

The coastline of experience

Materialism and metaphysics in Adorno

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Such a critique confines all our speculative claims rigidly to the sphere of possible experience; and it does this not by shallow scoffing at ever-repeated failures or pious sighs over the limits of our reason, but by an effective determining of these limits in accordance with established principles, inscribing its *nihil ulterius* on those Pillars of Hercules which nature herself has erected in order that the voyage of our reason may be extended no further than the continuous coastline of experience itself reaches – a coast we cannot leave without venturing upon a shoreless ocean which, after alluring us with ever-deceptive prospects, compels us in the end to abandon as hopeless all this vexatious and tedious endeavour.

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*¹

This passage from the transcendental dialectic of the *Critique of Pure Reason* argues for the need to set properly determined limits to metaphysical speculation. The metaphor reveals a redundancy in the procedure of the transcendental dialectic. Critique inscribes its 'nihil ulterius', but on pillars which nature herself has already erected. The limit which the critic is to set is one that already exists. Its 'nihil ulterius', moreover, is misleading: there is *not* nothing beyond these limits, but an (albeit shoreless) 'ocean'. These difficulties are not contingent upon this metaphor but are incident to the whole project of reason's self-limiting critique. It is not clear why criticism should need to 'set' a limit which is regarded as naturally inherent in reason: or rather, this need raises the acute difficulty that reason is supposed to be both naturally transgressive and critically self-limiting. So that while criticism may beat its bounds, it cannot put a stop to lawless speculation. Such speculation is 'inseparable from human reason, and even after its deceptiveness has been exposed, will

not cease to play tricks with reason and continually entrap it into momentary aberrations ever and again calling for correction.'²

These passages from Kant's work offer a useful introduction to the difficulty of thinking without illusions. Materialists have usually regarded themselves as the bearers of just such illusionless thinking. But it often appears more difficult to say what materialism is. Why should this be? Surely materialism is the most straightforward of philosophical creeds, not one requiring any complex negotiation with idealism, with phenomenology, with 'fundamental ontology'? So at least the confidence with which this word is sometimes put about in the human sciences would suggest. But Adorno's materialism starts from a painful awareness that it is much more difficult really to think as a materialist than it is to lay claim to that label; through an awareness, indeed, that it is often just where this label is most vehemently and immediately claimed that a particularly unreflective kind of metaphysics is all the more powerfully at work. For all the unfashionableness of its diction, what Adorno's attempt to rethink materialism without dogmatism is centrally addressing is nothing other than the problem of 'givenness, or, to use the Hegelian term, immediacy',³ which has proved of such continuing importance, in radically divergent ways, not only for phenomenology, fundamental ontology and deconstruction, but also for much recent work in analytical philosophy.⁴

The problem may be put like this. All attempts to avoid idealist claims of the type that thought constitutes, shapes, or is identical with, its objects appear to run the opposite risk of claiming access to immediacy, to a transcendence which is just 'given'. In

such invocations, as Hegel himself forcefully pointed out, we are effectively invited to have faith in some datum or framework for data which is sheerly given. Our knowledge of such 'givens' is mistakenly thought of as being purely passive.⁵ Enquiry must simply halt before them. Dogmatic materialism of this kind is not at all free from metaphysics in the way it supposes. When thinking comes to a halt with an *abstract* appeal to history, or society, or socio-historical material specificity, or any other form of givenness, it might as well stop with God. The lesson which Adorno draws is that whether thinking is really materialist is not decided by how often the word 'materialism' is repeated, but by what happens in that thinking. Materialist thinking would need to ask how thinking about that which appears to escape conceptuality is even imaginable.

In this article I want to attempt to understand the connection between the materialist and the metaphysical motifs in Adorno's thinking. This attempt will focus on Adorno's relationship to Kant's critical thought, in order to explicate what Adorno means by referring to his own thinking as critical thinking freed from the armour of transcendental method. The article falls into three main parts. In the first and longest part, I give an account of Adorno's reflections on transcendental epistemology and his reasons for thinking it unworkable. In part two I ask whether these objections to transcendental epistemology need oblige Adorno to adopt a fundamental ontology or a fully-fledged metaphysics of his own. In part three I consider the status of Adorno's appeals to negativity in his answers to these questions. Finally, a brief conclusion attempts to sketch the relation of these epistemological and metaphysical problems to problems of praxis which for reasons of space cannot be fully covered in this article.

The metacritique of transcendental epistemology

It is unfortunate that Adorno's book on phenomenology – 'On the Metacritique of Epistemology' – has been translated into English under the title *Against Epistemology*, because the idea of 'metacritique' is an important one to him.⁶ Adorno's approach to epistemology is a *metacritique* in the sense that it performs a further critique on critical enquiry itself. It asks not only 'what are the conditions of the possibility of experience?', but 'what are such a transcendental enquiry's *own* conditions of possibility?' The pivot of this metacritique is an account of Kant's transcendental subject. Adorno proceeds by radicalizing Kant's own insistence that all knowledge of objects must be

mediated through experience. In making this insistence, Kant wants to distinguish between what we can claim knowledge of, and what we can only think of. The pure concepts of the understanding by themselves afford no knowledge of objects. But we must be able to *think* of an object as it is in itself, irrespective of all experience of it. If we could not think of things in this way, Kant argues, we would be left in the absurd position of positing appearance without anything that does the appearing.⁷ Yet although we must be able to think the idea of a thing 'considered as it is in itself', it is nevertheless beyond our experience. We can only *know* things considered as they 'appear' to consciousness, only as 'phenomena'.

Adorno, however, points out that a pure form without any content is not merely unknowable, but also unthinkable. A thought which is not a thought *of* anything will be not merely 'empty', as Kant concedes, but also blind, not a thought at all.⁸ If the categorial forms specified by Kant are the conditions of the possibility of experience, the reverse is equally true: the categorial forms themselves are only made possible by the experience whose conditions of possibility they are supposed to provide.⁹ Accordingly those forms could not be invariant, but would necessarily change as experience changes.

It is sometimes thought that this argument rests on a misunderstanding of Kant's categorial forms as though they designated not pure forms but beings.¹⁰ This is a mistake. It is true that Adorno does not believe that we can intelligibly refer to a pure form without any substance, any more than a substance without any form is thinkable.¹¹ His target, however, is not the ontological status of the conditions of the possibility of experience, but the supposed invariance of these conditions.

Adorno's account of Kant's transcendental subject is motivated by a wish to arrive at a different kind of concept of experience from Kant's.¹² Kant insisted that all experience requires a concept, or form of understanding, to be joined with a (sensible) intuition. Without intuitions, my experience would simply be empty, nothing, because concepts have no content of themselves. Nor is it any easier to imagine the possibility of experience without conceptual forms, in Kant's view, since not only would there be no sense in which I could be said to 'have' my experiences, but it is not possible to imagine what a substance devoid of all form could actually be like. But this did not mean that concepts and intuitions could not be separated out by philosophers. On the contrary, it was 'a strong reason for carefully separating and distinguishing the one

from the other' for epistemological purposes. Adorno is less convinced that this kind of methodological separation is possible. The result of any such separation, for Adorno, is that experience comes to look as though it were something which was somehow added up by joining concept with intuition,¹³ or, to put the matter more precisely, as though it were manufactured by the pure activity of concepts upon the raw material of intuition.¹⁴

These considerations throw a rather different light on Kant's 'block' – his insistence that pure concepts of the understanding cannot by themselves provide knowledge of objects. This prohibition on dogmatic metaphysics, Adorno suggests, is itself dogmatically formulated, because of the claim that the conditions of the possibility of experience are timeless. This invariance has the result of converting certain features of variable experience itself into invariants. In particular it implies that it is impossible for us to *experience* (rather than just 'think' or 'postulate') freedom, or our own subjectivity in general. It also suggests that it is impossible to know things as they are in themselves rather than as they appear to consciousness.¹⁵

Adorno does not think that Kant simply made a mistake about experience. He argues that Kant's enquiry into the conditions of the possibility of experience truthfully bears witness to certain structural features of modern natural-historical experience. The Kantian object [*Gegenstand*] produced by 'pure' conceptual activity upon the material of intuition closely resembles the commodity as a supposed product of 'pure' or abstract labour.¹⁶ The insistence that for experience to be possible, a concept must work upon an intuition, is conditional upon what experience itself is increasingly becoming: a production of exchange-value for its own sake. For Adorno, this is both the truth and the untruth of Kant's 'experience'. It is a true index of the real historical emptying-out of our experience.¹⁷ Any attempt simply to wish away that prohibition in advance of a real change in our experience would amount to a merely hopeful or dishonest declaration that an unfree society is in fact free. To this extent Kant's prohibition remains in force.

Yet at the same time, because Kant's is a transcendental account, it implies that this emptied experience, bereft of real content, is the model of what experience itself has been and must be like. Adorno's interest here is in suggesting that this transcendental account of experience need not be taken as legislative for all future experience. If our experience were different, both these transcendental blocks – on experiencing freedom and on knowing the thing as it is in itself

– might no longer apply. However, like all attempts to criticize transcendental inquiry by 'radicalizing' it, Adorno's attempt to think with and against Kant has remained liable to the suspicion that, far from really radicalizing transcendental inquiry, it instead falls back from it, into one or other of the bad alternatives which Kant was attempting to get beyond. Its appeal to experience can be seen as a relapse into a historicizing or sociologizing dogmatism, which thinks about Kant from a perspective already set up by some dogmatically posited opinions about social history. Its attack on the prohibition on the experience of transcendence, conversely, can be seen as a relapse into pre-critical metaphysics. The charge of a relapse into pre-critical metaphysics is discussed later. Here we need to focus in more detail on Adorno's arguments about experience and its conditions of possibility.

As Hans-Georg Gadamer has remarked, the concept of experience is one of the least clarified concepts used by philosophers and yet one of those to which appeal is most often made.¹⁸ Adorno's use of the concept appears to struggle beneath this difficulty more than most others. The concept of experience is a constant point of reference in his criticisms of the philosophical tradition since Kant, yet he refuses to provide an unambiguous definition for it. What is more, it is not hard to think of plausible defences against Adorno's criticisms of the transcendental concept of experience. A Kantian might point out that for Kant, the conditions of the possibility of experience yielded by transcendental inquiry are not simply the conditions of the possibility of 'our' experience at present or to date, but, rather, the conditions of the possibility of any thinkable experience whatever. The point is not that historical and/or current experience is made possible by these conditions, but that we cannot in principle even imagine any experience which would be intelligible without these conditions. They make possible *all possible*, not merely actual or historical, experience.

If Adorno's reformulation of the concept of experience rested only on the argument that because experience itself changes the conditions of its possibility must change, it would clearly have failed to take this objection into account. But this is the conclusion, not the presupposition of Adorno's argument. The argument rests instead on a thoroughgoing re-examination of what Kant splits up for epistemological analysis as the two indispensable components of human experience, understanding and sensibility. To understand this re-examination, it is useful to draw on a course of lectures Adorno gave in 1957–58, the second half of

which comments in more consecutive fashion than was Adorno's habit on some central issues in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.¹⁹ If we look in more detail at his criticism of Kant's concept of experience, we will see that it marshalls three primary sets of arguments, the first addressing Kant's account of the intellectual conditions of knowledge, the second addressing his account of the sensible conditions of knowledge, and the third addressing Kant's account of the connections between these. All three groups of argument are contentious, and open to many objections. The first set is intended to show why concepts devoid of all reference whatever to a 'something' are not only 'empty', as Kant would have it, restricted to a logical rather than a synthetic use, but 'blind', unthinkable, and consequently devoid of a logical as well as of a synthetic use. Here Adorno is clearly in disagreement not only with Kant but also with his twentieth-century semanticist critics.²⁰ The second set of arguments is intended to show that an experience supposedly free from all conceptual mediation would not only be 'blind', as Kant suggests, but also empty, not experience at all. This second set of arguments addresses both Kant's theory that time and space needed to be considered 'pure forms of intuition' which were necessary to all synthetic a priori knowledge, and his characterization of phenomenal reality as a 'sensuous manifold' devoid of qualities prior to conceptual determination. Here Adorno's arguments, perhaps surprisingly, have something in common with those of Kant's semanticist and empiricist critics.

These two sets of arguments lead on to a more general case about the project of transcendental enquiry itself. Adorno argues that such enquiry dogmatically answers its own questions in advance by asking *how* synthetic a priori judgements are possible rather than *whether* they are possible.²¹ What links the arguments as a whole may be understood by saying that for Adorno, Kant indeed provided a critique of pure *reason*, but one which rested on a failure to criticize the notions of pure *understanding* and pure *sensibility*. Adorno's critical thinking understands itself as a radicalization rather than a relapse from critical thinking in that it criticizes not only pure reason but the very idea of 'pure concepts' and 'pure intuitions'. 'Thinking without purity' is the model for Adorno's attempt to free critical thinking from the armour of its transcendental method.²²

Let us examine the first limb of Adorno's account of the concept of experience. He attempts to argue that *pure* concepts of the understanding are not only empty but blind: that they are by themselves unthinkable, not just lacking in content. It might initially be thought that this argument is making the mistake of trying to use empirical means, to argue from the way human beings happen to be able or unable to think, to settle a non-empirical point about the *validity* of logical concepts. It might be thought, that is, that this is a psychologistic argument. Kant himself had already argued that this kind of argument could be of no help in transcendental thought. Pure concepts of the



understanding could not be simply inductive abstractions from experience, because otherwise we could not account for the ‘fact’ of that scientific knowledge which we can possess a priori: ‘namely, *pure mathematics* and *general science of nature*.’²³ Adorno’s argument, however, rests on an account of the conditions of intelligibility of a proposition. This is what makes it a metacritical rather than a psychologistic argument. For Kant non-contradictoriness is a sufficient condition of intelligibility. In his discussion of the possibility of thinking freedom, intelligibility is taken as synonymous with non-contradictoriness: ‘I can none the less *think* freedom (that is to say, the representation of it is at least not self-contradictory);’²⁴ ‘I can think whatever I please, provided only that I do not contradict myself, that is, provided my concept is a possible thought.’²⁵ The subjective intelligibility of the pure concepts of the understanding is taken as read; the question of their referential content – what Kant calls their objective validity and reality – is addressed later in the transcendental deduction and is not regarded as essential to their intelligibility. For Adorno, the referential content of concepts is a necessary condition of their intelligibility. Without reference to a ‘something’, no formal logic *could* be thinkable.²⁶ A thought which is not a thought of anything is not only empty but unintelligible: ‘the meaning of logic itself demands facticity.’²⁷

Here not only Kantians but their positivist or semanticist opponents may have a strong objection. It can be protested that Adorno is confusing the question of how logical propositions are arrived at – their ‘genesis’ – with whether they are true – their validity. Another way of putting this would be to say that he confuses the *quid juris* of a transcendental deduction – what right do we have to these concepts? – with the *quid facti* of an empirical deduction – how do we come by these concepts?²⁸ As I argue elsewhere, Adorno does not think that the genesis and validity of logical propositions can be quite so easily separated. More importantly here, for Adorno intelligibility is not a merely psychological criterion. It is inseparable from the very notion of validity. Validity can never be meaningfully ascribed to a proposition which is in principle unthinkable, even an analytic one: ‘Every judgement, even, as Hegel showed, an analytical one, carries within itself, whether it will or no, the claim to predicate something which is not merely identical with the bare subject-concept.’²⁹ Adorno’s critique is thus directed from the start against the notion that pure concepts of the understanding really are ‘pure’. The condition of their even being thinkable, not only of

their having any content, lies for Adorno precisely in their not being pure, but rather already contaminated with some reference, however minimal. (I shall discuss later the charge that this view necessarily obliges Adorno himself to develop a positive ontology.)

If we move now to look at the second limb of Adorno’s account of Kant’s concept of experience, we can see that it rests on some complementary arguments. Kant’s account of the sensible conditions of human knowledge in the transcendental aesthetic is notoriously complex. Adorno at some point or other discussed most of its arguments, and it would be impossible to give a complete catalogue here. Instead an especially critical instance, Kant’s account of time and space as pure forms of intuition, will be discussed. What does it mean to describe space and time as ‘pure forms of intuition’? Adorno is sympathetic to the impulse which lies behind such a description. Any attempt simply to define space and time will inevitably appeal to spatial and temporal concepts. But our right to use such concepts is precisely what an account of space and time is supposed to ground. This, of course, is itself an argument in favour of the need for a transcendental account of spatial and temporal concepts. They are concepts which we cannot *not* use.³⁰ Space and time, such an argument runs, cannot be inductive abstractions from experience because they are already presupposed in any attempt to describe experience. Yet they cannot be pure concepts of the understanding, according to Kant’s view of such concepts, otherwise they would be empty, whereas Kant’s account of them is supposed to show how *synthetic* a priori knowledge is possible. Accordingly Kant regards space and time as ‘pure forms of intuition’, or, as he elsewhere puts it, ‘pure intuitions’³¹ – that is, as a kind of a priori form of sensibility.

Adorno argues that the vacillation between these two formulations is not accidental but symptomatic.³² Kant must place the emphasis he does on the argument that space and time are not categories because otherwise the immediate givenness of sensibility would be endangered. Kant would have to concede that the ‘material’ which the activity of the categorial forms is supposed to shape is already preformed, a subjectified object. Hence the description of space and time as ‘pure intuitions’. Yet at the same time space and time must not be empirical intuitions, otherwise the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge itself would fall. Hence the description of space and time as ‘pure forms of intuition.’ Adorno, by contrast, argues that ‘space and time as developed by the transcendental aesthetic are, despite all assurances to the contrary, concepts: in

Kantian parlance, representations [*Vorstellungen*] of a representation'.³³ For Adorno, this fact is not simply a mistake on Kant's part, but rather testifies to the impossibility of freeing space and time from all conceptual mediation whatever. 'Pure intuition would be wooden iron, experience without experience.'³⁴ Yet this 'experience without experience' is arrived at precisely by a realist impulse to preserve a moment of sensibility from all mediation by concepts.

Kant insisted, of course, that the separation in his work of concept and intuition, of understanding and sensibility, had an epistemological rather than an ontological status. These were not opposed kinds of being for Kant, but an opposition between form and content. It is important to recognize that the above arguments do not misattribute an ontological separation between concept and intuition to Kant. They are not complaining that the pure concepts and pure intuitions discussed by Kant are non-entities, that there are 'no such things', but rather that their very epistemological 'purity' renders them unintelligible. Adorno expresses this by a joke. In Kant's epistemology, Adorno suggests, adding nothing to nothing produces something.³⁵ What Adorno is pointing to is that the very rigour of Kant's exclusion of any ontological moment from his epistemological separation makes it unworkable, because unintelligible, as epistemology. *Pure* understanding and *pure* sensibility have not been subjected to the same critique as pure reason. Or rather: how they may legitimately *be used* has been intensively discussed. But what these expressions *signify*, what pure concepts and pure intuitions 'are', cannot be made intelligible without already destroying the methodological separation in which they are supposedly held apart for epistemological analysis.

It is here that we come to the third limb of Adorno's account, his examination of the connection between Kant's accounts of pure understanding and pure sensibility. The aim of the transcendental deduction (most clearly in the version provided in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*) is to establish a connection between the conditions of the possibility of human knowledge provided by the understanding and those provided by sensibility: to show, crudely summarized, that the categories have a synthetic rather than a merely analytic use. In one sense, of course, the transcendental deduction does not have the decisive status for Adorno that it so often takes on in assessments of the success or failure of transcendental idealism, since he has already argued that the notions of 'pure' concepts and of the sensible manifolds that they are

to determine in order to make experience possible are not merely empty but unintelligible. Nevertheless, the transcendental deduction is of special interest to Adorno because it offers to show in just what way the two sets of conditions of human knowledge which Kant has been investigating in isolation are connected to each other. It provides further confirmation in Adorno's view of the internal difficulties produced by an epistemological separation of understanding and sensibility. It shows how hard it is subsequently to put back together what has first been analysed in radical separation.

The transcendental deduction is littered with the bones of the many attempts to provide an exhaustive interpretative account of it – not least because of the many important differences between the form it takes in the first and second editions of the *Critique* – and such an account certainly cannot be attempted here. Instead discussion will have to be limited to one crucial aspect to which Adorno points – the facticity of the categories. In one passage of the second edition of the transcendental deduction, Kant answers the question of why it is that 'our understanding ... can produce *a priori* unity of apperception solely by means of the categories, and only by such and so many' by ruling it out of court: it is 'as little capable of further explanation as why we have just these and no other functions of judgement, or why space and time are the only forms of possible intuition.'³⁶ The categories and the logical functions of judgement are at this point regarded as raw givens no less than the forms of sensibility. For Adorno this, if true, means that the deduction has in fact not taken place. In the transcendental deduction itself we come to a halt before 'something given, something simply to be taken up [*etwas Hinzunehmendes*], something which can no longer properly be deduced at all'.³⁷ In this sense the question *quid juris* – with what right do I use these concepts? – has become, with this appeal to brute givenness, a question *quid facti* – how did I get hold of them? Adorno is dissatisfied with the way in which the question of right is itself thus modelled on facticity in the heart of the deduction – with what he thinks is the dogmatic aspect of transcendental method itself.

How, then, has the concept of experience been reformulated? First, Adorno has argued that experience is both somatic and conceptual. It is so, not only in the sense that two elements must come together for experience to be possible, but also in the sense that these cannot be separated out as 'elements' for analysis in isolation from each other. There can be no account of experience without an account of experi-

ences. Second, it has been suggested that the future of experience cannot be legislated for in the image of its past. This dual reformulation has consequences for every aspect of the project of transcendental inquiry. It remobilizes the whole series of methodical separations – of form from content, of spontaneity from receptivity, of thinking from knowing – upon which Kant’s account of transcendental subjectivity depends.



We have already seen why Adorno thinks his argument can be sustained against Kantian objections to it. But two different kinds of objection may already have become clear. First, his reformulation of the concept of experience is deeply indebted (although, as we shall see, by no means identical) to Hegel’s earlier and more systematic criticism of all Kant’s radical separations. This debt is a clear difficulty for Adorno’s own account of Kant. How far does Adorno’s critique of Kant commit him to just that idealist identification of thought and being which a negative dialectic is supposed to help us out of? This is a question that I have begun to approach in an earlier paper.³⁸ Second, do Adorno’s criticisms of Kant’s transcendental account of experience obligate Adorno himself to provide a fundamental ontology, an examination of what is meant by ‘being’, or even a fully fledged metaphysics? It is this latter question that I want to attempt to answer here.

The problem of metaphysics

The problem around which these difficulties circle is that which has dominated the history of philosophy in the twentieth century: whether thinking may free itself from metaphysics; how this might happen; and whether such an escape, if feasible, is even desirable. One very powerful tradition in twentieth-century thought, that of logical positivism, has, of course, regarded this as not really a problem at all. For Rudolf Carnap, for example, so-called metaphysical problems were ‘pseudo-problems’ which were the result of incautiously allowing words with no meaningful referent into philosophical talk.³⁹ But most other European philosophical traditions have regarded metaphysics as not so easily liquidable. Adorno, indeed, does not

regard the *liquidation* of metaphysics as of itself desirable, despite – indeed, as will be seen, precisely on account of – his materialism. Instead, he regards a moment of metaphysical speculation as currently ineliminable from thinking which is to be thinking at all, including materialist thinking.

What, then, ‘is’ the metaphysical moment which Adorno thinks of as currently ineliminable from thinking? In order to answer this question, we need to go back once more to his encounter with Kant, and this time less to motifs originating in Kant’s analytic than to those originating in his dialectic. Adorno recognizes that the *Critique of Pure Reason* itself already aimed at a critical rescue of certain aspects of metaphysical thinking, rather than a simple liquidation of metaphysics.⁴⁰ Although it is Kant’s view, in Adorno’s words, that the result of the antinomies is that certain questions ‘may not really be asked’, the very premiss of Kant’s attempt, in the transcendental dialectic, to set clear limits to the use of the pure concepts of the understanding is an admission that reason is naturally transgressive of these limits. Kant points to ‘a natural and unavoidable dialectic of pure reason ... inseparable from human reason ... which, even after its deceptiveness has been exposed, will not cease to play tricks with reason and continually entrap it into momentary aberrations ever and again calling for correction’.⁴¹ This element in Kant’s work can prompt Adorno to speak of a ‘metaphysical experience’ which ‘inspires’ Kant’s thought:

In order to be spirit, spirit must know that it is not exhausted in that to which it extends; that it is not exhausted in the finitude which it is like. Thus spirit thinks what would be beyond it. Such metaphysical experience inspires Kant’s philosophy, once it has

been broken free of its armour-plated method. Any consideration of whether metaphysics is still at all possible must reflect the negation of the finite demanded by finitude. Its riddle-image [*Raetselbild*] animates the word 'intelligible'.⁴²

Such a passage seems to raise more problems than it solves. How, in particular, can spirit's 'thought' of what would be beyond it be compared to 'metaphysical experience'? Surely Kant's idea of the intelligible as such depends on just this distinction between our capacity to *think* the intelligible and the restriction of our *experience* to what appears?⁴³ However, it is in turn just this gulf between thinking and knowing, between thinking and experiencing, that Adorno has in his sights when he refers to freeing criticism from transcendental method. Freeing Kant's thought from the armour of its method is what Adorno takes the metacritique of transcendental enquiry to have accomplished.

Kant's antinomies arise in the course of illegitimate attempts to use the pure concepts of the understanding as though they could by themselves yield knowledge of objects. Adorno, however, regards the concept of intelligibility itself as aporetic. To Kant's antinomies, as we have seen, he adds a further antinomy which, as Albrecht Wellmer puts it, 'places not only the knowability, but also the *thinkability* of the intelligible world in question. The antinomy consists in the fact that objective reality cannot be attributed to the transcendental ideas, and yet if they are to be the expression of a meaningful thought, reality *must* be attributed to them.'⁴⁴

Adorno's critique of Kant's 'block', then, is motivated by the attempt to criticize the separation between our real experience and a really possible future experience through a philosophical interpretation of the former. In this criticism it is not *cognition* of external metaphysical *entities* which is at stake. The loss of metaphysical dogmas is irreversible, and all hope for such knowledge already testifies in the terms expressing it to its own impossibility. What is at stake is how the moment of freedom in thinking testifies to the real possibility of a future experience not bound to self-preservation, a future experience in which spirit could relinquish its infinite postponement of material satisfaction.

As Wellmer has remarked in his lucid discussion of this aspect of Adorno's thought, for Adorno it is as though with this idea 'a thin crack had opened up through which a weak glimmer of light might fall from redemption upon the darkened world, enough to contest the right of Kant's metaphysical agnosticism

to have the last word. Instead of "we cannot know": "we do not yet know".⁴⁵ But Wellmer goes on to raise an important objection to Adorno's line of argument: 'We can *already* know that what we cannot even consistently think as actual, we cannot anticipate as actual either.'⁴⁶

This objection by no means exhausts the issue, however. For Wellmer, Adorno becomes a pre-critical dogmatic metaphysician when he helps himself to a speculative Hegelian argument – the argument that the prohibition on the misemployment of pure concepts of the understanding is dogmatically formulated.⁴⁷ But this argument, if accepted, means that the very distinction between pre-critical and critical thinking which Wellmer, like almost all second-generation critical theory, takes as a bench-mark, cannot be taken as absolute. Indeed the whole point of this argument is that transcendental inquiry has not managed, and could not in principle manage, *radically* to separate itself from pre-critical 'metaphysics'. It is in fact quite central to Adorno's reflection on the demise of metaphysics, and part of the point of his 'metacritique', that transcendental enquiry was never as distinct from rationalism as it has sometimes subsequently been painted.

The motive for this argument is not to suggest that therefore it is legitimate to go back to pre-critical rationalism as though Kant had never happened, but rather to suggest that metaphysics may be ineliminable from thinking in a different way than was supposed by Kant. It need not be the case that, as Wellmer objects, this argument asks us to anticipate as actual what we cannot even consistently think as actual. Such a demand clearly would constitute a decisive objection to Adorno's account of his relation to metaphysics. The argument, instead, is a negative one. It points out that we cannot liquidate as chimerical what we cannot even consistently think as chimerical: the transcendence in thinking.

Adorno described Kant's statement that 'the critical path [in philosophy] alone remains open' beyond dogmatism and scepticism as 'one whose truth-content is incomparably greater than what it means in its particular context'.⁴⁸ Indeed critical thinking, for Adorno, may almost be defined as that thinking which manages in fact rather than merely in intention to take this path. It is in this context that Adorno's difficult remarks in the closing lines of *Negative Dialectics* on the 'solidarity' between his own thinking and metaphysics are finally to be understood.⁴⁹ Materialism and metaphysics alike violate both the Kantian prohibition on the misemployment of transcendent concepts and what

Adorno sees as Hegel's total 'context of immanence'. Materialism and metaphysics are both untrue wherever they claim access to immediate givenness. But they are both true where they show how the prohibition on dogmatism is itself dogmatically formulated. This is the basis upon which Adorno can argue that 'materialism is not the dogma which its shrewdest opponents accused it of being, but rather the dissolution of something which has for its part been seen through as dogmatic. Hence materialism's rights [*Recht*] within critical philosophy.'⁵⁰ Kant's prohibition on the misuse of transcendent concepts is true to aspects of our present and past experience, but untrue in so far as it seeks to legislate for all future experience:

Socially, it may be suspected with good reason that this block, the limitation on the absolute, is one with the need to work, which really does hold humans in the same spell which Kant transfigured into philosophy. The captivity in immanence to which he, with brutal honesty, confines spirit, is a captivity in self-preservation ... if this beetle-like natural-historical care were broken through, the positioning of consciousness with respect to truth would be changed.⁵¹

The prohibition is 'honest' about natural-historical experience. It is only 'brutal' in so far as it confines such experience within supposedly immutable conditions of its possibility, and to this extent prohibits experience from changing. Brutal honesty becomes brutally dishonest, Adorno suggests, by this appeal to invariance. The critical 'block' which prohibits experience of transcendence relies on a presentation of experience as invariably the pure work of conceptual forms upon the content of intuition. The block cannot be thought away. But thought can show how the experience on which the block rests is both real and changeable. A changed experience would change whatever are taken as the conditions of its possibility. A society in which our experience itself was no longer identitarian might be one in which the prohibition on the experience of transcendence would no longer apply.⁵²

Negativity without nihilism

Adorno's account of the entanglement between materialism and metaphysics, then, depends centrally on this double move. To liquidate the possibility of experiencing transcendence would make thinking impossible; yet this does not of itself mean that immediate access to such experience has thereby been secured. This is why Adorno takes care to refer to his thinking on this

topic as 'solely negative'.⁵³ The magical, mystical and theological terms which Adorno uses to designate the possibility of an escape from pure immanence or from self-preservation – as where he talks of 'breaking the spell' of the context of immanence or of a 'salvation' or 'redemption' of natural-historical life – need to be understood in the context of this negative thinking. Such expressions are, instead, a twofold 'anamnesis', thought's attempt to recollect, instead of suppress, what it depends on. They recollect both instrumental reason's own history of pre-instrumental rationality, its inability to rid itself of the magical and mythical thinking which it has suppressed, and the concealed transcendence of prohibitions on transcendence. They are determinate negations of these prohibitions which make visible the experience implicitly sedimented in them.

How far does Adorno, then, appeal to negativity itself as a panacea? When Adorno and Horkheimer discussed the possibility of a materialist dialectic in 1939, Horkheimer was on one occasion driven to an exasperated outburst: 'So all we can do is just say "no" to everything!'⁵⁴ Adorno's reply does not attempt to conceal the extent to which he identifies thought itself with determinate negativity: 'There is no other measure of truth than the specificity of the dissolution of illusion.'⁵⁵ We need, finally, to consider in more detail just what Adorno means by negativity, as well as some of the more cogent among the many counter-arguments that have been offered to his conception.

Michael Theunissen has given a critical account of 'Negativity in Adorno' that is all the more powerful for its engagement with the philosophical tradition from which Adorno emerges. Theunissen argues that, unlike most philosophers, Adorno does not use negativity to refer to non-being, but rather to something which is existent, which negates, and which ought not to be: the existing negativity of identificatory thinking and the domination that it accompanies and makes possible.⁵⁶ The point of negative thinking, in this sense, is not a limitless scepticism which will negate any positive content whatever, but a negation of this existing negativity. Its point, that is, is the reverse of scepticism. It is conceived of as a negation of sceptical negativity which will overcome the prohibition on the experience of transcendence. Theunissen goes on to distinguish two primary conceptions of negative dialectic. On the one hand, he suggests, negative dialectic is conceived of as (1) a 'consistent "consciousness of non-identity"';⁵⁷ on the other as (2) an 'ontology of the wrong state of things'.⁵⁸ Negativity means something different in each case. The non-identical is not itself

negative, except from the standpoint of identificatory thinking. In sense (1), then, the negativity is, as it were, within quotation marks. In this sense, negative dialectic is not really negative. In sense (2), by contrast, the negativity referred to is the negativity of that which should not be, the ‘wrong state of things’. In this sense, negative dialectic is not really dialectical. The result, for Theunissen, is that negative dialectic is ‘a dialectic which transcends itself, as it makes a transition into metaphysics’.⁵⁹ A dialectic which was imagined as entirely self-sufficient would be making an entirely undialectical claim to exclusivity. Accordingly, dialectic depends on an ‘undialectical’ moment. It is in invoking the ineliminability of this undialectical moment, in the raising of the non-identical to an absolute, Theunissen suggests, that Adorno’s dialectic goes over into metaphysics.

The force of Theunissen’s criticism, unusually, is that what he calls Adorno’s ‘negativism’ is not, in a certain sense, negative *enough*.⁶⁰ It depends on a series of pre-negativistic or even anti-negativistic arguments. In particular, it depends on the argument that *total* despair is unintelligible, because as a minimal condition of the possibility of despairing determinately of the world as it is, consciousness must have a sense of some element that is not negative: ‘When philosophy paints its grey in grey, a shape of life has grown old’;⁶¹ but ‘[c]onsciousness could not even despair over the grey, did it not harbour the notion of a different colour, whose dispersed traces

are not absent in the negative whole.’⁶² The negative is not the whole in the sense that there really is nothing positive – this would be the nihilism of ‘all is nothing’ against which Adorno sets himself – but in the sense that everything is shaped by negativity. The result, Theunissen argues, is that Adorno’s negative thinking founders in contradictions which cannot be excused as the manifestation of historical antagonism, but which are, instead, of its own making: between insisting, for example, on the one hand that exchange is a distorted prolepsis of true reconciliation, and on the other that the work of art is a prolepsis of the thing which would no longer be mutilated by exchange;⁶³ or between insisting, on the one hand, that the world as it exists is ‘false to its innermost core’⁶⁴ and insisting, on the other, that ‘even in its most questionable state society is the epitome of the self-producing and reproducing human life’⁶⁵ – ‘that is’, as Theunissen comments, ‘for all its negativity, never *simply* negative’.⁶⁶ Only if negative thinking were to be able to free itself entirely from metaphysics could it avoid such ‘bad contradiction’.

This is clearly a series of objections which goes to the heart of Adorno’s work. Since negative dialectic so openly confesses its own aporetic quality, objections that merely point to contradiction are not addressing the decisive issue, which is, instead, to what extent and in which cases negative dialectic’s claims that its moments of contradiction aporetically manifest real antagonism are justified. The question is partly



a hermeneutic one which demands an examination of how to *read* a contradiction such as that between the claims of the type that (1) the existing world is false to its innermost core and claims of the type that (2) even in its most questionable state society is the epitome of the self-producing and -reproducing life of mankind. Claims of the first type, Adorno wants to suggest, cannot be made intelligible without already hearing claims of the second type sounding within them. Arguments to the effect that ‘the existing world is false to its innermost core’ can never be read as completely literal in Adorno’s work, not at all because Adorno has in some way *decreed* that they should not be read literally, but because if taken with total literalness they are not thinkable. In the very act of thinking such a claim we provide ourselves with evidence of the extent to which it is untrue. That if we are to despair determinately we cannot make despair into an absolute – which Theunissen rightly emphasizes as being what distinguishes Adorno’s negative thinking from nihilism – also affects, rather than being a matter of indifference for, the hermeneutic status of Adorno’s claims.

Here many may think that their worst fears have been confirmed. The problem of contradiction is to be evaded in favour of a frankly aestheticized reason, which skips argument by an easy appeal to context and removes contradiction by suggesting that one limb of a contradictory pair was not meant literally. The arguments raised here, however, are not simply aesthetic but concern the extent to which Adorno’s thought remains not only dialectical but speculative. The model for what the ‘speculative moment’ in thinking *means* for Adorno is provided by the idea that we are already unable not to hear claims of the second type sounding in claims of the first type. A moment of unliteralness is non-liquidable from such claims to despair, because if they were meant with absolute literalness they could not even be thought. For Hegel, speculative thinking was famously able to see ‘the rose in the cross of the present’. Adorno’s thinking is speculative to the extent that this motif can be reread in the light of his own thesis about the unthinkable of complete despair. Every line which, if read with sheer literal-mindedness, speaks despair, *bespeaks* hope. What philosophical argument *bespeaks*, as well as what it speaks, cannot in Adorno’s view simply be reassigned to the aesthetic, and used as the basis for a charge of an aestheticization of reason, as though it were the place of strictly philosophical argument only ever to read what is written with absolute literalness, because *absolute* literalness is itself a chimera.

None of these arguments brings forward considerations of which a series of objections like Theunissen’s is unaware. Rather, the weight resting on an argument such as the claim that complete despair is not fully thinkable is just what Theunissen means by arguing that Adorno’s negative dialectic transcends itself in so far as it goes over to metaphysics. What the perspective outlined above would want to question, however, is Theunissen’s suggestion that there *can* be a negative thinking which is fully freed from metaphysics without becoming a nihilism. Theunissen’s own work has drawn attention to what he calls ‘the critical function’ of parts of Hegel’s logic – ‘the logic of being exposes positivism as metaphysics; the logic of essence exposes metaphysics as positivism.’⁶⁷ On Adorno’s account the condition of such a critical logic, which, despite Theunissen’s criticisms of Adorno, remains very close to the intentions of a negative dialectic, would be an acknowledgement of the impossibility of liquidating metaphysical speculation. It could not be expounded as a negativism absolutely free from metaphysics without delusively making just the kinds of claim to exclusivity which Theunissen himself regards as the reason for negative dialectic’s own ‘transition to metaphysics’.

Kant protested that any thought that, like Adorno’s, wanted to resist both dogmatism and the procedure of a critique of pure reason could only have the sceptical aim of ‘changing work into play, philosophy into philodoxy’.⁶⁸ For Adorno, the work of thought is negativity. Positivity is where thought comes to rest, comes to a halt. The negativity of Adorno’s thought represents its unceasing labour, its refusal to come to rest in a posited standpoint or fact or method. But the manual labour which ‘smooths the path’ for this ‘labour of the concept’ continues, and thought continues to live off it. For this reason, to come to rest in invariant positivity whilst work goes on all around is indeed to change ‘work into play, philosophy into philodoxy’. Adorno does want to change work into play, but really to change it, not in thought alone, nor for thinkers alone. Only on this condition can negative thinking be distinguished from nihilism.

The hope of Adorno’s negative thinking, then, is not to protect its own negativity but, in truth, to bring negativity to an end. Hegel referred to the course of thought as a self-correcting or ‘self-perficient’ scepticism. Adorno’s negativity too would be self-perficient, yet could not regard such self-perficiency as guaranteed, nor as satisfactorily to be accomplished in thought alone:

If thought ... gropes beyond itself in such a way that it names the other as something simply incommensurable with it, which it yet thinks, it will find no shelter but in the dogmatic tradition. In such a thought thinking is alien to its content, unreconciled with it, and finds itself once again condemned to two separate kinds of truth, which would be irreconcilable with the idea of truth itself. Metaphysics rests on whether it is possible to escape from this aporia without any sleight of hand. To this end dialectic, at once the impression [*Abdruck*] of the universal context of delusion and its critique, must in one final movement turn itself even against itself.⁶⁹

Adorno's 'non-identical', as he has emphasized throughout, is not 'simply incommensurable' with thought. Any statement of such 'simple incommensurability' is already a thought, after all. Dialectic 'turns against itself', not by exhaustedly lurching into a dogmatism it has managed to stave off until the last, but by making visible its *own* conditionedness. Adorno suggests, indeed, that charges of dogmatism will fall on any attempt to think the conditionedness of thought: 'Whatever convicts the subject of its own arbitrariness, whatever convicts the subject's *præ* of aposteriority, will always sound to the subject like a transcendent dogma.'⁷⁰ The two apparently opposed complaints most often addressed to Adorno's thought – that he makes an inadmissible leap into sociology, and that he takes flight into metaphysics or mysticism – are in truth deeply related. Both take Adorno as dogmatic in just the sense to which he here refers.⁷¹

But the statement also indicates just why it is so important to Adorno to contest the prohibition on the experience of transcendence. The impulse to thematize an ineliminably metaphysical moment in thinking is not the impulse once and for all to liberate spirit from its body: quite the reverse. The possibility of the experience of transcendence is *at once* that of the experience of freedom *and* that of thought's ability to think its own conditionedness. Without such a possibility thought will be unable to think what it lives off. Thought which fails to think what it lives off is not thinking. The reproach of dogmatism or of contradictoriness addressed to the idea of the non-identical – as though from blessed islands where these hydras have long been slain – does not succeed in eliminating either dogmatism or contradiction. The life of negative dialectic lies in contradiction; it does not aim to eradicate contradictions in thought, but to understand the possibility of reconciling antagonism. 'Nur wenn, was ist, sich ändern läßt, ist das, was ist, nicht alles': 'only if "that which is" can be changed is "that which is" not *all* there is'.⁷²

Notes

1. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, Macmillan, London, 1933, p. 361 (*Kritik der Reinen Vernunft* [*KrV*], A395–96). I wish to thank Nick Walker, Drew Milne, Nigel Mapp, Jay Bernstein, Chris Thornhill. For a paper on a partially related topic cf. Carrie L. Hull, 'The Need in Thinking: Materiality in Theodor W. Adorno and Judith Butler', *Radical Philosophy* 84, July/August 1997, pp. 22–35.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 300; *KrV*, A 298/B354–55.
3. Wilfrid Sellars, 'Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind' in *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science. Volume 1: The Foundations of Science and the Concepts of Psychology and Psychoanalysis*, edited by Herbert Feigl and Michael Scriven, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1956, pp. 253–329, p. 253.
4. Cf. John McDowell, *Mind and World*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1994.
5. G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1977, pp. 351–2.
6. The German title of the work translated as *Against Epistemology* by Willis Domingo (Blackwell, Oxford, 1982) is *Zur Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie* [*ME*] (Towards a Metacritique of Epistemology). Adorno, however, had initially wanted the work to be called *The Phenomenological Antinomies*; he was planning in 1935 to subtitle the work 'Prolegomena to a Dialectical Logic'. The final title was a compromise with the publisher. For a discussion of the title of this book see *Vorlesung zur Einleitung in die Erkenntnistheorie 1957–58* [*VEET*] Junius, Frankfurt am Main, n.d., p. 18. Readers should be aware that Domingo's version is not always accurate.
7. *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 27; *KrV*, Bxxvi.
8. *Negative Dialektik* [*ND*], Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1975, p. 383; *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1973, p. 391. *VEET*, p. 50. 'Der Essay als Form', *Noten zur Literatur*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1974, pp. 9–13, p. 17; *Notes to Literature*, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen, 2 vols, Columbia University Press, New York, 1991–92, vol. 1, p. 10. Readers should be aware that Ashton's translation of *Negative Dialektik* is often defective.
9. *ND*, p. 379; *Negative Dialectics*, p. 386. *Philosophische Terminologie* [*PhT*], 2 vols, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1973–74, vol. 2, p. 98 (4.xii.1962).
10. Cf. Carl Braun, *Kritische Theorie versus Kritizismus* ([*Kantstudien: Ergänzungshefte*, 115] de Gruyter, Berlin, 1983, *passim*).
11. *VEET*, p. 90. Cf. Helga Gripp, *Theodor W. Adorno: Erkenntnisdimensionen negativer Dialektik*, Schöningh, Paderborn, 1986, pp. 73–4.
12. Cf. Anke Thyen, *Negative Dialektik und Erfahrung. Zur Rationalität des Nichtidentischen bei Adorno*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1989.
13. *ND*, p. 189; *Negative Dialectics*, p. 188.
14. *ND*, pp. 379–80; *Negative Dialectics*, p. 387.
15. *PhT*, ii, p. 48 (20.xi.1962).
16. *Ibid.*
17. *ND*, p. 382; *Negative Dialectics*, p. 389.
18. Cf. Ludwig Pongratz, 'Zur Aporetik des Erfahrungsbegriffs bei Theodor W. Adorno', *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 93, 1986, pp. 135–42, p. 142.
19. *VEET*, pp. 185–320. An edition of this text overseen

- by the Theodor W. Adorno Archiv is to appear shortly as section 4, volume 1 of the *Nachgelassene Schriften* [Posthumous Works], published by Suhrkamp. Adorno's 1959 lectures on the *Critique of Pure Reason* will appear as section 4, volume 4 of the same series.
20. For whom, see J. Alberto Coffa, *The Semantic Tradition from Kant to Carnap: To the Vienna Station*, edited by Linda Wessels, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991.
 21. *VEET*, p. 187. Cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 128; *KrV*, B127–28.
 22. *ND*, p. 384; *Negative Dialectics*, p. 392.
 23. *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 128; *KrV*, B128.
 24. *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 28; *KrV*, Bxxviii.
 25. *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 27n; *KrV*, Bxxvi n.
 26. *ND*, p. 139; *Negative Dialectics*, p. 135.
 27. *ME*, p. 84; *Against Epistemology*, p. 78.
 28. *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 120–22; *KrV*, A84–87/B116–19.
 29. *ND*, p. 78; *Negative Dialectics*, p. 71. Cf. G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A.V. Miller, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1969, pp. 412–16.
 30. *VEET*, p. 288.
 31. 'Pure forms of intuition': *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 67; *KrV*, B36/A22. 'Pure intuitions': *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 69; *KrV*, B39/A24.
 32. *ME*, p. 151; *Against Epistemology*, p. 146.
 33. *Ibid.*
 34. *Ibid.*
 35. *VEET*, p. 215. Cf. *VEET*, p. 182.
 36. *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 161; *KrV*, B145–46.
 37. *VEET*, p. 225.
 38. S. Jarvis, 'The "Unhappy Consciousness" and Conscious Unhappiness. On Adorno's Critique of Hegel and the Idea of an Hegelian Critique of Adorno', in G.K. Browning, ed., *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit: A Reappraisal*, Kluwer Press, Amsterdam, 1997, pp. 57–72.
 39. Rudolf Carnap, 'Pseudoproblems in Philosophy: The Heteropsychological and the Realism Controversy', in *The Logical Structure of the World*, trans. Rolf A. George, Routledge, London, 1967, pp. 301–43.
 40. *ND*, p. 374; *Negative Dialectics*, p. 381.
 41. *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 300; *KrV*, A298/B355.
 42. *ND*, p. 384; *Negative Dialectics*, p. 392.
 43. See, for example, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 28; *KrV*, Bxxviii: 'Though I cannot *know*, I can yet *think* freedom; that is to say, the representation of it is at least not self-contradictory, provided due account be taken our critical distinction between the two modes of representation, the sensible and the intellectual, and of the resulting limitation of the pure concepts of understanding and of the principles which flow from them.'
 44. Albrecht Wellmer, "'Metaphysik im Augenblick ihres Sturzes'", in *Metaphysik nach Kant? Stuttgarter Hegel-Kongreß 1987*, edited by Dieter Henrich and Rolf-Peter Horstmann, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart, 1988, pp. 767–83, p. 767.
 45. *Ibid.*, p. 773.
 46. *Ibid.*, pp. 773–4.
 47. *Ibid.*, p. 773.
 48. *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 668; *KrV*, A856/B884. Adorno, 'Über Tradition', in *Gesammelte Schriften* 10.1, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1977, pp. 310–20, p. 315.
 49. *ND*, p. 400; *Negative Dialectics*, p. 408.
 50. *ND*, p. 197; *Negative Dialectics*, p. 197.
 51. *ND*, pp. 381–82; *Negative Dialectics*, p. 389.
 52. *Ibid.*
 53. *ND*, p. 384; *Negative Dialectics*, p. 392.
 54. 'Diskussionsprotokolle', in Max Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, volume 12: *Nachgelassene Schriften 1931–49*, edited by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, Fischer, Frankfurt am Main, 1985, pp. 349–605, p. 490.
 55. *Ibid.*
 56. Michael Theunissen, 'Negativität bei Adorno', in *Adorno-Konferenz 1983*, edited by Ludwig von Friedeburg and Jürgen Habermas, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1983, pp. 41–65.
 57. *ND*, p. 17; *Negative Dialectics*, p. 5.
 58. *ND*, p. 22; *Negative Dialectics*, p. 11.
 59. Theunissen, 'Negativität', p. 46.
 60. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
 61. G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, edited by Allen Wood, trans. Barry Nisbet, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 23.
 62. *ND*, p. 370; *Negative Dialectics*, pp. 377–8.
 63. *Ästhetische Theorie [AT]*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1970, p. 337; *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor, Athlone, London, 1997, p. 227.
 64. *ND*, p. 41; *Negative Dialectics*, p. 31.
 65. *AT*, p. 335; *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 226. (Translation mine.)
 66. Theunissen, 'Negativität', p. 53.
 67. Theunissen, *Sein und Schein. Die kritische Funktion der Hegelschen Logik*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1980, p. 33.
 68. *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 33; *KrV*, Bxxxvii.
 69. *ND*, p. 397; *Negative Dialectics*, pp. 405–6.
 70. *ND*, p. 183; *Negative Dialectics*, p. 181.
 71. For an account aware of the link between these two charges, see Michael Theunissen, *Hegels Lehre vom absoluten Geist als theologisch-politischer Traktat*, de Gruyter, Berlin, 1970, pp. 27–40.
 72. *ND*, p. 391; *Negative Dialectics*, p. 398. On the persistence of dogmatism, cf. especially lecture 23 from *PhT* ii, pp. 44–55 (20.xi.1962).