

HEGEL, “TOTALITY,” AND “ABSTRACT UNIVERSALITY” IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THEODOR ADORNO

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This paper will address the influence of G. W. F. Hegel on Theodor Adorno. It will look specifically at the way that the notions “totality” (*totalität*) and “abstract universality” (*abstraktes Allgemeines*) have informed the latter’s philosophy of “non-identity” (*Nicht-Identität*), “negativity” (*Negativität*) and “total system” (*Gesamtsystem*). Adorno’s “negative dialectic” (*negative Dialektik*), with its repudiation of universal properties, essences and beings, is anticipated by Hegel’s philosophy of dialectical contradiction (*dialektischer Widerspruch*). In the elaboration of Western philosophical concepts, and as a way of usurping the hegemony of identity thinking, Adorno finds he is forced to challenge totalising thought—what we now call “essentialism”—head-on through the theoretical construction of a (negative) “totality” (*totalität*). Adorno applies (negative) “totality” to confute the actual totality of exchange society. For Western Marxism more generally, the market objectification of things and people, and the subsequent reification of thought, has coloured all aspects of modern life. Both abstract universality and the law of identity (*abstrakt Identität*) are ubiquitously instantiated in social phenomena. It is the effort to radically question the conceptual foundations of homogenised sociality and the spectral presence of exchange relations that leads Adorno to appropriate and modify the Hegelian dialectic and system. He wants to show how abstract universality, which grounds the positive (false) totality of social being (*Gesamtsystem*), can be disassembled (*Dialektik der Zerfalls*) to reveal the “negative”, critical potential of the whole. This process allows particulars and fragments to amass so that true thinking can take place. His “anti-method” necessitates the acceptance of conceptual totality as a (negative) framework through which to account for and critique the presence of reified thought, reified social relations and objectified beings (*Reifikation, Objektivierung, Verdinglichung, Vergegenständlichung*).

A SHORT NOTE ON ADORNO’S ANTI-METHOD

This paper is divided into three broad heads, each emphasising one or other aspect of Adorno’s philosophy. An exposition of his negative dialectics, admittedly a seemingly contradictory enterprise, cannot be conceived on

strictly thematic lines. Rather, the aim is for an understanding in which the categories of thinking are treated dialectically and hermeneutically, through the context of their use. Adorno's interpretation of society holds that an account of the totality can only be generated *after* the specificity (and multiplicity) of "individuals" (*Einzigartigkeit, Singularität*) and "particulars" (*Partikularität*) are brought to bear on the initial conception of the whole—precisely the method which Adorno finds Hegel drawing on in his philosophical concatenation of social being and systematic thought. The negative totality is the inescapable condition imposed on any understanding of human thinking and being wishing to transcend its co-optation by commodity society and the socio-economic reduction to value equivalence (*äquivalent Form des Werts*).

A social philosopher needs a theoretical framework through which to gain a deeper understanding of social phenomena. Adorno concurs with Karl Marx that "microscopes" and "chemical reagents are of no use" in the critical social sciences and that the "force of abstraction must replace both."¹ Eschewing essentialism, Theodor Adorno offers a compelling, rigorous philosophy of society. He pursues the serious study of the immediate cultural, economic and political life-worlds of "Western democracies". He distances himself from all aspects and forms of positivism, abjuring the pretension to scientificity one finds for example in Frederick Engels and Dialectical Materialism or alternatively in Anglo-American sociology and "functionalism". Nevertheless he recognises that the production of a separate sphere of human knowledge beyond putative concrete facts is inevitable in the analysis of society. The concept dog, as Spinoza reminds us, does not bark. Adorno makes a strong case for philosophy as a critical undertaking (*kritische Theorie*). Since all concepts and understandings are tethered to their own negation, thought naturally engages the negativity implicit in phenomena, above all social phenomena.

Karl Popper's notorious conflation of conceptual "totality" with political "totalitarianism" is echoed by Jean-François Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition*: "... we have paid a high enough price for the nostalgia of the whole and the one, for the reconciliation of the concept and the sensible."² In response to Popper's caricature of Hegelianism and Marxism, Herbert Marcuse argues that the social totality marked by "total administration" (*total Verwaltung*) must be met by a "'holist' critique of this reality."³ Adorno's philosophy attempts to confront the totalising logic of "big" society by underscoring its material basis in exchange relations (*Austausch*). He also points out that subjects are able to move beyond "instrumental rationality" (*Zweckrationalität*) and restrictive patterns of sociality by engaging critical, dialectical thinking (*dialektisches Denken*). Adorno provides both a "realist" account of the hypostatised categories of social existence—i.e. value, capital, labour—and cogent reasons for society's "alienation" (*Entäusserung*) from its true—read "possible"—interests. The critical, negative totality, which Adorno adopts through an immanent reflection on the spectral, virtual nature of universal exchange relations, is the conceptual inversion of the positive totality, the social whole. Fictitious abstract universals, such as "total society" (*Gesamtsystem*), ultimately lead to the reassertion of particularity and individuality within thinking *and* being, including critical and liberatory impulses like the idea of human freedom (*vis-à-vis* Kant's *Freiheit als Autonomie*).

THE RETURN TO HEGEL, AND THE CATEGORY "TOTALITY"

Critical theory (*kritische Theorie*) appropriates Hegel's logic in a number of ways. For the purposes of this paper it is sufficient to note that it is (1) turned "right side up", informing historical and materialist dialectics, and (2) appropriated *prima facie* in order to conceptually account for economic and social categories. In his work *The Young Hegel*, Georg Lukács anticipates the anti-metaphysical, social reading of Hegel's logic. It is no accident, Lukács says, that "the man who completed the edifice of idealist dialectics was the *only* philosopher of the age to have made a *serious* attempt to come to grips with the economic structure of capitalist society."⁴ The "specific form" of dialectics and logic discovered by Hegel is the outcome of a preoccupation with the nature of capitalism, especially its socio-economic categories.⁵ The Hegelian system perfectly complements and harmonises with modern political economy; the parity between modern thought and the modern world means they are co-creative and co-productive.

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Adorno is an ambivalent reader of Hegel. Against the “systematic” Hegel he asserts that “the whole is the false” not the true.⁶ Yet he deems the Hegelian framework applicable in so far as “the force of the whole is absorbed into the knowledge of the particular”.⁷ It is the particulars (*Partikularität*) that now require reinforcing in the conception of the whole. In his *Three Studies of Hegel* Adorno remarks that Hegel’s totality is only convincing when it takes the whole as the “quintessence of the partial moments”.⁸ Not cognisance of the coming-to-consciousness of Absolute Consciousness constitutes true knowledge (*absolutes Wissen*) but the immanently driven power of concretion (*Verwirklichung*). It is a form of understanding at variance with the “organic whole” (*organische Einheit*) of classical Marxism⁹—the dialectical integration and synthesis of social facts—and more in line with Spinoza’s conception of an immanent “structured totality”, and even Louis Althusser’s revitalisation of Marx’s *Darstellung*.¹⁰

Hegel is of major importance for modernity since he is the first philosopher to convincingly question Kant’s prejudgement about the limits of thinking and the epistemological prejudice against ontology and immanentist metaphysics.¹¹ He is also chary of Cartesian philosophical doubt and metaphysical dualism. Against both, Hegel postulates (1) historical transformation and systemic mediation as immanent to thinking and understanding (a propos *The Phenomenology of Spirit*), and (2) the origin and generation of conceptual and material change and novelty within the one ontological continuum (a propos *The Science of Logic*). The Hegelian dialectic traces “essence” (*Wesen*) and “appearance” (*Erscheinung*) in their metamorphoses through spatial, temporal and ideational terrains.¹² To borrow and modify Gilles Deleuze’s metaphor, Hegel posits multiple, simultaneous and convergent “planes of immanence”. These all impinge on the subject of history, the social substance. In order to ground his dialectical system Hegel moves rapidly between individual beings (*subjektiver Geist*) and the objective dynamic of society (*objektiver Geist*). His system remains in many respects open to new perspectives and the incorporation of “difference” (*Differenz*).

Adorno’s negative dialectic reveals that the Hegelian system is not merely the “reflection” (*Reflexionsbestimmungen*) of social relations. It instantiates the “real” concepts of those relations. In the pursuit of a fundamental knowledge of modern society the Hegelian philosophy offers explanatory power and conceptual traction:

Hegel has been chided for equating logical categories with social ones and some from the philosophy of history; this was chalked as a *metavasis eis allos genos*, as that point of speculative idealism that had to break off in the face of the non-construability of experience. Yet this very construction was doing justice to reality.¹³

Hegel’s philosophical “construction” is amenable to social “reality”. The complex theorisation of essence and appearance, abstraction and concretion, is valuable in understanding the historically specific forms of “modern” life; *precisely the same forms through which Hegel formulated his philosophy*. The adequacy of thought to its object is construed through the positioning of the individual subject within the larger social subject; the opposition between the universal and the particular, as Frederic Jameson notes, parallels the “objective tension between the social totality and its subjects.”¹⁴

Adorno resists devising a *thetical* philosophical position because he takes seriously the impenetrable *aporias* of social existence. His philosophical style defies linear argumentation, emphasizes form as much as content and revokes faith in conceptual generalities, logical coherence and rational veracity. Adorno aims for an apprehension of material and spiritual objects in their monadological singularity and purity. He arrives at the “concrete particular”—what in *Aesthetic Theory* he calls the “truth content” (*Inhalt, Gehalt*) or “experience content” (*Erfahrungsgehalt*)—through collapsing the distance between the “abstract universal” and the “particular” (*Partikularität*), resulting in the “concrete particular” (*Einzigartigkeit*) and “concrete universal” (*konkretes Allgemeines*), something unthinkable using traditional deduction and syllogistic reasoning. Hegel’s contemporaries earlier attempted the “idealistic” elision of subject and object without recourse to material history. Adorno extends the Hegelian project of deconstructing Kant with full awareness of the pitfalls of “systematicity” and the philosophical slippery-slope of positive, “rational” discourse.

Hegel anticipates structuralism by more than a century. Rather than mere description, he attempts the philosophical reconciliation (*Gegensätze*) of conceptual dyads: the static/dynamic, synchronic/diachronic, structural/genetic, and systemic/processual. The dialectical sublation of these opposing moments (*Aufgehobensein des Gegensatzes*) can be linked (speculatively and mnemonically) to the *Science of Logic* and the *Phenomenology of Spirit* respectively. How does Adorno view Hegel's grandiose, abstruse philosophical architectonic? From the "system" with its division into "Subjective Spirit", "Objective Spirit" and "Absolute Spirit", Adorno derives a number of pertinent theoretical concerns: the (Messianic) idea and promise of individual and collective emancipation; a way of (negatively) assimilating the historical determinants of social development; clarification of the objectifying-reifying mechanisms and processes which attend the economic valorisation of capital. Hegelian "Spirit" (*Geist*) and "Concept" (*Begriff*, *allgemeiner Begriff*) for Adorno conceptually denote those social forms through which universal exchange relations have impinged on thinking.¹⁵ The putative difference between (social) being and thought is mediated through human reason and thinking: "society is essentially concept, just as spirit is."¹⁶ The social relations underpinning our present life-world are cognate with Hegel's "abstract universals", yet it is precisely these abstractions and generalities which are predisposed and open to conceptual demystification. The supersession of conceptual reification culminates in a materialist grasp of the social import of being (*Sein*), spirit (*Geist*) and essence (*Wesen*).

Despite his attempts at rational synthesis Hegel is incapable of admitting the radical consequences of his own philosophy. A dialectic that responds to the particular opens up the space for the destruction of the "primacy of identity and thus... idealism itself."¹⁷ The term "Spirit" (*Geist*), it is true, brings out the transitional, mutable conceptualism of historical transformation (*Entwicklung*). Yet the immanent logic of each and every unique society undermines monochrome universality. The "specific difference" of each social form is registered through its negative positioning vis-à-vis an abstract essence or being. A multiplicity of moments is foregrounded by dialectics. Metaphorically speaking, complex tables of mediating elements and "concrete particulars" document the elaborate metamorphoses of temporally, spatially and ideationally fluctuating phenomena.

In his Introduction to the *Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, Adorno unequivocally states that the "totality is not an affirmative but rather a critical category."¹⁸ The totality points to the sum total of "social relations" (*Produktionsverhältnisse*) which remain hidden from individuals. Furthermore the whole considered in itself constitutes a form of "illusion" (*Schein*) or "ideology". The *telos* of present society is a false promise and dream, a "spell" (*Bann*) which we take for reality. An unspecified condition persists beyond its seemingly predetermined, predestined horizons. "A liberated mankind would by no means be a totality."¹⁹ Disalienation transcends the logic of the whole. It is true Adorno espouses a radical "unsystematic" and "anti-systematic" dialectics. But he accepts the epistemological impulse towards unities as expressive of modern social being, and for this very reason (negatively) retains the semblance of a "philosophical system."²⁰ A negative, critical totality—in some respects a theoretical *camera obscura*—is necessary for shining a light on "emancipatory interests"—and critical hope—shadowed (and yet foreshadowed) by a social fabric predicated on abstract universality and conceptual generality.

The concept or notion of the totality is applicable only when conceived *against* actual social totality and irrationality. It is a referent whose liberatory power is predicated on its negative constitution and ultimate self-annulment. The most salient metaphor for this is the classical sculptural pose of a boy removing a thorn with another thorn. In Adorno's aesthetic theory the negation of a given social reality is reinforced through art's deployment of socially current forms. Whatever his real intentions in exploiting the simulacra of mass production, for example, Jeff Koons's commitment to cataloguing the banal and kitsch directly opens up the space for contesting the commodification of everyday life.

NON-IDENTITY, NEGATIVITY AND FORM

Adorno is a philosopher of the fragment, the particular, and the monad. He is concerned with fashioning a non-reductive materialism inimical to the phenomenological "return to the things themselves." Following Georg

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Lukács’s early philosophy, Adorno generally understands by the term “immediacy” the renunciation of critical reason and the conformity to, or cooptation by, status quo perceptions and understandings i.e. “false consciousness” (*falsches Bewußtsein*). Employing Heideggerian language, to behold an object in its immediacy is to capitulate to its socially condoned “facticity” (*Faktizität*): what is given *simpliciter* to intuition is a species of the “ontical”, a *topos* of empty facts devoid of intentionality and historical context. Husserl simply calls this the “natural attitude.” Formulating the social totality according to Adorno requires a method for side-stepping false immediacy and accounting for that which pushes beyond everyday experience and scientific understanding; the concept’s “surplus over factuality.”²¹ But it is the concrete social and materialist nature of the latter remainder that sets apart his philosophy from the various schools of phenomenology, which, according to Adorno, are inherently prone to subjectivism.

In Adorno’s and Horkheimer’s most widely discussed text, the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the concept of totality is famously used as a synonym for totalitarianism.²² Yet totality is ubiquitous in Adorno’s *œuvre* as an apposite critical notion and cipher for exchange society. It expresses the universalisation and conceptual hypostatisation of current material and social conditions, including the domination and power which accrue to such conceptuality.²³ Adorno engages the idea of totality in a qualified sense as “second nature” for naturalised material forces and relations of production following predetermined and predestined laws of generation and procession. On the one hand conceptual reifications subsist behind social objectifications.²⁴ On the other the objectification of human relations and the rationalisation of institutions and subjective experience always already inform the specific physiognomies of individual thought and social existence. Through employing Hegelian logic, and articulating and naming abstract universals, one can better predict the presence and attributes of reified, identity thinking.

It is only now, many years after Hegel elaborated his philosophy, that his system “prove[s] to be a system in the literal sense ... that of a radically societalized society.”²⁵ It is not theory but the (capitalist) necessity to reduce every thing, phenomenon, and person to its/his/her fungible equivalent that imposes an a priori abstract and universal schema on understanding and experience. Individual and collective experience is subsumed in the reified “life-world” of universal commodity exchange resulting in omnipresent forms of identity thinking. Theory merely appropriates and applies the living rubrics of a global “market economy” (*Weltmarkt*) with its tendency towards identification against identity thinking.

The implicit yet hidden criticality of Hegel’s thought must be understood apophatically. Against his will Hegel’s philosophy is “negative as a whole” and proves the “negativity of its object”. The “unpacifiable” negativity in Hegel ultimately “disintegrates in absolute negativity” leading to the possibility for criticism.²⁶ Historically, Left Hegelianism stresses the philosophy of dialectical contradiction. In the process it misses the obvious point made later by Adorno: the totalising tendency is already destabilised by conceptual—before historical—negativity, a negativity implicit in any positive system.

The ontological foundation of the dialectic in some preternatural-primordial “spirit” or “idea” no longer has a hold on the modern philosophical imaginary. Religio-speculative categories are clearly fictions deriving from the mental life and social existence of humanity. Hegel’s “Spirit” and “Absolute Idea” (*absolute Idee*) must be understood as categories of history and society. They are categories immanent to social being and life. The locus of Hegel’s “truth is not outside the system; rather, it is inherent in the system as his untruth. For this untruth is none other than the untruth of the system of the society that constitutes the substratum of his philosophy.”²⁷ The “essence” of social being is *precisely* the absence of an *ontos* or *hypostasis*, *essentia* or *substantia*. It is rather an accounting through the “illumination” of *mere* “attributes” and “accidents.” The implicit negativity of the social is therefore only reinforced in the desperate assertion of total form. The untruth of the refractory totality can be intimated through negative dialectics and aporetic enquiry, through, say, employing Walter Benjamin’s “dialectics at a standstill” with its textual juxtaposition of historically anachronistic elements (*di-alektisches Bild*).

Social phenomena cannot be explained using a priori or a posteriori reductions and schemas. Adorno draws on insights from his own musicology as well as Walter Benjamin's "microscopic analysis" in the formation of his original critical method and theory of the "constellation" (*Konstellation*) and "model" (*Modell*). For Adorno, "The constellation illuminates the specific side of the object, the side which to a classifying procedure is either a matter of indifference or a burden."²⁸ He gleans from musical compositions a *typos* for his "negative totality". Arnold Schoenberg for example "resist[s] the lure of organic totality" in his twelve-tone constructions and abandons the musical forms of the past and present. Beethoven manipulates and reconfigures classical formal structures to found an unparalleled freedom of expression analogous to the social revolution of the bourgeoisie.²⁹ Music plays a vital role in understanding critical philosophy. The "suspended" quality of philosophy, the "expression of its inexpressibility", makes it "a true sister of music."³⁰ Adorno's theory of constellative figures, his method of foregrounding fragments over totalities, is "more like tracking or following a piece of music than like following a logical argument."³¹

The formal deductive and inductive logics of the past are founded on the principle of "identity". Indeed, "Identity is the primal form of ideology."³² Logical thought is grounded in language: linguistic signification is therefore "identarian". In principle, "Any definition is identification."³³ Yet implicit within the logic of identity is the "non-identical." In dialectical logic being and nothingness are closely related, in fact co-dependent. Positivity implies negativity and vice versa. Before Derrida's *différance*, Adorno (following Hegel) highlighted and foregrounded the negativity within signification.³⁴ Adorno reconciles thought with social contradiction by reinforcing the potentiality for overcoming the epistemological limitation which supposedly grounds understanding and thinking. The non-identical is not the logical opposite of identity but its true other through evading altogether the logical frame of reference and "conventional" reason. It is furthermore immanent to all thinking. In fact it is destined to be acknowledged: "Non-identity is the secret *telos* of identification. It is the part that can be salvaged; the mistake in traditional thinking is that identity is taken for the goal."³⁵

Adorno praises Hegel's dialectical subtlety and ability to theorise the non-identical. He also concedes that Hegel desires the ultimate reconciliation of subject and object in Absolute Spirit: "He who was set upon a transition of logic to time is now resigned to timeless logic."³⁶ Hegel interrogates the whole through "determinate negation." After deconstructing the chain of positive moments within the articulated totality he is left with a remainder which can only be expressed through the inadequacies of language, the "limits of clarity itself."³⁷ In his reading of Hegel, Adorno reflects on the fact that the internal structure of the whole is maintained through a "retroactive force". The "movement of the concept" is constantly exposed to and reinscribed in the totality of moments from which it derives. The presentation rebounds on and recollects itself.³⁸ This movement is analogous to aesthetically grasping complex music, which "must be heard multi-dimensionally, forward and backward at the same time [since] one has to know a whole movement and be aware retrospectively at every moment of what has come before."³⁹ Each step of the dialectical process produces the whole and its outcome, the truth as subject: "the categories of being are already in themselves what [Hegel's] philosophy of the concept ultimately reveals their nature to be in and for itself."⁴⁰ What precisely this subject is will be clarified below.

At first blush both Hegel and J. G. Fichte seem to be on the same page when they pose a fundamental principle and unity. Yet Fichte's understanding of the totality fails to conceptualise the contradiction (*Widerspruch*) at the heart of philosophical unity. Hegel's truth as system is only really understood when it is taken as the "dynamic totality of all the propositions that can be generated from one another by virtue of their contradictions."⁴¹ The concretion of the abstract finds its locus in a reason which has been concentrated through dialectical logic. The Hegelian "system is not intended to form an abstract higher-order concept with regard to its moments but rather to achieve its truth only in and through the concrete moments."⁴² Hegel's "subject-object dialectic" exhibits a "hovering, suspended quality." It is a permanent *skandalon* to traditional epistemology and metaphysics. It refuses to separate the whole from the *life* of "Absolute Spirit", or to reduce "Essence" to fixed and "abstract higher-level" concepts.⁴³

REIFICATION, UNIVERSAL EXCHANGE, AND LATE CAPITALISM

Global capitalism could be defined as the perpetually achieved reproduction of the socio-economic whole. It is a “world integrated ... through the exchange relationship”.⁴⁴ Adorno confirms Alfred Sohn-Rethel’s and Alfred Schmidt’s interpretations of both the first chapter of Marx’s *Capital* on the “fetishism of commodities” and the *Grundrisse* manuscripts. The negative totality is internalised, or “self-inflicted”, as an essential aspect of subjectivity.⁴⁵ The social totality takes on the semblance and form of necessity. The pressure to conform is all-powerful. The “preponderance of the universal” is a “higher being which [society] must propitiate.”⁴⁶ Domination and subjection are disguised as individual and social positivity: “what society worships in the world spirit is itself, the omnipotence of its own coercion.”⁴⁷ Adorno’s conception of subjection, of the radical internalisation of domination, can be profitably compared to Freud’s “Superego”, Jacques Lacan’s “symbolic order”, and Michel Foucault’s “microphysics of power”. Adorno’s stronger “systemic” view of power though better expresses what Jürgen Habermas calls the “colonisation of the life-world.”⁴⁸ It is the subjectivised aspects of the “world spirit” which come to dominate the “external process of life.”⁴⁹ It is true that Max Weber’s “iron cage” of capitalist sociality and polity has been exploited in an effort to understand the social totality and its effects on both the collective subject and individual agent. Yet neither a descriptive nor a normative analysis will do for Adorno. What is sought is critical insight and the dialectical interrogation of current social relations. Dialectics (*Dialektik*) does not imply reconciliation and sublation, which it has long been assumed is the *telos* of Hegelian method. Rather the negative dialectic subsists in so far as philosophy prevails against deceptive social forms. One is reminded of Hegel’s aphorism, quoted approvingly by Walter Benjamin in his *Theses on the Philosophy of History*: “Seek for food and clothing first, then the Kingdom of God shall be added unto you.”⁵⁰

Adorno’s social thought contains two aspects, the first being to register the reified relations of modern society, the second to adumbrate the possibilities for negating them. Adorno aims at opening up a space for the “possibility of a transformability of ... ossified, reified reality.”⁵¹ The eternalisation of material and social processes leads to what Lukács calls “second nature”, a concept closely associated with the term “immediacy.” Conceiving relations of material and social production as abstract universals can be read as the direct inversion of what the Medieval Scholastic philosophers understood by *naturans naturata*.⁵² Nature, not a projected divinity, is the wellspring of domination, as evident in oppressive manifestations of “scientism” and “technocracy.” The insights of Walter Benjamin that nineteenth century industrial capitalism can be construed through its mythical, phantasmagorical forms was not lost on Adorno. The famous Hegelian Marxist notion of supersession (*Aufheben*) might therefore be understood as describing transformation and movement within naturalised abstractions. Extending Benjamin’s thesis, the development of society through its estrangement from nature in an age of technical reproducibility leads to new forms of heteronomy and social control, forms of domination which themselves re-present and caricature natural processes and forms.

Against the problematic Marxist conception of the subject of history Adorno argues that the dialectic of the “Notion” coming to “self-consciousness” through society does not describe the vanguard “class” but rather the “Subject” as “capital” (or “Monsieur Capital”, as Marx personifies it in volume three of *Capital*). The ultimate abstractions are those of the exchange market, what Marxist political economy thematises as the various permutations of the “commodity” (*Metamorphose der Waren*)—above all the commodity “labour power” (*Arbeitskraft*) and “money” (*Geld*)—“value” (*Wert*) and “capital” (*Kapital*).

In many places in *Negative Dialectics* it seems Adorno is arguing that society and consciousness have become completely reified. Fortunately the “totally administered society” cannot banish critical reflection on subjection: thinking, including Adorno’s, persists *about such subjection*. It is not a question of logical consistency. Negation is contained in society’s very abstraction and projection of ever-new generalities and universals. Art plays a role in countering the positive estimation of social being. In focusing on certain aspects of social experience art is able to spotlight the “administered world” and “what becomes of people under the total social spell.”⁵³ Through mimesis and reflection centred on significant visual, acoustical or conceptual forms artworks become subversive of the (false) totality established by a particular historical conjuncture.⁵⁴ Significant creative

practices always retain their counterfactual, countercultural and critical edge, however compromised consumer society (*Massenkonsum*) and the “culture industry” (*Kulturindustrie*, *Unterhaltungsindustrie*) become, indeed in spite of them.

“Total” reification and control come about as the inversion/confusion of the relation of “use-value” and “exchange-value” (*Gebrauchswert und Taschwert*).⁵⁵ Exchange value is the indispensable referent for late capitalist society. Adorno follows Marx’s *Paris Manuscripts of 1844*, and the fundamental insights of Georg Lukács’s *History and Class Consciousness*, in deploying alienation (*Entfremdung*) and objectification (*Vergegenständlichung*) as leitmotifs in his philosophy. Universal domination “degrades subjectivity to a mere object ... [and] makes an untruth of the general principle that claims to establish the subject’s predominance.”⁵⁶ The critical individuality established by bourgeois culture—the *principium individuationis*—is ironically eroded through the dominant form of exchange which it helped establish—a clear instance of Hegel’s “cunning of reason.” The individual ego is established then asphyxiated by the modern economic imperative, the a priori of the “cash nexus.”⁵⁷ Commodity fetishism (*Fetischismus*) is not an economic ploy or trick, but a surface phenomenon and reality which individual subjects—“consumers”(!)—fail to see. For this very reason the appearance-reality (and base-superstructure) trope and metaphor of classical Marxism—and Platonism—is inadequate.

The central aim of Marx’s *Capital* is an exposition of the process of the production and circulation of capital (*kapitalistischer Produktionsprozess*), or simply motion of capital. Yet the principal question is why the content of value has “assumed a particular form ... why labour is expressed in value.”⁵⁸ Adorno attempts a solution to this economic aporia. The quantitative reduction of labour to magnitude and duration is akin to the principle of identification and the equivalence between disparate qualities: “the spread of the principle [of exchange] imposes on the whole world an obligation to become identical, to become total.”⁵⁹ The consequence of rationally calculating average working hours (*Arbeitszeit*) is the homogenisation of the social substance. In addition to the reification of value established through the universalisation of the economic exploitation of labour, reified legal relations are necessary for the successful reproduction of the negative totality. Law, “the primal phenomenon of irrational rationality”, is a totalised sphere of the modern life-world: “In law the formal principle of equivalence becomes the norm; everyone is treated alike.”⁶⁰ Adorno sees exchange society as “nomothetic” (*Gesetzmäßigkeit*) in so far as all social relations and relations of production within its purview are dominated by legal-rational prescriptions. This rationalisation of everyday life is an intuition which Georg Simmel and Max Weber first developed. Adorno interprets such rationalisation (*Rationalisierungsprozess*) as grounded in the quantitative reduction to exchange value and the “total system” of universal exchange.

Adorno’s students noted the significance for political economy of this reading of value. Hans George Backhaus and Helmut Reichelt established the Neue Marx-Lektüre, which continues today in Wertkritik, Value-Form Theory and Systematic Dialectic.⁶¹ For these tendencies of critical thought it is Adorno’s insistence on the idea of a “real universal, which can be traced back to the abstraction of exchange”, which establishes the priority of a logico-critical, over a descriptive, method of interpreting the categories of Marx’s economic works.⁶² Totality in Wertkritik and Value-Form Theory is the upshot of a society dominated by the commodity form and universal exchange. “Universal exchange” signifies reified, objectified social being, the reintegration of estranged subjectivity and objectivity into a false holistic framework of value calculation. Moishe Postone addresses the “value-form” reduction by highlighting the place of social labour within the totality. His critical theory—heavily indebted to Lukács and Adorno—articulates the way in which reified social relations and false universals, such as “abstract labour” (*abstrakte Arbeit*), are integral to the successful valorisation and accumulation of capital (*Akkumulationsprozess*). “Abstract labour” for Postone forms the “substance” of value.⁶³ He argues that capital is the “self-moving substance that is Subject.” This “Subject” does not stand for a “social grouping”—i.e. the proletariat—but rather for historical “social relations constituted by the forms of objectifying practice.”⁶⁴ The “capitalist social formation” is a “social totality ... constituted by a homogeneous social ‘substance’.” The socio-economic whole is reproduced only on the basis of reified social relations. The central aim of Value-Form criticism is actively questioning the uniformity of social labour established by universal exchange. Postone follows Adorno in interpreting Marx and critical theory as pursuing “not the *realisation* but the

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abolition of totality.”⁶⁵ Marx “analyses totality as a heteronomous reality in order to uncover the condition for its abolition.”⁶⁶ Marx’s mature critique is not an anthropological-materialist inversion/conversion of Hegel’s idealist dialectic—an interpretation sustained in Lukács’s late work *The Ontology of Social Being*⁶⁷—but a “materialist *justification* of that dialectic.”⁶⁸ Hegel’s philosophy is therefore “adequate” to “reality.”

The “commodity form” (*Ware*) is an “abstract universal” within the false totality. The capitalist social formation *in toto* (*Gesellschaftsformation*) is driven by a number of such abstract universals. The totality accommodates underdetermined “Essence” (*Wesen*) and “Notion” (*Begriff*). The various moments and mediations of the commodity form ultimately coalesce and effloresce into an overdetermined totality. The adventure of the “Notion” in the capitalist mode of production, as developed in Marx’s three volumes of *Capital* (understood through the hermeneutic of the “value form”) gives us a guide to this development and motion of an initially “simple” concept. But it is to be noted that the simple concept at the beginning of both Marx’s *Capital* and Hegel’s *Science of Logic* is tied to its dialectical other. Being is generated *in opposition to* Nothingness. The commodity is both appearance and reality, thing and relation, a “use-value” and an “exchange-value”, the result of both “abstract labour” and “concrete labour.” The commodity begins as a “very trivial thing” but “in reality” it is a “very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties.”⁶⁹

Slavoj Žižek’s latest Hegelian forays return, in a similar vein, to thinking about negativity, totality and value. In *Less than Nothing* Žižek states: “The Hegelian totality is not the ideal of an organic Whole, but a critical notion.” Hegelian negativity proves instrumental in the critical analysis of global capitalism. Positing a self-contradictory system is relevant now more than ever: “[It] is today ... really existing capitalism is reaching the level of its notion.”⁷⁰ Capitalism is marked by radical historical inversions, overturning forms of life and politics. Its trajectory follows Hegel’s “Notion” eliciting and tracing concrete life out of pure abstractions. On the relation between thought and social reality Hegel misconstrued “the properly *Hegelian* aspect of the capitalist economy.” In fact “Hegel was not *idealist* enough” since “he did not see ... the properly *speculative* content of the capitalist economy, the way financial capital functions as a purely virtual notion processing ‘real people’.”⁷¹ The connection between Hegelian metaphysics and logic and the capitalist social formation is further elaborated in Žižek’s Deleuzian interpretation of the virtuality of capital and the ubiquity of exchange relations. Unlike Žižek, Adorno grounds the intuition of capital’s “universality” in material life. The abstraction of value through universal exchange leads to the commodification of human labour power, the objectification of human powers (*vorgegenständliche Arbeit*), and, ultimately, an alienated life-world—*vis-à-vis* the young Marx. Žižek avoids references to the young Marx, since he wants to rehabilitate Hegelianism rather than Western Marxism. Such references are also at odds with the Lacanian interpretation of society, which disavows the determinism involved in reducing sociality to exploited or alienated labour.

The totalisation of human material and social life instaurates the antinomy of heteronomy and autonomy, system and agency, on the one hand subsuming the individual in “total administration” and on the other disappearing the social in pecuniary individualism.⁷² Adorno follows Alfred Sohn-Rethel in viewing epistemological unity—Kant’s “*transzendente Einheit der Apperzeption /des Selbstbewußtseins*”—as the product of a particular set of exchange relations, namely those thrown up by late capitalism. Adorno engages the virtuality of capital—its “Real-Symbolic” expression, to use Lacan—as instantiated in generalised, homogeneous exchange. Hope for the subject is in a philosophy of autonomy which “lives on because the moment to realize it was missed.”⁷³

The ethical upshot of negativity is a materialist recapitulation of the categorical imperative, an ameliorative “ought” and “critical hope”, the *promesse du bonheur*. Indeed, “It lies in the definition of negative dialectics” Adorno states, “that it will not come to rest in itself, as if it were total. This is its form of hope. Kant registered some of this in his doctrine of the transcendent thing-in-itself, beyond the mechanisms of identification.”⁷⁴ It is a truism for Marx and Adorno that the capitalist totality leads to its own negation and overcoming.

CONCLUSION

To put it perhaps too simply, Adorno theorises the transition in “social being” from abstract universals to concrete particulars, ultimately vindicating critical, noumenal hope. The negative dialectic foreshadows a non-teleological futurity as amelioration (what is conceived by Walter Benjamin as a Messianic utopia). Artists are aesthetically, and philosophers theoretically, able, indeed compelled, to subvert the “total social spell” (*Bann, Schein*) through their respective practices. Where this leaves the class struggle—and non-literati—it is depressingly hard to tell. John Grumley contests Adorno’s use of Hegel and totality for this very reason. The “false” totality of the administered society he says is “another myth which severely hampered [the] programme of demythologisation and displaced [Adorno’s] critical efforts away from the practical problems of contemporary social and political action.”⁷⁵ However it is now after a major economic crisis that a comprehensive reinterpretation of late capitalism has become a practical necessity. Negative proof of totality’s force is the fact that the concentration and centralisation of capital—including finance capital’s (*merkantiles Kapital*) expanded influence and control over the state—has systematically eroded many of the conditions indispensable for securing democratic freedoms and safeguarding universal human rights. In this sense, the critical totality might be the sharp thorn needed to remove the painful thorn of actual totality.

Adorno is vehemently opposed to theories of “universal history.”⁷⁶ He also rejects the notion that the ontological substrate is reducible to the historically mediated interaction between the natural and the human. He would have to agree though with Marx’s statement in the *Grundrisse* that it is not the “metabolic exchange with nature” that requires explanation but the “separation between ... inorganic conditions of human existence and ... active existence, a separation which is completely posited only in the relation of wage labour and capital.”⁷⁷ Adorno’s finessed interpretation and restatement of alienation has much to recommend it, since it is the separation between blind and conscious production, the contradiction between a system of instituted wage-slavery and the fully realisable potential for a polity organised around creative self-fulfilment, that ultimately demands critical scrutiny and elaboration.

Despite being redolent of “high modernity” Adorno’s dialectical philosophy addresses in advance many of the questions and problems faced by critical philosophy today. It is true his ideas are at variance with Laclau’s and Mouffe’s analysis of society as an “articulated discursive totality.” Yet the reduction of sociality to discourse and culture misses the productive and critical negativity implicit in any global system. There is no cause for concern that thinking will become compromised by its own essentialising terms. Adorno’s is not a “melancholy science” but an affirmative philosophy of potency (*potentia*), a dynamic (*dunamis*) philosophy of society.⁷⁸

In contemporary theory there are signs of a return to the economic works and manuscripts of Marx (and the logical works of Hegel) precisely for highlighting the ambiguous, equivocal nature of the value-form (*Wertform*). It is also significant that the inner-transformations of socio-economic categories such as “commodity”, “value”, and “capital” display a keen likeness to the constitution of the psyche and the structure of language as set out by Lacan, a connection which both Althusser and Deleuze early acknowledged.⁷⁹

As a system becomes a closed totality gaps emerge auguring kairotic moments of authentic imagination and creative fiat beyond the “reality principle.” The elusive transcendental in Kant might find some basis here as the interstitial no-man’s land constituted by the dialectical synergy of sociality and autonomy. As an inheritor of the iconoclasm of Nietzsche and the gravitas of Freud is it any wonder that Adorno’s reading of Hegel as a grand theoretical ironist and spokesperson for Monsieur Capital retains its sting and appeal? At the most basic level Adorno presents society as the expression of a false totalising logic. Accepting received wisdoms and knowledges, the “positive” estimation of social relations leads to social and political apathy, an all-too-easy domination by heteronomous powers. The practice of *Ideologiekritik*, in continuity with the Radical Enlightenment, is still possible. We do not become “nay sayers” in the process. The *raison d’être* of critical thought is “the rational critique of reason, not its banishment or abolition.”⁸⁰

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NOTES

1. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume One*. Trans. S. Moore & E. Aveling. Ed. F. Engels. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962, 8
2. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Trans. G. Bennington & B. Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984, 81-2.
3. Herbert Marcuse, *Studies in Critical Philosophy*. Trans. J. De Bres. Beacon Press: Boston, 1973, 208.
4. Georg Lukács, *The Young Hegel: Studies in the Relations Between Dialectics and Economics*. Trans. R. Livingstone. London: Merlin Press, 1975, 565.
5. Lukács, *Young Hegel*, 565
6. Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life*. Trans. E. F. N. Jephcott. London & New York: Verso, 1974, 50.
7. Theodor Adorno, *Prisms*. Trans. Samuel Weber & Shierry Weber. Cambridge, Mass. & London: The MIT Press, 1981, 61.
8. Theodor Adorno, *Hegel: Three Studies*. Trans. S. W. Nicolson. Cambridge Mass. & London: The MIT Press, 1993, 4-5.
9. One should keep in mind that Georg Lukács, Mark Edward Meaney, and the Soviet philosophers Evald Vassilievich Ilyenkov and Viktor Alexeyevich Vazioulin have interpreted the category of the “organic whole” as a positive category on the basis of Hegel’s dialectical logic.
10. Althusser points out that it was a theoretical watershed when Spinoza sought to understand the “determination of the elements of the whole by the structure of the whole.” L. Althusser and E. Balibar, *Reading Capital*. London: New Left Books, 187. Althusser goes on to explain that *Darstellung*, the key epistemological concept in Marx’s *Capital*, designates “the mode of presence of the structure in its effects ... structural causality itself” and that the whole, the totality, for Marxism in general is “nothing outside its effects.” 188 & 189.
11. Adorno, *Hegel*, 8.
12. Adorno, *Hegel*, 8.
13. Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*. Trans. E. B. Ashton. London & New York: Routledge, 1973, 317.
14. Frederic Jameson, *Late Marxism: Adorno, or, the Persistence of the Dialectic*. London & New York: Verso, 1996, 30.
15. *Negative Dialectics* includes a chapter with the revealing title ‘World Spirit and Natural History’, and the subheading ‘Spirit as a Social Totality’. See 314.
16. Adorno, *Hegel*, 20
17. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 173.
18. Jameson, *Late Marxism*, 27.
19. Quoted in Jameson, *Late Marxism*, 232.
20. Jameson, *Late Marxism*, 27.
21. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 106.
22. Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, 261.
23. Martin Jay argues that Adorno’s totality is a “decentred totality” without a genetic centre. “The concept of totality in Lukács and Adorno.” in S. Avineri, *Varieties of Marxism*, The Hague: Martin Nijhoff, 1977, 163; Buck-Morss that the “totality” Adorno conceives is against Hegel’s “closed metaphysical system” and on the side of the Marxian “total socio-economic structure of relations which characterise [] the bourgeois order”. *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and the Frankfurt Institute*. New York: The Free Press, 1977, 73; Simon Jarvis that Adorno claims “the whole is the false” and “inseparable from an increasingly self-totalising society”. *Adorno: A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge & Oxford: Polity Press, 1998, 172; John Grumley that Adorno’s “withering critique of the concept of totality” is forged against the “instrumentalising logic of Enlightenment”, replacing it with a “negative image of totality” which comes to represent a totally administered modern society. *History and Totality: Radical Historicism from Hegel to Foucault*. London: Routledge, 1989, 207; and J-M Vincent that Adorno’s philosophy describes the “false totality represented by capitalist society ... shot through with unforeseeable, irregular dynamics that destructure and restructure social relations and individual situations.” “Adorno and Marx.” in J. Bidet & S. Kouvelakis (Eds), *Critical Companion to Contemporary Marxism*. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2008, 495.
24. Adorno, *Prisms*, 61-2.
25. Adorno, *Hegel*, 27. Hegel “inferred that systematic character of society from the concept long before it could gain ascendancy in the sphere of Hegel’s own experience, that of Germany far behind in its bourgeois development”. Adorno, *Hegel*, 11-12. This is a clear reference to F. Engels’ thesis of the “Three Sources of Marxism”. German philosophy expresses perfectly in theory what it lacks in (French) political and (English) economic experience.
26. Adorno, *Hegel*, 31-2.
27. Adorno, *Hegel*, 32.
28. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 162.

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29. Jay, *Marxism & Totality*, 255.
30. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 109.
31. Jay Bernstein, "Negative dialectic as fate: Adorno and Hegel." in T. Huhn (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Adorno*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 43.
32. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 148.
33. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 149.
34. See Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 150.
35. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 149.
36. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 331.
37. Adorno, *Hegel*, 101.
38. Adorno, *Hegel*, 135. In Hegel's dialectic of identity "not only is the identity of the non-identical, as its higher form, the A=B, the synthetic judgement attained; in addition, the content of the synthetic judgement is recognized as already a necessary moment of the analytic judgement A=A. Conversely, the simple formal identity of A=A is retained in the equivalence of the nonidentical." Adorno, *Hegel*, 135.
39. Adorno, *Hegel*, 136-37.
40. Adorno, *Hegel*, 92.
41. Adorno, *Hegel*, 11-12. With reference to German Idealism, Adorno further states: "While the mature Hegel disparaged Schelling's 'intellectual intuition' as an extravagant rapture that was simultaneously aconceptual and mechanical, in form Hegel's philosophy is incomparably closer to works of art than Schelling's, which wanted to construct the world using the work of art as its prototype." Adorno, *Hegel*, 137.
42. Adorno, *Hegel*, 92.
43. Adorno, *Hegel*, 13.
44. Adorno, *Hegel*, 27.
45. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 315.
46. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 316.
47. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 316.
48. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 2, Life-World and System: A Critique of Functional-ist Reason*. Trans. T. McCarthy, Boston: Beacon Press, 1987.
49. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 344.
50. Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*. Trans. H. Zohn, Ed. H. Arendt, London: Fontana Press, 1992, 246.
51. See Matthias Benzer, *The Sociology of Theodor Adorno*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 235 & 240.
52. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 358. "The more relentlessly socialization commands all moments of human and interhuman immediacy, the smaller the capacity of men to recall that this web has evolved, and the more irresistible its natural appearance. The appearance is reinforced as the distance between human history and nature keeps growing: nature turns into an irresistible parable of imprisonment." Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 358.
53. Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*. Trans. R. Hullot-Kentor. London & New York: Continuum, 301.
54. "There is nothing pure, nothing structured according to its own immanent law, that does not implicitly criticize the debasement of a situation evolving in the direction of a total exchange society in which everything is heteronomously defined." Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 296. More examples from the same work: "In the context of total semblance [where distortion by exchange, profit, and false needs rules], art's semblance of being-in-itself is the mask of truth". 298; "In the administered world neutralisation [of an artwork's critical, revolutionary dimension] is universal". 299; "The more brazenly society is transformed into a totality, in which it assigns everything, including art, its place, the more completely does art polarize into ideology and protest; and this polarization is hardly to art's advantage." 306.
55. Gillian Rose, *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1978, 49.
56. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 178.
57. In Marx, "the fetish character of goods is not laid to a subjectively errant consciousness, but objectively deduced from the social a priori, the exchange process" (Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 190).
58. From the section, "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof." In Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, 76-77.
59. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 146.
60. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 309.
61. Intellectual currents which have worked on, or continue to work on Marxist theories of value, abstract labour and the logico-critical understanding of capital, include Kapital Logik, Neue Marx-Lektüre, Wertkritik, Value-Form Theory, Theorie Communiste (Communisation), New Dialectics, Systematic Dialectic. See P. Albritton & J. Simoulidis (Eds), *New Dialectics and Political Economy*. Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003; C. J. Arthur, *The New Dialectic and Marx's Capital*. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2004; N. Larsen, M. Nilges, J. Robinson, N. Brown (Eds), *Marxism and the Critique of Value*. Chicago & Alberta: M-C-M', 2014; M. E. Meaney, *Capital as Organic Unity: The Role of Hegel's Science of Logic*

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in *Marx's Grundrisse*. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002; B. Ollman, *Dance of the Dialectic: Steps in Marx's Method*. Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003; B. Ollman & T. Smith (Eds), *Dialectics for the New Century*. Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008; Postone, *Time, Labor, and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003; T.T. Sekine, “The Dialectic, or Logic that Coincides with Logic.” P. Albritton & J. Simoulidis (Eds.), *New Dialectics and Political Economy*. Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003: 120-30; H. Uchida, *Marx's Grundrisse and Hegel's Logic*. London & New York: Routledge, 1988. For a critical appraisal and overview of these interpretations of Marx see A. Micocci, *The Metaphysics of Capitalism*. Lexington Books, Lanham, 2009. For a good historical overview of Marxist value criticism see the Introduction to N. Larsen et al. (Eds), *Marxism and the Critique of Value*.

62. N.A. (*Endnotes 2*), “Communitisation and value-form theory”, *Endnotes (2)*. Accessed 12/11/2013 <www.endnotes.org.uk/en/endnotes-communitisation-and-value-form-theory>

63. Moishe Postone “Lukács and the dialectical criticism of capitalism,” in R. Albritton & J. Simoulidis (Eds.), *New Dialectics and Political Economy*, Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, 94. In the same place Postone defines abstract labour as: “that labour in capitalism [which] has a unique social function that is not intrinsic to labouring activity as such” and which “mediates new, quasi-objective forms of social interdependence.”

64. Postone, “Lukács and the dialectical criticism of capitalism”, 86. Abstract labour realises the immanent and “decentred” form of pervasive domination of people by time. See Moishe Postone, *History and Heteronomy: Critical Essays*. Tokyo: UTPC, 2009, 78-80. See also Postone’s major work to date: *Time, Labour and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

65. Postone, “Lukács and the dialectical criticism of capitalism”, 87-8.

66. Postone, “Lukács and the dialectical criticism of capitalism”, 88.

67. See Georg Lukács, *The Ontology of Social Being (2): Marx's Basic Ontological Principles*. Trans. David Fernbach. London: Merlin Press.

68. Postone, “Lukács and the dialectical criticism of capitalism”, 89.

69. Marx, *Capital: Volume One*, 76.

70. Slavoj Žižek, *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism*. London & New York: Verso, 2012, 378 & 245.

71. Žižek, *Less Than Nothing*, 253-53.

72. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 310 & 313.

73. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 3

74. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 406.

75. John Grumley, *History and Totality: Radical Historicism from Hegel to Foucault*. London: Routledge, 1989, 207.

76. “No universal history leads from savagery to humanitarianism, but there is one leading from the slingshot to the megaton bomb ... It is the horror that verifies Hegel and stands him on his head. If he transfigured the totality of historic suffering into the positivity of the self-realizing absolute, the One and All that keeps rolling on to this day—with occasional breathing spells—would teleologically be the absolute of suffering.” Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 320.

77. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft)*. Trans. & Fwd. Martin Nicolaus. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 413.

78. Gillian Rose’s work, *The Melancholy Science* and Yvonne Sherratt’s *Adorno's Positive Dialectic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002, exemplify how Adorno’s philosophy is open to a full spectrum of interpretations. It is the tension between criticism and utopia, prophetic pessimism and Messianic hope, that characterises the dialectical thinking of the Frankfurt School.

79. See G. Deleuze’s essay “How Do We Recognize Structuralism?” in G. Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953-1974*. Trans. M. Taormina, Cambridge Mass. & London: Semiotext(e), Columbia University, 2004, 170-192; T. Stolze, “Deleuze and Althusser: Flirting with Structuralism.” *Rethinking Marxism*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (Fall), 51-63.

80. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 85.