto fissures and caesurae to reveal the contradictoriness of a world which conceals its contradictions. As Max Pensky has argued, "[T]o "solve" a puzzle, for Adorno, consists not in reassembling its pieces but in the discovery or

invention of the "key," which at once makes the puzzle spring open, but which also thereby dissolves (*aufhebt*) its status as a puzzle." ⁴⁶ Art, Adorno states is "the realization of the possible, [which] has always denied the reality of the contradiction upon which it is based." ⁴⁷ The contradiction upon which art is based is social and historical in nature. To bring these contradictions to knowledge is, however fleetingly and non-decisively, to solve the puzzle which art confronts in its state of utter alienation from the social totality; it is to release the possibility obscured and repressed by existing reality. That this liberation of possibility can be attained, if at all, only through following the dialectical path of necessity, yields the precariousness of Adorno's construction of art's *promesse du Bonheur*; for there can be no guarantee that following the path of necessity will indeed release art from the compulsion of necessity. The momentary stasis of the dialectic brought to a standstill, which is the objective of the particular work of art, may become the stasis of art as such which results not in the critical determinate negation of history, but rather in the abstract negation of history as such and thus the loss of art's critical potential. This is merely another formulation of the ambiguity inherent to Adorno's construction of modernism to which we adverted above whose consequences will be pursued through a reading of Adorno's "The Ageing of the New Music."

3. Stasis (Existence) - "The Ageing of the New Music."

In the essay 'Vienna', written in 1960, Adorno engages once again the aporia of rationalisation and remembrance through the problematic of the 'ageing' of the critical impulse of modernism. He writes, '[T]hings that are modern do not just sally forth in advance of their time. They are a remembrance of the forgotten (*gedenkt eines Vergessen*); they control anachronistic reserves which have been left behind and which have not yet been exhausted by the rationality of eternal sameness. When set beside the 'up to date', the advanced is always also the older. Of course this has a fatal social implication: the ageing of modernism in the face of an indiscriminately expanding

rationality.'⁴⁸ A number of important issues are raised by this passage: firstly, the thought that through modernism's insatiable drive towards the New (the determinate negation of all existing forms of artistic production), the New may cease to be a temporal category and congeal into an abstract invariant⁴⁹ (the abstract negation of tradition as such). In so doing modernism capitulates to the economic logic of commodification (the 'rationality of eternal sameness') that it would seek to resist. But further, and by contrast, Adorno raises the issue of whether the present can be construed, through the work of art, as irreducible to chronological time. It is central to Adorno's aesthetic theory that art has a "historiographic" function that can mobilize a complex temporality that destabilizes the "up to date"; if this thesis could not be supported, all talk of art as offering a "remembrance of the forgotten" would be otiose. But, Adorno will argue, such a memorial function is possible only for the most advanced works of art, that is, only for those works of art whose logic of production accords with the most advanced forces of aesthetic production. Thus, paradoxically, art's memorial function is possible only insofar as artistic production carries the logic of rationalisation (and thus reification) to its currently available limits. Art's protest against rationalisation can be critically redeemed only through that very rationalisation; remembrance requires the very reification it would oppose as its condition of possibility. This points to a reformulation of the aporia of rationalisation and remembrance which could be expressed in modal terms: namely that Adorno's construction of the logic of aesthetic modernism, which Hohendahl has termed "modernity as a necessary trajectory"⁵⁰, is what allows for the memorial release of possibility from its repression by existing reality. Paradoxically, possibility will only be redeemed by and through necessity. However, insofar as Adorno's aesthetic theory cannot simply posit art's memorial function extrinsically from the development of modernism, but rather must proceed through an immanent engagement with its contradictions, the development of advanced music in the 1950's - the "ageing" of modernism - seemed, to Adorno, to promise less a "remembrance of the forgotten" than an evisceration of remembrance as such, and in so doing the logic of necessity expounded in the *Philosophy of New Music*

yields not a utopian release from necessity, but the consolidation of necessity. The promised liberation of repressed possibility from necessity in fact succumbed to a confirmation of the necessity of existing reality. The aesthetic *impasse* of the "ageing" of modernism, it will be argued, becomes the theoretical *impasse* of Adorno's construction of modernism.

Adorno's "The Ageing of the New Music" ⁵¹ is a pivotal intervention into the post-war debates on New Music associated most centrally with the Summer School at Darmstadt. First delivered as a lecture in 1954, it was published in 1955 ⁵² a decade and a half after "Schoenberg and Progress" had been written, during which time the avant-garde had detected a latent but residual traditionalism in Schoenberg's restriction of the pre-formation of musical material to the tone-row. The ever increasing technical possibilities opened up by the use of electronics and the mathematisation of musical material allowed for compositional control to be applied to pitch and timbre as well as to the tone-row itself. The lesson to be learned from these developments was that Schoenberg's domination of (musical) nature had not gone far enough, that the process of aesthetic disenchantment had been artificially arrested, and it was to Webern that the post-war composers, in particular Stockhausen and Boulez turned. The radical impulse of serialism is well documented by Paul Griffiths who states that "[S]tockhausen and Boulez saw a precedent for their generalized serialism in the later works of Webern, who had become for them "THE threshold" (Boulez), untainted by the Romantic decadence of Schoenberg and Berg, surviving alone to make coherent sense of the serial method. It is in fact unlikely that Webern ever had any thought of applying serialism to other aspects than pitch, but his concentration on minutiae could be seen as presaging music in which each note was separately composed, as it was when total serialism was being applied." ⁵³

This passage usefully brings together the two key issues that arise in Adorno's "The Ageing of the New Music." First is the question of what precisely constitutes the basic elements of musical meaning. Put simply, if serialism allows for a music in which "each note was separately composed" can the single note itself, however rigorously pre-

formed or determined, be said to constitute a meaningful musical event? We have already noted that Adorno had discerned an incipient meaninglessness to be intrinsic to Schoenberg's negation of traditional musical language, a meaninglessness which arises when the material, liberated from unreflective tradition, becomes a raw material to be ordered by the composer. With the advent of serialism such meaninglessness tendentially verges on the absolute as every aspect of composition becomes subject to pre-formation and with it ensues a reification of construction at the expense of its residual dialectical interweaving with expression. The key to the distinction that Adorno draws between the meaninglessness of Schoenberg's dodecaphonic compositions, and those of serialism, hinges of the second aspect to be raised by Griffiths, namely on the relation of the avant-garde to tradition. Where, for Adorno, Schoenberg's aesthetic radicalism derived its force and impetus from its determinate negation of history, the desire of serialism to negate tradition as such in order to produce music, as Griffiths formulates it, "untainted by the Romantic decadence of Schoenberg and Berg", leads to the loss of critical tension which Adorno denominates through the concept of "ageing." However, as has been noted above, it is questionable whether, given the logic of Adorno's concept of musical progress, he has the terms of aesthetic judgement available to rigorously draw this distinction. It should be noted that the process of the "ageing" of the critical impulse of modernism is never considered by Adorno to be merely a "failure" or a "wrong turn" on the part of modernism, but inherent in the very concept of modernism itself.⁵⁴ By extension we should further add that this has the added corollary that the "ageing" of Adorno's own construction of modernism is an inevitable consequence of its immanent engagement with, and response to, aesthetic modernism. What remains to be critically discussed is whether the stasis that he sees as the consequence of serialism can be shown to afflict Adorno's own aesthetic theory.

Although the "ageing" of the critical tension of modernist compositions becomes most evident with serialism, Adorno argues that "ageing" is in fact an index of an antinomy inherent to New Music:⁵⁵ namely that the "emancipation from pre-established forms and structures of musical material was predicated upon a pre-

supposition that the material elements ... in themselves, have meaning. The totally new, many-layered sounds of the New Music were conceived as bearers of expression. And this they were, but in a mediated way, not immediately." ⁵⁶ The pre-condition for the New to be meaningful is through its mediated relation to what the New negates. Attributing "meaning" to the material itself, Adorno argues, is to fall all the more blindly under the reification of the material, and in so doing, to forget the constitutive role of subjectivity in rendering the material "meaningful" at all:

[T]he inflated idea of the material, however, which tenaciously clings to life, misleads a composer into sacrificing the ability, in so far as he has it, to form constellations and encourages him to believe that the preparation of primitive musical materials is equivalent to music itself. Something purely irrational is hidden in the midst of rationalisation, a confidence in the meaningfulness of abstract material, in which the subject fails to recognize that it, itself, releases the meaning from the material. The subject is blinded by the hope that those materials might lead it out of the exile of its own subjectivity. As long as New Music was alive, it mastered this illusion through the power of form; today it is losing that power, and it explains away its formal powerlessness as a triumph of cosmic substantiality. ⁵⁷

The task of the composer is here treated as extensionally equivalent to that of the philosopher: namely the construction of constellations in which meaning can be liberated from rigidified structures. Where the philosopher must construct constellations of concepts to release the non-identity repressed by the reification of the concept, the composer must construct constellations of a-conceptual syntheses (form) in order to release the meaning of the material. And just as the "non-identical is not to be hypostasized"⁵⁸, nor should the material be attributed "occult" powers of meaningfulness anterior to its organization through form by the composer. The critical tension that was intrinsic to the very concept of modernism derived, in part, from the fact that the New received its meaning from its determinate negation of the old, thereby preserving the old as an ideal. In its relentless pursuit of the New, serialism succumbs to a reification of the New that unhinges its dialectical relation to tradition and thereby eviscerates its critical edge. The abstract negation of tradition does not lead art to the

promised land of the New, but rather, to an impotent mimesis of an already triumphant technological and industrial control over society and over time.

The hallmark of myth is the dissociation of time into space. We have already seen that such a dissociation of musical time was implicit in Schoenberg's obviation of the distinction between theme and variation; with serialism such a dissociation threatens to become total. Where the "shocks" registered in *Ewartung* or Berg's *Wozzeck* registered the New as radical means of expression, such expression derived its force from the concept of expression which it negated. In abstraction from this determinate negation, "shock" or dissonance ceases to have a polemical edge and becomes easily accommodated. Only the subject can provide the grounds upon which negation is determinate and not abstract; and this is achieved through the exigency of form. Thus, as Hullo-Kentor remarks, "[I]n *The Philosophy of New Music*, Adorno came to the conclusion that the construction of the musical material resulted in the loss of expression; what he suggests is more radical construction. Construction is both the ability to manipulate the material and to break it out of the forms in which it has rigidified. The recommendation therefore means: more subjectivity." ⁵⁹ The difficulty that arises for Adorno in "The Ageing of the New Music" is that he is unable to identify any possible instances in which this recommendation can be observed. The musical world, as if in imitation of the "totally administered society," appears as though frozen between the conformism of the culture industry and the critical impotence of the most advanced musical forces of production. The situation that Adorno documents is one of stasis; a stasis already implicit in the very logic of his construction of the trajectory of modernism. Even as he argues that "[A]rt, and above all music, is the effort to preserve in memory and cultivate those split-off elements of truth that reality has handed over to the growing domination of nature" he adds the corollary that "[E]ven as determinate negation, what art says is itself part of the world and subordinate to the law of enlightenment." ⁶⁰ But if, as Adorno's social theory argues, the trajectory of the "law of enlightenment" is towards the (tendentially) total domination of reification (and thus the total impotence of subjectivity), and further, as his aesthetic theory requires, this is a

trajectory that art itself is governed by, then to what extent is the recommendation of "more subjectivity" merely a wishful hope that things might be otherwise? The "paralysis" that Adorno discerns as governing both the "musical forces" and "this over-managed world" ⁶¹ becomes the paralysis of Adorno's own theory. The pathos of his closing remarks ⁶² verges on the formulaic - the almost too easily formulated dialectical inversion in which the promise of "constellative" thought and, as Adorno claims, of art, to release the possibility repressed by reality threatens to become nothing but a pious invocation. The stasis of the world and the stasis of theory converge dangerously to a point of almost total indifference. Indeed it is perhaps not fortuitous that Adorno's argument in "The Ageing of the New Music" does not proceed by the construction of a conceptual constellation which would illuminate the contradictions within the object - indeed it might be argued that the very subjectivity which, Adorno argues, would release modernist art from the "paralysis" of the present (Adorno's present), is itself absent from his construction of that paralysis.

4. "Ideal of the Organic" (Possibility) - "Vers une musique informelle."

The survival of music can be anticipated only if it is able to emancipate itself from twelve-tone technique as well. This is not to be accomplished, however by a retrogression to the irrationality which preceded twelve-tone technique [I]t is rather to be achieved through the amalgamation and absorption of twelve-tone technique by free composition - by the assumption of its rules through the spontaneity of the critical ear. ⁶³

This passage from the *Philosophy of New Music* effectively anticipates the response to the stasis of "The Ageing of the New Music" which Adorno formulated in "Vers une musique informelle." As the very title of the essay indicates "musique informelle," or what Adorno termed in the *Philosophy of New Music* "free composition," is not to be conceptually defined, but approached configuratively, such that the form of the essay proceeds by moving towards an elucidation of the

physiognomy of an aesthetic freedom which both requires the logic of necessity of artistic progress whilst negating that very necessity by bringing its logic to self-consciousness. In this respect the very theoretical structure of this essay marks an advance on the unconstellative approach that highlighted the theoretical *impasse* of "The Ageing of the New Music." As we have seen, Adorno's demand that aesthetic radicalism proceed by determinate negation of traditional form rather than the abstract negation of tradition as such, entailed that the path of aesthetic nominalism demands of the composer that he create forms which could hold tradition and its negation in contradiction. The waning of the critical tension of modernism is the waning of this critical contradiction, the elevation of the New into an end in itself. Thus the more rigorously modernist art prosecutes its nominalistic path towards total autonomy, the greater the danger that the dialectic driving this nominalism will result in an abstract paralysis, for in the absence of any musical form, total construction becomes total form and the new thereby ceases to be qualitatively New and merely re-capitulates the closed universe of the tradition which it has abstractly negated.

However, Adorno argues, serialism itself succumbs to the dialectic of nominalism. Through the idea of an informal music, " ... an unconstrained nominalism becomes conscious of its own limitations. Just as in dialectical logic, so here in aesthetics the universal and the particular do not constitute mutually exclusive opposites. If informal music dispenses with abstract forms - in other words, with the musically bad universal forms of internal compositional categories - then these universal forms will surface again in the innermost recesses of the particular event and set them alight." ⁶⁴ With the concept of informal music, or a-serial music as he otherwise terms it, Adorno is seeking to construct the idea of a "formless form" which escapes the fate of the total compositional determinism of serialism without falling back behind the critique of traditional form enacted by Schoenbergian twelve-tone technique. As such he is attempting to delineate the requirements for a notion of form which would develop, rather than abstractly negate, the dialectic of nominalism, a development which

would, Adorno argues, portend the utopian release of possibility from out of the path of aesthetic necessity by way of that very necessity.

In an extraordinary passage, Adorno suggests that the opportunity to develop such an "informal music" had already occurred in 1910, ⁶⁵ citing Schoenberg's *Ewartung* and *Pierrot Lunaire* as well as Stravinsky's *Three Poems from the Japanese* as examples. As well as, with hindsight, finding a greater proximity between Schoenberg and Stravinsky than he had previously allowed in *Philosophy of New Music*, Adorno adds the following claim to account for this failed reconciliation: "What stopped the development of the 'free musical style', as Alois Haba termed it over thirty years ago, was not anything inherent in the music, as Schoenberg may have imagined, but sociological and ideological factors." ⁶⁶ Does not the admonition directed against Schoenberg perhaps serve to conceal the fact that the very same rebuke could be levelled against Adorno himself? Is Adorno not subtly re-formulating his own construction of the necessary logic of aesthetic production? The argument here would have to involve the question of whether the logic of the rationalisation of the musical material (the logic of aesthetic autonomy) is tied rigorously to the process of social and technological rationalisation, or whether an aesthetic logic of development may diverge from, and perhaps even problematize, such a model of history.

As we have seen, the concept of musical material as it was developed in the *Philosophy of New Music* was conceived by Adorno explicitly to be an aspect of objective spirit. Insofar as the progress of technical control over musical nature was taken to be the progress of musical enlightenment, the consequential stasis as documented in "The Ageing of the New Music", whilst calling into question the very concept of progress, was merely the logical development of the logic of modernism as constructed by Adorno. However, by insisting, in "Vers une musique informelle", that a different path had lain open to the most advanced music in 1910, a different path that, to be sure, would have involved prosecuting the most advanced aesthetic forces of production, it would appear that the necessary logic of the earlier essays was in fact a false necessity whose unmasking could only be perceived with hindsight. In allowing for

the relative autonomy of aesthetic rationalisation from social and technological rationalisation, Adorno not only provides some concrete grounds for his hitherto unsustainable claim that the work of art could provide a remembrance of the forgotten, but also allows for a more rigorous delineation of the aesthetic grounds for distinguishing between determinate and abstract negation of tradition.⁶⁷ Only if this second claim can be supported, can the first argument be given any weight, and it is only if both can be supported that the critical memorial function of the logic of modernism can be redeemed. The stakes of this essay are therefore of some consequence, for if these claims cannot be redeemed, the stasis that was seen to beset modernism through its "ageing" would inevitably engulf Adorno's own construction of modernism, and with it, the most crucial aspect of his attempt to redeem the non-identical from the tendential universality of identity, abstraction and equivalence.

The question of whether aesthetic form can encompass the critique of the old without succumbing to the nihilistic trajectory of the abstract negation of tradition returns us again to the question of meaning. As will be recalled, Adorno's charge against serialism's total determinism of the individual note was that in abjuring the construction of musical constellations, the composition eviscerated the possibilities for a meaningful negation of traditional musical meaning. In so doing, Adorno charges serialism with fetishizing the individual note, for in taking the individual note to be an unmediated first, which, as abstract raw material (*Stoff*) awaits determination by the compositional subject, serialism fails to recognize the individual note as being an already mediated material (*Material*) whose meaning can emerge only through the form which releases the history of the musical relations sedimented within it: "[T]he bare note is a transitional element in the critical process of music's reflection on itself, an anti-ideological marginal value. For it to become music, it must needs have recourse to those configurations which it cannot discover within itself."⁶⁸ The desire to construct an "informal form" thus becomes a question of relation. Adorno insists that there is no possibility of returning to the compositional context of 1910; both the forces and the relations of musical production have ineluctably moved on. Rather, what is envisaged is

the return to the possibilities opened up by the break with tradition of Schoenberg's atonal works, possibilities which remain untimely with respect to the development of music as measured by chronological time. As would be expected from Adorno, his attempt to move "beyond" the stasis of serialism operates not by way of the attempt to replace "the note" as a first by "relation" as a first, but rather to construct, once again, a dialectical model of their mediation expressed in the chiasmatic formula that "there are no notes without relations, no relations without notes."⁶⁹ The chiasm, as with the caesura, operates as a figure within Adorno's work whereby abstract oppositions are mediated; the figure operating as a quasi-transcendental condition of possibility for both the terms and their opposition, operating, that is, as a moment of possibility or freedom. This chiasm leads Adorno to construct a model of "informal form" through the dialectical negation of the opposition between the organic and the mechanical works of art. In returning to these terms, familiar from the typology of the *Philosophy of New Music*, is not Adorno attempting to recover repressed possibilities within his own aesthetic theory repressed by his initial construction of the necessary trajectory of modernism?

Adorno's return to these terms does not thereby entail a re-habilitation of the concept of the organic work of art, this concept, in the wake of aesthetic rationalisation is now irretrievable. Rather, what Adorno seeks to articulate is the concept of the "organic ideal", an ideal which is preserved through the negation of the actuality of the organic work of art, and which is deployed critically against the mechanical work of art. The distinction between the mechanical work of art and the organic ideal is expounded through a distinction between the mechanical subsumption of particulars under a universal and the organic dialectic of universal and particular. Adorno expresses this as follows, "[F]or music the organic ideal would be nothing but a rejection of the mechanical. It would be the concrete process of a growing supreme abstract concept, together with the juxtaposition of the parts."⁷⁰ It is at this point that the crucial assumption organizing Adorno's argument, and arguably organizing Adorno's entire aesthetic theory, is made clear; namely that the process of rationalisation can only

escape the blind, and ultimately nihilistic logic of the subsumption of particularity by universals (in this case, exemplified by the mechanical work of art) through the intervention of the subject. Only subjective domination of nature can free nature from its blind meaninglessness, and in so doing free the subject from its enthrallment to nature. Adorno phrases the point as follows: "[B]ut if the musical substance is to develop organically, the intervention of the subject is required, or rather, the subject must become an integral part of the organism, something which the organism itself calls for. If appearances do not deceive, it is upon this that the future of music calls for." ⁷¹ It would not be an exaggeration to say that for Adorno, it is not simply the future of music that hangs on the "intervention of the subject" but the future as such, which for Adorno can be envisaged only under the condition of a reconciliation with, and redemption of, nature. However the key to this passage rests not simply in the claim that it is only subjective intervention which can save music from mechanistic subsumption, but in the further claim that this intervention is "called for" by the organism (nature). How one assesses this claim will rest, in large part upon how one interprets the genitive "of" in "the redemption of nature." The interpretation being suggested here is that this phrase should not simply be read as a subjective genitive, in which the subject is taken to be the sole condition of possibility for the redemption of nature, but also as an objective genitive, in which nature operates as the condition of possibility for the subject being able to redeem nature. The "of" thus figures a further chiasmus in which the abstract opposition between subjective domination and nature's muteness (to return to the Benjaminian terminology discussed in Chapter Two) are suspended, and in so doing figures the "moment of passing" in which "history and nature become commensurable with each other." ⁷² Could one therefore argue that this "moment" - as chiasmus or caesura - in suspending the mechanical schema of subsumption, suspends empirical or chronological time thereby allowing for a more rigorous construal of the work of art as a "remembrance of the forgotten"? ⁷³

The distinction between the organic ideal, which, emerging out modernism's critique of the organic work of art serves to prefigure the fragmentary "utopian" work

of art, and the "mechanical" work of art is organized around the issue of musical time. The mechanical work of art, whether it be the popular music of the culture industry, the "eternal fashion" of Jazz, or the "neo-classicism" of Stravinsky remains, Adorno claims, indifferent to the qualitative difference of time that is intrinsic to music as an inherently temporal art form. ⁷⁴ Time is treated as an abstract "frame" by the mechanical work of art in which the musical event that takes place "within" this time remains unaffected by its inherently temporal nature. ⁷⁵ As such, the principle of such music is that of repetition. Qualitative difference, which can emerge only through time, is negated through the abstract schematization of time in which time serves only as the schema for more or less elaborate repetitions of the same. ⁷⁶ In so doing, the mechanical work of art, in its quantification of time, unconsciously imitates the reproductive circuits of capital without raising this mimesis to consciousness at the level of form. As such, the contradictions of art's mimesis of, and irrelevance to, the functionally organized economy are smothered by the ideological appearance of a commodity postulating itself as immediacy or use-value. Repetition serves as the principle whereby suffering and impotence are systematically excluded from expression and art's triumphal capitulation to the process of rationalisation severs any residual attempt to preserve the memory of qualitative difference in an age of tendentially universal quantification and exchangeability.

Perhaps what Adorno found most disquieting about the serialism of the mid-'50s was that this very schema of the quantification of time seemed to be invading the most advanced art, which, for Adorno, was the most emphatic haven for the remembrance of non-identity. The pre-determination of pitch, timbre and duration of the note (as opposed to Schoenberg's pre-determination of the tone-row) threatened the complete determination, and thus quantification, of musical time. ⁷⁷ Against this position Adorno argues that "[T]he objective time-factor in all parameters and the living experiential time of the phenomenon are by no means identical. Duration and pitch belong to different musical realms, even if in acoustics they belong under the same heading." ⁷⁸ Adorno is here effectively arguing that whilst sound can be temporally

quantified, music cannot. But in response to the aporia of musical time, the "static" organization of musical time characteristic of serialism cannot be abstractly opposed to the "dynamic" organization of musical time characteristic of organic music. The synthesis of the two will not yield the ideal of a "musique informelle." Rather, in a gesture characteristic of Adorno's reception of the dialectic, such an ideal will emerge as an actuality only through the mediation of these extremes, an emergence which itself requires the intervention of the subject. Adorno puts the point as follows, "[T]he meaning of the work of art is something which has to be produced, rather than just copied. It is what it is only by becoming itself. This is the element of action in informal music." ⁷⁹ The work of art can only "become what it is" through the subjective control of the available resources of the aesthetic forces of production at any given moment, that is, through technique. Only subjective mediation can free the musical material from the alien necessity of obedience to mechanical postulates, whose temporal principle is abstraction and repetition. In freeing music from the mechanical principle of the repetition of the same, the subjective domination of nature prefigures an organization of the musical material in which musical time serves as the medium whereby identity can be attained only through progressive difference. As such the temporal schema of such a music would not be one of the subsumption of qualitative difference under an abstract identity, but the emergence of identity through (and not opposed to) qualitative difference. ⁸⁰

In arguing against the principle of the pure quantification of musical time, Adorno is, in effect, arguing against the serialism's desire to compose music from a "degree zero" untainted by the residual traditionalism of Schoenberg and Berg. To compose music that would move towards the "organic ideal" is to compose self-consciously in the wake of the destruction of tradition without reifying that destruction. Total mathematical organization of musical time would be the consummate forgetting of the sedimented history contained within the musical material, and thus the repression both of the suffering expressed by this material and of art's critical stance towards reality. Adorno addressed these issues in the essay "On Tradition" where he states that

"[W]hatever imagines itself to be derived from nothing, unadulterated by history, will be the first victim of history unconsciously and thus fatefully." ⁸¹ As we have seen, there is a tension that runs as a thread throughout Adorno's engagements with new music between his claim that only the determinate negation of tradition can act as both a critique of the organic work of art and maintain critically the promise of harmony and peace of the organic work of art as an ideal, and the logic of his construction of modernism as aesthetic rationalisation which would tend towards the absolute negation of tradition as such. In "On Tradition" Adorno constructs the question of modernism's relation to tradition in the form of an antinomy: "To insist on the absolute absence of tradition is as naive as the obstinate insistence on it. Both are ignorant of the past that persists in their allegedly pure relation to objects; both are unaware of the dust and debris which cloud their allegedly clear vision. But it is inhuman to forget because accumulated suffering will be forgotten and the historical trace on things, words, colours and sounds is always of past suffering. 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 towards barbarism will begin." ⁸² The relation of "advanced consciousness" to tradition can only be aporetic. A condition of the destruction of tradition is that the past is not, or no longer, given to the present. The present is thereby freed from being a mere continuation of the past, but also potentially deprived of any qualitative temporal difference from either the past or the future insofar as the abstract negation of the past erases the criterion whereby qualitative difference could be experienced. Thus if the negation of the past is not to congeal into a perpetual present (ideologically disguised as perpetual progress) the aporia of tradition requires that the present be re-thought as the site at which a relation to the past must be constructed, if past suffering is to be acknowledged and redeemed. As we have argued in Chapter Two, such construction does not thereby licence a capricious "neo-classical" form of time travel, in which ironic subjectivity may pick and choose from the aesthetic forms of the past as though browsing through an antiquarian bookshop. For Adorno,

the end of tradition, far from licencing a temporal free-for-all, enjoins the more severe task of acknowledging this end aporetically.

The task of such acknowledgement is the driving theme behind the construction of the dialectic of progress that we have seen at work in each of the three essays under discussion. It will be remembered that in "Schoenberg and Progress," Adorno had denominated tradition as the "presence of the forgotten," a presence maintained by advanced consciousness only through the rigorous construction of technique, and thus through the resistance to the sedimented history within the forms of unreflective tradition. The liberation of the past *as past* requires that the dialectic be brought to a stand-still because "[I]n forgetfulness, subjectivity finally extends incommensurably beyond the consequence and correctness of the structure which depends upon the omnipresent recollection (*Erinnerung*) of itself."⁸³ The implicit reference to Hegelian *Erinnerung* implies that Adorno's "dialectic at a stand-still" (for which the practice of both Schoenberg and Benjamin are models) requires a model of time in which the radical otherness of the past, with respect to the present, is a condition of possibility for the remembrance of the forgotten, of what was never part of the self-actualizing logic of the dialectic of the concept in the first place. In the previous chapter, the beautiful in nature was shown to be a model of such radical otherness. The condition of possibility for such a model of remembrance is, as U. Schönherr has argued, that the past remains essentially incomplete and that the future remains essentially open.⁸⁴ For Adorno, the ideal of a music informelle would be realized in a work of art which, in eschewing the alternatives of either the serialist abstract negation of the past, or the neo-classical capriciousness with respect to the past, can hold the past and the future together through determinate negation. The work of art would be the site of the present in which the forgotten past and the undetermined future would traverse each other in productive contradiction. The principle upon which such a work of art would be constructed would be one of correspondence: "this process alone inaugurates a tradition worth pursuing. Its criterion is *correspondence* which, as something new, throws light on the present and receives its illumination from the past. Such *correspondence* is not

synonymous with empathy and immediate affinity but requires distance." ⁸⁵ The aporetic relation between the old and the new, tradition and modernity, captured under the concept of correspondence is not thereby to be erected as a new invariant structure of aesthetic judgement. Correspondence as a criterion is subject to changing historical configurations, as the discordance between past, present and future enter into ever new constellations which cannot themselves guarantee that the correspondence will be illuminating. But what is central to the work of art's temporal dehiscence of empirical time is, as we have seen in Chapter Three, the configuration of mimetic and rational elements, that is, its bringing into constellation the archaic and the modern. It is through this idea that Adorno will ultimately seek to intertwine the concepts of rationality and remembrance in an aporetic construction of modernist art.

The archaic aspect of art recalls the subject back to its embeddedness in nature, to the fact that it is a condition of its being a subject that it be an object in the first place. "Prior to" the historical cleavage between thought and emotion, sign and image, subject and object, reason and art, the archaic residues that survive within existing historical reality are given expression through the mimetic aspect of art - the longing for affinity with, rather than domination of, nature. In *Aesthetic Theory* Adorno states that, "[A]esthetic behaviour is neither mimesis pure and simple nor the repression of mimesis. It is a process set in motion by mimesis, a process also in which mimesis itself survives through adaptation. This process shapes both the relation of the individual to art and the historical macrocosm." ⁸⁶ But insofar as there can be no unmediated return to the past, or more rigorously, no return to a condition "prior to" historical time, the mimetic redemption of nature can be achieved only through the instrument of its repression, through, that is, the subject. Thus Adorno continues, "[S]ubjectivity, later so-called, frees itself from the blind fear of the horrible but it is also its continuation. The subject is lifeless except when it is able to shudder in response to the total spell. And only the subject's shudder can transcend the spell. Without shudder, consciousness is trapped in reification. Shudder is a kind of premonition of subjectivity, a sense of being touched by the other. The aesthetic mode of behaviour assimilates itself to that

other rather than trying to subdue it." ⁸⁷ Thus whilst the modernist work of art must partake of the logic of rationalisation if it is not to regress to a false enchantment of nature, it is not exhausted by what has become of reason, not exhausted that is, by the instrumentalisation of reason. Art as the site of a transcendence of existing reality provides a haven for both the residual consciousness of an emphatic concept of truth, and of an unviscerated model of experience. The intimation of such experience is betokened through the sense of "shudder", "of being touched by the other" wherein this "other" is irreducible or non-identical to an objective correlate of the subject. It is the constellation or correspondence between the modern and the archaic that, on Adorno's construction, renders the modernist work of art "untimely" to use Hohendahl's incisive formulation. ⁸⁸

As we have seen, Adorno could discern no dialectical element of subjectivity in the compositions of serialism, and therefore the telos of his construction of modernism as a logic of necessity appeared to portend not the redemption of nature, but the final consummation of its domination in the most advanced art of its time. The stasis of serialism - the repression of historical possibility by the bad immediacy consequent upon the abstract negation of tradition - was shown to infect Adorno's own construction of modernism; the ageing of modernism became the ageing of Adorno's own critical theory. The critique of serialism, and by implication, of a residual dogmatism in Adorno's construction of the necessity of modernism, through the return of the organic work of art as an ideal, offers the possibility of an immanent way out of that stasis. Whilst maintaining the primacy of a logic of aesthetic rationalisation, Adorno recovers a role for dialectical subjectivity as the hinge upon which aesthetic form can mediate between the present and tradition, thereby redeeming the distinction between the determinate and abstract negation of tradition which had reached a point of indifference in "The Ageing of the New Music." The concept of an informal form configured in "Vers une musique informelle" operates as the site of correspondence in which the necessity of empirical time is dislocated through the intrinsic untimeliness of the modernist work of art. Such a dislocation or de-hisience allows the modernist work of

art to "deviate" from the logic of societal and technological rationalisation even as it continues to pursue the path of aesthetic rationalisation. Such deviation allows for an aporetic construal of aesthetic progress in which subjectivity comes to recognize itself as part of nature, and not simply opposed to it, thereby releasing the possibility that the trajectory of the domination of nature may be reversible. In ceasing to treat the musical material as merely an abstract raw material to be mathematically mastered and pre-determined, the "organic ideal" of an informal form would be a mode of composition in which form would place the musical material into a constellation or correspondence in which tradition is preserved through its negation. Each "successful" composition would be a temporary and fragile model of the dialectic at a standstill in which the sedimented history and repressed possibilities not admitted to the actuality of the present would be brought to self-consciousness. Adorno states that "[M]usique informelle would be music in which the ear can hear live from the material what has become of it. Because what it has become includes and culminates in the rationalisation process, this process is preserved. At the same time, however, deprived of the element of violence it contained, thanks to the non-arbitrary nature of the subjective reaction. If the subject was the embodiment of rationality, it is now both negated and preserved." ⁸⁹ Only through necessity may possibility be redeemed, but this necessity must be dialectically conceived. Arguably the development of Adorno's construction of modernism as traced here requires that the dialectic of necessity must be intensified if necessity is not to be mis-recognized as the quasi-mythical stasis of the bad immediacy of existence. The vicissitudes of Adorno's aesthetic theory exemplify both this mis-recognition and its critique.

Chapter Five: The Memory of Utopia.

1. Introduction:

There is, inevitably, an infelicity that attends any attempt to "conclude" a study of Adorno. Designedly contradictory and open-ended, his texts theoretically and formally provide their own argument against all attempts to consummate a theoretical closure. Of course, the refusal of conclusions on Adorno's part does not thereby entail the refusal of judgement. Indeed one commentator has stressed the "remorselessly judgemental tone" ¹ of Adorno's work, a tone which, it is argued, has philosophical implications with respect to both Adorno's own self-understanding of his work, and for the possible parameters of our engagement with that work in the present. Thus one is ineluctably drawn towards the question of Adorno's "actuality." It could be argued that if it is infelicitous to submit Adorno to the bar of "final conclusions" it is downright inelegant to haul him before the bar of "contemporary debates." Not that Adorno was himself averse to contemporary polemical engagements - witness his engagements with Brecht and Sartre, Hindemith and Stravinsky, positivism and orthodox Marxism, and, of course, his continuous philosophical argument with Heidegger. The substance of all these encounters was of course, not simply philosophical and/or aesthetic, but, even if only obliquely, political. Thus, if one were to stage a "reckoning" of the substance of Adorno's work in the face of "contemporary debates", such a *mise en scène* must implicitly possess a political dimension.

However, one cannot naively - that is to say, without recognising the mediated nature of the gesture - place Adorno in the context of contemporary debates. Adorno himself provided a suitably terse formulation of the hermeneutical difficulty at stake with his verdict on the intellectual paucity of Croce's question of what is alive and what is dead in the work of Hegel. In this respect Adorno's two-fold response to Croce's alleged theoretical crudity is intriguing: on the one hand, he reverses the terms of Croce's question by asking, not what is still theoretically tenable in the work at hand, but rather what the present means in the face of Hegel ²; whilst on the other hand,

insisting that the truth value of Hegel can be preserved only by attempting to dialectically rescue that thought at what would appear to be its weakest, most theoretically indefensible point.³ In both cases, the strategy is two-fold: firstly a historical critique of the philosophical claims of Hegel, and reciprocally (chiasmatically) a philosophical critique of the historical limitations of that thought.⁴ Implicit in this "concluding" chapter will be the judgement that with this strategy Adorno has provided the formal lineaments for an assessment of the philosophical substance and implications of his own work in the present.

Any consideration of the contemporary relevance of Adorno's work must acknowledge not only its historical distance from the present but also its mediation through the work of its receptors. Undoubtedly the most significant and influential receptions of Adorno's work are those offered by Jürgen Habermas and those working under the aegis of Habermas's "paradigm" of communicative rationality, Albrecht Wellmer and Seyla Benhabib. It would be tempting to subtitle the discussion of these receptions "Adorno defended against his devotees" if it were not for the fact that the "devotion" in question is of a highly equivocal nature: the substance of this equivocation is contained within the implication of a "we" by which Habermas registers his historical distance from Adorno:

On their [Adorno and Horkheimer's] analysis, it is no longer possible to place hope in the liberating force of enlightenment. Inspired by Benjamin's now ironic hope of the hopeless, they [Adorno and Horkheimer] still did not want to relinquish the now paradoxical labour of conceptualization. *We* no longer share this mood, this attitude.⁵

Insinuated by means of a surreptitious *we*, Habermas claims to pay his respects to the matter at hand - Adorno - whilst significantly distancing himself from Adorno's constant injunction that thought must immerse itself in the matter at hand. Implicit in the "communicative critique" of Adorno is the judgement that not only is Adorno's work philosophically outmoded (insofar as it remains caught within the subject-centred "paradigm") but also historically outmoded. These two objections coalesce around a

rejection of Adorno's substantive model of the good life - the utopian reconciliation with nature. Thus, the stakes of Adorno's adherence to, and communicative reason's subsequent (post-Adornian) detraction of, a utopian dimension to reason provide the lineaments of the terrain upon which the contestability of the contemporary actuality of Adorno's work might be judged. This thesis has argued that Adorno's work does not (as Habermas claims) abandon any hope of the liberating force of the enlightenment's ideals, but seeks to realise those ideals through a critique of what has hitherto prohibited enlightenment from achieving such realization. The "remembrance of nature in the subject" is nothing less than the continuation of enlightenment against enlightenment's tendency to revert to myth through a forgetting of the naturalistic "origin" of reason.

Implicit in the notion of contemporary relevance or actuality is an acknowledgement of historical distance. However, the very concept of historical distance remains ambiguous. Whilst it would be hermeneutically naive to ignore the historical distance that separates the formative conditions of Adorno's *oeuvre* from the conditions of its reception today, it would be equally philosophically naive to reify it. Thus to account for the substance of the "historical distance" that separates Adorno's present from our own, one would not only need to flesh out the social, political and economic contours that would begin to account for such a distance, but also - unless one were to simply capitulate to the worst form of historicism - ask whether Adorno's thought does not itself contain resources for comprehending, not only the present in which one would presumptively construct one's judgement of his contemporary relevance, but also the concepts of historical distance and of "actuality." In this context one should remember that one of the central implications of Adorno's work is the attempt to preserve and salvage a truth content in what has come to be judged obsolete. The reification of historical distance, in judging everything before the standard of the present, implicitly enacts a process of forgetting - a forgetting of the conditionedness of its present *as* the present - whilst arrogantly pronouncing on the obsolescence of what does not meet that criteria. The central contention of this thesis has been to attest to the centrality of remembrance as providing the texture and form of Adorno's philosophical

practice, a remembrance whose aim and object is nothing less than the redemption of the possibility of utopia - which is to say, that the remembrance of possibility is itself the utopian moment of Adorno's thought.

2: Habermas and Adorno:

For Habermas, the "obsolescence" of Adorno's philosophical bequest hinges upon the interpretation of his construction of a utopian conception of reason, the pre-condition of whose actualisation would be reconciliation with nature, a reconciliation whose *modus operandi* Adorno attempted to configure through a philosophical construal of memory. As early as *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Habermas had pronounced on the "mysticism" of this attempt to construe utopia as the marker for the subject's reconciliation with nature. Commenting on Marx's concept of nature as the materialistic pre-condition of the subject of idealism, Habermas argues that "The resurrection of nature cannot be logically conceived within materialism, no matter how much the early Marx and the speculative minds in the Marxist tradition (Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch, Herbert Marcuse, Theodor W. Adorno) find themselves attracted by this heritage of mysticism." ⁶ In denouncing the "mystical" motif of the redemption of nature as "logically inconceivable" within materialism, Habermas denounces the utopian materialism of Adorno. As we have argued in Chapter One, that utopianism was inextricably tied up with a conception of the return of corporeal, transient, "first nature." The difficulty of logically adjudicating between Adorno and Habermas comes to the fore here, for, as we have seen, the reification of logical identity is, for Adorno, an essential element of the block upon recognising the naturalistic element of reason, whose remembrance would pre-figure reconciliation. Habermas, by surreptitiously assuming that the "logical space" of materialism must preclude the notion of the redemption of nature, thereby tacitly separates the question of logic and material interest - a question inherited by all the thinkers to which he refers from Marx's *German Ideology*.

Thus, Habermas's verdict on the logical inconceivability of the utopian motif of the redemption of nature (and this argument will remain axiomatic, not only for Habermas's continued engagements with Adorno, but also for Albrecht Wellmer's more nuanced engagements with the legacy of Adorno) should not be taken at face value; indeed it highlights an unacknowledged elision between rationality and communicative rationality that implicitly guides this discussion. The point at issue here has been well made by Andrew Bowie when he writes, apropos of Habermas's reduction of the heterogeneity of Adorno's texts, of the need "...to make Adorno part of the story which sees modern philosophy as needing to escape the 'paradigm of subjectivity' and to move on towards a model based on intersubjectivity." ⁷ The issue of central importance here is that the discernment of the logical aporias that result from attempting to weave materialist and "mystical" motifs together is predicated upon an implicit narrative of reason's entanglements with a subject-object "paradigm" whose plausibility requires that one has already adopted the standpoint of the "paradigm" of communicative rationality. This is not to say that Habermas's criticism is without purchase, nor that the same criticism could not have been advanced from an alternative theoretical standpoint, but rather to insist that in assuming the neutrality of his own position with respect to the supposedly outmoded position under discussion, Habermas prohibits the very self-reflection upon reason's entanglement with rationalisation that was constitutive of Adorno's construction of utopia. Thus, as Jay Bernstein has argued, Habermas's narrative, predicated upon the assumption of communicative rationality - when this is what ought to be being argued for - is neither disinterested, nor is it neutral with respect to its own construction of rationality. The very nihilism which Habermas discerns in Adorno's conflation of reason and reification enters into his own construction of a communicative reason insofar as it denies its constitutive entanglements in the very process (rationalisation) which it would claim to transcend. ⁸

In this context it should not be forgotten that the guiding motif of Adorno's critique of instrumental reason was a belief in the self-transcending "dialectical" nature of reason; that an emphatic concept of rationality was immanent within, albeit repressed

by, instrumental reason. What was deemed to be requisite for the actualisation of an emphatic conception of reason was the very remembrance of nature in the subject which Habermas denounces as irrational. What guides this philosophical practice of remembrance is the cognition that what perpetuates the block on reason becoming emphatically rational is the continuity of reason's history with pre-history; a continuity not of progress but of suffering. As we have argued in Chapter Two, Albrecht Wellmer's communicative critique of Adorno's conception of non-identity was predicated upon the assumption that, within a linguistic conception of rationality, the "non-identical" could be located as a merely contingent and, in principle, "curable" pathology. The *pre-supposition* of the transparency of communicative language, and the associated understanding of non-identity, fails to address Adorno's claim that non-identity betokens an originary indebtedness (which, for the present is discursively unredeemable) of conceptual thought to the utopian promise inherent in its identifications. To bring this indebtedness to self-consciousness, and thus to pre-figure the possibility of the actualisation of the utopian promise of identity, is the work of remembrance undertaken by negative dialectics and modernist art.

If, however, one were to take Habermas's assertion of changing "moods" and "attitudes" at its word, one could perhaps, initially at least, begin to determine the substance of his charge against Adorno and Horkheimer by noting that his assertion proceeds by way of a reference to the closing line of Benjamin's "Goethe's Elective Affinities" essay which, it is claimed, has become "now ironic". It is not entirely clear whether the ironic inversion which Habermas claims has befallen this motif is intended to refer to the "now" of the writing of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* or the "now" of Habermas's critique of Adorno and Horkheimer. If one were to assume that it referred to the "now" of the writing of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* one could trace the inverted irony through the ray of hope that Benjamin attempts to conjure in the "Theses on the Philosophy of History" written directly in response to the Hitler-Stalin Pact. The inversion of irony here would of course force the issue of the contested legacy of materialist and messianic elements in Benjamin's work; a debate to which Habermas has

been a central participant.⁹ As we have seen it is precisely the impossibility of holding the two together that Habermas construes as the failing of a utopian materialism. Of course, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* shares this historical conjuncture with Benjamin's "Theses"; written in war-time exile, it acts as a polemical response to global conflagration which seemed to promise not the imminent transcendence of capitalist relations of production, but rather a calcified stand-off between two repressive power blocks sharing out the spoils of the capitalist present, whilst tolerating the organized destruction of European Jewry. Thus, as with Benjamin, Adorno and Horkheimer's "now paradoxical labour of the concept" represented the desperate attempt to salvage the possibility of an interruptive force against the catastrophic present. Adorno's line about his work being "messages in a bottle" indicates the frailty of the hope in the future as a source of utopian energy.

In this context Habermas is, of course, correct to argue that "we", in the present - Habermas's present - no longer share the extreme foreclosing of a sense of the future as meaningful. The experiential conditions from which theory would take its bearings are no longer guided by the sense of *imminent* catastrophe. As such, an historical distance indeed separates us from the conditions under which Adorno and Horkheimer's "totalizing" critique of Western rationality was initiated, and against which it was mobilised. However, as was argued above, the recognition of historical distance - vital to the recognition of the historical situatedness of all theory - must not itself be reified. Habermas, in arguing that Adorno's construction of fascism as the demonic realisation of the sacrificial structure of reason as such forecloses on a differentiated reconstruction of modernity as a *project*, and thus forecloses on a primarily *futural* sense of emancipation (an argument which, it must be observed significantly renders Adorno's position undialectical), crucially misses the sense in which Adorno had already thematized the difficulty of construing the present "after Auschwitz". Indeed, it could be argued that Adorno, particularly in *Negative Dialectics*, attempts to construe the *experience* of a fundamental un-timeliness of the present; to construe, that is, the

experience of the "after" in "After Auschwitz".¹⁰ The point at issue here has been well made by Eva Geulen:

Adorno's work is perhaps unique in being marked by the experience of a fundamental *untimeliness* that resists its sublation into the totality of an essentially unfinished continuum. This untimeliness can be described as the contradictory and irresolvably ambivalent simultaneity of continuity and discontinuity that circumscribes the position of philosophy after Hegel. [.....] But since the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* - a text written (with Horkheimer) in the US in the 1940's and thus decidedly marked by the experience of a *hiatus* in time - Adorno was increasingly pre-occupied with the uncanny experience of a coincidence between continuity and discontinuity. Their potential indifference, i.e., the impossibility of differentiating between them, depends on a *telos*, but a *telos* that lies *behind* us. [...] Philosophically speaking, Hegel's philosophy is this end; in non-philosophical but not unrelated terms, fascism is for Adorno the end that changed everything - because not enough changed. The truly disruptive experience is nothing other than the uninterrupted continuity: living on after the end.¹¹

What this argument importantly brings to the fore, is precisely what is absent from Habermas's self-proclaimed historical distance from Adorno, namely the question of temporality and the experience of historical temporalisation. Where Habermas's reconstruction of the unfinished project of modernity posits an essentially continuist temporal model of philosophical and socio-economic history, Adorno attempts to decode the experience of this continuity as itself being complicit in the block on the actualisation of emphatic rationality. Utopia is the marker for an "untimeliness" or radical discontinuity from which the "indifference" of continuity and discontinuity might be construed. Thus Habermas's argument against the logical inconceivability of holding together messianic and materialist motif in a utopian materialism can be viewed in a different light; not as a clinching "logical" argument against utopian materialism, but as an *evasion* of the implications and problems that would be raised if one were to take seriously the question of temporality, and by extension, the temporalisation of utopia.

3. The Temporalisation of Utopia:

Something of the nature of the implicit temporalisation of utopia that subtends the supposed transcendence of Adorno's "utopian philosophy" can be obtained through an extraordinary interview (conducted in 1980) between Leo Lowenthal and W. Martin Lüdke.¹² On being asked as to the status of the "utopian motif" - that is "the speculative-utopian call for a resurrection of nature...." - in critical theory, a motif which Habermas "discarded as a kind of ballast"¹³ Lowenthal replies as follows:

Maybe he is right. Perhaps it is ballast. Possibly that is all for the best. when I speak of such things, I feel a bit old and obsolete. After all, one cannot live only on utopian hopes based in never-never land, whose realization seems scarcely within the realm of the possible. Maybe this is a cause of the sadness I spoke of at the outset. But perhaps the theoretical realism I sense in Habermas is the only means of salvaging the motifs present in Critical Theory and thereby of protecting them from a complete disintegration into an empty, melancholy pessimism.¹⁴

The philosophical significance that one grants to the persistence - or otherwise - of the utopian motif in Adorno is conditioned by the theoretical and historical vector from which one approaches, and thereby contextualises, his actuality. Lowenthal's half-hearted advocacy of the "theoretical realism" of Habermas would seem to involve a capitulation of the claims of the utopian materialism of first generation critical theory of fairly major proportions. Whilst Lowenthal maintains that the need for the "critical approach" remains as viable as ever, he suggests that "The utopian motif has been suspended."¹⁵ However, it is surely questionable whether "the critical approach" can be separated from the "utopian motif" without thereby abdicating the transcendent perspective - utopia - that alone guided the practice of determinate negation in the first place. In positing an abstract opposition between "empty-melancholy pessimism" and "theoretical realism" does not Lowenthal concede the claims of first generation critical theory by rendering the matter at hand undialectical? In order that the opposition might be mediated, could it not be argued, against Lowenthal, that only a certain conception

of utopia has been forced into abeyance, a conception that presupposes a particular conception of the temporalisation of utopia grounded in an undialectical configuration of the modal categories of possibility, existence and necessity? For, on Lowenthal's account, it would appear that the future *alone* provides the only temporal dimension through which utopia might be construed. To be sure, critical theory approaches the future through a dialectic of possibility and actuality grounded in a critique of historical and natural necessity. In this respect a futural sense of utopia is conceivable only through the becoming actual of immanent possibilities within the present; and this must be the case if one is not to separate *abstractly* is and ought and thus to relapse (through a positing of the *sollen*) into undialectical theory. But this also entails that the relation between the future, present and past must itself be understood dialectically, which is to say that utopian hope cannot be lodged exclusively within the future tense. Thus, could one not counter Lowenthal's claim as to the abeyance of the utopian motif through a reformulated modal construction of utopian materialism? This, at least, is the argument that will be pressed here.

Thus, rather than surrender the "utopian motif" entirely to the (undialectical) claims of "theoretical realism", what needs to be pursued is both the question of the temporalisation of utopia in Adorno's utopian materialism, and the evasion of the implications of this temporalisation in Habermas's self-proclaimed "transcendence" of the limitations of Adornian critical theory. The philosophical construal of this temporalisation - acknowledged and unacknowledged - is conditioned, it will be argued, by the broader question of the "temporal dialectics of modernity."¹⁶ Insofar the nature of the temporalisation of utopia at stake here is a temporalisation specific to modernity, it should be noted that, conceptually, modernity operates as a specific form of temporalisation; as Peter Osborne has argued, "Modernity is a form of historical time which valorizes the new as the product of a constantly self-negating temporal dynamic. Yet its abstract temporal form remains open to a variety of competing articulations."¹⁷ Insofar as modernity is taken as a *form* of historical time, the competing temporalisations operable within that form, upon which substantive differences over the

nature of modernity would be based, presuppose an exteriority to that form of historical time, a non-representable exteriority which for Adorno is thought under the rubric of utopia. But if this utopia is not to remain as merely the (theological) abstract negation of the present, this exteriority - eternity or utopia - must be brought into conjunction with its temporal representability.

In thinking this conjunction what, initially, needs to be accounted for is the distinction between the historically new and the chronologically new. The radicalization of modernity's time consciousness as a "constantly self-negating temporal dynamic" is, as we have seen, interpreted, by Adorno, under the aegis of a dialectic of reification and remembrance. Insofar as, socio-economically, modernity tendentially advances towards the universalisation of reification, critical cognition of this historical logic must itself proceed through the prosecution of the "the most advanced aesthetic (or theoretical) forces of production". Philosophical and aesthetic remembrance, whose aim is a "utopia of the particular", ¹⁸ does not abstractly negate the logic of reification (posit utopia) but rather, by pursuing the antinomies that beset this logic it attempts to bring to self-consciousness the repressed heteronomy by which abstract identity is unconsciously conditioned. Thus Adorno's understanding of modernity attempts to expose (and diagnose the consequences of) the conflation of the historically new and the chronologically new. As was argued in Chapter One, the tendency of the new towards abstraction signals (through the penetration of the commodity-form to all aspects of life) the naturalisation of history; the historically new is experienced as the eternal return of the same, and the repetitive novelty of the ever-same is mis-recognized as historical novelty. Experientially such conflation portends the evisceration of an emphatic concept of experience, as the conditions for experiencing the new become structured or schematized by the abstract logic of capital's logic of equivalence. This would be the material condition for comprehending the ideology of the experience of time's abstraction; whether as abstract linear time, or as abstract eternal return. To the extent that the new, in its ever-increasing logic of self-negation, and thus ever renewed re-constitution of the old, conflates the historically new with the chronologically new, and

thus naturalises time, the present can only be experienced as fate; thus forestalling the cognition that things could be otherwise, that the historically new might begin. This is the basis upon which Adorno's utopian configuration of the frozen present requires a shift in the temporalisation of utopia from futural anticipation to remembrance.

The implications of this shift in the temporalisation of utopia are not pursued in Habermas's linguistic re-working of critical theory. Where Habermas takes the issue of "modernity's consciousness of time" ¹⁹ as the starting point for his reconstruction of the philosophical discourse of modernity, the "exteriority" to the temporal dialectics of modernity that Adorno terms utopia becomes, with Habermas, the notion of an "ideal speech situation" - a modification which bears enormous consequences for their respective constructions of modernity. Of the ideal speech situation Habermas argues that "One should not imagine the ideal speech situation as a utopian model for an emancipated society. I use it only to reconstruct the concept of reason, that is, a concept of communicative reason, which I would like to mobilize against Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Horkheimer and Adorno allow reason to shrivel down to the "unreason" of mimesis. In the mimetic powers the promise of reconciliation is sublated. For Adorno that then leads to *Negative Dialectics* - in other words to nowhere." ²⁰ The harshness of Habermas's polemic derives from his claim that Adorno and Horkheimer's "totalizing critique" of reason leaves itself unable to rationally ground itself, and further, that in its global indictment of unfreedom as the realization of modernity's drive to dominate the other, Adorno and Horkheimer foreclose on the cognitive, aesthetic and ethical advances of modernity. Habermas summarizes his conception of modernity succinctly,

as the separation of the substantive reason expressed in religion and metaphysics into three autonomous spheres. They are: science, morality and art. These come to be differentiated because the unified world conceptions of religion and metaphysics fell apart. Since the 18th century, the problems inherited from these older world-views could be re-arranged so as to fall under specific aspects of validity: truth, normative rightness, authenticity and beauty. They could then be

handled as questions of knowledge, or of justice and morality, or of taste. ²¹

Not only does Habermas ratify the Kantian delimitation of domains of experience under the aegis of a Weberian account of disenchantment as the separation of value spheres, but he reconstructs a philosophical discourse of modernity in order to demonstrate how any attempt to evade this differentiation leads to a regression of theory whose aporias can all be shown to derive from the failure to transcend the "paradigm" of subject-centred reason. Habermas's narrative is intended to counter the dissociation of modernity and reason upon which (he claims) such progressive differentiation is based. Two forms of this dissociation assume primacy in Habermas's re-construction: a *neo-conservative* and an *anarchist* dissociation, both of which, he argues, claim to have transcended modernity towards "*post-histoire*." ²² If the conception of reason upon which differentiated modernity was predicated can no longer be supported, then, for the sake of the preservation of the ideals of modernity, indeed for the sake of the preservation of modernity as a project, reason will have to be reconstructed according to the premises of communicative action.

Even though Habermas clearly recognises the fact that the self-conceptualisation of modernity involves a distinct form of temporalisation (the perpetual self-negating present and the "chronological simultaneity of historically nonsynchronous developments" ²³) the precise status of this recognition in Habermas's re-construction of self-differentiating reason under the guise of logics of rationalisation remains unclear. Peter Osborne has argued that Habermas "fails to reflect upon the ontological status of this idea [modernity's consciousness of time], taking it for granted as an external merely empirical historical premise of his thought. He thus foregoes the opportunity for a combined - historical and philosophical - deepening of the concept of subjectivity, taking it over ready-made from Kant in its most abstract and ahistorical form." ²⁴ Osborne's objection is vital to understanding why, despite his self-proclaimed historical distance from Adorno's work, Habermas construes his dispute with Adorno primarily in

terms of theory. The failures of negative dialectics are deemed to be "logical" (negative dialectics is indicted for resulting in a "performative contradiction" ²⁵), as though Adorno's self-reflexive engagement with the "after" of Hegel and Auschwitz were merely a matter of empirical time and history. However, might not the "performative contradiction" of negative dialectics, which for Habermas characterizes the impasse of Adorno's inability to exit the subject-centred "paradigm" of reason, operate as an index of the crisis of modernity's self-consciousness of time insofar as this time consciousness is predicated upon the very rationalisation which Habermas wants to underwrite? For what the logic of rationalisation tendentially undercuts is the very basis upon which a counter-logic of the realisation of the ideals of enlightenment is predicated.

It is Adorno's acute consciousness of the implications of the temporal dialectics of modernity for any account of agency and praxis - and thus of a logic of realisation or actualisation - that gives rise to the oft-repeated dictum that Adorno severs theory from practice and thus is unable to account for how the intimations of repressed possibilities uncovered by dialectical theory might be actualized in the future. ²⁶ Although the charge has purchase, its implications must be understood dialectically. The charge that Adorno, by himself "mythologizing" the impasse of the present as a world-historical condition, severs theory from practice, would itself need to give some account of how, and in what sense, an anti-capitalist account of agency would be in any way less utopian (in the derogatory sense) than Adorno's utopian call for a reconciliation with nature. What, in the present, would constitute the conditions for an anti-capitalist interest, and how would such an interest be developed in terms of an account of revolutionary agency? The charge that Adorno's work entails "resignation" in not providing prescriptive rules for praxis would need to confront not only Adorno's own critique of the degeneration of the dialectic of theory and praxis at the hands of vulgar Marxism, but also take into account the historical determinacy of Adorno's negative dialectics, namely its "specific function as a response to and critique of a presumably postideological society no longer in need of theory because technology has replaced technology." ²⁷ Further, it could be argued that Adorno's diagnosis of socio-economic

stasis in the present (the stasis of a world frozen into competing power blocks, neither of which - despite the obligatory rhetoric to the contrary - showed any sign of liberating the individual from its abstract subsumption by the totality ²⁸) was not intended to be a clinching argument against utopian transfiguration of the relations of production. Rather this diagnosis was predicated on the argument that, given the predominance of the totality over the individual, - a predominance which, as we have seen, Adorno speculatively traces back to the domination of nature - the individual is, to quote Hohendahl once again, left "with the futile choice between a revolution that would not change the structure of domination, on the one hand, and individual passivity, on the other." ²⁹ Thus, the (Marxist) demand for praxis, or agency, fails to take into account the way in which the Marxist logic of praxis is itself implicated in the very logic of domination which it contests. This was of course the basis for Adorno's critique of vulgar Marxism's apotheosis of the metaphysics of production: "the dialectic of praxis also demanded that praxis as production for production's sake, as the universal cover for false praxis, should be done away with. That is the materialist ground for those traits in negative dialectic which rebel against official materialist doctrine. The moment of independence and irreducibility in spirit (*Geist*) might indeed sit well with the priority (*Vorrang*) of the object. Wherever spirit here and now becomes independent, as soon as it names the bondage into which it falls insofar as it binds others, it, and not an entangled praxis, anticipates freedom." ³⁰ It is Adorno's recognition of this problem, more specifically of the difficulty of elaborating a Marxist account of futural realisation, once the metaphysics of production underlying such an account have been shown to be complicit with the negation of such an actualisation, that is at stake in his construction of utopia in terms of a dialectic of remembrance and anticipation as opposed to a merely futural sense of revolutionary actualisation. Utopia is understood less as a horizon of futural realisation, and rather as the memory of the untimely fragments of the historically new (which could, of course, be the chronologically old) which would de-mythologize the illusory immutability of the present as itself a reversion to myth's abstract repetition of the same under the guise of the permanent production of the new.

It is in this sense that Adorno argues that "anachronism becomes the refuge of modernity." ³¹

This crisis of utopian logics of progress or realisation, of which Marxism would be inscribed, is self-consciously registered by Adorno's sense of history as the contradictory unity of progress and regression. The cognition that a logic of progress can all too easily occlude an emphatic concept of the future by construing the future as merely the continuation of the present, leads him to argue that it is "Remembrance (*Eingedenken*) alone [that] is able to give flesh and blood to Utopia, without betraying it to empirical life." ³² Remembrance and utopia collide, for Adorno, in the restitution that the present owes to the constitutive (but unactualised) possibilities of that present in the name of an unposited future.

Because Habermas does not fully engage the implications of the temporal dialectics of modernity for his own reconstruction of the project of modernity in terms of differentiated logics of rationalisation, the defence he stages of modernity misses its mark. For what Habermas construes as failed attempts to break with the project of modernity - which Habermas denominates "neo-conservative" and "anarchist" *posthistoire* - can (once modernity as a form of temporalisation is taken seriously as having implications for the form and possibility of theorizing modernity, as opposed to being treated as merely an empirical pre-supposition for that theorizing) be seen as attempts to break with, or at the least problematise, a particular form of the temporal dialectics of modernity. On this reading, the contemporary variants of *posthistoire*, against which Habermas seeks to defend modernity as a "project", signify not the end of modernity, but rather the end of a particular temporalisation of modernity in which utopia operates as the horizon of futural actualisation. This is the position which is argued by Andreas Huyssen's historical diagnosis of a contemporary "end of utopia" thesis. In analysing the claims of a postmodern "end of utopia" (which would itself ironically repeat the "end of ideology thesis" of the 1950's) Huyssen argues that what has come to an end, is not the utopian impulse *per se*, but rather a certain temporalisation of utopia. Huyssen identifies three levels of the "end of utopia" thesis:

first, at the political level, the "new conservatism" which followed 1968; secondly, at the philosophical level, the post-structuralist critiques of the "grand narratives" of the enlightenment; and thirdly, at the level of postmodern theory and information technology, the claim that utopia has already been achieved through the dystopian subversion of the logic of actualisation such that "...in the society of the simulacrum reality itself has become u-topian, hyper-real." ³³ If reality "itself" has become hyper-real, what sense can be given to the "traditional" utopian claim of a transfiguration of reality? Huyssen's analysis bears a striking similarity to Habermas's with the proviso that what, for Habermas, is interpreted under the guise of a reconstruction of modernity indifferent to its temporal presuppositions, is, with Huyssen, explicitly situated in terms of the temporal dialectics of modernity.

What, Huyssen argues, the three aspects of the critique of utopia indicate is not the exhaustion of utopian energies *per se*, but rather the exhaustion of a particular temporalisation of utopia; namely a purely futural logic of actualisation: "Perhaps what we are currently witnessing as the exhaustion of utopian energies vis-à-vis the future is only the result of a shift within the temporal organization of the utopian imagination from its futuristic pole toward the pole of remembrance, not in the sense of a radical turn, but in the sense of a shift of emphasis." ³⁴ Against the charge that this "turn" merely represents a nostalgia for what is no longer possible, Huyssen provides the appropriate retort, "Nostalgia itself, however, is not the opposite of utopia, but, as a form of memory, always implicated, even productive in it. After all, it is the ideology of modernization itself that has given nostalgia its bad name, and we do not need to abide by that judgement. Moreover, the desire for history and memory may also be a cunning form of defence: defence, in Kluge's formulation, against the attack of the present on the rest of time." ³⁵

This passage allows for the connection of the historical and philosophical comprehension of Adorno's memorial construction of utopia. Historical comprehension in the sense that memory as a "form of defence ... against the attack of the present on the rest of time" registers the historically determinate logic of modernity's conflation of

the chronologically new with the historically new. Insofar as the abstract temporality of unreflective progress itself forecloses on the historically new by the perpetuated production of the repetition of (chronological) novelty, memory becomes the historical condition of possibility for an emphatic concept of the possibility of historical novelty; that is, for a cognition that history might begin. But further, insofar as this turn to memory is described as a "cunning form of defence", we should not forget the dialectical truth that Adorno detects in Odyssean cunning; namely that although cunning is the pre-condition for the subjective domination of nature, it is only through the constitution of the subject that the blind repetition of unspiritualized nature can be brought to self-consciousness and thus broken. By analogy, memory as a form of philosophical cunning thus remains implicated within the historical present it would like to escape from whilst allowing for the possibility of cognizing that present as the block on the utopian future, the mere continued insistence upon which, whilst safeguarding one's political good conscience, changes nothing with respect to its concrete possibility. The burden of constructing a utopias of memory - above and beyond the sociological dispute over the status and form of the concept of modernity - lies in the philosophical vindication of memory as the moment of dialectical mediation between the temporal dialectics of modernity and the temporalisation of utopia, a task Adorno pursues in his "Meditations on Metaphysics."

4. Remembrance and utopian materialism.

Where Habermas, in his Kantian reading of Marx ³⁶, discerns a logical incompatibility between materialism and the "mystical" redemption of nature, Adorno's Marxist reading of Kant in his "Meditations on Metaphysics" attempts - aporetically - to hold utopia and materialism together. Habermas's divorcing of the two derives from his assumption that an account of reason can be given that would not be implicated in modernity's tendency to reduce reason to instrumental reason - that is to rationalisation. This in turn, it has been argued, derives from his blindness to the fact that theory

cannot remain untouched by the temporal dialectics of modernity which it would claim to theorize. Not only does Adorno recognize that reason cannot remain untouched by rationalisation, but in attempting to maintain a role for reflective reason in the face of the tendential universalisation of reification, he self-consciously extends the consequences of this reification to the possibility of theory, which is why, in comparison with Habermas, the resistance to reification extends to the very form of Adorno's texts. In the face of the tendential universalisation of reification, and the subsequent occlusion of a praxial realisation of theory, Adorno's texts enact the difficulty of praxis at the level of philosophical form. If the future can no longer unproblematically be understood as a horizon for the realisation of reason, the critique of reification must discern the contours of an unposited future through the memory of possibilities occluded in and by the present. The possibility of redeeming the historically new from its conflation with the chronologically new is the praxial work of remembrance undertaken by negative dialectics and modernist art. This would be the ground for comprehending Adorno's claim that reconciliation with nature is to proceed through remembrance. Where Habermas judges Adorno to have committed a category error (and thereby fails to pursue any further the philosophical claims and implications of Adorno's concept of remembrance), we have suggested here that Adorno's construction of utopia in terms of remembrance is to be understood as an historically determinate response to the historical evisceration of an emphatic conception of reason by modernity's logic of rationalisation. However, the utopian import of Adorno's praxis of remembrance still remains to be philosophically vindicated in the face of the Habermasian challenge.

Taking his cue from Habermas's argument that the theological and materialist elements of Adorno's utopianism cannot be simultaneously maintained, Albrecht Wellmer has sought to free Adorno's work from its aporetic stasis by "translating" ³⁷ its central concerns into the framework of communicative action. Rather than beginning with the denial of the possibility of holding the theological and materialist together in the concept of utopia, Wellmer seeks the consequences of such an operation. Thus he

argues that "[Adorno's] eschatological-sensualist utopia puts such an immeasurable gap between historical reality and the condition of reconciliation that the task of bridging it can no longer constitute a meaningful goal of human praxis." ³⁸ This is why, Wellmer argues, Adorno can locate a meaningful praxial dimension only in the production of works of art; aesthetic synthesis becomes the paradigm for a praxis which is no longer possible. Mimesis, which Habermas, Wellmer and Benhabib, all read as Adorno's name for the "other" of conceptual discourse, thus assumes the role of a model for this aesthetic praxis, with the consequence that Adorno, it is claimed, surrenders the possibility of rationally grounding his critique of modern rationality and rationalisation. Wellmer therefore concludes that,

.... the immeasurability of the gap between reality and utopia means that reality becomes fixed transcendently, so to speak, prior to all experience. If truth can only be accorded to us if we see the world 'as it shall be revealed, distorted and deprived, in the messianic light', then the murderous character of world history is ensured even before the experience of it can lead us into despair. The fact that the necessity of such despair is built into the fundamental categories of Adorno's philosophy explains, if anything does, the peculiar way in which the question of truth in Adorno's interpretations of modern art is decided in advance. ³⁹

The substance of the debate over utopia is metaphysical; as we have seen, there is, for Adorno, an inherently utopian aspect to the identifications of conceptuality and exchange. Negative dialectics and modernist art bring this to light by revealing the non-identity between subject and object, thereby exposing the illusory nature of these identity claims. But insofar as what is taken to be 'reason' or 'truth' is complicit in the block on realizing the "rational identity" of subject and object ⁴⁰ - a complicity whose trajectory is that of reification, and thus the forgetting of non-identity - the cognition of this illusory identity is itself condemned to illusion. Negative dialectics and modernist art prosecute the redemptive critique of illusion by way of illusion. To disavow illusion as the realm of critique would be to confirm the necessity of existing reality and thus to ratify its repression of the possibility that things might be otherwise. The redemption of

repressed possibility is co-terminous with the real identity of thought and being; an identity which would not be posited and thus, for the present, falls under the ban on its being imaged. The reverse side of instrumental reason's illegitimate claim to an identity with its objects is its repression of its naturalistic aspect. Suffering is both the condition of thought and its subsequently repressed other. Remembrance of the conditionedness of reason aims to bring the imbrication of reason and nature to self-consciousness. Modernist art-works, by virtue of their a-conceptual synthesis provide the most emphatic models of what a non-sacrificial identity would involve. Constitutive of such models is a remembrance of need, suffering and the longing that such suffering might not be perpetuated:

If the element of longing is excised, art works become sterile; if it hypostatized, they become embodiments of impotence. As a rule they do transcend longing because they relate to real historical being into which are etched outlines of want and neediness. By retracing these outlines, art goes beyond mere being, passing over into objective truth, for want implies the overcoming of want. That which is - as an in-itself rather than as a consciousness for-itself - wills the other. Art works are the language (*Sprache*) of this will; they are no less substantial than will itself. The elements of this other are all present in reality, but in order to come together they must be displaced, however slightly, and thus brought into new constellations. Far from imitating (*imitierten*) reality, works of art actually show reality how this kind of displacement is effected - which points to the conclusion that we must reverse the copy theory of realist aesthetics: in a subtle sense reality ought to imitate (*nachahmen*) works of art, not the other way around. By their presence art works signal the possibility of the non-existent; their reality testifies to the possibility (*Möglichkeit*) of the unreal, the possible. More specifically, in art longing, which posits the actuality of the non-existent, takes the form of remembrance (*Erinnerung*).⁴¹

Remembrance here enacts the complex temporality of Adorno's utopian materialism, in which utopia is not to be construed exclusively as a futural telos immanent within existing reality, but rather, through the dialectical mediation of possibility and existence, the present is construed as the site of possibility only through the memory of the non-existent. This conjunction of materialism and utopia is philosophically expounded in

Negative Dialectics through a critical rescuing of the theological claims of Kantian metaphysics at "the moment (*Augenblick*) of its fall." ⁴² Adorno seeks to pursue this rescue by arguing that the theological must enter into an aporetic relation with the worldly: that to forgo the transcending impulse which has traditionally been thought in theological terms is to surrender the world to its progressive disenchantment in which the memory that things could be otherwise is conclusively eradicated from consciousness; whilst at the same time acknowledging that the secularization of the theological is an irreversible process.

However, does not Wellmer's claim that Adorno's ban on depicting utopia in positive terms serves to "transcendentally" fix reality in "negative terms", still retain a telling plausibility? The corollary of this claim is that Adorno's utopian logic of reconciliation amounts to little more than "negative theology." ⁴³ In Chapter Three we have sought to construct a defence of Adorno from this charge through attention to his dialectic of modernist art. Here I would like to attempt a philosophical vindication of Adorno's construction of utopia in terms of reconciliation. Wellmer, as we have seen, argues that due to Adorno's choice of fundamental categories, subjectification can only be seen in terms of reification, thus ensuring that redemption from the intra-historical logic of reification can only be conceptualized in terms of messianic redemption; which is to say, for Wellmer, that it cannot be conceptualized within the categories of materialism at all. Thus, it is claimed, Adorno's historico-philosophical critique of the intertwining of conceptual and economic reification leads, inexorably, to the "necessity of despair." Might it not be argued, however, that this alleged "necessity of despair" is, in fact, an affliction which arises in and through the communicative re-interpretation of Adorno's thought? For, against Habermas and Wellmer, I suggest that Adorno's "Meditations on Metaphysics" offers a critical interrogation of the experience of the "necessity of despair" which seeks to redeem an emphatic concept of experience through which one could discern the experience of necessity *as* the experience of despair. The argument that will be pressed here is that insofar as Adorno's retrieval of the speculative moment in Kant is, implicitly, a critique of the categorial separation of

value-spheres which Habermas and Wellmer take to be axiomatic in their construction of modernity, Adorno offers here, *avant la lettre*, his own philosophical critique of the philosophy of communicative action.

The key to this argument is to be found in Adorno's claim that,

Kant's rescue of the intelligible (*intelligiblen*) sphere is not merely the Protestant apologetics known to all; it is also an attempted intervention in the dialectics of enlightenment, at the point where this dialectics terminates in the abolition of reason. (*Abschaffung von Vernunft*) That the ground of the Kantian rescuing urge lies far deeper than just in the pious wish to have, amidst nominalism and against it, some of the traditional ideas in hand - this is attested by the construction of immortality as a postulate of practical reason. The postulate condemns the intolerability of extant things (*Bestehenden*) and confirms the spirit of its recognition. That no reforms within the world sufficed to do justice to the dead, that none of them touched upon the wrong of death - this is what moves Kantian reason to hope against reason (*Vernunft*). The secret of his philosophy is the unthinkability of despair (*Unausdenkbarkeit der Verzweiflung*).⁴⁴

Before engaging with Adorno's reading of Kant we must take note of the specificity of his designation of the "Meditations on Metaphysics" as a "model" in and of negative dialectics. "Models", Adorno claims, do not merely provide examples of general concepts for which their particularity would be a matter of indifference. "Models" bring negative dialectics "into the realm of reality"⁴⁵ by suspending the discursive logic of subsumption of the particular under the general. However, because the dialectic here is negative, this entails that the opposition between universal and particular will not be speculatively sublated; negative dialectics does not seek to grasp the identity of identity and non-identity through its models, but rather, to experience its own philosophical dereliction in bringing dialectics to a standstill. This is why, in retrieving the speculative moment of Kantian metaphysics, Adorno does not prosecute the path of Hegelian speculative philosophy:

The debate between Kant and Hegel, in which Hegel's devastating argument had the last word, is not over; perhaps because what was decisive, the superior power of logical stringency, is untrue in the face of

Kantian discontinuities. Through his critique of Kant, Hegel achieved a magnificent extension of the practice of critical philosophy beyond the formal sphere; at the same time, in so doing he evaded the supreme critical moment, the critique of totality, of something infinite and conclusively given.⁴⁶

Whilst the "Kantian discontinuities" referred to above could be taken to refer to the distinctions between domains of experience as articulated through the three *Critiques*, it will be argued here that the pivotal "discontinuity" in Adorno's reception of Kant is that which Kant posits as obtaining between knowledge of the empirical world and the thinkability of the intelligible world. In pursuing an aporetic engagement with what he terms the "Kantian block" on knowing what transcends the immanence of the categorially constituted empirical world, Adorno pursues a two-fold agenda: to *historically* comprehend the supposed "immutability" of the Kantian conditions of possibility for cognition as social and historical in character, but also, having demonstrated this, to *philosophically* re-work the Kantian block on conflating knowability and thinkability as providing a block to triumphant subjectivity (Hegel's "mythology of the concept"⁴⁷) and thereby to turn Kant's subjective idealism against his construction of the subject; such a turn thereby instituting the "passage to materialism"⁴⁸ whose defining characteristic is the liberation of repressed possibility from existence understood as being regulated by the category of necessity. Thus, Adorno's refusal to "adjudicate" on the "debate" between Kant and Hegel signifies not a moment of theoretical indecision on the part of Adorno - indeed it would not be implausible to suggest that the fulcrum of Adorno's philosophical thought consists in an extended oscillatory meditation on the implications of the philosophical transition from Kant to Hegel⁴⁹ - but rather an attempt to undercut the very terms of the debate by recovering the "repressed" materialist condition of Idealism, without relapsing into pre-critical dogmatic metaphysics, positivism or undialectical Marxist materialism.

Insofar as Adorno's social and historical "decoding" of Kant's transcendental subject as "spiritualized labour" has already been considered in Chapter One, we will treat the first aspect of his reading of Kant very briefly here. It will be sufficient to add

that because Adorno's focus here is on the separation between the intelligible realm and the empirical realm, his "decoding" of Kant issues in the argument that this separation is legislated dogmatically. The anaemic nature of Kant's account of experience in the first *Critique* is taken to indicate both the truth and untruth of his system, the detection of which is designed to set in motion a different constellation of postulate and experience. Adorno's argument could be briefly paraphrased as follows: Kant's rigid separation of form and content in cognition is what conditions the eternal restriction of experience to the bounds of the categories and restricts the exploration of the unintelligible realm. However, it is precisely this rigid separation to which Kant is not critically entitled. Rather, if form and content are conceived according to a model of reciprocal mediation, then the block on experience straying beyond its prescribed limits and thereby informing the postulates is an historically contingent and therefore mutable one. The Kantian subject expresses a shape of consciousness unaware of its conditioned status; thus Adorno argues, "If the material element lies in the forms themselves, the block is shown to have been made by the very subject it inhibits. The subject is both exalted and debased if the line is drawn inside it in its transcendental logical organization." ⁵⁰ Refusing to construe Kant primarily as an epistemologist, Adorno aims to decode Kant's account of experience socially, arguing that it is true to the extent that it expresses the abstract, formal nature of the experience of wage-labour, false to the extent that it eternalizes this character; thereby reifying this conditioned and thus changeable condition of the subject of experience.

This argument, taken by itself, would establish little more than a fairly orthodox Hegelian Marxist position, repeating in essence the argument offered (minus, of course the valorization of the Proletariat as the subject-object of history) by Lukács in his "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat" essay. But Adorno does intend more; namely a critical rescuing of the metaphysical impulse of transcendence which animates Kant's construction of the postulates of Practical Reason. In his "Meditations on Metaphysics", Adorno pursues an aporetic construal of the theological claims of Kantian metaphysics, self-consciously operating in the wake of nihilism's devaluation of

the claims of theology. Negative dialectics, characterized as "accompanying metaphysics at the moment of its fall", in seeking to re-configure theology and materialism, is motivated by the question of whether "it is still possible to have a metaphysical experience?"⁵¹ Adorno's question here is deeply bound up with an attempt to re-work Kant's transcendental Ideas (which become practical postulates in the *Critique of Practical Reason*), precisely those ideas which, according to Nietzsche, in the modern twilight of the idols, succumb to the process of nihilism. Of course, Adorno is not seeking to deny this process, which on his account is deeply bound up with the Weberian thesis of the disenchantment of the world and the ever more expansive sway of capital accumulation, both of which betoken an indifference to substantive ends; rather he is re-examining the highest values in the wake of their tendential devaluation for the traces of a residual utopian memory of ends-oriented reason. That is to say, he is seeking to recover a truth-content sedimented in these now obsolete Ideas. Thus, the second aspect of his argument in the "Meditations on Metaphysics" involves the claim that the decline of metaphysics, more generally understood as the movement of Western history captured by Nietzsche, Marx and Weber, betokens an irreversible movement; but that paradoxically, it is only at the moment of its fall that metaphysics reveals a previously hidden truth content. Perhaps we could say that what is at stake here is an aporetic formulation of the problem of how to think meaning (or how to non-dogmatically re-enchant the Ideas of Reason) in a situation marked by the general loss of meaning (progressive disenchantment).

Adorno's argument proceeds by locating a contradiction in Kant's attempt to account for how freedom might have any practical force within the empirical world. Citing a passage from the Third Antinomy of the *Critique of Pure Reason*⁵² in which Kant hesitantly offers the possibility that freedom might be able to intervene in the empirical world and thus "change the world" - precisely what his critique of dogmatic metaphysics ought to have prohibited - Adorno quite rightly argues that insofar as freedom must be transcendent to the categorially constituted world of appearance within the forms of space and time, it cannot act as a predicate of existential

judgements; for freedom to be so predicable would entail that it would have to be intuitable, but if this were to be the case freedom would fall under the causal necessity that categorially constitutes the world of appearances which freedom was to have changed. However, this contradiction is not, for Adorno, to be erased, but rather to be taken as the index of a truth content that obtains within the Kantian doctrine of a "block" which can be pursued through an aporetic reading of Kant's construction of the postulate of immortality in the *Critique of Practical Reason*.

What is the status of the postulates of Practical Reason? If they are to have "objectivity", that is to say, if the postulates are to be conceived of as at least bearing the possibility of being realized, and thus instantiated within empirical reality, then "something" must be thought in and through these postulates, a "something" which cannot be an intuition just as it cannot also be an "airy nothing".⁵³ Although these postulates, as regulative ideas, are unknowable, they are, for Kant at least thinkable. But what is the condition of this thinkability? This condition is the "something" which tacitly at least, must draw on the very intuitions necessary for the thinkability of the postulates to attain objective reality, but impossible insofar as the Kantian block prohibits the extension of appearances beyond the forms of the categories and space and time. Thus Wellmer in his analysis of this section argues that "...as names of the real, these ideas [the postulates of practical reason] are only thinkable because in terms of their meaning they are always - in a way that Kant did not perceive - related to possible experiences, or to the conditions of possible experience. In fact, they assume, in their different ways, the concept of an individuated spiritual being, or rather that of a world of individuated spiritual beings; in the concept of a spiritual being, however, in the only way in which we can conceive of it, its physicality, and therefore space and time and possible experience are always implied from the beginning."⁵⁴ The intelligible realm cannot be thought of an object of intuition, but neither can it be conceived, as we have seen, without surreptitiously importing intuitional material into purely rational concepts; it can be thought in negations only. This thinking in negations is precisely where Adorno locates the "truth content" of Kant's notion of the intelligible realm:

Paradoxically, the intelligible sphere which Kant envisioned would once again be "appearance" (*Erscheinung*): it would be that which is hidden from the finite mind (*Geist*), what the mind is forced to think and, due to its own finiteness, to disfigure. The concept of the intelligible is the self-negation of the finite mind. ⁵⁵

The "axial turn" which Adorno aims to give to the "Copernican Revolution" ⁵⁶ reaches an extraordinary denouement here (significantly, Albrecht Wellmer, in his discussion of Adorno's "Meditations on Metaphysics" does not cite, or even acknowledge, this passage, an omission we will return to). The "self-negation of the finite mind" does not issue in the sublation of finitude and its reflective "other" (nature) into a speculative identity, as with Hegel, but rather, in a manner directly opposed to the intention of Kantian ethics, the finite mind becomes aware - through remembrance of nature in the subject - that the "intelligible realm" operates as the dialectical key to both its servitude and the possibility of freedom. It may, at first sight, appear surprising that Adorno seeks to find a truth content in Kant's postulates of practical reason. After all, the prevailing tenor of Kant's moral philosophy is hardly compatible with the principal motif of Adorno's materialism; that it is the remembrance of bodily suffering which is "what compels us to think"⁵⁷. Indeed, for Kant, the realisation of the moral law (as the telos of rational moral willing) is predicated upon the denial of precisely the empirical, corporeal desiring subject which, Adorno argues, is the condition of conceiving an individuated rational being in the first place. ⁵⁸ However this apparent contradiction in Adorno's argument disappears when it becomes clear that these postulates cannot, for Adorno, be defended unless submitted to a materialistic re-working. It was in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* that Adorno and Horkheimer had argued that the myths that fell victim to enlightenment critique were its own creations. This is precisely the structure of Adorno's claim in the "Meditations on Metaphysics." Kant's "immortal soul", "pure rational beings", and "holy wills" are themselves myths that succumb, in the process of progressive enlightenment, to precisely the critique of dogmatic metaphysics which Kant himself had pursued in the "Transcendental Dialectic" of the *Critique of Pure*

Reason. However, what can be defended is what emerges from the rubble of the critical architectonic at the moment of its destruction; namely the concept of the intelligible realm which returns once again as an "aporetic" concept.

For Adorno, Kant's doctrine of non-corporeal and yet individuated, spiritual beings, predicated as it is upon the division of body and spirit which is the intellectualised after-image of the domination of nature, cannot be critically rescued.⁵⁹ However, the postulate, once shorn of its architectonic self-understanding, and construed aporetically, contains a truth-content that illuminates the untruth of this very division of spirit and body. For the division is itself drawn by the finite spirit which, in forgetting its conditionedness within nature, posits nature as an object over and against which it stands. But Kant's postulates, in transcending the immanence of the finite spirit, intimate reason's non-identity with itself. For Adorno Kant's construction of the postulates of practical reason expounds the dialectical character of reason whilst, in maintaining the block on conflating the thinkability and yet unknowability of the intelligible world, exposes reason's constitutive non-identity with itself. It is the memory of this non-identity which, through self-negation, releases the subject from its self-proclaimed autonomy, and thus frees nature from its incipient (Hegelian) sublation into an extorted identity with the subject. Reason's self-negation enacts a remembrance of its conditionedness. What would be different, uncoerced reconciliation between spirit and nature, a difference which configures the constitutive non-identity that traverses both spirit and unredeemed nature, would lie in the recognition, or better, remembrance that, as yet, "nature does not exist."⁶⁰ Kant's positing of a transcendence of the immanence of nature (an immanence which Adorno's Marxist re-reading discerns, historically, as second nature) is re-written as the historically possible, but as yet unactualised, redemption of nature.

By tracing the truth content of Kant's construction of the intelligible world to the point at which progressive de-mythologization threatens to convict the transcending impulse which animates that construction of itself being myth, the postulate of immortality is thus given a paradoxically materialist twist: "What demythologization

would not affect is not an argument ... but the experience that if thought is not decapitated it will flow into transcendence, through to the idea of a world that would not only abolish existent suffering but revoke the suffering that is irrevocably past." ⁶¹

The aporetic return of Kant's intelligible world neither asserts the existence of a transcendent realm (theological metaphysics) nor denies its existence (positivism) but rather attests to the possibility of what, at present, does not exist. According to a passage previously cited from *Aesthetic Theory*, remembrance, as the critical consciousness of possibility which contests existing reality's appearance of necessity, is the form which such an attestation of unredeemed suffering takes in the face of the tendential forgetting of the possibility of transcendence. "Metaphysical experience", the possibility of which is the object of the "Meditations on Metaphysics", is thus co-terminous with the illusory autonomy of "finite mind" whose "self-negation" is revealed as the truth content of Kant's intelligible world. This self-negation is the work of the remembrance of the indebtedness of spirit to its constitutively disavowed naturalness. But because this truth content is revealed only at the moment of the fall of metaphysics, the metaphysical construction of transcendence must itself be re-worked through the secularization of its theological impulse. Thus, the postulate of immortality which, for Kant, entailed the potentially infinite progress towards moral perfection enjoined by the need to give objective reality to "holiness" ⁶² (a progress predicated upon the suppression of the material and natural pre-conditions of a "totally rational being") is compelled, after the destruction of the "inalienability of one's own death" in the death-camps, to descend to the material, somatic level of suffering. After Auschwitz "[N]o remembrance (*Eingedenken*) of transcendence is possible any more, save by way of transience (*Vergängnis*): eternity appears, not as such, but diffracted through the most perishable." ⁶³ The "unthinkability of despair" contained in Kant's postulate of immortality is, after the fall of metaphysics, redeemable only through a materialist re-inscription, the principle of which is the remembrance of transient "first nature".

As we have noted above, Wellmer does not pursue the implications of Adorno's "paradoxical" inversion of the Kantian concept of the "intelligible realm." Instead,

having delineated the structure of Adorno's argument in the "Meditations on Metaphysics", he focuses, not on the implications of this inversion, but rather on what we have outlined as the first element of Adorno's double reading of Kant; namely the historico-philosophical critique of the supposedly immutable forms of cognition. Adjudging Adorno's critique to be merely Hegelian, (which, oddly, he characterizes as a return to pre-critical metaphysics, ⁶⁴) Wellmer argues that even if the forms of thought could be shown to be historically contingent, and thus alterable, "...only at the cost of philosophical naiveté could one conclude from the historical character of our forms of thought and apperception that the Absolute as reconciliation - or that absolute reconciliation - could become a historical reality." ⁶⁵ Even if one were to agree with this verdict, it is arguable whether it applies to Adorno. The grounds for questioning the appositeness of this critique arise from Wellmer's assumption that because Adorno's makes use of an essentially Hegelian criticism of Kant in locating his approach to Kant, his argument must remain essentially Hegelian in its intention. But this is precisely what the specificity of the "Meditations on Metaphysics" as a *model* of negative dialectics puts in doubt.

What is at stake here is Wellmer's characterization of Adorno's utopian materialism through the assumption that what is at work in Adorno's argument is an essentially Hegelian logic of realisation. This assumption must ignore Adorno's insistence upon what eludes dialectical logic; that is, it must ignore Adorno's bringing the dialectic to a standstill as a form of philosophical remembrance. In reading Adorno according to a logic of realisation, Wellmer thereby remains blind to the way in which the future to be actualized is always only conceivable, for Adorno, through its refraction through the memory of non-identity. Because Wellmer reads Adorno too narrowly as merely Hegelian, he thereby misses the implications of Adorno's concept of remembrance as a ruptural intervention into the (illusory) continuity of historical time. Thus Wellmer's argument that, "If the hope of salvation were to be fulfilled in history, it would not be the hope of salvation that was fulfilled (but rather of a fulfilled life). On the other hand, if what was fulfilled were really the hope of salvation, this would still

not designate a new condition of *history*" cannot but appear as somewhat beside the point; and this for two reasons: first, the surreptitious shift to the language of "salvation" as opposed to Adorno's language of reconciliation already pre-judges the theological issue, whereas the movement of Adorno's "Meditations" seeks to maintain an aporetic tension between the theological and the materialist, a tension that notably eschews the language of "salvation"; and secondly because in arguing that a redeemed condition would not, on Adorno's argument, "designate a new condition of *history*" Wellmer would appear to assume precisely what Adorno's argument contests, namely that reconciliation can be conceived as merely a qualitative change *within* a temporal continuum - this is the point of Adorno's polemical claim that "history has not yet begun."

Elsewhere, however, Wellmer does acknowledge these issues, but in so doing he once again significantly pre-judges the philosophical stakes because, arguably, he fails to accord philosophical weight to the issue of remembrance. In an essay ("Ethics and Dialogue") devoted to an engagement with Habermas's discourse ethics, Wellmer argues, in contradistinction to a position (of conceiving the Absolute as an end to a progressive continuum) he attributes to K. O. Apel that, "Adorno was still enough of a theologian to know that such an absolute - which for him, too, represented the condition of the possibility of truth - could only be conceived as an absolute horizon for the history of reason if it were firmly associated with the idea of a radical *break* with historical continuity: reconciliation, for him, would be the complete obverse of reason as it existed." ⁶⁶ Wellmer is right to argue here that the idea of a radical break with historical time is intrinsic to Adorno's concept of reconciliation (emphatic truth) but wrong to argue that, for Adorno this entailed a conception of reason as "the complete obverse of reason as it existed". If this were Adorno's position - reconciliation as the *abstract* negation of the present - then Adorno would indeed be a "theologian." But, as we have consistently sought to demonstrate, all of Adorno's thought seeks to conceive reconciliation as the *determinate* negation of instrumental reason. Wellmer's argument that, for Adorno, reconciliation must involve a conception of reason as the "complete

obverse" of existing rationality is merely the reverse side of his assumption (shared with Habermas) that Adorno's concept of mimesis operates as the "other" of existing reality. This is why both Habermas and Wellmer argue that Adorno must displace his construction of a utopian reconciliation between universal and particular, concept and intuition, to art and aesthetic experience. But in assuming, in opposition to Adorno's aporetic intertwining of modernist art and philosophy, their categorial separation, which is what ratifies the construal of mimesis as the "other" of reason, the philosophy of communicative action must pre-suppose precisely what is put in question by Adorno, namely that reason can remain immune from rationalisation. Insofar as this imbrication of reason with rationalisation is conceptualized through a process of tendentially increasing reification, and thus as the ever increasing tendency towards the forgetting of non-identity, Adorno is compelled to construct the aporetic relation between modernist art and philosophy as a "remembrance" of non-identity, a relation which is developed, as we have argued in Chapter Three, through the determinate irreconcilability of reason and mimesis.

Despite the predominant occlusion of the centrality of remembrance in Adorno's utopian materialism, Wellmer cannot defer an engagement with this problematic indefinitely. He broaches the issue of historical time and remembrance in the following passage, the consideration of which will return us to the issue of Adorno's anamnestic reading of Kant's postulate of immortality and its relation to his understanding of the temporalisation of utopia:

The *generalization* of a future-oriented concept of absolute truth ... would actually have to delete historical time at the limiting point of the absolute, for a truth to which all eyes are opened is something that must also be shared by those long since dead: the reconciliation of all humanity would have to be something in which the dead, too, participate. But this can only be conceived in theological terms, as Adorno very well knew. With respect to humanity and its history, the idea of a perfect truth to which *all* eyes are opened is prefigured, not in the idea of a perfected physis, but in the image of the Day of Judgement. And the image of the Day of Judgement includes the hope of resurrection and salvation. Judgement, salvation and resurrection are

categories of a radical break with the historical world; this is precisely what makes them theological categories. ⁶⁷

Once again, it should be noted that the terminology Wellmer uses to discuss Adorno's concept of reconciliation is not, in fact, Adorno's. Leaving aside the conflation of Judaic and Christian theological problematics, might it not be argued that by pressing Adorno's construction of utopia into explicitly theological terms what is actually taking place is an *evasion* of the aporias of Adorno's "concept" of utopia. For in re-considering the metaphysical impulse that animates Kant's postulate of immortality, Adorno has explicitly situated his argument in the wake of his discussion of the genocide of the Holocaust. Adorno is not offering a theoretical argument as to the possibility of the redemption of the dead as such, but rather offering a determinate negation of the reduction of the death of millions of individuals to the administratively planned extermination of a "specimen". ⁶⁸ The qualitative indifference of each individual death before the a priori "guilt" of the Jews as such is precisely the logic of subsumption that thinking in "models" is intended to negate.

Wellmer is right to argue that a "concept of absolute truth would actually have to delete historical truth at the limiting point of the absolute." However, the implications of the temporality of this "deletion" remain unanalysed because by qualifying this conception of truth as "future-oriented", Wellmer pre-judges the issue of the temporality of utopia in such a way that Adorno cannot but be forced into the procrustean bed of the, by now ubiquitous, assertion that materialism and theology are logically incompatible. But utopia puts in question the very nature of what might be meant by the future. To assume that the future can be construed unproblematically as a temporal continuation of historical time of the present, is already to eviscerate the temporal dialectics of modernity in which the meaning and experience of the temporality of historical time are precisely what is at issue in any critical engagement with the present. Arguably, because Wellmer, like Habermas, does not conceive of the process of rationalisation as intrinsically bound up with any account that one might give

of the categorial formations and deformations of an emphatic account of reason, he remains blind to the complicity of communicative rationality with the discursive structuring of the experience of temporality. Thus, he can only conceive of utopia, under the sign of Judgement Day, - which we have suggested might better be conceived of as a utopian exteriority of historical time - as the "deletion" of historical time.

The reverse of this position is not, however, considered; namely, whether a certain understanding of historical time might not be constitutive of the *exclusion* of utopia. It is not, of course, a question of either/or here, but rather of conceiving utopia as the moment of identity which defines the difference of these two configurations of utopia and historical time as a dialectical contradiction; a moment of identity, which, as we have seen, Adorno conceives according to the interruptive logic of the caesura, which is to say, a memorial logic of the disintegration of abstract identity. To push this argument would involve, in Adornian terms, the claim that the "messianic" redemption of the dead is inconceivable without the "future" and the "past" being open to a constitutively different interpretation - or more strongly, experience - of temporality, an experience which we have sought to approach through the notion of a memorial interruption (or caesura) of illusory continuity. For Wellmer and Habermas, this "interruptive caesura" can only appear under the guise of an "irrational" mystical exit from historical time, an exit incompatible with a materialist conception of history. But this argument holds only insofar as the temporality of a materialist conception of history is construed according to an illicit conflation of historical and chronological time, that is to say, a conflation of the emphatically new with the chronologically new. Insofar as the second sense of the new is conflated with the first, the materialist temporality of history conflates an emphatic account of the temporality of modernity with the temporality of rationalisation. This was precisely Adorno's charge against both naive historicism and vulgar materialism; namely that the illusion of historical progress was in fact the unconscious perpetuation of pre-history, and thus the occlusion of an emphatic concept of history. Understood in this light, the "messianic" deletion of historical time, is not to be understood as a flight from a materialist conception of history into a mystical other

world, but rather, the most emphatic re-assertion of a materialist conception of history. Only when history has been freed from pre-history will history actually begin; this beginning of history is what is being thought in Adorno's concept of utopia.

And this is precisely why it is disingenuous to conceptualise Adorno's notion of utopia - which is to say, his persistence with an emphatic concept of truth - as simply "future oriented." For everything in Adorno militates against this understanding of utopian reconciliation. The pre-condition for such reconciliation, and thus for an emphatic conception of the future as the qualitatively new, Adorno argues time and again, is remembrance. To suggest that this can simply be equated with an anamnestic remembrance of the dead *as such* is to fail to understand what is at stake in Adorno's concept of remembrance. For insofar as remembrance is understood by Adorno to be a remembrance of the non-identity occluded by the formation of identity as the dominant discursive and functional principle of modernity, what is to be remembered - insofar as non-identity is non-identical *for* prevailing identity - can, by definition, only be particular. This does not mean, of course, the remembrance of each individual dead person, but rather, that remembrance is constitutively the remembrance of repressed particularity - a particularity which will remain particular for as long as reason is irrationally compelled to subsume particularity under universality.

Thus, to return to Adorno's re-working of Kant's "intelligible world", once this concept of metaphysical transcendence is understood aporetically, it becomes the site of the "transcendent objectivity" (*transzender Objectivität*) of spirit (*Geist*), a "site" neither in this empirical world, nor knowable outside it, and thus the no-place or utopia of "the possibility of metaphysics." (*die Möglichkeit von Metaphysik*).⁶⁹ This "possibility" which accompanies "metaphysics at the moment of its fall"⁷⁰ is that of a utopian transcendence of existing reality conceived through the remembrance of possibility; the possibility, that is, of the redemption of possibility. As was argued in Chapter Two, negative dialectics, or micrology, by demonstrating how the oppositions of metaphysics remain theoretically ungroundable, because the "ground" of these oppositions is the unacknowledged (material) heteronomy that is disavowed by autarkic

spirit, operates as the memory of this discursively unredeemable condition. This is why Wellmer's charge that Adorno's fundamental categories congeal into the "necessity of despair" ultimately must be rejected, for the notion of an "ideal speech situation" (upon which is predicated the discernment of Adorno's failure to transcend the categories of subject-centred reason) itself perpetuates the discursive forgetting of nature, by re-constituting Adorno's "remembrance of nature in the subject" as "remembrance of language in the subject" But such a "translation" of Adorno's thought into the categories of communicative action must fail because where, for this translation, the key terms are "language" and "nature", for Adorno, the key is "remembrance" which cannot be glossed over as though it were a matter of indifference, precisely because the memory of *nature* in the subject is constitutive of Adorno's notion of remembrance. For Adorno despair is the experience of existing reality as necessity, which is to say, the experience of modernity as the liquidation of the individual *as* individual under the logic of rationalisation. Nothing in Habermas or Wellmer challenges this reading, precisely because they accept this logic of rationalisation as the logic of modernity. Because Adorno's thought is, from the outset, conceived of in terms of a critical comprehension of this logic, a comprehension which acknowledges that philosophy as theory is no longer conceivable except in terms of its own immanent impossibility, he no longer prosecutes philosophy as "theory" in the manner of Habermas and Wellmer; rather negative dialectics, in its abdication of theory's traditional mastery of its object, seeks to experience immanently what instrumental reason has excised from that object, namely its non-identity. The experience of non-identity is thus a configuring of experience as the memory of non-identity. It is through this memorial turn of experience towards the trace of nature repressed by instrumental reason, that the necessity of despair can be critically comprehended and transcended: "signs that not everything is futile come from sympathy with the human, from the self-reflection of nature in the subject (*Selbstbesinnung der Natur in den Subjekten*); it is only in experiencing (*Erfahrung*) its own naturalness that genius soars above nature." ⁷¹ The reference to genius as the self-

reflection of nature in the subject returns us, for the last time, to Adorno's reading of Hölderlin.

It is no accident that Adorno should denominate Hölderlin's "Mnemosyne" as "the most important text for deciphering Hölderlin philosophically..."⁷² Nor is it fortuitous that the essay should end with a citation of the following lines from "Mnemosyne": "*Den nicht vermögen / Die Himmlischen alles. Nämlich es reichen / Die Sterblichen eh an den Abgrund. Also wendet es sich, das Echo, / Mit diesen*" ["Not everything / is due to the heavenly. Namely / mortals sooner reach toward the abyss. So the echo reverses / With them"]⁷³ The turning of echo is the dialectical moment of self-reflection in which an emphatic concept of experience is pre-figured through the memory of the trace of nature in the subject. Memory thus acts as a form of philosophical cunning; the dialectical truth of which, according to the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, was the possibility of non sacrificial subjectivity. Self-reflection is both the principle of the domination of nature, and that element of nature in which the possibility of escaping nature's mythic thrall is preserved. For Adorno the historical present labours under the illusion of its entrapment with the fatefulness of existence experienced as necessity. The condition for bringing this illusion to self-consciousness resides in the possibility of unhinging the abstract temporality that governs the present as an eternal return of the same; an unhinging predicated upon the possibility of liberating possibility from its repression by the false immediacy of existing reality; the historically determinate turn of utopian energies towards memory, in Kluge's tremendous formulation already cited, enacts a "defence against the attack of the present on the rest of time." Memory thus enacts the dialectical act of cunning upon which the possibility of thinking a return, not within time, but of time, is predicated. The possibility of such a difference within the temporality of return is what allows for the distinction between the necessity of despair, which for Wellmer defines the failure of Adorno, and Adorno's critical comprehension of necessity as despair, the "unthinkability" of which is co-terminous with the memorial redemption of the wrong visited upon the dead - a wrong which is nothing other than the forgetting of the dead.

Utopia speaks its own name only through remembrance; for remembrance is, constitutively, the memory of particularity, a particularity, which, as we have argued in Chapter Two, is thought by Adorno to reside in the name. Utopia is not a concept (universal), neither is it a name (particular) but the configuration of the reconciliation of universal and particular would portend a true identity without sacrifice.

"Echo" had previously come under discussion in Adorno's reading of Hölderlin, in the very context which, for Habermas and Wellmer, defines the impossibility of Adorno's utopian materialism - namely in the context of the "mystical". What is of significance here is that Adorno construes the "messianic" ⁷⁴ in Hölderlin's "Friedensfeier" as figuring the interruption of mythic stasis. The passage quoted reads as follows:

*Das ist, sie hören das Werk, / Längst vorbereitend, von Morgen
nach Abend, jetzt erst, / Denn unermesslich braust, in der Tiefe
schlafen, übertönt von Friedenslauten, hinunter, / Ihr aber,
teuergewordne, o ihr Tage der Unschuld, / Ihr bringt auch heute das
Fest, ihr Lieben! [That is, they hear the work / Only now, long in
preparation, from morning til evening, / For the echo of the thunderer,
the thousand-year old storm, / Roars, immense, dying away in the
depths, / Descending to sleep, drowned out by the sounds of peace. But
you, you who have grown dear, o you days of innocence, / Today too
you bring the feast, you dear ones!]*

Adorno's reading of this passage continues thus:

In an immense arc, the solar era of Zeus, seen as domination of nature entrapped within nature, is equated with myth, and it is prophesied that it will die away in the depths, "übertönt von Friedenslauten," drowned out by the sounds of peace. That which would be different is called peace, reconciliation. It does not eradicate the era of violence in turn but rather rescues it as it perishes, in the anamnesis of echo. ⁷⁵

What Hölderlin accomplishes through poetic form - the interruption of the mythic symbolism of the thunderer through the "bursting forth" of the days of innocence ⁷⁶ - Adorno seeks to configure, philosophically, through his aporetic reading of Kant's intelligible world, which figures the possibility of a non-positing transcendence of the immanence of the existing world. In both cases the fatality of necessity is interrupted

through the memory of the non-finality of the appearance of necessity, an interruption whose condition of possibility is, for Hölderlin, the perishing of the era of violence, and for Adorno the fall of metaphysics. Formally, both Hölderlin and Adorno locate the moment of "rescuing" (*Rettung*) the truth content in the perishing of what had proclaimed itself immutable; that is, in the moment of its passing or transience. Echo - in which this memorial turning from necessity to repressed possibility is enacted, configures both the form and content of memory: the form because the memorial turning from the abyss is the movement of memory's turning from the experience of necessity, and content because what is remembered "in the anamnesis of echo" is the non-identical possibility of freedom, sedimented in the tellurian age of the domination of nature, whose image (as semblance) is illuminated at the moment of the caesura of that age; the bringing to a standstill of the dialectic of natural history, in the memorial self-reflection of reason's naturalistic condition. "Echo" names the moment of passing or transience in this dialectic of memory's form and content.

Does this reading of Adorno's construal of the messianic aspect of Hölderlin's "Friedensfeier" permit us to formulate, finally, a response to Habermas and Wellmer's objection concerning the illegitimate conflation of materialist and messianic elements in Adorno's concept of utopia? Perhaps we might say that what is curious about this objection was that it was ever raised in the first place. After all, the cardinal philosophical operation of negative dialectics resides in the dialectical mediation of conceptual opposites, in order to release the non-identity within concepts, wherein lies the promise of non-subsumptive identity which the concept promises. Should not the conceptual opposition of materialism and theology itself be mediated? ⁷⁷ This is the task which the "model" of the "Meditations on Metaphysics" undertakes. The categories of materialism must be negated by the categories of theology because, for us, materialism conceptualizes a nature already under the yoke of domination, and thus, the transcendence of that nature - a nature which does "not yet exist" (the beautiful in nature is the trace of this nature) - requires the theological categories which have, traditionally consecrated such this-worldly domination. But chiasmatically, the

categories of theology require a materialistic mediation insofar as they posit a theodicy, the abjection of which was fully consummated in the death camps. As we have argued, for Adorno every conceptual opposition remains indebted to the a-conceptual non-identity, which is non-identical precisely because the claim of conceptuality to fully identify its objects must fail due to the constitutive repression of what is qualitatively different within abstract equalization. This repressed or "forgotten" non-identity, which is simultaneously the condition and product of every act of reification, is the object of the memory which negative dialectics practices. The realisation of such identity cannot be anticipated, except under the guise of the negation of all anticipation, for the time of anticipation must, if the qualitatively different (and thus emphatically new) is to be actualised, break with the time of the return of the same; the time, that is of natural history. The mediation of the theological and materialist releases the non-identity intrinsic to both conceptual realms in a moment of transience which figures the possibility of utopia. Utopia is not a pre-lapsarian condition to be longed for, nor is it a future condition which can be posited, but rather, as the possibility of freedom amidst existing unfreedom, it configures - through memory - the cognition of the possibility that things could be otherwise. In a passage from *Aesthetic Theory* cited earlier, Adorno claimed that, "The elements of this other are all present in reality, but in order to come together they must be displaced, however slightly, and thus brought into new constellations."⁷⁸ The work of memory enacted by Adorno's negative dialectics and aesthetic theory is this work of displacement, in which utopia is not an object to be theorized, but rather its memory provides the utopian texture of that thought..

Epilogue: Dialectical Melancholia.

In the preceding chapters we have sought to trace an aporetic construal of the relation - in its various configurations - of reification and memory within Adorno's work. It has been argued that this relation provides the nimbus around which Adorno's utopian redemption of repressed nature circles. Insofar as nature has been shown to operate as the "forgotten" heteronomous condition for the positing of abstract identity, Adorno's construction of a "logic of disintegration", a logic which traces the non-identity that vitiates identity claims, formally and substantively operates as a work of memory. Nature can be redeemed only through the work of memory; this work of memory is the praxial moment of negative dialectics. However, in claiming that memory operates as the praxial work of a thinking "which accompanies metaphysics at the moment of its fall"¹, the philosophical status of memory still remains to be determined. Does memory name a thinking that would take the place of metaphysics; that is, does memory designate the possibility of thinking *after* metaphysics, or would memory enact a thinking *within* metaphysics which, emerging only at the moment of the "fall" of metaphysics, is destined to fall with metaphysics? What, in effect, is the relation of memory and thinking? In the late essay "Resignation," Adorno offers the following formulation:

..... thinking is not the spiritual reproduction of what exists. As long as thinking is not interrupted, it has a firm grasp upon possibility. [.....] The Utopian impulse in thinking is all the stronger, the less it objectifies itself as Utopia - a further form of regression - whereby it sabotages its own realisation. Open thinking points beyond itself. For its part, such thinking takes a position as a figuration of praxis which is more closely related to a praxis truly involved in change than in a position of mere obedience for the sake of praxis. ²

Thought's "thinking beyond itself" which, for the present, Adorno claims in *Negative Dialectics*, is possible only through a "thinking against itself"³, is, I have claimed, best conceived as a work of memory the possibility of which has been

configured through the concepts of (*inter alia*) "chiasmus", "caesura", "correspondence", "logic of disintegration" and "echo". The very plurality of these memorial ciphers indicates the intention of Adornian critical theory to be a mobile and fluid thought, sensitive to the traces of non-identity wherein resides the utopian possibility of reconciliation. However, to claim that such a model of thought be conceived as a "figuration of praxis" implies that what would truly be praxis, the possibility of which would be co-terminous with the realisation of the possibility of utopia, is - for the present - absent. The implication of this claim could be understood in two ways: either as the claim that such a praxis is absent or unrepresentable *for* discursive thought, or that discursive thought is constitutive *of* this absence or unrepresentability.

Arguably, this double implication does not obey the logic of either/or, but rather both/and in Adorno's work. And the reason for this is to be found in the fact that, for Adorno, the relation between theory and praxis in modernity is a relation conditioned by the tendential universalisation of capitalist exchange relations, and thus the universalisation of the domination of use-value by exchange-value. Adorno's critique of metaphysics is always simultaneously social critique, although the very imbrication of philosophy and social critique, more specifically the social-critical insight that the trajectory of technical and social rationalisation increasingly renders philosophy, or critical thought obsolete, is what compels Adorno to persist with philosophy. In the face of the indiscriminately expanding sway of rationalisation, metaphysics cannot be redeemed precisely because its valorisation of universal over particular, reduction of ends-oriented ethics to means-end procedural pragmatics, and construal of aesthetics in terms of disinterested pleasure, effectively underwrites the very processes which betoken its obsolescence. Because, for Adorno, history still remains unconsciously the continuation of pre-history, the future can be conceived only through a radical break with the phantasmagoric continuity of that history; a break in which the appearance of a non-positated, non-imaged condition of reconciliation would be revealed, not as an object to be theorized, but rather as the memorial texture of thought. Utopia, for Adorno, is

therefore inconceivable as the fulfilment of history; rather, as the figure of a remembrance of non-identity it limns the contours of an other history whose actuality, for the present, cannot be discursively presented. What remains, for Adorno, of metaphysics "at the moment of its fall", is its transcending impulse, which is to say, the work of negation in which possibility is recovered from its obliteration by "the spiritual reproduction of what exists."

The memory of possibility is thus the utopian moment of metaphysics. Because instrumental reason is either complicit with, or rendered obsolete by, the historical logic of rationalisation, the recovery of Reason's dialectical character is possible only as part of a logic of illusion; which is why modernist art occupies such an apparently exorbitant role in Adorno's *oeuvre*. For modernist art, precisely through its alienation from instrumental reason, attests to what, for instrumental reason, is unrepresentable; an emphatic concept of reason which would not be categorially separable from end-oriented ethics. Such attestation does not present the unrepresentable, but, through its (alienated) economy of illusion enacts a memory of the possibility of what is, for instrumental reason, discursively unrepresentable. Because modernist art's critique of its categorial alienation is prosecuted through the particular - the work of art - art's inverted traversal of the dialectic of enlightenment ("it [Art] sacrifices the universal to the particular through the universal (technique)" ⁴) within the alienated particular, potentially allows for modernist art to enact a logic of progress which unconsciously registers a "deviation" from the process of technical progress which governs social rationalisation. Adorno's practice of aesthetic theory is the recovery of the "truth content" of this memorial aesthetic figuration of an absent praxis.

Does memory therefore name a new principle of thought "beyond" or "after" instrumental reason, a praxial thinking beyond the instrumentalisation of the relation of theory and praxis? Such a conclusion would be precipitate, for if the temporal meaning of "after" is not merely to enact a perpetuation of empirical time - the time of rationalisation - but is, for Adorno, only refracted through the memory of what a certain temporalisation of historical time has occluded or repressed, then the very sense

of a "memorial thought" *after* instrumental reason already requires that memory be at work if the "after" is to denote the historically new as opposed to the merely chronologically new. As was argued in Chapter Five, the construal of memory as enacting the utopian promise of thinking, makes sense only when understood in the light of the "temporal dialectics of modernity." The effective globalisation of exchange relations, the ever accelerating velocity of the turn-over cycles of the circulation of capital and technification of the means of communication provide the socio-historical back-drop to Adorno's turn to memory as a source of utopian potential; for what these processes presage is the consummate simultaneity of geographically diverse times in the "real time" of universal technological modernisation, which, for Adorno represented the tendentially total occlusion of the historically new by the chronologically new. Memory as the critical figuration of a now absent praxis operates as a determinate negation of this occlusion. As Andreas Huyssen has argued, "The struggle for memory is ultimately also a struggle for history and against high-tech amnesia" ⁵ which is to say that memory is, constitutively, a struggle over the meaning and experience of time.

Thus, rather than construing the utopian relation between memory and thinking adumbrated by Adorno's negative dialectics and aesthetic theory as a thinking after metaphysics, might not this relation name an aporetic thinking at the limits of metaphysics? As was noted in Chapter Three, the formulation of "dialectical melancholy" (*Die dialektische Schermut*) ⁶, which occurs in Adorno's discussion of the "crisis of melancholy" in *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, could perhaps serve as the perfect appellation for his own thought. It will be argued here that the aporetic relation of thinking and memory at the limit of metaphysics is contained within this undecidable formulation. Unfolding the undecidability of this relation will require an exposition of the way in which each term serves to chiasmatically qualify the other: dialectical melancholy and melancholy dialectics. Beginning initially with "dialectical": Adorno never demurred from the claim that Hegelian dialectics not only reveals conceptual opposites to be mediated, but that this mediation was to be understood not as a "middle term" between the opposition, but rather occurred by way of the extremes

of the opposition.⁷ However he contests the Hegelian claim that this process of mediation was to be reconciled into a "higher" conceptual (speculative) unity; rather, for Adorno, once the conceptual premises of the Philosophy of Identity are no longer axiomatic for dialectical mediation, this process of mediation through the extremes yields, not a conceptual reconciliation, but rather the "excluded" other to which the opposition is indebted but which cannot be discursively stated within the terms of that opposition. Bringing this indebtedness to self-consciousness is the memorial work of *negative* dialectics. In Chapters Two and Three we argued that the object of such memory was the particular or unique (*das Einmalige*). Melancholy names this work of remembrance.

The status of the memory which would enact the remembrance of particularity remains, however, to be determined. If memory were to be construed as the universal form of the remembrance of particularity, the very logic of such memory would merely perpetuate the repression of the particularity which negative dialectics intends to redeem through remembrance. This, however, is precisely what would appear to be the case with allegorical memory. As was argued in Chapter Two, Adorno derives his understanding of melancholy from Benjamin, for whom transience (*Vergängnis*) is the central category of allegorical thought. The allegorical memory of the melancholic departs from nostalgic memory, for which the object to be remembered is a recoverable object within the givenness of the past, by construing the past not in terms of its givenness, but in terms of its transiency. But it is precisely in this avoidance of nostalgia that allegorical memory threatens to recapitulate the domination of particularity by universality, for what subtends the transiency of the particular object of memory is the transiency of the past as such which allows for the distinction between the specific act of memory and memory as such. To be sure, this move from the individual memory to remembering is vital if the act of remembering is not to be forgotten by the memory of the specific object⁸, but if this duality of specific memory and the general act of remembering is not to re-capitulate a logic of subsumption, then the duality must itself be mediated. This is why it is as important to insist upon *dialectical* nature of

melancholy as it is to bring to light the *melancholy* negative of dialectics. Adorno renders melancholy dialectical by construing transience, which is the condition of possibility for both remembering and the particular act of memory, as the moment of dialectical mediation which renders the conceptual opposition of nature and history "commensurable", thus yielding their difference as a contradiction which "...makes the thought of unity the measure of heterogeneity."⁹ Transience, as the dialectical operator of melancholy dialectics, is both the singular object of memory (transient first nature) and the general condition of possibility for the memory released from the (nostalgic) illusion of the past as simply given in and to the present. The philosophical difficulty enjoined by Adorno's dialectical melancholy does not reside in the inversion of the schema of general and particular, but in thinking memory as both general and particular, that is to say, in thinking memory as the site of a determinate irreconcilability of general and particular, as the site, that is, of a negative dialectic of memory. It is in this sense that the undecidability of melancholy dialectics configures a relation between memory and thinking which is best understood not as the object of negative dialectics, but as the texture of its praxis. The refusal of negative dialectics, as a praxial work of memory, to either abdicate or underwrite the logic of universal and particular is the measure of the aporetic character of negative dialectics.

In the "Meditations on Metaphysics" Adorno claimed that Kant's intelligible world was conceivable only as an "aporetic concept"¹⁰, likewise utopia designates nothing less than the aporetic character of the praxial work of negative dialectics, a character configured by the formulation "dialectical melancholy." Of "dialectical melancholy" Adorno writes that it,

does not mourn vanished happiness. It knows that it is unreachable. But it also knows of the promise that conjoins the unreachable, precisely in its origin, with the wish: 'Never have I been happy; and yet it has always seemed as if happiness were in my train, as if glad genii danced about me, invisible to others but not to me, whose eyes gleamed with joy.' Such hope rejects all mythical deception, all claim to having once existed, by this *never*: it is promised as unattainable; whereas, if it were directly asserted as reality, it would regress to the mythological and

phantasmagorical, surrendering itself to the lost and past. For the true desire of melancholy is nourished on the idea of eternal happiness without sacrifice, which it still could never adequately indicate as its object. Although the wish that follows this aim is unfulfillable and yet full of hope, it originates in its aim, and just as it circles around happiness, the wish circles, fulfilled, in happiness itself. ¹¹

Adorno's aporetic construction of the idea of what we have termed "the memory of utopia" receives perhaps its most concise formulation in this passage. "The wish", as the illusory appearance of a possibility which has never existed (Adornian non-identity), enters into a constellation with the idea of "eternal happiness without sacrifice" (Adornian utopia), an idea which the "desire of melancholy" (Adornian memory) "could never adequately indicate as its object." Memory cannot present utopia, for this would be to ideologically image reconciliation as possible within existing reality. What memory can present, through its negation of existing reality (its memory of non-identity) is the fact that existing reality does not exhaust possibility. The realisation of repressed possibility ("the remembrance of nature in the subject"¹²) is the condition of possibility for the actualisation of utopia. If the wish (non-identity) were to be "fulfilled, in happiness itself" non-identity ("which is opaque only for identity's claim to be total"¹³) would no longer be the non-identical but the reconciliation of subject and nature - utopia.

To bring this fulfilment into being, to posit the actuality of utopian reconciliation is not, however, the task of a memorial thinking in and of the "fall of metaphysics." It is not that negative dialectics abdicates the legislative role that metaphysics has traditionally arrogated to itself with respect to the praxial realm of the political, but rather that negative dialectics discerns this arrogation as constitutive of the instrumentalisation of the political, which is to say as constitutive of the absence of an ends-oriented praxis. The spectral after-life of negative dialectics, its "living on" after the moment of philosophy's "realiz[ation] was missed" ¹⁴, is nothing less than a memorial second-reflection upon the fact that the failure of Marxism to actualise a utopian configuration of reason and reality within historical time, was not a matter of

contingency; rather, this second reflection attests to the fact that the entwinement of a philosophy of history (unreflectively) bound to the premisses of historical progress and an instrumental conception of the relation of theory to praxis is constitutive of the failure to realise utopia. For Adorno, this attestation did not entail the rejection of the Marxian concern with social justice, but rather the recognition that if this concern is still to matter, and if the conditions which perpetuate the (illusory) necessity of injustice are to be comprehended, the epistemological and ontological assumptions which bind Marxism to metaphysics in its desire to legislate the political would have to be subject to the same "ruthless criticism" which Marx himself called for in his "Letter to Ruge."¹⁵ A philosophy which declines to legislate for the praxial domain of the political will inevitably fall victim to the charge that it has severed the connection between theory and praxis which alone offers the possibility that suffering and injustice will be redeemed. However, this charge posits an equivalence between declining and abdication which Adorno's thought contests, for in declining to legislate negative dialectics does not abdicate from the need to redeem suffering and injustice, but responds to this need by reflecting, through its work of memory, upon the complicity between the metaphysics and the perpetuation of suffering which blocks the realisation of utopia. In *Aesthetic Theory* Adorno writes that, "Art's utopia, the counterfactual yet-to-come, is draped in black. It goes on being, through its mediations (*durch all ihre Vermittlung*), a recollection (*Erinnerung*) of the possible (*Mögliche*) with a critical edge against the real (*Wirkliche*); it is a kind of imaginary restitution of that catastrophe which is world history; it is freedom which did not come to pass under the spell of necessity (*im Bann der Necessität*) and which may well not come to pass at all."¹⁶ The memorial work of negative dialectics and aesthetic theory exhausts itself in and through this imaginary restitution. If this restitution were to be actualised, the need for negative dialectics and aesthetic theory would be obviated; but in its powerlessness to legislatively determine this actualisation, the utopian work of memory subsists within the aporia of its immanent impossibility as metaphysics and its metaphysical memory of possibility.¹⁷

Notes to Introduction:

All references will give full bibliographical details on the first occasion of citation within each chapter. In the case of Adorno's texts, the English translation will be cited first, followed, where necessary, by the relevant *Gesammelte Schriften* volume number and page reference. Full bibliographical details of all texts are contained in the bibliography.

- 1 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. trans. E. B. Ashton. (London: Routledge, 1990) p. 33. / *Negative Dialektik* (G. S. 6)
- 2 F. Jameson. *Late Marxism: Adorno, or, the Persistence of the Dialectic*. (London: Verso, 1990) p. 9.
- 3 G. Rose. *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of T. W. Adorno*. (London: Macmillan, 1978) p. 43.
- 4 L. Zuidervart. *Adorno's Aesthetic Theory: The Redemption of Illusion*. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993) p. xvi.
- 5 T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*: "By virtue of this remembrance of nature in the subject, in whose fulfillment the unacknowledged truth of all culture lies hidden, enlightenment is universally opposed to domination;" trans. J. Cumming. (London, Verso, 1992) p. 40. / *Dialektik der Aufklärung*. (G.S. 3.) p. 58.
- 6 T. W. Adorno. "On Epic Naiveté." in *Notes to Literature Volume 1*. trans. S. Weber Nicholse. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1991) / *Noten zur Literatur*. (G. S. 11.)
- 7 T. W. Adorno. "Parataxis: On Hölderlin's Late Poetry." in *Notes to Literature Volume Two*. trans. S. Weber Nicholse. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1992) / *Noten zur Literatur*. (G. S. 11.)
- 8 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. trans. C. Lenhardt. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984.) / *Ästhetische Theorie*. (G. S. 7)
- 9 T. W. Adorno. "Sacred Fragment: Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron*." in *Quasi una fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*. trans. R. Livingstone. (London: Verso, 1992) / *Quasi una fantasia* (G. S. 16)
- 10 T. W. Adorno. "Schoenberg and Progress." in *Philosophy of Modern Music*. trans. A. Mitchell and W. Blomster. (London: Sheed and Ward, 1973) / *Philosophie der neuen Musik*. (G. S. 12)
- 11 T. W. Adorno. "The Ageing of the New Music." trans. R. Hullot-Kentor and F. Will. (*Telos*. no. 77, Fall 1988.) / in *Dissonanzen* (G. S. 14)
- 12 T. W. Adorno. "Vers une musique informelle." in *Quasi una fantasia: Essays in Modern Music*.
- 13 "Meditations on Metaphysics." in *Negative Dialectics*.

Notes to Chapter One:

- 1 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. trans. E. B. Ashton (London: Routledge. 1973) p. 52-3 / G. S. 6. p. 62.
- 2 T. W. Adorno. "Notes on Kafka." *Prisms*. trans. S. and S. Weber. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. 1990) p. 257.
- 3 T. W. Adorno. "The Actuality of Philosophy." *Telos*, no. 31 (Spring 1977) pp. 120-133. ("Die Aktualität der Philosophie." G. S. 1. pp. 325-344.)
- 4 Cf. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 153-156: "Starting Out From The Concept."
- 5 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 149.
- 6 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 147 / G. S. 6. p. 150. (trans. amended)
- 7 This point is emphasised by both S. Breuer "The Long Friendship: Theoretical Differences between Horkheimer and Adorno." in ed. Benhabib et.al. *On Max Horkheimer: New Interpretations*. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. 1993) pp. 257-279 and P. Osborne "A Marxism for the Postmodern? Jameson's Adorno." in *New German Critique* no. 56. (Spring-Summer 1992) pp. 171-192.
- 8 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. "Universal History." pp. 319-20.
- 9 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 323.
- 10 T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. p. 230. / G. S. 3. p. 263. [trans. amended]
- 11 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p.320 / G. S. 6. p.312 [trans. amended].
- 12 J.M. Bernstein. *The Fate of Art: Aesthetic Alienation from Kant to Derrida and Adorno*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993) p.189.
- 13 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics* p.12.
- 14 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics* p.356-7.
- 15 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *Minima Moralia*. trans. E. F. N. Jephcott. (London: Verso. 1993) p.127 # 82. "The distance of thought from reality is itself nothing other than the precipitate of history in concepts."
- 16 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics* p. 55.
- 17 K. Marx *Grundrisse* trans. M. Nicolaus (Harmondsworth, Penguin. 1993) p. 109.
- 18 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 320.
- 19 Cf. Adorno and Horkheimer's claim that "The task to be accomplished is not the conservation of the past, but the redemption of the hopes of the past." *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. p. xv.
- 20 Cf. Adorno's claim that "it [immanent critique] takes seriously the principle that it is not ideology in itself which is untrue but rather its pretension to correspond to reality." *Prisms*. p. 32.
- 21 T. W. Adorno "The Idea of Natural History" [trans. R. Hullot-Kentor] in *Telos* no. 60 (Summer 1984) p.111.

- 22 *ibid.*
- 23 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p.323.
- 24 The analysis of second nature in Lukács upon which Adorno draws can be found in the English translation of *The Theory of the Novel* (trans. A. Bostock. London: Merlin Press, 1971) p. 62-4. However, where Lukács reads "first" nature as the nature of science, Adorno, I suggest, departs from Lukács by interpreting "first nature" through the Benjaminian concept of transience.
- 25 The passage from *Capital* cited by Adorno states that "I comprehend the development of society's economic formation of society as a process of natural history; less than any other does my standpoint permit holding the individual responsible for conditions whose social creature he remains, no matter how far he may subjectively rise above them" T. W. Adorno *Negative Dialectics*. p.354.
- 26 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 354/5.
- 27 Cf. W. Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. (trans. J. Osborne. London: Verso, 1992) p. 177-182.
- 28 T. W. Adorno. "The Idea of Natural History." p. 120.
- 29 This point is well made by S. Buck-Morss. See *The Origin of Negative Dialectics*. (Sussex: The Harvester Press. 1977) p. 54 and Chapter 3 "Dialectics without Identity: The Idea of Natural History" *passim*.
- 30 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 359.
- 31 Adorno "The Idea of Natural History." [trans. R. Hullot-Kentor] *Telos* no. 60 (summer '84) p.117. - italics in the original.
- 32 The importance of chiasmatic argument in Adorno's work has been highlighted by G. Rose Cf. *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of T. W. Adorno*. (London: Macmillan, 1978) p. 13. For a discussion of the philosophical implications of chiasmus as a form of thought see R. Gasche, "Reading Chiasms: An Introduction." This essay forms the introduction to Andrzej Warminski's *Readings in Interpretation: Hölderlin, Hegel, Heidegger*. (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1987) Gasche does not however consider Adorno in his treatment of chiasms.
- 33 T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment* p. 8.
- 34 Cf. T. W. Adorno. "The Idea of Natural History." p. 123.
- 35 T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. p. xvi.
- 36 T. W. Adorno. "The Idea of Natural History." p. 118.
- 37 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 157 / G. S. 6. p. 160. (trans. amended)
- 38 The question of negative dialectics as a form of philosophical remembrance will be pursued in the following chapter through the relation of non-identity and language, specifically through Adorno's reception of Hölderlin. The remembrance of transient nature will also be the object of analysis in chapter three by way of Adorno's attempt to rehabilitate the concept of the beautiful in nature. In both the cases, what will be argued for is the centrality of remembrance to Adorno's philosophical work.

- 39 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 365.
- 40 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. pp. 11-12.
- 41 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 11.
- 42 On this point see J. Bernstein, "Art against Enlightenment: Adorno's critique of Habermas." in A. Benjamin ed. *The Problems of Modernity: Adorno and Benjamin*. (London: Routledge. 1989) p. 51.
- 43 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. pp. 183-186.
- 44 T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer *Dialectic of Enlightenment* p.54 / G.S. 3 p.73. I follow R. Hullot-Kentor in translating *Urgeschichte* as "proto-history" rather than Cumming's "pre-history". See Hullot-Kentor's translation of the Odyssey excursus in *New German Critique* no. 56 (Spring-Summer 1992) p.119.
- 45 Of course, I am not claiming that Kant's critical philosophy is *simply* this philosophical underwriting, nor is Adorno. If this were the case it would be otiose to speak of a *dialectic* of enlightenment. Adorno's life-long engagement with Kant attests to desire to wrest the truth-content from critical philosophy. However, Adorno does follow Lukács in construing the antinomies of thought bequeathed to German Idealism by Kant as deducible from the antinomies of the commodity form.
- 46 P. Osborne. "A Marxism for the Postmodern? Jameson's Adorno." in *New German Critique* no.56 (Spring-Summer 1992) esp. pp.178-180.
- 47 T. W. Adorno *Negative Dialectics* p.358.
- 48 P. Osborne. *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde*. (London: Verso, 1995) p. 16. Osborne argues that the pre-condition for the universalization of the concept of modernity as a form of temporalizing the secular concept of universal history, in the 18th and 19th Centuries, is the geo-political actuality of colonialism. Cf. Chapter One *passim*.
- 49 T. W. Adorno *Negative Dialectics* p.320.
- 50 T. W. Adorno "The Idea of Natural History" p.121.
- 51 T. W. Adorno. *Hegel: Three Studies*. trans. S. Weber NicholSEN. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. 1993) p. 18.: "The mystery [behind synthetic apperception] is none other than social labour." cf. also *Negative Dialectics* p. 177.: "Beyond the magic circle of identarian philosophy, the transcendental subject can be deciphered as a society unaware of itself."
- 52 T. W. Adorno. "Subject and Object." in Arato and Gebhardt eds. *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*. (New York: Continuum, 1987) p. 504.
- 53 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 289. / G. S. 6 p. 285. (trans. amended)
- 54 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 230.
- 55 P. Osborne. "A Marxism for the Postmodern? Jameson's Adorno." p. 187.
- 56 P. Osborne. "A Marxism for the Postmodern? Jameson's Adorno." p. 187. The passage cited by Osborne is from *Negative Dialectics*. p. 185.
- 57 J. Habermas. *Knowledge and Human Interests*. trans. J. Shapiro (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1972.) p. 34.

- 58 T. W. Adorno. "Subject and Object." p. 499.
- 59 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 290-91.
- 60 Cf. *Negative Dialectics*, p. 244 / G. S. 6. p. 242: "Marx took over the thesis of the primacy of practical reason from Kant and German Idealism and sharpened it into an insistence upon changing the world rather than merely interpreting it. He thereby underwrote the programme of an absolute mastery over nature, an arch-bourgeois programme." (trans. amended) However, Adorno does argue that Marx provides the antidote to this position with his insistence in the "Critique of the Gotha Programme" that labour was not the only source of value, thereby indicating that nature constituted a source of value independent of its subjective mediation. Labour, as a source of value, should not be hypostatized because it becomes a source of value only in relation to what is non-identical to it, nature. (cf. *Negative Dialectics*. pp. 177-78)
- 61 T.W. Adorno. "Reflexionen zur Klassentheorie." G.S. 8 p.374.
- 62 T.W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics* p.148.
- 63 T.W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p.23.
- 64 T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. p.43.
- 65 On this point, see C. Rocco, "Between Modernity and Postmodernity: Reading *Dialectic of Enlightenment* against the Grain." (*Political Theory*, Vol. 22 no. 1, Feb 1994) p. 77.
- 66 T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. p. xvi.
- 67 T.W. Adorno. "Progress" [trans. E. Krakauer] in G. Smith ed. *Benjamin: Philosophy, Aesthetics, History*. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press. 1989.) p.99.
- 68 T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. p.10,
- 69 T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. p. 55.
- 70 Cf. Adorno and Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. p. 11.: "Like science, magic pursues aims, but seeks to achieve them by mimesis - not by progressively distancing itself from the object."
- 71 Adorno and Horkheimer. op. cit. p. 10.
- 72 Adorno and Horkheimer. op. cit. p. 13.
- 73 Adorno and Horkheimer. op. cit. p. 57.
- 74 This philosophical lineage of Adorno's allegory of World Spirit is concisely drawn by R. Hullot-Kentor, "Back to Adorno." (*Telos*, no. 81 Fall 1989) p. 19.
- 75 On this point see C. Rocco "Between Modernity and Postmodernity: Reading *Dialectic of Enlightenment* against the Grain." (*Political Theory*. Vol. 22, No. 1. Feb. 1994. - pp.71-97) esp. p. 85-6. Rocco's argues that Habermas's charge that *Dialectic of Enlightenment's* critique of reason must involve a "performative contradiction" misses the mark because Habermas reads *Dialectic of Enlightenment* as "Theory" thereby missing the dialectical self-consciousness of philosophical difficulty enacted by the work's dialectic of form and content. Habermas would appear to be oblivious to the philosophical stakes of the work's form, because to acknowledge its claims would pose the question of the implication of Habermas's "theory" of communicative action with the very

nihilism he discerns in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. These issues will be developed in Chapter Five.

76

T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. p.3.

77

T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. p. 40.

78

The significance of Adorno's practice of thinking in constellations, as a model of philosophical form, will be considered in Chapter Two.

79

T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment* p. 51.

80

T. W. Adorno. *Quasi una Fantasia*. trans. R. Livingstone. (London: Verso. 1994) p.299.

81

W. Benjamin. "Theses on the Philosophy of History" (Thesis 1X) H. Arendt ed *Illuminations* trans. H. Zohn. (New York: Schocken Books. 1969) p. 258.

82

Cf. F. Pollock, "State Capitalism: Its Possibilities and Limitations." (1941) in Arato and Gebhardt eds. *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*. pp. 71-94.

83

See Adorno's "Free Time." in J. Bernstein ed. *T. W. Adorno: The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*. (London: Routledge, 1991.) pp. 162-170.

84

P. U. Hohendahl. *Prismatic Thought: T. W. Adorno*. (Lincoln and London: Univ. of Nebraska Press. 1995) p. 125.

85

This argument is presented most clearly in Adorno's essay, "On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Listening." in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*. pp. 26-52.

86

S. Benhabib. *Critique, Norm and Utopia: A Study of the Foundations of Critical Theory*. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press. 1986.) p. 176.

87

H. Caygill. "The Return of Nietzsche and Marx." in Patton ed. *Nietzsche, Feminism and Political Theory*. (London: Routledge, 1993.) pp. 189-203. Caygill's analysis is devoted to reading the "and" of "Nietzsche and Marx" through the concept of return as it is developed in response to Kant's analysis of time. For my purposes here, it is the relation between Kant and Marx which is of central importance.

88

H. Caygill. "The Return of Nietzsche and Marx." p. 193.

89

H. Caygill. "The Return of Nietzsche and Marx." p. 194.

90

H. Caygill. "The Return of Nietzsche and Marx." p. 196. Caygill is referring to the following passage in Marx's *Grundrisse*; "On the one side labour time, on the other circulation time. And the whole of the movement appears as unity of labour time and circulation time, of production and circulation. This unity itself is motion, process. Capital appears as this unity-in-process of production and circulation, a unity which can be regarded both as the totality of the process of its production, as well as the specific completion of *one* turnover of the capital, *one* movement returning into itself." trans. M. Nicolaus. p. 620.

91

T.W. Adorno, "The Schema of Mass Culture" (trans. N. Walker) in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*. ed. J. Bernstein. Routledge, London, 1991. Where the German has been used the edition cited is to *Gesammelte Schriften, Bd. 3*. ed. R. Tiedemann. Suhrkamp: Frankfurt am Main.

- 92 T. W. Adorno. "The Schema of Mass Culture." p. 53. / G. S. 3. p. 299.
- 93 T. W. Adorno. "The Schema of Mass Culture." p. 71.
- 94 T. W. Adorno. "The Schema of Mass Culture." p. 65.
- 95 T. W. Adorno *Negative Dialectics* p. 372.
- 96 M. Horkheimer and T.W. Adorno. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. p.84.
- 97 T. W. Adorno. "The Schema of Mass Culture" p.60.
- 98 T. W. Adorno. "The Schema of Mass Culture." p.61 / G. S. 3. p. 308.
- 99 T. W. Adorno. "A Portrait of Walter Benjamin." in *Prisms*. p. 233.
- 100 On these points, see Adorno's "The Actuality of Philosophy." (*Telos*. no. 31. Spring 1977) pp. 120-133. The concept of unintentional truth derives from Benjamin, and will be considered further in chapter 3.
- 101 M. Taussig. *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses*. [London and New York: Routledge. 1993] p. 233.
- 102 T. W. Adorno *Minima Moralia*. p.235.
- 103 T. W. Adorno. *Minima Moralia*. p.237,
- 104 For a reading of Heidegger's political involvement according to this structure, to which I am indebted, see P. Osborne "Heidegger's Politics" in *Radical Philosophy* 70, March/April 1995, p. 26.
- 105 This is the aspect of Benjamin's *Arcades* project in which the image of modernity was to be diagnosed as the time of Hell which so impressed Adorno. Of this image Benjamin writes that it "... deals not with the fact that "always the same thing" happens (*a fortiori* this is not about eternal recurrence) but the fact that on the face of that oversized head called earth precisely what is newest doesn't change; that this "newest" in all its pieces keeps remaining the same." Quoted by S. Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993.) p. 88.
- 106 T. W. Adorno. *In Search of Wagner*. trans. R. Livingstone. (London: Verso. 1981.) p. 95. Adorno's use of the concept of phantasmagoria derives, of course, from Marx's analysis of commodity fetishism, of which Marx famously writes that "... it is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the phantasmagoric (*phantasmagorische*) form of a relation between things." *Capital, Volume One*. (trans. S. Moore and A. Aveling. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1983) p. 77. [This translation incorrectly translates *phatasmagorische* as "fantastic."]
- 107 Cf. T. W. Adorno. "Progress." in G. Smith ed. *Benjamin: Philosophy, Aesthetics, History*. pp. 84-101.
- 108 T. W. Adorno. "The Schema of Mass Culture." p. 63-64.
- 109 T. W. Adorno. "The Schema of Mass Culture." p. 55.
- 110 T. W. Adorno. "Letter to Benjamin, 18, March, 1936." in *Aesthetics and Politics*. p. 123.
- 111 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. trans. C. Lenhardt. (London: Routledge. 1986) pp. 77-78.

- 112 Or rather, it is modernist art which, for the present, enacts this mourning. The specificity is important for Adorno for, as we have seen, the culture industry, in its penetration of all spheres of life eviscerates the concept of aesthetic illusion central to classical aesthetics. Modernist art remains faithful to the critical stance implicit in the notion of aesthetic autonomy only through the formal negation of the harmony and symbolic unity characteristic of aesthetic illusion. Aesthetic illusion lives on in modernist art, but only, through its negation, as an ideal; this is why modernist art is, at the level of form, an aesthetics of dissonance, rupture and abstraction. Adorno's aesthetics of modernist art will be considered in Chapters 3 and 4.
- 113 Cf Adorno and Horkheimer's claim in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* that "A constant sameness governs the relationship to the past as well. What is new about the phase of mass culture compared with the late liberal stage is the exclusion of the new." p. 134.
- 114 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 404.
- 115 T. W. Adorno. *Notes to Literature vol. 1*. trans. S. Weber Nichol森 (New York: Columbia Univ. Press. 1991) p.120.
- 116 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics* p.400.
- 117 J-F. Lyotard. *Heidegger and "the jews"*. trans. A. Michel and M. Roberts. (Minneapolis: Minnesota Univ. Press. 1990) p. 48.
- 118 I. Wohlfarth, "Hibernation: On the Tenth Anniversary of Adorno's Death." *MLN* vol. 94, 1979. - p.961.
- 119 T. W. Adorno *Negative Dialectics* p. 57 / G. S. 6. p. 66. I owe this amended translation to D. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*. [Cambridge: Polity Press. 1990.] - p.221-2. Ashton's translation of the first clause, "Utopia is blocked off by possibility, never by immediate reality;" not only obscures the meaning of this passage, but is in fact incomprehensible with the context of Adorno's philosophy. If possibility were indeed to "block off" utopia, critical theory as the critique of "immediate reality" would be impossible, and thus the utopian perspective "which comes from nonbeing (*Nichtseienden*)" (p. 57/ G.S. 6. p. 66), which alone discloses the mediacy of all immediacy, would be inconceivable.
- 120 J. Bernstein. Introduction to *The Culture Industry*. p. 9.
- 121 T. W. Adorno. *Minima Moralia*. p.247 #153.
- 122 cf. T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics* p.146.
- 123 T. W. Adorno. *Minima Moralia* p.247.
- 124 Cf. Adorno's claim that "It [the world] resists all attempts of a desperate consciousness to posit despair as absolute. The world's course is not absolutely conclusive, nor is absolute despair; rather, despair is its conclusiveness. However void every trace of otherness in it, however much all happiness is marred by revocability: in the breaks that belie identity, entity is still pervaded by the ever-broken pledges of that otherness. All happiness is but a fragment of the entire happiness men are denied, and are denied by themselves." *Negative Dialectics*. p. 404.

Notes to Chapter Two:

- 1 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p.57. / G. S. 6. p. 66. [I owe this amended translation to D. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990. pp. 221-2.]
- 2 T. W. Adorno. "Marginalia on Mahler." *Telos* no. 87, Spring '91. [Trans. D. Pan and U. Schönherr] p.80.
- 3 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 24.
- 4 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 3.
- 5 T. W. Adorno. *Minima Moralia* # 44 p.70.
- 6 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. P. 402.
- 7 In a footnote to the (B) Transcendental Deduction, Kant effectively re-writes the architectonic plan of the first *Critique*: "In the *Aesthetic* I have treated this unity as belonging merely to sensibility, simply in order to emphasise that it precedes any concept, *although as a matter of fact* [my italics], it presupposes a synthesis which does not belong to the senses but through which all concepts of space and time first become possible." N. Kemp Smith trans. (London: Macmillan, 1987.) pp. 170-71 (B 160-1).
- 8 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 355.
- 9 T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. p. 230. / G. S. 3. p. 263. (trans. amended).
- 10 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 162 / G. S. 6 p. 164.
- 11 For this section, I am indebted to the reading of Adorno given by P. Hohendahl in Ch. 9 of his *Prismatic Thought: Theodor W. Adorno*. (Lincoln and London: Univ. of Nebraska Press. 1995.)
- 12 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 101.
- 13 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 28.
- 14 T. W. Adorno. "The Actuality of Philosophy." p.120.
- 15 T. W. Adorno. "The Actuality of Philosophy." p.128-9.
- 16 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics* p. 11.
- 17 T. W. Adorno. "On Epic Naïveté." *Notes to Literature*. vol. 1 p.24.
- 18 T. W. Adorno. "On Epic Naïveté." *Notes to Literature*. vol 1. p. 26 / G.S. 11 p. 36.
- 19 The particle "in fact" translates the German "nämlich".
- 20 T. W. Adorno. "On Epic Naïveté" *Notes to Literature* vol. 1 p.28.
- 21 T. W. Adorno. "On Epic Naïveté" *Notes to Literature*. vol. 1 p.27 / G.S. 11 p. 38.
- 22 T. W. Adorno. "On Epic Naïveté" *Notes to Literature* vol.1 p. 29.
- 23 T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. p. 203.
- 24 T. W. Adorno. "On Epic Naïveté" *Notes to Literature*. vol. 1. p.26.
- 25 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics* p.321.

- 26 T. W. Adorno. *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*. p. 54 .
- 27 E. Geulen, "A Matter of Tradition." (Telos. no. 89, Fall '91.) p.164 .
- 28 Cf. G. W. F. Hegel. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. trans. A. V. Miller. (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977.) A1. "Sense-Certainty: or the 'This' and 'Meaning'." pp. 58-66.
- 29 T. W. Adorno. *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*. p.33 / G.S. 2. p. 51.
- 30 T. W. Adorno. *Against Epistemology*. p.38 .
- 31 T. W. Adorno "The Idea of Natural History" p. 120.
- 32 T. W. Adorno. "On Epic Naiveté" *Notes to Literature vol. 1*. p.26 .
- 33 T. W. Adorno. *ibid*.
- 34 T. W. Adorno. "On the fetish character in music and the regression of listening." in J. Bernstein. ed. *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*. (London: Routledge, 1992.) p. 34.
- 35 On Adorno's "Parataxis" see P. Fenves "Measure for Measure: Hölderlin and the Place of Philosophy." *Philosophy Today* (vol. 37, no. 4/4. Winter 1993) pp. 369-382.
- 36 T. W. Adorno. "Parataxis: On Hölderlin's Late Poetry." *Notes to Literature vol. 2*. p.111
- 37 T. W. Adorno. "Parataxis." *ibid*.
- 38 T. W. Adorno. "Parataxis." *Notes to Literature vol. 2*. p.109.
- 39 T. W. Adorno. "Parataxis." *Notes to Literature vol. 2*. p.128.
- 40 T. W. Adorno. "Parataxis." *ibid*.
- 41 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p.189-90 .
- 42 T. W. Adorno. "Parataxis." *Notes to Literature vol. 2* p. 113 / G. S. 11 p. 451. I have used the slightly different translation of Hölderlin by M. Hamburger in *Friedrich Hölderlin: Poems and Fragments* (Third edition) London: Anvil Press, 1994. p. 461, 459. However, where Hamburger translates *Alle sich erfahren* as "know all others" I have preferred Nichol森's "all shall learn".
- 43 T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer. "Odysseus or Myth and Enlightenment" Trans. R. Hullot-Kentor. (*New German Critique* no. 56. 1992) p. 140 / G.S. 3 p.98 .
- 44 T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer. *ibid*. [trans. amended]
- 45 In developing this reading of non-identity in Adorno's thought, I must acknowledge my debt to Alexander García-Düttmann's *Gedächtnis des Denkens. Versuch über Heidegger und Adorno*. (Frankfurt a/M.: Suhrkamp, 1991) or rather, to its precis, in Henry Pickford's "Under the Sign of Adorno." (MLN, 108 (1993): 564-583.) Insofar as I have had to rely on the precis, rather than a reading of Garcia-Duttmann's book, I cannot tell how far my development of these themes either mirrors or diverges from his own. But insofar as Mr. Pickford's review may be taken as a reliable guide, I have found

- Garcia-Duttmann's formulation of this issue of great utility in focusing my own thoughts on the question of language in Adorno's work.
- 46 T. W. Adorno. "Parataxis." *Notes to Literature* vol. 2. p. 114 / G.S. 11. p.452.
- 47 T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. p.32.
- 48 I borrow this phrasing from G. Koch, who writes that, for Adorno, "Art is the wound that breaks open at the edges where nature and society rub against each other." "Mimesis and *Bilderverbot*." (*Screen* 34:3, Autumn 1993) p. 213
- 49 T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. p. 70
- 50 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p.221-2 .
- 51 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p.157.
- 52 T. W. Adorno. "Parataxis." *Notes to Literature* vol. 2. p.136.
- 53 T. W. Adorno. "Parataxis." *Notes to Literature* vol. 2. p.130 / G.S. 11. p. 471.
- 54 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 15, 14.
- 55 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p.10.
- 56 P. Hohendahl. *Prismatic Thought: Theodor W. Adorno*. p. 236.
- 57 T. W. Adorno. *Hegel: Three Studies*. p. 101-2.
- 58 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory* p.115. / G.S. 7. p. 121 [trans. amended]
- 59 W. Benjamin. *Reflections* Trans. E. Jephcott. (New York: Schocken Books, 1986) p. 329.
- 60 R. Hullot-Kentor. "Introduction to the translation of Adorno's 'The Idea of Natural History.'" *Telos* no. 60 [Summer '84] p.107, note 56.
- 61 W. Benjamin. *Reflections*. p.329.
- 62 T. W. Adorno. "Parataxis." *Notes to Literature*. Vol. 2. p.146.
- 63 T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment* p. 24 / G. S. 3 p. 41 [trans. amended]
- 64 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p.182 / G.S. 7 p. 189 [trans. amended]
- 65 T. W. Adorno. "Parataxis" *Notes to Literature* vol. 2 p. 141. / G.S. 11, p.482.
- 66 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p.165/ G.S.7 p.172. [trans. amended]
- 67 T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. p. 180.
- 68 *ibid*.
- 69 T. W. Adorno. *Against Epistemology: A Metacritique*. p. 143.
- 70 T. W. Adorno. "Parataxis." *Notes to Literature*. Vol. 2. p. 147.
- 71 What will be pursued in the following chapter is that what the configuration of mimesis and rationality expresses is not nature, but, through the logic of artistic form, the beautiful in nature. Adorno's attempt to redeem this category as a model of non-identity is at the heart of his attempt to engage in a "second reflection" on the categories of aesthetics beyond their Idealist provenance, in

- the case of the beautiful in nature, beyond Hegel's construal of it as inferior to artistic beauty.
- 72 T. W. Adorno. "Parataxis." *Notes to Literature. Vol. 2.* p.112.
- 73 cf. W. Benjamin. *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet In The Era of High Capitalism.* trans.H. Zohn (London: Verso. 1992.)
- 74 T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment.* p. 24 / G. S. 3 p. 41. [trans. amended].
- 75 The central importance of this text, and of Benjamin's work in general, to Adorno's thought has, of course, been explored most extensively by Susan Buck-Morss in her *The Origins of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin and the Frankfurt Institute.* (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1977.)
- 76 W. Benjamin. *Reflections.* pp.333-336. trans. E. Jephcott. See also, "Doctrine of the Similar" [trans. K. Tarnowski] *New German Critique.* (Spring '79, no. 17) pp. 65-68.
- 77 W. Benjamin. *Reflections.* p.335.
- 78 W. Benjamin. *Reflections.* p.335.
- 79 T. W. Adorno. "Marginalia on Mahler. " p. 80.
- 80 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory.* pp. 105, 191.
- 81 Hans-Jost Frey. *Studies in Poetic Discourse: Mallarmé, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Hölderlin.* [trans. W. Whobrey] Stanford, California: Stanford Univ. Press, 1996. p. 92.
- 82 Hans-Jost Frey. *op. cit.* p. 93.
- 83 Hans-Jost Frey. *op. cit.* p. 96, 97.
- 84 T. W. Adorno. "Introduction to Benjamin's *Schriften.*" *Notes to Literature. Vol. 2.* p.226.
- 85 A. Wellmer. *The Persistence of Modernity: Essays on Aesthetics, Ethics and Postmodernism.* trans. D. Midgely (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991.) pp. 36-94.
- 86 P. Dews ed. *Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews with Jurgen Habermas.* (London: Verso, 1992.) p.93.
- 87 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics.* p. 14.
- 88 A. Wellmer. *op. cit.* p.75.
- 89 A. Wellmer. *op. cit.* p.74.
- 90 A. Wellmer *op. cit.* 75. The Adorno citation can be found in *Quasi una fantasia: Essays on Modern Music.* trans. R. Livingstone (London, Verso, 1994.) p. 3.
- 91 A. Wellmer. *op. cit.* p. 74.
- 92 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics.* p. 163.
- 93 T. W. Adorno. "Subject and Object." in A. Arato/ E. Gebhardt eds. *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader.* (New York: Continuum, 1987.) pp. 499-500.

- 94 On this point, see J. M. Bernstein's "Art Against Enlightenment: Adorno's Critique of Habermas." in A. Benjamin ed. *The Problems of Modernity: Adorno and Benjamin*. (London: Routledge, 1989) p. 62.
- 95 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 364.
- 96 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 115.

Notes to Chapter Three:

- 1 T. W. Adorno. *Philosophy of New Music*. p. 3.
- 2 T. W. Adorno. cf. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 458.
- 3 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 483. cf. also p. 487.
- 4 T. W. Adorno. *Philosophy of New Music*. p. 3. The passage quoted can be found in the English translation of W. Benjamin's *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* tr. J. Osborne (London: Verso, 1992) on p. 47
- 5 Of "dialectical melancholy" Adorno states that, "Dialectical melancholy does not mourn vanished happiness. It knows that it is unreachable. But it also knows of the promise that conjoins the unreachable, precisely in its origin, with the wish. [.....] For the true desire of melancholy is nourished on the idea of an eternal happiness without sacrifice, which it still could never adequately indicate as its object." *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*. p. 126. With these words, in his first published book, Adorno anticipates the physiognomy and telos of the rest of his theoretical work.
- 6 G. W. F. Hegel. *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*. trans. T. Knox. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975) p. 103.
- 7 G. W. F. Hegel. *Aesthetics*. p. 111.
- 8 T. W. Adorno. *Philosophy of New Music*. p. 27-8.
- 9 J. -L. Nancy. "The Vestige of Art." pp. 81-100. of *The Muses*. [trans. P. Kamuf.] (Stanford, California: Stanford Univ. Press. 1996.)
- 10 J. -L. Nancy. *The Muses*. pp. 92-3.
- 11 J. -L. Nancy. op. cit. p. 92.
- 12 See, for example, S. Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics*. (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1977) pp.127-131. and M. Jay, *Adorno*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1984) p.161.
- 13 This essay is to be found in the collection of essays *Quasi una fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*. trans. R. Livingstone. (London and New York: Verso. 1994.) The German text is to be found in G. S. 16, ed. R. Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979.) On this essay, see Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe's fascinating reading in chapter 4 of his *Musica Ficta (Figures of Wagner)* trans. F. McCarren. (Stanford, California: Stanford Univ. Press. 1994.) pp. 117-145. I have also consulted G. Steiner's essay "Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron*" in *Language and Silence*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1990) pp. 150-163.
- 14 P. Osborne. "Adorno and the Metaphysics of Modernism: The Problem of a 'Postmodern' Art." in A. Benjamin ed. *The Problems of Modernity: Adorno and Benjamin*. (London, Routledge. 1989.) p. 30.
- 15 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 107.
- 16 cf. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 144. "The falsehood apposed by art is not rationality *per se* but the rigid juxtaposition of rationality and particularity."
- 17 cf. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 81.
- 18 Cf. *Aesthetic Theory*. pp. 252-255.

- 19 Cf. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 81. "Art is rationality criticizing itself without being able to overcome itself."
- 20 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 6.
- 21 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 6.
- 22 cf. J. Bernstein. *The Fate of Art: Aesthetic Alienation from Kant to Derrida and Adorno*. (London: Polity Press, 1993.) p. 201. On the points that follow it will be apparent that I have learnt much from J. Bernstein's presentation of this "logic" of mimesis and rationality/ intuition and conceptuality. Cf. Bernstein op. cit. pp. 197-206.
- 23 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 80.
- 24 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 7.
- 25 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 131.
- 26 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 128.
- 27 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 128.
- 28 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 130 / G.S. 7. p. 136.
- 29 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 191./ G.S. 7. p. 198.
- 30 I follow J. Bernstein here. See his *The Fate of Art: Aesthetic Alienation from Kant to Derrida and Adorno*. p. 245.
- 31 Cf. W. Benjamin. *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, p. 36: "Truth is an intentionless state of being, made up of ideas. The proper approach to it is not therefore one of intention and knowledge, but rather a total immersion and absorption in it. Truth is the death of intention."
- 32 This is the worry expounded by L Zuidervart. cf. *Adorno's Aesthetic Theory: The Redemption of Illusion*. p. 209.
- 33 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 47.
- 34 On the constellation of the beautiful in nature, mimesis and remembrance, I have learned much from W. Wurzer's treatment of these issues in his *Filming and Judgement: Between Heidegger and Adorno*. (New Jersey and London: Humanities Press, 1990.) See chapters 4 and 5.
- 35 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 108./ G.S. 7 p. 114. (trans. amended)
- 36 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 110. The passage which Adorno quotes is to be found on page 123 of the Knox translation of Hegel's *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art, Volume 1*. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975.)
- 37 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory* p. 104/ G.S. 7. p. 111. (trans. amended)
- 38 This point is well made by H. Pickford. See "Under the Sign of Adorno." (*MLN* April, 1993. no.108:3) p. 565.
- 39 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 99.
- 40 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 98-9
- 41 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 99 / G. S. 7, p. 105. (trans. amended)
- 42 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 105 / G. S. 7, p. 111.
- 43 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 107 / G. S. 7, p. 113. (trans. amended)

- 44 W. Benjamin. "The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism." trans. D. Lachterman, H. Eiland and I. Balfour. in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 1: 1913-1926*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Univ. Press.) 1996. p.181.
- 45 W. Benjamin. *ibid.* p. 181.
- 46 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 97.
- 47 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 109.
- 48 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 107.
- 49 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 185.
- 50 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 178.
- 51 This, I take to be the thrust of C. Menke's interpretation of Adorno's notion of aesthetic experience. I refer here to the review of his *Die Souveranität der Kunst: Ästhetische Erfahrung nach Adorno und Derrida*. by H. Pickford, "Under the Sign of Adorno." *MLN* no. 108:3 (April 1993) p.575.
- 52 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 138.
- 53 R. Hullot-Kentor. "Introduction to 'The Idea of Natural History.'" *Telos*. no. 60 [Summer 1984] p. 107.
- 54 Cf. T.W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 191.
- 55 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. pp. 365-6.
- 56 T. W. Adorno. *Minima Moralia*. # 37 "This side of the pleasure principle." p.61.
- 57 J-L. Nancy. *The Muses*. p. 93.
- 58 Cf. J -L. Nancy. *ibid.*
- 59 Cf. G. Rose, *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno*. (London: Macmillan, 1978) pp. 17-26.
- 60 Cf. *Negative Dialectics*. esp. pp. 361-65 and the "Meditations on Metaphysics" *passim*.
- 61 T. W. Adorno. *Quasi una fantasia*. p. 225.
- 62 Cf. G. W. F. Hegel. *The Philosophy of History*. trans. J. Sibree. (New York: Dover, 1956) pp. 250-256.
- 63 This is also argued by P. Lacoue-Labarthe. See his *Musica Ficta (Figures of Wagner)* p. 126.
- 64 T. W. Adorno. *op. cit.* p. 226.
- 65 T. W. Adorno. *op. cit.* p. 227.
- 66 P. Lacoue-Labarthe argues that, by concentrating his reading almost exclusively upon the music of the opera, to the exclusion of the text, Adorno fails to orient his analysis of the opera in the light of the Kantian analytic of the sublime, the thematics of which are everywhere pre-supposed, not only by the opera, but also by Adorno's reading. cf. P. Lacoue-Labarthe, *op. cit.* esp. pp. 129-132, and pp. 139-145.

- 67 A. Schoenberg. *Moses und Aron*. I quote from the translation by A. Forte of Schoenberg's libretto contained in the SONY edition (SM2K 48456) of the opera conducted by P. Boulez. p. 120.
- 68 T. W. Adorno. *Quasi una fantasia*. p. 229.
- 69 T. W. Adorno. *ibid* p. 242.
- 70 T. W. Adorno. *ibid*. p. 243. (trans. amended)
- 71 T. W. Adorno. *In Search of Wagner*. trans. R. Livingstone. (London: Verso, 1981.) p. 107.
- 72 cf. T. W. Adorno. *ibid*. p. 99 "Music can only be bodied forth in the present as a result of the most intense effort of memory and anticipation. This effort is the task of authentic thematic work, something evaded in Wagner's case by the trick of using extra-musical mnemonics in the form of motifs charged with allegorical meanings."
- 73 T. W. Adorno. *ibid*. p. 87.
- 74 On this point see A. Huyssen's fascinating reading of Adorno's Wagner book in chapter 2, "Adorno in Reverse: from Hollywood to Richard Wagner." of his *After The Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 1986)
- 75 T. W. Adorno. *ibid*. p. 121.
- 76 T. W. Adorno. *ibid*. p. 241.
- 77 T. W. Adorno, "Music and Language: A Fragment." in *Quasi una fantasia*. pp. 2 and 4.
- 78 For these readings see, respectively, C. Dahlhaus *The Idea of Absolute Music*, trans. R. Lustig. (Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press. 1989) pp. 115-6. and A. Wellmer, *The Persistence of Modernity*, trans. D. Midgely (Cambridge: Polity Press. 1991) p. 75. se also p. 12.
- 79 T. W. Adorno. *Quasi una fantasia*. p. 248.
- 80 T. W. Adorno. "Jene zwanziger Jahre" (1962) in *Eingriffe* (G.S. 10:2, p. 506) Quoted in (and translated by) M. Paddison, *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music*. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993) p 56.
- 81 Cf. Adorno's claim in "The Essay as Form." that "It [the essay] thinks in fragments, just as reality is fragmentary, and finds its unity in and through the breaks and not by glossing them over." *Notes to Literature, Vol. 1*. trans. S. Weber Nicholsen. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1991) p. 16.
- 82 T. W. Adorno. *ibid*.
- 83 T. W. Adorno. *Minima Moralia*. p. 247, #153, "Finale."

Notes to Chapter Four:

- 1 T. W. Adorno "Valery's Deviations" in *Notes to Literature vol 1* p.147 / G.S. 11 p.170.
- 2 T.W. Adorno *Negative Dialectics*. p.33.
- 3 T.W. Adorno *Notes to Literature*. p.147.
- 4 P. Osborne "Adorno and the Metaphysics of Modernism: The Problem of a 'Postmodern' Art. in A. Benjamin ed. *The Problems of Modernity: Adorno and Benjamin*. [Routledge, London 1989] p. 43.
- 5 T.W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer *Dialectic of Enlightenment* p.230 / G.S. 3 p.263. [Trans. amended]
- 6 T. W. Adorno *Aesthetic Theory* p.453.
- 7 T.W. Adorno *Philosophy of Modern Music* p.xvii. Hereafter this work will be referred to in the text as *Philosophy of New Music*. The German text *Philosophie der neuen Musik* is to be found in vol. 12 of the *Gessamelte Schriften*.
- 8 T. W. Adorno. "Ideen zur Musiksoziologie." (G.S. 16, p. 21) Quoted (and translated) in M. Paddison, *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993) p. 231.
- 9 T. W. Adorno. op. cit. p. 30.
- 10 A. Schoenberg. *Style and Idea*. [ed. L. Stein, trans. L. Black] (London: Faber and Faber, 1984.) p. 216.
- 11 T.W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 471/ G.S. 7. p.511.
- 12 T. W. Adorno. *Philosophy of New Music*. p. xvii.
- 13 T. W. Adorno. *Alban Berg: Master of the Smallest Link*. trans. J. Brand and C. Hailey. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994.) p. 50-1. (trans. amended)
- 14 T.W. Adorno. *Philosophy of New Music*. p. 67-8.
- 15 T. W. Adorno. op. cit. p. 33-4.
- 16 Adorno specifies that by hermetic work of art he means Benjamin's "auratic" work of art. Cf. T.W. Adorno. op. cit. p. 125, note 55.
- 17 T. W. Adorno. op. cit. pp. 125-5, footnote 55.
- 18 T. W. Adorno "Letter to Benjamin 18/3/36." in *Aesthetics and Politics*. (London: Verso, 1992.) p. 121. - I am not here concerned with whether Adorno's criticism, or even understanding of, Benjamin's essay is justified, rather I am simply indicating Adorno's self-understanding of his project in the *Philosophy of New Music*.
- 19 T. W. Adorno. op. cit. p. 17.
- 20 T.W. Adorno. op. cit. p. 38./ G.S. 12 p. 39. [trans. amended]
- 21 T. W. Adorno. op. cit. 34.
- 22 T.W. Adorno. op. cit. p. 35.
- 23 T.W. Adorno op. cit. p. 39.

- 24 Cf. T. W. Adorno op. cit. p. 123 / G. S. 12 p. 117, where Adorno describes tradition as the "presence of the forgotten" (*Denn Tradition ist das gegenwärtige Vergessene.*)
- 25 Cf. T. W. Adorno. op. cit. p. 64-5.
- 26 T.W. Adorno. op. cit. p. 51.
- 27 Cf. P. Osborne. "A Marxism for the Postmodern? Jameson's Adorno." *New German Critique*, no. 56. (spring-summer 1992) p. 186.
- 28 T. W. Adorno. op. cit. p. 67.
- 29 T. W. Adorno. op. cit. p. 38.
- 30 T.W. Adorno. op. cit. p. 39.
- 31 See for example Adorno's claim that "The recapitulation was the crux of sonata form. It revokes what since Beethoven had been the decisive element, the dynamic of the development, in a way comparable to the effect of a film on a spectator who stays in his seat at the end and watches the beginning again. Beethoven mastered this by a tour de force that became a rule with him: at the fertile moment at the beginning of the recapitulation he presents the result of the dynamic, the evolution as the affirmation and justification of what has been, what was there in any case. That is his complicity with the guilt of the great idealist systems, with the dialectician Hegel, for whom in the end the essential character of negations, and so of becoming, amounted to a theodicy of being. *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*. trans E. Jephcott. (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press. 1992) p. 94. Adorno discerns the break-down of the theme-variation schema prosecuted by Schoenberg to be already pre-figured in Mahler. *ibid.* pp. 88-89.
- 32 T. W. Adorno. "On the Social Situation of Music." (1932) (trans. W. Blomster) *Telos* no. 35, Spring 1978. p. 135-6.
- 33 T.W. Adorno. *Philosophy of New Music*. p. 51.
- 34 T.W. Adorno. op. cit. p. 60.
- 35 T. W. Adorno. op. cit. p. 103.
- 36 T. W. Adorno. op. cit. p.117.
- 37 T. W. Adorno. op. cit. p.117.
- 38 D. Roberts. *Art and Enlightenment: Aesthetic Theory after Adorno*. (Lincoln and London: Univ. of Nebraska Press. 1991) see pp. 2 and 161.
- 39 T. W. Adorno. "Arnold Schoenberg 1874-1951." in *Prisms*. trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1990) p. 155.
- 40 T. W. Adorno. *Philosophy of New Music*. p. 124/ G. S. 12, p. 118. [trans. amended]
- 41 Cf. T. W. Adorno. op. cit. p. 124.
- 42 T. W. Adorno. op. cit. p. 125/ G. S. 12. p. 119. [trans. amended].
- 43 T. W. Adorno. op. cit. p. 126/ G. S. 12. p. 120. [trans. amended]
- 44 T. W. Adorno. op. cit. p. 132/ G.S. 12 p. 125 [I have used Roberts' amended translation cf. *Art and Enlightenment* p. 54]

- 45 T. W. Adorno. *op.cit.* p. 133/ G. S. 12 p. 126 [trans. amended]
- 46 M. Pensky. *Melancholy Dialectics: Walter Benjamin and the Play of Mourning.* (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press. 1991) p. 229.
- 47 T. W. Adorno. *op. cit.* p. 125.
- 48 T. W. Adorno. *Quasi una fantasia: Essays on Modern Music.* trans. R. Livingstone (London: Verso, 1994) p. 216. / G. S. 16, p. 446. [trans. amended]
- 49 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory.* p. 47: "The new is the longing for the new, not the new itself. This is the curse of everything new."
- 50 P. U. Hohendahl. *Prismatic Thought: Theodor W. Adorno.* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press. 1995) p. 174.
- 51 T. W. Adorno. "The Ageing of the New Music." (trans. R. Hullot-Kentor and F. Will) *Telos.* no. 77 (Fall 1988) pp. 95-117. / "Das Altern der neuen Musik." G. S. 14. pp. 143-167.
- 52 On these points see R. Hullot-Kentor's introduction to his translation of "The Ageing of the New Music." *Telos* no. 77 (Fall 1988) p. 86.
- 53 P. Griffiths. *Modern Music: A Concise History from Debussy to Boulez.* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992) p. 143-4. M. Chanan's description of serialism makes much the same point when he writes that, "[T]he new form of serial composition which Messiaen helped to define took the principle of the twelve-note series and applied it systematically to the other main musical parameters. In this way duration, and hence rhythm, along with the key aspects of timbre like dynamics and attack, all came to be governed by the same rubric of mathematical coding as pitch." Michael Chanan, *Musica Practica: The Social Practice of Western Music from Gregorian Chant to Postmodernism.* (London: Verso, 1994.) p. 261.
- 54 On this point see R. Hullot-Kentor, "Popular Music and Adorno's "The Ageing of the New Music." p. 89.
- 55 T. W. Adorno. "The Ageing of the New Music." p. 103.
- 56 T. W. Adorno. *loc. cit.* p. 104.
- 57 T. W. Adorno. *loc. cit.* p. 105.
- 58 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics.* 140-43.
- 59 R. Hullot-Kentor. "Popular Music and Adorno's "The Ageing of the New Music." *Telos.* no. 77, 1988. p. 94.
- 60 T. W. Adorno. "The Ageing of the New Music." p. 108.
- 61 T. W. Adorno. *op. cit.* p. 114.
- 62 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *op. cit.* p. 116. - "The possibility of winning back the power of artistic resistance depends on not shrinking from the fact that what is objectively, socially required now is preserved exclusively in hopeless isolation. Only one who was prepared to work in isolation, to support himself by no delusive laws and necessities, would perhaps be granted something more than mirroring the helplessly solitary."
- 63 T. W. Adorno. *Philosophy of New Music.* p. 115.

- 64 T. W. Adorno. "Vers une musique informelle." [trans. R. Livingstone] in *Quasi una fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*. (London: Verso, 1994) p. 273.
- 65 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *ibid.*
- 66 T. W. Adorno. *op. cit.* p. 274.
- 67 See *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 325: "The real history of society repeats itself in art history because the productive forces of the former can dissociate themselves from society and live a life of their own in art. This explains why art is a recollection of transience. Art preserves the transient, bringing it before our eyes by changing it. This is the sociological explanation of art's temporal core."
- 68 T. W. Adorno. "Vers une musique informelle." p. 298.
- 69 T. W. Adorno. *op. cit.* p. 301.
- 70 T. W. Adorno. *op. cit.* p. 307.
- 71 T. W. Adorno. *op. cit.* p. 307.
- 72 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 359.
- 73 T. W. Adorno. "Vienna" p. 216.
- 74 Of course Adorno's evaluations of popular music, jazz and Stravinsky can be, and have been contested. Adorno provides his own "critique" of his Stravinsky essay contained in *Philosophy of New Music* in "Stravinsky: A Dialectical Portrait" in *Quasi una fantasia* pp. 145-175. My interest here focuses not with the overall tenability (or otherwise) of these evaluations, but solely with Adorno's construal of the issue of musical time and its (postulated) relation to the redemption of nature.
- 75 On this point see *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 54. "While it is foolish to try and restore to music triple and other chords from the tonal repertoire, it is quite conceivable that, when once the total quantification of music has gone far enough so as to engender qualitative counter-tendencies, the interest in the vertical dimension may be reborn."
- 76 In "Music and Technique", Adorno makes this point emphatically when he states that, "The development of music in time, the essence of which is the continual production of the new rather than of that which has already been, contradicts pre-determination in itself. Pre-determination blasted music out of its own element - out of time; totally determined music would no longer be a matter of becoming, but only of mere existence, and its becoming within the framework of time would degenerate into an illusion - quite simply, into subjectivity." - T. W. Adorno. "Music and Technique." trans. W. Blomster. (*Telos* no. 32, 1977) p. 94.
- 77 T. W. Adorno. "Vers une musique informelle." p. 310.
- 78 T. W. Adorno. *op. cit.* p. 312.
- 79 T. W. Adorno. *op. cit.* p. 317.
- 80 On this point see R. Hullot-Kentor's "The Impossibility of Music: Adorno, Popular and other Music." *Telos* (no. 87, Spring 1991) p. 116.
- 81 T. W. Adorno. "On Tradition." (*Telos* no. 94, 1993) p. 78.
- 82 T. W. Adorno. *op. cit.* p. 78.

- 83 T. W. Adorno. *Philosophy of New Music*. p. 123 and 124. /G. S. 12. p. 118.
- 84 U. Schönherr. "Adorno, Ritter Gluck, and the Tradition of the Postmodern." (*New German Critique*. no. 48, Fall 1989.) p. 145.
- 85 T. W. Adorno. "On Tradition." p. 79. In Adorno's usage of this term we should hear resonances of Baudelaire as mediated through Benjamin's engagement with his work.
- 86 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 455.
- 87 T. W. Adorno. *ibid.*
- 88 P. Hohendahl. *Prismatic Thought: Theodor W. Adorno*. p. 207
- 89 T. W. Adorno. "Vers une musique informelle." p. 319.

Notes to Chapter Five:

- 1 G. Rose. *Judaism and Modernity: Philosophical Essays*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1993) p. 63.
- 2 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *Hegel: Three Studies* trans. S. Weber Nicholsen (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 1993) p. 1.
- 3 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *Hegel: Three Studies*. p. 83.
- 4 On this double strategy see P. Osborne's "The Organised Spirit of Contradiction" a review of the translation of *Hegel: Three Studies in Radical Philosophy* 67 (Summer 1994) pp. 52-53.
- 5 J. Habermas. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*. trans. F. Lawrence. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990) p. 106. [italics mine.]
- 6 J. Habermas. *Knowledge and Human Interests*. trans, J. Shapiro (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1972) p. 33.
- 7 A. Bowie. *From Romanticism to Critical Theory: The Philosophy of German Literary Theory*. (London: Routledge, 1997) p. 267.
- 8 See, J. M. Bernstein. *Recovering Ethical Life: Jürgen Habermas and the future of Critical Theory*. (London: Routledge, 1995) especially Ch. 1.
- 9 Cf. J. Habermas. "Consciousness-Raising or Redemptive Criticism: The Contemporaneity of Walter Benjamin." trans. P. Brewster. and C. Buchner (*New German Critique*, 17 (1979).
- 10 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. pp. 361-365.
- 11 E. Geulen. "A Matter of Tradition." (*Telos*, no. 89. Fall 1991) p.159-60.
- 12 "The Utopian Motif in Suspension: A Conversation with Leo Lowenthal." in ed. M. Jay, *An Unmastered Past: The Autobiographical Reflections of Leo Lowenthal*. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press. 1987) pp. 237-246. This interview was originally published in *Frankfurter Rundschau*, May 17, 1980. I owe this reference to R. Wolin. See his discussion of its implications (through a reading of Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*) in Ch. 3 of his *The Terms of Cultural Criticism: The Frankfurt School, Existentialism, Poststructuralism*. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press. 1992).
- 13 op. cit. p. 245.
- 14 ibid. p. 245-6.
- 15 ibid. p. 237.
- 16 Cf. P. Osborne's analysis in *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde*. (London: Verso. 1995) esp. Ch.1 "Modernity: A Different Time?" and Ch. 4 "Modernity, Eternity, Tradition." for a rigorous and extended treatment of the "temporal dialectics of modernity" to which I am indebted.
- 17 P. Osborne. *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde*. p. xii.
- 18 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 480.

- 19 Cf. J. Habermas. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. Chapter.1.
 20 J. Habermas in P. Dews ed.: *Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews with Jurgen Habermas*. (London: Verso, 1992) p. 93.
- 21 J. Habermas. "Modernity - An Unfinished Project." trans. S. Benhabib. in C. Harrison and P. Wood eds. *Art in Theory: 1900-1990*. (pp. 1000-1008.) p. 1004.
- 22 Cf. J. Habermas *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. pp. 3-4.
 23 J. Habermas. op. cit. p. 6.
- 24 P. Osborne. *The Politics of Time*. p. 133.
- 25 Cf. J. Habermas. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. p. 127.
- 26 See M. Sullivan and J.T. Lysaker, "Between Impotence and Illusion: Adorno's Art of Theory and Practice." (*New German Critique*, no. 57, Fall 1992) Sullivan and Lysaker argue, against the view that Adorno severs the dialectic of theory and praxis, that Adorno continues such a dialectic by transforming the very terms in which the question of political practice could be raised in the historical present due to his recognition that rationalisation has consequences for what might be meant by political practice and the ability of theory to raise the question of its relation to praxis. In arguing that, for Adorno, memory operates as the historically determinate "second reflection" on the dialectic of theory and praxis, I take it that my reading of Adorno is in substantial agreement with the argument advanced by Sullivan and Lysaker.
- 27 P. U. Hohendahl. *Prismatic Thought: T. W. Adorno*. (Lincoln and London: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1995) p. 17.
- 28 Cf. T. W. Adorno. "Society" (1965) trans. F. Jameson in S. Bronner and D. Kellner eds. *Critical Theory and Society: A Reader* (London: Routledge, 1989) esp. p. 271. and "Late Capitalism or Industrial Society?" (1968) in Meja et. al eds. *Modern German Sociology*. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1987)
- 29 P. U. Hohendahl. *Prismatic Thought: T. W. Adorno*. p. 17.
- 30 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 389-90. / G. S. 6. p. 382. (trans. amended)
- 31 T. W. Adorno. *Minima Moralia*. # 141, "La nuance / encor'." p. 221.
- 32 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 192 / G. S. 7. p. 200.
- 33 A. Huyssen. *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*. (New York and London: Routledge, 1995). p. 90.
- 34 A. Huyssen. *Twilight Memories*. p. 88.
- 35 A. Huyssen. *Twilight Memories*. p. 88.
- 36 Cf. G. Rose. *Hegel Contra Sociology*. (London: Athlone, 1995) p. 35.
- 37 A. Wellmer. *The Persistence of Modernity: Essays on Aesthetics, Ethics and Postmodernism*. trans. D. Midgely. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991) p. viii.
- 38 A. Wellmer. "Truth, Semblance, Reconciliation: Adorno's Aesthetic Redemption of Modernity." in *The Persistence of Modernity*. (pp. 1- 35) p. 12.

- 39 A. Wellmer. "Truth, Semblance, Reconciliation. " p. 12. The passage Wellmer
quotes is from Adorno's *Minima Moralia*. (# 153, "Finale") p. 247.
- 40 For a splendid account of "rational identity" in Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*,
see G. Rose, *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of T. W.
Adorno*. (London: Macmillan, 1978) pp. 44-48.
- 41 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 192 / G. S. 7 p. 199-200. (trans.
amended)
- 42 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 408 / G. S. 6. p. 400. (trans. amended)
- 43 A. Wellmer. "Truth, Semblance, Reconciliation." p. 7.
- 44 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 385 / G. S. 6. p. 376.
- 45 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. xx.
- 46 T. W. Adorno. *Hegel: Three Studies*. p. 86.
- 47 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 389.
- 48 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. "Passage to Materialism." pp.192-94.
- 49 For a fuller treatment of this issue, see S. Jarvis, "The "Unhappy
Consciousness" and Conscious Unhappiness: On Adorno's Critique of Hegel
and the Idea of an Hegelian Critique of Adorno." *Bulletin of the Hegel Society
of Great Britain*. no. 29 (Spring/Summer 1994) pp. 71-88.
- 50 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 386.
- 51 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 372.
- 52 The passage cited reads, "Even if a transcendental power of freedom be
allowed, as supplying a beginning of happenings in the world, this power would
in any case have to be outside the world (though any such assumption that over
and above the sum of all possible intuitions there exists an object which cannot
be given in any possible perception, is still a very bold one.)" p. 390. This
citation is taken from the Observation on the Third Antinomy, *Critique of Pure
Reason* (A 451/B479). trans. N. Kemp Smith. (London: Macmillan, 1987.)
- 53 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 391.
- 54 A. Wellmer. "Metaphysics at the Moment of its Fall." trans. S. Whiteside in P.
Collier and H. Geyer-Ryan eds. *Literary Theory Today*. (Cambridge: Polity
Press, 1990) (pp. 35-49) p. 36.
- 55 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 392./ G. S. 6. p. 384.
- 56 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. xx.
- 57 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 408.
- 58 On this point cf. Wellmer "Metaphysics at the Moment of its Fall." p. 36.
- 59 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. pp. 400-1.
- 60 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 190.
- 61 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 403 / G. S. 6 p. 395. (trans. amended)
- 62 Cf. I. Kant. *Critique of Practical Reason*. (Ak 122) "..the perfect fit of the will
to moral law is holiness, which is a perfection of which no rational being in the
world of sense is at any time capable. But since it is required as practically
necessary, it can be found only in an endless progress to that perfect fitness. [...]"

This infinite progress is possible, however, only under the presupposition of an infinitely enduring existence and personality of the same rational being; this is called the immortality of the soul." trans. Lewis White Beck. (New York: Macmillan, 1993.) pp. 128-9.

- 63 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 360./ G. S. 6. p. 353 (trans. amended)
- 64 A. Wellmer. "Metaphysics at the Moment of its Fall." p. 40.
- 65 A. Wellmer. "Metaphysics at the Moment of its Fall." p. 40.
- 66 A. Wellmer. "Ethics and Dialogue" in *The Persistence of Modernity*. p. 177.
- 67 A. Wellmer. "Ethics and Dialogue" p. 177.
- 68 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 362.
- 69 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 392-3. / G. S. 6 p. 385. (trans. amended)
- 70 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 408.
- 71 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 397. / G.S. 6. p. 389-90 (trans. amended)
- 72 T. W. Adorno. "Parataxis: On Hölderlin's Late Poetry." in *Notes to Literature vol. 2*. trans. S. Weber NicholSEN. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1992) p. 142.
- 73 T. W. Adorno. "Parataxis." p. 149.
- 74 T. W. Adorno. "Parataxis." p. 148.
- 75 T. W. Adorno. "Parataxis." p. 148.
- 76 Cf. T. W. Adorno. "Parataxis." p. 148.
- 77 Of course, one might object that this merely loads the dice with respect to the agon between Adorno and Habermas/Wellmer. But insofar as the purported "translation" of negative dialectics into the terms of communicative rationality is actually to involve a translation, it must remain, to some degree at least, immanent to what is being translated. But this is, I am suggesting, precisely what is not possible, insofar as communicative rationality claims to have "transcended" the philosophical "paradigm" in which it pigeon-holes Adorno. If the critique of Adorno is to remain immanent, it cannot, without evacuating the meaning of immanent critique, return to the practice of conceptual opposition which everything in Adorno militates against. This is not to say that one cannot return to such a model of philosophizing, merely that such a return must entail that the critique of Adorno becomes extrinsic, and can thus be questioned on Adornian grounds without begging the question, precisely because there is no "neutral" discursive space from which the agon might be decided..
- 78 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. p. 192 .

Notes to Epilogue:

- 1 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. trans. E. B. Ashton. (London: Routledge, 1990) p. 408.
- 2 T. W. Adorno. "Resignation." trans. W. Blomster in J. M. Bernstein ed. *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*. (London: Routledge, 1991) pp. 174-75. It should be noted that the passage from "Resignation" cited above, does not posit an ahistorical thesis as to the relation of theory and praxis, but is an historically determinate intervention into the aftermath of the criticism of quietism aimed at Adorno and Horkheimer by the German Socialist Students in 1968-69. Whilst the position Adorno develops is indeed consistent with the general orientation of his thought prior to 1969, the advocacy of dialectical thinking as a figuration of an (absent) praxis responds to the charge that negative dialectics had replaced revolutionary praxis with the perpetuation of (bourgeois) philosophy. On this historical conjuncture see R. Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories and Political Significance*. trans. M. Robertson. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994.) pp. 609-636.
- 3 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 365.
- 4 J. M. Bernstein. "The Death of Sensuous Particulars: Adorno and Abstract Expressionism." *Radical Philosophy* 76 (March/April 1996) p. 17.
- 5 A. Huyssen. *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*. (New York and London: Routledge, 1995) p. 5.
- 6 T. W. Adorno. *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*. trans. R. Hullot-Kentor. (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1989) p. 126. / G. S. 2. p. 179.
- 7 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *Hegel: Three Studies*. trans. S. Weber NicholSEN. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993) pp. 8-9.
- 8 On this point see H-J Frey, *Studies in Poetic Discourse: Mallarmé, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Hölderlin*. trans. W. Whobrey. (Stanford, California: Stanford Univ. Press, 1996) pp. 96-7.
- 9 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 5.
- 10 Cf. T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 391.
- 11 T. W. Adorno. *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*. p. 126. The passage Adorno quotes is from Kierkegaard's *Either/Or Vol. 1*. trans. D.F. Swenson and L. M. Swenson (New Jersey: Princeton Univ. press, 1971) p. 39.
- 12 T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. trans. J. Cumming. (London, Verso, 1992) p. 40.
- 13 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 163.
- 14 T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*. p. 3.
- 15 Cf. K. Marx. "Letter to A. Ruge. (September 1843)." "...we do not anticipate the world with our dogmas but instead attempt to discover the new world

though the critique of the old." and "If we have no business with the construction of the future or with organizing it for all time there can still be no doubt about the task confronting us at present: the *ruthless criticism of the existing order*" trans. R. Livingstone and G. Benton. in *Early Writings*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1992.) p. 207. Cf. also T. W. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics* pp. 3-4. On this point see also J. M. Bernstein. *Recovering Ethical Life: Jürgen Habermas and the future of Critical Theory*. (London: Routledge, 1995) p. 25.

16 T. W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. trans. C. Lenhardt. (London: Routledge Kegan and Paul, 1984) p. 196. / G. S. 7 p. 204. (trans. slightly amended).

17 In concluding this thesis, it should be acknowledged that the attempt to explore the interrelation between time, memory and utopia in Adorno's philosophy and aesthetics through the "optic" of the categories of modality has led to the "disregard" of another "language" of memory that is operative within Adorno's work: namely its psychoanalytic (and more specifically Freudian) dimension. An examination of the importance of Freud's thinking of memory, repression, mourning and melancholia to Adorno's memorial "utopics" would undoubtedly provide the basis for a more careful and delicate assessment of how Adorno's treatment of memory differs from that developed in the work of Hegel, Benjamin and Marcuse. That this treatment has not been essayed here can be traced, arguably, to my attempt to focus (almost exclusively) on tracing a "modal metaphysic" within Adorno's work. However, I would like to thank Howard Caygill for formulating for me precisely how this omission of the Freudian dimension has implications not only for how one constructs the central categories for reading Adorno's work, but also, for how one might think the utopian "stakes" of Adorno's work.

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