

Université de Montréal

A Shine of Truth
in the “universal delusional context of reification”
(Theodor W. Adorno)

par
Xander Selene

Département de philosophie
Faculté des arts et des sciences

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{Abstract} “A Shine of Truth in the ‘universal delusional context of reification’ (Theodor W. Adorno)” defends Adorno’s aesthetics as a theory of advanced, or avant-garde, artworks. Its seven chapters show that aesthetic experience implies liberation from *illusion* (Schein). Chapter I engages a dialectic of viewpoints to explain how different dialectical thinkers (Marx, Lukács, Hegel, Horkheimer, Adorno) have contributed to a criterion of truth adequate to today’s total delusional context of reification—*determinate negation of illusion*. Chapter II introduces the concept of artistic aesthetic illusion—a *reversible* illusion opposed to the social illusions of mechanical musical reproduction and of the culture industry. Chapter III examines the question of whether truth in philosophy is a different kind of truth than truth in art. Chapter IV considers whether truth in twentieth-century Expressionism is a new truth based on *immediate expression*, in light of an important precedent for Expressionism in Robert Schumann’s “Der Dichter spricht.” Chapter V determines whether *inorganic montage* is more advanced than Expressionism. Chapter VI takes up a parting suggestion of Peter Bürger: to treat artworks after Dada and Surrealism on the model of “prose” in Hegel’s aesthetics. Chapter VII pursues the idea that *Dichterliebe*, op. 48, (1840) by Robert Schumann is a true artwork. Three results emerge from this close musical analysis: (1) exploiting, on occasion, an ambiguity in the rules for figuration that permits all twelve tones in the harmony, Schumann anticipates Schoenberg; (2) Op. 48, No. 1 is in a hidden key: to all appearances, its key is either A major or F-sharp minor, but its secret key is the Neapolitan region applied to C-sharp major; (3) the other “half” of the cadence with which Op. 48, No. 1 breaks off suddenly may be found in a brief applied-Neapolitan passage in No. 12. The thesis argued is that the *anti-organicity* in such a work is advanced with regard to the false reality that organicity had become by 1930 in Germany. According to Adorno, the only life-praxis afforded by art is

remembrance. But the social effect of remembering social suffering is considerable when the Here-and-Now is its own justification.

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Authorities: Adorno, Theodor W., 1903-1969; Schumann, Robert, 1810-1856

{Résumé} “A Shine of Truth in the ‘universal delusional context of reification’ (Theodor W. Adorno)” comprend sept chapitres, un prologue et un épilogue. Chaque partie se construit à deux niveaux : (1) à partir des liens qui se tissent entre les phrases contiguës ; et (2) à partir des liens qui se tissent entre les phrases non contiguës, surtout entre les incipit des paragraphes, qui forment l’argument principal de la thèse. Cette exigence double découle de la méthode adoptée : la méthode dialectique. Le sujet de la thèse, Schein (*apparence, illusion, clarté*) est abordé de manière non formaliste, c’est à dire, de manière que la forme donne d’elle-même une idée de la chose : illusion comme contradiction imposée. Bien que le sujet de la thèse soit l’illusion, son but est la vérité. Le Chapitre I présente une dialectique de perspectives (celles de Marx, Lukács, Hegel, Horkheimer, Adorno) pour arriver à un critère de vérité, compte tenu du contexte d’aveuglement universel de la réification ; c’est la détermination de la dissolution de l’apparence. Le Chapitre II présente le concept d’apparence esthétique—une apparence *réversible* qui s’oppose à l’apparence sociale générée par l’industrie de la culture. Le Chapitre III cherche à savoir si la vérité en philosophie et la vérité en art sont deux genres distincts de vérités. Le Chapitre IV détermine si l’appel à la vérité comme immédiateté de l’expression, fait par le mouvement expressionniste du 20^e siècle, est nouveau, jugé à l’aune d’un important antécédent à l’expressionnisme musical : « Der Dichter spricht » de R. Schumann. Le Chapitre V se penche sur la question à savoir si le montage inorganique est plus avancé que l’expressionnisme. Le Chapitre VI reprend là où P. Bürger clôt son essai *Theorie de l’avant-garde* : ce chapitre cherche à savoir à quel point l’œuvre d’art après le Dada et le Surréalisme correspond au modèle hégélien de la « prose ». Le Chapitre VII soutient que *Dichterliebe*, op. 48, (1840), est une œuvre d’art vraie. Trois conclusions résultent de cette analyse musicale détaillée : (1) en exploitant, dans certains passages, une

ambiguïté dans les règles de l'harmonie qui fait en sorte tous les douze tons sont admis dans l'harmonie, l'Opus 48 anticipe sur Schoenberg—tout en restant une musique tonale ; (2) l'Opus 48, no 1 cache une totalité secrète : à l'œil, sa tonalité est soit la majeur, soit fa-dièse mineur, mais une nouvelle analyse dans la napolitaine de do-dièse majeur est proposée ici ; (3) une modulation passagère à la napolitaine dans l'Opus 48, no 12 contient l'autre « moitié » de la cadence interrompue à la fin de l'Opus 48, no 1. Considérés à la lumière de la société fausse, l'Allemagne des années 1930, ces trois aspects anti-organiques témoignent d'une conscience avancée. La seule praxis de vie qu'apporte l'art, selon Adorno, est la remémoration. Mais l'effet social ultime de garder la souffrance vécue en souvenir est non négligeable : l'émancipation universelle.

Vedettes-matière de l'Université Laval : Philosophie ; Dialectique ; Théorie critique ; Illusion (Philosophie) ; Musique—Philosophie et esthétique ; Réification ; Modernisme (Esthétique)

Autorités : Adorno, Theodor W., 1903-1969 ; Schumann, Robert, 1810-1856

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Prologue.....	1

A shine of truth in the “universal delusional context of reification”¹ sounds doubtful (1). It sounds all the more doubtful when the topic is art (1). The aim of this thesis is to save a minimal criterion of truth that holds good for art as well as for philosophy (1). Although many have weighed in on the question of art’s truth, the most developed and nuanced reflections on it in the European tradition belong to Theodor W. Adorno (1903-1969), philosopher of the Frankfurt School (1). The conception of truth to be developed in detail here is, broadly speaking, that of *disillusionment* (2). In art, truth as disillusionment seems to entail didacticism, but this is not the case because the illusions lost can be illusions particular to art (2). Friedrich Schiller calls the illusion particular to art “ästhetischer Schein,” aesthetic illusion² (2). Adorno takes up the concept of aesthetic illusion in his aesthetics, yet develops it

¹ GS, vol. 7, p. 252 as translated by Robert Hullot-Kentor, *Aesthetic Theory* by Theodor W. Adorno, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 168.

² Friedrich Schiller, *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen*, in *Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden*, herausgegeben von Otto Dann, et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1988-2004), vol. 8, pp. 556-676, here p. 661 n19, translated by Reginald Snell as “aesthetic appearance,” *On the*

in ways that would have been inconceivable to Schiller (2). Adorno clearly admits truth to the realm of art, but it is less clear whether truth in art has a necessary relation to illusion, as truth outside art must (3). Adorno's "dialectic despite itself" shows up in the following four unmediated antinomies (4).

1. On the one hand, truth in art necessarily implies illusion (4). But on the other hand, Adorno reads the twentieth-century Expressionist movement as art that seeks truth otherwise than through aesthetic illusion (4).

2. On the one hand, it is impossible for art ever to lose its aesthetic illusion (5). On the other hand, Adorno thinks that it is possible for art to lose its aesthetic illusion (5).

3. On the one hand, Adorno claims that "the illusory aspect of artworks [Das Illusionäre der Kunstwerke] has narrowed into the claim to be a whole,"³ which implies that modern art's "rebellion against illusion" is a revolt specifically against the "fiction of the whole" and not against illusion in general, for "even anti-realistic currents such as Expressionism take part in the rebellion against illusion"⁴ (5). On the other hand, in the late essay "Little Heresy," Adorno makes the blanket claim that gaining a comprehension of music disparages "atomistic listening" and promotes "structural listening," which requires the perception of music as a "meaningful whole": "Musical understanding, musical cultivation [Bildung] with a human dignity that means more than mere information content, is tantamount to the ability to perceive

Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters (New York: Ungar, 1965), p. 125. Note that Snell does not preserve the gender-neutral language of the title in German.

³ GS, vol. 7, p. 155f., or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 101.

⁴ GS, vol. 7, p. 157, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 103.

musical contexts, ideally developed and articulated music, as a meaningful whole [sinnvolles Ganzes]”⁵ (6).

4. On the one hand, Adorno implies that Modern music is new (7). But on the other hand, the expression of Expressionism is not new (7).

The sorts of “contradictions” that show up in Adorno’s aesthetics do not invalidate it, for they are not due to inattention to the rules of logic (7). When a proposition about the whole breaks the law of non-contradiction then it is clear that total identification must be false on the terms of general logic (8). From another point of view, the sorts of contradictions that appear in Adorno’s aesthetics are “objective”—that is, they come out of the (social) demand for identity between the concept and its object (9). Adorno’s critique of Hegel would be unthinkable without the contribution of Marx, who, in the introduction to the *Grundrisse*, charges J. S. Mill and Adam Smith with employing an abstract notion of production: in order to speak of production *in general* consistently, these thinkers must abstract qualities from the actual object of production—those particular aspects of production that enter into contradiction because they arose in different societies, in different eras⁶ (10). Adorno’s own aesthetic theory is not immune to objective contradictions, despite his priority of the object in principal (11).

Although objective contradictions cannot be solved in thought alone, philosophy can adopt practices that support their real resolution rather than hinder it (11). The present work approaches Adorno’s aesthetics by way of detailed interpretations of consummate works that make the competing demands of universal and particular explicit (12). Again, these non-

⁵ GS, vol. 17, p. 297 as translated by Susan H. Gillespie, “Little Heresy,” in *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 318-324, here p. 318.

⁶ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* (Berlin: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1953), p. 6f. as translated by Ernst Wangermann, “Economic Manuscripts of 1857-58 (First Version of *Capital*),” in Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works*, 50 vols. (New York: International Publishers, 1975-2004), vol. 28, p. 23.

identities do not invalidate Adorno's aesthetics, as they are seated in social processes, rather than in one person's subjective thought (12). The truth of art is not a lesser grade of truth than the truth of philosophy when it is understood as the effective critique of illusion (Schein) (12). Adorno's concept of Schein will be rendered here most often as "illusion" (13). While "illusion" was once the usual translation of "Schein," the recent tendency is to refer to Adorno's concept as "semblance" (15). Different misunderstandings of Adorno's position may result when "Schein" is translated as "appearance" (16). Adorno's association of Arnold Schoenberg's music with "Progress" becomes convincing only when the "Schein" in "Schönbergs Kritik an Schein und Spiel" ("Schoenberg's Criticism of Illusion and Play") is understood as a *deceptive* appearance: Adorno reads Schoenberg's Expressionism as a critique of ideology, and not just as a critique of surfaces and unreality⁷ (18). The translation "appearance" for "Schein" has the added complication of coinciding with the standard translation for "Erscheinung," which is a distinct concept for both Kant and Hegel (18). If Schein sounds old today, it is not because it evokes the German Idealism of Immanuel Kant and G. W. F. Hegel (21). Jürgen Habermas's exact reason for abandoning ideology critique is the integration of its preferred objects—bourgeois art and philosophy—into "the system"... (21). Horkheimer, Marcuse and Adorno may at times lament the dwindling autonomy of art, letters and philosophy, but they must be aware that totally independent art, letters and philosophy would have no critical hold on society (22). Adorno's claim that "the need to have suffering speak eloquently is condition of all truth" implies that truth exceeds the bounds of

⁷ GS, vol. 12, p. 44 as translated by Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Blomster, *Philosophy of Modern Music* (New York: Seabury, 1980), p. 37.

current speech⁸ (26). Certain changes to bourgeois society—“‘green’ problems,”⁹ “excessive complexity”¹⁰ and the “neoconservative defence of postmodernity”¹¹—have not rendered Adorno’s theory of ideology critique useless (28). Today it seems necessary to construct and to deploy a robust concept of *life* in order to defend the environmental cause (29). The regressive current of thinking of the high bourgeois period held up *life-forms* as models for cultural and intellectual forms: *organicism* (29). Yet organic form served as the model not only in art, but also in philosophy, for at least two hundred years (29). The illusion of independence and naturalness that characterizes the bourgeois work of art and even works of philosophy also characterizes the commodity (31). The following is a story about a few of the Modern people and works opposing the organicist tendency (32). This work is also a critique of Peter Bürger’s *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, which is perhaps the most serious response to Adorno’s *Aesthetic Theory*¹² (32). Bürger does not sufficiently account for the negative side of Schein, by which art is not only self-critical, but also critical of reality, which claims to be what it is (32). On the assumption that there is no truth without illusion, we start out with illusion (33). The work comprises seven chapters (33). Chapter I engages a dialectic of viewpoints to show how different dialectical thinkers—Marx, Lukács, Hegel, Horkheimer and Adorno—have contributed to a criterion of truth that works within the total delusional context

⁸ GS, vol. 6, p. 29, or prefer to my translation here that of E. B. Ashton, *Negative Dialectics* (1973; repr., New York: Continuum, 1997), p. 17f.

⁹ Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*, vol. 2, *Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), p. 579 as translated by Thomas McCarthy, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 2, *Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, 3rd corrected ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), p. 394.

¹⁰ Habermas, *Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft*, p. 580 as translated, *Lifeworld and System*, p. 394.

¹¹ Habermas, *Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft*, p. 583 as translated, *Lifeworld and System*, p. 396.

¹² Peter Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, mit einem Nachwort zur 2. Auflage (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980), translated by Michael Shaw as *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 1984. Please note that only chapters 1-4 of *Theorie der Avantgarde* are translated in *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (as chapters 2-5).

of reification: *the determinacy of the dissolution of illusion* (33). By way of an analysis of parts of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, Chapter II distinguishes the concept of artistic illusion as *reversible*—opposed to the merely social illusion of mechanical musical reproduction and the culture industry (33). Chapter III examines the question as to whether truth in philosophy is a different kind of truth than truth in art (33). Chapter IV considers whether truth in twentieth-century Expressionism is a new truth based on *immediate expression*; however, a precedent for Expressionism in Robert Schumann’s “Der Dichter spricht” (The Poet Speaks) suggests that the Expressionism of Arnold Schoenberg, Anton Webern and Alban Berg is mediated, and not the irrationalist movement that it seems (34). Chapter V considers whether *inorganic montage* is more advanced than Expressionism, and why (34). The thesis defended throughout is that *anti-organicity* in works is advanced in light of the false reality that organicity had definitely become by 1930 in Germany (34). Chapter VI takes up a parting suggestion of Peter Bürger: to consider the artwork after Dada and Surrealism on the model of “prose” in Hegel’s aesthetics (34). Chapter VII pursues the idea that *Dichterliebe*, op. 48, (1840) by Robert Schumann is a true artwork (35). Schumann’s musical advances have too long been taken for symptoms of a chronic mood disorder or the sighs of a fiancé (35). Much is left out of this story (35).

Chapter I.....37

Theodor W. Adorno was not the first to employ the term “ästhetischer Schein”—“aesthetic illusion” (37). The concept has an important precedent in the twenty-sixth letter of Friedrich Schiller’s *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*¹³ (37). While

¹³ Friedrich Schiller, *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen*, in *Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden*, herausgegeben von Otto Dann, et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1988-2004), vol. 8, pp. 556-676, translated by Reginald Snell as *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of*

Schiller defines appearance (Schein) against reality (Realität), ästhetischer Schein is “honest” and “independent”—“aufrichtig” and “selbstständig”—: refusing any comparison with reality, aesthetic Schein is not appearance, but pure appearance¹⁴ (38). Although it is rarely mentioned, Karl Marx, like Schiller, noticed that ästhetischer Schein extended beyond the artistic realm (38). Karl Marx uses the term “ästhetischer Schein” pejoratively, to denote the incursion of the artistic fiction of naturalness into the economic theory of Adam Smith and David Ricardo (40). The illusion that values pertain to “natural” properties of objects enables a commodity’s particular ranking within a *universe* of commodities to pass unquestioned (43). In his essay “Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat,” Lukács bases his discussion of reification on Marx’s chapter on commodity fetishism, but considers congealed labour of all kinds, intellectual and physical, in his attempt to show that the commodity-form rules all sectors of society and all disciplines: that it has become in fact the total social preoccupation of life (45). Reification seems to arise in the first instance from the pseudo-necessity of set working hours... (46). Reification may have begun with the social, fabricated necessity of set working hours, which are determined in isolation from the work itself, but since the tendency of the commodity is to become a universal structuring principle, finally nothing is untouched by reification... (48). Like Lukács, Adorno rejects the reflection theory, an expression of which can be found early in *The German Ideology*... (49). Important consequences follow from the refutation of the reflection model of ideology (51). In the observation that “without abstracting from living human beings there would be no exchange,” Adorno shows a definite affinity with Lukács’s (and Feuerbach’s) emphasis on the living

Letters (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1965). Note that Snell does not preserve the gender-neutral language of the title in German.

¹⁴ Schiller, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 8, p. 664, or prefer to my translations here *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, p. 128.

individual, whom Hegel submits to abstract world spirit¹⁵ (54). Hardly convinced that the proletariat all on its own is predisposed to ending reification, Adorno is no more convinced that the dissolution of rigid, reified forms alone would automatically be the end to all ills solvable by human beings (56). Furthermore, Lukács's dialectics risks becoming a form of idealism because reification is, after all, "a shape of consciousness"¹⁶ (57). Whether the whole is at all knowable is utterly decisive for what strain of dialectics one chooses, as Lukács himself was well aware... (59). Lukács cannot consistently adopt positive dialectics (60). The title of Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* refers to an opportunity missed by both Hegel and Lukács: a dialectics that truly recognizes a moment of otherness (60). Given the choice between self-certainty and a necessarily partial cognition of estranged, mutilated and recalcitrant objects, thought must, to gain anything at all, prefer the latter (62). Negative dialectics cannot be a solution to the general "problem" of reification, as Lukács claims for Hegelian dialectics (63). The universal delusional context, which goes well beyond reification, raises the question as to how philosophy, which is essentially concerned with the truth, can even be possible (64). When Kant was faced with the philosophical debates concerning the finitude or infinitude of the universe, the divisibility or indivisibility of matter, the freedom or unfreedom of the will, the existence or non-existence of God, he did not immediately argue for one side, but asked how these antinomies came about (65). In his interpretation of Kant's dialectic of pure reason, Hegel expresses the source of the contradiction somewhat differently than does Kant (65). Neither Kant nor Hegel considers the underlying conditions of contradictions—whether abstraction, indifference to the thing thought, a pretension to capture the totality or the attempt to flee experience—to be the truth (66). Like Kant, Hegel names the

¹⁵ GS, vol. 6, p. 348, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 354f.

¹⁶ GS, vol. 6, p. 191, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 190.

resolution of the antinomies to be the task of speculative reason, which “apprehends the unity of terms (propositions) in their opposition—the affirmative, which is involved in their disintegration [Auflösung, solution] and in their transition”¹⁷ (67). Adorno denies that knowledge completely engulfs any one of its objects¹⁸ (69). While Adorno is in agreement with Kant that knowledge must leave a place for otherness,¹⁹ he would not assert that, because pure reason has created the antinomies all by itself, it needs to solve them all by itself (70). The abstraction implicit in the correspondence of concept and reality precludes the positive dialectic, the resolution of the antinomies in thought, by the concept (71). Given the dilemma between resignation and collusion with exchange society, philosophers, it seems, should put aside their critical vocations and launch a direct assault against exchange society (71). Philosophy does not have to venture outside its own domain of conceptual reasoning to find signs of the damage wrought by socially-prescribed abstraction and indifference: it may find them in contradictions (72). The identifying thinking that expels contradiction from the mind not only fails to grasp an imperative of concept formation, as Hegel claims here, but it also denies the painful consequences of abstraction (73). One might raise Hegel’s objection against the negative dialectic: that it terminates in skepticism (77). The dissolution of a particular delusion indeed permits one to speak of truth even within the universal delusional context (79).

¹⁷ G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, Theorie-Werkausgabe, vols. 8-10, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), vol. 8, p. 176, or, part one, as translated by William Wallace except where indicated in square brackets, *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 119.

¹⁸ GS, vol. 6, p. 25, or translated, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 14.

¹⁹ GS, vol. 6, p. 185, or translated, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 184.

Chapter II.....80

The aesthetic illusion of Robinsonades, which gives the *result* of a historical process to be *original first nature*, transfers into economic theory, which gives labour originally and naturally to be a thing independent of social ties (80). The artwork seems no less illusory than reality: both have a share in generalized and necessary aesthetic illusion (80). The great music of Beethoven distinguishes itself from mere empirical reality by the mediated, autonomous relation of whole and part...(81). To resist the social demand for total unity, it is not enough, however, to prefer Beethoven to popular music (85). Adorno's contention that the goal of listening is to perceive music as a "meaningful whole" is a "little heresy" against his unstinting defense of the particular, summarized in his oft-quoted catchphrase, "The whole is the untrue"²⁰ (89).

Chapter III.....92

According to Adorno, the criterion of truth—the determinacy of the negation of illusion rather than a positive result—holds good for art as well as for philosophy (92). To claim, with Rüdiger Bubner²¹ and Gilles Moutot,²² that art as a sphere is really free from the pervasive illusion of reification is to fall victim to the artistic aesthetic illusion itself, to deny that the artwork is a product of organized labour and to buy into the conventional wisdom that the artwork is an outpouring of natural genius or of a super-individual who does not rely on a highly specialized division of labour (94). Since artworks each require interpretation to be art,

²⁰ GS, vol. 4, p. 55 § 29, or prefer to my translation here that of E. F. N. Jephcott, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life* (London: Verso, 2005), p. 50.

²¹ Rüdiger Bubner, "Kann Theorie ästhetisch werden? Zum Hauptmotiv der Philosophie Adornos," in *Materialien zur ästhetischen Theorie Theodor W. Adornos, Konstruktion der Moderne*, ed. Burkhardt Lindner and W. Martin Lüdke (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980), pp. 108-137. In English, see "Can Theory Become Aesthetic? On A Principle Theme of Adorno's Philosophy," trans. Nicholas Walker, in *Theodor W. Adorno*, 4 vols., ed. Simon Jarvis, *Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory* (London: Routledge, 2007), vol. 1, pp. 14-39.

²² Gilles Moutot, *Adorno: Langage et réification* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2004).

this then raises the question as to whether art does not depend on philosophy and other forms of discursive criticism to make its truth claim (101). The contradiction over whether art requires philosophy to make its truth claim does not stem from an oversight or some confusion on Adorno's part (104). In the paragraph entitled "Art and Philosophy; Collective Content of Art" in *Aesthetic Theory*, he clearly lays out the contradiction (104). Adorno first posits the thesis that "philosophy and art converge in their truth content"²³ (104). The demonstration of the way in which an individual expression can have universal force takes up the second half of the paragraph on art and philosophy (108). The question of how something can have universal weight without a concept might be the original aesthetic problematic, formulated by Kant (108). Kant's determination of aesthetic as subjective, right at the outset of the first part of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, poses a remarkable challenge to his methodology, which so far has accorded priority to the object... (109). Adorno, however, doubts that "the judgement of taste is...not a cognitive judgement, hence not a logical one, but is rather aesthetic, by which is understood one whose determining ground **cannot be other than subjective**"²⁴ (112). Kant's attempt to secure the judgement of taste's universality by relating it back to the faculties of mind and mental functions makes it unacceptable to Adorno, who considers the appeal to the faculties Idealist (113). While Adorno rejects Kant's solution to the problem of aesthetic universality on the grounds that it does not allow for the subject to relate to beautiful artworks as objects and to make judgements on them that can be true or false, he nonetheless admits the Kantian thesis that what is beautiful is "purposive without a

²³ GS, vol. 7, p. 197 as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 130.

²⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 5:203. The pagination given here and throughout corresponds to the Academy of Sciences edition of Kant's works (*Kant's Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin: G. Reimer/ W. de Gruyter, 1902-), and appears in the margins of Guyer and Matthews's translation.

purpose” (113). Adorno reads the paradox “purposive without a purpose” as expressive of an epoch-making event in the history of language—the *arrival* of concepts—, for he elsewhere translates this contradiction as “that of its spiritual and mimetic essence”²⁵ (116). Mimesis is an antique form of cognition based on likenesses and once took the form of communicative language (116). According to the mimetic theory of language, the mimetic faculty made communicative language possible less in that speakers needed the ability to reproduce others’ speech exactly than in that the gift enabled recognition of a great diversity of expressions’ similarity to the thing, even in utterly different sensuous mediums, as in the recognition of the similarity of certain combination of *sounds* to the *visual* aspect of a thing (117). According to anti-mimetic theories of language, what preceded signs was the utterly undifferentiated, not an utter diversity of distinctions corresponding to the thing (117). According to the mimetic theory of language, the concept did not make a distinction in a cloudy idea-soup, creating reason where before there was none; rather, it *replaced* a form of rationality (121). The small child merely points to the cupboard where the biscuits are kept, sticks out his tongue and makes an aspirate from the back of his throat, moves his hand horizontally with the palm sideways while opening and closing the fingers, lifts his arms up toward his father, presents his mother with his shoes, his tumbler or the bath plug, makes up a nonsense name for his blanket (122). Despite its overthrow in the field of communication, mimesis has managed to survive by finding a terrain where it is not in direct competition with the sign, whose linkage to a thing is decided by social and historical forces, rather than by the degree of resemblance to that thing (122). Adorno’s solution to the old problematic of art’s universality does not at first seem like a solution (123). The artist’s sense of form is on the most general level a sense

²⁵ GS, vol. 7, p. 149, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 97.

of illusion, for Adorno called (artistic) illusion “form in its broadest understanding”²⁶ (123). The unusual word *Eingedenken* would have been familiar to Adorno from the works of Walter Benjamin (125). While Benjamin was presenting his new method of doing history to his friends and peers, Sigmund Freud was preparing *Civilization and its Discontents* for publication (126). Benjamin’s “new, dialectical method of doing history” addresses the problem on which Freud was also working—namely, the fusion of past and present in the memory-trace (128). Adorno employs the Freudian category of the memory-trace critically when he introduces it into the sphere of art, as the memory-trace of mimesis (129). In an important note toward his theory of musical reproduction, Adorno states a thesis that he and Horkheimer would sign in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*—“All reification is a forgetting”²⁷ (130). Reification in music is not something totally other than reification in other domains: whether it takes the form of musical notation, the linguistic sign or the commodity, reification implies social domination (131). Adequate musical performance in general converts reified objects back into experience, into life and flowing time, into singular acts however *different* from the artists’ acts (132). Aesthetic illusion is form in the widest sense, so results from artists’ feeling for form, and this feeling is idiosyncratic (132). The idiosyncratic movement opposes not merely this or that particular norm, but the norm, the current form of universality, which wants neither a reminder of the past relation of individual and collective, nor anticipation of a changed relation, in which an individual desire for the happiness that the world does not give would no longer be a threat to the social order (134). When art upholds

²⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 169, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 110.

²⁷ Theodor W. Adorno, *Zu einer Theorie der musikalischen Reproduktion: Aufzeichnungen, ein Entwurf and zwei Schemata*, herausgegeben von Henri Lonitz (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001) p. 71 (my translation). In Max Horkheimer und Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung: Philosophische Fragmente*, see GS, vol. 3, p. 263.

the universality of adequacy to itself in order to unmask signifying language's front of intersubjective agreement as a sham universality, as mere conformity under duress that the dominant subjects exert on all the other subjects, art does not thereby deny that universality can be subjective (136). The point of mimesis in art is not to exhibit the atavism of a few rare individuals, but to recall through the atavism of these few individuals the suffering that everyone endures, dominated and dominating, when concepts replace mimesis (137). Mimesis in art is a "collective reminder" in the double sense: both a souvenir of the past and a string around the finger that points to something to be done in the future²⁸ (138). Artworks become spiritual, objective, true and universal subjectively and mimetically (139). A changed relation between art and philosophy, no longer based on truth content, suggests that new art strikes out on its own to seek truth (140). The question now becomes whether Expressionism is successful in its search for illusionless truth in immediacy (140).

Chapter IV.....141

In *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno describes the movement of modern art as the illusory attempt to rid itself of illusion: "To a large extent, the dialectic of modern art is that it wants to shake off the illusory character like an animal a grown set of antlers"²⁹ (141). Of the "characteristic schools of new music" that Adorno names, Expressionism is the first to appear, although he goes on to say that the "radical folkloric tendencies," whose innovations "have nothing in common with the blood-and-soil romanticism of the Fascist era," can also be counted as a school of Modern music³⁰ (143). Expressionism is the movement that, in music,

²⁸ GS, vol. 7, p. 198, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 131.

²⁹ GS, vol. 7, p. 157, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 102.

³⁰ GS, vol. 18, p. 81, or prefer to my translation here that of Wieland Hoban, "Nineteen Encyclopaedia Articles on New Music," under "New Music," in *Night Music: Essays on Music, 1928-1962*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (London: Seagull, 2009) pp. 269-321, here p. 311.

strives for the individuality of the voice not through traditional means—not through any means at all, but by directly expressing (144). Expressionism is supposed to be the first of Modernist movements; however, Schoenberg’s “first fully Expressionist work” meets competition from Robert Schumann’s “Der Dichter spricht,” which Adorno calls, “one of the earliest models of Expressionist music”³¹ (145). Expressionist works, then, do not eliminate the universality of musical language; they are part of that language—they take up Robert Schumann’s idiosyncrasies in “Der Dichter spricht,” the thirteenth and final piece of *Kinderszenen* (Scenes from Childhood), op. 15³² (146). One can point to three such idiosyncrasies (146). Firstly, during the foray into A minor (ii of the home key, G major), Schumann twice leaves the leading tone (G-sharp) unresolved: a dissonant vii^{o6,5} chord is followed by an incomplete i⁶ chord in each case³³ (146). Secondly, Schumann’s is an aphoristic form (146). Thirdly, Schumann presents an instrumental recitative that comments on what has already been presented (148). “Der Dichter spricht,” then, presents at least three important idiosyncrasies, yet these idiosyncrasies were able to become norms, the norms of the Expressionist music that was to follow some three-quarters of a century later (150). “Der Dichter spricht” is thereby *more* than just a Romantic artwork; it is also active in perhaps the most profuse, dynamic and decisive changes in the history of Western music (151). As long as works *have* aesthetic illusion, they are illusions of balance, illusions of being fully achieved wholes, so illusions of being closed and fully actualized: “The illusoriness of artworks has narrowed into the claim to be a whole”³⁴ (151). To describe Modern music as a “rebellion

³¹ GS, vol. 7, p. 252 as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 168.

³² Robert Schumann, “Der Dichter spricht (The Poet Speaks),” *Kinderszenen=Scenes from Childhood*, op. 15, ed. Holger M. Stüwe (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2011), p. 17.

³³ *Ibid.*, m. 6 and m. 18.

³⁴ GS, vol. 7, p. 155f., or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 101.

against illusion” and associate its inception with Expressionism weakens the case for its newness because it is not the first such revolt, and Adorno admits as much: “Because [the traits of expression], as artworks, however indeed remain illusion, the conflict between illusion—form most broadly understood—and expression has not been had out and fluctuates historically”³⁵ (153). The question is whether Robert Schumann did not achieve emancipation from the concept of harmony before Arnold Schoenberg (155). Of Berg, Webern and Schoenberg, then, Schoenberg is the most resistant towards the aspect of agreement, but not because his music is more dissonant (158). In suppressing the narrow concept of harmony, Schoenberg may have inadvertently restored regressive aspects of the broader concept of harmony (158). Schoenberg’s organicism raises the question as to whether montage was not indeed a more critical advance than musical Expressionism (160). Schoenberg’s negated aesthetic illusion in withholding even the merest of cadential gestures, thereby suppressing hopes of an eventual reconciliation (162). The question now is whether montage was not the more critical technique towards 1910; whether the characterization of Modernism as *anti-organic* is not more advanced than Adorno’s characterization of it as the *crisis of aesthetic illusion* (162).

Chapter V163

Expressionism and montage seem to be vying with one another for first place in the competition of the most advanced artistic consciousness, yet Ernst Bloch described Expressionism as a “higher order” of montage, because Expression had started as *image-explosion...* (163). According to Bloch, montage can bring forth the separation of whole and part, but does not do so necessarily—an “organic” montage does not... (164). While Bloch

³⁵ GS, vol. 7, p. 169, or prefer to my translation *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 110.

sees inorganic, mediate montage as the advanced Modern form, Walter Benjamin considers *shock* to be the peculiarly Modern contribution of art to progressive consciousness (166). Bloch's characterization of montage as *image-explosion*, however, is suggestive of *shock* (166). The question now is whether *shock* is the advanced effect in Modern art (166). According to Benjamin, modern art, particularly the poetry of Charles Baudelaire, registers a fundamental change in society—"the disintegration of aura in the experience of shock"³⁶ (166). Baudelaire has achieved something quite remarkable, according to Benjamin: "Baudelaire has given the weight of an experience (Erfahrung)" to "something lived through (Erlebnis)"³⁷ (167). In "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Benjamin advances that Dada created a demand for shocks precisely in the interests of strengthening the ego against what it would have to confront in modern life (168). Peter Bürger rightly recognizes the disjunction between the feeling of shock in the viewer and determinate political action: "The problem with shock as the intended reaction of the recipient is that it is generally non-specific. Even a possible breaking through the aesthetic immanence does not insure that the recipient's behaviour is given a particular direction"³⁸ (169). One might ask if the object of Adorno's aesthetics is a lost object (172). Bürger's theory in some ways coincides with George Dickie's institutional theory of art (172). Although Bürger engages reflections on illusion, interpreting "avant-garde" techniques such as montage and defamiliarization as the work's *refusal* to create illusion, his understanding of the concept as affirmative is largely

³⁶ Walter Benjamin, "Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, Unter Mitwirkung von Theodor W. Adorno und Gershom Scholem, herausgegeben von Rolf Tiedemann und Hermann Schweppenhäuser, 6 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), vol. 1.2, pp. 605-653, here p. 653 as translated by Harry Zohn, "Some Motifs in Baudelaire," in *Illuminations*, edited and with an introduction by Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), pp. 155-194, here p. 194.

³⁷ Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1.2, p. 652f. as translated, "Some Motifs in Baudelaire," p. 194.

³⁸ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 108 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 80.

informed by Marx and Marcuse... (174). To Benjamin, Baudelaire's solution to the loss of experience (Erfahrung) was to treat mere, unconsciously-imprinted stimuli in such fashion that they might be consciously experienced: in poetry—yet Benjamin's answer is ambiguous on the point of Baudelaire's *poetical* solution to a *real* problem (183). In reading Proust, Benjamin would have no doubt seen through the false absolutization of social milieux (186). Absolute temporal homogeneity is not simply truth to the illusion of absolute class divisions, but illusion in its turn: the wishes and desires of the past do occasionally surface in the present in what Benjamin calls "a painful shock of rejuvenation"³⁹ (188). Unlike "image-explosion," "shock" has specific psychological connotations: it seems that consciousness as a psychological category must be distinguished from the notion of political consciousness before the progressiveness of shock claimed by Benjamin can be considered (195). True aesthetic experience is becoming a thing of the past, according to Adorno, because this implies a *strong ego* able to see through its own illusion of substantiality (195). The link made in *Studies in the Authoritarian Personality* between a weak ego and authoritarianism suggests that the psychological category of consciousness is not something totally different from political consciousness (196). The interest in a conscious experience of shock no doubt lies in its bringing about the separation of inner from outer, of particular self from general social norms, of part from whole, of detail from planned structure, because their conflation goes along with conventional thinking and authoritarianism (196). In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Max Horkheimer and Adorno associate the present form of rationality with a certain psychological structure (197). Against the prevailing ego-weakness, montage is a form of art adequate to bourgeois reception, to the strong ego and to the bourgeois individual, who, in the

³⁹ Walter Benjamin, "Zum Bilde Prousts," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2.1, pp. 310-324, here p. 320 as translated by Harry Zohn, "The Image of Proust," in *Illuminations*, pp. 201-215, here p. 211.

shock that shakes the clear division between inner and outer, self and other, sees through the illusion of the ego and its unnecessary, surplus repression (201). Adorno's grave doubt about shock's productivity for advancing consciousness in contemporary art and new media should not be mistaken for resignation; in another context, he defends the shock experience—for knowledge (202). Adorno's endeavour in theory to make the shock-experience possible again opens the question whether the shock experience may happen in art now, or whether, as Bürger claims, shocks have worn off forever and montage can never again advance consciousness (202). To test whether this question has really opened requires an interpretation of the passage on cognitive shock: "To produce a yield, cognition throws itself away on the objects à fonds perdu. The dizziness that this causes is an index veri; the shock of the open, appearing necessarily as negativity within what has been screened and what is ever-same, is untruth only for the untrue"⁴⁰ (202). The first idea here is that cognition is a heady business venture, which, to gain anything at all, must expect to lose its capital investment (203). In *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno suggests that philosophy should seek *infinite diversity without an underlying structure...* (204). Adorno proposes the idea that "philosophy would truly give itself" to objects as an alternative to the Kantian schemata, which merely posit the likeness between subject and object, coordinating them in a shot⁴¹ (205). In contrasting "the screened (das Gedeckten)" to "the unscreened thought (der ungedeckte Gedanke)," Adorno, thereby evoking the Freudian concept of the *screen memory* (Deckerinnerung), suggests that in productive cognition, the ego yields its defenses⁴² (208). Despite his objection to Proust's Idealism, Adorno's "changed philosophy" nonetheless owes much to *mémoire*

⁴⁰ GS, vol. 6, p. 43, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 33.

⁴¹ GS, vol. 6, p. 25 as translated, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 13.

⁴² GS, vol. 6, p. 43, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 33.

involontaire (209). Dialectics, like Proust's *mémoire involontaire*, is provoked by what is *left over* from the past, by what therefore stands out from the dull continuity that has seamlessly progressed around it (210). Adorno's use of the expression "the shock of the open" brings with it the objective association of possibility, for it was in close connection with the concept of possibility that Ernst Bloch developed the concept of the open, or what he more commonly calls "the unclosed." (214). Given that the concept of the real Possible has been so deeply denied, even amongst great thinkers, Bloch sees himself confronted with the colossal task of showing that the real Possible is neither nothing nor just reality (217). Despite his advance of imageless materialism, Adorno recognizes the legitimacy of the project motivating Bloch's defense of images: for Bloch, utopian images are supposed to demonstrate a category of *possibility* (220). Ignoring Adorno's clear case for an imageless materialism, Gunzelin Schmid Noerr attempts to synthesize Adorno's position and Bloch's⁴³ (226). The image of reconciliation should form naturally, independently of volition, whenever instrumental reason has been suspended, so, should be the true sign of material fulfilment (228). The happiness in the knowledge of artworks is nothing less than the *explosion* of their image character, image character which *seems* to say that we are happy, materially satisfied, blessed as gods (237). The aesthetic image is the *illusion* of a happiness from which all contingency has been emptied—the illusion not of Glück, but of Seligkeit, blessed bliss (237). The explosion of the aesthetic image swings the artwork back towards the expressive extreme, since expression and Seligkeit, which is closely associated with Schein, are polar opposites: "Bliss would be expressionless"⁴⁴ (238). Shock became false in art because it had been reduced to the *effect* of

⁴³ Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, "Bloch und Adorno: Bildhafte und bilderlose Utopie," *Bloch-Almanach* 21 (2002): pp. 29-69.

⁴⁴ GS, vol. 7, p. 169, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 110.

a (historical) avant-garde technique, montage, whereas the avant-garde works of Modernism were advanced, according to Bloch and Adorno, not because they occasioned a shock response, but because they maintained a split between whole and part (238). In other words, it is the negation of organicity, the seeming harmony between whole and part,—rather than montage or expression—that is advanced (238). In this light—advanced art of the Modern period as a negation of organicity—Peter Bürger’s theory on what constitutes the definition and claims of the avant-garde—advanced, Modern art—should be re-evaluated (238). Bürger agrees that inorganicity characterizes the avant-garde work, but he interprets the avant-garde’s inadvertent renewal of the category of *work* as the seal of their failure: “The category ‘work’ is not merely given a new lease on life after the failure of the avant-gardiste attempt to reintroduce art into the praxis of life; it is actually expanded”⁴⁵ (238). Bürger rejects the avant-garde theories of Adorno and Georg Lukács for failing to take into account what he believes is the historical avant-garde movements’ attack on the art institution;⁴⁶ the exact object of the avant-garde attack, however, is most probably reification (241). Bürger’s strategy in *Theory of the Avant-Garde* can be guessed by the final chapter: the argument for the failure of the historical avant-garde to destroy the art institution allows *Bertolt Brecht* to emerge as the superior avant-garde hero (242). In the end, however, Bürger minimizes Brecht’s achievement when he claims that “engaged” works, of which Brecht’s, *succeed* only by becoming organic wholes (!) (243). Brecht’s *epic theatre* is engaged without becoming an organic whole in the following way (243). Epic theatre seeks to show that things can still always be otherwise, not necessarily to offer particular protocols for political action outside the theatre (243). Brecht changed the institution of art from within by making production pass

⁴⁵ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 78 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 57.

⁴⁶ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 121 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 86.

into reception and reception into production, much in the way that Marx mediated production and consumption in the introduction to the *Grundrisse*, in order to explode the middle terms “circulation” and “exchange” in the Robinsonades of Smith and Ricardo⁴⁷ (247). A side-effect of Brecht’s importation of Marx’s dialectical techniques into theatre is that the aesthetic illusion that Marx thereby aimed to exorcise from economic theory is also dispelled where it has its true place—art (248). That Schiller can even speak of life in aesthetic illusion and aesthetic illusion in living beings stands as evidence against Bürger’s claim that “the insights formulated in Kant’s and Schiller’s aesthetic writings presuppose the completed evolution of art as a sphere that is detached from the praxis of life”⁴⁸ (248). At the same time, the “failure” that Bürger attributes to the historical avant-garde movements is far from self-evident (250). Bürger interprets the continuing rift between inorganic montage works and their reception as a problem for methodology—rather than as an indication that the art institution cannot completely absorb and control the challenges made to it by individual works (250). Even while arguing for the control of the art institution over the political effect of the individual works, Bürger acknowledges the confusion of literary theory (which is part of that institution) when it is confronted with inorganic works... (250). Bürger was closer to an adequate appreciation of Brecht’s contribution when he attributed its superiority over Dada and Surrealism to Brecht’s fidelity to the *Real-Possible*—even though he himself failed to grasp the rift between inorganic works and literary theory as an indication of the Real-Possible (251). In contrast to Bürger, the conclusion that Adorno draws from the contradictions amongst methodological approaches is that non-organic works *explode* the secure methods,

⁴⁷ Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* pp. 5-31, esp. pp. 10-21 or translated, *Collected Works*, vol. 28, pp. 17-48, esp. pp. 26-37.

⁴⁸ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 34 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 26.

schemata and habits of reception that already exist, leaving the recipient on the open sea of the possible (252). Bürger claims that the invalidation of single forms or techniques *as norms* was a particular contribution of the historical avant-garde movements: “Once the historical avant-garde movements revealed art as an institution as the solution to the mystery of the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of art, no form could any longer claim that it alone had either eternal or temporally limited validity”⁴⁹ (253). Bürger begrudges Adorno the failure of his concept of the New to take into account the historical break that the avant-gardes made with art,⁵⁰ for the result of this break, Bürger claims, is that “no movement in the arts today can legitimately claim to be historically more advanced *as art* than any other”⁵¹ (254). Advanced art, however, is not necessarily New according to Adorno’s theory of Modernism (254). While Bürger considers *inorganic* to be a point of rupture that marked the historical avant-gardes out from everything that preceded them, Bloch and Adorno tend to see inorganicity not only as specific to Modernism, but also as part of a general tendency previous to Modernism (254). Anti-organic art was not new at the beginning of the Modern period, but it was the most advanced art at that historical moment (255). The Moderns’ adoption of inorganic montage is advanced not merely because it went back to the advanced art of another time: it also went against the most regressive current of *its* time: against Nazism (256). The young Adorno was so sensitive a thinker that by late 1928, he had already claimed anti-organicism as an advanced artistic norm, publicly flagging his opposition to the real organicist current, while calling on truth’s need of dialectic, in his essay “Schubert”⁵² (259). Adorno not only explicitly rejects organicist theories, but also adopts an inorganic form for his own text (264). Schumann, who

⁴⁹ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 121 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 86.

⁵⁰ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 83f. or translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 60.

⁵¹ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 86 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 63.

⁵² GS, vol. 17, pp. 18-33 or translated by Wieland Hoban, “Schubert,” in *Night Music*, pp. 19-46.

goes unnamed in Adorno's slipshod allusion to Schubert's "divine length"⁵³—where we expect "heavenly length"⁵⁴—wrote compositions whose inorganicity rivalled that of Schubert's, not, however by way of potpourri assemblage, but rather in their brinks, in rifted structures of a seismic imagination that parted and distanced the similar, and which nonetheless created groundswells back towards it that changed the face of it (267). With a remarkable political astuteness sharpened no doubt by his intellectual circle, the 25-year-old Adorno closed his essay by blocking the reading that would equate the Schubertian landscape, the concept he had so consistently developed against the notion of "personality," with a particular existing country or region, whether that be Austria, Germany or a frozen Northern land: "There is no homeland here except the remembered one"⁵⁵ (270).

Chapter VI.....271

The question as to whether montage is more or less advanced than expression collapsed with the introduction of the concept of *image-explosion*; *anti-organicity* was found to be the criterion of advanced, modern art (271). The question now is whether any notion of *advanced* art or even *art* is possible, in light of challenges posed first by G. W. F. Hegel, then also by Adorno and Peter Bürger (271). In the conclusion to *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Bürger claims that the impossibility of advanced art after the failure of the historical avant-garde movements has already been registered by Hegel, in his criticism of the "prose" that characterizes the extreme form of Romantic art: "What we deduced for post avant-gardiste art from the failure of the avant-gardiste intentions, the legitimate side-by-side existence of styles and forms of which none can any longer claim to be the most advanced, is already observed by

⁵³ GS, vol. 17, p. 31 as translated, "Schubert," p. 43.

⁵⁴ Robert Schumann, "Die C-Dur-Sinfonie von Franz Schubert," in *Robert Schumann in Eigenen Wort*, zusammengestellt und herausgegeben von Willi Reich (Zurich: Manesse Verlag, 1985), p. 396 (my translation).

⁵⁵ GS, vol. 17, p. 33, or prefer to my translation here "Schubert," p. 45.

Hegel with reference to the art of his time”⁵⁶ (271). The “prosaic” works raise the question of their status because the standard of art is *Ideal*—the Idea of the beautiful (272). Modern works negate specific aspects of the *Ideal*: illusion, play and meaning (281). For Hegel, the *Ideal artwork* is a seeming synthesis of Being and the Idea that gives the appearance of liveliness: “The task of art must therefore be firmly established in art’s having a calling to display the appearance of life [Erscheinung der Lebendigkeit, appearance of liveliness], and especially of spiritual animation (in its freedom, externally too) and to make the external correspond with its Concept.”⁵⁷ (281). An avowed source of Hegel’s concept of *life* is Schiller’s poem “Das Ideal und das Leben,” whose opening stanza contrasts *divine life*, which flows on eternally, meeting no opposition to trouble or ripple its waters, with the waves of *human* generations, each tossing between the delights of the senses and peace of mind... (282). A second avowed source of Hegel’s concept of *life* is another work by Schiller: the Prologue to *Wallenstein* (286). While Adorno admits, with Schiller, that each artwork negates its own moments of Schein, he emphasizes the self-critical movement of art as a *whole*... (288). Adorno suggests that art’s status as *poetry*, removed from the accidents and caprices of life, must be questioned, confronted with art that would be life—prose (289). The right to existence of poetry as a whole was perhaps unquestioned in philosophy of art until 1951, when Adorno made his contentious statement on poetry after Auschwitz: “It is barbaric to write a poem after Auschwitz, and that also corrodes the verdict voiced on why it has become impossible to write

⁵⁶ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 130 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 93.

⁵⁷ G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, Theorie-Werkausgabe, vols. 13-15, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), vol. 13, p. 202 as translated by T. M. Knox except where indicated, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, by G. W. F. Hegel, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), vol. 1, p. 152.

poems today”⁵⁸ (289). Art itself had refused illusion prior to Auschwitz, and Adorno was keenly aware of such refusal in the interwar period (291). Paul Celan’s “Todesfuge” prohibits the moments of happiness promised by illusion⁵⁹ (292). Adorno’s reasons for declaring poetry after Auschwitz barbaric may be traced to the very beginning of his career, to his aesthetics course of 1931/32, which has come down in the form of preparatory notes⁶⁰ (295). In *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno maintains that just by *existing*, artworks are necessarily affirmative to some extent: “No [art] leaves no trace of affirmation, if any [art], by its sheer existence, rises above the neediness and degradation of the merely existing”⁶¹ (297). In his judgment against poetry, Adorno included those artworks that attempted to erase their similarity to language (299). If culture as a whole can be judged barbaric, then the position of such criticism itself is unsustainable (303). Criticism that makes a blanket condemnation of *all* art on the basis of its affirmative character is itself affirmative, in that it leaves off its divisive work; it so annuls itself (304). Celan negates the idea that there can be any ancient *German right* to the play of rhyme, whose exercise would stand above all criticism, anymore (304). In light of Celan’s “Todesfuge,” it seems that Schoenberg’s music is more advanced than Mahler’s: the critique of play is more advanced than the critique of conventions through play (304). The question as to whether culture as a whole has become barbaric is articulated through *play* not only because the play impulse in Schiller’s aesthetics is supposed to fulfil the concept of humanity, but also

⁵⁸ GS, vol. 10.1, p. 30, as translated by Samuel Weber and Shierry Weber, “Cultural Criticism and Society,” in *Prisms* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), pp. 17-34, here p. 34.

⁵⁹ Paul Celan, “Todesfuge,” in *Werke*, Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe, 1. Abteilung [division], *Lyrik und Prosa*, begründet von Beda Allemann, herausgegeben von Rolf Bücher und Axel Gellhaus, vol. 2/3, “*Der Sand aus den Urnen*” und “*Mohn und Gedächtnis*”, herausgegeben von Andreas Lohr unter Mitarbeit von Holger Gehle in Verbindung mit Rolf Bücher, 2 Teile (parts) (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003), Teil (part) 1, pp. 99-102.

⁶⁰ Theodor W. Adorno, “Aufzeichnungen zur Ästhetik-Vorlesung von 1931/32,” in *Frankfurter Adorno Blätter 1*, im Auftrag des Theodor W. Adorno Archivs, herausgegeben von Rolf Tiedemann (Munich: edition text + kritik, 1992), pp. 34-90.

⁶¹ GS, vol. 7, p. 239, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 160.

because in Kant's aesthetics the task legislated for the faculty of judgement gains all of its legitimacy from its capacity to arbitrate specifically on the universal and necessary communicability of aesthetic feeling, which results from the "free play of the faculties of cognition with a representation through which an object [Gegenstand] is given"⁶² (309). To Kant's resolution of the antinomy of taste, Hegel would argue that an *indeterminate* concept is really no concept at all because determinateness belongs to concepts essentially: "And because this determinateness is the determinateness of the concept, and hence the *absolute determinateness, singularity*, the concept is the ground and source of all finite determinateness and manifoldness"⁶³ (314). When one looks more closely into how Kant defines the arts, however, one discovers that the concept there is not indeterminate, but always involves *play* (317). Modern art's critique of play evokes the Kantian concept of play, which has not only to do with the *play of the faculties*, but also with the beautiful art object (319). In "Is Art Light-Hearted?" Adorno revises the ban on poetry after Auschwitz to cover only art that is "heiter"—cheerful or light-hearted: "Because Auschwitz was possible and remains possible for the foreseeable future, light-hearted art is no longer conceivable"⁶⁴ (320). Adorno's statement that poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric can be read not as a ban on the *artistic form* of poetry, but as a new answer to Hegel's question—whether art should be poetry or prose—, upon the exhaustion and invalidation of cheerful, Ideal art by historical circumstances (325). Yet poetry (as opposed to prose) may have been invalidated some one hundred years before Auschwitz (326). Eduard Mörike's "Auf eine Lampe" criticizes Hegel's resolution of the

⁶² Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 5:217.

⁶³ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 6, p. 261 as translated by George di Giovanni, *The Science of Logic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 520.

⁶⁴ GS, vol. 11, p. 603 as translated by Shierry Weber Nicholsen, "Is Art Lighthearted," in *Notes to Literature*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991-1992) vol. 2, pp. 247-253, here p. 251.

conflict between poetry and prose, Ideal and Life, on the side of the Ideal (326). Yet Adorno missed Mörike’s critique of German Idealism because, to judge by his 1958/59 lectures on aesthetics, he took Mörike’s Hegelian language in the last line of “Auf eine Lampe” *to be* Hegelian philosophy (334). While “Auf eine Lampe” escapes the charge of empiricism, Hegel is right to claim that everyday art, arrangements of things picked out from what simply exists, cannot bring down the Ideal without working against meaning at the same time (336).

Transition to Chapter VII.....340

Contrary to Hegel’s reckoning that art is to be poetry, and so, the advance of the Ideal, we have seen that a prosaic work, Eduard Mörike’s “Auf eine Lampe,” is “advanced” in light of what Ideal, with its priority of meaning, has become: affirmation (340). For in his Lectures on Aesthetics, Hegel splits the “Ideal as Such” between two moments—(1.) the moment of *beautiful individuality*, which posits *the Ideal* only to see it dissolve from within, and (2.) the moment in which the Ideal *relates back to Nature*, in an attempt perhaps to give itself a lease on life by borrowing from the “prose of the world” that it had cut out (340). In the contradictory terms of Hegel’s system, Dutch genre paintings may have failed to supplant Ideal with Life as the principle of art—in which case they fail as *post-Romantic* works—, or, alternatively, *as Romantic* works, they may have failed to dissolve the Ideal fully from within, for selig (serene, blissful) in the face of life, they mastered and resolved their contingency (342). This becomes clear when one considers the three moments that go to build beautiful individuality, or, the “poetry” side of the Ideal as such: (a) the harmony of inner and outer; (b) the negation of contingency; and (c) Seligkeit (the result) (342). Seligkeit itself is broken into three moments, the first of which is properly the moment of cheerfulness and affirmation, which relates to the achievement of the work, its “Beschlossenheit,” this conclusiveness,

decidedness and resolve,⁶⁵ even, we might add, in the face of a “breach” between the inner life of the subject and external circumstances, as in tragedy⁶⁶ (343). Hegel associates the second and third moments of *Seligkeit*—*sustained disunity* and *irony*—with Romantic artworks, as stages in decline (344). This chapter aims to detail an anti-Ideal that is not decline and degeneration, but rather critical choice and combination of what remains of fled life, inorganic and still, after the *explosion* of Jean Paul, arresting the aesthetics of growth and development (346).

Chapter VII.....347

The thesis defended is that Robert Schumann’s song cycle *Dichterliebe*, op. 48, (1840) is a true artwork⁶⁷ (347).

Section i.....347

Schumann began his career not long after Hegel delivered his lectures on aesthetics (347). *Dichterliebe* combines the negative moments of *Seligkeit*—*sustained disunity* and *irony*—to negate the affirmative, Ideal art favoured by Hegel (348). According to Hegel, the negativity of the second moment of *Seligkeit* appears clearly in extreme forms of Romantic art, where the opposition between outer and inner remains unreconciled: “It is true that in romantic art the distraction and dissonance of the heart goes further and, in general, the oppositions displayed in it are deepened and their disunion may be maintained”⁶⁸ (348).

Dichterliebe forces no reconciliation between the individual and the collective such as that found in *Der Freischütz* by C. M. von Weber: its moments of unrestrained emotion find no

⁶⁵ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 208 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 157.

⁶⁶ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 208 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 158.

⁶⁷ Robert Schumann, *Dichterliebe*, op. 48, ed. Hansjörg Ewert, translation of song texts by Richard Stokes (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2011).

⁶⁸ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 209 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 158.

final acknowledgment within the world of conventions (350). Hegel would not only reject Robert Schumann's music for its abstract emotional extremes, but also Heinrich Heine's text for its *irony*—, which constitutes the third moment and downfall of *Seligkeit* (355).

Section ii.....359

Besides supporting the ironic conviction of the text, the expression of *Dichterliebe* is also a solution to an objective music-specific problem (359). Expression in Schumann's *Dichterliebe* is double-sided: it is at once the subjective reaction to rude, harsh bad objectivity, on the one side, and, on the other, the objective state of subjective reactions as seemingly private (361). Nineteenth-century bourgeois art is deeply enigmatic: Schubert and Schumann musically grasped reification, fetishism, phantasmagoria, alienated labour, uneven development, surplus value, total administration and ideology before these were truly conceptually grasped, notably by Karl Marx (362). Hegel interprets abstraction in art as recalcitrance towards resolution—as the preference for immediacy over mediation, which is why he—and philosophers at large—tend to cut emotion off from thinking (363). Schumann's scoring of *Dichterliebe* for high voice puts distance between the sentiment expressed and its presentation, defeating the possible Hegelian charge of a clinging to immediacy (368).

Section iii.....370

Schumann's critique of immediacy also operates in his ostensible adoption of the *cycle* as his aesthetic form (370). Polyp Excursus: The polyp is a riddle for the taxonomist and for the philosopher, and has been for centuries (382). To evoke the cycle form in connection with extensive unity seems to be a restorative gesture: the demand that the new work be measured against the aesthetics of the distant past (387). Schumann, however, by calling his work a

“cycle,” is not evoking the older aesthetic criterion that epic poetry established for itself, extensive unity; rather, he offers the illusion of a form—a false immediacy (387).

Section iv.....387

Important literature on *Dichterliebe* in English has concerned itself with the question of the whole by showing that the work is a linear progression of linked songs (387). The decades-long persistence of the unity question is fuelled by a basic contradiction: the dominant method of musical interpretation is the organicist paradigm of Heinrich Schenker; however, Schenker’s influential theory was never intended for multi-part works⁶⁹ (388). Arthur Komar employs Schenker’s methods to analyze *Dichterliebe*, while admitting that he is not “entirely orthodox” in his application of them⁷⁰ (389). While disagreeing with certain points of Komar’s supporting analysis, Rufus E. Hallmark does not contest the claims that *Dichterliebe* has a tonal plan, a compositional plan and a single key; these, however, are not sufficient (390). David Neumeyer for his part wishes to retain Schenkerian analysis, but makes the explicit criticism that, in its subordination of all elements to harmonic and melodic closure, such a framework is ill-equipped to deal with vocal, “narrative” works⁷¹ (391). Neumeyer’s attempt to extend Schenker’s concept of organic whole to narrative works, however, misses what is peculiar to it (392). Schenker’s theory is founded on a naturalistic presumption: he takes the harmonic series to be an invariable natural phenomenon (393). Despite the conservatism of

⁶⁹ Heinrich Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, herausgegeben und bearbeitet von Oswald Jonas, 2. Auflage (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1956) translated by Ernst Oster as *Free Composition*, ed. Ernst Oster, 1 vol. accompanied by a supplement, *Musical Examples*, (New York: Longman, 1979). In subsequent references to *Free Composition*, page number references (p.) refer to the main volume while figure number references (fig.) refer to the supplement.

⁷⁰ Arthur Komar, “The Music of *Dichterliebe*: The Whole and Its Parts,” in Robert Schumann, *Dichterliebe: An Authoritative Score, Historical Background, Essays in Analysis, Views and Comments*, ed. A. Komar (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971), pp. 63-94, here p. 67 n3.

⁷¹ David Neumeyer, “Organic Structure and the Song Cycle: Another Look at Schumann’s *Dichterliebe*,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 4 (Spring 1982): pp. 92-105, doi: 10.2307/746012.

Schenker's organicism, he at least acknowledges the extra-territoriality of text to music, in no way insisting that words and music form an organic whole (400).

Section v.....402

The inapplicability of Schenker's organicist theory to vocal works is a negative indication of the growing alienation of Lieder, which has its basis in the historical difficulty of reconciling music and text (402). Both Schumann's music and its poetic source cast suspicion and even aspersion on the harmonizing claims of Lieder (403). As a cycle of ironically set folk idioms, *Dichterliebe* stands critically to the Volksideologie to come out of a certain irrational strain of Romanticism (407).

Section vi.....412

The song cycle form gives the impression that Romantic love follows the seasonal cycle of nature in its flowering, fruition and decay; individual details of *Dichterliebe* destroy this illusion (412). *Dichterliebe* appears to make a perfect circle (413). To claim that *Dichterliebe* is an illusory natural whole and that it negates its illusion of unity is *not* to claim that *Dichterliebe* is nothing but fragments and pieces (417). Recently, the presumption of organic unity adopted by Schenker and others has been deemed inadequate or constraining for an understanding of *Dichterliebe* as a Romantic artwork and an aesthetic of *fragmentation* adopted instead (417). The proponents of a fragmentary aesthetic have at least made clear that Schenker's theory cannot properly account for the specificity of Romantic artworks (421). Schenker's theory of musical analysis should be able to account for Romantic artworks, considering that his organicism may be traced to a certain organicity in Hegel's concept of *harmony* (423). Adorno's declaration that "the emancipation from the concept of harmony reveals itself as a revolt against illusion" also bears some of the contradictions of the Hegelian

concept of harmony⁷² (426). Schoenberg, at least, did not abandon the idea of harmony inherent in the physical divisions of sound; in fact, he used the harmonic series to justify the dissonance in his music... (427). The notion of consonance is not based fundamentally on what sounds suave or pleasing, nor that of dissonance on what sounds rough or harsh, and Schoenberg in other moods acknowledges this (429). On one hand, Schoenberg is quite against the unrestricted use of dissonant chords (430). But on the other hand, Schoenberg undertook to make dissonance incomprehensible again, because any good theory teacher knows what is really happening with Wagner's dissonances (431). The *unresolved dissonance* in Schoenberg's music seems to correspond to the second moment of *Seligkeit*, to the sustained disunity that, according to Hegel, characterizes extreme Romantic artworks, and the difference between advanced Romantic works and advanced Modern works threatens to collapse (432). In *Harmonielehre*, Schoenberg himself admits that "Voll jener Süße," op. 8, no. 5, and "Lockung," op. 6, no. 7, were continuations of the advances in "schwebende Tonalität," made by Beethoven, Schumann and Mahler⁷³ (435). The contradiction in Schoenberg's concept of "floating tonality" arises because his concept of tonality is antinomical (436). On one hand, tonality is a specific selection of tones from the twelve available (436). Yet, on the other hand, Schoenberg does not conceive of tonality in diatonic terms in the least (440). Carl Dahlhaus registers a similar collapse of the distinction between diatonicism and chromaticism in the theory of functions of Hugo Riemann, who, by always postulating an imaginary extension of the stacks of thirds in chords, strives to claim a direct relation between chords suggesting different keys (440). Although Schoenberg acknowledges floating tonality and even "sublated" tonality in the music of his predecessors, his own theory

⁷² GS, vol. 7, p. 154, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 100.

⁷³ Arnold Schoenberg, *Harmonielehre* (s.l.: Universal Edition, 1949), p. 459.

of harmony is prejudiced so as to downplay these instances, making his own music appear more radical than it is (443). Kofi Agawu criticizes the musicological practice of pleading ambiguity and argues that, while certain passages of tonal music suggest multiple readings, where these are not disambiguated by the music in its unfolding, the task of theory is to resolve ambiguities: “An analysis that terminates in undecidability represents a conscious or subconscious retreat from theory”⁷⁴ (445). Recently David Kopp has attempted to account for the unusual handling of key in the first song of *Dichterliebe* by supplying the concept of a key *continuum*, which, to his mind, escapes Agawu’s criticisms of tonal ambiguity while resisting the pressure to resolve Schumann’s puzzle definitively in favour of A major or F-sharp minor⁷⁵ (448). The statement of key is conventionally taken to “mean” the unity of the work (450). The first Lied of *Dichterliebe* shows key to be contradictory concept (451). Tonal ambiguity, tonal instability indeterminacy, bitonality, or even polytonality, are easy ways to solve the puzzle of the first Lied’s key (452). When functions dominate qualities according to convention, then the progressive element of harmony, movement from chord to chord, takes on a landscape character: the goal comes into view and disappears, comes close into view and is reached (453). The last, expressive bar of the first Lied of *Dichterliebe* is new (454). The major-minor seventh chord placed at the end of the first song of *Dichterliebe* cannot be reduced to a “harmonic meaning” because the chord controls more than harmony: it also controls the concept of “tonal piece” or “tonal work” (455). Yet Hallmark ignores the artwork’s self-negation because he implicitly uses the text to justify Schumann’s eccentricity: for Hallmark, the last chord is the mere music-conventional equivalent of the last words of the

⁷⁴ Kofi Agawu, “Ambiguity in Tonal Music: A Preliminary Study,” in *Theory, Analysis and Meaning in Music*, pp. 86-107, here p. 107.

⁷⁵ David Kopp, “Intermediate States of Key in Schumann,” in *Rethinking Schumann*, eds. Roe-Min Kok and Laura Tunbridge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 300-325.

Lied, *Sehnen und Verlangen* (longing and desire)⁷⁶ (456). The C-sharp major-minor seventh chord at the end of the first Lied tends across an immense distance to the F-sharp minor triad falling on the first syllable of the word *Blumen* in the first occurrence of the line *Es flüstern und sprechen die Blumen* in the twelfth Lied (457). The first Lied becomes readable in light of the twelfth Lied as the articulation of the problem that the applied Phrygian key area poses to the very idea of non-harmonic tones within a figured texture (460). Schumann's musical advance comes out of the properties of figuration itself (461). *Dichterliebe* opens on C-sharp", the tonic, where "tonic" refers to the root of the first chord of a work (462). The opening of *Dichterliebe*, however, presents a great diversity of highly coloured chords—four different proportions of chords built on four different roots—yet without a sense of rupture: it is by a skilful use of common tones that Schumann is able to bring together chords that normally would not be associated in such a brief passage (464). The beauty of an interpretation in D major-as-Neapolitan is that it does not require any special treatment of "non-chord" tones—all the tones can be chord tones in this analysis (467). It may be argued that an analysis in applied Neapolitan should at least bring out the "tonal" moments of this progression (470).

Schumann's advanced, anti-organic practice lies in the contradiction between the three sharps seen in the score of "Im wunderschönen Monat Mai" and what its tonality sounds like to the ear: the Neapolitan region applied to C-sharp major (472). This contradiction cannot be overstepped, but, given the universal delusional context of reification, it should be resolved on the side of performance (472). The important words *Herzen* (heart) and *die Liebe* (the love) gain their interest not from arbitrary non-chord tones, to which the performers can add emphasis, but from a number of harmonic elements that work together: the most powerful

⁷⁶ Rufus E. Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann's "Dichterliebe": A Source Study* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1979), p. 16.

harmonic movement of a half-step up to the subdominant chord on *Herzen*; the number of alterations, liberated by the applied Neapolitan figuration, in this thirteenth chord that takes up the whole of bar 10; the placement of the root almost at the *end* of this figured chord, following the norm of the style *brisé* of Renaissance lute-playing, the advanced music of the past, norm which this Romantic song reinstates as its idiosyncrasy; the high voicing of this root, which is in fact the highest-sounding pitch of the chord; the minor g^6 variant on *Liebe*, indicating an alternative reading of historical progress, this literal progress up the scale (472). Lied I bears a certain strophic structure, which nonetheless takes on the appearance of being through-composed (473). If smooth transitions assure the integrity of the circle, and of the work, then the cyclic form of *Dichterliebe* is in fact imperilled at many points (476). In allowing *discontinuity* to enter his dialectical composition in such jarring fashion, in opening the apparently complete work to history, Schumann in fact goes quickly to the solution to the problem of dialectical undifferentiatedness that Adorno would articulate in his 1932 address “The Idea of Nature-History”... (477). The expression of *Dichterliebe* is illusion (481). The applied Neapolitan key area continues to haunt the non-figured second Lied, in A major (482). Arthur Komar remarks the importance of both C-sharp and D in the opening of the second Lied, but reads the A major triad (supporting C-sharp in the voice) in measure 1 as the point of arrival of the first Lied: “In view of the B left hanging at the end of Song 1, the initial C-sharp of Song 2 can be regarded as a local passing-note to the neighbour D, which resolves directly to C-sharp in the same measure”⁷⁷ (483). For Schenker, however, it is completely out of the question that both the tonic and the flattened supertonic be admitted into the fundamental structure: “In the fundamental structure a Phrygian supertonic can no more exist

⁷⁷ Komar, “The Music of *Dichterliebe*,” p. 72.

than can a mixture”⁷⁸ (484). In taking issue not with the concept of tonic, but rather with the exclusionary aspect of harmony, the relegation of certain notes to a *subaltern* category of “non-harmonic tones,” which needs no further comment, Schumann at his most advanced holds fast to the hope of transcendence (in modulation), yet determines transcendence not as the pure creation or break-in of the utterly different, but as a different organization of *what is* already (484).

Section vii.....485

Like Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu*, Schumann’s *Dichterliebe* owes its revolutionary form to inorganic transformation wrought under internal pressures, not to processes of natural growth (485). And everything that transpires from the poet’s confession of longing to the moment in which the flowers speak, when it becomes clear what the true object of longing was, once it is missed, becomes readable as a *history* of that reification (489). The poet’s confession of longing in the first Lied opens directly onto his suffering in the second (489). In Lied III, the poet withdraws his love of the spreading nature that served as a conduit to the beloved, the manifold of roses, lilies, dove, and sun, in exclusive favour of their pure synthesis, the beloved herself, who, going by the epic epithet of *die Kleine, die Feine, die Reine, die Eine* (the fine one, tiny one, refined one, only one) (490). In Lied IV, the poet then suffers the consequences of the consolidation of his love into a single one (490). The failure of speech to fulfil its promise seems to drive the poet to find an objective expression for the “wonderfully sweet hour” and the hopes it held: in Lied V, he thinks to capture the fleeting hour spent with the beloved by way of a lily, which would be able to play back her song off his soul like a quivering phonograph, reproducing the shudder of her kiss, shudder that

⁷⁸ Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, p. 77 § 104 as translated, *Free Composition*, p. 41, with scale degree written out.

Schumann renders mimetically with animated chords in thirty-second notes (491). However, in Lied VI, the poet discovers that his beloved has already been captured in something old: in the painting of the Blessed Virgin Mary that he studies in Cologne Cathedral (491). To his horror, the poet still loves, as can be drawn from his reaction to the definitive loss of the beloved in Lied VII (495). In Lied VIII, hints of alienation enter the text (497). The split between individual and society reaches acute expression, both in Heine's text and in Schumann's setting, in Lied IX of the cycle (500). In Lied X comes the poet's melancholy rumination, high in the forest, in phrases tracing deep valleys, on just what it might inflict on him to hear his beloved's song again (500). Thereafter the poet descends, in Lied XI, into cynicism at the way of the world (501). Through each of these progressive displacements of the object, forced by the pursuit of fulfilment itself, the poet is alienated from the initial experience of natural beauty of May, removed and again removed from nature, so that when his wish for speaking nature is fulfilled, in Lied XII, it is completely other, and he does not recognize it... (501). Schumann shows his fidelity to illusion, against the affirmative vocation of art as a dispenser of morals, truths and practical knowledge, by closing his cycle with a profusion of dreams (502). The first of these, in Lied XIII, is the darkest moment of the cycle (503). While the tears in Lied XIII suggest that there is a term that can go between dreaming and waking, less is transferred from dreams to waking in Lied XIV and almost nothing at all in Lied XV (505). The dreamer in Lied XIV remembers most of his dreams of his beloved, but he wakes finding himself bereft of the spray of cypresses that she gave him and the soft word that she spoke to him (506). Lied XV almost celebrates the return of repressive capacities (507). Lied XVI follows directly from Lied XV: if dreams are mere foam, rationalizes the dreamer, then let us rid ourselves of them for good (510). The common reading of Lied XVI is

that the poet, unburdened by the weight of the past, reaches reconciliation in the “reflective” postlude, with its reference back to Lied XII (512). Yet the conclusion of *Dichterliebe* gives reason to hope that there may yet be awakening (514). The four-bar citation of the postlude of the last song begins on the dominant over a tonic pedal, then proceeds to $IV^7 - V^{4,2} - I$, the large piece of the most common progression in Western music (515). The German sixth that follows the $IV - V - I$ progression in Lied XVI touches on the poet’s un-heroic cast in this misery, picking up on several important moments of his alienation earlier in Lied XII (515). The German sixth in the postlude of Lied XVI is followed by the *crescendo-decrescendo* chord: a diminished seventh chord applied to the supertonic⁷⁹ (516). It is unclear what a pianist asked to *crescendo* and *decrescendo* on a singly struck chord is to do (517). There are slight discrepancies between the postlude of Lied XII and its citation in the postlude of Lied XVI (518). The substitution of a major triad for a dominant seventh in the citation of Lied XVI gives an utterly different sense of harmonic movement away from the illuminated chord (519). The major II chord is the last step in the history of the supertonic that Schumann has told in this cycle (520). The last postlude so casts suspicion over the poet’s claims to have buried his pain and his love, the old songs and dreams; it suggests that such a radical, wilful act of forgetting only leads surely to deeper dreaming and delusion, the projection of all happiness into the past, mere dreams of how good people were to one another once upon a time... (523).

Epilogue.....524

Adorno’s concept of aesthetic illusion seems like an outmoded subject today (524).

The recent focus on appearance and apparition, on the vanishing or performative side of art, wishes to spare aesthetics and art the ideology critique that is the real dynamo powering

⁷⁹ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), XVI, p. 37, m. 54.

Adorno's brilliant dialectics of illusion (525). The disdain for illusion in the domain of aesthetics is moved by the positivist spirit, which considers suspect anything that goes beyond the Here and Now of the observable world (528). It should perhaps be underscored that in "Der Essay als Form," Adorno does not claim that the essay is devoid of aesthetic illusion—only that it makes a claim to *truth* devoid of aesthetic illusion (530). In the Western tradition, form serves memory (533).

Bibliography.....535

List of Abbreviations and Unusual Characters

bsn.	bassoon
C	Great C (two octaves below middle C)
c	Small C (one octave below middle C)
c'	middle C
c''	two-line C (one octave above middle C)
Calif.	California
cf.	confer
chap.	chapter
cl.	clarinet
ed.	edited by, editor, edition
eds.	editors
E. H.	English horn
esp.	especially
et al.	et alii (and others)
ex.	example
<i>f</i>	<i>forte</i>
f.	and the following (page)
<i>ff</i>	<i>fortissimo</i>
fig.	figure
Fl.	flute
f ^o	folio
GS	Theodor W. Adorno, <i>Gesammelte Schriften</i> , herausgegeben von Rolf Tiedemann, unter Mitwirkung von Gretel Adorno, Susan Buck-Morss und Klaus Schultz, 20 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003).
ibid.	ibidem (in the same place)
l.h.	left hand
m.	measure
Mass.	Massachusetts
MEW	Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, <i>Werke</i> , 41 vols. (Berlin: Dietz, 1959-68).
<i>mf</i>	<i>mezzoforte</i>
mm.	measures
N	Neapolitan
n	note
NaS	Nachgelassene Schriften (posthumously published works)
n ^o	numéro (number)
no.	number
op.	opus
<i>p</i>	<i>piano</i>
p.	page
Penn.	Pennsylvania
pf.	pianoforte
<i>pp</i>	<i>pianissimo</i>

pp.	pages
pt.	part
pts.	parts
repr.	reprint
r.h.	right hand
s.a.	sine anno (without year)
<i>sf</i>	<i>sforzando</i>
s.l.	sine loco (without place of publication)
s.v.	sub verbo (under the word)
s.vv.	sub verbis (under the words)
trans.	translated by, translator
v.	voice
vcl.	cello
vol.	volume
vols.	volumes
Wisc.	Wisconsin
{ }	<i>accolades</i> (to save space in the presentation of new sections)
¶	paragraph
§	section
I	major tonic chord
I ⁶	major tonic triad in first inversion
I ^{6,4}	major tonic triad in second inversion
i	minor tonic chord
i ⁶	minor tonic chord in first inversion
I ⁺	augmented tonic chord
I ⁹	tonic ninth chord
II	major supertonic chord
II [#]	altered supertonic chord
II ⁺	augmented supertonic chord
ii	minor supertonic chord
ii ⁶	ii chord in first inversion
ii ^{ø4,3}	half-diminished ii chord in second inversion
iii	(minor) mediant chord
IV	(major) subdominant chord
IV ⁷	subdominant seventh chord
iv ⁶	minor subdominant chord in first inversion
sharp-iv ^{ø4,3}	sharpened subdominant half-diminished seventh chord in second inversion
V	dominant chord
V ^{6,4}	dominant triad in second inversion
V ⁷	dominant seventh chord in root position
V ^{4,2}	dominant seventh chord in third inversion
V ⁹	dominant ninth chord
v ^{ø4,3}	half-diminished seventh chord in second inversion on the fifth scale degree
vi	(minor) submediant chord

VI ⁺	augmented submediant chord
VI ^{6,5}	submediant seventh chord in first inversion
VI ^{6,5+9}	submediant seventh chord in first inversion with an added augmented ninth
VI ^{6,5+11}	submediant seventh chord in first inversion with an added augmented eleventh
VI ^{6,5 & 13}	submediant seventh chord in first inversion with an added thirteenth
VI ^{6,5+13}	submediant seventh chord in first inversion with an added augmented thirteenth
vii ^{o7}	fully diminished seventh chord
vii ^{o6,5}	fully diminished seventh chord in first inversion
vii ^{o7}	half-diminished vii seventh chord
VII ⁹	major leading-tone ninth chord
flattened-vii ⁶	flattened leading-tone chord in first inversion
V/V	V applied to V, V of V

For Louise Campbell

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{Notes on Style} The main style guide adopted in the present work is *The Chicago Manual of Style*, sixteenth edition. Additional guidelines were sought in D. Kern Holoman's *Writing About Music: A Style Sheet*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008). I depart from tradition in rendering figured bass horizontally from left to right instead of vertically from top to bottom, and separate the figures with commas (see "Abbreviations and Unusual Characters," supra, pp. xviii-xlix). Please note as well that I use the Helmholtz system to name the octaves where appropriate: the notes in the octave starting two octaves below middle C are called "Great" and written in upper case, (for example, "Great C"), those in the octave starting one octave below middle C are called "Small" and written in lower case (for example, "Small c"), those in the octave starting with middle C are identified with one line (for example, c') and those in the octave above that with two lines (for example, c"). Slight adjustments have been made to the guidelines offered in these style guides to suit the multilingual context of international philosophy. Following the musical convention, I italicize words in Italian (*espressivo*, *pp*, *piano*, *sempre f*, *crescendo*), but not words in other languages (Mit innigster Empfindung). For aesthetic reasons, I use italics rather than quotation marks when quoting lyric. I provide references to Adorno's texts in their languages of composition and, where necessary, references to available English translations. The choice to translate on occasion from the original instead of quoting an already-existing translation in print should not be interpreted as a value judgement against the translator or translators. It is undeniable that there would be little motivation to learn a new language without those who first promise its riches, translators. Aesthetic judgements and philosophical positions are implicit in translations, however, and it is in the interests of philosophical consistency that I translate certain passages myself.

{Prologue} A shine of truth in the “universal delusional context of reification”¹ sounds doubtful.

It sounds all the more doubtful when the topic is art. Today the claim that an artwork is true meets not merely with suspicion, but with ridicule, scorn, ire or even hostility.

The aim of this thesis is to save a minimal criterion of truth that holds good for art as well as for philosophy. The model chosen here is European art, particularly the music and poetry of Germany and Austria. The model chosen is an especially clear one, but it is not the only one.

Although many have weighed in on the question of art’s truth, the most developed and nuanced reflections on it in the European tradition belong to Theodor W. Adorno (1903-1969), philosopher of the Frankfurt School. Adorno had a great deal of experience in the music of his time: he studied composition with Alban Berg and piano with Eduard Steuermann in Vienna, worked as a music critic, edited the music journal *Anbruch*, lectured at the Darmstadt summer school and counted among his friends leading musicians such as Rudolf Kolisch and Carla Henius.² His philosophy of art engages audaciously with particular artworks, which do not serve as mere examples chosen at random to fill out and justify the thought, but which stand in his work as the life-changing events of history, after which one must philosophize in a completely different way. Adorno’s aesthetic theory rests on close interpretations and analyses of hundreds of individual works. Academic philosophy did not then and does not now demand such specialized knowledge of artworks from its professors of aesthetics. This is a risky way

¹ GS, vol. 7, p. 252 as translated by Robert Hullot-Kentor, *Aesthetic Theory* by Theodor W. Adorno, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 168.

² For biographical details on Adorno, see Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and the Frankfurt Institute* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), pp. 1-23; Martin Jay, *Adorno* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984); Stefan Müller-Doohm, *Adorno: A Biography*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005).

to philosophize, after all: a thesis, an argument or even a whole system can be felled by a chord. But what Adorno gains for philosophy through this risk is experience. Aesthetic experience is at the centre of his theory and, as experience, it implies concrete objects in time and space, rather than, say, a transcendent encounter into the beyond. For Adorno, aesthetic experience, as all experience, implies the liberation from error and illusion.

The conception of truth to be developed in detail here is, broadly speaking, that of *disillusionment*. Truth as disillusionment implies, on one hand, *somebody* who becomes liberated from a particular illusion and, on the other, *something* that remains from this process, concretely, and which can be discovered by somebody else, somewhere else.

In art, truth as disillusionment seems to entail didacticism, but this is not the case because the illusions lost can be illusions particular to art.

Friedrich Schiller calls the illusion particular to art “ästhetischer Schein,” aesthetic illusion.³ Its distinction is that it is forthright about being an illusion, so, in theory, it never effectively deceives. Schiller opposes the aesthetic illusion to “reality.” Yet from its beginnings, aesthetic Schein shows a tendency to overstep the bounds of art. An ambiguous relation to the extra-aesthetic sphere is indeed a characteristic of aesthetic Schein. Schiller’s distinction of a special “aesthetic” illusion raises the question of whether there is also a special “aesthetic” truth of art.

Adorno takes up the concept of aesthetic illusion in his aesthetics, yet develops it in ways that would have been inconceivable to Schiller. Adorno understands Modern art as a

³ Friedrich Schiller, *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen*, in *Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden*, herausgegeben von Otto Dann, et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1988-2004), vol. 8, pp. 556-676, here p. 661 n19, translated by Reginald Snell as “aesthetic appearance,” *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters* (New York: Ungar, 1965), p. 125. Note that Snell does not preserve the gender-neutral language of the title in German.

revolt against aesthetic illusion that culminates in a crisis, whereby art objects are practically indistinguishable from empirical reality, or, in the words of Arthur C. Danto, from “mere real things.” Arnold Schoenberg is a forerunner of this tendency, while Happenings are perhaps its extreme example. Although Adorno generally champions Modern art and considers the twentieth-century revolt against illusion to be a *progressive* tendency, he is without question opposed to the fusion of empirical reality and art that takes place in the Happening. One must resist the tendency to define art as illusion, Modern art as the “crisis of illusion” and Modern art as the crisis that threatens art in general.⁴

Adorno clearly admits truth to the realm of art, but it is less clear whether truth in art has a necessary relation to illusion, as truth outside art must. This is because Adorno’s concept of aesthetic illusion is embroiled in a number of seemingly inextricable contradictions. The weakening of art’s aesthetic illusion around 1910 no doubt makes Adorno’s aesthetics, which is more than an account of Modernism, most contradictory around this concept. The present work takes up a suggestion from Lambert Zuidervaart: “One aim for a reading of *Aesthetic Theory* is to expose antinomies within Adorno’s account of artistic illusion.”⁵ Indeed, as well

⁴ For example, Thomas Huhn, “Adorno’s Aesthetics of Illusion,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 44, no. 2 (Winter 1985): pp. 181-189. This is how Huhn reads Adorno: “The crisis of illusion that typifies modern art can be construed as the crisis of art in general to the extent to which illusion has been embedded in art. Adorno believes illusion has been embedded in Western art throughout its entire history” (ibid., p. 182). While Huhn here and elsewhere (ibid., p. 181) presents aesthetic illusion as the essential, defining aspect of art, in another mood he treats it as an acquired trait: “Expression existed prior to illusion. In fact we might say that illusion came about as the attempt to dominate and transform expression” (ibid., p. 186). Huhn is aware of the contradictions in which truth and illusion are enmeshed in Adorno’s aesthetics (ibid., p. 188), but his solution is perilously close to the Hegelian absorption of art by philosophy that he rightly wants to avoid: “Art, in order to be completed, must be moved beyond itself by philosophy because art’s truth content is not just its own possession but also participates in history” (ibid.). This does not follow, especially as philosophy is less—not more—historically conscious than art. Against Huhn, it must be said that the contradictions in art are themselves generated by closure; the notion of art being “completed” by philosophy is just as illusory as the closed, autonomous sphere of art itself, and such an idea in practice will generate contradictions, not secure truth. The position defended in this thesis is that art does not necessarily need philosophy to be true.

⁵ Lambert Zuidervaart, *Adorno’s Aesthetic Theory: The Redemption of Illusion* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), p. 179.

as being emphatically dialectical, Adorno's philosophy is a "dialectic despite itself," as he once accused the philosophy of Edmund Husserl.⁶

Adorno's "dialectic despite itself" shows up in the following four unmediated antinomies.

{1.} On the one hand, truth in art necessarily implies illusion. The artwork is something made, and Adorno claims that "the question about the truth of a made thing is nothing other than the question about illusion and its redemption as a redemption of the illusion of the true," which implies that there is no truth without illusion.⁷

But on the other hand, Adorno reads the twentieth-century Expressionist movement as art that seeks truth otherwise than through aesthetic illusion. The truth sought in Expressionist music is "the illusionless, undisguised, un-transfigured truth of subjective reaction [die scheinlose, unverstellte, unverklärte Wahrheit der subjektiven Regung]."⁸ Expressionism suggests a truth that does not pass through illusion, since it is the "*immediacy*" of subjective expression that Expressionism ideally aims at.⁹ But it is not clear whether truth that passes

⁶ See GS, vol. 5, p. 132. As can be drawn from the line of criticism in *Zur Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie* (Towards the Metacritique of Epistemology, translated as *Against Epistemology: A Metacritique*), Adorno denies truth to texts that seek consciously and deliberately *to avoid* contradictions, but which admit them nonetheless. Husserl's thinking, despite the fact that it "passively registers breaks and contradictions in its object," is a mere medium of truth, without however making good on its own claim to *be* truth (GS, vol. 5, p. 217, in my translation). It does not preserve experience, but liquidates it. According to Adorno, Husserl "would like to bring his results into immediate agreement with the traditional logic of non-contradiction," but he lets contradictions slip in unintentionally nonetheless (GS, vol. 5, p. 132, in my translation). Adorno therefore gives Husserl's phenomenology the pejorative title of "dialectic against its own will" or "dialectic despite itself": "In the non-dialectical system the dialectic despite itself becomes the source of errors and yet the medium of truth, in that it forces the analysis of the form of knowledge out of itself yet without consideration for its concrete, determinate content, to the point that it liquidates its very foundation" (GS, vol. 5, p. 132, in my translation). Husserl's philosophy nonetheless becomes a "medium of truth" because it points beyond the extreme disregard for concrete particularity that predominates in Western philosophy.

⁷ GS, vol. 7, p. 198, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 131.

⁸ GS, vol. 18, p. 60, or prefer to my translation here that of Wieland Hoban, "Nineteen Encyclopaedia Articles on New Music," under "Musical expressionism," in *Night Music: Essays on Music, 1928-1962*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (London: Seagull, 2009), pp. 269-321, here p. 275.

⁹ GS vol. 18, p. 60 as translated, "Nineteen Encyclopaedia Articles," p. 275.

through a critique and redemption of illusion could ever cede to another *kind* of truth, since the idea of varieties of truth, inviting relativism, is itself dubious, according to Adorno.

{2.} On the one hand, it is impossible for art ever to lose its aesthetic illusion. In the text of his 1961 Darmstadt talk “Vers une musique informelle,” Adorno denies that art’s revolt against illusion could ever be effective: “The aesthetic illusion is not to be effaced from artworks. Even the illusionless artwork would not be one with empirical reality absent of mediation; illusion lives on in it, even when the artwork wants to seem [scheinen] nothing more than what it is.”¹⁰ In *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno gives an explanation for the indelibility of illusion: artworks cannot efface all illusion without effacing themselves because “they themselves—and not only the illusion [Illusion] that they raise—are the aesthetic illusion [Schein].”¹¹

On the other hand, Adorno thinks that it is possible for art to lose its aesthetic illusion. In *Aesthetic Theory*, he suggests that art will have to survive without illusion if it is to continue: “If the question about the future of art were not futile and did not reek of technocracy, it would come to a head over whether art can outlive illusion.”¹² The reason for this contradiction might be a narrowing in the scope of art’s illusoriness.

{3.} On the one hand, Adorno claims that “the illusory aspect of artworks [Das Illusionäre der Kunstwerke] has narrowed into the claim to be a whole,”¹³ which implies that modern art’s “rebellion against illusion” is a revolt specifically against the “fiction of the whole” and not

¹⁰ GS, vol. 16, p. 535f., or prefer to my translation here that of Rodney Livingstone, “Vers une musique informelle,” in *Quasi una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music* (London: Verso, 1992), pp. 269-322, here p. 317.

¹¹ GS, vol. 7, p. 155, or prefer to my translation here, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 101.

¹² GS, vol. 7, p. 156, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 101f.

¹³ GS, vol. 7, p. 155f., or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 101.

against illusion in general, for “even anti-realistic currents such as Expressionism take part in the rebellion against illusion.”¹⁴

On the other hand, in the late essay “Little Heresy,” Adorno makes the blanket claim that gaining a comprehension of music disparages “atomistic listening” and promotes “structural listening,” which requires the perception of music as a “meaningful whole”: “Musical understanding, musical cultivation [Bildung] with a human dignity that means more than mere information content, is tantamount to the ability to perceive musical contexts, ideally developed and articulated music, as a meaningful whole [sinnvolles Ganzes].”¹⁵ This implies that music that cannot be perceived as a meaningful whole—because it is completely aleatory and indeterminate, for example—is not illusionless music, but rather that it is not music at all. For even inarticulate, piecemeal music must lend itself to structural listening. But from another perspective, aesthetic illusion is not so much the illusion of a whole, but that of *harmony*, and this can be seen in Expressionism, which manifests the crisis of illusion by separating out expression, detaching it from the harmonious construction: “The emancipation from the concept of harmony reveals itself as a revolt against illusion: tautologically, construction is inherent in expression, which is its polar opposite.”¹⁶ The concept of harmony is not the equivalent of *triadic harmony* in music; it refers to the passage of art beyond the determinations of reflection in the illusory identity of essence and appearance. But Adorno suggests that the artworks dissatisfied with the idea of harmony are actually the ones that have gone into it more deeply, and which have given themselves over to being appearing essences: “The deeper artworks lose themselves in the idea of harmony, of appearing essence, the less

¹⁴ GS, vol. 7, p. 157, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 103.

¹⁵ GS, vol. 17, p. 297 as translated by Susan H. Gillespie, “Little Heresy,” in *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 318-324, here p. 318.

¹⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 154, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 100.

are they able to content themselves with it.”¹⁷ In other words, these artworks are the most processual ones, the ones that have, *first*, posited themselves as appearing essences, the reconciliation of nature and spirit, *then*, become disillusioned with this harmony, allowing inconsistencies to appear. These artworks make the claim to be wholes most strongly, appearing manifestly to be wholes, but they negate this claim most strongly, in the height of their expressive moments, in the indelibility of their outstanding passages, in being parts. But Adorno’s aesthetics of illusion is also contradictory around the concept of Expressionism.

{4.} On the one hand, Adorno implies that Modern music is new. The expression of twentieth-century Expressionism is supposed to be something different from Romanticism’s musical expression. In *Philosophy of Modern Music*, Adorno states: “Since the break, Schoenberg’s *expressivo* is qualitatively different from the Romantic one, at least since the Piano Pieces, op. 11, and the George songs, if not from the very beginning, even by way of that ‘excess,’ which thinks Romantic *expressivo* through to the end.”¹⁸

But on the other hand, the expression of Expressionism is not new. In *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno thinks the relation between Romantic and Modern music not on the analogy of a plan and its full realization, but on the analogy of model and imitation, making Schoenberg’s music “after the break” mere variations on what had already been realized, the “incomparable last piece of Schumann’s *Kinderszenen*, one of the earliest models of Expressionist music.”¹⁹

The sorts of “contradictions” that show up in Adorno’s aesthetics do not invalidate it, for they are not due to inattention to the rules of logic. The problem is with the rules of logic

¹⁷ GS, vol. 7, p. 168, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 110.

¹⁸ GS, vol. 12, p. 44, or prefer to my translation here that of Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Blomster, *Philosophy of Modern Music* (New York: Seabury, 1980), p. 38.

¹⁹ GS, vol. 7, p. 252, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 168.

themselves. More precisely, the problem is with the underlying “identifying thinking,” which mistakes non-contradictions for contradictions. Under the condition of total identity, more is lumped under the heading of contradiction than should be. No longer is contradiction considered to be the assertion of a thing and its opposite simultaneously and in the same respect, at once both *a* and not-*a*; rather, anything that escapes binary opposition, what is neither *a* nor not-*a*, appears contradictory: “All that does not fit into [the law of the excluded middle], everything qualitatively different, acquires the mark of contradiction.”²⁰ What cannot be negated *in its entirety*, in other words, is a contradiction as far as total identification is concerned: *a* would have to perish utterly, undergo *complete* annihilation, or else reign *completely* in order for totalizing thinking to consider it, on its terms, true and valid. But this immediately pushes totalizing thinking to contradict its own law: once *a* either perishes entirely or reigns completely, the proposition “*a* or not-*a*” is no longer true, and thought steps outside the law of the excluded middle. Total identification is false on its own terms. Its claim to truth finishes in illusion.²¹

When a proposition about the whole breaks the law of non-contradiction then it is clear that total identification must be false on the terms of general logic. The problem, as Adorno reads it, is not with self-contradictory texts, but rather with the necessity to make exhaustive,

²⁰ GS, vol. 6, p. 17, or prefer to my translation here that of E. B. Ashton, *Negative Dialectics*, (1973; repr., New York: Continuum, 1997), p. 5.

²¹ Cf. Alison Stone, “Adorno and Logic,” in *Theodor Adorno: Key Concepts*, ed. Deborah Cook (Stocksfield, UK: Acumen, 2008), pp. 47-62. Adorno’s logic is not an “alternative” to general logic, as Stone suggests (*ibid.*, p. 47). Rather, Adorno demonstrates that the laws of thought that form general logic are false on their own terms, implying that general logic is invalid. For Stone, this would leave only transcendental logic. Negative dialectics does indeed look to be a transcendental logic, but Stone does not argue convincingly for it. A weakness of her exposition is her rendering of the “non-identical.” If it were, as she suggests, that aspect of a particular dog that cannot be brought under the concept of dog, the non-identical would be a “junk category” that would have no hold on the real (*ibid.*, p. 54). A stronger case can be made for negative dialectics by thinking the non-identical as a historical process, by which particular aspects of real concepts are repressed. A precipitate of the non-identical is in principle retrievable if concepts implicitly carry repressed content along with them through time—but not if “the non-identical” is something unique that falls outside of the concept completely, which would be something on which the concept would have no hold.

all-or-nothing claims. Solving problems or resolving contradictions is a cosmetic fix when the contradictions are constantly generated from the need to seal each property off from its otherness (not-*a*), so that the two, property and its other, exhaust the whole. A text that makes its negations partial, gradated and diverse, within the concept itself, denies the law of the excluded middle. But such diversity, difference, limitation and shading within the subject treated would amount to “contradictions,” according to the thinking of total identification.

From another point of view, the sorts of contradictions that appear in Adorno’s aesthetics are “objective”—that is, they come out of the (social) demand for identity between the concept and its object. This properly social demand is the norm in analytic philosophy, but also in the work of Hegel. In Hegel’s Idealist dialectical practice, the resolution of contradictions implies a totality that is supposed to encompass partial and antagonistic perspectives. Hegel conceives of contradiction as more than a problem with thinking: “It is said that contradiction cannot be thought; but in the pain of the living being it is even an actual, concrete existence.”²² Adorno also understands contradictions in this sense. Hegel’s project, however, is to resolve all the contradictions into a totality that is at once thinking and existence. At the end of his key work, *The Science of Logic*, Hegel makes the claim that the resolution of thinking and existence in thought is at the same time *totality*—or, more than just thought, but also nature.²³ The mediation of contradictions in Hegelian dialectics generally tends towards this fantastical totality. According to Adorno, however, a *conceptual* whole is not totality—not even speculatively. According to Adorno, the resolution of contradiction in a higher generality does not make the totality a *harmony*, but rather an antagonistic whole,

²² G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, Theorie-Werkausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969-1971), vol. 6, p. 481 as translated by George di Giovanni, *The Science of Logic*, ed. George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 684.

²³ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 6, p. 573, or translated by G. di Giovanni, *Science of Logic* p. 752f.

hostile to the particular, which must be conquered in order for the dialectic to advance to a new stage. Hegel's resolution of thinking and existence ultimately denies real unresolved pain and suffering—the “contradiction” in existence, which is not the same thing as a contradiction in thought. As long as concepts are conceived as totality, they are grounded in *fiction*. The problem of concepts' fictitiousness cannot be reasonably resolved by bursting all the traditional Idealist categories (Concept, Being, Life-Process...) and replacing them with some denser stuff (Capital, Commodity, Circulation...), as was Karl Marx's strategy.²⁴ Adorno sees no alternative other than to take the conceptual totality at its word: “Once conscious of the conceptual totality's illusoriness [Scheinhaftigkeit], consciousness has no way but to break through the illusion [Schein] of total identity immanently: using total identity's own measure.”²⁵ The conceptual totality—that is, the harmony, within thought, of thinking and existence—claims to be totality. But it is only a conceptual totality: the pain of existence lies outside it. As the conceptual totality takes itself to be totality itself, any criterion lodged against it from the outside—such as the pain of actual existence—would be *nothing* to it. The only way to criticize the system of thought that claims to be everything is to adopt a criterion from within that “totality”—its own claim to be a consistent entirety with no part missing. Totalizing, identifying thinking is not peculiar to Hegel, but is the norm.

Adorno's critique of Hegel would be unthinkable without the contribution of Marx, who, in the introduction to the *Grundrisse*, charges J. S. Mill and Adam Smith with employing

²⁴ For an argument suggesting the translation of Hegel's logical categories into Marx's economic categories, see Mark E. Meaney, *Capital as Organic Unity: The Role of Hegel's "Science of Logic" in Marx's "Grundrisse"* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002).

²⁵ GS, vol. 6, p. 17, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 5. The translation of “Schein” here as “illusion” expresses Adorno's understanding of the totality as false. In *Minima Moralia*, an earlier work, he declares, “Das Ganze ist das Unwahre [The whole is the untrue]” (GS, vol. 4, p. 55 §29; my translation). In *Aesthetic Theory*, his last work, he uses the phrase “the fiction [Fiktion] of a totality that is recognized as unrealizable” to describe structure in music (GS, vol. 7, p. 154 as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 100).

an abstract notion of production: in order to speak of production *in general* consistently, these thinkers must abstract qualities from the actual object of production—those particular aspects of production that enter into contradiction because they arose in different societies, in different eras.²⁶ Mill and Smith nonetheless handle the concept of production in general *as if* it really encompassed all forms of production. Any harmony between the concept of production and its object is illusory, and due to abstraction. In fact, there is a contradiction between the concept of production in general and production—objective contradiction.

Adorno's own aesthetic theory is not immune to objective contradictions, despite his priority of the object in principal. They are signs of social abstraction, and the blame for them cannot be laid on the lone thinker. This is because abstraction is not a matter of personal choice, but socially necessary, rooted in the unavoidable use of money for exchange. Abstraction seems reasonable in philosophy because it is the norm in the society of monetary exchange where that philosophy is produced.

Although objective contradictions cannot be solved in thought alone, philosophy can adopt practices that support their real resolution rather than hinder it. Instead of assuming that concepts really cover their objects, philosophers can recall the different aspects that, through time, concepts have repressed from their objects, and which disturb common assumptions about the things themselves. This practice goes against the social process of abstraction essential to the illusory harmonization of divisions in society. In aesthetics, this implies a close look at artworks.

²⁶ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* (Berlin: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1953), p. 6f. as translated by Ernst Wangermann, "Economic Manuscripts of 1857-58 (First Version of *Capital*)," in Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works*, 50 vols. (New York: International Publishers, 1975-2004), vol. 28, p. 23.

The present work approaches Adorno's aesthetics by way of detailed interpretations of consummate works that make the competing demands of universal and particular explicit. For the most part, I examine works in the Austro-German tradition with which he was familiar. I demonstrate that true, advanced artworks break out of their times, whether Classical, Romantic or Modern.²⁷ The analyses of artworks in the present work are offered with the aim of showing that there is a non-identity between Adorno's aesthetic theory and the artworks that should be adequate to it, as well as a non-identity between Adorno's account of Modernism and the artworks that should be adequate to it.

Again, these non-identities do not invalidate Adorno's aesthetics, as they are seated in social processes, rather than in one person's subjective thought. Yet Adorno's philosophy does not permit a reduction of all features of philosophical texts to social reality. Philosophy, like art, must make good on its claim to truth, and this puts it at odds with society.

The truth of art is not a lesser grade of truth than the truth of philosophy when it is understood as the effective critique of illusion (Schein). The contradictions around Adorno's concept of Schein have to do with the determinations that the concept has gained and lost in philosophical history. The word "Schein" is close in meaning to "shine" in the obsolete

²⁷ As there are recognizably Romantic strains to this conception of great works, the challenge in what follows will be to show that it has utmost relevance for the twentieth century and, indeed, for today. While the goal here is not to reconstruct the past or to defend truth as eternal, I take up the idea that great works open passages from one historical period to another, which Lydia Goehr has included in her characterization of the Romantic conception of the work: "Reconstructing the past was partly motivated by a new sort of academic interest in music history. Bringing music of the past into the present confirmed at least one tenet central to romanticism, that of replacing a traditional, static conception of nature with a dynamic conception of history. But there was another interest in reconstruction that was more influential. Musicians did not look back to the past, as they once had done, to find models for contemporaries to imitate. Instead, they began to see musical masterpieces as transcending temporal and spatial barriers. One level of history was being transcended to reach another. Works were not to be thought about as expressive or representative of concrete historical moments, but as valuable in their own right as transcending all considerations other than those of an aesthetic/spiritual nature. 'Do not think that old music is outmoded,' Schumann wrote in 1834. 'Just as a beautiful true word can never be outmoded, so a beautiful piece of true music.'" Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 246.

figurative sense of “a specious appearance, a ‘show’,” itself a loan-meaning from “Schein.”²⁸ Like “shine” in English, “Schein” also describes the glow of light. From this meaning, Schein spills over in a mass of related ideas, from surface sheen, to mere surface, semblance, appearance, show and, finally, illusion. It carries some or all of these senses in the works of philosophers such as Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Schiller, G. W. F. Hegel, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche and Walter Benjamin. The great diversity within the concept has yielded quite distant translations for the same word: “shine,” “show,” “illusion,” “semblance,” “appearance,” “mere appearance,” “pure appearance” and “illusory being.” This scattered history makes the term all the more difficult to translate when one comes to the texts of Adorno, who relates to the philosophical history implicit in “Schein” not so much as a tradition to appropriate, but as basic working “materials” to advance.²⁹ Michael Spitzer picks up on many of these echoes from the past in his definition of Adorno’s concept of Schein: “Artistic illumination; the sheen of natural beauty; surface semblance; illusion; veil; husk; the quivering of life; the flicker of aesthetic categories; an image of freedom; the promise of reconciliation; harmony.”³⁰

Adorno’s concept of Schein will be rendered here most often as “illusion.” “Illusion” does not capture the entire sense of “Schein,” but, as Adorno himself remarked in his “Theses on the Language of the Philosophy,” word choice in philosophy is not determined by

²⁸ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “shine,” accessed December 15, 2013, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/178183>.

²⁹ On this idea, see Norbert Rath, “Dialektik des Scheins—Materialien zum Scheinbegriff Adornos,” in *Kolloquium Kunst und Philosophie*, herausgegeben von Willi Oelmüller, Band 2, *Ästhetischer Schein* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1982), pp. 51-61.

³⁰ Michael Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy: Adorno and Beethoven’s Late Style* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), p. 1; see also p. 14 for the clue to reading the definitions.

signification, but rather by *history*.³¹ Social criticism and the critique of culture are no doubt central to Adorno's project, and the translation of "Schein" as "illusion" links him with the nineteenth-century tradition of the critique of Schein. As Willi Oelmüller explains, aesthetic Schein most definitely carries the sense of "illusion" when it is used in a critical capacity:

In the nineteenth century, when something is criticized as aesthetic illusion, as a rule this presupposes a critique of ideology and of world views: the critique of religion, of metaphysics, of morals, the critique of political institutions and conditions, the critique of the economic commodity in the capitalist process of production, the critique of science and of the European processes of rationalization, the critique of particular so-called aesthetic ways in which human beings behave toward themselves, toward one another, toward the nature beyond themselves and towards God. When something is criticized as aesthetic illusion, that means: this is deception, whether self-deception or deception by another, it is not true, it is not the case.³²

Yet as Oelmüller also points out, nineteenth-century thinkers and writers employed "ästhetischer Schein" with a double aim: not only with a view to its critique, but also with a view to its "rescue" or "redemption" (Rettung). Adorno's concept of aesthetic illusion encompasses both dimensions.³³ He considers the redemption of illusion to be the "object of aesthetics,"³⁴ and even claims that the "legitimation" of art's truth depends on the "redemption

³¹ GS, vol. 1, p. 366f. 2., or in translation Theodor W. Adorno, "Theses on the Language of the Philosopher," trans. Samir Gandesha and Michael K. Palamarek, in Donald A. Burke et al. (eds.), *Adorno and the Need in Thinking: New Critical Essays* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), pp. 35-40, here p. 35f. Thesis 2.

³² Willi Oelmüller, opening presentation [Diskussionseröffnung] to "Argumente für und gegen die Verwendung des Begriffs ästhetischer Schein I: Protokolle der Diskussion vom 12.6.1981, 15.00-18.30 Uhr," by Willi Oelmüller et al., in *Ästhetischer Schein*, pp. 318-354, here p. 320, my translation from: "Wenn im 19. Jahrhundert etwas als ästhetischer Schein kritisiert wird, ist dabei in der Regel die neuzeitliche Ideologie- und Weltanschauungskritik vorausgesetzt: die Kritik der Religion, der Metaphysik, der Moral, die Kritik der politischen Institutionen und Verhältnisse, die Kritik der ökonomischen Ware im kapitalistischen Produktionsprozeß, die Kritik der Wissenschaft und des europäischen Rationalisierungsprozesses, die Kritik bestimmter sogenannter ästhetischer Verhaltensweisen des Menschen zu sich selbst, zu anderen Menschen, zur außermenschlichen Natur und zu Gott. Wenn etwas als ästhetischer Schein kritisiert wird, heißt das, dies ist Täuschung, Selbsttäuschung oder Fremdtäuschung, es ist nicht wahr, es ist nicht der Fall."

³³ See Hyung-won Min, *Zur Kritik und Rettung des Scheins bei Th. W. Adorno: Der Zusammenhang der Gesellschafts-, Erkenntnistheorie und der Ästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main: R. G. Fischer, 1992). Min clearly shows Adorno's advance of both sides of the nineteenth-century tradition of Schein: critique of illusion in the form of ideology critique and redemption of illusion in the form of a critical aesthetics. While attesting to the important role of art in the redemption of illusion, Min provides no close interpretations or striking examples of artworks to support the argument of the second part of the dissertation (ibid, p. 157).

³⁴ GS, vol. 6, pp. 7-412, here p. 386, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics* p. 393.

of illusion.”³⁵ This centrality is no doubt why Lambert Zuidervaart sub-titled his book dedicated to Adorno’s aesthetics “The Redemption of Illusion.”³⁶ Aesthetic illusion has its rightful place in art: to redeem illusion is to recognize the truth of *art’s* illusion.

While “illusion” was once the usual translation of “Schein,” the recent tendency is to refer to Adorno’s concept as “semblance.” Yet “semblance” does not properly capture the connotation of “deception” that “Schein” carries in Adorno’s work: he defines ideology, which is not a neutral or descriptive term for him, as “socially necessary illusion.”³⁷ Ideology is necessarily a problem for knowledge and, as Raymond Geuss points out, it is the motivating factor in ideology critique (Ideologiekritik) for members of the Frankfurt School:

“Ideologiekritik is not just a form of ‘moralizing criticism,’ i.e. an ideological form of consciousness is not criticised for being nasty, immoral, unpleasant, etc. but for being false, for being a form of delusion. Ideologiekritik is itself a cognitive enterprise, a form of knowledge.”³⁸ The choice of “semblance” for “Schein” indeed has a history in the translation of Marx, and, while Schein serves the intention of ideology critique in the work of both thinkers, certain misunderstandings about Adorno can be traced to a failure to distinguish his concept of ideology from a certain Marxian conception of it. In the *Grundrisse*, “Schein” has been translated as “semblance,” for example, when it refers to a mere surface phenomenon that hides the deeper processes taking place behind it: Marx describes the “immediate being” of commodity circulation as “pure semblance [Schein],” elaborating, “*It is the image*

³⁵ GS, vol. 7, p. 164 or prefer to my translation here, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 107.

³⁶ For discussion on the redemption of illusion, see Zuidervaart, *Adorno’s Aesthetic Theory: The Redemption of Illusion*, chap. 8, pp. 178-213, esp. p. 194. The present work builds on this chapter.

³⁷ GS, vol. 7, p. 346 or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 233.

³⁸ Raymond Geuss, *The Idea of a Critical Theory: Habermas and the Frankfurt School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 26.

[*Phänomen*] of a process occurring behind it.”³⁹ “Schein” is also translated as “semblance” in other contexts: semblance is a “fleeting mediation”⁴⁰ or what misses its realization through being merely fleeting, inconsequential or partial.⁴¹ The sort of critical praxis suggested by the conception of Schein as semblance would involve, first, going beyond the surface to grasp the essential processes working beneath and, second, comparing what things are to what their full realization would be. But these tactics are not sufficient when Adorno’s mature conception of ideology is considered. First, Adorno denies that ideology is a surface phenomenon. This is clear in his statement: “Ideology is not superimposed as a detachable layer on the being of society; it is inherent in that being.”⁴² Second, Adorno does not begrudge what is partial, ephemeral and inconsequential (or “idle”), because he believes that happiness is closely connected to these things,⁴³ and, moreover, although he does not give up hope for fully realized truth,⁴⁴ he certainly does not frame the problem of ideology in terms of things’ failure to realize or fully and lastingly to disclose their “essences.”⁴⁵ Considering its history in translation, “semblance” does not bring out what is new about Adorno’s conception of ideology.

Different misunderstandings of Adorno’s position may result when “Schein” is translated as “appearance.” For “appearance” is famously contrasted to “reality” in Reginald

³⁹ Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, p. 166 as translated, *Collected Works*, vol. 28, p. 186.

⁴⁰ Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, p. 124 as translated, *Collected Works*, vol. 28, p. 145.

⁴¹ Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, p. 123f. as translated, *Collected Works*, vol. 28, p. 144.

⁴² GS, vol. 6, p. 348 as translated, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 354.

⁴³ See the fourth Meditation on Metaphysics, “Glück und vergebliches Warten” (Happiness and Idle Waiting), in GS, vol. 6, pp. 366-368 or in *Negative Dialectics*, pp. 373-375.

⁴⁴ See GS, vol. 6, p. 361 or *Negative Dialectics*, p. 368, where Adorno criticizes metaphysical obstacles to the realization of truth.

⁴⁵ This can be drawn from Adorno’s famous words, with allusion to the Communist catastrophe of Marx’s Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach, “Philosophy, which once seemed obsolete, lives on because the moment of its realization was missed.” GS, vol. 6, p. 15, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 3.

Snell's translation of Friedrich Schiller's *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*.⁴⁶ Yet the object of Adorno's ideology critique certainly includes reality, especially its more or less permanent features: "When thought is banned, thinking sanctions what simply is."⁴⁷ He understands sanctioned reality to be the basis for irrational movements, whether Being for neo-ontology,⁴⁸ the reality principle for revisionist psychology⁴⁹ or the "given" facts for positivism.⁵⁰ Adorno's ideology critique, as the critique of socially necessary Schein, is thus certainly not limited to "appearance," because reality forms such a large part of that critique. Adorno even suggests that existence itself is ideological,⁵¹ and denies that mere thought is unreal.⁵² At times, Adorno indeed means by "Schein" a superficial cover, but the translation "illusion" *also* captures the idea of unreal or superficial appearances and semblances. Yet, as an ideology critic, Adorno is not concerned with just *any* appearance or semblance—for example, clouds that look like whales or pears that at first seem to be apples because they are round rather than elongate. Adorno is concerned with appearances that delude and deceive, and the word for this is "illusion" in the sense of "a deceptive or illusive appearance, statement, belief, etc."⁵³

⁴⁶ Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, p. 125.

⁴⁷ See GS vol. 6, p. 93, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 85.

⁴⁸ See GS vol. 6, p. 92, or *Negative Dialectics*, p. 85; GS, vol. 6, p. 484, or translated by Knut Tarnowski and Frederic Will, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 106f.

⁴⁹ See GS, vol. 8, p. 39.

⁵⁰ See GS, vol. 8, p. 216.

⁵¹ According to Horkheimer and Adorno, "Existence [Dasein] is magically turned into its own ideology by its faithful duplication." GS, vol. 3, p. 301 (my translation).

⁵² See GS, vol. 8, p. 209, where Adorno deems the positivist critique of knowledge insufficient because, to it, the "objective character of exchange" would not count as real and would thus be beyond its grasp. Adorno considers the "Schein" of exchange value to be "the most real thing of all," even though it remains, "in contrast to use value, something only thought" (ibid.). Adorno's critique of exchange value is an example of Schein that is both ultimately real and mere thought.

⁵³ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "illusion," accessed August 20, 2014, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/91565>.

Adorno's association of Arnold Schoenberg's music with "Progress" becomes convincing only when the "Schein" in "Schönbergs Kritik an Schein und Spiel" ("Schoenberg's Criticism of Illusion and Play") is understood as a *deceptive* appearance: Adorno reads Schoenberg's Expressionism as a critique of ideology, and not just as a critique of surfaces and unreality.⁵⁴ Bourgeois music presents a façade of good manners, which leads Schoenberg to drop all social pretenses, forcing his listeners to consider whether expression, the registering of inner feelings and psychology, is not the truth. But Adorno would like to argue that Schoenberg's music is not just a protest against the *superficiality* of conventional Viennese society, but that it is also a critique of the bourgeois deceptive mechanism of harmony, by which music seems to represent a classless society when in reality it only promotes the interests of the bourgeoisie. Ultimately, Adorno wishes to conclude that Schoenberg's music, by surrendering its delusion (Trug) about harmony, actually takes a position *against* the bourgeoisie in the class struggle and is thus no longer itself an "ideology"!⁵⁵ Schoenberg's critique is not just aimed at the semblance of a classless society, but against the whole "deception of harmony," which gives to think that classless society has been established when it has not.⁵⁶

The translation "appearance" for "Schein" has the added complication of coinciding with the standard translation for "Erscheinung," which is a distinct concept for both Kant and Hegel.⁵⁷ It is also a distinct concept for Adorno, who, like Kant, denies it any claim to totality

⁵⁴ GS, vol. 12, p. 44 as translated *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 37.

⁵⁵ GS, vol. 12, p. 124 as translated, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 131.

⁵⁶ GS, vol. 12, p. 124, as translated, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 131.

⁵⁷ For a clear explication of the distinctions between Schein and Erscheinung in the work of both Kant and Hegel, see Michael Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), s.v. "appearance, illusion and shining." It is interesting to note that Inwood translates the Kantian concept of Schein as "illusion" (implying deception) and the Kantian concept of Erscheinung as "appearance" (meaning a perceptible phenomenon), the

or to complete revelation. For Kant, collapsing the distinction between this world and “the world beyond” necessarily generates a “logic of illusion,” and Adorno remains firmly unconvinced by Hegel’s attempt to rehabilitate transcendental dialectics as a “logic of truth.”⁵⁸ Although “the world beyond” for Adorno would be the world beyond commodities, ideology and other subjective deformations, his agreement with Kant on the need for the subject to recognize its own limits, as well as for it to recognize the sorts of errors that result from its *failure* to recognize them, is a very good reason to translate “Schein” as “illusion.” For the translation “illusion” links Adorno to Kant, for whom Schein implies deception.⁵⁹ Adorno’s qualification of Schein as “socially necessary” echoes Kant’s qualification of transcendental illusion as “**natural** and unavoidable.”⁶⁰ Schiller’s qualification of Schein as “aesthetic” preserves recognizably Kantian vocabulary, but it is clear that Schiller uses Kant’s terms in his own way. For Schiller, the difference of logical appearance from aesthetic appearance is the fact that the former is “mere deception,”⁶¹ whereas, for Kant, illusion in painting is deception nonetheless.⁶² Aesthetic Schein does not imply deception for Schiller. Here Adorno follows

Schillerian concept of Schein as “semblance” (as contrasted to reality and without any deception involved), the Hegelian concept of Schein as “shine” (not fully manifest essence) and the Hegelian concept of Erscheinung as “appearance” (fully manifest essence). In the field of aesthetics, Schein retains the sense of “illusion” for Kant and of “semblance” for Schiller, while Hegel emphasizes different aspects of Schein in his aesthetics, according to Inwood—the connection of the word “Schein” to the word “schön” (beautiful) and its distinction from deception.

⁵⁸ GS, vol. 6, p. 385 and p. 386, or *Negative Dialectics*, p. 393.

⁵⁹ The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant establishes both “Schein” and “Illusion” as “illusion,” but “Blendwerk” as “semblance.” See the glossary to Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 757-774, s.vv. “Blendwerk,” “Schein,” “illusion.” NB: the pagination given here and throughout, with “A” and “B” editions noted, corresponds to the Academy of Sciences edition of Kant’s works (*Kant’s Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin: G. Reimer/ W. de Gruyter, 1902-) and appears in the margins of Guyer and Wood’s translation).

⁶⁰ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A298/B354.

⁶¹ Schiller, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 8, p. 662n as translated, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, p. 126.

⁶² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 5:323. The pagination given here and throughout corresponds to the Academy of Sciences edition of Kant’s works (*Kant’s Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin: G. Reimer/ W. de Gruyter, 1902-), and appears in the margins of Guyer and Matthews’s translation.

Kant. The redemption of illusion is not a task that can be accomplished by Hegelian, “positive” dialectics. For Adorno, art is an empty placeholder for a better world, for the world which does not yet exist, precisely because it maintains its dialectic of illusion rather than resolving its contradictions in appearance (Erscheinung): “The ineffableness of illusion [Illusion] stops it settling the antinomy of aesthetic illusion [Schein] in a concept of absolute appearance [Erscheinung].”⁶³ Art’s suspension of the antinomy of illusion, its denial of claims to reveal or to manifest the world to come, is closely connected to the redemption of illusion: the not-yet-existing redeemed world is *not* ideology in art because artworks take a critical, suspended, unresolved position on it. The connection between redemption and illusion is well expressed by “Schein,” which joins the notion of speciousness to the shine of light. While “illusion” does not evoke the *light of redemption* like “shine” does, it indicates the similarity of Adorno’s and Kant’s positions on what we can know of the world beyond. Adorno makes active use of the double meaning of “Schein”: his imagery and metaphors of light are not decorative, but, like the illuminations in illuminated manuscripts, function as mnemonics. They evoke the other sense of Schein indirectly, so that, even in some of his most transcendental and metaphysical moments, Adorno quietly recalls this world and its illusions.⁶⁴ By the same token, Schein, employed to mean “illusion,” is also a tacit reminder of the light of redemption, of the end resolution of all contradictions in a better world that does not yet exist and which may never exist.⁶⁵

⁶³ GS, vol. 7, p. 159, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 103.

⁶⁴ Consider, for example, “Knowledge has no light but that shed on the world by redemption: all else is reconstruction, mere technique.” GS, vol. 4, p. 283 §153 as translated, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 2005), p. 247.

⁶⁵ Adorno sees something Hitlerian in neo-ontology’s “revolt,” which prefers what *is* worse to the illusion of what would be better: “And this is what the up-to-date philosophies are glad to toil for. The tragic Hitlerian pose

If Schein sounds old today, it is not because it evokes the German Idealism of Immanuel Kant and G. W. F. Hegel. It is because the ideology critique with which it is associated has fallen out of practice. Ideology critique characterizes the work of the Frankfurt School represented by Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Friedrich Pollock, Leo Löwenthal, Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse and Erich Fromm.⁶⁶ But in the 1970s, critical theory shifted away from its social task.⁶⁷ With the publication of *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (*The Theory of Communicative Action*) in 1981, Jürgen Habermas redirected critical theory away from ideology critique towards a critique of the so-called “steering media,” power and money.⁶⁸ In other words, the concept of Schein has almost no place in Habermas’s influential theory, whereas it is a central to the Critical Theory of Adorno.

Jürgen Habermas’s exact reason for abandoning ideology critique is the integration of its preferred objects—bourgeois art and philosophy—into “the system”:

Ironically, however, the critiques of ideology carried out by Horkheimer, Marcuse and Adorno confirmed them in the belief that culture was losing its autonomy in post-liberal societies and was being incorporated into the machinery of the economic-administrative system. The development of productive forces, and even critical thought itself, was moving more and more into a perspective of bleak assimilation to their opposites. In the totally administered society only instrumental reason, expanded into a totality, found embodiment; everything that existed was transformed into a real abstraction.⁶⁹

of lonely valor makes them feel already in tune with the dawning order of the most powerful interests.” GS, vol. 6, p. 96 as translated, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 89.

⁶⁶ On the Frankfurt School, see Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996) and Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, trans. Michael Robertson (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994).

⁶⁷ See Lambert Zuidervaart, *Social Philosophy After Adorno* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 6. For a review of the important literature concerned with a “critical retrieval” of Adorno from Habermasian distortions, see esp. *ibid.*, pp. 7-10.

⁶⁸ Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*, vol. 2, *Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), p. 549 as translated by Thomas McCarthy, in a version whose emendations by Jürgen Habermas has resulted in “minor departures from the original text” (p. 1), *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 2, *Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, 3rd corrected ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), p. 374f.

⁶⁹ Habermas, *Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft*, p. 560f. as translated, *Lifeworld and System*, p. 382.

It does not follow from the *increasing* co-opting of thought and other productive skills for the futile needs of the economy that everything has already been integrated into the totally administered society, and that no critical thought is now possible. The total integration of society, however, is precisely what is in question.

Horkheimer, Marcuse and Adorno may at times lament the dwindling autonomy of art, letters and philosophy, but they must be aware that totally independent art, letters and philosophy would have no critical hold on society. This is why significant contributions by these and other members of the Frankfurt School are critiques of social objects that are well integrated into the “machinery” of the economic bureaucracy—objects such as propaganda, authority and technology.⁷⁰ When the Frankfurt School was officially created as The Institute for Social Research on February 3, 1923, it was to be a Marxist institute devoted to the “radical dissection of bourgeois society.”⁷¹ The direction that the research actually took suggests that the prospects of critique were perhaps far vaster than Felix Weil had imagined when he decided to found the Institute. The particular attention paid by the Frankfurt School to the administered or economic elements of the cultural sphere suggests that, since even a presumably autonomous sphere can be determined by administration and the economy, then some critique that transpires in this so-called autonomous sphere may also be transferable to the administration and the economy. Habermas defines the practice of cultural ideology critique very narrowly, and in a way that does not do justice to Adorno’s un-schematic and highly spontaneous approach. Certainly Adorno’s music criticism does not conform to a given formula, as Habermas suggests when he presents ideology critique as practiced by Marcuse,

⁷⁰ For example, see the essays collected in Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt, eds., *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, introduced by Paul Piccone (New York: Continuum, 1982).

⁷¹ Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination*, p. 10.

Löwenthal, Benjamin and Adorno as having a shared aim: the separation of “the transcendent contents of authentic art—whether utopian or critical—from the affirmative, ideologically worn-out components of bourgeois ideals.”⁷² Habermas assumes that, for these critics of culture, ideology comes in the form of “bourgeois ideals” each and every time, whereas these ideals may be a question in a Frank Wedekind play, but not in a Volksstück (popular or folk play). In immanent critique, which is the criticism adequate to testing the claims of totality, the criterion is supplied by the object criticized, rather than being something fixed, defined in advance, such as “bourgeois ideals,” “money” or “power.” Suspicions that society is totally administered are not grounds to abandon ideology critique, but they oblige ideology critique to take the form of immanent critique, because total society does not recognize anything outside it. Habermas, however, rejects ideology critique altogether on the grounds that it requires “a *theory of history*” in order to be applied to cultural phenomena.⁷³ More specifically, Habermas seems to think that it requires *Marx’s* theory of history. First of all, Habermas bases his claim on a reading of early Marcuse, rather than on the work of the mature Adorno—a better indication of the level to which ideology critique had attained. Adorno is not interested in determining and naming exactly *what* is objectively possible in a historical situation, but rather in negating the claims of the epoch to be closed and total. The social totality claims to have everything, *including* a theory of history, and this is a problem. Adorno for his part rejects the historical determinism that Habermas seems to impute to Critical Theory. Habermas is right to conclude from Marcuse’s statement on critical practice—that the process of critical theory is one of “bringing to consciousness potentialities that have emerged within the maturing historical situation itself”—that “critique would be delivered up to the reigning standards in

⁷² Habermas, *Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft*, p. 559 as translated, *Lifeworld and System*, p. 381.

⁷³ Habermas, *Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft*, p. 560 as translated, *Lifeworld and System*, p. 382.

any given historical epoch.”⁷⁴ A potentiality that has *emerged* is just actuality, which meets with the “reigning standards,” whereas critique implies negation of the reigning standards. Habermas’s critique of Marcuse is valid, but it cannot be generalized into a critique of the ideology critique of the Frankfurt School. Furthermore, Habermas makes a criticism of Marcuse that can be turned back on his own theory of communicative action, which is supposed to find its critical effectiveness in the “potential for rationality” in speech. But if “the potentiality for rationality found in the validity basis of speech” is a potentiality that has emerged, it is just actuality, and it is up to the “reigning standards” that exist.⁷⁵ One might ask, then, in what sense the theory of communicative action is critical. If it is a potentiality that has *not* emerged, then the rationality that Habermas claims for existing speech is not real. If this potential for reason is intermittently “activated,” it is not the validity basis of everyday speech in general, but some other kind of validity basis that serves as the critical deterrent to what he calls “colonization of the lifeworld.” For, according to Habermas, domination no longer has an ideological cloak, but takes the form of open colonization:

In place of “false consciousness” we today have a “fragmented consciousness” that blocks enlightenment by the mechanism of reification. It is only with this that the conditions for a *colonization of the lifeworld* are met. When stripped of their ideological veils, the imperatives of autonomous subsystems make their way into the lifeworld from the outside—like colonial masters coming into a tribal society—and force a process of assimilation upon it.⁷⁶

In other words, money and power openly interfere in subjects’ life practices for reaching an understanding. Communication, however, represents a hope against such colonization because the replacement of communication by power and money does not necessarily result in

⁷⁴ Habermas, *Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft*, p. 560 as translated, *Lifeworld and System*, p. 382.

⁷⁵ Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*, vol. 1, *Handlungsrationalität und gesellschaftliche Rationalisierung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), p. 455 as translated by Thomas McCarthy, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, *Reason and the Rationalization of Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), p. 339.

⁷⁶ Habermas, *Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft*, p. 522 as translated, *Lifeworld and System*, p. 355.

reification.⁷⁷ As the transformation of understanding into power and money does not necessarily concern a theory of value, Habermas argues, another theory is needed to account for it—i.e. the theory of communicative action. Such a transformation, however, would be an insufficient reason for rejecting ideology critique. On one hand, money does indeed concern value, so a theory of value *would* be useful in explaining the assimilation of understanding to power and money, in, say, the distortion of scientific research by the interests of corporations who have invested in it; on the other hand, ideology critique concerns *more* than just value. Understood as “socially necessary illusion,” ideology is obviously not limited to value: illusion can take many forms. By at least the 1960s, Adorno was aware that disenchanted, jaded society was not apt to adopt any sort of identifiable worldview (communism, fascism, syndicalism) en masse. But he did not thereby conclude that ideology had reached its end; ideology, as he understands it, survives this change because “ideology is not superimposed as a detachable layer on the being of society; it is inherent in that being.”⁷⁸ Adorno goes on to argue that the “disregard for living human beings”⁷⁹ necessary for exchange (which is supposed to serve life processes) necessarily implies “social illusion [gesellschaftlichen Schein]”⁸⁰ within the life-process itself. The idea that the lifeworld is just the lifeworld and that all incursions into it are too obvious to be called “ideological” is based on the definition of ideology as a worldview that veils reality. Adorno is arguing that, in fact, social reality is inherently ideological because its sheer existence is also the *claim* to legitimacy, the claim to the *right* to existence and the pretense of being “natural”—when in fact social reality is a “second nature” that is in the historical process of usurping original nature, leaving no place

⁷⁷ Habermas, *Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft*, p. 549 as translated, *Lifeworld and System*, p. 375.

⁷⁸ GS, vol. 6, p. 348 as translated, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 354.

⁷⁹ GS, vol. 6, p. 348 as translated, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 354.

⁸⁰ GS, vol. 6, p. 348, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 355.

that is free of human intervention, while returning civilization to a state of nature.⁸¹ In this context, where ideology is indeterminate and reality also contains its self-legitimation, ideology critique must in a sense find its object before it can criticize it. Habermas's claim above that "fragmented consciousness" has replaced "false consciousness" is not a convincing reason for abandoning ideology critique. Certainly fragmented consciousness does not preclude false consciousness, but it is only ideology critique that puts us in a position to make a claim such as Habermas's. While resistance to scientific debate and to the sharing of perspectives and expertise is a problem for knowledge today, as increasingly the money and power of top researchers seem to grant them not only immunity from critique but also dispensation from service to the non-paying general public, the nonetheless important dimension of education that Habermas underlines—coming to an understanding—is not the same thing as truth.

Adorno's claim that "the need to have suffering speak eloquently is condition of all truth" implies that truth exceeds the bounds of current speech.⁸² The suffering subject gains emancipation from the society that continues to wrong it when a language of its own is found for its suffering—not when the subject itself converts its suffering into the current terms of social communication, as a theory such as Habermas's suggests it would. In *Mother Courage and her Children*, the odds are stacked against the mute: the mute Kattrin's drumming is answered by musket fire. The truly mute have neither the power of speech nor sign language; the mute suffer because no one hears them, not because they cannot speak. Or, rather, as Brecht suggests in *Mother Courage and her Children*, the hearing is selective: the village hears and adequately interprets Kattrin's drumming, which is in their interests, but not the

⁸¹ GS, vol. 6, p. 351 as translated, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 357.

⁸² GS, vol. 6, p. 29, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 17f.

“jämmerliche Laute” (pitiful sounds) and crying that she in fact produces when her own livelihood and life alone are in danger.⁸³ The interest in expressing suffering is not “reaching an understanding”; it is: to end suffering. It seems that the objective conditions that caused the suffering in the first place would stand a better chance of dissolving if the suffering were conveyed in conventional, purely conceptual terms. But society further wrongs those it has wronged in demanding that their language production remain purely within current forms of understandability. Philosophy, according to Adorno, has a duty not to make suffering merely thematic, but to *express* objective suffering: a “duty to make a production [Darstellung]” or to deliver what it has to convey.⁸⁴ To free itself, philosophy puts its unfreedom into a form of its own; for thinking distinguishes itself in its “resistance toward what is imposed on it.”⁸⁵ Expressing suffering by way of *Darstellung*—where a showing or production of the thought is put on—gets around society’s repressive censure of emotional outbursts, but it also raises the bar for interpreters; *presentation* is not conventionally considered to be the evidence of suffering or the precipitate of what was lived through.⁸⁶ Consequently, hope for a “right and just reality” lies “only in traces and ruins”—in the clues that accidentally escape the cool, harmonized totality that bans painful feelings.⁸⁷

⁸³ Bertolt Brecht, *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*, in *Werke*, hrsg. von Werner Hecht et al., Große kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe, 30 Bde. (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag; Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1988-2000), vol. 6, pp. 7-86, here p. 83.

⁸⁴ GS, vol. 6, p. 29, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 18.

⁸⁵ GS, vol. 6, p. 30, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 19.

⁸⁶ Shierry Weber Nicholsen is one of the few interpreters to consider seriously both what Adorno *says* in language and what he *does* with language. Her thesis—that, in Adorno’s work, these never detach from one another—is beautifully argued and robustly demonstrated; yet, for his language really to be up to his philosophy of language, what Adorno does in language would actually have to be *more* than what he can say. What imposed itself on Adorno (and all others in his time) with the force of taboo should nonetheless be readable nowhere else but in what he does in language alone. See *Exact Imagination, Late Work: On Adorno’s Aesthetics* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997).

⁸⁷ GS, vol. 1, p. 325, or prefer to my translation here that of Benjamin Snow [?], “The Actuality of Philosophy,” *Telos*, no. 31 (Spring 1977), pp. 120-133, on p. 120.

Certain changes to bourgeois society—“‘green’ problems,”⁸⁸ “excessive complexity”⁸⁹ and the “neoconservative defence of postmodernity”⁹⁰—have not rendered Adorno’s theory of ideology critique useless. Habermas wishes to analyze contemporary conflicts in society in terms of resistance against the “colonization of the lifeworld,” rather than to determine and to dissolve the illusion that is turning out the antinomies.⁹¹ Yet it is thanks largely to *ideology critique* that the most successful of the protest movements credited by Habermas,⁹² the feminist movement, has been able to make its advances—not due to an emphatic concept of *life*.⁹³ It is difficult to imagine in what way the concept of the *lifeworld* would explain the struggles and successes of the feminist movement, which in many respects wanted to dissociate the concept of *woman* from notions of carrying, giving, nurturing and sustaining life. Good Marxian categories such as division of labour, wages, slavery, property and working-hours, as well as the schoolbook sociological terms to denote the degrees of delusional thinking about groups—stereotype, prejudice and discrimination—, can take much more credit for women’s gradual emancipation than the concept of lifeworld.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ Habermas, *Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft*, p. 579 as translated, *Lifeworld and System*, p. 394.

⁸⁹ Habermas, *Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft*, p. 580 as translated, *Lifeworld and System*, p. 394.

⁹⁰ Habermas, *Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft*, p. 583 as translated, *Lifeworld and System*, p. 396.

⁹¹ Habermas, *Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft*, p. 579 as translated, *Lifeworld and System*, p. 394.

⁹² Habermas, *Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft*, p. 578 as translated, *Lifeworld and System*, p. 393f.

⁹³ Although some feminisms have recourse to an emphatic concept of life, such a concept did not obstruct the legalization and accessibility of abortion in advanced countries, for example.

⁹⁴ The concept of androcentrism is relevant in explaining the great success of the “generation of Adorno’s sons” (as Elisabeth Lenk put it), compared to the relative obscurity of his student Regina Becker-Schmidt, who, in not only unfolding classic sociological categories such as work and equality but also pressing into service Adornonian concepts such as non-contemporaneity and identifying thinking, asks overtly whether women’s integration into the economy is really in their best interests— thus presenting a much more articulate, pointed, objective, recognizable and critical analysis of contemporary society than does Habermas. Elisabeth Lenk, “La catégorie de la féminité chez Adorno: Une contradiction secondaire qui a survécu à la contradiction principale,” trans. Nicole Gabriel, in “Adorno critique de la domination: Une lecture féministe,” edited by Sonia Dayan-Herzbrun, Nicole Gabriel and Eleni Varikas, themed issue, *Tumultes*, n° 23 (novembre 2004): pp. 11-27, here p. 15; Regina Becker-Schmidt, “Critical Theory as a Critique of Society: Theodor W. Adorno’s Significance for a Feminist Sociology,” in *Adorno: Culture and Feminism*, ed. Maggie O’Neill (London: Sage Publications, 1999), pp. 104-118.

Today it seems necessary to construct and to deploy a robust concept of *life* in order to defend the environmental cause. In fact, the use of an emphatic concept of *life* to guide cultural and intellectual practice is part of so-called green problems—or, what might be better called the outstripping of natural resources when a quality of life, growth, is projected onto non-life, capital.

The regressive current of thinking of the high bourgeois period held up *life-forms* as models for cultural and intellectual forms: *organicism*. In particular, it was the *integrity* of organisms growing harmoniously and proportionately toward an encompassing goal—to which all parts were subordinated—that characterized the “organic” work. But when natural form must serve as the standard for made things, a kind of necessary illusion must inevitably result: “Art acquired the ‘semblance,’ ‘appearance’ or ‘illusion’ (Schein) of nature (this applies particularly to the music of the Austro-German tradition, with its strong emphasis on ‘organicism’).”⁹⁵

Yet organic form served as the model not only in art, but also in philosophy, for at least two hundred years. The idea of organicism is clearly expressed by Benedetto Croce, interpreting Hegel: “As empirical concepts are distinguished into classes and subclasses, so the philosophical concept possesses its particular forms, of which it is not the mechanical aggregate, but the organic whole, in which every form unites itself intimately with the others and with the whole.”⁹⁶ But it was Marx who unriddled the puzzling craze for organic wholes. Marx’s main argument was that the system of capital works because it demands and creates insensitivity to the life congealed in every commodity; yet, in borrowing Hegel’s organic

⁹⁵ Max Paddison, *Adorno’s Aesthetics of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 57.

⁹⁶ Benedetto Croce, *What Is Living and What Is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel*, trans. Douglas Ainslie (London: Macmillan, 1915), p. 9.

structure of *The Science of Logic* for his own work, Marx showed the form that mimicked the living organism to be the mere appearance of the whole capitalist system itself—or, more precisely, of its present stage.⁹⁷ One inference to draw from the organic form of capital claimed by Marx is that mere appearances of organic unity in the cultural, intellectual sphere are not driven by intellectual demands, but have to do with economic imperatives. This is consistent with how our North American Stó:lō culture might view the “living/nonliving” distinction.⁹⁸ The idea that plants, animals and people are animate, while minerals and all that has been crafted, manufactured or otherwise developed skilfully are inanimate looks to be a product of socially forced, anonymous labour, because this way of dividing up the world does not belong to this philosophical tradition developed here in North America before capitalism and its colonialism.⁹⁹ It is not a question of adopting North American ontologies in the present work. Since the European way of thinking does not necessarily even recognize North American categories, we have no choice but to use theirs—yet we may do so to show that the system in which the categories of European philosophy fit is unsustainable on its own terms. Organicism makes contradictory demands: on one hand, it demands that a distinction between animate and inanimate be recognized; on the other hand, it demands that cultural objects falling under the defined category “inanimate” be given the appearance of the “animate,” and this, according to specific distinctions. This is why the current system does not consider life,

⁹⁷ As Adorno glosses Marx: “Decisive here, in the present stage, is the category of the organic composition of capital” (GS, vol. 4, p. 261 §147 as translated, *Minima Moralia*, p. 229).

⁹⁸ See Deanna Reder, “A Complex Web of Relations that Extend Beyond the Human: A Reply to Chung-ying Cheng,” *Contours*, no. 3 (Fall 2012), <http://www.sfu.ca/humanities-institute/?p=1651>.

⁹⁹ Cf. J. M. Bernstein, *Adorno: Disenchantment and Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). According to Bernstein, “the living/nonliving distinction is necessary to even begin making the kinds of discriminations necessary for ethical life” (ibid., p. 194). Perhaps without realizing it, in making ethical life dependent upon the living/non-living distinction, Bernstein excludes from ethical practice those peoples whose “ontological categories defy Western classification systems based on animate and inanimate binary groupings,” as Deanna Reder attests for the Stó:lō. Reder, “A Complex Web of Relations,” <http://www.sfu.ca/humanities-institute/?p=1651>.

and is structured in such a way that the life in it is necessarily distorted beyond recognition. There is no reason to think that what is living can be unproblematically discerned, affirmed and rescued for reason, ethics or aesthetics.¹⁰⁰ So there can be no question here, as Benedetto Croce proposed for Hegel's thought, of actually separating out what is living, "of sifting the intimate and vital elements...from the extrinsic and dead."¹⁰¹ The demand that the cultural beneficiaries of deadening forced labour make their products lifelike is a social contradiction and a necessary, real illusion. This is why Adorno is able to make the paradoxical claim that "only death is an image of undistorted life"¹⁰² in the first part of *Minima Moralia*, which, incidentally, bears as its epigraph the words of the exiled writer Ferdinand Kürnberger: "Life does not live."¹⁰³

The illusion of independence and naturalness that characterizes the bourgeois work of art and even works of philosophy also characterizes the commodity. It is even how the commodity is able to go on existing, despite the damage that its universalization inflicts on workers, human and animal, and on the environment. In the argument that forms this thesis, I will show in detail why the conception of the artwork, cultural work or product as an organic totality is false—no matter whether it occurs in art, philosophy or everyday life. This is not merely an argument against capitalism, but against a false way of thinking that is a pillar of capitalism and whose catastrophic consequences are not only economic.

¹⁰⁰ Bernstein is wrong to assert that "the living/nonliving distinction is for Adorno not only antecedent to the distinction between consciousness and being, but that for adequate conceptions of knowledge, rationality and normativity the living/nonliving distinction is the fundamental one" (Bernstein, *Adorno*, p. 194). Adorno claims rather that it is the *lack* of distinction between life and non-life—i.e., in the pseudo-life that constitutes the sphere of consumption—that is antecedent to "the consciousness and unconsciousness of individuals" (GS, vol. 4, p. 13 as translated, *Minima Moralia*, p. 15). Adorno's conceptions of knowledge and rationality are not based on the living/nonliving distinction because he judges that "our perspective of life has passed into an ideology which conceals the fact that there is life no longer" (GS, vol. 4, p. 13 as translated, *Minima Moralia*, p. 15).

¹⁰¹ Croce, *What Is Living and What Is Dead*, p. 215.

¹⁰² GS, vol. 4, p. 87 §48 as translated, *Minima Moralia*, p. 78.

¹⁰³ GS, vol. 4, p. 20 as translated, *Minima Moralia*, p. 19.

The following is a story about a few of the Modern people and works opposing the organicist tendency. Claimed here is not that Modern artists and the theorists who wrote on them somehow possessed an uncanny ability to see beyond the system to the life that it disguised. Rather, even working within the system, they refused to apply the organicist standard for works in European culture—that of a harmonized, resolved whole with no part missing, defective or insubordinate.¹⁰⁴ Much of the Modern art examined here is music, since this was the field in which Adorno excelled. It is not clear to what extent his aesthetic theory takes into consideration the advances made in other arts. The works considered here were made in European centres where socially necessary illusion reigns supreme.

This work is also a critique of Peter Bürger's *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, which is perhaps the most serious response to Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*.¹⁰⁵ I draw on Bürger's categories, but argue that his theory is not as advanced as that of Adorno.

Bürger does not sufficiently account for the negative side of Schein, by which art is not only self-critical, but also critical of reality, which claims to be what it is. Adorno has adopted these aspects from Friedrich Schiller in order to relate Schein to truth. The motivation for the critique lodged in this dissertation is to invalidate the post-modernism, looming around *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, that has *given up* on truth. Nothing could be less acceptable to post-modernists today than to claim that a particular work is wrong and false, and post-modernism

¹⁰⁴ The thesis defended in this dissertation is that Adorno's response to the social necessity of apparent life is the determinate negation of organicism, not a middle way between the animate and inanimate, as Bernstein claims: "Adorno's philosophical project is to resurrect a legitimate anthropomorphism, an anthropomorphic nature that is somewhere between the mythic extremes of myth 'which compounds the inanimate with the animate,' and enlightenment, 'which compounds the animate with the inanimate'" (Bernstein, *Disenchantment and Ethics*, p. 196f.). Bernstein quotes from the John Cumming translation of *Dialektik der Aufklärung, Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Seabury Press, 1972), p. 16.

¹⁰⁵ Peter Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, mit einem Nachwort zur 2. Auflage (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980), translated by Michael Shaw as *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 1984. Please note that only chapters 1-4 of *Theorie der Avantgarde* are translated in *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (as chapters 2-5).

is now the norm in art. To degrade truth in art to mere “truthfulness” (Habermas) or to permit art no more than a “truth potential” (Wellmer) denies that artworks, despite their protestations, are bound up in society, and that through the memories that they evoke, artworks have a social effect. Artworks are concrete results of positions taken on social reality. A critique of organicism in 1928 is true whether it comes in the form of a discursive text or a song. Even within the society that was narrowing into totalitarianism, critical men and women did not just wade about in a state of delusion, but analyzed what defined the delusional context, and so determined that the illusion of organic unity was a particular persuasive force in it, yet determined it to be, at the same time, essentially *nothing*.

On the assumption that there is no truth without illusion, we start out with illusion.

The work comprises seven chapters.

Chapter I engages a dialectic of viewpoints to show how different dialectical thinkers—Marx, Lukács, Hegel, Horkheimer and Adorno—have contributed to a criterion of truth that works within the total delusional context of reification: *the determinacy of the dissolution of illusion*.

By way of an analysis of parts of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, Chapter II distinguishes the concept of artistic illusion as *reversible*—opposed to the merely social illusion of mechanical musical reproduction and the culture industry.

Chapter III examines the question as to whether truth in philosophy is a different kind of truth than truth in art. This is a persistent question in the secondary literature on Adorno, and a great cause for misunderstanding. A common view is that art is “mimetic” or “non-reified,” while discourse is reified and conceptual. A close reading of the paragraph in *Aesthetic Theory* specifically treating the relation of art and philosophy shows a historical shift

from a relation based on shared truth content to a relation based on a shared language-character.

Chapter IV considers whether truth in twentieth-century Expressionism is a new truth based on *immediate expression*; however, a precedent for Expressionism in Robert Schumann's "Der Dichter spricht" (The Poet Speaks) suggests that the Expressionism of Arnold Schoenberg, Anton Webern and Alban Berg is mediated, and not the irrationalist movement that it seems.

Chapter V considers whether *inorganic montage* is more advanced than Expressionism, and why. This chapter first examines an alternative reading of Modernism—that of Walter Benjamin, for whom *shock* is the decisive element in Modernism in general and in montage in particular. This reading is interesting because at a certain point in *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno seems almost to claim shock for the philosophical truth experience. As a characterization of Modernism, however, shock is problematic because it is unspecific, as Peter Bürger points out. Furthermore, Adorno seems to mean something different by it than does Benjamin: an indication of the *real Possible*. This concept is developed with reference to Ernst Bloch. It is put forth that shock, in itself neither advanced nor regressive, can be a reaction to a specific type of work: the non-organic work.

The thesis defended throughout is that *anti-organicity* in works is advanced in light of the false reality that organicity had definitely become by 1930 in Germany.

Chapter VI takes up a parting suggestion of Peter Bürger: to consider the artwork after Dada and Surrealism on the model of "prose" in Hegel's aesthetics. Bürger claims historical specificity for his theory; however, the poetry of both Eduard Mörike and Paul Celan can be conceived as anti-poetry—determinate negations of the poetic Ideal that Schiller and Hegel

characterize by concepts such as play, illusion and meaning. Montage is not specific to the twentieth-century art-historical period known as Modernism, as revealed by an analysis of Mörike's poem "Auf eine Lampe" (On a Lamp). I compare Mahler's critique of convention in his ironic play of forms to the "play" in Schoenberg's twelve-tone technique.

Chapter VII pursues the idea that *Dichterliebe*, op. 48, (1840) by Robert Schumann is a true artwork. It is itself divided into seven sections. Section i of VII establishes *Dichterliebe* as a Romantic artwork. Section ii of VII discusses the expression of *Dichterliebe*. Section iii of VII examines the song-cycle form. Section iv of VII looks at the unity debate on *Dichterliebe*. Section v of VII explores the themes of the folk song and the Volk. Section vi of VII is dedicated to exposing the contradictions of tonality, with a detailed analysis of Lied I in a hidden key. Section vii of VII is a narrative, song-by-song interpretation of *Dichterliebe*, which I read as a history of reification.

Schumann's musical advances have too long been taken for symptoms of a chronic mood disorder or the sighs of a fiancé. But not only did he bring the contradictions of tonality to their extreme expression; he also pointed the way out of them. Judged by Hegel's aesthetics, this song cycle fits the description of a Romantic art form: it is ironic and disunified. Yet in many respects it is a Modern work, which regards all traditions, styles, techniques, forms and materials as co-existing on the same level, awaiting judgement. *Dichterliebe* is a critical reading of its own—of art, events, ideas and historical processes. It achieves the new. Yet it is true to illusion.

Much is left out of this story. The goal, however, is not to provide an exhaustive explanation of what makes a work advanced or even to present the most advanced artworks of

today. The idea is to negate such notions as “historical avant-garde” by breaking certain works out of strict historical periodization, to show them to be “more” than they are.

{Chapter I} Theodor W. Adorno was not the first to employ the term “ästhetischer Schein” (aesthetic illusion).

The concept has an important precedent in the twenty-sixth letter of Friedrich Schiller’s *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*.¹ There, Schiller opposes “Schein” to “Realität”— appearance as opposed to reality: “The reality of the thing is the work [Werk] of that thing; the appearance of the thing is the work of human beings, and a soul that revels in appearance delights no longer in whatever greets it, but rather in what it makes.”² On the face of it, this distinction is grossly counter-intuitive. The deed or work of an inanimate object would, to the usual understanding, be its appearance, whereas its reality would be the human labour that goes on behind the scenes. This double aspect of things is likely what drew the thinkers of the Enlightenment to the theme of automata: automata are non-living things that appear to work by themselves, when in reality they are the work of human beings. Schiller, however, wishes to argue that the fascination with automata and other appearances is itself essentially human: *humanity* distinguishes itself from *savagery* through its “pleasure in *illusion* [*Schein*], the tendency toward *finery* and *play*.”³ Considering, however, the inhumane conditions in which modern automata are produced, the question is rather whether delight in appearances, dress-up and play has become a sign not of humanity, but rather of savagery. The

¹ Friedrich Schiller, *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen*, in *Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden*, herausgegeben von Otto Dann, et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1988-2004), vol. 8, pp. 556-676, translated by Reginald Snell as *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1965). Note that Snell does not preserve the gender-neutral language of the title in German.

² Schiller, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 8, p. 661, or prefer to my translation here *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, p. 125. I follow Snell in translating “Schein” as “appearance” here because the meaning of “Schein” that Schiller is picking out is that of *appearance* as opposed to *reality*. Schein does not imply deception for Schiller. As a rule, I do *not* translate “Schein” as “appearance,” in order to avoid confusion with the concept of *Erscheinung*— “appearance” in the sense of “manifestation” or “act of appearing.”

³ Schiller, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 8, p. 661, or prefer to my translation here, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, p. 125. See note 2 above.

question is whether the concept of Schein is anything other than the repressive Idealism, European chauvinism, imperialist culture and empty glorification of settled, bourgeois autonomy in which it is steeped.

While Schiller defines appearance (Schein) against reality (Realität), ästhetischer Schein is “honest” and “independent”—“aufrichtig” and “selbstständig”—: refusing any comparison with reality, aesthetic Schein is not appearance, but pure appearance.⁴

Ästhetischer Schein as pure appearance differs from plain appearance in that it “expressly renounces all claims to be reality.”⁵ But while ästhetischer Schein is the essence of all fine art, according to Schiller,⁶ it is not specific to fine art, nor is fine art reducible to aesthetic appearance, although the relation between aesthetic appearance and life is asymmetrical: “But admittedly it requires an incomparably higher degree of fine cultivation to experience only the pure appearance alone in the living being than to deprive appearance of life.”⁷

Although it is rarely mentioned, Karl Marx, like Schiller, noticed that ästhetischer Schein extended beyond the artistic realm. In a way, Marx demonstrated his “incomparably higher degree of fine cultivation” when, in the introduction to the manuscript of 1857-1858, the “Grundrisse,” he noted that within economic theory there persisted an “aesthetic illusion” that had begun its life as a fable—“the aesthetic illusion [der ästhetische Schein] of the small and big Robinsonades.”⁸ For Marx, “Schein” here has a pejorative sense: it is not mere

⁴ Schiller, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 8, p. 664, or prefer to my translations here *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, p. 128. See note 2 above.

⁵ Schiller, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 8, p. 664, or prefer to my translations here *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, p. 128. See note 2 above.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 662 Anmerkung 19 or prefer *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, p. 126.

⁷ Schiller, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 8, p. 664, or prefer to my translations here *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, p. 128f. See note 2 above.

⁸ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* (Berlin: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1953), p. 5 as translated by Ernst Wangermann, “Economic Manuscripts of 1857-58 (First Version of *Capital*),” in Marx and

semblance (an outward appearance that can be true or false), but rather a spurious appearance—illusion. The aesthetic illusion with which Marx reproaches the economists Adam Smith and David Ricardo is not honest and independent illusion, but rather the illusion of honesty and independence. This is manifest in their choice of starting point. They begin with some such isolated, independent, natural man, the hunter or the fisher, who is supposed to build up a society gradually around himself. Marx suggests that the isolated man forced to reproduce life all on his own, will be the *result* of *civil-bourgeois* society; the lonely human economic unit is not an original first existing prior to society. The works of writers such as Daniel Defoe should be read as allegories of the bourgeois society in store—as results of the process of breaking up feudal ties, not as mythological explanations of origins for the present. In the novel *Robinson Crusoe*, what will be the *result* of the *historical* process of transition into bourgeois society seems to be frozen *nature*. This is aesthetic illusion in the Marxian sense. Marx accuses Smith and Ricardo of having imported this aesthetic illusion into their economic theories:⁹ the endpoint of the civil-bourgeois society appears in their work *as if* it were static nature.¹⁰ Yet in Smith and Ricardo, the naturalness of isolated man who fends for

Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works*, 50 vols. (New York: International Publishers, 1975-2004), vol. 28, p. 17. Note this important precedent for the translation “aesthetic illusion” for “ästhetischer Schein.”

⁹ Accusing Smith and Ricardo of having imported aesthetic illusion into theory, Marx is in essence accusing them of exploiting the “art of persuasion,” as Kant defined it: “Rhetoric, insofar as by that is understood the art of persuasion, i.e., of deceiving by means of beautiful illusion (as an *ars oratoria*), and not merely skill in speaking (eloquence and style), is a dialectic, which borrows from the art of poetry only as much as is necessary to win minds over to the advantage of the speaker before they can judge and to rob them of their freedom; thus it cannot be recommended either for the courtroom or the pulpit.” Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 5:327. The pagination given here and throughout corresponds to the Academy of Sciences edition of Kant’s works (*Kant’s Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin: G. Reimer/ W. de Gruyter, 1902-) and appears in the margins of Guyer and Matthews’s translation.

¹⁰ In the last section of what could well be considered the foundational text in philosophical fictionalism, *The Philosophy of “As If”*, Hans Vaihinger looks at illusion in the thought of Nietzsche, tracing the development of the concept in distinct stages. Vaihinger reads “Schein” in *The Birth of Tragedy* as a historical precedent for his own philosophy of fictionalism, offering as evidence Nietzsche’s repeated use of the “as-if” construction in connection with Schein, which, he shows, Nietzsche uses as a synonym for “Illusion.” Hans Vaihinger, *Die*

himself does not give itself to be an *illusion*, renouncing all claims to reality, as it does in art; it gives itself to be *truth*.

Karl Marx uses the term “ästhetischer Schein” pejoratively, to denote the incursion of the artistic fiction of naturalness into the economic theory of Adam Smith and David Ricardo. Adorno, writing about a century later, holds that such aesthetic illusion, which takes historical endpoints for eternal nature, has become a structural delusion: the “universal delusion-context of reification.” In the meantime, aesthetic illusion changes its quality. It takes on the character of having escaped from the delusion that everywhere prevails:

Artworks’ illusion of being in themselves [Ansichseins], their illusory character, rejects the fact that, in the totality of their subjectively mediated existence, they partake in the universal delusional context of reification; that they, as Marx would say, necessarily reflect a relation of living labour as if it were objective [gegenständlich].¹¹

Philosophie des Als Ob: System der theoretischen, praktischen und religiösen Fiktionen der Menschheit auf Grund eines idealistischen Positivismus, Mit einem Anhang über Kant und Nietzsche, siebente und achte Auflage (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1922), p. 773.

Like Nietzsche, Adorno uses the As-If construction in relation to art: “Artworks make their way out of the empirical world and produce a world contrary to it, of a separate essence, so as if this one too were an existent.” GS, vol. 7, p. 10, or prefer to my translation here that of Robert Hullot-Kentor, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 1.

Yet the “essence” of the art world, its As-If “character,” is a difference in a very odd sense, since specific difference still presupposes empirical experience. Artworks are generally opposed to empirical experience: “Artworks’ difference from empirical experience [Empirie], their illusory character [Scheincharakter], is constituted upon empirical experience and in the tendency against it” (GS, vol. 7, p. 158, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 103). In a further passage, Adorno argues against shock or other subjective reactions being constitutive of art precisely because they are lived and therefore not fiction: “But also because what one calls ‘lived aesthetic moments’ [ästhetische Erlebnisse] is, as a lived moment, psychologically real, it would be difficult to make anything out of such things if one transferred the illusory character [Scheincharakter] of art onto them. Lived moments are not As If” (GS, vol. 7, p. 364, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 245). Adorno indicates that art’s illusory character is a new development in art-alien bourgeois society (GS, vol. 7, p. 350, or *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 235) and that the dodecaphonic revolt against illusion was specifically directed against “fictional developments,” suggesting that New Music is a suppression of Schein-as-fiction and not of aesthetic Schein per se (GS, vol. 7, p. 154 as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 100).

For a reading of Schein as fiction, see Fredric Jameson, *Late Marxism: Adorno, or the Persistence of the Dialectic* (London: Verso, 2007), pp. 166-170 and p. 173, but esp. p. 167, where Jameson cites the transformation of *culture* into the “culture industry” as a cause of the fictionalization of Schein. For Nietzsche’s influence on Adorno, see Karin Bauer, *Adorno’s Nietzschean Narratives: Critiques of Ideology, Readings of Wagner* (Albany: State University of New York Press), 1999; Gillian Rose, *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978).

¹¹ GS, vol. 7, p. 252, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 168f.

Artworks do not really escape the structural illusion under which all empirical reality is organized; they, too, fall under the universal, extra-aesthetic principle that imposes illusion on all products of labour. In the statement that artworks “necessarily reflect a relation of living labour as if it were thingly” or “objective,” Adorno glosses Marx’s concept of the *commodity fetish* without however naming it:

The mysterious character of the commodity-form consists therefore simply in the fact that the commodity reflects the social characteristics of men’s own labour [den Menschen die gesellschaftlichen Charaktere ihrer eignen Arbeit, the social characteristics of human beings’ own labour] as objective characteristics of the products of labour themselves, as the socio-natural properties of these things. Hence it also reflects the social relation of the producers to the sum total of labour as a social relation between objects, a relation which exists apart from and outside the producers. Through this substitution, the products of labour become commodities, sensuous things which are at the same time suprasensible or social. In the same way, the impression made by a thing on the optic nerve is perceived not as a subjective excitation of that nerve but as the objective form of a thing outside the eye. In the act of seeing, of course, light is really transmitted from one thing, the external object, to another thing, the eye. It is a physical relation between physical things. As against this, the commodity-form, and the value-relation of the products of labour within which it appears, have absolutely no connection with the physical nature of the commodity and the material [dinglich] relations arising out of this. It is nothing but the definite social relation between men [Menschen, human beings] themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic [phantasmagorische, phantasmagoric] form of a relation between things.¹²

Commodities are made things invested with power in and of themselves. In other words, the human source of their power, the power of labour, is abstracted and forgotten. For Marx, commodity-fetishes are made things, and this happens to be reflected in their etymology: the word “fetish” is derived from the Portuguese “feitiço,” which is ultimately from the Latin “facticius,” meaning “made by art, artificial, skilfully contrived.”¹³ In *Du Culte des dieux fétiches* (On the Worship of Fetish Gods), however, Charles de Brosses gave its etymology

¹² Karl Marx, *Das Kapital: Kritik der politischen Ökonomie, Erster Band*, in Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke* [MEW], 41 vols. (Berlin: Dietz, 1959-68), vol. 23, here vol. 23, p. 86 as translated by Ben Fowkes, except where indicated, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*, introduced by Ernest Mandel (1976; repr., London: Penguin, 1990), p. 164f.

¹³ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “fetish,” accessed January 19, 2014, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/69611>.

rather as “*chose fée, enchantée, divine ou rendant des oracles*” (*magical, enchanted, divine or prophetic thing*), and applied the term to any object, whether natural or made, worshipped by peoples of vastly different cultures, whom he called “Sauvages” (savages).¹⁴ In 1760, “fetish” was clearly a term of scorn for the widely diverging sacred practices of non-Europeans, from Syria to Gaspésie.¹⁵ Like Charles de Brosses, Marx uses the word in disparagement—not against non-Europeans, but rather against what he deems the true barbarism, capitalism. Nonetheless, the word has retained something of the original vilification by the bourgeoisie of those human beings who do not attain to bourgeois “autonomy,” whether women or jazz fans. On the other hand, something of Marx’s critique of the commodity is vital to the anthropological definition: fetishes “were not idols, since they were not images of gods located elsewhere but were deemed potent in themselves.”¹⁶ Marx suggests that commodities’ potency “in themselves”—or, to speak in the terms that Adorno borrows from Hegel, their “illusion of their being in themselves”—would dissolve utterly if the dependence of these objects on human labour were revealed and the quality of this labour correctly appreciated.¹⁷ The “in itself” or “an sich” of the commodity is an illusion because, in denying the human labour on which it depends, it can only be a mere partial reality, not the *whole*, which alone would really be the self-identical, independent power that the fetish claims for itself.¹⁸ But the idea that fetishes claim to be potent *in themselves* is certainly a European projection of the commodity form onto the sacred objects of non-European peoples. In not-yet thoroughly

¹⁴ Charles de Brosses, *Du Culte des dieux fétiches, ou, Parallèle de l’ancienne Religion de l’Egypte avec la Religion actuelle de Nigritie*, texte revu par Madeleine V.-David (s.l.: Fayard, 1988), p. 15.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30 and pp. 38-44.

¹⁶ Wyatt MacGaffey, “Fetish and Fetishism,” in *New Encyclopedia of Africa*, edited by John Middleton and Joseph C. Miller, 5 vols. (Detroit: Thomson/Gale, 2008), vol. 2, pp. 368-370, here p. 368.

¹⁷ GS, vol. 7, p. 252, or prefer to my translations here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 168.

¹⁸ According to Charles Taylor, “only the whole is truly an sich in this sense [in the sense of self-contained, not dependent on anything outside].” Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 112.

capitalized regions of North America, the sacred is not an autonomous “in itself” that hides social relations, but quite the opposite: the sacred lights up social relations and obligations, and not only those between and towards human beings.¹⁹ Furthermore, what Europeans took to be non-Europeans’ inability to see things for what they were really worth,²⁰ turns out to be Europeans’ own inability to see that value is relative and can by no means be an “in itself”—what would be called “real worth” or “true value.” Marx suggests that the value of commodities *cannot* be “true” because it necessarily contains a surplus, which is withheld to be reinvested into the company so that more of the market may be captured for it. This potential for growth, the commodity’s “power,” has nothing to do with the object intrinsically on its own, but with the social relations in which it is actually enmeshed: “The power attributed to an object...derives from that object’s relationship to human beings, never solely from the fetish itself or from its physical components.”²¹ The social basis of the fetish’s power remains hidden from commodity-fetishists, who support the illusion whereby power, or “value,” seems to be nothing but the natural property of an object, instead of truly emerging as it is—as the result of a social links existing amongst the human beings who have put the object together.

The illusion that values pertain to “natural” properties of objects enables a commodity’s particular ranking within a *universe* of commodities to pass unquestioned. According to Marx, the value of commodities, which is their possibility of being compared to one another, comes from socially organized work, delivered in standardized units: “As

¹⁹ Deanna Reder, “A Complex Web of Relations that Extend Beyond the Human: A Reply to Chung-ying Cheng,” *Contours*, no. 3 (Fall 2012), <http://www.sfu.ca/humanities-institute/?p=1651>.

²⁰ “Dutch Protestant merchants extended the term to cover what they saw as an African inability to assess material goods at their ‘true’ value.” MacGaffey, “Fetish and Fetishism,” p. 368.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 370.

exchange-values, all commodities are merely definite quantities of *congealed labour-time*.²²

Yet what makes commodities comparable actually rests on what is incomparable: not only moments of individuals' lives, but also the qualities of the objects that these individuals produce. Furthermore, capitalism has forced a situation whereby no need can be satisfied without comparing the "incomparable," which occurs without fail during the exchange of commodities. The very people whose lives are indifferently converted into objects of use must, for their own survival, use the lives of others, most certainly worse off than they. The limits of affordability define the circles of this hell. Marx's solution out of it, however, is not to adhere philosophically to the impossibility of converting quality into quantity. Rather, he distinguishes between "use value" and "exchange value." For Marx, something counts as a commodity only if it is an object of utility *and* an exchangeable item. Socially organized labour is the sole veritable source of exchange value, according to the chapter on commodity fetishism, but if the thing produced is to have value at all, then it must have an afterlife beyond its existence on the market and actually serve someone as a use value, for "if the thing is useless, so is the labour contained in it; the labour does not count as labour, and therefore creates no value."²³ On this point, however, Marx enters into contradiction with himself. Utility is not decisive for value any longer, for it is rarely clearly identifiable in the post-scarcity capitalism of fashion, planned obsolescence and gadgets whose functions are so specialized that the occasion to use them almost never arises. These seemingly useless commodities do manage to eke out values, and so their labour should count as labour. However, from another point of view, such commodities are only seemingly useless, for all commodities have become useful to the act of exchange itself. Marx elsewhere realized that

²² MEW, vol. 23, p. 54 as translated, *Capital*, p. 130.

²³ MEW, vol. 23, p. 55 as translated, *Capital*, p. 131.

usefulness no longer necessarily underlay production. The capitalist as capital personified “is fanatically intent on the valorization of value; consequently he ruthlessly forces the human race to produce for production’s sake.”²⁴ Production as an end in itself conflicts with the use value that Marx could still evoke as the unquestionable reality behind the illusory exchange value. Adorno, aware of this contradiction in *Capital*, draws the consequences for use-value of an ever-expanding exchange value: “In the age of overproduction, use-value for its part became doubtful.”²⁵ Use value might now be unrecognizable, so deformed is it by the constant pressure of exchange as an end in itself. This is why, as Simon Jarvis puts it, Adorno “regards attempts to invoke an immediate access to use-value as an ideological cover for the way in which all human activity is mediated by commodity exchange.”²⁶ When the illusion of exchange extends down into the commodity’s utility, illusion becomes inevitable and structural. When the commodity assumes the total preoccupation of life, we find ourselves in a “universal delusion-context of reification.” The social power exercised by religious fetishes, considerably more limited, is almost harmless in comparison.

In his essay “Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat,” Lukács bases his discussion of reification on Marx’s chapter on commodity fetishism, but considers congealed labour of all kinds, intellectual and physical, in his attempt to show that the commodity-form rules all sectors of society and all disciplines: that it has become in fact the total social preoccupation of life. Relations,²⁷ language²⁸ and even consciousness²⁹ may be reified. Lukács

²⁴ MEW, vol. 23, p. 618 as translated, *Capital*, p. 739.

²⁵ GS, vol. 7, p. 32, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 17.

²⁶ Simon Jarvis, *Adorno: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 55.

²⁷ Georg Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, in *Werke*, vol. 2, *Frühschriften II: “Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein.”* 2. Auflage (Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1977), pp. 161-517, here p. 361, or translated by Rodney Livingstone, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971), p. 177.

emphasizes the commodity's power to make labour return as an independent thing, unrecognizable as such: "Man's own activity, his labour becomes something objective and independent of him, something that controls him by virtue of an autonomy alien to man."³⁰ Lukács thus focuses on the "objective characteristics" that the result of social labour takes on.³¹ Reification may be called a "phantom objectivity" because it gives something that only humans could have created the appearance of a fact, fate or nature seemingly beyond their control.³² The social, conventional character of the thing is forgotten, and the object takes on the look of fossilized remains of a rigid "second nature":

For, on the one hand, men are constantly smashing, replacing and leaving behind them the "natural," irrational and actually existing bonds, while, on the other, they erect around themselves in the reality they have created and "made," a kind of second nature which evolves with exactly the same inexorable necessity as was the case earlier on with irrational forces of nature.³³

Against the argument made by a wave of philosophers, led by Kant and Fichte, that human beings can only know what they create, Lukács claims that the created world itself slips out of conscious control to become just as irrational as the forces that it was set to combat.³⁴ The man-made world is no longer clearly opposed to the natural world, for it, too, operates according to obscure laws that seem to have always existed. Reification names the natural look of anything made.

Reification seems to arise in the first instance from the pseudo-necessity of set working hours: "The period of time necessary for work to be accomplished... is converted, as

²⁸ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 267 Anmerkung 1, or translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 209 n16.

²⁹ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 268, or translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 93.

³⁰ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 261 as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 87.

³¹ MEW, vol. 23, p. 86 as translated, *Capital*, p. 164f.

³² Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 257 as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 83.

³³ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 307 as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 128.

³⁴ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 299f., or translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 121f.

mechanization and rationalization are intensified, from a merely empirical average figure to an objectively calculable work-stint that confronts the worker as a fixed and established reality.”³⁵ Workers begin to treat their own time just like the preconceived commodity that they produce. Yet it is clear that production for production’s sake—the useless production of exchange values—creates waste labour, and the length of the working day cannot be a fixed and established reality. However, instead of making regular analyses of the minimum number of working hours actually required to satisfy needs, workers accept the conventional workweek, and with it the idea that the destruction of their time and the waste of their lives performing avoidable tasks is normal and natural. Full full-time employment is an end in itself, not a means to satisfy needs, because human beings are reduced to “human resources” on the same level as natural resources to exploit.³⁶ The working day no longer seems to be the result of a process, but a thing that always was what it is—or at best, an organism that changes naturally and of its own accord. Lukács underlines Marx’s observation that “in the history of capitalist production, the establishment of a norm for the working day presents itself as a struggle over the limits of that day, a struggle between collective capital, i.e., the class of capitalists, and collective labour, i.e., the working class.”³⁷ According to Lukács, it is only with a consciousness that “goes beyond what is immediately given” that workers can forcefully shorten their artificially long working day and rescue their time.³⁸ Reified consciousness is a consciousness that does not go beyond what is immediately given, and the

³⁵ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 262 as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 88.

³⁶ In some provinces of Canada, the unemployed must be employed full-time looking for work to obtain and maintain benefits. Friedrich Pollock notes that a peculiarity of state capitalism is that “full employment of all resources is claimed as the main achievement in the economic field.” See Friedrich Pollock, “State Capitalism: Its Possibilities and Limitations,” in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, ed. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt, introduction by Paul Piccone (New York: Continuum, 1982), pp. 71-94, here p. 73.

³⁷ MEW, vol. 23, p. 249 as translated, *Capital*, p. 344.

³⁸ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 363 as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 178.

first evidence of it is the halt of negotiations over the working day, negotiations which should be ongoing as long as overproduction is the norm. However, when exchange values and not use values are consumed, the state of overproduction becomes exceedingly difficult to recognize.

Reification may have begun with the social, fabricated necessity of set working hours, which are determined in isolation from the work itself, but since the tendency of the commodity is to become a universal structuring principle, finally nothing is untouched by reification: “The proletariat shares with the bourgeoisie the reification of every aspect of its life.”³⁹ As evidence for this, Lukács shows that even in a discipline remote from proletarian labour, philosophy, workers forget that they themselves have made concepts and categories, which confront them as fixed, alien powers. Philosophy falls into insoluble antinomies because philosophers prove to be just as incapable of negotiating the terms of their labour as any other workers:

We drew attention ... to the antinomies (between subject and object, freedom and necessity, individual and society, form and content, etc.) to which [bourgeois] thought necessarily led. It is important to realise at this point that although bourgeois thought only landed in these antinomies after the very greatest mental exertions, it yet accepted their existential basis as self-evident, as a simply unquestionable reality. Which is to say: bourgeois thought entered into an unmediated relationship with reality as it was given.⁴⁰

The conflicting concepts that appear to the philosopher as fixed and given are not merely analogous to the workweek that appears to the worker as fixed and given. Capitalism depends for its existence on a universal lack of time-consciousness. In order for the sacrifice of workers' hours not to seem like the catastrophe and barbaric loss of life that it is, time must become everywhere abstract, homogeneous, empty, convertible, exchangeable and

³⁹ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 332 as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 149.

⁴⁰ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 339f. as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 156.

inconsequential, even in philosophy. Time must not appear as what it is: consisting of work and struggle. When philosophers suppress the temporal core of concepts, they are simply upholding the illusion that exists everywhere: that there is no work in things. But in failing to recognize the past work done on the concepts that they take up, philosophers are tacitly at one with a system that dissimulates a desecration of life under a high society of alluring products. A “logical world of ossified concepts” is not the mere spiritual reflection or effect of a “world of ossified things.”⁴¹ The young Lukács rejects the dualism between “thought and existence, consciousness and reality” to which Marx and Engels’s reflection model of ideology falls victim, as itself a product of “reified consciousness.”⁴²

Like Lukács, Adorno rejects the reflection theory, an expression of which can be found early in *The German Ideology*:

The phantoms formed in the brains of men are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises. Morality, religion, metaphysics, and all the rest of ideology as well as the forms of consciousness corresponding to these, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence [Schein der Selbständigkeit]. They have no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their actual world, also their thinking and the products of their thinking. It is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness.⁴³

Adorno reiterates Lukács’s charge that the reflection theory is a product of an “untiring reified consciousness,” but rejects it on different grounds.⁴⁴ Adorno criticizes not so much the rigid opposition between life and consciousness that so appalled Lukács, but rather the idea that material base could be completely absorbed into consciousness without a remainder. Unlike materialist apologists for the totalitarian Soviet Union, Adorno criticizes its “state terrorist

⁴¹ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 374 as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 188.

⁴² Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 388 as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 200.

⁴³ MEW, vol. 3, p. 26f. as translated, *Collected Works*, vol. 5, p. 36f.

⁴⁴ GS, vol. 6, p. 205, or prefer to my translation here that of E. B. Ashton, *Negative Dialectics* (1973; repr., New York: Continuum, 1997), p. 205.

machinery”⁴⁵ and “relapse into barbarism,”⁴⁶ which he traces to the *lack* of reflection of the materialist base into consciousness. Adorno points to “immaturity” (Unmündigkeit) as the cause of materialism’s “self-abasement” and renunciation of solidarity that characterize the situation in the Soviet Union.⁴⁷ This immaturity is precisely the lack of aptitude on a society-wide scale for reflecting material conditions: “Materialism’s immaturity (Mindere) is the prevailing condition’s unreflected immaturity.”⁴⁸ Barbarism comes about not because human beings reflect all of material life in their thoughts, even “upside-down as in a camera obscura,”⁴⁹ but because they do not reflect it: something in the vast misery of the reproduction of material life conditions is left out. However, the point is not to reflect everything in thought, for consciousness does not have “photographs of objectivity” in the first place.⁵⁰ Rather, according to Adorno, the reflection theory misses the insight that active consciousness does not dumbly, inexorably perform the same distorting operation on whatever is put before it, like a camera, but *works* on its material. It is Marx and Engels’s oversight of the work performed by consciousness that marks their reflection theory out as reified. The reflection theory leaves open no possibility for consciousness to contest material conditions, to break them apart and re-form them:

The reflection theory [Abbildtheorie] denies the spontaneity of the subject, a movens of the objective dialectics of forces of production and relations of production. If the subject is limited to the stubborn reflection of the object, which necessarily misses the object, as the object is open only to the subjective surplus in the thought, then the result is the impacific intellectual silence of the integral administration.⁵¹

⁴⁵ GS, vol. 6, p. 204, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 204.

⁴⁶ GS, vol. 6, p. 205, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 205.

⁴⁷ GS, vol. 6, p. 204, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 204.

⁴⁸ GS, vol. 6, p. 204, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 204f.

⁴⁹ MEW, vol. 3, p. 26 as translated, *Collected Works*, vol. 5, p. 36.

⁵⁰ GS, vol. 6, p. 205, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 205.

⁵¹ GS, vol. 6, p. 205, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 205.

Because something of material conditions does not go into thought but persists as a remainder on the side of the object, as witnessed by the lack of reflection in material conditions, the subject actually comes closer to the core of the object not by trying to grasp its totality, but by giving this objective remainder a subjective correlate, by doing its own work, spontaneously reading something out of the object that was not made or put there. Theory does not aim at copying the object, but at discovering always “more” within it.

Important consequences follow from the refutation of the reflection model of ideology. It is no longer possible to make a blanket claim and dismiss “morality, religion, metaphysics” wholesale as ideology.⁵² This entails the hopelessness of dispelling illusion by merely discrediting the “superstructure,” the spiritual spheres of art, philosophy and religion:

Where [ideology] is no longer added to what exists [zum Seienden] as something that justifies or complements it, but rather passes over into the illusion [Schein] that whatever exists is unavoidable and is therefore legitimate, then a critique that operates with the clear causal relation of superstructure and base misses the mark. In the total society, everything is equally close to the focal point; that society is as see-through, its apology as threadbare [fadenscheinig], as those who see through it are dwindling.⁵³

Adorno’s criticism of the reflection theory of ideology is *not* that consciousness is *never* the unthinking reflection of reality, but rather that consciousness in the strong sense is *more* than just a lens for reality. But the reflection theory of ideology is true to the extent that consciousness has become something like an automatic camera. What distinguishes the total society from one in which there can be a distinct superstructure is that the total society is organized around a single focal point—the legitimacy of whatever exists—to which everything else is equally fuzzy in comparison. Consciousness “sees through” this set-up in

⁵² MEW, vol. 3. p. 26 as translated, *Collected Works*, vol. 5, p. 36.

⁵³ GS, vol. 6, p. 265, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 268.

inverse proportion to the staginess of society. Adorno is not willing to concede, however, that consciousness is limited to the frame that society presents it. But in order to see through the total society, critics cannot limit their attention to whatever looks like a justification for it—religious tracts, philosophical texts and other forms of discourse. Not only philosophy, religion and art, but anything—fixed working hours, traffic lights, hospital triage, bus schedules, union dues, charity fund drives, newspapers and children’s summer camps—can be made to legitimate the idea that things cannot be otherwise. Lukács sees the commodity form, broadly understood, as the epitome of such self-legitimation, in its seemingly infinite reproduction of the same. Adorno agrees, but departs from Lukács in how he understands the role of consciousness in delegitimizing the existing order. Adorno understands ideology to be self-perpetuating society as a whole, so he does not lay the blame for the bad order of things solely on the individual consciousness that accepts things as they are: “The doom lies in conditions, which condemn human beings to powerlessness and apathy and would still be changed by them; it does not lie primarily in human beings and the way in which the conditions appear to them.”⁵⁴ This is because the more objectively obvious social illusion is, the more individuals personally risk in exposing it. Adorno thus emphasizes the necessity of the illusion:

Ideology is not a detachable layer overlying social Being, but is inherent to social Being. It is based in abstraction, which essentially counts toward the exchange transaction. Without abstracting from living human beings there would be no exchange. Then necessarily social illusion is implied in the real life process up to today. At its core is value as the thing-in-itself, as “nature.”⁵⁵

In this passage, Adorno draws from Lukács, who originally recognized in the inscrutability of Kant’s thing-in-itself the inscrutability of the commodity form. An unknowable thing with the human element, time, removed, is an apt description for either thing. But this similarity is not

⁵⁴ GS, vol. 6, p. 191, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 190.

⁵⁵ GS, vol. 6, p. 348, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 354f.

a mere coincidence. The interdiction against knowing the thing-in-itself is in league with the socially necessary indifference towards the flown, irrecoverable time of fellow human beings in the act of exchange. Because the thing-in-itself is not just a metaphor for the commodity form, but an integral part of its illusion, Lukács regards Hegel's critique of the thing-in-itself as the genuine starting-point for the end to reification in all spheres. This critique of the thing-in-itself takes the form of dialectical method: "The genesis, the creation of the creator of knowledge, the dissolution of the irrationality of the thing-in-itself, the resurrection of man from his grave, all these issues become concentrated henceforth on the question of *dialectical method*."⁵⁶ Hegelian dialectics for Lukács is nothing other than "the ending of a rigid confrontation of rigid forms," or the ending of reification.⁵⁷ Yet, in contradistinction to Eleatic and Sophistical dialectics, Hegel's is a dialectics in which the subject is active: "The dialectical process...is enacted essentially *between the subject and the object*."⁵⁸ Thus, Hegelian dialectics looks to be a very promising antidote to the reified consciousness of the individual intellectual or physical worker. However, according to Lukács, Hegelian subject-object dialectics did not succeed in overcoming reification because the subject Hegel chose was not an individual consciousness or even, in the final analysis, a particular people or culture, but rather an abstract "world spirit." Here Lukács takes up from Ludwig Feuerbach, who criticized Hegel for reducing sensuous consciousness to self-consciousness and self-certainty, thus breaking with the individual consciousness insofar as it is interested in its

⁵⁶ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 323 as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 141.

⁵⁷ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 324 as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 142.

⁵⁸ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 324 as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 142.

material needs and fulfilment.⁵⁹ The world spirit uses individuals and peoples to accomplish its historical deeds, quite beyond their understanding: “The deed becomes something transcendent for the doer himself and the freedom that seems to have been won is transformed unnoticed into that specious freedom to reflect upon laws which themselves govern man, a freedom which in Spinoza a thrown stone would possess if it had consciousness.”⁶⁰ No true transformation of the ossified forms is possible for a grotesque abstraction of consciousness, and so the Hegelian philosophy “is driven inexorably into the arms of mythology.”⁶¹ According to Lukács, the abstract character of classical philosophical work itself was preventing Hegel from locating the true subject of history: that very group of people who experience their work “directly” as “the naked and abstract form of the commodity,” the proletariat.⁶² Although Hegel had found the correct method for dissolving ossified forms, his reduction of the individual consciousness to a fungible, blind, contingent servant of a mythical world spirit reintroduced the irrational element that his dialectics sought to overcome.

In the observation that “without abstracting from living human beings there would be no exchange,” Adorno shows a definite affinity with Lukács’s (and Feuerbach’s) emphasis on the living individual, which Hegel submits to abstract world spirit.⁶³ Suffering and oppression will continue as long as the individual consciousness is left out of the dialectic. Yet, for Adorno, solving the problems wrought by exchange cannot be a simple matter of a certain *class* recognizing the liquid historical core of whatever appears frozen, natural, timeless or “in

⁵⁹ Ludwig Feuerbach, “Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Philosophie (1839),” in *Sämtliche Werke*, neu herausgegeben von Wilhelm Bolin und Friedrich Jodl, zweite unveränderte Auflage (Stuttgart: Frommann Verlag Günther Holzboog, 1959-1964), vol. 2, pp. 158-204, here p. 187.

⁶⁰ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 328 as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 146.

⁶¹ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 329 as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 146f.

⁶² Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 356 as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 172.

⁶³ GS, vol. 6, p. 348, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 354f.

itself.” In fact, it should not seem so to Lukács, either. The idea that only the proletariat can put an end to reification, for the reason that this class experiences work “directly” as taking the commodity form, is invalid on Lukács’s own terms.⁶⁴ For Lukács himself elsewhere argues that such “immediacy” is indeed what blocks change and progress:

It may be hoped that our arguments up to this point have demonstrated with sufficient clarity that this particular mediation was absent and could not be otherwise absent from bourgeois thought. In the context of economics this has been proved by Marx time and time again. And he explicitly attributed the mistaken ideas of bourgeois economists concerning the economic process of capitalism to the absence of mediation, to the systematic avoidance of the categories of mediation, to the immediate acceptance of secondary forms of objectivity, to the inability to progress beyond the stage of merely immediate cognition.⁶⁵

Thus, the seemingly immediate experience with the “naked” commodity form is in fact an obstacle to progress, not a boon. Furthermore, this passage reveals, quite against the preceding one, that intellectual workers (“bourgeois economists”) also experience the apparent immediacy of the commodity form. This is because apparent immediacy in fact belongs to the very notion of reification, which Lukács describes at one point as “the necessary, immediate reality of every person living in capitalist society.”⁶⁶ Here Lukács plainly asserts that immediacy characterizes the experience of proletariat and bourgeoisie alike. In other words, it makes no difference whether one works with pre-formed automobile parts or pre-formed philosophical categories: abstraction disguises the experience with the material as a direct one. Thus, the proletariat should have no *necessary* role to play in the possible progress to a better society. While Lukács does not draw this conclusion from his own elucidations of reification, Adorno does.

⁶⁴ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 356 as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 172.

⁶⁵ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 339 as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 156.

⁶⁶ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 385 as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 197.

Hardly convinced that the proletariat all on its own is predisposed to ending reification, Adorno is no more convinced that the dissolution of rigid, reified forms alone would automatically be the end to all ills solvable by human beings. Adorno does not even view reification as an evil in itself, for he makes the surprising point that “with the birth of the natural sciences, reification and reified consciousness also brought about the potential for a world without privation.”⁶⁷ Reification itself is less prominent in Adorno’s philosophy than an expression such as “the universal delusional context of reification” would suggest. For in *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno asserts: “The lament over reification skims over what human beings suffer under, sooner than denouncing it.”⁶⁸ Suffering, not the petrified forms in and of themselves, is the pressing evil, but Lukács seems not to entertain the thought that reification is itself a defense against suffering. All members of society suffer from an all-pervasive indifference, and not merely workers in the act of unfair exchange. In a dramatic claim, Adorno spells out the extent of this indifference: “Without exception human beings are doubtless under the spell, not one really capable of love, and consequently each one thinks himself loved too little.”⁶⁹ If human beings are not even really capable of love, this means that the coldness between them exceeds the degree of indifference actually required by exchange, which thereby loses its priority. The real danger of destroying the entire world a thousand times over, to no one’s advantage, falls outside of the explanatory power of the theory of reification: “Compared with the possibility of total catastrophe, reification is an epiphenomenon.”⁷⁰ Global nuclear disaster, in the end, does not serve capitalism. Lukács’s critique of capitalism in a way fails to produce dialectics because he works with one large

⁶⁷ GS, vol. 6, p. 192, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 191f.

⁶⁸ GS, vol. 6, p. 191, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 190.

⁶⁹ GS, vol. 6, p. 356, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 363.

⁷⁰ GS, vol. 6, p. 191, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 190.

category: “Dialectics can no more be made off reification than off any other isolated category whatsoever, even if it were just as polemical.”⁷¹ Reification needs to be mediated with another category—that of love, for instance—in order for its true groundlessness to be demonstrated and its illusion determined.

Furthermore, Lukács’s dialectics risks becoming a form of idealism because reification is, after all, “a shape of consciousness.”⁷² Although Lukács admits that “reification is ... the necessary, immediate reality of every person living in capitalist society,” he does not concentrate his thought on the reality of this necessity.⁷³ Instead, he lays the emphasis on consciousness. Reification, according to Lukács, “can be overcome only by *constant and constantly renewed efforts to disrupt the reified structure of existence by concretely relating to the concretely manifested contradictions of the total development, by becoming conscious of the immanent meanings of these contradictions for the total development.*”⁷⁴ This passage reveals another way in which idealism is a danger for Lukács’s theory: Lukács’s solution to reification, which is also the dissolution of capitalism, is completely in line with the Hegelian pretension to know the whole. Here Lukács advances that reification can be overcome only by a comparison in consciousness of contradictions with the “*total development.*” However, earlier in that same essay, Lukács argued that no complete knowledge of the whole looked possible:

If a rational calculation is to be possible the commodity owner must be in possession of the laws regulating every detail of his production. The chances of exploitation, the laws of the “market” must likewise be rational in the sense that they must be calculable according to the laws of probability. But they must not be governed by a law in the sense in which “laws” govern individual phenomena; they must not under any

⁷¹ GS, vol. 6, p. 191, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 190.

⁷² GS, vol. 6, p. 191, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 190.

⁷³ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 385 as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 197.

⁷⁴ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 385 as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 197.

circumstances be rationally organised through and through. This does not mean, of course, that there can be no “law” governing the whole. But such a “law” would have to be the “unconscious” product of the activity of the different commodity owners acting independently of one another, i.e. a law of mutually interacting “coincidences” rather than one of a truly rational organisation. Furthermore, such a law must not merely impose itself despite the wishes of individuals, it may *not even be fully and adequately knowable*. For the complete knowledge of the whole would vouchsafe the knower a monopoly that would amount to the virtual abolition of the capitalist economy.⁷⁵

Lukács himself observes that if knowledge of the whole were at all possible, someone would have long since used this knowledge to secure for himself complete control of all markets.

Lukács claims that if a key to this chaotic system really existed, capitalism would cease. For capitalism feeds on competition, that uncoordinated, bumbling chaos of pseudo-random interactions stirred up by the perverse effects of fashion, advertising and the mass media.

Since the unconsciously-produced “laws” of capitalism are more like dream images than real knowledge, all commercial activity necessarily brings with it loss and waste, which to the mind of the investor are not real sufferings of human beings and nature, but “his” risks, which profit compensates. The chaos of the market thus provides investors have a perfect way of rationalizing their actions: profits are rewards for taking the risk of heavy financial losses that any commercial activity brings with it. The emergence of government controls does practically nothing to eliminate this character of blind destruction, as can be gathered from the state’s powerlessness in impeding the financial crises that return regularly, depriving people of comfort and security, emptying company towns and dashing hopes for a better material existence. It is difficult to see in what sense the historic spread of this chaos could be understood as “development.” While Lukács is right to associate capitalism’s chaos with an unknowable totality, he does not see this impenetrability as real.

⁷⁵ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 278 as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 102.

Whether the whole is at all knowable is utterly decisive for what strain of dialectics one chooses, as Lukács himself was well aware:

Hegel himself distinguishes between negative and positive dialectics (*Encyclopädie*, §81).⁷⁶ By positive dialectics he understands the growth of a particular content, the elucidation of a concrete totality. In the process, however, we find that he almost always advances from the determinants of reflection to the positive dialectics even though his conception of nature, for example, as “otherness”, as the idea in a state of “being external to itself” (ibid., §247) directly precludes a positive dialectics.⁷⁷

Lukács points out here that positive dialectics, which presumes knowledge of the whole, is not possible as long as nature comes into play. However, rather than limit himself to negative dialectics, Lukács simply excludes the category of nature from his work. According to Martin Jay, closing the concept of nature to all movement caused Lukács’s concept of history to be “reified”⁷⁸ and earned him the criticisms of the Frankfurt School:

While thoroughly endorsing Lukács’ insight that society under capitalism was falsely perceived as a “second nature,” Adorno felt that Lukács had neglected the “first nature” which man could not entirely escape. To Adorno, the total socialization of the world, which both Marx and Lukács had celebrated, threatened a new regression to a socialized barbarism. The revenge of exploited nature was one of the main Frankfurt School explanations of fascism in the 1940s.⁷⁹

Lukács’s dialectic turns a blind eye to the increasing domination of first nature. Yet he could not simply modify the notion of the whole without grotesquely reproducing what he had cut out. For the “second nature” of reification is indeed a state of being external to oneself, and would play the same role in Lukács’s dialectics as first nature played in Hegel’s: both first nature and second nature give the lie to the presumed total knowledge. It thus becomes

⁷⁶ In this section from the *Enzyklopädie*, incorrectly cited in the English translation of *History and Class Consciousness* as §16, Hegel does not actually employ the terms “positive dialectic” and “negative dialectic,” but speaks rather of “positive knowledge” and of the “purely negative result of dialectic.” G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, Theorie-Werkausgabe, vols. 8-10, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), vol. 8, p. 176, or, part one, translated by William Wallace, *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 119.

⁷⁷ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 395 as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 395f.

⁷⁸ Martin Jay, “The Concept of Totality in Lukács and Adorno,” in *Theodor W. Adorno*, ed. Simon Jarvis, 4 vols., *Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory* (London: Routledge, 2007), vol. 3, pp. 282-303, here p. 289.

⁷⁹ Ibid., vol. 3, p. 295f.

extremely difficult to see how reification, as otherness, is to be overcome if this overcoming assumes prior knowledge of the “total development.” If it were possible to elucidate a “concrete totality,” reification would not present itself as a problem, either because otherness would be total or because existence would really be a bare immediacy or animal existence and not just the appearance of one. The peculiar loop whereby the solution to the real opaque whole requires just that whole, imagined transparent, is the product of a dialectics limited to a single category. Dialectics, then, if it is to avoid this mystical, self-enfolding loop, cannot do without otherness.

Lukács cannot consistently adopt positive dialectics. This leaves negative dialectics,⁸⁰ which only mediates the determinations of reflection [Reflexionsbestimmungen]: the contradictions. What is negative dialectics and what might it achieve?

The title of Adorno’s *Negative Dialectics* refers to an opportunity missed by both Hegel and Lukács: a dialectics that truly recognizes a moment of otherness. What this amounts to is, in a certain sense, a return to Kant. Both Hegel and Lukács claim for their dialectics an effective resolution of the thing-in-itself problem. However, their forms of dialectics are idealist in that they do not treat the imponderability of the thing-in-itself as real, but as a problem of consciousness. Lukács believes that the commodity form can be effectively dissolved as soon as the worker attains self-consciousness of the commodity structure reproduced in himself: “When the worker knows himself as a commodity his knowledge is practical. *That is to say, this knowledge brings about an objective structural change in the*

⁸⁰ Walter Benjamin, however, bequeathed “the obligation to think at the same time dialectically and undialectically.” GS, vol. 4, p. 173 §98 as translated by E. F. N. Jephcott, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life* (London: Verso, 2005), p. 152.

object of knowledge.”⁸¹ The priority here is laid upon the subject (who is also an object) in that objective conditions are thought to change automatically with a change in (self-)consciousness. It is assumed: (1) that the only thing one really has to know or can know is oneself; and (2) that objective conditions are completely absorbed by the self, because that is what is required for mere self-knowledge to bring about the desired change in the object. The claim that theory is already praxis, that the object changes through mere self-knowledge, seems to be a version of the reflection theory of ideology that Lukács will reject some pages later. Adorno, for his part, does not see how the relevant objective conditions could be totally controllable by the mind in this way, as if mind and the object of knowledge formed a perfect identity.⁸² This is why Adorno sees conceptuality’s need “to turn toward the non-identical” as

⁸¹ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 353 as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 169.

⁸² This does not make Adorno a “dialectical realist” as has been claimed by Linda Martín Alcoff and Alireza Shomali in “Adorno’s Dialectical Realism,” *Symposium* 14, no. 2 (Fall 2010): pp. 45-65. They argue that his position “is realist because it affirms the ontological primacy of the object, repudiates subject-centred idealisms, and champions a kind of empirical openness to the irreducible particularities of the material world” (*ibid.*, p. 48). Adorno indeed calls for the primacy of the object, but he does not affirm that this primacy is given, nor that the object *is* reality, as opposed to, say, the “unreality” or “idealism” of the subject—in other words, Adorno does not claim that this is a priority of nature and substance (kata phusin kai ousian), rather than a priority of principle (kata ton logon) or some other sort of priority (for the different meanings of priority, see Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 5.11.1018b9-19a14). What he does say is that the law of identity, which traditionally is one of the three laws of thought, is no longer a law of thought, but rather “real” (GS, vol. 6, p. 18). Adorno’s critique of the law of identity, which occupies a large part of *Negative Dialectics*, is therefore as much a critique of reality as it is a critique of identity thinking in history. Since identity thinking, the current form of ideology, is no longer a layer added to reality, but inherent in social being, ideology critique, which Adorno practices, is not “realism” (GS, vol. 6, p. 348). As Adorno and Horkheimer expressed it earlier: “Existence [Dasein] is magically turned into its own ideology by its faithful duplication” (GS, vol. 3, p. 301 in my translation here). Reality, including the findings of the so-called closed systems of experimentation, is distorted. Ideology critique must in some way detach itself from existing reality and negate some aspect of it to be critique at all—not uphold reality or realism. While it is true that Adorno is anti-Idealist, it cannot be drawn from his anti-Idealism that he is a realist: such “either/or” thinking is an object of the dialectical critique that takes the form of progressive distinction (see GS, vol. 6, p. 17). Alcoff and Shomali make another identification in reducing potentiality to what exists, which is a misreading of Adorno: “The real is something like a process for Adorno, a fluid and historicised potentiality; as he famously puts it, ‘what is, is more than it is’” (“Adorno’s Dialectical Realism,” p. 49). In the passage quoted from *Negative Dialectics* (GS, vol. 6, p. 164), the “more” is *not* potentiality, but rather, as Adorno makes clear in the next sentence, the unmastered past—the repressed [Verdrängte]. Adorno is concerned with the “illusion of closure” and the no-longer-existing that still influences the present below the radar of consciousness. Lastly, Alcoff and Shomali miss the utopian and speculative dimension of Adorno’s thinking. A statement such as “dialectic is in the service of reconciliation” does not *give up* on the closure and peace for the subject that exist nowhere in reality today (GS, vol. 6, p. 18).

the turning point for dialectics, as against Lukács, who sees the commodity, thing or object of thought as already belonging totally to the self and consciousness and so remains on the path of Hegelian dialectics.⁸³ In grasping the otherness of the thing-in-itself as something real, insuperable by mere consciousness, Adorno follows Kant, who “really does not sacrifice the idea of otherness,” for “without it, knowledge would disintegrate into tautology; the known would be knowledge itself.”⁸⁴

Given the choice between self-certainty and a necessarily partial cognition of estranged, mutilated and recalcitrant objects, thought must, to gain anything at all, prefer the latter. The choice presents itself because the identifying mode of thinking is not merely a blend or balance of subject and object, but also contains the assumption of the subject’s ability to control whatever aspect of the object it wants by thought alone. Splitting the identity apart thus means reading a limit into the subject. What is really objectionable in identifying thinking is not the imbalance of subject and object—symmetry is a formalistic aesthetic criterion and has nothing to do with the matter itself—, but the way in which the assumption of total knowledge of the object immediately translates into control of the object, i.e., into instrumental reason. The move to instrumental reason can be plainly seen in Lukács’s conclusion in the quotation given: as soon as the proletariat has consciousness of itself as an identical subject-object, its theory become practical and it can exert influence on the object (merely itself), almost by default. Negative dialectics therefore is not the “restoration” of a mythical balance between subject and object according to some worn-out aesthetic schema, but rather the attempt to divert instrumental reason by reminding it of the object’s remainder: that in the object that is not thought. Thus, “critique of identity that has been carried through

⁸³ GS, vol. 6, p. 24, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 12.

⁸⁴ GS, vol. 6, p. 185, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 184.

casts about for the preponderance of the object.”⁸⁵ Subjective philosophy is no longer possible once it is admitted that the mind does not have the power to change practice merely by reflecting on itself and its activity, since the subject is not at one with the totality of conditions for its actions. The existentialist attempt to get rid of the reified with a “doctrine of action”⁸⁶ sacrifices knowledge to the arbitrary will of the subject:

The liquefaction of everything thing-like without a remainder regressed to a subjectivism of the pure act and hypostatized mediation as immediacy. Pure immediacy and fetishism are equally untrue. The insistence on immediacy as opposed to reification relinquishes the moment of otherness in dialectic, as Hegel’s institutionalism clearly comprehended, and this is just as arbitrary as the dialectic in the later Hegel’s practice, though, that does not let anything fixed and permanent beyond it stand in its way.⁸⁷

Adorno’s point here is that an unstoppable total dialectic is no less arbitrary and subjective than the existentialist doctrine of action. Neither allows a moment of otherness, which would be beyond human being. Sartre, in declaring, “there is no universe other than a human universe, the universe of human subjectivity,”⁸⁸ exchanges the discovery of what would be other for a world of “values” and “meaning” that human beings invent for themselves.⁸⁹ Yet these invented values do not get around the problem of reification, but in fact support the commodity form. For what is capitalism but a universe of invented values?

Negative dialectics cannot be a solution to the general “problem” of reification, as Lukács claims for Hegelian dialectics.⁹⁰ This is not to say that negative dialectics necessarily

⁸⁵ GS, vol. 6, p. 184, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 183.

⁸⁶ Jean-Paul Sartre, *L’existentialisme est un humanisme*, présenté par Arlette Elkaim-Sartre (s.l.: Gallimard, 1996), p. 78 as translated by Bernard Frechtman, “The Humanism of Existentialism,” in *Essays in Existentialism*, ed. Wade Baskin (New York: Carol Publishing, 1990), pp. 31-62, here p. 62.

⁸⁷ GS, vol. 6, p. 367f., or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 374f.

⁸⁸ Sartre, *L’existentialisme est un humanisme*, p. 76 as translated, “The Humanism of Existentialism,” p. 61.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 74 as translated, “The Humanism of Existentialism,” p. 60.

⁹⁰ This is a danger for Gillian Rose’s account of Adorno’s theory of reification in *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978). In referring to the “non-reified concepts of critical theory,” where “something is non-reified when the concept is identical with

takes the commodity structure, which the thing-in-itself encodes, as a permanent feature of reality. But for the time being, thought cannot do without the petrified, congealed, mindless, accepted and established element. This is not to say that philosophy must therefore stand in collusion with capitalism. Although universally dissolving the commodity form is beyond the scope of philosophical practice, philosophy does have the capacity to withdraw its tacit support of the commodity form. Furthermore, if philosophy is to continue as philosophy, it *must* withdraw its support of the commodity form.

The universal delusional context, which goes well beyond reification, raises the question as to how philosophy, which is essentially concerned with the truth, can even be possible. The very working materials of philosophy divide into antinomies, whose sides are equally convincing. Delusion thus seems structural and inescapable. It may be recalled that it was in the understanding of these antinomies as an established existential reality and not something historically produced that Lukács located philosophy's adherence to bourgeois class interests:

We drew attention...to the antinomies (between subject and object, freedom and necessity, individual and society, form and content, etc.) to which [bourgeois] thought necessarily led. It is important to realise at this point that although bourgeois thought only landed in these antinomies after the very greatest mental exertions, it yet accepted their existential basis as self-evident, as a simply unquestionable reality. Which is to say: bourgeois thought entered into an unmediated relationship with reality as it was given.⁹¹

But while Lukács understands dialectics as the way of effectively getting rid of the reification of these categories, Adorno understands dialectics as a way to rescue their content.

its object," she suggests that Adorno had overcome reification in fact (ibid., p. 47). But the concepts of critical theory are not something wholly other than the concepts of the individual (social) sciences from which they are taken. This is how the concepts of critical theory are able to point beyond themselves toward changing social practices. That the concepts of critical theory do not automatically rid their objects of reification shows that something is still lying unabsorbed by these concepts. Therefore, these concepts are not identical with their objects, as Rose claims. It is Idealist to speak of a non-reified concept in a world of reified objects.

⁹¹ Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, p. 339f. as translated, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 156.

When Kant was faced with the philosophical debates concerning the finitude or infinitude of the universe, the divisibility or indivisibility of matter, the freedom or unfreedom of the will, the existence or non-existence of God, he did not immediately argue for one side, but asked how these antinomies came about. The ‘natural’ need of conditioned reason to think the unconditional landed philosophy in these precise battles:

Now we have before us the entire dialectical play of the cosmological ideas, which do not permit an object congruent to them to be given in any possible experience, which, indeed, do not even permit reason to think them in agreement with the universal laws of experience, but which have not been thought up arbitrarily; reason, rather, in continuous progression of the empirical synthesis, has been led to them necessarily when it tries to liberate from every condition, and to grasp in its unconditioned totality, that which can always be determined only conditionally in accordance with rules of experience.⁹²

Experience would solve the antinomies, but when do we have experiences of the outer and inner limits of space or of the ultimate causes of our actions or of the universe? Reason has in Kant’s view a natural propensity to seek release from the bounds of experience. He goes on to say that the number of antinomies is limited because there is a certain structure to these extravagant claims. They consist in taking what is really subjective and therefore limited, the forms of intuition, time and space, for objective and total, as if they were not conditions for the possibility of our experience, but things that we could get outside of to see in their entirety. The departure from experience necessarily results in contradiction.

In his interpretation of Kant’s dialectic of pure reason, Hegel expresses the source of the contradiction somewhat differently than does Kant. He expresses the flight from experience as abstraction, indifference to the thing thought and a refusal on the part of the

⁹² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), A462/B490. The pagination given here and throughout, with “A” and “B” editions noted, corresponds to the Academy of Sciences edition of Kant’s works (*Kant’s Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin: G. Reimer/ W. de Gruyter, 1902-) and appears in the margins of Guyer and Wood’s translation.

understanding to work on its objects. Ready-made cognition inevitably produces contradiction:

In modern times it was, more than any other, Kant who resuscitated the name of Dialectic, and restored it to its post of honour. He did it, as we have seen (§ 48), by working out the Antinomies of the reason. The problem of these Antinomies is no mere subjective piece of work oscillating between one set of grounds and another; it really serves to show that every abstract proposition of understanding, taken precisely as it is given, naturally veers round into its opposite.⁹³

Like Kant, Hegel emphasizes the objectivity of the antinomies.

Neither Kant nor Hegel considers the underlying conditions of contradictions—whether abstraction, indifference to the thing thought, a pretension to capture the totality or the attempt to flee experience—to be the truth. Nor does either thinker draw a relativistic or skeptical conclusion from the objectivity of the contradiction. Both thinkers believe that philosophy, if it is to be knowledge, must resolve the antinomies. Kant even speaks of an obligation to resolve them:

Now I assert that among all speculative cognition, transcendental philosophy has the special property that there is no question at all dealing with an object given by pure reason that is insoluble by this very same human reason; and that no plea of unavoidable ignorance and the unfathomable depth of the problem can release us from the obligation of answering it thoroughly and completely; for the very same concept that puts us in a position to ask the question must also make us competent to answer it, since the object is not encountered at all outside the concept (as it is in the case of justice and injustice).⁹⁴

Kant asserts that it is objectively clear that the antinomies do admit of solution. This is because transcendental philosophy is indeed concerned with an objective order. The antinomies are concerned with questions involving time, space and causality. Pure reason does not run up against the element of otherness, the thing-in-itself, as it would in ordinary cognition, because time, space and causality cannot be things-in-themselves. For that reason

⁹³ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 8, p. 174 as translated, *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, p. 117.

⁹⁴ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A477/B505.

Kant judges that such questions may be “unknown to us, but not on that account impossible.”⁹⁵

Like Kant, Hegel names the resolution of the antinomies to be the task of speculative reason, which “apprehends the unity of terms (propositions) in their opposition—the affirmative, which is involved in their disintegration [Auflösung, solution] and in their transition.”⁹⁶ Hegel is in agreement with Kant that, for this to be possible, the object of the dialectic must lie entirely within the concept. Hegel gives different supports than does Kant, however, for the conviction that the object must lie entirely within the concept for the antinomies to be solved. According to Hegel, it is possible for mind alone to solve the antinomies not because the object of the dialectic has the peculiarity of corresponding to no experience, but it is rather because for something to be real is already for it to have its concept. In other words, there is no thing “in itself” that could not also be “for us.” While in the Kantian philosophy the object of the dialectic is exceptional because the object would normally have an unknown side, its “in itself,” for Hegel the reality that falls outside the concept “would be a nothing”:

It is not just that the subject matter, the objective and the subjective world, *ought* to be in principle *congruent* with the idea; the two are themselves rather the congruence of concept and reality; a reality that does not correspond to the concept is mere *appearance* [bloße *Erscheinung*], something subjective, accidental, arbitrary, something which is not the truth. When it is said that no subject matter to be found in experience which is perfectly congruent with the *idea*, the latter is opposed to the actual as a subjective standard; but there is no saying what anything actual might possibly *be in truth*, if its concept is not in it and its objectivity does not measure up to this concept; it would then be a nothing.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Ibid., A478/B506.

⁹⁶ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 8, p. 176, as translated except where indicated in square brackets, *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, p. 119.

⁹⁷ Hegel, *Werke*, vols. 5-6, *Wissenschaft der Logik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969), p. 464 as translated by George di Giovanni, *The Science of Logic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 671f..

Hegel sees the resolution of the contradiction as necessary if philosophy is to avoid skepticism. The skeptic wrongly ignores the total reality that is already in the universals that the dialectic has produced:

In contradistinction to mere Scepticism...philosophy does not remain content with the purely negative result of Dialectic. The sceptic mistakes the true value of his result, when he supposes it to be no more than a negation pure and simple. For the negative which emerges as the result of dialectic is, because a result, at the same time the positive: it contains what it results from, absorbed into itself, and made part of its own nature. Thus conceived, however, the dialectical stage has the features characterizing the third grade of logical truth, the speculative form, or form of positive reason.⁹⁸

Once dialectic successfully shows the illusion of independence and unity that each abstract concept, taken as given, has, it must take the additional step of resolving the contradictions that have come forth as evidence against this independence and this unity. Hegel perhaps views the negative result of dialectic as already positive because he bases his dialectic loosely on that of Plato, whose negative results include not only confusion, the relinquishment of finite views and removal from particulars, but also the universal:

The dialectic that goes further than this consists in taking the universal that emerges from the confounding of the finite, in defining it within itself and resolving the antitheses within it. The outcome is the resolution of contradiction, it is the affirmative; this is the universal defined as what inwardly resolves—and has resolved—the contradictions or antitheses, and it is thus defined as the concrete, as what is inwardly concrete. In keeping with this definition, the dialectic is Platonic in the proper sense; it is speculative dialectic because it does not culminate in a negative result but exhibits the unification of the opposites that have nullified themselves.⁹⁹

The same “negative” result of the dialectic, the universal concept, turns out to be what is capable of resolving the two sides. Ultimately, the concept resolves all contradictions and grasps all of reality, leaving no merely contingent or subjective appearance within it.

⁹⁸ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 8, p. 176 as translated, *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, p. 119.

⁹⁹ Hegel, *Werke*, vols. 18-20, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971), vol. 19, p. 65 as translated by R. F. Brown and J. M. Stewart (with the assistance of H. S. Harris), *Lectures on the History of Philosophy, 1925-6*, ed. Robert F. Brown, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), vol. 2, p. 197.

Adorno denies that knowledge completely engulfs any one of its objects.¹⁰⁰ Hegel is incorrect to dismiss the reality that falls outside the concept—the arbitrary, the contingent, the subjective, the phenomenal—as “mere *appearance*,” “nothing,” the untrue, that will one day be concept.¹⁰¹ This is to deny the need of otherness that, as Lukács has pointed out, already forms Hegel’s dialectic of nature. Truth does not show up within the concept, according to Adorno: “But the truth hit upon by concepts beyond their abstract range can have no arena other than what the concept suppressed, disregarded and discarded.”¹⁰² According to Hegel’s Idealist model, truth is the correspondence of subject and object, of the concept and the conceptless—ultimately, the rational concept, the absolute Idea. Marx, however, explains that, in order for us to have a concept of production in general, which covers the earliest production up to the most recent, we must cut away qualities that are specific to production in certain eras:

Production in general is an abstraction, but a reasonable abstraction in so far as it actually emphasises and defines the common aspects and thus spares us the need of repetition. Yet this *general aspect*, or the common element which is brought to light by comparison, is itself multiply divided and diverges into different determinations. Some features are found in all epochs, others are common to a few epochs. The most modern epoch and the most ancient will have [certain] determinations in common.¹⁰³

The correspondence of the concept and what it covers does not mean that the concept correctly grasps true reality; it means that the concept has abstracted and suppressed certain determinations for the sake of convenience. Adorno advances that truth is played out not in the common elements that the concept brings together, but rather in the diverging elements that the concept cut away *because* they diverged. Certainly, concepts are the means by which truth

¹⁰⁰ GS, vol. 6, p. 25, or translated, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 14.

¹⁰¹ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 6, p. 464 as translated by G. di Giovanni, *The Science of Logic*, p. 671; p. 672.

¹⁰² GS, vol. 6, p. 21, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 9f.

¹⁰³ Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 7 as translated, *Collected Works*, vol. 28, p. 23.

is hit upon. But the concept that corresponds to reality does not overcome abstraction, since, in order for the concept to cover an ever-changing reality, it necessarily has to abstract determinations that belong to merely one era or place.

While Adorno is in agreement with Kant that knowledge must leave a place for otherness,¹⁰⁴ he would not assert that, because pure reason has created the antinomies all by itself, it needs to solve them all by itself. Not only pure reason, but also the social order, in which all needs are fulfilled through exchange, creates antinomies. Abstraction, indifference, a pretension to totality, flight from experience—the errors that generate contradictions in philosophy are not absolutely different from those that generate contradictions in reality. Conceptual thought takes on an abstract character because abstraction was already the norm—what resulted when work, life, activity, feeling and suffering were rendered into wages insufficient to express or even compensate the time lived.¹⁰⁵ Reification and exchange give rise to abstraction, rather than the inverse. According to Adorno, it is not true that the object of dialectic is not encountered at all outside the concept: it is encountered every day in the unjust exchange of commodities. If reason thinks that it can conceive of the totality of causes in order to answer the question of the possibility of human freedom—if the perception of the totality of time, from the outside, as if it were a “thing,”¹⁰⁶ seems possible for it—, it is because in exchange society the mind must persistently perceive time as a thing. But time is not a thing.

¹⁰⁴ GS, vol. 6, p. 185, or translated, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 184.

¹⁰⁵ In his biography, *Adorno*, Stefan Müller-Doohm traces Adorno's recognition of the social basis of Kant's philosophy to Alfred Sohn-Rethel: “Adorno did not jettison Sohn-Rethel's chief findings, . . . namely that the exchange of commodity values as mediated by money was the precondition of an objective process of abstraction that became in its turn the precondition of the abstract nature of conceptual thought.” Stefan Müller-Doohm, *Adorno: Eine Biographie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003), p. 338 as translated by Rodney Livingstone in *Adorno: A Biography* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2005), p. 222. See the famous “Nottingham Letter,” Sohn-Rethel to Adorno, Paris and Nottingham, November 4-12, 1936, in Theodor W. Adorno and Alfred Sohn-Rethel, *Briefwechsel, 1936-1969*, herausgegeben von Christoph Gödde (Munich: edition text + kritik, 1991), pp. 13-30.

¹⁰⁶ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A492/B520.

The problem is no longer that the mind ventures beyond the bounds of experience, but rather that experience has shrunk. Part of what is now considered, so to speak, “in itself” should be in theory knowable because it was once experience—“for us.” The task of reason is not to resolve the antinomies, but to avoid creating them through the reification of what is really “for us.”

The abstraction implicit in the correspondence of concept and reality precludes the positive dialectic, the resolution of the antinomies in thought, by the concept. The true resolution of the antinomies would amount to nothing less than ending the unfair exchange of commodities mediated by money, as well as the ambient abstraction and general indifference that enlarge its charmed circle. It seems, then, that philosophy is condemned both to total resignation in the face of the contradiction and to absolute collusion with exchange society. On one hand, to resolve contradictions in the idea is to abstract qualities diverging from the concept, and so to adopt a practice that is a mere result of exchange society—so, contingent and transitory, rather than necessary and timeless; on the other hand, to ignore the contradictions is to ignore the signs of a false world.

Given the dilemma between resignation and collusion with exchange society, philosophers, it seems, should put aside their critical vocations and launch a direct assault against exchange society. Yet the very implication of unjust exchange in metaphysical questions, which prohibits resolving the antinomies in thought, at the same time permits philosophy to engage with unjust exchange in reality—without however leaving behind its medium of concepts. Philosophy can withdraw its actual tacit support of exchange society by ceasing to perform the mental acts that exchange society produces: abstraction, indifferent bracketing of the thing thought, totalizing thinking and disregard for experience. While

philosophy cannot single-handedly vanquish them, it can show these mental acts to be false not only through the real *suffering* they cause, but also through the antinomies that they also happen to produce. For an Idealist such as Hegel, *knowledge* can be squeezed from suffering, which is why he, in the backward manner typical of men of his time, puts knowledge, the knowledge that Greek ethical life has collapsed, over and above the life of a woman, Antigone, whose death is supposed to produce this knowledge, thus providing another rung on the ladder to the absolute standpoint.¹⁰⁷ For a materialist such as Adorno, it is barbaric to think that knowledge makes good suffering; suffering is an evil in itself that puts knowledge on trial.¹⁰⁸ In order not to relinquish all possibility of truth, materialist philosophy *must* aim at disrupting those conditions that have created and continue to sustain suffering: the context of pervasive, socially necessary illusion that is exchange society. In such a context of universal delusion, there can be no existing truths, lying available for the taking. When truth can no longer be an affirmation, philosophy must turn to the negative work of weakening ideological supports.

Philosophy does not have to venture outside its own domain of conceptual reasoning to find signs of the damage wrought by socially-prescribed abstraction and indifference: it may find them in contradictions. For Adorno, not only the Kantian antinomies, but also inconsistencies in any of the most developed spiritual works, are signs of ambient abstraction. Thus, bringing contradictions to consciousness and thinking them through inculcate exchange society, which overproduces abstraction to mask systematic uncompensated and even

¹⁰⁷ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 3, *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969), p. 348, or translated by A. V. Miller, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, with analysis of text and foreword by J. N. Findlay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 284 ¶ 470.

¹⁰⁸ See GS, vol. 6, p. 354, or translated, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 361.

unnecessary toil. The “formal thinking” disparaged by Hegel is actually more profoundly reactionary than he believes:

But formal thinking makes identity its law, lets the contradictory content that it has before it fall into the sphere of representation, in space and time, where the contradictory is held in *external moments*, next to and following each other, parading before consciousness without reciprocal contact. The firm principle that formal thinking lays down for itself here is that contradiction cannot be thought. But in fact the thought of contradiction is the essential moment of the concept. Formal thinking does in fact think it, only it at once looks away from it and stating its principle it only passes over from it into abstract negation.¹⁰⁹

The identifying thinking that expels contradiction from the mind not only fails to grasp an imperative of concept formation, as Hegel claims here, but it also denies the painful consequences of abstraction. A philosophy concerned with what has made the world false will have to work with contradictions in some way. In other words, it will have to adopt a dialectical method for at least part of the time. Resolving the contradictions in thought has been ruled out. With positive dialectics ruined by the abstraction it implies, and abstract, formal thought rendered false through its collusion with commodity exchange, the responsibly practiced philosophy remaining is negative dialectics.¹¹⁰ Adorno thus proposes the following handling of contradiction:

¹⁰⁹ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 6, p. 562f. as translated by G. di Giovanni, *The Science of Logic*, p. 745.

¹¹⁰ J. M. Bernstein, “Negative Dialectic as Fate: Adorno and Hegel,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Adorno*, ed. Tom Huhn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 19-50. Adopting negative dialectics in no way commits Adorno to Idealism, contrary to the claims of Bernstein, who asserts that “Adorno was a Hegelian” and that Adorno “accepts the rudiments of Hegelian idealism” (*ibid.*, p. 19). First, Bernstein sees in Adorno’s denial of an absolute beginning evidence of Idealism. The denial of an absolute beginning, however, is nothing other than a denial of immediacy, for to follow a Cartesian method of ordering thought, one starts with the simplest, the immediate. Mediation is not specific to Idealism: Marx’s materialism works to dissolve the apparent immediate reality of value and reveal it as really mediated—as the result of human relations. Some reference to mind would be more relevant to a notion of Idealism than the denial of an absolute first. During the discussions at the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, Adorno himself described Idealism as follows (in my translation): “That philosophy is Idealist which either simply attributes being to mind or else subordinates all being, insofar as it is not mind, to mind. What is understood here by ‘mind’ and ‘being’ differs according to the respective philosophies at issue.” Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Leo Löwenthal et al., “Wissenschaft und Krise. Differenz zwischen Idealismus und Materialismus. Diskussionen über Themen zur Vorlesung Max Horkheimers,” Meeting of February 19, 1932, in Max Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, herausgegeben von Alfred Schmidt und Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, 19 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1985-1997), vol. 12, p. 387.

[The objective contradiction] carries more weight than it did for Hegel, who was the first to set his sights on it. Once the vehicle of total identification, objective contradiction turns into the organon of the impossibility of total identification. Dialectical cognition is not supposed to construe contradictions from above and advance by way of their solution, like its opponents reckon it does, although Hegel's logic proceeds in this way every now and then. Instead, it is incumbent on dialectical cognition to investigate the inadequacy of thought and thing, to experience it in the thing. Dialectics does not have to fear the reproach that it obsesses over the *idée fixe* of objective antagonism when all the while the thing is pacified; nothing individual finds peace in the un-pacified whole. The aporetic concepts of philosophy are marks of what is objectively unresolved, not simply unresolved by thinking. To load contradictions with the guilt for intractable speculative stubbornness would shift the blame; shame demands that philosophy not repress Georg Simmel's insight: it is astonishing how little the history of philosophy says about the sufferings of humanity.¹¹¹

Once they are understood to be objectively irreconcilable by speculation alone, contradictions become clues to what makes life false. As clues to real systematic misidentifications not only of living labour and wages, but of minds and their objects, contradictions may incriminate the system of identity. Adorno's adoption of negative dialectics does not mean that he utterly repugns speculative thinking, as Gillian Rose contends.¹¹² He only rejects the narrow Hegelian definition of speculative thought, whose specific nature "consists solely in grasping the opposed moments in their unity."¹¹³ If speculative thought amounted to nothing more than this

Adorno in no way accepted Idealism, and in fact the collective project to arrive at a clear concept of Idealism went precisely to develop a theory free of all idealist baggage. On this, see Pierre-François Noppen, "Marx, Horkheimer, Adorno et le projet d'une théorie post-hégélienne de la dialectique," (PhD diss., Université Paris IV – Sorbonne, 2007), pp. 297-301.

Bernstein's other piece of evidence for Adorno's supposed Idealism would be the latter's "speculative identities" ("Negative Dialectic as Fate," p. 19). Bernstein claims that for Adorno "history and nature are one," just as "philosophy ... and art ... are one" (ibid., p. 20). His evidence for these "identities" is dialectical method itself, in which "two apparently opposing items are shown to be internally related to one another, to somehow belong together" (ibid., p. 19). Bernstein here conflates the concept of relation with the concept of identity, while ignoring Adorno's numerous interdictions against the unification of art and philosophy (see, for example, GS, vol. 6, p. 26 or, translated, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 15). By distinguishing the negative dialectic, which only mediates the terms, from the positive dialectic, which undertakes their identification through speculation, one can clearly see what Adorno took from Hegel. Adorno's *anti*-idealism compelled him to remain with the negative dialectic: he saw the actual state of contradiction between the terms as belonging to objective conditions, not to mind.

¹¹¹ GS, vol. 6, p. 156, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 153.

¹¹² Gillian Rose, "From Speculative to Dialectical Thinking—Hegel and Adorno," in *Judaism and Modernity: Philosophical Essays* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), pp. 53-63.

¹¹³ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 5, p. 168 as translated by G. di Giovanni, *The Science of Logic*, p. 122.

“positive dialectic,” Adorno would indeed reject it entirely. As Hegel himself acknowledges, the reconciliation and resolution of the contradiction is “the *ideality* of the distinct moments.”¹¹⁴ Grasping the opposing moments in their unity is obviously incompatible with a materialist philosophy that recognizes the reality of what does not have its concept—just by the power of those appearances to mould lives and cause unnecessary suffering. The concept of speculative thinking need not be restricted to the definition that Hegel offers of it. While speculative thought today cannot reconcile contradictions, its hope for reconciliation may take the form of breaking through the *illusions* that throw up contradictions in the first place: “The power of what prevails erects façades, which consciousness comes up against. It must strive to knock through them. That alone would wrest the postulate from the depths of ideology. The speculative moment survives in such resistance.”¹¹⁵ The “postulate” to which Adorno refers here is the “demand for identity,” which he associates with a self-defeating philosophy that “would imitate art.”¹¹⁶ But neither contradiction nor identity would be true reconciliation: “Utopia would be above identity and above contradiction; a cooperation of various people and miscellaneous things.”¹¹⁷ Adorno’s resistance toward the contradictory world does not take the form of a resolution of contradictions, but rather that of an ideology critique that holds out hope for something better. Adorno’s philosophy can be called speculative because, like Hegel’s and Kant’s, it does not give up on the *hope* of reconciliation.¹¹⁸ Yet this hope is,

¹¹⁴ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 5, p. 168 as translated by G. di Giovanni, *The Science of Logic*, p. 121.

¹¹⁵ GS, vol. 6, p. 29, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 17.

¹¹⁶ GS, vol. 6, p. 26, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 15.

¹¹⁷ GS, vol. 6, p. 153, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 151.

¹¹⁸ Simon Jarvis sets the speculative element in Adorno’s thought somewhat differently in his “What is Speculative Thinking?,” *Revue internationale de Philosophie*, n° 227, (2004): pp. 69-83. Jarvis claims that something of the tradition of speculative thinking survives in Adorno’s work where the expression of *suffering* is concerned: “Thinking, powerless to make suffering go away, yet has this single freedom: to express, without legitimizing, *its* suffering. That is where ‘speculative’ thinking survives” (ibid, p. 78; emphasis added). Suffering

paradoxically, most illuminating, for Adorno, when the work with contradiction comes up against the limits of mind, leading to an experience of which Hegel and Kant denied the possibility: the encounter of the object of the dialectic outside of the concept—or, as Adorno puts it, the experience of the thing's inadequacy with the concept. For negative dialectics starts with this: it resists dismissing as “nothing” the waste laid to lives by the unpredictability of the economy and of repressive, discriminatory regimes.

is indeed key to Adorno's notion of speculative thought; however, he does not intend so much the suffering *of thinking* alone. As his linkage of suffering to the unreflective automatism of reification suggests, it is suffering provoked by *thoughtlessness* that really concerns him. More importantly, Adorno emphasizes the need of speculative thinking to break through the social illusions that produce and reproduce suffering. Jarvis's concluding appeal to Michel Henry's material phenomenology (*ibid.*, p. 83) ignores the impulse of Adorno's speculative thinking not to persist in the phenomenon of suffering, but to determine and criticize the conditions that cause avoidable pain and distress. It should be noted that Henry, in his reference to the Greek of his title “Pathos-avec,” takes the notion of “souffrance” in a much larger sense than we usually understand by “suffering” (*Phénoménologie matérielle*, Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1990, p. 137). Suffering for Henry does not necessarily imply pain, negativity, displeasure or unhappiness, as it does for Adorno (GS, vol. 6, p. 202 or, in English, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 202). While Henry is ultimately concerned with conceptualizing a community based on a shared reality, the affectivity of all living things, Adorno is concerned with criticizing the social structures that do violence to human beings, nature and inanimate objects. And while Henry's “communauté pathétique” assumes a fundamental state of compassion amongst all sensing things (*Phénoménologie matérielle*, p. 179), Adorno points to the structural lack of compassion that must have been in place for Auschwitz to happen at all, but whose causes his philosophy seeks to unriddle and criticize. Jarvis's contention that the speculative turn of negative dialectics “requires” a material phenomenology (“What is Speculative Thinking?,” p. 83) becomes all the more questionable when one considers that Henry bases his phenomenology on a primitive, non-signifying “Fond de la vie” in which no subject-object distinction is made and in which each living thing experiences himself “identically” even while losing himself in the other (*Phénoménologie matérielle*, p. 178). It is precisely these identifying tendencies with their reversion to mythology that Adorno's speculative thinking resists. In “The Actuality of Philosophy,” Adorno himself is overtly critical of the material phenomenology of Scheler, which Henry emphatically takes up:

The transition to “material phenomenology” has only apparently succeeded, and at the price of that certainty of the findings which alone provided the legitimacy of the phenomenological method. If in Max Scheler's development the eternal, basic truths alternate in sudden changes, to be exiled finally into the powerlessness of transcendence, then one can certainly recognize the tirelessly questioning impulse of a thinking which takes part in truth only in moving from error to error. But Scheler's puzzling and disquieting development needs to be understood more rigorously than as the fate of an individual mind. On the contrary, it indicates that the transition of phenomenology from the formal-idealist to the material and objective region cannot succeed with continuity or total assurance, that instead the images of transhistorical truth, which at one time [Scheler's] philosophy projected so seductively onto the background of closed, Catholic theory, became confused and disintegrated as soon as they were sought for in just that reality, the comprehension of which was in fact precisely what constituted the program of “material phenomenology.”

GS, vol. 1, pp. 328-329 as translated by Benjamin Snow [?], “The Actuality of Philosophy,” *Telos*, no. 31 (Spring 1977): p. 122.

One might raise Hegel's objection against the negative dialectic: that it terminates in skepticism. Thought that did nothing but blindly, obsessively maintain contradictions in their opposition would be skeptical, as Hegel says. If thought were nothing but negative dialectic, no truth claim could be made, just as if thought were nothing but positive dialectic, it would automatically set everyone (or no one but a fictitious world spirit) on the reasonable path of knowledge, which would be self-evident. But Adorno (and Hegel) must deny that dialectic is "total" if knowledge is not to be tautology.¹¹⁹ Indeed, the Hegel of the *Phenomenology* criticizes Skepticism precisely on the grounds of its denial of otherness:

Dialectic as a negative movement, just as it immediately *is*, at first appears to consciousness as something which has it at its mercy, and which does not have its source in consciousness itself. As Scepticism, on the other hand, it is a moment of self-consciousness, to which it does not *happen* that its truth and reality vanish without its knowing how, but which, in the certainty of its freedom, *makes* the "other" which claims to be real, vanish.¹²⁰

Hegel here *contrasts* Skepticism to "dialectic as a negative movement": Skepticism's positivity lies in its certainty that self-consciousness is free, that it is really able to detach itself from all the contradictory and confusing appearances that present to it, and maintain its attitude of doubt. The Skeptic simply resists whatever is put before him, systematically opposing any assertion to come forward with one of equal weight. But in the end such abstract negation can only support the status quo: indeed, Sextus Empiricus asserts that, "attending to what is apparent, we live in accordance with everyday observances [kata tēn biōtikēn tērēsin], without holding opinions."¹²¹ Skepticism resigns itself to whatever customs and laws exist

¹¹⁹ GS, vol. 6, p. 398, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 406.

¹²⁰ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 3, p. 160 as translated, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 124.

¹²¹ Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrōneioi hypotypōsei*, vol. 1 of *Opera*, recensuit Hermannus Mutschmann (Leipzig: In aedibus B. G. Teubneri, 1912), p. 10, <https://archive.org/details/rsoperarecensuit01sextuoft>, as translated by Julia Annas and Jonathan Barnes, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 9, book 1, chap. xi [I 23].

because the “causal principle of Scepticism...is the hope of becoming tranquil.”¹²² To the Skeptic, the real error lies not in the deception of the senses by a contradictory world but in the judgement made about it, hence the Pyrrhic maxim, “I determine nothing.”¹²³ Thus Sceptics, even while attributing to consciousness an absolute power of resistance against deceptive, changing reality, simultaneously forego the chance to criticize specific features of that reality. Skeptical self-consciousness consequently falls fully under the sway of whatever exists: for example, it “affirms the nullity of ethical principles, and lets itself be governed by these very principles.”¹²⁴ Negative dialectics, by contrast, does not affirm the absolute freedom of self-consciousness. Nor does it reduce freedom to the abstention from judgement. Negative dialectics determines *something*—namely, the context of illusion. The determination of illusion so destroys the charge of skepticism:

An entrepreneur who does not want to be left behind in the competition must calculate such that the unpaid portion of the return made by alien labour falls to him as profit, and he must think that in so doing he is exchanging like for like—labour against the costs of its reproduction; but to demonstrate why this objectively necessary consciousness is objectively false is just as stringent.¹²⁵

As this particular case makes manifest, dialectical work with contradictions aims at determining the universal delusional context in some way. Arriving at the specificity of the entrepreneur’s delusion, namely that his profit is actually his rightful pay for reproducing the existing labour conditions, which are dreadful and even dangerous, saves us from the blanket skeptical point of view. Not necessarily absolutely everything is to be doubted, but rather the specific illusion must be carved out of the whole—here, the entrepreneur’s delusion that the

¹²² Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrôneioi hypotypôsei*, vol. 1, p. 6 as translated, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* p. 5, book 1, chap. vi [I 12].

¹²³ Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrôneioi hypotypôsei*, vol. 1, p. 49 as translated, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, p. 49, book 1, chap. xxii [I 197].

¹²⁴ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 3, p. 162 as translated, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 125.

¹²⁵ GS, vol. 6, p. 47, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 37.

mere reproduction of existing conditions is worthy of some reward. Furthermore, this determination of the illusion clearly points toward some action—namely, the abolition of unfair exchange. Adorno therefore does not engage in the abstract negation of whatever proposition presents itself, but pursues contradictions in order to come to the *determinate negation* of some aspect of the universal conditions of falsehood. The Pyrrhic Sceptics themselves would have come to this conclusion had they pushed their dialectic far enough, because they must have at least determined the concept of *determinacy* to have been able to negate it in their refusal of it. Hegel’s critique goes exactly in this sense.¹²⁶ Thus it is mysterious that he himself was later so closed to the notion of negative dialectic.

The dissolution of a particular delusion indeed permits one to speak of truth even within the universal delusional context. As Adorno advanced in conversation with Horkheimer, “There is no other measure of truth but the determinacy of the dissolution of illusion.”¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 3, p. 161, or translated, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 125.

¹²⁷ Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Leo Löwenthal et al., “Diskussionen über Positivismus und materialistische Dialektik,” Meeting of April 5, 1939, in Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 12, p. 490.

{Chapter II} The aesthetic illusion of Robinsonades, which gives the *result* of a historical process to be *original first nature*, transfers into economic theory, which gives labour originally and naturally to be a thing independent of social ties. The total delusional context of reification is this illusion become objective social necessity. Artworks, as products of labour, participate in it.

The artwork seems no less illusory than reality: both have a share in generalized and necessary aesthetic illusion. The artwork, however, itself is illusion as well as its opposite. On one hand, it deludes itself in thinking that it can just reject out of hand the context of delusion under which it falls. On the other hand, it really is illusion that it emphatically gives itself to be. On one hand, it is awake to truth, rejecting the false reality that everything else accepts. On the other hand, it is also false, no less an illusion for having rejected illusion. Artworks so contain illusion and disillusionment within themselves. Directing comparison inward, asking to be judged by their own criteria, autonomous artworks deny that the dubious external reality beyond them constitutes the standard of truth. What separates art from empirical reality is the relation between what the artwork *comes on the scene* as and what it *is*:

Today every element of aesthetic illusion bears aesthetic inconsistency, contradictions between what the artwork appears as [als was das Kunstwerk auftritt] and what it is. Its appearance [Auftreten] makes the claim to essentiality; the artwork makes good on this claim only negatively, but at the same time the gesture of something more, a pathos that even the most radically unimpassioned work cannot relinquish, is inherent in the positivity of its peculiar appearance [Auftretens].¹

¹ GS, vol. 7, p. 156, or prefer to my translation here that of Robert Hullot-Kentor, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 101. Here I have rendered “auftritt” as “appears” and “Auftreten” as “appearance,” thus using the translations usually reserved for “erscheint” and “Erscheinung.” Adorno is playing on the multiple meanings of “Auftreten.” On one hand, he evokes the Hegelian opposition of appearance (Erscheinung) and essence. On the other hand, he evokes the Marxian opposition of exchange value and use value within the commodity. For Auftreten is also appearance in the sense of “dramatic appearance,” and “als was das Kunstwerk auftritt” can thus also be rendered as “what role the artwork plays.” It is a question here of the artwork’s function in the whole world of values versus its intrinsic quality. Adorno intimates that aesthetic inconsistency, the split between function and quality, is the contemporary artwork’s negation of commodification, which depends on the pretense that the function *is* quality—or, in other words, that exchange value can be consumed.

In the long passage leading up to this expression of the general form of aesthetic contradiction, Adorno lays out the transformation that has resulted in the contradictory music of “today.” The “great music such as that of Beethoven,” by contrast, shows a play between opposites.² On one hand, the artwork is a “whole” that seeks to reduce its developments into what has already been heard—“motif or theme”—, taking refuge in “set definition”; on the other hand, it is made up of “differentiated partial forms” only, and is nothing but “pure Becoming” and “process”: the constant production of the new and unassimilated.³ These contradictions do not, however, remain on the level of the incomprehensible and merely paradoxical, but the great artworks relate the sides in a dynamic logic of mutual contestation. The tendency of the whole and the detail to contest one another in a process of mutual transformation may be termed their mediation.

The great music of Beethoven distinguishes itself from mere empirical reality by the mediated, autonomous relation of whole and part: “Only by dint of the separation from empirical reality, which allows art to shape the relation of whole and part according to its own need, does the artwork turn into Being raised to higher power.”⁴ In the twentieth century, however, art is less and less able to determine the relation between whole and part as it sees fit, so less able to retain its autonomy: society’s demand for unity creeps into the aesthetic sphere, resulting in the “culture industry.”⁵ Popular music might well exhibit outstanding

² GS, vol. 7, p. 154, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 100.

³ GS, vol. 7, p. 155, or prefer to my translations here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 101.

⁴ GS, vol. 7, p. 14, or prefer to my translations here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 4.

⁵ In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer and Adorno characterize modern culture as a system based on the “false identity of general and particular” (GS, vol. 3, p. 141, in my translation). The culture industry “kills both whole and parts” of the work because, “uncontrasted and unconnected, whole and detail bear the same traits” (GS, vol. 3, p. 147, in my translation). Deborah Cook has noted four characterizations of commodified culture that recur in Adorno’s work, all of which destroy whole-part mediation: “standardization, pseudo-individualism,

details, but these have no effect on the patterns, forms and genres numbly adopted. The use of past forms in itself does not make a work a mere product of the culture industry. When serious art music employs antiquated dance forms, reveilles, fiddle tunes, children's rounds and other tropes, these are fully decomposable and play into the construction of the piece, just like any other stable element. Their capacity both to break apart and go beyond themselves is what makes them capable of evoking a whole. The use that popular music makes of past forms is merely parasitic, according to Adorno. In his essay "On Popular Music," Adorno clarifies the distinction of mediated, autonomous use of past material from merely parasitic copying with reference to the third movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony in C Minor ("Allegro").⁶ While this movement adheres to the old minuet dance form in various respects—Adorno names its time signature, symmetry, contrasting themes, major trio and minor reprise, among others—, its specific deployment of the form has consequences for the whole symphony, of which it is only a part. The minuet refers less to some supposed original, pure minuet form buried in the past than it does to the movement that follows directly: "The whole movement is conceived as an introduction to the finale in order to create tremendous tension, not only by its threatening, foreboding expression but even more by the very way in which its formal development is handled."⁷ This tension is created largely by departures from the traditional minuet form. Adorno names two such innovations. Rather than introducing and developing each of the two themes separately, as tradition would dictate, Beethoven presents them in

schematization and stereotypes." Deborah Cook, *The Culture Industry Revisited: Theodor W. Adorno on Mass Culture* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), p. 39.

⁶ Theodor W. Adorno, with the assistance of George Simpson, "On Popular Music," in *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 437-469. The essay appeared originally in English in *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, 9 (1941), pp. 17-48. References here are to the Leppert volume.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 440.

quick succession and then puts them into dialogue. Furthermore, the second rather than the first theme ends up prevailing: “The end of the scherzo part is actually marked, not by the first, but by the second theme which has overwhelmed the first musical phrase.”⁸ In fact, the second theme is presented straightaway as the dominant one, as much by the vast dynamic contrast as by the piercing timbre of the horn, sounding like a call. In the development, the second theme proves to be a somewhat rude interlocutor, in places talking over the delicate first theme in a petty, sniping way.⁹ But the pre-eminence of the second theme here is not an arbitrary rebellion against protocol, for its repeated four-note motif is closely related to the opening four-note motif of the first movement. The opening unison figure thereby poses the enigma of the undecidable. G and E-flat could just as well be the mediant and tonic of E-flat major as they could be the dominant and mediant of C-minor. To the ear, the symphony’s first note, reproduced aright, could just as well fall on or off the beat. Adorno reads an accent into the note, which does in fact fall off the beat.¹⁰ Such an interpretation would create the impression of a downbeat and so intensify the ambiguity of the opening statement. An interpretation that raises the ambiguity of the opening statement also raises questions about the reality or unreality of it. After such an opening, the first movement seems more like the mind catastrophizing, a morbid imagination wildly multiplying consequences of its favourite idée fixe, than anything imminently life-threatening. The possibility of the initial four-note motif turning out major after all suggests that the spiralling terror of the minor movement is no brute

⁸ Ibid., p. 441.

⁹ Ludwig van Beethoven, *Symphony No. 5 in C minor, op. 67*, ed. Jonathan Del Mar (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2001) III, p. 48, mm. 101-108; mm. 111-114.

¹⁰ Theodor W. Adorno, *Zu einer Theorie der musikalischen Reproduktion: Aufzeichnungen, ein Entwurf und zwei Schemata*, herausgegeben von Henri Lonitz (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001), p. 99, translated by Wieland Hoban as *Towards a Theory of Musical Reproduction: Notes, a Draft and Two Schemata*, ed. Henri Lonitz (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2006), p. 75.

fact, but a certain projection of awful possibilities. But by augmenting the initial rhythm and shifting it to the downbeat in a slower, unambiguously minor context of the third movement, Beethoven gives substance to the initial idea: the motif, originally something oblique and fleeting, now faces the listener directly, much closer. Its regal, conquering bearing, broad tones and body leave less doubt about the reality of the threat. The second theme takes up almost the entire section after the Trio, albeit in a dematerialized, wispy voice, as if sinisterly whispering its wicked designs. In this way, the dominance of the second theme in the third movement, while weighing against the hopes manifested by the opening motif, prepares some terrible resolution of the doom. However, this tension is real only for whomever has imaginatively conjoined the secondary theme with the ambiguity of the opening statement and expects to be able to follow it in its unfolding. And indeed, the statement of the opening motif in C major in the finale appears as the fulfilment of potentialities latent in the very beginning of the symphony.¹¹ Yet the surprising incursion of a fragment of the second theme from the third movement into the re-transition of the Finale, mirroring the major trio of the minuet, once again opens the question of the status of the feared object.¹² A haunting reminder or a new danger to be vanquished, the insidious rhythm returns as ambivalent as the symphony's opening gesture. The adjustments that popular music makes to worn forms—for example, word substitutions, tempo changes, stylization of rhythms, solo improvisations, digital manipulation, even their agglutination in medleys or mixes—are not similarly autonomous. In mass-produced popular music, these deviations refer primarily to an absent original, parodying it, instead of dynamizing a whole that is greater than the borrowing. The old forms have no musical consequences in popular music, and it is precisely this that makes it heteronomous:

¹¹ Beethoven, *Symphony No. 5*, IV, p. 68, mm. 48-50.

¹² *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 85-88, mm. 153-206.

“In the hit song...the schemata are separated from the concrete course of the music in such a way that everything can stand for [eintreten] for something else.”¹³ In great art music, something transpires with the old forms and recognizable patterns: the small progressive changes in the set patterns and recognizable forms are due to the individual elements protecting their own interests, seeing their differences through to the end. In popular music, by contrast, the schemata go uncontested: this is why everything in popular music can “stand for” or “advocate for” something else. Hit songs are easy to recuperate for extra-aesthetic ends because they agree that *nothing happens* to dominating patterns, and this is exactly the thinking that dominating patterns require for their continued and increasing domination. Hit songs do not encourage autonomy in the listener. Rather, popular music “hears for the listener,” as Adorno puts it, because it has pretences to being the construction itself, ready-made out of a given material.¹⁴ The “whole” corresponds simply and immediately to the duration of the song. This implies that *the* whole, society, is a ready-made, given reality to be accepted. However, fully decomposable music with a rich potential for inner connections demands that it be constructed by the listener, and so teaches that wholes in general are constructions. As such a construction, society could be differently configured, but this requires not mockery of its norms, but imaginative reassembly. But to find one’s way to the “could be different” demands grasping the relation of whole and part as an antinomy, as a mutually contesting pair.

To resist the social demand for total unity, it is not enough, however, to prefer Beethoven to popular music. For the schemata of popular music are so clear and plain, and

¹³ GS, vol. 14, p. 208, or prefer to my translation here that of E. B. Ashton, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1976), p. 29.

¹⁴ Adorno, with the assistance of Simpson, “On Popular Music,” p. 442.

popular music so pervasive, that the classical forms become increasingly difficult for even a good listener to pick out of a symphony.¹⁵ The depth of inner connections that distinguishes great works from popular music is never discovered. The works in which part and whole are mediated sound unstructured to most types of listeners¹⁶—the music beads into isolated aural effects. Such “atomization” is exactly what Adorno disparages in “Little Heresy,” where he clearly indicates that mature aesthetic comprehension connects the moments rather than just taking pleasure in them for themselves:

Musical understanding, musical cultivation with a human dignity that means more than mere information content, is tantamount to the ability to perceive musical contexts, ideally developed and articulated music, as a meaningful whole. This is what is meant by the concept of structural listening, whose demands, critical of everything that is mired in the momentary, of bad naïveté, are emphatically and acutely with us nowadays. Atomistic listening, which loses itself weakly, passively, in the charm of the moment, the pleasant single sound, the easily graspable and recollectable memory, is pre-artistic.¹⁷

¹⁵ This may be inferred from the starting level of first-year university “music appreciation” textbooks. See, for example, Joseph Kerman and Gary Tomlinson, with Vivian Kerman, *Listen*, 7th edition, (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2012).

¹⁶ See GS, vol. 14, pp. 178-198. Adorno created a typology of listeners in *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*: the expert listener, the good listener, the culture consumer, the emotional listener, the “static” or “resentment” listener, the entertainment listener and the indifferent listener. The first two listening types, the educated expert listener and good listener, are “adequate listeners” and would be more resistant to the culture industry. In light of this typology, Cook might moderate her statement that Adorno failed to identify what kinds of recipients would be resistant to manipulation by the culture industry: “By failing to identify what peoples and classes are not covered by the concept [of narcissistic pseudo-culture], Adorno makes short work of his analysis of the resistive potential in reception” (Cook, *The Culture Industry Revisited*, p. 119). But cf. *ibid.*, p. 120, where Cook rightly signals the lack of education as a condition for narcissistic tendencies of those lacking resistance toward the culture industry.

¹⁷ GS, vol. 17, p. 297 as translated by Susan H. Gillespie, “Little Heresy,” in *Essays on Music*, p. 318. Cf. Rose Rosengard Subotnik, “Toward a Deconstruction of Structural Listening: A Critique of Schoenberg, Adorno, and Stravinsky,” in *Deconstructive Variations: Music and Reason in Western Society* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 148-176. In her attack on structural listening, Subotnik attributes much to Adorno that cannot be substantiated in the relevant work. First, she equates structural listening with listening for a certain, predefined structure that is culturally valued: “Structural listening looks on the ability of a unifying principle to establish the internal ‘necessity’ of a structure as tantamount to a guarantee of musical value” (*ibid.*, p. 159). Second, she suggests that the structure that ideally corresponds to “developmental listening” (*ibid.*) is, for Adorno and Schoenberg, Brahms’s developing variation (*ibid.*, p. 156). Third, she claims that structural listening *universally* discovers a structure that is already there in the music: “Based on an assumption that valid structural logic is accessible to any reasoning person, such structural listening discourages kinds of understanding that require culturally specific knowledge of things external to the compositional structure, such as conventional associations or theoretical systems” (*ibid.*, p. 150). Much evidence from Adorno’s essay can be cited against the false attributions. Against the charge of formalism may be levied statements such as “the true musical whole does

Adorno's critique of aesthetic pleasure is tied to his conviction that art bears the memory of suffering. The recipient who takes pleasure in the immediacy of the passing moment cannot at the same time be emotionally touched by the suffering expressed in the work of art: Adorno is therefore opposed to any kind of aesthetic reception that closes itself off to the pain of the other.¹⁸ Atomistic listening is more than just an attention to the immediate detail as it presents itself, but also implies the listener's naïve enjoyment of the isolated, sensuous sound.

Furthermore, Adorno is critical of the technical means that encourage the disintegration of the artwork into discrete, isolated moments. In "The Radio Symphony: An Experiment in Theory"

not impose a blind dominance of so-called form" and "there are no longer any overarching forms to which the ear could entrust itself blindly" (GS, vol. 17, p. 301 as translated, "Little Heresy," p. 321 and p. 322). Structural listening is the effort to experience the story of the musical work as it goes by, and includes asking oneself if a certain distinctive sound will repeat itself, noticing that an established element has changed, realizing that the main theme has suddenly returned mid-phrase, recognizing that a distinctive timbre varies in intensity, remembering that a previous harmonization of a theme had been denser, noticing that a certain passage has nothing whatsoever to do with what goes on before or after (a "fenêtre" in the language of Walter Boudreau). Subotnik seems to have missed the irony in Adorno's title "Little Heresy" and, as Lydia Goehr points out, his critical motivations:

I think the defense of the 'classical' or 'serious' form of listening is not his point, even if it serves as a dialectical (Subotnik says 'utopian') point of reference. His interest, rather, is in providing in concrete terms a critique of the administration of technology; its deceptive ways of stereotyping, streamlining, standardization, and simplification; its deceptive support of easy listening. His interest in listening always reflects his concern with the present state of society's exchange categories, its totalizing form. To provide a concrete critique, one has to engage in the actual practice of music that exists. And no practice apparently reveals the dialectical play between truth and deception better than that of serious music. However, that this practice developed in a society that required and allowed other practices to develop alongside means a resembling dialectic will be found in them too.

Lydia Goehr, "Dissonant Works and the Listening Public," in *The Cambridge Companion to Adorno*, ed. Tom Huhn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 222-247, here p. 237.

¹⁸ On art's memory of suffering versus the culture industry's erasure of memory, see Mary Anne Franks, "An-aesthetic Theory: Adorno, Sexuality and Memory," in *Feminist Interpretations of Theodor Adorno*, ed. Renée Heberle (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), pp. 193-215. According to Franks, the culture industry is an "an-aesthetic" that turns emotions and experiences into commodities. Emotionally disengaged pleasure prevents the recipient from putting up resistance to the suffering in the world: "According to Adorno's political aesthetics, art's duty is to oppose itself to the suffering that takes place in reality. This cannot be accomplished if suffering is presented as an object of consumption" (ibid., p. 194). While Horkheimer and Adorno's relating of the culture industry to fascist torture may have seemed exaggerated to past readers of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Franks argues that sadism and culture have a point of convergence in the pornography industry—something that Adorno did not see. In an immanent critique, Franks brings evidence from *Dialectic of Enlightenment* against Adorno's "simplistic, misogynist" defense of pornography elsewhere (Franks, "An-aesthetic Theory," p. 211).

of 1941, Adorno warns that radio reproduction of a Beethoven symphony plays into atomistic listening, principally by its compression of the dynamic range, its shrinking of sound architecture to a maquette, which, too small to be entered, falls under the listener's tinkering and manipulation. The radio symphony refers to a missing context. In this way, music perceived as something already detached from its context shifts the burden of meaning from the whole to the parts: "The weight which falls upon the isolated detail conveys to it an importance that it never has in its context. And it is this air of importance that makes it seem to 'signify' or express something all the time, whereas in the original the expression is mediated by the whole."¹⁹ The early radio symphony changes the detail's structure of reference: its dynamical contours obscured, the detail no longer seems to refer to other details. For perceiving the work as a "meaningful whole" implies that the smallest elements of the work be retained in memory, compared and contrasted against one another and related backwards and forwards. This aspect is de-emphasized if not altogether suppressed if fine differences in dynamics and timbre are not reproduced.²⁰ In the radio symphony of the early forties, the hierarchical reference takes precedence: damaged details cannot refer to one another properly when the question of the original becomes too distracting. The radio implies a one-to-one relationship between present sound and absent original, and this tends to isolate the individual detail. This precisely is what makes the radio symphony easy to recuperate for extra-musical

¹⁹ Theodor W. Adorno, "The Radio Symphony: An Experiment in Theory," in *Essays on Music*, p. 265. The essay appeared originally in English in *Radio Research 1941*, ed. Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Frank N. Stanton (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941), pp. 110-139. References here are to the Leppert volume.

²⁰ See esp. Beethoven, *Symphony No. 5*, I, p. 13, mm. 210-232. Hearing distinctions as fine as *piano*, *pìu piano* and *pianissimo*, as well as the contrast of qualities that these identical intensities produce on string instruments versus woodwinds, is crucial in this passage preparing the surprise return (*ff!*) of the motif at rehearsal letter [C] of the first movement. If the fine distinctions in dynamics and timbre are not heard, then the rhythm predominates and the entire work threatens to become mere repetition. Granted, Adorno deliberately chooses for his example a symphony in which intensity and colour are primary in building up the musical whole; nonetheless, the symphonic form itself implies work with dynamics and timbre.

ends: it seems to be a symbol lacking a meaning. The listener who is unfamiliar with the work cannot solve the mystery of themes loaded with pseudo-significance by charting their development in the work, as good listeners traditionally would: unreadable or poorly reproduced elements are equally helpless before the “social authoritarianism” of the radio.²¹ Furthermore, many contexts in which radios are played interfere with structural listening: ambulance sirens, clanking dishes and creaking floorboards can drown out entire passages of music, while the demands on the multi-tasking listener to concentrate on the more immediate activities of driving or housework distract from the task of listening. To compensate for the listener’s distraction, radio installs a *mind* to animate and subordinate the phenomena scattering under its control—the radio announcer. The radio symphony is diffuse. By contrast, the live symphony is intense—or can be, when its details are imaginatively delivered from sheer immediacy through the efforts of the listener, rather than by blanket technical means. Structural listening folds an entire movement into “virtually one moment” when it forms solidarity among the details.²²

Adorno’s contention that the goal of listening is to perceive music as a “meaningful whole” is a “little heresy” against his unstinting defense of the particular, summarized in his oft-quoted catchphrase, “The whole is the untrue.”²³ This contradiction is expressive of a change in epoch. The great artwork of the past is actually indifferent to the side from which one enters its illusion: disillusionment is produced whether one moves from the whole to the part, from the thing to the process, from the fixed motif to the developing variation, or the inverse. The reversibility of the process indicates that there is no ultimate disillusionment:

²¹ Adorno, “The Radio Symphony,” p. 264.

²² Ibid., p. 256.

²³ GS, vol. 4, p. 55 § 29, or prefer to my translation here that of E. F. N. Jephcott, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life* (London: Verso, 2005), p. 50.

illusion is structural. This illusion draws the artwork into relation with the dubious external reality that it spurned when it took itself, and not that “reality,” as the index of true and false. What seemed to mark the artwork’s separation from contradictory empirical reality, its autonomous activation of all merely static opposites into a process of disillusionment, does not actually get rid of every illusion. Art is just an illusion after all. The reversibility of its illusion suggests that illusion *really* is bottomless, and so art *is* different from the reality it rebukes. This is why Adorno affirms that “art has truth as the illusion of the illusionless.”²⁴ There is no incontrovertible proof that the artwork is really a fragmented process of becoming and not the unbroken, fixed whole that it might equally be. Reversible illusion makes the dispelling of all illusions—whole, detail, thing, process, gapless unity and dispersing cloud—seem possible, but actually the reversible structure of illusion in equally weighted pairs of opposites indicates that illusion in general is structural. This is how the great autonomous music of the past was able to stand in critical relation to reality. But by the writing of *Aesthetic Theory*, according to Adorno, this situation had changed: “reality” had become the predominance of the social whole over the particular. Art responds to this change by making a finer distinction in its critique of that reality. Since art criticizes reality through illusion, it finds its illusory character thus affected: “The illusory character of artworks has narrowed into the claim to be a whole.”²⁵ Whereas the great music of Beethoven criticized the realistic attitude by way of a fine balance amongst all its pairs of mediated opposites, such that the good listener would necessarily become disillusioned with whatever presented itself as the music’s ultimate reality—whole, part, motif, development, sensuous particular, spiritual form, genius, technique and so on—, music at some point after Beethoven tended to concentrate the illusion

²⁴ GS, vol. 7, p. 199, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 132.

²⁵ GS, vol. 7, p. 155f., or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 101.

on one pair of opposites in particular—that of whole and part—and to direct the movement of disillusionment from the whole to the part. Whereas, before, *balance* was a mark of aesthetic illusion, in Adorno’s time “aesthetic inconsistency” is expressive of this illusion.²⁶ In the music of Beethoven, either side of the aesthetic illusion could stand in as “what it appears as” or as “what it is.” But where the artwork can appear as a whole but be a swarm of details or just as well appear as a confused mass of details but be a whole, then function and quality come down to the same thing. If the artwork claims to be a whole, but turns out to be a mass of details just as well as it claims to be singular details, but turns out to be a whole, then it does eventually make good on its claims, in a roundabout way. Adorno claims that the music of his time, by contrast, makes good on its claim to essence “only negatively.”²⁷ In what sense is a work that claims to be a whole and appears to be a whole, but turns out to be mere details, nonetheless essentially a whole, albeit “negatively”? Suggested in this passage is that the artwork is a whole only by inference, only by conjecture from the “positivity” of its expression, with its “pathos” and “gesture” toward the transcendent, positivity that the aesthetic sphere, as the dedicated sphere of illusion, qualifies as illusory. Art as a whole does not claim to be real; it claims to be illusory. In this art is distinct from everything extra-aesthetic, which, while suffering from a structural illusion, claims to be reality. At the same time, art must grasp that art as a whole is not *the whole*; *the whole* would be real reconciliation between these conflicting and competing spheres. This is why art does not totally detach itself from the reality that it opposes.

²⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 156 as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 101.

²⁷ GS, vol. 7, p. 156, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 101.

{Chapter III}

According to Adorno, the criterion of truth—the determinacy of the negation of illusion rather than a positive result—holds good for art as well as for philosophy. He claims that “two kinds of truth”—an artistic truth and a philosophical truth, for instance—“would be incompatible with the idea of the true.”¹ The determinateness or *qualified character* of illusion is the criterion of truth, for, under a system of exchange, illusion is disguised by its indeterminacy, and the false resides precisely in the *indifference toward qualities* in exchange. Art is not exempt from the universal delusional context of reification, so when it aims at the truth, it should find itself in the same aporia as philosophy does. On one hand, its general situation is one of falsehood; on the other hand, the Skeptics’ solution to a false world, equipollence and the suspension of judgement, ends up reinforcing the status quo—the blind acceptance of the delusional context, no matter the suffering it causes. Art, however, makes it seem *as if it were* exempt from the universal context of delusion—and this delusion gives it a peculiar illusory character of its own, artistic aesthetic illusion. It is therefore an open question whether the determinateness of the negation of illusion is also the criterion of truth in art, considering art’s unusual relation to the delusional context. Adorno declares that there is “no truth of artworks without determinate negation,” which would support the thesis that art has the same standard of truth as philosophy—the specificity of the illusion dissolved.² But for the artwork to negate its own specific illusion—the self-deception that it refuses reification, which nothing can escape—, it would either have to affirm itself to be the reified thing that it really is or else show itself to be the mere *illusion* that it is reified, and so the *illusion* of un-reified life. This might make art-truth a different kind of truth: nowhere else in a context of delusion

¹ GS, vol. 6, p. 397, or prefer to my translations here those of E. B. Ashton, *Negative Dialectics* (1973; repr., New York: Continuum, 1997), p. 405 and p. 406.

² GS, vol. 7, p. 195, or prefer to my translation here that of Robert Hullot-Kentor, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 129.

should affirmation and illusion be considered truth. Yet, Adorno suggests in *Negative Dialectics* that truth is not content to stop with negation: it belongs to the *idea* of truth not only that illusion will disappear, but also that something will be left behind. While for Marx truth *means* reality,³ truth for Adorno presupposes a metaphysical experience whose gains somehow converge with the utterly thingly:

But the surplus in excess of the subject that subjective metaphysical experience will not be talked out of and the moment of truth in rem are extremes that touch in the Idea of truth. For this would be so little an idea of truth without the subject who escapes from illusion as without what is not subject and from which truth gets its prototype.⁴

It may seem an odd concession to Idealism to have an *idea* of truth. Idealism, however, does not consist in merely having ideas, but rather in subordinating reality to them or else in taking them for reality—the real Idealism is *not* to have an idea of truth, but to have an idea of truth such that it controls reality. A non-Idealist concept of realization—“*Verwirklichung*”—would have to restrict itself to the realization of what was *unintended* and unimagined by theory, just as a non-Idealist theory would refrain from giving positive solutions: Adorno praises Marx for shying away from “describing classless society in positive terms.”⁵ Despite this, Adorno indicates that Marx’s thesis that the point of philosophy is to change the world “missed” its realization—“the transformation of the world went wrong.”⁶ Although the Cold War, the Siberian gulag and, later, the Khmer Rouge, were *unintended* by Marx’s theory, they do not *realize* philosophy: all of these fall short on the subjective side of idea of truth, which implies that subjects escape from illusion. On the other hand, truth is not reached when subjective

³ “The question whether human thinking is fit for objective truth is not a matter of theory, but rather a *practical* question. Human beings must demonstrate truth—i.e., reality and power—the world-boundedness of their thinking in practice. The quarrel over the reality or unreality of thought—isolated from practice—is a purely *scholastic* question.” Karl Marx, “[Thesen über Feuerbach] 1. Ad Feuerbach,” in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke* [MEW] (Berlin: Dietz, 1959-68), vol. 3, pp. 5-7, here p. 5, These II (my translation).

⁴ GS, vol. 6, p. 368, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 375.

⁵ GS, vol. 10.2, p. 780 and p. 781 (my translations).

⁶ GS, vol. 6, p. 17, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 3.

escape from illusion leaves things as they are. Adorno may have had no illusions about what happens when philosophers try to change the world; at the same time, however, there remains of this disillusionment a different philosophical practice, which is decidedly interpretation—fixed in writing, reified though it may be, and so no less free of the delusional context than is art.

To claim, with Rüdiger Bubner⁷ and Gilles Moutot,⁸ that art as a sphere is really free from the pervasive illusion of reification is to fall victim to the artistic aesthetic illusion itself, to deny that the artwork is a product of organized labour and to buy into the conventional wisdom that the artwork is an outpouring of natural genius or of a super-individual who does not rely on a highly specialized division of labour. Both Bubner and Moutot misinterpret Adorno because they do not see that he applies the category of labour to artworks. They take art's veiled or broken meaning to be freedom from reification, which in Bubner's case takes on irrationalist allures. Bubner's assumption that in a total context of delusion "we can...only place our hopes in a different form of expression, namely in art"⁹ leads him to conclude that for Adorno only what is "beyond our rational capacities" is also "safe from any danger of ideological contamination," in a *beyond* that he situates in "the pseudo-reality of art."¹⁰ Bubner contends that Adorno bridges the chasm between art and reason in claiming that the autonomous artwork prompts the critic to *reveal* the universal context of illusion: "It is only from a *third position*, beyond the reification of everyday life and artistic production alike, that

⁷ Rüdiger Bubner, "Kann Theorie ästhetisch werden? Zum Hauptmotiv der Philosophie Adornos," in *Materialien zur ästhetischen Theorie Theodor W. Adornos, Konstruktion der Moderne*, ed. Burkhardt Lindner and W. Martin Lüdke (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980), pp. 108-137. In English, see "Can Theory Become Aesthetic? On A Principle Theme of Adorno's Philosophy," trans. Nicholas Walker, in *Theodor W. Adorno*, 4 vols., ed. Simon Jarvis, Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory (London: Routledge, 2007), vol. 1, pp. 14-39.

⁸ Gilles Moutot, *Adorno: Langage et réification* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2004).

⁹ Bubner, "Kann Theorie ästhetisch werden?," p. 112 as translated, "Can Theory Become Aesthetic," p. 18.

¹⁰ Bubner, "Kann Theorie ästhetisch werden?," p. 117 as translated, "Can Theory Become Aesthetic," p. 22.

this context is effectively revealed in its own right. It is this position which the critical thinker claims to occupy.”¹¹ The critical thinker, however, is barred from reproducing this insight in the “unshrouded,” and therefore, on Bubner’s account, *ideological*, language of critique if his claim is to have truth: in a reversal of the Hegelian sublation of art by philosophy, “*theory passes over into aesthetics*” in Adorno.¹² Bubner’s argument rests on the premise that art is free of ideology because it is beyond what subjects can reasonably master. He grants, however, that artworks can be more or less advanced and gives rational criteria for what would count as a progressive work: “consummate technique and endorsement of the proper course of history.”¹³ Setting aside the question of whether progressively-minded works can be reduced to these two criteria, we may conclude that in Bubner’s sense progressive works are not beyond “rational capacities”: they have already been submitted to rationality, judgement and decision, both during the composition process and in criticism, in order to come out as the progressive, supposedly non-ideological works. Finally, Bubner presumes that the *standpoint* of the aesthetic critic guarantees truth uncontaminated by ideology. However, from his lofty “*third position*,” Bubner’s aesthetic critic is *not* “beyond the reification of everyday life” because his material, language, is a thing that expresses by virtue of the past human labour implicit in it. Critique may make the past work on particular concepts explicit, but there is

¹¹ Bubner, “Kann Theorie ästhetisch werden?,” p. 122 as translated, “Can Theory Become Aesthetic,” p. 26.

¹² Bubner, “Kann Theorie ästhetisch werden?,” p. 131 as translated, “Can Theory Become Aesthetic,” p. 34. Jimenez repeats this trope without crediting Bubner, but contrary to him, suggests that a theory that is itself aesthetic is simply ideological. Jimenez gives no textual evidence to support his position: “il semble qu’un moment arrive où la critique se replie sur soi, où le discours s’érige non plus, par exemple, en discours sur l’esthétique, mais en discours esthétique lui-même, où la théorie ‘devient’ esthétique. De la critique, la théorie ne conserve plus que la forme et, critique de l’idéologie, elle sombre elle-même dans l’idéologie, finalité en soi et à soi, c’est-à-dire sans fin.” (It seems that at a certain point, theory withdraws into itself, discourse no longer purports to be a discourse on aesthetics, for example, but rather purports to be aesthetic discourse itself, and theory ‘becomes’ aesthetic. All that theory retains from critique is the form, and, as ideology critique, it sinks to the level of ideology itself, an end in itself and for itself—that is, endless.) Marc Jimenez, *Adorno et la modernité: Vers une esthétique négative* (s.l.: Éditions Klincksieck, 1986), p. 61.

¹³ Bubner, “Kann Theorie ästhetisch werden?,” p. 120 as translated, “Can Theory Become Aesthetic,” p. 25.

always an unreflective, congealed side to the language that it takes up. Since the objective state of language, the damage that it wears as a result of its use as a vehicle of instrumental communication, is insuperable by mere consciousness, the critical writer cannot entirely free himself from reified daily existence by taking up some standpoint beyond that existence. Adorno explicitly claims that negative dialectics is not a standpoint.¹⁴ Like Bubner, Moutot places his hopes for theory in the veiled quality of art. Although Moutot indeed recognizes, with Lukács and Marx, the spread of reification to language, he considers Adorno to have adopted the equivocal aspect of art in order to counter the all-embracing reification. Adorno's "*minor philosophy*" would, on Moutot's reading, be "musical." According to Moutot, the term *musical* means "le lieu d'une tension extrême entre 'matériau' et 'signifiant', entre *mimésis* et sens" (the site of an extreme tension between "material" and "signifier," between "mimesis" and "meaning").¹⁵ In other words, Adorno's "musical" language seems to refer only to itself, like art, yet it cannot entirely break free of all reference to communication. Moutot sees such musicality as Adorno's challenge to reification: "l'ultime 'riposte' d'Adorno à la réification pourrait bien... faire corps avec un tel usage [musical] de la langue: se faufiler entre les mécanismes de domination en travaillant à produire du sens en mode *mineur*" (Adorno's ultimate 'riposte' to reification could well... be at one with such [musical] use of language: to slip through the mechanisms of domination by working to produce meaning in a *minor* mode).¹⁶ While Moutot does not want to call Adorno's philosophy aesthetic outright—he claims that Adorno's styles resist the "hermetic gesture" and occasion transformations of

¹⁴ GS, vol. 6, p. 17, or translated, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 5.

¹⁵ Moutot, *Adorno: Langage et réification*, p. 120.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

language that are only “like” the tensions of aesthetic illusion—,¹⁷ Moutot’s determination of the concept of “the musical” as an extreme tension between the material and signifier gives itself away as an aesthetic answer to reification. This is because Christoph Menke, whom Moutot credits,¹⁸ characterizes the *aesthetic object* in this very way: as an oscillation between material and signifier.¹⁹ And indeed, Moutot claims that the philosopher can resist reification by taking as his models the enigmatic parables of Kafka²⁰ and the paratactic syntax of Hölderlin.²¹ From this we are to conclude that for Moutot what is capable of resisting reification is ultimately art. But Moutot’s claim to have found a hidden power against reification in “the musical” falls flat for the same reason that the aesthetic sphere on its own failed to save Bubner’s critic from the reification of everyday life: something’s being enigmatic, hidden, undecidable, veiled or somehow beyond rational mechanisms does not alone save it from being reified because reification comes about wherever there is hidden labour, and labour can be dissimulated under all of these forms. It is even *best* dissimulated under these forms. Adorno states outright that “the musical” implies reification: “What is called ‘musical’ in everyday parlance refers precisely to this idiomatic character, to a relationship to music in which the material, by virtue of its reification, has become second nature to the musical subject.”²² Adorno’s adoption of writing strategies developed by Kafka and Hölderlin does not serve as some ultimate “riposte” to reification because parables and

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 124 and p. 125 (my translations).

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 122.

¹⁹ See Christoph Menke, *The Sovereignty of Art: Aesthetic Negativity in Adorno and Derrida*, trans. Neil Solomon, (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1998), pp. 33-45.

²⁰ Moutot, *Adorno: Langage et réification*, p. 121.

²¹ Ibid., p. 122f.

²² GS, vol. 18, p. 161, as translated by Susan H. Gillespie, “On the Contemporary Relationship of Philosophy and Music,” in *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 135-161, here p. 145.

parataxis are conventions, which imply *forgotten labour*, whether in art or not. Art's lack of clear use value may be grounds for the argument that labour is the wrong category to apply to artworks. Since production for the sake of production makes the labour stored up in ordinary commodities *seem* useless and worthless, the status of the labour needed to produce emphatically useless objects, artworks, is open to an even greater mystification. Adorno maintains, against Marx, that the labour contained in useless things does indeed count as labour, for usefulness cannot be clearly recognized. On one hand, any thing, even an artwork, can be *used* to expand value; on the other hand, the expansion of value as an end in itself is *the complete opposite of use*—as far as human beings and their needs are concerned—, and labour today is organized toward the expansion of value. The artwork's apparent lack of use-value is thus no reason to think it exempt from reification: artworks are ideological because they actually “participate in the universal delusional context of reification” and “necessarily reflect a relation of living labour as though it were objective [gegenständlich].”²³ Yet reification in art is different, according to Adorno: “Only through its social power of resistance does art keep itself alive; if it does not reify itself, then it becomes commodity.”²⁴ By this, Adorno means that if art does not blank out the living labour of society from memory, hiding it in a dead, congealed, thingly appearance, then it is helpless to resist its use by capitalism for purely instrumental ends of expanding profit.²⁵ Whether artists are aware of the social relations active

²³ GS, vol. 7, p. 252, or prefer to my translations here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 168f.

²⁴ GS, vol. 7, p. 335, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 226.

²⁵ See, for example, Marcel Proust, *Le Côté de Guermantes*, édition présentée par Thierry Laget, établie et annotée par Thierry Laget et Brian Rogers (s.l.: Gallimard, 1988), p. 486, or translated by Mark Treharne, *The Guermantes Way* (London: Allen Lane, 2002), p. 501, where Proust compares the outmoded language of the Duchess of Guermantes to the savoury dishes seasoned with authentic salt from Guérande, which appear in Pampille's *Les Bons Plats de France* as presently on offer for the palate to discover, but which are in reality rare. In making allusion to Guérande sea salt, Proust admits the work of the “hommes de sel” (salt harvesters) into his novel. He does not represent the work of the salt harvesters, as Soviet music “represents” automated labour, but work is implicit in *À la recherche du temps perdu* as it is implicit in all fetishes. Proust's literature lives off the

in their artworks is a matter of indifference. Art is social because the artist cannot produce everything on which the artwork depends for its existence. In the coffee that the composer drinks to aid concentration, in the train that takes him to premieres in distant capitals, in the crab pastries that fuel his intellectual exchanges with other musicians and in the Wurst that he eats to sustain himself between rehearsals, in the manuscript paper on which he traces the calligraphy of his music, in the mountain villa that frees him from distractions, in the shaving kit that prepares his public face and in the wood, gut, hair, skin, felt, brass, reed and silver that bring his composition to realization, others' time has been expended, and it would be wrong to believe that *their* energy does not contribute to the artwork. Contrary to the other piece of popular wisdom—that the artwork is a pure, natural expression of individual life—, the life that the artist puts at the service of his works *is* fundamentally reproduced by society, whether the artist is conscious of this or not: “The labour in the artwork is social through the individual, but without the individual being necessarily conscious of society in the process—all the more so, perhaps, the less conscious the individual is.”²⁶ The artwork is the thing that ultimately reflects as a thing the relation of living labour in every thing that passes through an individual's hand. Even when the artist's role is reduced to a minimum, even when he does nothing but present a curator with a piece of charred willow that he has found by the river, as John Catto in fact did in 1975, this does not escape the fact that a society-wide organization of labour must obtain in order for things with no clear utility to be, even if not produced and distributed, then at least presented and indefinitely conserved. Kettle's Yard in Cambridge,

work of society, and not only because Proust himself was a rentier supported by uncompensated labour: Proust's elaborate comparison between the Duchess's speech and fine regional specialties would not *be* without the unmentioned work of those who actually rake up, clean, dry out, package and distribute Brittany sea salt. The artwork is truly reified in that it dissimulates this social labour as the individual Marcel Proust's immediate, spontaneous genius for similarities.

²⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 250, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 167.

England, where *St. Edmund* is on permanent display, is financed by a number of granting bodies and foundations that presuppose a system of capital accumulation and administration—so, labour relations.²⁷ Yet the artwork dissimulates these *relations* of labour with its thingly appearance, hence its ideological character. While art is ideology’s “accomplice,” art itself does not “slump to ideology,” indistinguishable from every other kind of social illusion.²⁸ Artworks are necessarily reifying because this is how they are able to generate a contradiction between what they appear to be and what they are: “Reification is essential [essentiell] to works and contradicts their essence-as-appearing [ihrem Wesen als Erscheinendem].”²⁹ Traditionally, philosophers defined the essence of artworks as appearance—as fleeting, changing play, manifesting itself here and now. This is what artworks give themselves to be. But artworks *are* things. However, their mute, fixed thinghood relates to society-wide processes that artworks themselves dissimulate and would prefer not to have discussed. Artworks generate an internal logic of disillusionment despite themselves, but only because they are *reified* despite themselves. This “dialectic despite itself” is what opens the work onto truth. Truth is not accidental to the successful artwork, for “only failed ones [artworks] are untrue.”³⁰ Nor is success accidental to the artwork, for “the concept of the artwork implies that of success” and “failed artworks are not artworks.”³¹ Yet the production of truth content is not concurrent with the production of the work, but is only ever decided after the fact, in interpretation: “The need of works for interpretation—insofar as it is the production of their

²⁷ See the endmatter of the *Kettle’s Yard House Guide*: “Kettle’s Yard is an institution of the University of Cambridge, regularly supported by East England Arts and the Arts Council of England, Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridgeshire County Councils, Museums Service East of England and The Henry Moore Foundation.” *Kettle’s Yard House Guide*, foreword by Jim Ede (Cambridge: Kettle’s Yard, 2002), [p. 48].

²⁸ GS, vol. 7, p. 203, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 134.

²⁹ GS, vol. 7, p. 153, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 99.

³⁰ GS, vol. 7, p. 196, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 130.

³¹ GS, vol. 7, p. 280, or prefer to my translations here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 188.

truth content—, is stigmatic of their constitutive insufficiency.”³² Since works must be true to be art, Adorno implies that a work does not fully become art in being made. With this move, Adorno situates the deciding factor of art as far away from the artist’s intentions as possible. For if artists conferred the status of art onto their works, then painted chancel screens, Turner’s preparatory watercolours and perhaps the entire bundle of writings that Kafka had instructed Max Brod to burn would not be artworks, while a self-published volume of purple prose would be. The artist’s intention to make an artwork cannot at any rate be certified, and not even the makers’ explicit instructions as to the handling of their works can be simply taken as direct, sincere expressions of their intentions. At the same time, Adorno also avoids pegging truth to some conditions relating to the work’s origins. If a work’s being art were entirely decided in its creation, then aesthetics would amount to historiography, the seeking-out of evidence for a set of invariable art-indicators present at the beginning. Adorno challenges originalist and historicist definitions of art in maintaining that artworks always arrive without titles, and so require interpretation to make the case that they are art.

Since artworks each require interpretation to be art, this then raises the question as to whether art does not depend on philosophy and other forms of discursive criticism to make its truth claim. An assumption of art’s dependence on philosophy is perhaps what moves Albrecht Wellmer for one to claim that art does not have truth, but a mere *truth potential*.³³ Yet Wellmer proceeds “on the basis that we can only speak of the truth of art if we already know what is meant by truth independently of this specific context,” where “truth” is taken “in the

³² GS, vol. 7, p. 194, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 128.

³³ Albrecht Wellmer, “Wahrheit, Schein, Versöhnung: Adornos ästhetische Rettung der Modernität,” in *Zur Dialektik von Moderne und Postmoderne: Vernunftkritik nach Adorno* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985), pp. 9-47, or translated by David Midgley, “Truth, Semblance, Reconciliation: Adorno’s Aesthetic Redemption of Modernity,” in *The Persistence of Modernity: Essays on Aesthetics, Ethics, and Postmodernism* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1991), pp. 1- 35.

sense of being faithful to reality.”³⁴ The idea of truth as *actual, non-artistic truth*, which risks affirming whatever is, is a standard that art as art, being unreal, can never attain. Wellmer’s reading, however, is not adequate to the aesthetic theory of *Adorno*, who on occasion suggests that art’s truth *is* its negativity: “In art, a non-being is true.”³⁵ If one admits such a thing as the total delusion-context of reification—and Wellmer does—, then mere reality cannot be the measure of truth. When reality is a necessary illusion, truth has to do something other than merely be faithful to reality: it must *negate* some aspect of it.³⁶ But rather than conclude from the condition of social illusion that truth can no longer be conceived positively as “fidelity,” Wellmer concludes that truth is fidelity to a “real utopia,” which he links with non-violent communication.³⁷ But Wellmer errs in reducing the intimation of aesthetic “speech” at the close of *Aesthetic Theory* to human communication, because there Adorno clearly states that the artwork brings social content “to speech” only by returning to itself, in deepening art-specific techniques.³⁸ It does not seem, therefore, as though art needs discourse to determine and negate some aspect of the all-encompassing illusion—its pretences of wholeness, its fixity, and so on. Yet Adorno is split over Hermann Lotze’s gloss on Hegel—“Die *Wissenschaft der Kunst ist uns daher mehr Bedürfniß als die Kunst selbst*” (*Scholarship of art*

³⁴ Wellmer, “Wahrheit, Schein, Versöhnung,” p. 16 and p. 43 as translated, “Truth, Semblance, Reconciliation,” p. 9 and p. 35.

³⁵ GS, vol. 7, p. 198, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 131.

³⁶ The negativity of truth is what leads Simon Jarvis to assert: “The truth content of works of art, like that of philosophy, inheres in the determinate negation of untruth. It cannot be thought of as a kind of kernel which is inside the shell of the work of art and needs to be got out with philosophical nutcrackers [!].” Simon Jarvis, *Adorno: A Critical Introduction*, New York: Routledge, 1998, p. 104.

³⁷ Wellmer, “Wahrheit, Schein, Versöhnung,” p. 29 as translated, “Truth, Semblance, Reconciliation,” p. 21.

³⁸ For a rebuttal of Wellmer’s attempt to situate Adorno’s aesthetics within Habermas’s theory of communicative action, see Donald A. Burke, “Adorno’s Aesthetics of Reconciliation: Negative Presentation of Utopia or Post-metaphysical Pipe-Dream?” in Donald A. Burke et al. (eds.), *Adorno and the Need in Thinking: New Critical Essays* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), pp. 233-260. Martin Jay long ago showed Adorno’s (and Benjamin’s) theory of intentionless truth to be incompatible with the “communicative notion of truth as an intersubjective construct” defended by Habermas. Martin Jay, *Adorno* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 77.

is thus more needful to us than art itself).³⁹ On the one hand, Adorno criticizes the gloss for its “hierarchical view of the relationship of the intellectual domains to one another”; on the other hand, he sees “prophetic truth” to it, in that art “needs philosophy for the sake of its own content’s unfolding.”⁴⁰ This split is reproduced in statements scattered throughout *Aesthetic Theory*. On one hand, Adorno re-activates the subordination of art to philosophy in Hegel’s system. For instance, he states that “genuine [genuine] aesthetic experience must become philosophy or it is not at all.”⁴¹ He claims that art’s truth *content* “is to be gained only through philosophical reflection.”⁴² On the other hand, Adorno suggests that truth content is non-discursive. He proposes that some art—like that of Wagner—is true as an “expression of a consciousness false in itself,” but then goes on to claim that the “merely adequate expression of false consciousness” cannot be separated from what is true in itself.⁴³ All art, not just that of Wagner, is “the merely adequate expression of false consciousness” because “to date, correct consciousness has not existed, and neither likewise one in which such separation would be offered to view from a bird’s eye perspective”; rather, “perfect delivery [vollkommene Darstellung] of false consciousness is the name for it and itself truth content.”⁴⁴ Since Adorno states that art’s “expression opposes expressing something,”⁴⁵ then a subjective genitive should be read into the phrases “expression of a consciousness false in itself”⁴⁶ and “perfect delivery of false consciousness.”⁴⁷ It is important to note that false consciousness is not the

³⁹ Hermann Lotze, *Geschichte der Aesthetik in Deutschland* (München: Cotta, 1868), p. 190 (my translation).

⁴⁰ GS, vol. 7, p. 141, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 91.

⁴¹ GS, vol. 7, p. 197, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 131.

⁴² GS, vol. 7, p. 193, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 28.

⁴³ GS, vol. 7, p. 196, or prefer to my translations here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 129 and p. 129f.

⁴⁴ GS, vol. 7, p. 196, or prefer to my translations here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 129f. and p. 130.

⁴⁵ GS, vol. 7, p. 171, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 112.

⁴⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 196, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 129.

⁴⁷ GS, vol. 7, p. 196, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 130.

content of art's expression; rather, expression is itself content. And since neither expression nor delivery necessarily implies concepts, then it seems that artworks can be true independently of philosophical reflection.

The contradiction over whether art requires philosophy to make its truth claim does not stem from an oversight or some confusion on Adorno's part.

In the paragraph entitled "Art and Philosophy; Collective Content of Art" in *Aesthetic Theory*, he clearly lays out the contradiction. The goal of this paragraph is to find the point of convergence between art and philosophy.⁴⁸

Adorno first posits the thesis that "philosophy and art converge in their truth content."⁴⁹ He then offers a philosophical history that traces the formation, flourishing and dissolution of the thesis. The relating of art and philosophy through truth content begins at the moment when philosophy seizes the truth of art's autonomy and attempts to copy it. And so Idealist systems are born: "The unified, internally self-circling totality of Idealist systems is read out of artworks."⁵⁰ However, philosophy does not possess art's autarky because it necessarily works with concepts, which bear on reality. And so the grand Idealist systems' self-sufficiency is eventually unmasked as a sham. But the disillusionment with Idealism also

⁴⁸ Cf. Benedetto Croce, *What Is Living and What Is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel*, trans. Douglas Ainslie, from the original text of the third Italian edition, 1912 (London: Macmillan, 1915), p. 88-95. Croce accuses Hegel of not distinguishing between the theory of opposites and the theory of distincts: art and philosophy are distinct from one another, not opposites, which means that, even on Hegel's own terms, philosophy should not surpass art (ibid., p. 94) as they do in Hegel's system—in what Croce has called an "abuse of the triadic form" (ibid., p. 97). Hyung-Won Min reads into Adorno's relating of art and philosophy in the rescue of illusion a systematicity that finds little support in his corpus: "Aesthetic theory is...on balance, the result of Adorno's entire theoretical effort, which he relays to diverse areas, from philosophy of history and social theory to epistemology, up to philosophical aesthetics. Adorno makes this systematic kind of linkage between aesthetics and the other disciplines because sociologically he ties art to the idea of reconciliation and epistemologically he ties art to truth, which gets lost in the present universal context of delusion." Hyung-won Min, *Zur Kritik und Rettung des Scheins bei Th. W. Adorno: Der Zusammenhang der Gesellschafts-, Erkenntnistheorie und der Ästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main: R. G. Fischer, 1992), p. 159, in my translation.

⁴⁹ GS, vol. 7, p. 197 as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 130.

⁵⁰ GS, vol. 7, p. 197, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 130.

plays into the truth of art's autonomy because the identity that philosophy postulates with art is effective, and so "the progressively self-unfolding truth of the artwork is none other than that of the philosophical concept."⁵¹ After this, art has to register the falsehood of grand Idealist systems, which it can do by disrupting its own autonomy, since its autonomy has become the cipher for Idealist systems. Art thus disrupts its autonomy by tying itself to the purely commercial ends in the production of surplus value—or, alternatively, to political ends.⁵² At the same time, however, the in-itself of art truth, of which Idealist truth was a derivation, does not disappear without a trace. The works themselves are traces of their disappeared truth. But commercial products of the culture industry and social realist works, in their retroactive negation of aesthetic autonomy, considerably trouble their own interpretation: in negating aesthetic autonomy, they also unfortunately negate the relation to philosophy, which would provide keys to unriddling the negation of autonomy. Art's rupture with philosophy means that the contemporary consciousness, formed in the school of the culture industry, fails to see the precise object of aesthetic heteronomy's critique. Normal consciousness of today thus fails to make critical distinctions, and simply refuses all dealings with art, which it considers, to use a popular epitaph, *elitist*: "The contemporary consciousness, fixated on what is blatant and unmediated, obviously finds it the hardest thing of all to recover this relation to art, whereas without this relation, art's truth content does not open itself up."⁵³ The Hegelian-sounding statement that "genuine aesthetic experience must become philosophy or it is not at all" draws the consequence of art and philosophy converging

⁵¹ GS, vol. 7, p. 197, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 130.

⁵² Wellmer's somewhat instrumental reading of the artwork as creating a potential for the "real utopia of non-violent communication" might be understood as a reflection of the contemporary disruption in art's autonomy. "Wahrheit, Schein, Versöhnung," p. 29 as translated, "Truth, Semblance, Reconciliation," p. 21.

⁵³ GS, vol. 7, p. 197, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 131.

in their truth content.⁵⁴ Yet art's traditional dependence on philosophy may be comprehended only in the contemporary incomprehension towards works of art, only when philosophy and art have diverged. According to the philosophical history outlined, the traditional convergence of art and philosophy in their truth content was not struck up by mutual agreement, but rather initiated by Idealist philosophy: and so it is in effect philosophy that dominates in the relationship based on truth content. — But the force of this consequence is reversed by a dash that immediately follows it. Adorno then posits the antithesis: "The condition for the possibility of the convergence of philosophy and art is to be found in the element of universality that art has in its specification—as a language *sui generis*."⁵⁵ If the dash is read as signalling a reprise, then what follows takes the form of a new beginning and a new relation of art and philosophy. At the fall of Idealist systems, the truth of autonomous, monadic existence looks dubious in philosophy and in art alike. Furthermore, in a total context of delusion, art's truth in-itself, which philosophy so envied, is not as pure as it seemed: "The separation between a thing that is true in itself and the merely adequate expression of false consciousness is not to be maintained."⁵⁶ So, the hermetic, autonomous artistic truth in itself that philosophy was imitating and whose imitation opened artistic truth to philosophical interpretation has transformed. Truth is no longer understood as what remains once all partial perspectives have been removed, but it is now an adequate expression from one of those partial perspectives. Now if truth content is the merely adequate *expression* or the perfect *delivery* expressed or delivered by a false consciousness, philosophy and art can no longer converge in truth content, for these expressions and deliveries are medium-specific particulars. The commonplace notion

⁵⁴ GS, vol. 7, p. 197, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 131.

⁵⁵ GS, vol. 7, p. 197, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 131.

⁵⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 196, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 129f.

of an identical, universal truth content that is poured into various containers is unsustainable because truth is no longer *what* is expressed—as we took it to be in high bourgeois art’s positive “meanings” of freedom, autonomy, humanity, justice or harmony, which turned out to be just the aspirations of the unfolding philosophical concept. When the domination by concepts becomes questionable, it also becomes clear that the locus for truth in art is to be found in the particular expression: “The philosophical interpretation of the truth content must steadfastly construct it in the particular.”⁵⁷ *What* is expressed, art’s “meaning,” turns out to be only an illusory reflection of Idealist philosophy. Art language is in this way language *sui generis*, expression that does not express something. The artwork’s inseparability of truth in-itself from perfect delivery of a false consciousness cuts both ways, making expression or delivery into an in-itself: “Being-for-other so greedily devours expression, with which art locks itself away from it, to speak in itself: this is art’s mimetic enactment.”⁵⁸ The idea here is that art locks itself in from the inside. Expression is the key to art, but held within it, safe from the outside heteronomy. Art opens itself to interpretation, but only when the interpreter refrains from instrumentalizing expression, which would leave art to be consumed. In other words, the “key,” expression, cannot serve the purpose of communication—expressing *something*. Art language thus differs from signifying language, whose elements communicate things, and which attains to universality in the subsuming of particulars under more or less stable concepts. Yet art language also possesses an element of universality, which Adorno claims should be the model for philosophical universality.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ GS, vol. 7, p. 198, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 131.

⁵⁸ GS, vol. 7, p. 171, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 112.

⁵⁹ Cf. Fredric Jameson, *Late Marxism: Adorno, or, the Persistence of the Dialectic* (London: Verso, 2007). Jameson equates “modern art” with “nominalistic art” (*ibid.*, p. 157). This was not a position that Adorno adopted, for example, in his statement that “by means of construction, art desperately wants to escape from its

The demonstration of the way in which an individual expression can have universal force takes up the second half of the paragraph on art and philosophy. The goal of the demonstration is to show that the particular artistic expression does not need to borrow the universality necessary for truth from the concept. In other words, art would have no mere truth potential waiting to be actualized by philosophy.

The question of how something can have universal weight without a concept might be the original aesthetic problematic, formulated by Kant. Kant denies that a concept of beauty is operative in the judgement of taste. In saying that a thing is beautiful, we are not picking out and bringing together certain marks that all beautiful things share—for example, their being small, smooth, gradually varied, delicate and either clear-hued or colour-balanced, as in Edmund Burke's definition of beauty.⁶⁰ Yet Kant wants to save the judgement of taste from relativism, whereby it would be merely the expression of conventions, fashion, habits or

nominalistic situation, to extricate itself by its own power from a sense of accidentalness and attain what is overarchingly binding, or, if one will, universal" (GS, vol. 7, p. 91 as translated *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 57). It is the situation that is nominalistic, not the art, which is critical of the situation. Moreover, Jameson suggests that Adorno himself participates in Modern art's "repudiation of the universal" (*Late Marxism*, p. 157). Jameson states that "Adorno must also argue against himself" (ibid., p. 159) because he sees Adorno's supposed nominalism entering into conflict with "his single-shot description formal category,...that of *construction*" (ibid., p. 159). Jameson offers no textual support for the apparent hegemony of construction in Adorno's aesthetics. More importantly, he ignores Adorno's emphatic statements on nominalism. Adorno's resistance towards nominalism can be traced to 1926, when he defended himself to Alban Berg against Schoenberg, who bristled at Adorno's recourse to the word "truth" in the essay on Berg's *Wozzeck* (GS, vol. 18, pp. 456-464). That Schoenberg and his circle were adherents of Karl Kraus is well known. While seeking to establish some common ground with Schoenberg's Kraussian outlook, Adorno also makes it clear to Berg that he does not wish "to argue with him over the depth and the problems of Kraus's nominalism [Krausschen Nominalismus]," over its "intention to eradicate the great universals in our language." Adorno to Berg, Frankfurt am Main, January 6, 1926, in Theodor W. Adorno and Alban Berg, *Briefwechsel, 1925-1935*, herausgegeben von Henri Lonitz (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997), p. 58 as translated by Wieland Hoban, *Correspondence 1925-1935* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity, 2005), p. 38.

In *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno claims that "nominalism has passed into ideology" and that "the relation of genuine critical philosophy to nominalism is not fixed; it changes historically with the function of skepticism" (GS, vol. 6, p. 59n).

⁶⁰ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, edited and with an introduction by James T. Boulton (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), pp. 113-117.

personal inclination. The reason why Adorno does not consider Kant's own solution adequate will become clear with a brief outline of the Kantian argument.

Kant's determination of aesthetic as subjective, right at the outset of the first part of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, poses a remarkable challenge to his methodology, which so far has accorded priority to the object:

In order to decide whether or not something is beautiful, we do not relate the representation by means of understanding to the object for cognition, but rather relate it by means of the imagination (perhaps combined with the understanding) to the subject and its feeling of pleasure or displeasure. The judgement of taste is therefore not a cognitive judgement, hence not a logical one, but is rather aesthetic, by which is understood one whose determining ground *cannot be other than subjective*.⁶¹

Despite his identification of the aesthetic with the subjective, Kant wishes to distinguish between a satisfaction that is merely limited to this or that person, involving merely his or her private likes and dislikes, and one that accompanies the decision that something is beautiful. Kant claims that the judgement that something is beautiful has universal validity. At the same time, this element of universality cannot come from what usually grants universality—the concept—, for concepts necessarily connect to objects, whereas “nothing at all in the object is designated” by means of feelings of pleasure and displeasure.⁶² Another way to put this is to say that in the aesthetic judgement, the object's existence is a matter of indifference.⁶³ Kant's doctrine of aesthetic disinterestedness, which does not refer to a phlegmatic psychological state of the subject, but rather to the absence of relation between the representation and the

⁶¹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 5:203. The pagination given here and throughout corresponds to the Academy of Sciences edition of Kant's works (*Kant's Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin: G. Reimer/ W. de Gruyter, 1902-), and appears in the margins of Guyer and Matthews's translation. Bold typeface in the translation is reproduced here in italics.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 5:204.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 5:209.

object, then raises the question as to how aesthetics can be scientific. Kant lays out the stakes of his aesthetics in these terms:

But [aesthetic] universality cannot come from concepts. For there is no transition from concepts to the feeling of pleasure or displeasure (except in pure practical laws, which however bring with them an interest of the sort that is not combined with the pure judgement of taste). Consequently there must be attached to the judgement of taste, with the consciousness of an abstraction in it from all interest, a claim to validity for everyone without the universality that pertains to objects, i.e., it must be combined with a claim to subjective universality.⁶⁴

While Kant asserts here that there is no passage from concepts to feelings, one of his most fundamental tenets is that there must be a passage from the faculty of the understanding to the faculty of reason in order for a freely determined end *to appear* in nature, which is not itself free.⁶⁵ It is the faculty of judgement that coordinates the faculty of the understanding with the faculty of reason so that theory may pass over into practice in this way. Besides coordinating the other two higher faculties, the faculty of judgement does what all higher faculties do, which is to constitute the a priori principles for its lower faculty, which in this case is the feeling of pleasure and displeasure.⁶⁶ As part of its legislating role for the other two higher faculties, the faculty of judgement attributes its a priori principle (purposiveness) to nature, and so makes it legitimate for the power of the understanding to know nature by introducing into its order a unity of principles.⁶⁷ The purposiveness that we observe in nature is therefore

⁶⁴ Ibid., 5:211f.

⁶⁵ See *ibid.*, 5:168; 5:176-79 and 5:197f.

⁶⁶ See *ibid.*, 5:196-98, esp. 5:197f: “In regard to the faculties of the soul in general, insofar as they are considered as higher faculties, i.e., as ones that contain an autonomy, the understanding is the one that contains the *constitutive* principles a priori for *the faculty of cognition* (the theoretical cognition of nature); for the *feeling of pleasure and displeasure* it is the power of judgement, independent of concepts and sensations that are related to the determination of the faculty of desire and could thereby be immediately practical; for the *faculty of desire* it is reason, which is practical without the mediation of any sort of pleasure, wherever it might come from, and determines for this faculty, as a higher faculty, the final end, which at the same time brings with it the pure intellectual satisfaction in the object” (boldface type in Guyer and Matthews’s translation, denoting Kant’s *Fettdruck*, here reproduced as italics). Cf. “First Introduction,” in *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 20:246.

⁶⁷ Kant, 5:187.

not actually a property of the object, but subjective, introduced by the faculty of judgement.⁶⁸

The faculty of judgement leaves a trace of its work legislating for cognition in the *pleasure* felt whenever the architectonic of reason gains in elegance.⁶⁹ For the faculty of judgement also constitutes the principle for its lower faculty that the attainment of every aim will be combined with pleasure.⁷⁰ To unify heterogeneous laws under a higher one attains an aim, only suggested by the purposiveness of nature, and so is accompanied by pleasure.⁷¹ The pleasure that we experience, then, in a *representation* of the purposiveness of nature itself is a pleasure of peculiar kind. It is not of the kind that accompanies the attainment of an aim: the beautiful is “purposiveness without an end [Zweck, purpose].”⁷² This pleasure merely refers us back to the faculty of judgement, which is the origin of the “concept” of purposiveness. For purposiveness precedes concepts: it in fact makes concepts possible. The purposiveness of nature is indeed what spurs the subject to know nature and to make of the entire body of knowledge an organic whole, like an “animal body.”⁷³ For Kant, the judgement of taste has universal validity because, although the quality of the beautiful, the purposiveness, is not a quality of the object of the judgement, it is the attribute that makes every experience possible:

By contrast, the pleasure in the beautiful is neither a pleasure of enjoyment, nor of a lawful activity, and not even of a contemplation involving subtle reasoning in accordance with ideas, but of mere reflection. Without having any purpose or fundamental principle for a guide, this pleasure accompanies the common apprehension of an object by the imagination, as a faculty of intuition, in relation to the understanding, as a faculty of concepts, by means of a procedure of the power of judgement, which it must also exercise for the sake of the most common experience:

⁶⁸ Kant, 5:189.

⁶⁹ Kant, 5:187f.

⁷⁰ Kant, 5:187.

⁷¹ Kant, 5:187f.

⁷² Kant, 5:241, as translated except where indicated.

⁷³ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), A833/B861. The pagination given here and throughout, with “A” and “B” editions noted, corresponds to the Academy of Sciences edition of Kant’s works (*Kant’s Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin: G. Reimer/ W. de Gruyter, 1902-) and appears in the margins of Guyer and Wood’s translation.

only in the latter case it is compelled to do so for the sake of an empirical objective concept, while in the former case (in the aesthetic judging) it is merely for the sake of perceiving the suitability of the representation for the harmonious (subjectively purposive) occupation of both cognitive faculties in their freedom, i.e., to sense the representational state with pleasure. This pleasure must necessarily rest on the same conditions in everyone, since they are subjective conditions of the possibility of a cognition in general, and the proportion of these cognitive faculties that is required for taste is also requisite for the common and healthy understanding that one may presuppose in everyone.⁷⁴

By means of a transcendental argument, then, Kant grounds art's universality in the conditions of the possibility of experience—conditions found, to be sure, in the faculties. Although not everyone may actually agree that the object of the judgement of taste is beautiful, the judgement does indeed concern everyone, for it discovers on the object the reflection of what makes any cognition possible for anyone, without however itself being a cognition. Furthermore, this discovery could in principle be communicated to everyone.

Adorno, however, doubts that “the judgement of taste is...not a cognitive judgement, hence not a logical one, but is rather aesthetic, by which is understood one whose determining ground **cannot be other than subjective.**”⁷⁵ According to Adorno, this thesis runs immediately into a contradiction: aesthetic judgement is not supposed to be logical; yet Kant claims on the same page that the aesthetic judgement about the beautiful takes certain *moments* into consideration, and that these correspond to logical functions. Kant claims that the judgement of taste is concerned with *quality* first.⁷⁶ But Adorno thinks that if the judgement of taste is concerned first and foremost with quality, then this implies a pre-judgement about which logical function concerns it the most. He does not think that it makes sense for Kant to claim that the judgement of taste “is not a logical one”: “On the one hand,

⁷⁴ Kant, 5:292f.

⁷⁵ Kant, 5:203.

⁷⁶ Kant, 5:203n.

Kant treats the judgement of taste as a logical function and thus attributes this function to the aesthetic object to which the judgement would indeed need to be adequate; on the other hand, the artwork is said to present itself ‘without a concept,’ a mere intuition, as if it were simply extra-logical.”⁷⁷ But while Kant states that the judgement of taste is not a logical judgement, his use of the logical functions is merely a heuristic or guide in pursuing the question of what is “required for calling an object beautiful.”⁷⁸ But Adorno wants to claim that, since quality,⁷⁹ quantity,⁸⁰ relation⁸¹ and modality⁸² are all *required* for calling an object beautiful, Kant contradicts himself in asserting that the judgement of taste is not *necessarily* logical, and objective, other judgements.⁸³

Kant’s attempt to secure the judgement of taste’s universality by relating it back to the faculties of mind and mental functions makes it unacceptable to Adorno, who considers the appeal to the faculties Idealist.

While Adorno rejects Kant’s solution to the problem of aesthetic universality on the grounds that it does not allow for the subject to relate to beautiful artworks as objects and to

⁷⁷ GS, vol. 7, p. 149, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 97.

⁷⁸ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 5:203n.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 5:203.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 5:211.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 5:219.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 5:236.

⁸³ Adorno’s strategy is to show that there is a contradiction between functions and qualities in Kant’s account of the aesthetic judgement so that he may then claim that Kant’s aesthetics registers the split between exchange value and use value that characterizes the commodity, and is thus advanced. But the attempt to derive a critique of the commodity structure in a rote Lukács-type treatment of the judgement of taste remains formalist and, as such, unconvincing as long as it suppresses the historical background for Kant’s assertion that the beautiful object is “without a concept.” Kant’s aesthetics is progressive because it directly challenges the conservative Burke’s concept of the beautiful, which is a collection of pre-determined empirical characteristics. In Kant, logic serves as a clue or guide to look into aesthetic judgements in general, whereas Burke’s definition of the beautiful renders the judgement of taste the mere result of a logical procedure. In Burke’s aesthetics, the rose is beautiful because beautiful things are small, smooth, delicate, clear-hued and gradually varied and the particular rose falls under the definition. In Kant’s aesthetics, the judgement of taste is *not* logical and cannot be reached by way of Burkean bureaucratic proceduralism.

make judgements on them that can be true or false, he nonetheless admits the Kantian thesis that what is beautiful is “purposive without a purpose.” Kant himself turns out not to be the great systematizer that he is often made out to be. His formulation that the beautiful is what is “purposive without a purpose” indeed, by expressing an aesthetic contradiction, goes beyond the needs of the system to be a completely self-relating whole. For, according to Kant, purposiveness observed in nature does not exist in itself, but is a principle added to nature by the subject to achieve the ends of forming concepts and making of knowledge an organic whole; purposiveness in the beautiful object is different because it *achieves* no concept and does not introduce any unity of principles into the architectonic of knowledge. The purely empirical observation of reality never really discovers proof that nature in itself naturally gives itself to human knowledge. The empirical observer might argue that the proof that nature gives itself to be known is that it actually provides us with the fruits of wisdom—in other words, it is purposive. But the proof of the pudding is not necessarily in the eating. Purposiveness reveals itself to be a subjective addition to nature only in the experience of beauty, where there is pleasure, yet without the subject attaining the aims of achieving a concept and introducing unity into reason. The conclusion to draw from an experience of beauty is that, in itself, there is no necessary, objective, essential connection between purposiveness, on the one hand, and the systematicity and conceptuality of knowledge, on the other. Kant and Adorno are agreed that purposiveness is a principle that the subject inserts into reality to serve its own needs, but the two thinkers depart when they try to rescue purposiveness—in other words, when they try to read more out of the thing, so that it cannot just be dismissed and ignored as something trifling, just false or merely contingent. Kant reads out of it the subjective freedom of the faculties, whereas Adorno reads out of it the objective constraint of society. For Kant,

purposiveness is what we add so that we can understand nature (through concepts). For Adorno, any need for knowledge to appear as an organic whole is properly a social necessity and any appearance of purposiveness in nature, socially necessary illusion. According to Adorno, Kant does not remain true to the aesthetic antinomy “purposiveness without purpose” because ultimately he refers the lack of concepts in art back to the *faculty* of judgement, which legislates for the other two higher faculties, so to the a priori condition for the possibility of *concepts*. Kant considers that referring the judgement of taste back to the faculty of judgement, so, indirectly, to all three higher faculties, as good as secures the artwork’s necessity and universality, since he views the faculties as static, permanent features of human mind on which all cognitions, past, present and future, depend. According to Adorno’s definition, this move is Idealist, and ultimately makes an apology for purposiveness—and so, for organicism—since, in Kant’s system, human minds are naturally set up in such a way as to produce the principle of purposiveness, and could not form concepts, and so, cognition, without it. Adorno cannot accept the claim that the faculties are just set up in such a way that the subject must strive to make of knowledge an organic whole or else know nothing at all. He rejects the way in which Kant resolves the paradox. The judgement of taste is rational for Kant because ultimately it refers to the way in which our faculties are set up in general, so that the particularity of the judgement is subordinated to features of all minds. Adorno wishes to avoid such Idealism and therefore brings out the dynamic, historical, socially-determined dimension of the faculties. His aesthetics make the case for art, and especially for music, as knowledge without concepts.⁸⁴ In this way, Adorno remains true to the objective aesthetic contradiction

⁸⁴ See Martin Zenck, *Kunst als begrifflose Erkenntnis*, Theorie und Geschichte der Literatur und der schönen Künste, herausgegeben von Max Imdahl et al., vol. 29 (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1977), esp. Kapitel 3, “Erkenntnischarakter der Musik,” pp. 93-162. Zenck does well to contrast the relatively inferior position that

expressed by “purposive without purpose.” He glosses Kant’s formulation as follows: “[Works’] purposiveness, divested of practical purposes, is their language-like-ness; their ‘without purpose,’ their lack of concept—their difference from significative language.”⁸⁵

Adorno reads the paradox “purposive without a purpose” as expressive of an epoch-making event in the history of language—the *arrival* of concepts—, for he elsewhere translates this contradiction as “that of its spiritual and mimetic essence.”⁸⁶

Mimesis is an antique form of cognition based on likenesses and once took the form of communicative language. Now it becomes tempting to conclude that artworks, despite their status as particulars, are universal because their mimetic side engages some universal human capacity for recognizing similarities. However, Adorno is not making this claim, which would merely substitute one form of Idealism for another. No doubt the primary source for Adorno’s concept of mimesis, Walter Benjamin’s essay “On the Mimetic Faculty,” observes “the increasing decay of the mimetic faculty.”⁸⁷ Adorno’s interpretation goes in this sense: “Art is refuge of mimetic conduct.”⁸⁸ Art, then, does not gather its moment of universality from some active or ready capacity belonging to a priori structures of consciousness—and not from logical functions or a conceptual schema, either. As Benjamin suggests, the mimetic faculty cannot be taken for granted in every individual. What is universal in artistic expression, on

music holds in Kant’s aesthetics to the priority treatment that it receives in Adorno’s aesthetics (*ibid.*, p. 102f.). This invites the thought that Adorno’s defense of *art* as knowledge without a concept may be a false generalization from the art that he knew best: music. Adorno considered music to be furthest removed from concepts (see GS, vol. 7, p. 148; GS, vol. 10.1, p. 447).

⁸⁵ GS, vol. 7, p. 211, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 140.

⁸⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 149, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 97.

⁸⁷ Walter Benjamin, “Über das mimetische Vermögen,” in *Gesammelte Schriften*, unter Mitwirkung von Theodor W. Adorno und Gershom Scholem, herausgegeben von Rolf Tiedemann und Hermann Schweppenhäuser, 6 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972-1987), vol. 2.1, pp. 210–213, here p. 211 as translated by Edmund Jephcott, “On the Mimetic Faculty,” in *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), pp. 333-336, here p. 334.

⁸⁸ GS, vol. 7, p. 86, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 53.

Adorno's reading, cannot be use of a more original form of cognition. Rather, the artwork draws its universality from a *memory-trace* of the social upheaval that was the occasion for the collective dying-out of the mimetic faculty, in a world dominated by the concept. Memory does not destroy the artistic contradiction, for in it past and present language, forms of cognition and faculties can arrive at the same time—as historical, not as purely and simply illogical.

According to the mimetic theory of language, the mimetic faculty made communicative language possible less in that speakers needed the ability to reproduce others' speech exactly than in that the gift enabled recognition of a great diversity of expressions' similarity to the thing, even in utterly different sensuous mediums, as in the recognition of the similarity of certain combination of *sounds* to the *visual* aspect of a thing. Thus, the sort of gift of similarity capable of language is the gift of "nonsensuous similarity."⁸⁹ Any number of expressions can bear a resemblance to the thing, diverging however wildly from one another. The truly mimetic adept would be able not only to recognize the thing in all the variants, but also to produce quite spontaneously still others liable to be recognized, and is much closer to a winner at charades than to Peter Sellers. One can speculate that in its early stages, language was a state of constant mimetic improvisation and divination. This raises the question as to how there could come to be something like a sign out of an overwhelming number of expressive variants.

According to anti-mimetic theories of language, what preceded signs was the utterly undifferentiated, not an utter diversity of distinctions corresponding to the thing. The scene in John Mighton's *Possible Worlds* in which two men handle a rudimentary language whose

⁸⁹ Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2.1, p. 212 as translated, "On the Mimetic Faculty," p. 334.

functional vocabulary comprises only the words “slab” and “block” would, to such theories, recreate the starting point of language, rather than stage an allegory of its ultimate conclusion in binary code.⁹⁰ Ferdinand de Saussure’s influential semiological theory of linguistics is one such anti-mimetic theory.⁹¹ Saussure conceives of linguistics as a branch of a not-yet-existing science of *signs*, which he calls “*sémiologie*” (semiology)⁹² because, for him, language necessarily implies the *sign*: “A language is a system of signs expressing ideas.”⁹³ Furthermore, clear and distinct ideas *depend upon* signs:

Philosophers and linguists have always agreed that were it not for signs, we should be incapable of differentiating any two ideas in a clear and constant way. In itself, thought is like a swirling cloud, where no shape is intrinsically determinate. No ideas are established in advance, and nothing is distinct, before the introduction of linguistic structure.⁹⁴

Saussure claims not only that thought is “chaotic by nature,”⁹⁵ but also that sounds on their own, “in themselves,”⁹⁶ are not any more delimited than thoughts are. Language—la langue—would be the product of mutual determination within the mass of thought as much as within

⁹⁰ John Mighton, *Possible Worlds* (Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 1997), pp. 41-43. The language also includes a third word, “hilarious,” which is functionless (ibid., p. 42). In Mighton’s play, the Guide expounds three theories of the civilization whose language has only three words: “Some say they were once an advanced civilization. There was a war. Somehow their memories were selectively destroyed. Only three words survived. Others say they’re a very primitive civilization. They learned the first two words by trial and error, and somehow stumbled on the third...a tourist perhaps. Other say they’re an ordinary civilization but very concise. It would take fifty encyclopaedias to translate the meanings of “slab” and “block” into our language” (ibid.). Mighton parodies Wittgenstein’s “complete primitive language,” which consists of four words: “block,” “pillar,” “slab” and “beam.” See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen=Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, 3rd ed. (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2001), p. 3 §2.

⁹¹ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, publié par Charles Bally et Albert Séchehaye avec la collaboration de Albert Riedlinger, édition critique préparée par Tullio de Mauro (Paris : Payot, 2005), translated by Roy Harris as *Course in General Linguistics* (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1986).

⁹² Ibid., p. 33. The pagination given here and throughout corresponds to the standard page numbers in use since the second edition and appears in brackets in the margins of Harris’s translation.

⁹³ Ibid. “La langue est un système de signes exprimant des idées...”

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 155. “Philosophes et linguistes se sont toujours accordés à reconnaître que, sans le secours des signes, nous serions incapables de distinguer deux idées d’une façon claire et constante. Prise en elle-même, la pensée est comme une nébuleuse où rien n’est nécessairement délimité. Il n’y a pas d’idées préétablies, et rien n’est distinct avant l’apparition de la langue.”

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 156. “La pensée, chaotique de sa nature, est forcée de se préciser en se décomposant.”

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 155.

the mass of sound.⁹⁷ The linguistic sign is the fusion of a conceptual element, the *signifié* (signified), with a material, acoustic element, or *signifiant* (signifier).⁹⁸ Perhaps the most important characteristic of Saussure's theory is that the linguistic sign is *arbitrary*, in the sense of *unmotivated* (*immotivé*): nothing necessarily links the signified to "reality."⁹⁹ Saussure claims language to be "a social product"¹⁰⁰ and the sign, "social by nature."¹⁰¹ In another sense, language as a social product implies that signs are *not* arbitrary—they *are* attached to reality, social reality, shaped by specific practices of social control. Saussure in fact takes a contradictory view of the social character of language. On one hand, language "exists only in virtue of a kind of contract agreed between the members of a community"¹⁰² and signs are "associations, ratified by collective agreement."¹⁰³ On the other hand, Saussure fully admits that language is not freely entered into by contract, but rather socially imposed:

The community, as much as the individual, is bound to its language. A language cannot therefore be treated simply as a form of contract, and the linguistic sign is a particularly interesting phenomenon to study for this reason. For if we wish to demonstrate that the rules a community accepts are imposed upon it, and not freely agreed to, is is a language which offers the most striking proof.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 156.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 99. Harris's translations of "signification" for "signifié" and "signal" for "signifiant" are seldom used.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 101.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 25. "C'est à la fois un produit social de la faculté de langage et un ensemble de conventions nécessaires, adoptées par le corps social pour permettre l'exercice de cette faculté chez les individus."

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 34. Saussure qualifies the sign as social by nature ("le signe, qui est social par nature") in the context of a critique of a psychological approach to language.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 31. "Elle n'existe qu'en vertu d'une sorte de contrat passée entre les membres de la communauté."

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 32. "Les signes linguistiques, pour être essentiellement psychiques, ne sont pas des abstractions ; les associations ratifiées par le consentement collectif, et dont l'ensemble constitue la langue, sont des réalités qui ont leur siège dans le cerveau."

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 104. "Non seulement un individu serait incapable, s'il le voulait, de modifier en quoi que ce soit le choix qui a été fait, mais la masse elle-même ne peut exercer sa souveraineté par un seul mot ; elle est liée à la langue telle qu'elle est. La langue ne peut donc plus être assimilée à un contrat pur et simple, et c'est justement de ce côté que le signe linguistique est particulièrement intéressant à étudier; car si l'on veut démontrer que la loi admise dans une collectivité est une chose que l'on subit, et non une règle librement consentie, c'est bien la langue qui en offre la preuve la plus éclatante."

Despite defining language as a social institution—“institution sociale”—, Saussure considers it far less in its social aspects than this element of coercion in language would demand.¹⁰⁵ This puts his theory at risk of sanctioning a second nature—of sanctioning the merely conventional character of language that he observes. Saussure openly declares the bias of his linguistics toward internal factors of language as opposed to external ones: “Our definition of a language assumes that we disregard everything which does not belong to its structure as a system; in short everything that is designated by the term ‘external linguistics’.”¹⁰⁶ Elements that might be regarded as external to the “organisme linguistique interne” (inner linguistic organism)¹⁰⁷ are cultural mores, colonization, language laws, literary production and social institutions such as school, church, the salon, the court and academies.¹⁰⁸ Given the thoroughly social character of language, separating internal and external factors in language does not look viable, yet Saussure nonetheless offers the following definition: “Everything is internal which alters the system in any degree whatsoever.”¹⁰⁹ In other words, linguistics is concerned with external elements of language only insofar as the *whole* of language is affected. Yet the organicist terms in which Saussure casts this “system” recalls that, in Kant, the need to make of all knowledge a whole was a merely subjective principle introduced into nature by the faculty of judgement. As Adorno has pointed out, this principle does not secure universality for the judgement of taste in Kant—nor, we can add, does it secure universality for language in Saussure’s theory of linguistics.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 33.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 40. “Notre définition de la langue suppose que nous en écartons tout ce qui est étranger à son organisme, à son système, en un mot tout ce qu’on désigne par le terme de ‘linguistique externe’.”

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 42 (my translation; Harris translates “organisme linguistique interne” as “internal structure of the language itself”).

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 40f.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 43. “Est interne tout ce qui change le système à un degré quelconque.”

According to the mimetic theory of language, the concept did not make a distinction in a cloudy idea-soup, creating reason where before there was none; rather, it *replaced* a form of rationality. This was not a natural evolution, but a social transformation. The prehistoric shift from mimetic communication to a sign system would have marked the ascendancy of social forms over objects' qualities. Signs are not decided by common accord: "Language, as is evident, is not an agreed system of signs."¹¹⁰ The first signs may have been just the mimetic expressions invented by the dominant group or by the dominant individuals. But the social authority seeking to establish its expressions universally would have to have not only imposed these particular linguistic forms on the community in no uncertain terms, but would have also delivered it an injunction to *forget* its mimetic capacities, so as to make it dependent on the one and unique, decreed, fixed expression for each idea. Speakers would have faced strong pressure not merely to uphold the socially dominant linguistic forms, but also to repress their gift for recognizing and producing similarities. The best defense against the mimetic faculty, which makes everyone into a language generator, is the arbitrariness of signs. The result of the sign's arbitrariness is a society of speakers who confront a bizarre language-mass, established before them, on which they cannot improvise, but which they simply obey. The arbitrariness of signs is thus a political move to split the subject from the object, so as to make the subject dependent on the social authority. However, the split between subject and object itself does not usually appear as the tactic of social authority: its social basis is forgotten. The

¹¹⁰ Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2.1, p. 212 as translated, "On the Mimetic Faculty," p. 334. This appears to be a direct contestation of Saussure's definition of language as "un ensemble de signes fixés par un accord des membres de cette société" ("a set of signs fixed by agreement between the members of that society"). Ferdinand de Saussure, *Troisième cours de linguistique générale (1910-1911) d'après les cahiers d'Emile Constantin*=Saussure's *Third Course of Lectures on General Linguistics (1910-1911) from the Notebooks of Emile Constantin*, French text edited by Eisuke Komatsu, English translation by Roy Harris (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1993), p. 9/9a. This leaves only the question of whether and how Benjamin would have had access to this material left out of the 1916 edition of the *Cours de linguistique générale*.

arbitrariness of signs thus takes on a natural appearance, rarely ever striking us with the absurdity that it has.

The small child merely points to the cupboard where the biscuits are kept, sticks out his tongue and makes an aspirate from the back of his throat, moves his hand horizontally with the palm sideways while opening and closing the fingers, lifts his arms up toward his father, presents his mother with his shoes, his tumbler or the bath plug, makes up a nonsense name for his blanket. But one day, these signs stop working: his parents refuse him his wishes, feigning incomprehension, until he expresses what he wants in common words, even though he makes himself perfectly understood to them. Children's impulses to generate language out of the things themselves never have the chance to develop into communicative mimetic language, but, even if they are successfully suppressed by the parental authority and later by the educative one, something of the injustice of this common experience must remain. For if signifying language is first of all communicative language, then the child who finds a way to express some thing without recourse to his mother tongue is closer to articulating a language than when he started to say "mama" to all people and "duck" to all small objects. The child who, under the evaluating eyes of the parent, correctly names all the animals figuring in a picture book does not grasp language.

Despite its overthrow in the field of communication, mimesis has managed to survive by finding a terrain where it is not in direct competition with the sign, whose linkage to a thing is decided by social and historical forces, rather than by the degree of resemblance to that thing. But when mimesis leaves the sphere of communication to take refuge in the sphere of art, it in fact abandons its original purpose of expressing *something*. In so doing, art also abandons the objective criterion of mimetic conduct: the thing to be expressed. At first glance,

mimesis in art does exactly the opposite of what Adorno claims it does. Mimesis appears not to secure the artwork's universality, but only to turn art into self-expression. It appears as though absolutely nothing justifies the exhibition and performance of artworks: they appear to be essentially private languages of concern only to their makers.

Adorno's solution to the old problematic of art's universality does not at first seem like a solution. It would be artists' "sense of form" or "feeling for form" (Formgefühl) that "delivers the mediating category to the Kantian problem of how art—to him, glaringly non-conceptual—nonetheless subjectively bears that moment of the universal and necessary, which, according to the critique of reason, is reserved only for discursive cognition."¹¹¹ But in what way does this peculiar feeling aspire to universality? The sense of form is hardly a *sensus communis*: only rare individuals possess it. So how could a feeling, particularly the feeling of a rare individual, the artist, ever give a particular thing universal force? Adorno appears to justify art on the basis of a chance or occult quality.

The artist's sense of form is on the most general level a sense of illusion, for Adorno called (artistic) illusion "form in its broadest understanding."¹¹² While mere social illusion is a support for existing reality, in art, illusion needs to be supported itself. It is supported by a behaviour that is positioned simultaneously against existing reality and within it—mimetic behaviour. This marks a fundamental difference between mere social illusion and artistic aesthetic illusion: social illusion supports reality, and this conditions individuals' behaviour; artistic aesthetic illusion is supported by a behaviour that takes a stand against reality. But once mimetic behaviour begins to serve illusion, art in turn serves mimesis: art expresses the position that mimetic behaviour takes toward reality. Adorno expresses this mutually-serving

¹¹¹ GS, vol. 7, p. 175, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 114.

¹¹² GS, vol. 7, p. 169, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 110.

relationship between mimesis and illusion in terms that almost evoke propaganda: “Mimetic behaviour, a position on reality this side of the fixed opposition of subject and object, is seized with illusion, captivated by art, the mouthpiece of mimesis since the mimetic taboo, and, in complement to the autonomy of form, practically becomes illusion’s vehicle [Träger].”¹¹³

Mimetic behaviour that has been overcome with illusion implies a contradiction between what it is and what it appears as. From this passage, it can be surmised that contemporary mimetic behaviour does not in fact get beyond the fixed opposition between subject and object. Yet, in art, it appears to. Mimesis in art appears to be the individual artist’s movements living in the work, mimetic behaviour. Indeed, the artwork does depend upon a rare individual’s living mimetic behaviour, which *is* only at the time of making. But at the same time, if the artist succeeds, then a *work* is produced that freezes movement. The work’s coming into existence makes the artist’s surviving mimetic skill into mimesis past, something dead and frozen, not surviving at all. In other words, artists direct mimetic manners of behaving into the work, which stands as a kind of substitute for them. As a substitute for living mimetic behaviour, as its concretization, the work actually unburdens the mimetic faculty itself, the active mimetic skill. Each work attempts to rescue mimesis by capturing it in some way, but this relieves its full exercise, just as noting something down eases the demands on memory. For mimesis really to survive, really to be, not just to appear, the mimetic urge would have to survive the particular work that it goes to produce. If mimesis could do that, it would destroy the illusion of mimesis in the work. Then the work would no longer be just dead forgotten mimesis and dead time, but remembered time, living memory of mimesis that carries itself beyond, despite

¹¹³ GS, vol. 7, p. 169, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 110.

the particular immobilization of mimesis in the particular work. But the mimesis that has not been fixed *appears* as other than it is—as a collective “bearing in mind” or remembrance:

The memory-trace [Erinnerungsspur] of mimesis, which every artwork seeks, is always...an anticipation of a condition beyond the split of individual from all others. Such collective remembrance [Eingedenken] in the artwork is however not khôris from the subject, but happens rather through the subject; in the subject’s idiosyncratic stirring, the collective form of reaction announces itself.¹¹⁴

The unusual word “Eingedenken” would have been familiar to Adorno from the works of Walter Benjamin. It occurs in an important passage from material Benjamin read to Adorno in 1929:

Dialectical structure of awakening: remembering and awaking are most intimately related. Awakening is namely the dialectical, Copernican turn of remembrance <Eingedenken>. It is an eminently composed [durchkomponierter, through-composed, as opposed to strophic] reversal from the world of dreaming to the world of waking. For the dialectical schematism at the core of this physiological process, the Chinese have found, in their fairy tales and novellas, the most radical expression. The new, dialectical method of doing history teaches us to pass in spirit—with the rapidity and intensity of dreams—through what has been, in order to experience the present as [a] waking world, a world to which every dream at last refers.¹¹⁵

The sort of collective remembering in artworks is not borrowed from the fact-finding work of historiographical science. Rather, Adorno’s concept goes back to Benjamin’s “new, dialectical method of doing history” that takes for *its* model the remembrance (Eingedenken) of art, notably of Chinese literature and of Proust.¹¹⁶ According to Benjamin, the goal of doing history should not be to position ourselves in a lost past, but to free ourselves from our present illusions.

¹¹⁴ GS, vol. 7, p. 198, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 131.

¹¹⁵ Benjamin, “[Pariser Passagen II],” in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, pp. 1044-1059, here p. 1058, as translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin except where indicated, “<The Arcades of Paris><Paris Arcades II>,” in *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 873-884, here p. 884.

¹¹⁶ Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, p. 1058 as translated, “Paris Arcades II,” p. 883.

While Benjamin was presenting his new method of doing history to his friends and peers, Sigmund Freud was preparing *Civilization and its Discontents* for publication. Freud opens his book by responding to a criticism voiced against his 1927 publication *The Future of an Illusion*. The question is whether wish-fulfilment is an adequate characterization of religious belief, considering that an important dimension of religious experience is personal religious feeling. Certain individuals might believe in eternity because they have an “oceanic feeling” of eternity, not because they want eternity to such an extent that they subscribe to the institution that requires them to believe in it.¹¹⁷ Freud bases his criticism on “religious doctrine.”¹¹⁸ But the subjective feeling of eternity does not reduce to “an article of faith.”¹¹⁹ Freud takes up this criticism by evoking his theory of the memory-trace, which is “that in mental life nothing which has once been formed can perish—that everything is somehow preserved and that in suitable circumstances (when, for instance, regression goes back far enough) it can once more be brought to light.”¹²⁰ Freud does not deny that people have feelings of being at one with the universe, but explains these feelings as remnants surviving from an earlier stage of the individual¹²¹—the text suggests that it is the infant stage, in which there is no clear differentiation of the ego from the external world.¹²² While Freud’s insight into the infant’s sense of self may well be a belief motivated by wish-fulfilment no less than the faithful’s belief in eternity—expressing, say, Freud’s wish-fulfilment that he is already just

¹¹⁷ Sigmund Freud, *Civilisation and its Discontents*, in *Volume 21 (1927-1931)* [of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*]: “*The Future of an Illusion*,” “*Civilisation and its Discontents*” and *Other Works*, trans. James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson (London: Vintage, 2001), pp. 57-145, here p. 64.

¹¹⁸ Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, in “*The Future of an Illusion*,” “*Civilisation and its Discontents*” and *Other Works*, pp. 1-56, here p. 31.

¹¹⁹ Freud, *Civilisation and its Discontents*, p. 64.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 66f.

more mature than religious people who have such feelings of eternity—, nonetheless he, seemingly by chance, proposes that religious illusion be dissolved by the memory-trace. To elucidate what he means by the memory-trace, Freud compares the human mind to the city of Rome:

Now let us, by a flight of imagination, suppose that Rome is not a human habitation but a psychical entity with a similarly long and copious past—an entity, that is to say, in which nothing that has once come into existence will have passed away and all the earlier phases of development continue to exist alongside the latest one. This would mean that in Rome the palaces of the Caesars and the Septizonium of Septimius Severus would still be rising to their old height on the Palatine and that the castle of S. Angelo would still be carrying on its battlements the beautiful statues which graced it until the siege by the Goths, and so on. But more than this. In the place occupied by the Palazzo Caffarelli would once more stand—without the Palazzo having to be removed—the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus; and this not only in its latest shape, as the Romans of the Empire saw it, but also in its earliest one, when it still showed Etruscan forms and was ornamented with terra-cotta antefixes. Where the Coliseum now stands we could at the same time admire Nero's vanished Golden House. On the Piazza of the Pantheon we should find not only the Pantheon of to-day, as it was bequeathed to us by Hadrian, but, on the same site, the original edifice erected by Agrippa; indeed, the same piece of ground would be supporting the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva and the ancient temple over which it was built. And the observer would perhaps only have to change the direction of his glance or his position in order to call up the one view or the other.

There is clearly no point in spinning our phantasy any further, for it leads to things that are unimaginable and even absurd. If we want to represent historical sequence in spatial terms we can only do it by juxtaposition in space: the same space cannot have two different contents. Our attempt seems to be an idle game. It has only one justification. It shows us how little far we are from mastering the characteristics of mental life by representing them in pictorial terms.¹²³

This passage suggests that mental life does not respect historical phases: the psychical entity does not move on and build in a new place when the era shifts, so as to make space correspond to time, but rather builds on what was destroyed, all the while *believing* that the old structures still exist, so as to inhabit, to borrow a term from Michel Foucault, “heterotopias”: places with multiple contents.¹²⁴ Freud's thesis that religion is wholly illusory depends on an argument for the existence of the memory-trace; however, the demonstration takes the form of a baroque

¹²³ Ibid., p. 70f.

¹²⁴ Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1986): pp. 22-27.

analogy of the psyche with something physically impossible: a city in which two things can occupy the same place at the same time. Yet it seems no more illusory to believe in eternal life than in two things occupying the same place at the same time. Although Freud ultimately rejects his own analogy, it is telling that he compares the psyche to a city having suffered multiple destructions. The memory-trace is memory of something destroyed. But it must not be conscious of itself as memory, since it treats the remembered content *as if* it were still present. With his concept of the memory-trace, Freud wants to dissolve a very specific illusion, then: the illusion that a structure from a past historical period exists superimposed on the present one. Historically juxtaposing the psychically superimposed contents should dissolve the illusion that the past is really present. But giving up this illusion implies remembering the destruction of the old structures as well, and perhaps also the upheaval that ended a historical phase. It is thus not surprising that the mind clings to its illusion of being an “eternal city” in which nothing is ever lost. The question then is why Freud would single out the religious feeling of eternity as illusory when, according to his thesis, the psyche as a rule behaves *as if* the past were present, which is actively regressive. For, although he finds no way of supporting his theory of the memory-trace, Freud still takes the position that “it is rather the rule than the exception for the past to be preserved in mental life.”¹²⁵

Benjamin’s “new, dialectical method of doing history” addresses the problem on which Freud was also working—namely, the fusion of past and present in the memory-trace. Benjamin believes that the conditions for memory (*Erinnerung*) have been destroyed by the repetitive character of modern existence, and that any fusion of past and present is a remnant from Epic times; nonetheless, forgetting may still be countered through transformed memory,

¹²⁵ Freud, *Civilisation and its Discontents*, p. 72.

either through reminiscence (Gedächtnis), which is itself a repetitive form, or through remembrance (Eingedenken), which is concerned only with the unique event.¹²⁶ Benjamin's method of doing history is based on remembrance (Eingedenken). The aim of his method is to experience the present as expected, rather than as the past that has continued unconsciously. Benjamin opposes waking not to sleeping, but to dreaming: the opposite of remembrance is not void, but a substitute. This is no ordinary forgetfulness, but a delusional state provoked by a social injunction to forget.

Adorno employs the Freudian category of the memory-trace critically when he introduces it into the sphere of art, as the memory-trace of mimesis. The As-If character of Freud's concept indeed justifies this displacement. Adorno qualifies the concept of memory-trace further: the memory-trace of mimesis is also "anticipation" of a state beyond the one that mimetic conduct resists from within, beyond the fixed opposition of subject and object. With these modifications, memory-trace translates into the Benjaminian concept of collective Eingedenken. Memory-trace as Eingedenken is memory that bears in mind that it is memory, remembrance of the unique event of memory's destruction. Every artwork seeks the "memory-trace of mimesis" because art retains some trace of the suffering endured when rationality through concepts replaces mimesis. The point is not to restore an ancient form of rationality on

¹²⁶ For a good explication of the distinctions amongst memory (Erinnerung), reminiscence (Gedächtnis) and remembrance (Eingedenken), see Andrew Benjamin, "Tradition and Experience: Walter Benjamin's 'On Some Motifs in Baudelaire'," Chapter 7 in *The Problems of Modernity: Adorno and Benjamin*, ed. Andrew Benjamin (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 122-140, esp. pp. 123-126. The three are associated each with a different literary genre: "Memory (*Erinnerung*) contains...both remembrance and reminiscence. They are combined in the epic though with its decline they separate, giving rise on the one hand to the novel and on the other to the story. The novel opens an enclosed world closed off from the world of repetition. The world it opens is self-enclosing and within it the novel is preoccupied with a unique happening. The novel finishes at the border of its own enclosure. The impossibility of repetition is therefore inscribed within the actual identity of the novel itself...The story on the other hand is brief. It passes with the moment and yet potentially its end is infinitely deferred. The story both in terms of form and content can be repeated *ad infinitum*, if of course the conditions for its reception also endure" (ibid., p. 126).

a universal scale, but to have it engage a dialectical reversal that will awaken *us* here and now.¹²⁷

In an important note toward his theory of musical reproduction, Adorno states a thesis that he and Horkheimer would sign in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*—“All reification is a forgetting.”¹²⁸ He includes musical notation among the reified objects: “Musical notation is a wad of discipline. It expropriates the memory [Gedächtnis] by backing it.”¹²⁹ He goes on to make an even stronger claim—not merely that something is always lost in recording oral tradition, but that this loss is actually socially commanded: “The cultic dances and songs are cut off from the unity of memory [Erinnerung] and change. They are to be forgotten in order to be fixed, established, they are to pass into identical repetition, which characterizes the music of barbaric cultures.”¹³⁰ By “the music of barbaric cultures,” Adorno likely means the recorded music of the culture industry first and foremost, for—to make a point of comparison—he claims that the music of so-called primitive peoples—and, to some extent, jazz—is rhythmically so complex that “the most highly trained musician” of the scores-tradition cannot exactly reproduce its models.¹³¹ Imitation in scores evokes the time of unsupported memory; the musician is to create the illusion whereby whatever departs from the model seems like the collective freedom expressed in cultural variants, when, really, it must be closer to the historical illustration of what a weakening musical memory sounds like: it starts

¹²⁷ GS, vol. 7, p. 198, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 131.

¹²⁸ Theodor W. Adorno, *Zu einer Theorie der musikalischen Reproduktion: Aufzeichnungen, ein Entwurf and zwei Schemata*, herausgegeben von Henri Lonitz (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001) p. 71; Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung: Philosophische Fragmente*, GS, vol. 3, p. 263 (my translation).

¹²⁹ Adorno, *Zu einer Theorie der musikalischen Reproduktion*, p. 70 (my translation, where “Gedächtnis” refers to the faculty of memory).

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 70f. (my translation).

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 70 (my translation).

on the wrong note, misjudges intervals slightly here and there, mixes up the order of notes or sections, alters the rhythm. It expresses the crisis in memory [Erinnerung], or, reification.

Reification in music is not something totally other than reification in other domains: whether it takes the form of musical notation, the linguistic sign or the commodity, reification implies social domination.¹³² The artwork is, however, a different sort of fixed thing that commands forgetting. Its existence is also a spur to contesting the social injunction to forget. Gerhard Schultz relates the experiences of his teacher Sándor Végh playing performances of Bartók's compositions inspired by Hungarian folk idioms. Invariably, those familiar with the folk songs would complain to Végh of their inaccuracy. It is true to say that in writing down what a community knew from heart and reproduced in perhaps hundreds and thousands of variants, Bartók was replacing a living multiplicity with a fixed, singular authority. In a sense, something really was lost when Bartók began to draw from folk songs. But on the other hand, with Bartók it became clear that each variant of a particular folk song was already exercising an authority: this must have been the case for so many people to have complained so vehemently to Sándor Végh that their music was not rendered correctly. What Bartók did in

¹³² Cf. Karla L. Schultz, *Mimesis on the Move: Theodor W. Adorno's Concept of Imitation*, New York University Ottendorfer Series, herausgegeben von Volkmar Sander, Neue Folge, 36 (Berne: Peter Lang, 1990). Schultz suggests that the artwork's critical aspect lies in its playful mimesis—as opposed to the “bad...displays of mimesis” (ibid., p. 6), such as the “poisoned imitation” in fascist society (ibid., p. 51). She implies that by dint of its being a make-believe realm in which the subject “is without actual power” (ibid., p. 6), art can know its object, the material, without dominating it:

The mimetic is the salient part of Adorno's critique of domination—the power-structure that pervades society, the economy of the self, the order of symbolic language. Throughout history, the ruling subject's warped imitations respond to its own repressed nature (desire, sensation, a sense of connectedness) in a chain of identifications that ends in catastrophe. Art, on the other hand, is reason without domination. As artistic technique it finds a temporary “home” or identity in its material (language, music), which it forms into a new text or composition...By objectifying itself in play, spirit/subjectivity awakens its objects (and itself) from reification. Its dynamic recalls what the young Marx considered the key to criticizing ideology: making petrified relations dance by playing to them their own tune (ibid., p. 8).

Schultz here neglects one rational aspect of art: technique, which, Adorno admits, is “Materialbeherrschung”—mastery or domination of the material (GS, vol. 7, p. 316).

using folk music as his material, especially in his most advanced handling of it, in the energetic, impetuous, almost Mozartean combinations of the *Dance Suite*, was to put the traditional authority behind folk songs into a form in which it could be contested. An adequate performance of music based on folk songs refuses to take the oral tradition as its authority and repeat clichés, but challenges the social authority, which, thanks to musical notation, has been clearly identified and isolated.

Adequate musical performance in general converts reified objects back into experience, into life and flowing time, into singular acts however *different* from the artists' acts. Music draws its universality from disturbances in the seeming temporal unity of the work. The work seems to be "of its time." But time in music does not behave according to universal physical laws because music is illusion: "In the contradiction between its curdled state in writing, and the liquid state it implies, music has a part in the illusory character of mature art."¹³³ On the one hand, the implication of life in lifeless scores is pure affirmative illusion. On the other hand, illusion is not purely affirmative because it splits open unitary time, the everlasting present. The score points out of the enduring present in an ambivalent fashion, at once backward toward the reactions of the composer and forward toward the reactions of an interpreter. An interpreter able to read a score adequately reads it through this illusion.

Aesthetic illusion is form in the widest sense, so results from artists' feeling for form, and this feeling is idiosyncratic. Nevertheless, Adorno claims that the category of artists' feeling for form secures art's universality, without however relying on the concepts of signifying language. For artists' feelings are not just arbitrary, but are reactions directed both

¹³³ GS, vol. 16, p. 517, or prefer to my translation here "Vers une musique informelle," in *Quasi una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 1992), pp. 269-322, here p. 296.

against the norms that have been established in the past and forward in time: “Idiosyncrasies of artists condense into the canon of prohibitions, but these idiosyncrasies are in turn objectively binding, where aesthetically the particular is literally the universal.”¹³⁴ These idiosyncrasies are at the time unconscious, theoretically uninformed and resistant to definition: they are, in other words, non-conceptual, although not absolutely impervious to all conceptualization and definition. A reaction may one day reach formulation in a new aesthetic prohibition, which will in turn colour works. Yet an idiosyncratic prohibition can be just as binding without any clear formulation at all: Adorno gives the example of kitsch.¹³⁵ As prohibitions may be broken and reinstated any number of times, it is senseless to read artists’ idiosyncratic reactions as merely following the continuous, linear path of time, as “development”: “It does nothing to stick a gnomon or a little hour-hand from without onto these norms.”¹³⁶ We have rather a canon of prohibitions not grounded in any natural or practical matter and whose transformations are not the results of justifications or reasoning through concepts. The canon is the result of and results in blind, individual feelings, but feelings that take the specific form of reactions against the established norm. Since idiosyncrasies resulting can themselves become norms, an identical element can be conformism or an idiosyncrasy, and chronology is no aid at all. Idiosyncrasies refute the notion of a homogeneous time continuum, pointing beyond themselves forward and backward in time, beyond the here and now. Art’s universality shows up as a resemblance to language: “Universals are strongest in art where it comes closest to language—says something that, in

¹³⁴ GS, vol. 7, p. 60, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 36.

¹³⁵ GS, vol. 7, p. 60, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 36.

¹³⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 62, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 37.

being spoken, goes beyond its here and now.”¹³⁷ What goes beyond the here and now opposes the social injunction to forget; it defends the right of the collective to remember what it has suffered and to work towards a reality different from the here and now.

The idiosyncratic movement opposes not merely this or that particular norm, but the norm, the current form of universality, which wants neither a reminder of the past relation of individual and collective, nor anticipation of a changed relation, in which an individual desire for the happiness that the world does not give would no longer be a threat to the social order. Such a language element may be detected not in the work’s “meaning,” not in its laws or norms, but rather in its gesture against what has been universally imposed:

The language-like moment of art is its mimetic one; art becomes eloquently universal only in the specific movement, flickering to life, away from the universal. The paradox that art says it yet does not *say* is rooted in this: the *way* by which art says it, that mimetic moment, as something opaque and something particular, at the same time puts up opposition to Saying.¹³⁸

Like language, art has particular material elements that are more than what they are.

Signifying nothing, these particular elements nonetheless make claims that carry universal weight. Namely, these particular elements contest what signifying language makes pass for universality: the “agreement” of members of a society that something represents an object, rather than the *adequacy* of a great number of representations to their object. Art’s universality resides in its demonstration that universality is not equivalent to norms. A norm is only the illusion of consensus; it is not true universality. What would dissolve the illusion of universality in norms is not real consensus, but the true universality of a representation’s *adequacy* to its object. However, as art, cut off from the sphere of communication, does not express any *thing*, it seems that there can be no universality as adequacy, only the false

¹³⁷ GS, vol. 7, p. 305, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 205.

¹³⁸ GS, vol. 7, p. 305, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 205.

universality of unattainable inter-subjective agreement. If art were mere expression, this would be the case. But art is not mere expression; it is “only adequate expression.”¹³⁹ Unlike sign systems, art does not forego the need of adequacy; there is just not any external criterion for the adequacy of artistic expression: “Nothing external to artworks decides over their standing or quality. They—certainly not their authors—are their own measure, or, as Wagner put it, their self-positing rule.”¹⁴⁰ The question of adequacy in art is whether expression is adequate to itself. But the question of an expression’s adequacy, which is really the question of the truth of the work, cannot be answered by merely articulating a norm. For expression is precisely what does not uphold the norm, precisely what behaves by generating its own language instead of using the normal, prescribed language. It seems that all of art would be true insofar as it refuses the norms of signifying language: it refuses to express *something*. It may be recalled, however, that mimesis only survives by not communicating; not expressing some thing is a mere survival strategy for art and is not its virtue. For the injustice in signifying language lies not in its representation of objects, but in its coercion of individuals to represent objects in identical, predetermined ways that have nothing whatsoever to do with what is represented. What art refuses of signifying language is its *pseudo-collective*, its *externality*, its substitution of social might for adequacy. As simply avoiding signifying language does not exclude the possibility of arbitrariness, which is the real failing of present signifying languages, non-signification in itself does not constitute a sufficient critique of signifying language. Thus, an expression qualifies as art not merely by refusing the norm of signifying language, but, in addition, by making its critique of signifying language specific. But to aim its critique squarely at the merely posited character of signifying language, art has to work with norms in some

¹³⁹ GS, vol. 7, p. 196, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 129.

¹⁴⁰ GS, vol. 7, p. 253, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 169.

way. Art admits of norms and therefore risks being false by admitting of norms; but it thereby establishes its need to be true.

When art upholds the universality of adequacy to itself in order to unmask signifying language's front of intersubjective agreement as a sham universality, as mere conformity under duress that the dominant subjects exert on all the other subjects, art does not thereby deny that universality can be subjective. But true universality on the side of the subject cannot be constituted as long as some subjects hold power over other subjects, as long as the particular class interests or standpoints or whims of some subjects are imposed on *all* subjects. The "I" omnipresent in lyric poetry is only "the illusion that poetic subjectivity is self-explanatory."¹⁴¹ Although the mimetic element in art seems to be the immediate, present suffering of the artist, the expressive subject that speaks out of art can only be a *collective* subject: "not a Me but a We speaks out of artworks, even the so-called personal ones."¹⁴² Adorno gives precise indications as to how the anticipation of a collective subject comes through in art. In music, it comes through precisely in the way one would not think, neither in the massive forces of working men's choirs nor in the total orchestral participation in banner themes. The collective subject appears in music rather as diversity and as the distinction of the individual lines, but, since this diversity and plurality of voices is never a literal totality of all the diversity there is, but always a choice out of the whole, the collective subject cannot be read as simply literal. Adorno names "the harmonic dimension of depth," counterpoint and polyphony as the relays of the We of choric cults, which marked universal experiences.¹⁴³ Neither harmonic depth nor counterpoint nor polyphony would be possible without the clarity

¹⁴¹ GS, vol. 7, p. 249, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 167.

¹⁴² GS, vol. 7, p. 250, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 167.

¹⁴³ GS, vol. 7, p. 250, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 167.

of the individual voices, achievable by contrast, whether that of dissonance or syncopation or even that of colouristic or dynamic variation.

The point of mimesis in art is not to exhibit the atavism of a few rare individuals, but to recall through the atavism of these few individuals the suffering that everyone endures, dominated and dominating, when concepts replace mimesis. The expression of suffering seems accidental to language: it is thought that little children have language when they know a number of words, not when they put across with sometimes idiosyncratic expressions that they are hungry or that their scarves have been tied too tightly. The arbitrary sign-system is unjust not simply because it is imposed, but particularly because it usurps a language that essentially expresses the suffering of the subject. It relegates suffering to the zone of the abject and “unspeakable.” Thinkers who claim language for Being run the risk of conferring on speechless suffering the status of unreality. This ignores the split in language, whereby signifying language becomes detached from the real things to be expressed—the needs and feelings of the subject—and attaches itself to social power. Instead of loading existing signifying languages with all hopes for a just society and truth, critical philosophy works counter to the aims or intentions of signifying language, which had to cover up its founding injustice. “The need to let suffering speak eloquently,” as Adorno declared in *Negative Dialectics*, “is condition of all truth. For suffering is objectivity, which weighs upon the subject; what the subject experiences as its most subjective, its expression, is objectively mediated.”¹⁴⁴ The need to let suffering speak eloquently is akin to what Benjamin called “the elimination of the unspeakable,” in a letter from which Adorno quotes in *Aesthetic Theory*: ““And if I here disregard other forms of effective action—as poetry and prophecy—, it is that

¹⁴⁴ GS, vol. 6, p. 29, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 17f.

time and again it appears to me that the crystal-clear elimination of what is unspeakable in language is for us the given and most obvious form of acting within language and, in this respect, through language.”¹⁴⁵ Now here Benjamin was discussing the criterion of political writing. But art is aimed at the elimination of the unspeakable, too, not by representing the very suffering that the arbitrary sign-system rendered mute, but by making a language that is again the continuum of the subject’s suffering, which is objectivity itself, the suffering of the whole society at the loss of expressive, mimetic language and, more generally, at domination—both domination of self and domination of the other—that is its condition. This leads Adorno to say that in art the terms subjective and objective are “equivocal.”¹⁴⁶ This equivocalness is evident in the subject’s structure, which happens to take the forward and backward structure that the object has.

Mimesis in art is a “collective reminder” in the double sense: both a souvenir of the past and a string around the finger that points to something to be done in the future.¹⁴⁷ Insofar as it is memory, music’s *Eingedenken* is not the preservation of tradition, but rather the memory of the oppressed, defensed time and again by the great works of the tradition, whether the oppressed non-quartal harmony defensed by Guillaume DuFay’s “*Du tout m’estoie*” (1450) or the oppressed quartal harmony defensed by Arnold Schoenberg in his Chamber Symphony, Op. 9 (1906). Memory in music is a memory of past suffering. For *Aesthetic Theory* ends with the challenge: “But then what would art be, as the writing of

¹⁴⁵ Walter Benjamin to Martin Buber, July 1916, Munich, in *Briefe*, herausgegeben und mit Anmerkungen versehen von Gershom Scholem und Theodor W. Adorno, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1966), vol. 1, p. 127, quoted in GS, vol. 7, p. 304, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 205.

¹⁴⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 244, as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 163.

¹⁴⁷ GS, vol. 7, p. 198, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 131.

history, if it shook off the memory of accumulated suffering.”¹⁴⁸ But while mimesis appears in art as the collective memory of the imposition of social norms on the individual in the past, it also appears as a collective reminder to open up a different relation between the individual and the collective.¹⁴⁹ It anticipates a further transformation of society, a “condition beyond the split of the individual from all others.”¹⁵⁰ For a collective subject has yet to be realized: “While art is tempted to anticipate a nonexistent total society, of which a non-existent subject, and in this respect is not purely ideology, at the same time this subject’s non-existence is a defect that remains with art.”¹⁵¹ The subject was born along with domination: in its splitting off from the object, the subject became the social authority that now decides in the place of adequacy. Yet art leaves a place for a different subject, not yet existing, an expressive collective subject.

Artworks become spiritual, objective, true and universal subjectively and mimetically. This is the conclusion to Adorno’s unfolding of the thesis that philosophy should model its moment of universality on that of art, on art’s non-communicative, self-generated mimetic *language*: “On the strength of their subjectively mimetic, expressive moment, artworks flow into objectivity; they are neither sheer movement [Regung] nor its mould, but rather the solidified process between the two, which is social.”¹⁵² Adorno leaves the reader to draw the conclusion that philosophy should also be a “solidified process” between subjective urge and collective solidarity that has arrived to protest against the imposed norm, and so should serve, like art, as a collective reminder that in freedom subject and object would coincide. But art and

¹⁴⁸ GS, vol. 7, p. 387 as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 261.

¹⁴⁹ As Karla L. Schultz puts it, “Mimesis is memory, *anamnesis*, not of Plato’s perfect forms of the mind but, *ex negativo*, of a reconciled existence.” *Mimesis on the Move*, p. 180.

¹⁵⁰ GS, vol. 7, p. 198, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 131.

¹⁵¹ GS, vol. 7, p. 251, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 168.

¹⁵² GS, vol. 7, p. 198, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 131.

philosophy cannot converge in their universal moment without parting ways when it comes to their search for truth.

A changed relation between art and philosophy, no longer based on truth content, suggests that new art strikes out on its own to seek truth. Indeed, the new art seeks truth not through mediation, like philosophy, but in immediacy. The art that specifically seeks “illusionless” truth in subjective movement, in new language and in “the *immediacy* of the expression” is musical Expressionism.¹⁵³ With Expressionism, immediacy becomes a moment of increased tension between art and philosophy, for in *Negative Dialectics* Adorno notes that a specificity of philosophy, by contrast to art, is that it “clings to nothing immediate.”¹⁵⁴

The question now becomes whether Expressionism is successful in its search for illusionless truth in immediacy.

¹⁵³ GS, vol. 18, p. 60, or prefer to my translation here that by Wieland Hoban, “Nineteen Encyclopaedia Articles on New Music,” under “Musical expressionism,” in *Night Music: Essays on Music, 1928-1962*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (London: Seagull, 2009), pp. 269-321, here p. 275.

¹⁵⁴ GS, vol. 6, p. 27, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 15.

{Chapter IV} In *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno describes the movement of modern art as the illusory attempt to rid itself of illusion: “To a large extent, the dialectic of modern art is that it wants to shake off the illusory character like an animal a grown set of antlers.”¹ Thus the “rebellion against illusion” produces illusion.² In *Philosophy of Modern Music*, Adorno associates this rebellion with Schoenberg, claiming that “Schoenberg takes a polemical stance just as much towards play as towards illusion,” and even goes so far as to speak of the “negation of illusion and play” in this connection.³ There Adorno reads aesthetic illusion specifically as the illusory reconciliation between the universal and the particular: “[expression’s] subsumption under the placatory universal makes up the innermost principle of musical illusion.”⁴ Schoenberg does not fall victim to this illusion, according to Adorno: “His music denies the claim that universal and particular are reconciled.”⁵ In other words, in Schoenberg’s music, expression refuses to be placated under a merely normative schema or convention, which, implicitly, makes universalist claims. The innovation of Schoenberg’s music, according to Adorno, is not that it has a lot of harsh noises, but rather that its dissonances are not ultimately placated by a full cadence, normally required at the end of each section or piece. Final dissonance is a characteristic that separates Schoenberg from other composers considered to be Modern—for instance, Paul Hindemith. The first movement of Hindemith’s Third Sonata for Violin and Piano in E Major is full of harsh noises, but it ends on a very pretty consonance; the sonata affirms reconciliation of individual and universal

¹ GS, vol. 7, p. 157, or prefer to my translation here that of Robert Hullot-Kentor, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 102.

² GS, vol. 7, p. 154, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 100.

³ GS, vol. 12, p. 46, or prefer to my translation here that of Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Blomster, *Philosophy of Modern Music* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980), p. 41.

⁴ GS, vol. 12, p. 45, or prefer to my translation here *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 40.

⁵ GS, vol. 12, p. 45, or prefer to my translation here *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 40.

when its tonic chord appears for the last time, free of dissonance.⁶ In Modern music, dissonance plays a central, even structuring, role: “Dissonance is the focal point [Kristallisationspunkt] of all new tendencies of harmony, becoming central in the tone language of almost all musical schools, and, in the end, even the new structures of the harmonic context derive from it.”⁷ The dissonance of Modern music is total, as opposed to free-standing, dissonance. Free-standing dissonance within the course of a piece cannot be attributed to Schoenberg, according to Adorno, who suggests that “the independence of dissonance occurred during the Romantic period,” with Richard Wagner.⁸ By this Adorno means that even by the late Romantic period, rules for dissonance treatment relaxed. The ear was able to recognize dissonant aggregates of notes as distinct sonorities, so there was no need for Wagner to “treat” them—by framing the dissonances in such a way that they could be recognized as passing tones, neighbour tones, added sixths or as some other convention. What is new about Modern music is not the possibility of unresolved dissonance, but its necessity: “The *totality* of dissonance was first enforced with Schoenberg.”⁹ On this reading, Schoenberg is not concerned with creating a harsh effect on the public’s ears, but he is rather reacting specifically against what is regressive in the most progressive harmony, the harmony of Jean-Philippe Rameau, whose harmonic ideal is a chain of dissonances that resolves in the cadence. Schoenberg demands that chords take a necessarily non-triadic structure and that cadences be

⁶ Paul Hindemith, *Sonate in E für Geige und Klavier* (Mainz: B. Schott’s Söhne, 1935), I, p. 6, 10 measures after rehearsal letter [F]. The final E major triad of Movement I is consonant, despite appearing in the “expectant” second inversion.

⁷ GS, vol. 18, p. 73, or prefer to my translation here that of Wieland Hoban, “Nineteen Encyclopaedia Articles on New Music,” under “Dissonance in New Music,” in *Night Music: Essays on Music, 1928-1962*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (London: Seagull, 2009) pp. 269-321, here p. 297.

⁸ GS, vol. 18, p. 73, or prefer to my translation here “Nineteen Encyclopaedia Articles,” p. 197.

⁹ GS, vol. 18, p. 74, or prefer to my translation here, with emphasis added, “Nineteen Encyclopaedia Articles,” p. 199.

avoided. In other words, unusual aggregates of tones must not be reduced to familiar consonances. In demanding dissonance precisely where the listener expects consonance, Schoenberg contests the illusion of happy reconciliation: “Dissonance is the most essential vehicle of expression, symbol for pain and sorrow.”¹⁰

Of the “characteristic schools of new music” that Adorno names, Expressionism is the first to appear, although he goes on to say that the “radical folkloric tendencies,” whose innovations “have nothing in common with the blood-and-soil romanticism of the Fascist era,” can also be counted as a school of Modern music.¹¹ This would possibly put Leoš Janáček ahead as the first Modern composer. Adorno however thinks that it is only “in a certain sense” that Janáček can be attached to radical folklorism, and does not name particular works of his that would be candidates for Modernism.¹² Adorno does, however, leave an important clue to Janáček’s Modernism: “It is the tradition of any official music whatsoever that is suspended by Janáček’s diction modelled after speech, amidst all the triads.”¹³ Janáček used “speech melody” notably in his opera *Jenůfa*, which had its premiere in 1904. It could be argued that what is new in Janáček’s music is not the use of Moravian folk songs, but speech melody—or else that his use of folk songs is new to the extent that they become an extension of prose speech, “idiom.” Janáček musically notated everyday conversations so that he could draw on a repertoire of affective tropes in setting the prose texts for his operas.¹⁴ These tropes were perhaps peculiar to the Czech spoken in Moravia, but they served no political purpose in

¹⁰ GS, vol. 18, p. 73, or prefer to my translation here “Nineteen Encyclopaedia Articles,” p. 197.

¹¹ GS, vol. 18, p. 81, or prefer to my translation here “Nineteen Encyclopaedia Articles,” under “New Music,” p. 311.

¹² GS, vol. 18, p. 81 as translated, “Nineteen Encyclopaedia Articles,” p. 311.

¹³ GS, vol. 12, p. 42 Amn., or prefer to my translation here *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 36 n5.

¹⁴ See Paul Wingfield, “Janáček’s Speech-Melody Theory in Concept and Practice,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 4, no. 3 (November 1992): pp. 281-301.

Janáček's music; rather, he was interested in innovating a true musical language developed out of expression as it presented itself in everyday conversations. Despite Janáček's discovery of an expressive language new to music, however, Adorno considers "the first fully Expressionist work" to be Schoenberg's "*Drei Klavierstücke*, op. 11 (1909), whose third piece," Adorno affirms, "contains a canon of Expressionist prohibitions."¹⁵ This choice of first Expressionist work concurs with Adorno's dating elsewhere of the sea-change in art: according to him, "the revolutionary art movements ventured out on the sea of the never-foreseen around 1910."¹⁶

Expressionism is the movement that, in music, strives for the individuality of the voice not through traditional means—not through any means at all, but by directly expressing. Adorno claims that the Expressionist movement aims at destroying the universality of musical language, which lifts the moment out of the here and now: "Expressionist music seeks to eliminate all of traditional music's conventional elements, everything formulaically rigid, indeed all generality [*Allgemeinheit*, universality] of musical language that supersedes the unique moment and its character—in analogy to the literary ideal of the 'scream'."¹⁷ This suggests that the modern Expressionist movement no longer wishes to maintain the equivocalness of subject and object in a language where idiosyncrasies can be read as new norms and norms traced back to idiosyncrasies, where individual impulses form universal experiences of memory and anticipation. At the same time, according to Adorno, Expressionism prioritizes subjective suffering rather than bringing it into balance with the

¹⁵ GS, vol. 18, p. 62, or prefer to my translation here "Nineteen Encyclopaedia Articles," under "Musical expressionism," p. 278.

¹⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 9, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 1.

¹⁷ GS, vol. 18, p. 60, as translated except where indicated in square brackets, "Nineteen Encyclopaedia Articles," under "Musical expressionism," p. 275.

objective side of the artwork, its adequacy. Prioritizing of any sort determinately negates aesthetic illusion: “The artwork must aspire to balance, without having a complete command of it: an aspect of the aesthetic illusory character.”¹⁸ While artworks traditionally *seem* to make a compromise between expression and adequacy, living time and thing, subject and object, no artwork in fact achieves it because this harmony nowhere exists: “Balance by form [Gestalt] must fail within because it does not exist without, meta-aesthetically. Antagonisms unsettled in reality will not have themselves settled in the imagination; they effectively reach the imagination and are reproduced in inconsistency [Unstimmigkeit] of the imagination’s own.”¹⁹ Since neither the individual artist nor the work can exit the total delusional context of reification to occupy a place where subject and object would be in balance, their balance in the artwork “is an aspect of the aesthetic illusory character.”²⁰ Expressionist music, for its part, does not even make the pretence of balance between expression and adequacy; it “seeks the undisguised, un-transfigured, illusionless truth of subjective feeling.”²¹

Expressionism is supposed to be the first of Modernist movements; however, Schoenberg’s “first fully Expressionist work” meets competition from Robert Schumann’s “Der Dichter spricht” (The Poet Speaks), which Adorno calls, “one of the earliest models of Expressionist music.”²² Having an antecedent stands in complete contradiction to the claims of Expressionism. Expressionism seeks to eliminate the universal moment of musical language, its mimetic moment, which lifts the work out of the here and now. This implies that it cannot

¹⁸ GS, vol. 7, p. 249, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 166.

¹⁹ GS, vol. 7, p. 252f., or prefer to my translation cited here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 169.

²⁰ GS, vol. 7, p. 249, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 166.

²¹ GS, vol. 18, p. 60, or prefer to my translation here “Nineteen Encyclopaedia Articles on New Music,” p. 275.

²² GS, vol. 7, p. 252 as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 168.

have models. For the universality of musical language lies in the possibility of the unique moment to refer back to past works and forward to future works.

Expressionist works, then, do not eliminate the universality of musical language; they are part of that language—they take up Robert Schumann’s idiosyncrasies in “Der Dichter spricht,” the thirteenth and final piece of *Kinderszenen* (Scenes from Childhood), op. 15.²³

One can point to three such idiosyncrasies.

Firstly, during the foray into A minor (ii of the home key, G major), Schumann twice leaves the leading tone (G-sharp) unresolved: a dissonant vii^{o6,5} chord is followed by an incomplete i⁶ chord in each case.²⁴ Schumann also delays resolution. In the brief D major passage, he leaves the G-natural of the vii^{o7} chord hanging until the D-major triad following the intervening V^{6,4} chord.²⁵ An idiosyncrasy in Schumann, unresolved dissonance, becomes the norm in Expressionism.

Secondly, Schumann’s is an aphoristic form. It is a piece in pieces rather than a movement, working with a motif rather than a melody or theme. Its silences do not indicate ends of progressions, phrases or sections, but a kind of difficulty. The compression of themes into motifs and silences is also a trait of Expressionist music.²⁶ Webern especially excels at the pithy, fragmenting form. On the surface, Berg’s aphoristic Four Pieces for Clarinet and Piano,

²³ Robert Schumann, “Der Dichter spricht (The Poet Speaks),” *Kinderszenen=Scenes from Childhood*, op. 15, ed. Holger M. Stüwe (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2011), p. 17.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, m. 6 and m. 18.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, mm. 3-4 and mm. 15-16. This passage is unusual also in that this first cadence is not in the home key of G major, but in D major: the tone G is set up to be the goal of the first phrase, not its dissonant, interfering factor.

²⁶ Cf. Fredric Jameson, *Late Marxism: Adorno, or, the Persistence of the Dialectic* (London: Verso, 2007), p. 170f. Jameson is not wrong to suggest that the aphoristic statements of the music of 1911 evoke by their brevity extra-aesthetic expressions of suffering or cries of pain; however, he is not authorized to infer from this that the opposite of Expression, illusion, is simply reducible to the opposite of brevity, duration: “Fictionality, in music, is then simply temporal duration, which is also the Schein or aesthetic appearance of the musical work” (*ibid.*, p. 170).

op. 5, (1913) are unusual in his oeuvre, the least flowing.²⁷ Yet the three-note “sigh” motif (A – B-flat – A-flat), which first appears in the piano part,²⁸ structures the pieces in a way characteristic of his thematic handling right from his Piano Sonata, op. 1 (1908/09), whose prime motif, properly lyrical, is only longer and articulated in itself, extending to a whole phrase.²⁹ Schoenberg’s Expressionist pieces are harmonically denser and more richly orchestrated than those of his pupils, and some, like the Five Orchestral Pieces, op. 16, and *Erwartung* (Expectation) are large-scale works. Schoenberg’s Expressionism comes out in abrupt shifts and hurtling reversals rather than in nervous or difficult silences in the intimate sphere. By their broken-up forms, Webern and Berg express more often a shell-shocked, fragile psyche, living an aftermath, whereas Schoenberg more closely approximates the ideal of immediacy, expressing cascades of reactions without perspective or distance, inescapable states of a mind locked in the grips of overwhelming events or suffocating atmospheres. In the Second Viennese School composers, discontinuity has a psychological motivation—extreme inhibition or fits of impulsiveness interrupt the rational carrying-out of musical intentions. Yet Schumann’s brokenness is related more to the insufficiency of what passes for language, of what passes for rational schemas, and exhibits the Romantic character of dissolution. For example, the unusual $V^{4,2} - I^6$ progression that opens “Der Dichter spricht” repeats directly after this first period cadences in A minor.³⁰ The progression is “the same,” but the music is not the same: the chords are figured, yet their unfolding in time, their fleeting quality, goes uncaptured by the root progression. Root progression no longer tells the whole story; root

²⁷ Alban Berg, *Vier Stücke für Klarinette und Klavier*, op. 5 (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1924).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, I, p. 2, m. 2.

²⁹ Alban Berg, *Sonate für Klavier*, op. 1, herausgegeben von Klaus Lippe (Vienna: Universal Edition, 2006), p. 2, mm. 1-4.

³⁰ R. Schumann, “Der Dichter spricht,” m. 9.

progression, as history written by the victors, is contradicted by recitative. Schumann's contestation of root progression was pushed to its extreme by the Second Viennese School, who uprooted it.

Thirdly, Schumann presents an instrumental recitative that comments on what has already been presented. The beautifully variegated middle section of "Der Dichter spricht," the last of the thirteen pieces for solo *piano*, adopts the recitative style usually reserved for *voice*.³¹ In opera, the open, expressive line, travelling through vastly differing imaginary landscapes, breaking free of periodic phrasing and meter, could be justified by the signifying narration that had to be told. The recitative brings the audience up to date on un-staged events that will serve the plot. In the recitative bar of "Der Dichter spricht," the freedom of the line, passing spontaneously in a matter of instants through different key colours hinting at E minor, B minor and D minor, is not a function of a *narration* whose difference at every point is itself merely the function of the moving action that it needs to relate.³² The poet's recitative follows no words at all, yet it no longer needs words to justify a suddenly reversing, novelistic—as opposed to melodic—top line. The wordless recitative suggests that what "speaks" to the listener is not signifying language, but the breakdown of meaningful units. The recitative bar is unmetered and combines two sizes of print. The notes in small print may be understood as a gloss or interpretation of the notes in regular print. More specifically, the small notes take apart a short motif that appears, in regular-size print notation, within the recitative, and which fragments under their analytical scrutiny.³³ The middle section is a comment on the rising first

³¹ Ibid., mm. 9-12.

³² Ibid., m. 12.

³³ Rudolph Reti has remarked that the notation in bold type refers to the opening thematic material of "Der Dichter spricht"—and, ultimately, of *Kinderszenen* as a whole. He, however, draws attention to the notes in large type at the *end* of the recitative (A-sharp – B – C-sharp/E – A-sharp). These notes reproduce the contour of the

three notes of the opening melody: (F-sharp – G – C).³⁴ It reproduces these verbatim,³⁵ then presents them transposed down a minor third (D-sharp – E – A).³⁶ Then, amidst the notes in small type, only the first two tones of this transposition appear an octave higher, in large type.³⁷ The final E ultimately gives way to the opening theme, suggesting perhaps that poet does not “speak” (spricht) but rather “complies” (entspricht) with formal requirements.³⁸ Yet a recitative that does not advance the plot, but which merely returns the audience to the same scene, which is played out a second time note for note, does not comply with the formal requirements of the recitative. Furthermore, it may be asked in what sense “Der Dichter spricht” is a childhood *scene*, considering that its most striking passage is a recitative, which, traditionally, is supposed to stand in for missing scenes or else to set the scene for action. The specific relation between the thematic material and the recitative here, however, as that of text and commentary, changes the function of the repeated bars. A re-read text is not identical after it has been subject to analysis and consideration. In this readerly aspect, Schumann’s recitative differs from its important antecedents, which it audibly resembles: the Largo and Adagio sections from the first movement of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata No. 17, op. 31, no. 2, and the passage marked “Recitativo” from the third movement of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata No. 31,

opening theme far less exactly than the long-value, large-type notes stemmed up in bars 9-12. Schumann tended to write notes that he wished to emphasize with stems up. Rudolph Reti, “Schumann’s ‘Kinderszenen’: A ‘Theme with Variations,’” chap. 2 in *The Thematic Process in Music* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1951), here p. 52 and ex. 79 on p. 51.

³⁴ R. Schumann, “Der Dichter spricht,” mm. 1-2, r.h., top line.

³⁵ Ibid., mm. 9-10, r.h., top line.

³⁶ Ibid., mm. 11-12, r.h., top line.

³⁷ Ibid., mm. 12-13, r.h.

³⁸ To Don McLean may be owed this suggestion, and the play on words. Don McLean, “Der Dichter entspricht: Conforming and Deforming Formenlehre chez Schoenberg et son école” (paper presented at the symposium “Schoenberg’s Legacy on Form,” McGill University, Montréal, May 2008).

op. 110.³⁹ The recitative in “Der Dichter spricht” aims to fragment the unitary, sign-like aspects of what has happened; it is memorial, like opera recitative. The composer Elliott Carter has noted instrumental recitative to be an important feature of the music of the Second Viennese School:

The use of equally intense melodic shapes, often broken up into short, dramatic fragments, joins with a very varied rubato rhythmic technique to produce a new kind of what might be called instrumental recitative. The rapid increases and decreases of harmonic tension, quick changes and register, and fragmented, non-imitative counterpoint are also worthy of note.⁴⁰

Indeed, Schoenberg gave the fifth movement of his *Five Pieces for Orchestra*, op. 16, the title “Das obligate Rezitativ – The Obligatory Recitative.”⁴¹ This *accompanied* recitative, however, is one in which the speaker never makes an entry.

“Der Dichter spricht,” then, presents at least three important idiosyncrasies, yet these idiosyncrasies were able to become norms, the norms of the Expressionist music that was to follow some three-quarters of a century later. Furthermore, the movement in turn had an influence on the music beyond the decade in which Expressionist works were composed (1910-1920). Adorno, writing in 1942, affirms: “The most serious and radical forces in music drove it towards Expressionism, and one can hardly imagine great music today in which Expressionist elements [Motive] do not play a decisive part.”⁴² In all these respects, then, Expressionist music presents the universality of musical language in its canonization of certain of Schumann’s compositional reactions.

³⁹ For a list of works making use of instrumental recitative, see *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “recitative,” by Dale E. Monson, Jack Westrup and Julian Budden, accessed December 9, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/23019>, under the heading “3. Instrumental recitative,” by Jack Westrup.

⁴⁰ Elliott Carter, “To Be a Composer in America,” in *Collected Essays and Lectures, 1937-1995*, ed. Jonathan W. Bernard (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1997), pp. 201-210, here p. 207.

⁴¹ Arnold Schoenberg, *Five Pieces for Orchestra, op. 16, new version=Fünf Orchesterstücke*, rev. ed., reduced for normal-sized orchestra by the composer (New York: Peters, 1973), p. 46.

⁴² GS, vol. 18, p. 61 as translated, “Nineteen Encyclopaedia Articles,” p. 277.

“Der Dichter spricht” is thereby *more* than just a Romantic artwork; it is also active in perhaps the most profuse, dynamic and decisive changes in the history of Western music. Something “more” exceeds the mere work and disturbs its seeming repose. In an address to the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Frankfurt in 1969, Adorno called this “more” the work’s truth content.⁴³ Truth content is the “plus” breaking in from the future or surging forward from the past that is *added* to what seems poised to continue just as it is, to what seems to be everything that is. When a detail of a seemingly finished work becomes charged with associations, that work is evidently not all the maker put into it, but more. Yet the “more” can come entirely from other artworks: “The truth content of artworks is fused with their critical content. That is why works are also critics of one another.”⁴⁴ What stands out most in “Was will die einsame Träne?” of Schumann’s *Myrten* song cycle composed in 1840 are its Debussyst harmonies, but what loads these moments with a charge heavier than any other and upsets the appearance of perfect balance is the music of Debussy.⁴⁵ Reciprocally, in light of “Was will die einsame Träne?” the music of Debussy ceases to be the independent, original, self-actualized, balanced creation that it seemed to be, for what in Schumann appears as a nuanced and sensitive use of suspensions looks like overuse of seventh and ninth chords in Debussy.

As long as works *have* aesthetic illusion, they are illusions of balance, illusions of being fully achieved wholes, so illusions of being closed and fully actualized: “The illusory

⁴³ Theodor W. Adorno, “Zum Probleme des musikalischen Analyse,” *Frankfurter Adorno Blätter* 7 (2001): pp. 73-89, here p. 80. The talk became available in print in 1982 in an English translation by Max Paddison, who had made the recording, in *Musical Analysis* 1, no. 2 (July 1982): pp. 169-187. See Paddison’s own revision of his 1982 translation “On the Problem of Musical Analysis,” in *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 162-180, here p. 169.

⁴⁴ GS, vol. 7, p. 59 as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 35.

⁴⁵ Robert Schumann, “Was will die einsame Träne,” *Myrten*, in *Lieder für eine Singstimme mit Klavierbegleitung nach den Handschriften und Erstdrucken*, Originalausgabe, herausgegeben von Max Friedlaender (Frankfurt: C. F. Peters, s.a.), pp. 49-50, esp. p. 49f., mm. 10-25, with pick-up.

character of artworks has narrowed into the claim to be a whole.”⁴⁶ But the illusion of being their own fully realized possibilities is an illusion dissolvable *by other works*, antecedent and subsequent to them, which show, on one hand, that the seemingly fully realized work did not realize all the possibilities that it opened and, on the other, that what it did realize was not *its* potential, but a potential opened by what came before. The artwork turns out *not* to be complete in itself. For artists’ impulses go beyond the artworks that they made, into other artworks, and as soon as an artist’s impulses are taken up by other artists, the seeming closure of the particular artwork is upset. This is why art does not need philosophy to be true. Modern art, however, strives to make a truth claim *without* positing and then negating specific illusions. It attacks the equivocalness of the artwork whose every element can stand equally as an illusion and as the negation of some other illusion. For in actuality the whole predominates over the partial element, the fixed thing over the process, being over becoming. Aesthetic illusion, which attempts to create balance where there really is none, to solve unsolved antagonisms by pure imagination, cannot succeed: “Today every element of aesthetic illusion bears aesthetic inconsistency, contradictions between what the artwork appears as [als was das Kunstwerk auftritt] and what it is.”⁴⁷ With Modernism, art advances to the point where it discovers the source of such inconsistency: reality. Art can no longer turn its back on the pain and suffering of a distorted, unbalanced world, so it abandons the beautiful illusion of perfection. However, if art does not even make the claim to be a balanced whole, then it makes no (false) claim that can be negated by another artwork. It has no illusion to be redeemed. Unless its expression of suffering is truth, unless it can be true to a false world, then it has no hope of truth. Yet this problem does not present itself for the first time in Expressionism.

⁴⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 155f., or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 101.

⁴⁷ GS, vol. 7, p. 156, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 101.

To describe Modern music as a “rebellion against illusion” and associate its inception with Expressionism weakens the case for its newness because it is not the first such revolt, and Adorno admits as much: “Because [the traits of expression], as artworks, however indeed remain illusion, the conflict between illusion—form most broadly understood—and expression has not been had out and fluctuates historically.”⁴⁸ The statement “The emancipation from the concept of harmony reveals itself as a revolt against illusion” might not even express anything particular to Modern music.⁴⁹ The concept of harmony cannot be reduced to triadic harmony or even to consonance. Harmony is a loose, centuries-old concept:

In music, the concept of harmony has included, since the early Middle Ages: (1) the combining of tones into a sequence of tones, or even groups of tones into a melody; (2) the agreement of the two tones in a dyad, or of the tones and intervals in a triad; (3) the connecting of dyads into an intervallic progression; (4) the relationship among the voices of a polyphonic composition; and (5) the joining together of chords into a chord progression.⁵⁰

The element of reconciliation in the concept of harmony can be very strong—for instance, when the aspect of “agreement” predominates in the concept. Dahlhaus singles out Gioseffo Zarlino for having constructed the concept of harmony in a particularly balanced way: “[Zarlino’s] concept of harmony, which embraces all the factors of composition, admits of no one-sided interpretations that allude to a precedence of voice leading or chord progressions, of dyads or triads.”⁵¹ Adorno, however, suggests that Modern music protests not against a balanced concept of harmony, but against an imbalanced one, which has reduced simply to the end resolution of dissonances: “Harmony, which, insofar as result, denies the tension that

⁴⁸ GS, vol. 7, p. 169, or prefer to my translation *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 110.

⁴⁹ GS, vol. 7, p. 154, or prefer to my translation *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 100.

⁵⁰ Carl Dahlhaus, *Untersuchungen über die Entstehung der harmonischen Tonalität*, in *Gesammelte Schriften in 10 Bänden*, herausgegeben von Hermann Danuser (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 2000-2008), vol. 3, pp. 11-307, here p. 23, lines 15-21; as translated by Robert O. Gjerdingen, *Studies on the Origin of Harmonic Tonality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) p. 18f.

⁵¹ Dahlhaus, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, p. 26, lines 2-4 as translated, *Studies*, p. 22.

rallies within it, thereby becomes something disturbing, false, dissonant, if one will. The harmonistic view of the ugly falls to protest in the Modern period.”⁵² When the aspect of agreement is all that remains of the concept of harmony, manifested in the cadence as the end result of the chord progression, then emancipation from the concept of harmony requires only a baby step. Emancipation from the concept of harmony and not just determinate negation of one of its aspects would be new; as a “rebellion against illusion,” however, it is just another demonstration of expression, which comes in historical waves. The formulation “The emancipation from the concept of harmony reveals itself [enthüllt sich] as a revolt against illusion” suggests that the revolt against illusion is the mere appearance, the outer manifestation or shell, of what is really different and specific: the emancipation from the concept of harmony.⁵³ Since Adorno denies that essence is appearance, the new emancipation from the concept of harmony is not simply the same old historical struggle between illusion and expression. Adorno claims that it *is* different and new, distinct from the crisis of illusion, which can take completely banal forms, such as the practice of “Hamlet in tails”—Shakespeare productions without theatre’s trappings of illusion—without a set, period costumes, props, stage curtains or even a stage.⁵⁴ Modern music’s emancipation from the *concept* of harmony has little if anything to do with such stunts as flooding the stage with *real* water, as in the Bayerische Staatsoper 2012 production of Alban Berg’s *Wozzeck*. The rebellion against illusion can just as well be a sign of boredom with the inner details of the work, of an incapacity to interpret the text, of the tendency to privilege everyday life over the inner sphere of the artwork, as it can be the manifestation of the deepest immersion in the

⁵² GS, vol. 7, p. 75, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 46.

⁵³ GS, vol. 7, p. 154, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 100.

⁵⁴ GS, vol. 7, p. 156, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 102.

problems of musical language. The emancipation from the concept of harmony is not, finally, something we ever come across in everyday life, like water or a fancy suit, and Adorno is right to distinguish it from its outer appearance as a periodically-recurring irritation with art's showiness and artifice. The claim to twentieth-century musical Expressionism's *newness*, however, can be challenged, with recourse to resources even within Adorno's body of work.

The question is whether Robert Schumann did not achieve emancipation from the concept of harmony before Arnold Schoenberg. This is difficult to determine, for the two composers were not working with the same concept of harmony. Schumann never enforced unresolved dissonance, although he left dissonances unresolved. He negated the narrow concept of harmony, harmony as *result*, in, for instance, the fourth piece of *Kinderszenen*, "Bittendes Kind," which ends on a dissonant dominant seventh chord.⁵⁵ But the concept of harmony was not narrow when Schumann was writing. Furthermore, it is not clear what counts as emancipation from the concept of harmony—whether it is the *possibility* of unresolved dissonance or whether it is the *necessity* of unresolved dissonance. The attempt to date the beginning of tonal harmony back to the emancipation of the third falls into this exact antinomy of necessity and possibility. As Dahlhaus argues, "The granting of independence to imperfect consonance and the tendency toward *ricchezza dell'armonia* [harmonic richness] did not, however, completely invalidate the concept of interval progression as a category of musical perception."⁵⁶ For, while Adam von Fulda in the late fifteenth century argues against obligatory treatment of the third—so for the *possibility* of an untreated third—, and Zarlino in

⁵⁵ Robert Schumann, "Bittendes Kind," *Kinderszenen=Scenes from Childhood*, ed. Holger M. Stüwe (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2011), p. 5, m. 17.

⁵⁶ Dahlhaus, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, p. 90, lines 10-12 as translated, *Studies*, p. 92, or, preferring to keep the dialectical language: "The gain of independence for imperfect consonance and the tendency towards *ricchezza dell'armonia* sublated the concept of interval progression as a category of musical hearing but not without a remainder [nicht restlos ausgehoben]."

1558 argues for obligatory triads—so for the *necessity* of untreated thirds—, neither, according to Dahlhaus, really overcame modal harmony:

The fact that a chord is immediately conceived as a unity does not mean that its individual tone and intervals “fuse,” that is, blend together so completely that a listener can barely distinguish them. Instead, it means that the chord relates to the preceding and succeeding chords as a whole and not through individual interval progressions standing out from the sonorities. The criterion for the chordal character of sonorities is the principle of connecting the sonorities by root progressions. What contradicts the concept of the chord is not the independence of the voices, but the method of linking sonorities through interval progressions. The categories “chord” and “root progression” are in a reciprocally dependent relationship.⁵⁷

These observations on chords suggest that, in a parallel fashion, the independent sonorities that constitute the music of total dissonance can nonetheless carry with them associations of harmony if movement between individual tones of the aggregates suggests V – I relations. Even if dissonance is used throughout, a cadence can nonetheless be intimated by the voice-leading. The perception of resolution may be created, despite dissonance, by downward movement by a fifth or upward movement by a fourth in the bass, by a half-step up or a whole step down in the upper voice or, to a lesser extent, by a falling third or rising second in the middle voices. Final reconciliations are suggested in works that Adorno includes within the extremely small canon of “Expressionist pieces in the strong sense.”⁵⁸ The cello’s last statement in Anton Webern’s *Sechs Bagatellen für Streichquartett*, op. 9, (1913) makes a cadential gesture: this half-step up in the highest voice alone is marked “sehr zart” (very tenderly).⁵⁹ The following dissonance created out of the viola’s G-natural/A-natural trill and first violin’s G-sharp eighth-notes on the bridge has the character of a phosphorescence or vanishing aura emanating from the cadence—a coda of sorts. The piano’s last statement in

⁵⁷ Dahlhaus, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, p. 91, line 28-p. 92, line 7 as translated, *Studies*, p. 93.

⁵⁸ GS, vol. 18, p. 62, or prefer to my translation here, “Nineteen Encyclopaedia Articles,” p. 277.

⁵⁹ Anton Webern, *Sechs Bagatellen Op. 9 für Streichquartett (1913)* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1924), VI, p. 8, m. 9.

Alban Berg's *Four Pieces for Clarinet and Piano* is a major seventh chord, which, although dissonant, forms a V – I relation with the clarinet's impressive series of ornamented G-naturals ascending in four octaves—a strong emphasis on this note.⁶⁰ The brutal, dissonant chord built up progressively deep in the piano's range at once disrupts and creates the cadence. For it produces the tonic C as a quasi-flageolet major seventh chord that should, once the pedal is re-applied with the depressed keys held, shine through in the clarinet's (fermata) rest preceding the concluding recitative.⁶¹ Distantly related to the key of C Major, the recitative detaches from the work as a whole. It traces a light, ornamented figure whose prominent notes, a-flat' – e-flat" – a-flat (in concert pitch) suggest a I – V – I cadence.⁶² One would be hard-pressed, however, to find overt tonal references in Schoenberg's *Five Pieces for Orchestra*, known for its *Klangfarbenmelodien*.⁶³ The cellos, in the final moving line of the work, rise out of their C-major motif a dramatic half-step to C-sharp (IV).⁶⁴ The phrase does not finish there, but rather chokes; in the next instant, the D-sharp (V) surges up strongly.⁶⁵ In staggered entries, the entire orchestra, with the exception of horns and double-basses, fade in and out of this tone, forming altering, softly-massed dissonances.⁶⁶ A corresponding tonic G-sharp (I), moving from English horn to solo cello to first flute, might be picked out from within this billowing cloud head.⁶⁷ In the last entry of the *Five Pieces for Orchestra*, the G-sharp is

⁶⁰ Berg, *Vier Stücke für Klarinette und Klavier*, IV, p. 10, mm. 16-20.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, IV, p. 10, mm. 17-18.

⁶² *Ibid.*, IV, p. 10, mm. 18-19, cl.

⁶³ The third movement is called "Summer Morning by a Lake (Colors)." Schoenberg, *Five Pieces for Orchestra*, III, p. 31.

⁶⁴ Schoenberg, *Five Pieces for Orchestra*, V, p. 60, m. 461, vcl.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, V, p. 60, m. 462, vcl.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, V, p. 60, mm. 462-466.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, V, p. 60, mm. 463-465, E. H.; mm. 464-465, vcl. I Solo; mm. 464-466, fl. I.

prominent, owing to both the register and piercing timbre of the flute.⁶⁸ It becomes part of an enormous, dissonant, iridescent aggregate that can be analyzed as a G-sharp minor seventh chord with added ninths and elevenths.⁶⁹ The tuba, however, sits on a contra G-natural, a note that falls out of the chord.⁷⁰ This dissonance occurs precisely in the voice where the tonic is expected.

Of Berg, Webern and Schoenberg, then, Schoenberg is the most resistant towards the aspect of agreement, but not because his music is more dissonant. Dissonance, even total dissonance, is not necessarily free of the (narrow) concept of harmony, since the idea of placation can still be operative in very subtle suggestions of the IV – V – I root progression. Schoenberg is the most fastidious about suppressing hints of cadences suggested by voice-leading. While Schoenberg may have achieved emancipation from the (narrow) concept of harmony, whether this emancipation was progressive in 1910 is quite another matter.

In suppressing the narrow concept of harmony, Schoenberg may have inadvertently restored regressive aspects of the broader concept of harmony. When Adorno judges the critique of harmony to be the criterion of great art in different eras, he takes into account the changing concept of harmony. In his discussions of the Second Viennese School, Adorno focuses on dissonance; in his discussion of Schumann, he speaks rather of disintegration, disagreement, disconnection and dissociation. What earns Schumann the title of great composer is not only the lack of accord in the sonority, dissonance, but also his resistance toward connection, joining and synthesis, which are aspects of a broader concept of harmony:

Romantic art hopes to conserve the mimetic moment, insofar as Romantic art does not mediate it by way of form; through the mimetic moment, the whole says what an isolated

⁶⁸ Ibid., V, p. 60, mm. 464-466, fl. I (G-sharp) entering with fl. II, cl. I and bsn. I.

⁶⁹ Ibid., V, p. 60, mm. 464-466.

⁷⁰ Ibid., V, p. 60, mm. 463-466.

thing can scarcely say anymore. Despite this, Romantic art cannot simply ignore the compulsion to objectivation. It reduces what the synthesis objectively denies itself to something dissociated. Romantic art may break itself up into details, but it inclines no less to abstract formal qualities—to be distinguished from surface ones. In one of the greatest composers, Robert Schumann, this quality is essentially allied with a tendency toward disintegration. The purity with which his work presses out unreconciled antagonism lends it the power of its expression and its rank.⁷¹

Here Adorno emphasizes the forces of repulsion and disintegration in Schumann's music, and these appear to set his Romantic critique of harmony apart from twentieth-century Expressionist music: "Expressionist music had remained 'organic,' a language, subjective and psychological. That drives it back to totality. If Expressionism did not act radically enough against the superstition of the organic, then the liquidation of the organic re-crystallized the idea of the work; the Expressionist heritage is necessarily passed on to works."⁷² In this last sentence Adorno indicates that Expressionism itself failed to criticize organicism, but he suggests that this did not end up being fatal to it—as works, so, as the products of labour, Expressionist pieces are inorganic despite themselves; however, the superstitious belief in organic unity is somehow embedded in them.⁷³ In a footnote, Adorno elucidates further by a comparison with Surrealism, which he calls "anti-organic," a quality reflected in its form: "Its form is that of montage. This is completely foreign to Schoenberg."⁷⁴ It was indeed montage that brought attention to "the work" as a category of aesthetics in general.⁷⁵ This may save

⁷¹ GS, vol. 7, p. 275 (my translation).

⁷² GS, vol. 12, p. 54f. (my translation).

⁷³ Cf. Lisa Yun Lee, *Dialectics of the Body: Corporeality in the Philosophy of T. W. Adorno* (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 175 n51. Lee here enlists Adorno's discussion of organicism in *Philosophie der neuen Musik* as evidence for her claim that "the 'organic' is a recurring motif in Adorno's thought that appears and is used, much of the time to refer to a materiality and spontaneity of the body and in contrast to the lifelessness associated with reification" (ibid., p. 135). She provides no other evidence for this claim but the passage from *Philosophie der neuen Musik*, of which she ignores Adorno's critique of Expressionist organicism.

⁷⁴ GS, vol. 12, p. 54 n11, or prefer to my translation here *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 51 n15.

⁷⁵ See Peter Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, mit einem Nachwort zur 2. Auflage (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980), pp. 76-80. Chapters 1-4 translated by Michael Shaw as chapters 2-5 in *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), here pp. 55-59.

Expressionist works as inorganic; yet Expressionism cannot be understood without interpretation of their content, of their “inner strife,” which Adorno puts down to “organic irrationality.”⁷⁶ Elsewhere Adorno will affirm, in the context of a discussion of Schoenberg’s Expressionist works, “however much this music owes its origin to plant-like impulses, however much even its irregularity resembles organic forms, in no way is it totality.”⁷⁷ Its claim to truth through the immediacy of expression is illusory, for the works are indeed given to analysis and philosophical reflection. If one denied them this, they would indeed be merely plant-like, irrational. However, one cannot deny them this once the most regressive forces in society claim the organic as “truth.” To save Expressionist works, it is necessary to negate their claims to truth in immediacy, whether in reflecting on them philosophically or in taking up their impulses in subsequent composition, thereby negating their negation of musical universality.

Schoenberg’s organicism raises the question as to whether montage was not indeed a more critical advance than musical Expressionism. Mahler had already realized montage musically by 1910, in the second movement of his Ninth Symphony, although he would not live to conduct it or to hear it performed: “The Ländler main section is probably the first exemplary case of musical montage, anticipating Stravinsky both by its quotation-like themes and by its decomposition and lop-sided reunification.”⁷⁸ To defend montage as advanced would in a way mitigate Adorno’s judgement against Stravinsky as “restoration.”⁷⁹ Considering, however, the invalidity of organicism, advanced music must not only be

⁷⁶ GS, vol. 12, p. 54 n11 as translated, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 51 n15.

⁷⁷ GS, vol. 12, p. 45, or prefer to my translation here *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 40.

⁷⁸ GS, vol. 13, p. 304 as translated by Edmund Jephcott, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 161.

⁷⁹ GS, vol. 12, p. 127 as translated, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 135.

dissonant, but also anti-organic.⁸⁰ Schumann's work does not go the path of organicism: not only is it unreconciled; it is also inorganic, according to Paul Bekker:

Schumann was no logician, neither in terms of thought nor emotion. This characteristic [Eigenheit, idiosyncrasy], closely connected with the nature [Charakter] of his talent, led him to the *sketch*, the small *aphoristic* form, permitted him the more extensive ones only in rhapsodic terms, but forbade him all wide-ranging, organically closed structures [großlinigen, organisch geschlossenen Gestaltungen].⁸¹

Adorno and Bekker both associate the organic with totality: Adorno, with an irrational totality; Bekker, with a logical totality, a system, which just as well amounts to an irrational totality in Adorno's eyes: the totally administered society. Romanticism and Modern Expressionism have different reactions to the whole. Romanticism, argues Adorno, evokes the whole as a gesture in the "mimetic moment" that it wants to conserve; Expressionism, however, is concerned with the whole as totality, as a logical system, which it attacks: "In its Expressionist phase, music quashed the claim to totality."⁸² Despite this, Adorno, as we have seen, does not think that Expressionism escapes from totality: "Expressionist music had remained 'organic,' a language, subjective and psychological. That drives it back to totality."⁸³ Adorno likely believes that Expressionism remained organic because it bears traits of innerness, which he associates with systems organized along organic principles.

⁸⁰ Cf. Anne Boissière, *La pensée musicale de Theodor W. Adorno: L'épique et le temps* (Paris: Beauchesne, 2011). While Boissière's claim that Adorno neglected the montage-aspects of Mahler's form is surprising (ibid., p. 25), she rightly draws a polarity between Mahler and Stravinsky: Stravinsky's "body art," dance beat, vitalism and biologism (ibid., p. 95) are at the extreme of Mahler's un-danceable dances, ironic distance, deathly foreboding and juxtapositions stilled with the remove of memory.

⁸¹ Paul Bekker quoted in Thomas Alan Brown, *The Aesthetics of Robert Schumann* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1968), p. 183 n3, as translated by Thomas Alan Brown. I have consulted a digitized version of the University of Toronto copy of Paul Bekker, introduction to *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker* by Robert Schumann (Berlin: Wegweiser, 1922), pp. 5-54, here p. 33, <http://www.archive.org/details/22gesammeltesch00schu>.

⁸² GS, vol. 12, p. 54, or prefer to my translation here *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 51.

⁸³ GS, vol. 12, p. 54f., or prefer to my translation here *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 51.

Schoenberg's negated aesthetic illusion in withholding even the merest of cadential gestures, thereby suppressing hopes of an eventual reconciliation. He also negated play, avoiding the kind of "ironic play with forms whose substantiality has vanished," which, for instance, Mahler practiced in montage.⁸⁴ Adorno, while critical of Schoenberg's relaxed reactions towards organicism, nonetheless associates him with "progress."⁸⁵ Yet since montage is anti-organic and since the most regressive forces to gather in the twentieth century were emphatically organicist, Schoenberg's critique seems to have missed the mark.

The question now is whether montage was not the more critical technique towards 1910; whether the characterization of Modernism as *anti-organic* is not more advanced than Adorno's characterization of it as the *crisis of aesthetic illusion*.

⁸⁴ GS, vol. 12, p. 45, or prefer to my translation here *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 40.

⁸⁵ GS, vol. 12, p. 36 as translated, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 29.

{Chapter V} Expressionism and montage seem to be vying with one another for first place in the competition of the most advanced artistic consciousness, yet Ernst Bloch described Expressionism as a “higher order” of montage, because Expression had started as *image-explosion*: “Expressionism *in its original form* was image-explosion, was torn-up surface even starting with the original, namely with the subject which violently tore up and cross-connected.”¹ Bloch considered image-explosion to be an advanced aspect of an advanced art movement, Expressionism, which he defended on several occasions, famously against Lukács.² According to Bloch, Lukács fails to grasp the implications of montage: “Because Lukács has an objectivistically-closed concept of Reality, he therefore opposes, apropos of Expressionism, every artistic attempt to chop to pieces a world-picture [Weltbild] (even if the world-picture is that of capitalism).”³ Montage, then, is hardly incompatible with Expressionism. Yet what Bloch understands to be montage actually covers quite a lot: jazz, revue, der Blaue Reiter, James Joyce, Pablo Picasso, Bertolt Brecht and Surrealism. Adorno in certain moods also understands montage broadly—for instance, when he suggests that it is the tendency of *all new art*: “The aesthetic principle of construction, the stark primacy of the methodically planned whole over the details and over their interconnection inside the microstructure, forms the complement to [the disrupted faith in organic continuity]; insofar as the microstructure is concerned, all new art should be called montage.”⁴ In their characterizations of montage, both Bloch and Adorno remark on the construction of a second

¹ Ernst Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*, erweiterte Ausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1962), p. 224, as translated by Neville and Stephen Plaice, *Heritage of Our Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 204.

² See Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*, pp. 255-278, or translated, *Heritage of Our Times*, pp. 234-253.

³ Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*, p. 270 as translated, *Heritage of Our Times*, p. 246.

⁴ GS, vol. 7, p. 233, or prefer to my translation here that of Robert Hullot-Kentor, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 155.

structure, criss-crossing the large-scale structure, and formed out of individual connections amongst tiny, torn pieces. Expressed this way, montage is not only an artistic technique, but also resembles a form of reception: the peculiar process of breakdown and reconstruction of the artwork that the listener or reader makes in scholarly interpretation. Image-explosion has a distinctly cognitive character in the work of both thinkers.

According to Bloch, montage can bring forth the separation of whole and part, but does not do so necessarily—an “organic” montage does not:

Even in the human body, skin, internal organs are transplanted; but at best the transplanted organ performs in its new place only what is appropriate to that place, nothing else. In *technical* and *cultural* montage, however, the context of the old surface is decomposed, a new one is formed. It can be formed as a new one because the old context increasingly reveals itself as illusory [scheinhafter], brittle, as one of surface.⁵

As opposed to the corresponding organic montage—organ transplant—, technical and cultural montage show that inner is not the same as outer; part is not the same as whole. In the kind of montage that interests Bloch, the whole has no intrinsic essence that reaches down deep into each part: for in such montage, a part can leave the whole and become part of a different whole, to function in a completely different way. The old whole, or “context,” did not really determine each part inside and out; the whole turns out to be only “surface.” Now Bloch differentiates amongst even more sorts of montage, so, while Adorno seemed prepared to write off montage once he noted the general lack of *shock effect*, the shock or “jolt” for Bloch was not the decisive aspect of montage—for, as the first fragment of his chapter on montage, “Jolt,” suggests, the shock effect was only the most immediate, most subjective aspect of montage, the aspect least enlivened by progressive energies.⁶ The shocks of montage may have worn off, then, but this does not damage Bloch’s argument for montage as an advanced

⁵ Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*, p. 221 as translated, *Heritage of Our Times*, p. 202.

⁶ Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*, p. 207 as translated, *Heritage of Our Times*, p. 189.

art form because shock is not what he considers to be the most advanced about montage at any rate. It is rather the open character of *mediate* montage that is progressive. Bloch claims that *immediate* montage, on the other hand, the “sealed bottle” or “castle-restoration” of “bourgeois empty montage,” merely reproduces the same old world, and is hence *contemporaneous, not* progressive.⁷ The sort of montage that Bloch considers to be advanced does not smooth over the rifts in its disturbed surface. It is easy to see why he thinks this kind of montage is advanced: the *cracks* in the surface of montage show that innerness differs from the surface, which itself is no longer “of a piece.” Furthermore, the transitional aspect of *mediate* montage is progressive:

Montage is inclined towards the interim, towards new ‘passage-forming’ through things and towards the display of what has previously been extremely remote; in other places, for example in many remarkable experiments by the Surrealists, from Max Ernst to Aragon, it is a kind of crystallization on the chaos that has come, attempting to mirror in a bizarre way the coming order.⁸

Montage does not destroy all notion of the whole, nor free the part from the domination of the whole, but it merely suggests a state of things in which the individual parts really would be able to step out of the whole: “Only in and after the revolution can particulars themselves be raised out in montage.”⁹ Mediate montage is more advanced than closed, immediate montage in that it presents a transitional state *between* the domination of the part by the whole and the part’s liberation. Mediate montage does not actually accomplish this state, but nor does it claim that it does. Mediate montage shows *the give* within the whole, whereas immediate montage seals up all cracks between the pieces that it passes in “revue.” The primary intention

⁷ Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*, p. 223; p. 222 and p. 222, respectively, as translated, *Heritage of Our Times*, p. 203.

⁸ Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*, p. 227 as translated, *Heritage of Our Times*, p. 207.

⁹ Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*, p. 226 as translated, *Heritage of Our Times*, p. 206.

behind montage may have been to shock the recipient, but montage does not become false in missing its intention, nor in realizing its intention in a completely unforeseen way.

While Bloch sees inorganic, mediate montage as the advanced Modern form, Walter Benjamin considers *shock* to be the peculiarly Modern contribution of art to progressive consciousness.

Bloch's characterization of montage as *image-explosion*, however, is suggestive of *shock*. Shock might not be detachable from montage, in which case, montage, even as the avant-garde form by definition, may be a spent form—as Peter Bürger argues.¹⁰

The question now is whether *shock* is the advanced effect in Modern art.

According to Benjamin, modern art, particularly the poetry of Charles Baudelaire, registers a fundamental change in society—“the disintegration of aura in the experience of shock.” Baudelaire, Benjamin claims,

indicated the price for which the sensation of the modern age may be had: the disintegration of the aura in the experience of shock. He paid dearly for consenting to this disintegration—but it is the law of his poetry, which shines in the sky of the Second Empire as ‘a star without atmosphere.’¹¹

This passage concludes the twelfth and final section of “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” in which Benjamin draws a parallel between the dilemma of the modern artist and the strange dilemma that confronted the poet character in the prose-poem “Perte d’auréole” (Lost Halo):

¹⁰ Peter Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, mit einem Nachwort zur 2. Auflage (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980), p. 108, or translated by Michael Shaw, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 1984, p. 80f. Please note that only chapters 1-4 of *Theorie der Avantgarde* are translated in *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (as chapters 2-5).

¹¹ Walter Benjamin, “Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire,” in *Gesammelte Schriften*, Unter Mitwirkung von Theodor W. Adorno und Gershom Scholem, herausgegeben von Rolf Tiedemann und Hermann Schweppenhäuser, 6 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), vol. 1.2, pp. 605-653, here p. 653 as translated by Harry Zohn, “Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” in *Illuminations*, edited and with an introduction by Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), pp. 155-194, here p. 194.

whether or not to retrieve his halo, which has landed in the mud on a chaotic boulevard.¹² In the posthumously published version of the poem in prose, the poet fully rationalizes leaving the halo where it fell, jolted off his head as he was dodging traffic. Going undecorated is preferable to having one's bones crushed, and besides, without this mark of distinction, one can frequent all sorts of disreputable places. Dignity is boring, whereas the halo might even be a source of amusement if some mediocre poet ever finds it and, idiotically overjoyed, crowns himself with it. But Benjamin notes that there also exists a variant of "Perte d'auréole" in which the poet puts his halo back on. The dilemma represented by these two possible endings is any poet's own: for if through some sort of accident, poetry has lost its magic, the poet is left with either trying to restore it, or else going more deeply into this accident, into jolts and turmoil, mud, low places and degradation. Baudelaire himself chose not to restore art's halo or *aura*. Yet he did not thereby submit to the shocks of modern life, nor merely reproduce them.

Baudelaire has achieved something quite remarkable, according to Benjamin:

"Baudelaire has given the weight of an experience (Erfahrung)" to "something lived through (Erlebnis)."¹³ Benjamin describes what is merely "lived through" in Proustian terms: "Only what has not been experienced explicitly and consciously, what has not happened to the subject as an experience, can become a component of the *mémoire involontaire*."¹⁴ Benjamin then translates this Proustian concept into Freudian terms. What can become a component of the *mémoire involontaire* is a particularly strong stimulus, which the ego has screened out so as to protect itself. *Shock*, then, is just the failure of the ego to screen out overwhelming

¹² Charles Baudelaire, *Œuvres complètes*, texte établi, présenté et annoté par Claude Pichois, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), vol. 1, p. 352.

¹³ Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1.2, p. 652f. as translated, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," p. 194.

¹⁴ Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1.2, p. 613 as translated, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," p. 160f.

stimuli: “The threat from these energies is one of shocks.”¹⁵ If aura is nothing but the “associations which, at home in the *mémoire involontaire*, tend to cluster around the object of a perception,” then the loss of aura is not so much the falling away of these associations as their incursion into the ego.¹⁶ Following a certain implication in Freud’s work, Benjamin then concludes that the multiplication of shock effects in art would act almost as a kind of negative reinforcement, conditioning the recipient to register his experiences more consciously, so as to avoid trauma, for “the more readily consciousness registers these shocks, the less likely are they to have a traumatic effect.”¹⁷ The less likely the shocks are to have a traumatic effect, the more able the subject is to have an explicit and conscious experience (*Erfahrung*).

In “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” Benjamin advances that Dada created a demand for shocks precisely in the interests of strengthening the ego against what it would have to confront in modern life. Benjamin claims that film montage, which he thinks *realized* the demand for shocks created by Dada, necessitates a greater consciousness on the part of the spectator if he is to survive the onslaught of stimuli: “The spectator’s process of association in view of these images is indeed interrupted by their constant, sudden change. This constitutes the shock effect of the film, which, like all shocks, should be cushioned by heightened presence of mind.”¹⁸ Benjamin however conflates this heightened presence of mind with *political* consciousness, arguing that the shock effects of film turn the recipient into

¹⁵ Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1.2, p. 613 as translated, “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” p. 161.

¹⁶ Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1.2, p. 644 as translated, “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” p. 186.

¹⁷ Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1.2, p. 613 as translated, “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” p. 161.

¹⁸ Walter Benjamin, “Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit (Zweite Fassung),” in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1.2, pp. 471-508, here p. 503 as translated by Harry Zohn, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations*, pp. 217-251, here p. 238.

a critic¹⁹ and set art on a political basis.²⁰ Benjamin understands the modern artwork's basis in politics to be its progressive feature.

Peter Bürger rightly recognizes the disjunction between the feeling of shock in the viewer and determinate political action: "The problem with shock as the intended reaction of the recipient is that it is generally non-specific. Even a possible breaking through the aesthetic immanence does not insure that the recipient's behaviour is given a particular direction."²¹

Bürger is however aiming this criticism at the wrong target. He seems to think that *Adorno* attributes political effectiveness to shock, when it is rather *Benjamin* who fits this description and to whose Baudelaire essay Bürger directs the reader in a footnote—though he declines to analyze the account of shock there.²² Bürger associates shock with specific aesthetic procedures, of which montage. He borrows from Adorno the idea that montage scrambles the recipient's usual engagement with the work of art, which is to search for its *meaning*.²³ But Adorno does not claim that montage conveys the recipient toward taking political action. While Adorno indeed claims that art and life—or sooner, what he calls "the aesthetic and the extra-aesthetic"—are connected,²⁴ he does not suggest that montage has a revolutionary political effect extra-aesthetically. On the contrary, he criticizes montage: "Montage is the

¹⁹ Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1.2, pp. 492-494, or translated, "Age of Mechanical Reproduction," p. 231f.

²⁰ Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1.2, p. 482 and p. 508, or translated, "Age of Mechanical Reproduction," p. 224 and p. 242.

²¹ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 108 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 80.

²² Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 116 n35, or translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 118f. n35.

²³ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 106, or translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 79

²⁴ See Murray Dineen, "Adorno and Schoenberg's Unanswered Question," *The Musical Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (Autumn 1993): pp. 415-427. Whether the forms of life are necessarily linked to changes in music is the subject of this elegant essay. Replying to the "unanswered question" that they are, Dineen traces Schoenberg's destruction of the musical medium, tonal space, in Opus 11 to the denial of internal and external sanction to the ego to express itself in life at all. Schoenberg's music is the response to the form of life whereby the "synthesis of ego and a larger social existence is denied in society and in works of art" (*ibid.*, p. 423).

inner-aesthetic capitulation of art in the face of what is heterogeneous to it.”²⁵ Montage divests art of its critical bearing on reality rather than making this critique operative in reality.

Furthermore, Adorno was perfectly aware that the shocks of montage quickly wear off, and this well before Bürger announced that shock had become “institutionalized.”²⁶ While Bürger interprets the neutralization of shock as the definitive failure of Dada and Surrealism to change life, Adorno states merely that montage technique no longer *suffices* to open the aesthetic totality:

As a campaign against the organic unity obtained by devious means, the principle of montage was set to shock. Since the desensitization to shocks, what goes into montage tends to revert to merely indifferent matter; the procedure no longer suffices to ignite the communication between the aesthetic and the extra-aesthetic, and the interest of it is neutralized into a cultural-historical interest.²⁷

Adorno here suggests by way of metaphor that the goal of montage was not to unite life and art, but to use the already-existing communication between the two to create an explosion; successful detonation, however, would mean that the line or path between the aesthetic and extra-aesthetic, would have been consumed, much in the way that a detonation also consumes the detonating cord. Montage served as a trigger installed from the side of what passed itself off as art to blow up what passed itself off as *life* (*organic* unity). Montage does not work against the pseudo-organic unity, however, because, Adorno suggests, its specific shock-effect has worn off. Bürger, by contrast, blames the *non-specificity* of the shock intention for the failure of early montage to engage the recipient *politically*. This also makes montage vulnerable to recuperation by the art institution, in which objects have a representational function, not a political one. Bürger suggests that Bertolt Brecht was able to correct this failing

²⁵ GS, vol. 7, p. 232, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 155.

²⁶ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 108 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 81.

²⁷ GS, vol. 7, p. 233f., or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 155f.

of montage by giving his nonorganic works political contents, which, no longer subordinated to the whole, could detach themselves from the work to become available for praxis: “On the basis of the nonorganic work, a new type of engaged art thus becomes possible.”²⁸ But the nonorganic, politically-engaged work only goes so far, for according to Bürger the art institution is in full control of the political efficacy of individual works: “It is art as an institution that determines the measure of political effect avant-garde works can have.”²⁹ For something to qualify as a successful avant-garde manifestation, it would somehow have to eliminate the art institution by negating its bourgeois function, reception and production, something which Bürger claims the avant-garde cannot do as long as they exhibit their ‘works’ in a museum or the theatre.³⁰ In other words, although the universal no longer dominates the particular in the particular work of art, in montage, the universal still dominates the particular in life. So, Bürger concludes, the universal still dominates the particular work of art; therefore, even works that contest the universal do so only inner-aesthetically and thus necessarily fail to affect the domination of the universal over the particular in life. He appears to see art as a sealed subset of life to be unsealed. Bürger closes his study with a call for scholarship, following the definitive failure of Dada and Surrealism; but at the same time, he doubts whether aesthetics is still possible at all, given Adorno’s observation on the irrationality of society in general: “Adorno’s notion that late-capitalist society has become so irrational...that it may well be that no theory can any longer plumb it applies perhaps with even greater force to post avant-gardist work.”³¹

²⁸ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 127 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 91.

²⁹ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 128 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 92.

³⁰ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 68f., or translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 50f.

³¹ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 131 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 94.

One might ask if the object of Adorno's aesthetics is a lost object. Indeed, Adorno's striking use of the preterite tense in connection to aesthetic experience is a sign of an unsurpassable block between the theory and its object: "Up to the phase of total administration, the subject who beheld, heard, read a work (Gebilde) was supposed to forget himself, to lose his self-interest, to be quenched in it."³² The situation of art, on Adorno's reading, is far more serious than Bürger thinks: not only shock effects, but *every* aspect of the artwork has been not merely institutionalized, but administered. For Bürger, the failure of the historical avant-garde movements demonstrates that the institution of art cannot be eliminated, and that it is not possible for art to be integrated into life praxis. At best, artists can strive to change the function of the art institution, as Brecht strove to do in making *fun* the object of the theatre.³³ For Adorno, by contrast, the entire forming of works by the culture industry and by the cultural administration actually comes between the work and the recipient, and this is what makes the possibility of aesthetic experience and aesthetic theory entirely uncertain. For Adorno holds that one has no aesthetic experience unless immersed in a particular artwork, to the exclusion of all else. The neutralization of shock effects does not re-establish the status quo because art was never the status quo: aesthetic experience was an entirely different experience, without comparison, not religious contemplation.

Bürger's theory in some ways coincides with George Dickie's institutional theory of art.³⁴ Indeed, what for Bürger disqualifies a work from being avant-garde today is just what for Dickie qualifies a work as an artwork. Just as being "accepted as an object that deserves a

³² GS, vol. 7, p. 33, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 17.

³³ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 124, or translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 88f.

³⁴ Marie-Noëlle Ryan has also remarked the convergence between Peter Bürger's notion of the art institution and George Dickie's institutional theory of art. See Marie-Noëlle Ryan, "Penser l'art depuis les avant-gardes: Problèmes de l'esthétique contemporaine après Adorno" (PhD diss., Université de Paris I: Panthéon-Sorbonne, 1993), microfiche, p. 20f. and p. 153.

place in a museum” is enough to distinguish an artwork from a provocation for Bürger,³⁵ for Dickie, “an artifact’s hanging in an art museum as part of a show or a performance at a theatre are sure signs that the status [of a candidate for appreciation] has been conferred,” and that the artifact is therefore art.³⁶ Although Dickie affirms the art institution while Bürger criticizes it, the *concept* of institution enables both theorists to define art safely from the outside: it is the particular work’s place in society, not the movement of its inner laws, that makes it art. While Bürger at no moment claims that the art institution is a fixed, eternal, singularly valid concept that defines art absolutely, he nonetheless applies philosophical universality to artworks. Particular works are art because they fall under the social institution of art: they are currently subject to formalized educational and museological policies, articulated through concepts. How they came to be included under the heading “art” may not be transparent. But the traditional theorist sees as his task not to debate whether the objects on display in museums are art or not art, but rather to explain how it is that they *are* art. Such traditional philosophical universality, through which particulars fall under abstracted qualities, contrasts with the universality of art language, which is constituted in the particular when it unmask the sham consensus of norms and conventions. It is no surprise that institutional theories of art come on the scene when art language and aesthetic illusion are in peril. Institutional theories respond to the problem that illusionless works pose, which is really that truth and legitimization of works as art have taken place only through aesthetic illusion, through the negation and rescue of aesthetic illusion, which is a negation and rescue that *particular* artworks can effect; yet institutional theories simply seek the truth and legitimization of art on other grounds, by having the universal take over the role of the particular. In a certain sense, the failure of

³⁵ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 71, as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 52.

³⁶ George Dickie, *Aesthetics: An Introduction* (Indianapolis: Pegasus, 1971), p. 102.

particulars to constitute the universal, art, negatively, through the determinate negation of aesthetic illusion, is perfectly reflected by institutional theories. Defining art from the top down, these theories ignore or fail to recognize the role of aesthetic illusion as a condition for constituting universality in the particular. In so doing, institutional theories cover up an important break in history: the decline of illusion.

Although Bürger engages reflections on illusion, interpreting “avant-garde” techniques such as montage and defamiliarization as the work’s *refusal* to create illusion, his understanding of the concept as affirmative is largely informed by Marx and Marcuse:

In bourgeois society, art has a contradictory role: it projects the image of a better order and to that extent protests against the bad order that prevails. But by realizing the image of a better order in fiction, which is semblance (Schein) only, it relieves the existing society of the pressure of those forces that make for change.³⁷

Although Bürger expresses doubts over whether Marx’s critique of religion in *Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right* can be applied to literature,³⁸ he nonetheless endorses Marcuse’s view that autonomous art is “affirmative”—that is, the *illusion* of a better world in art, even while enfolding the real misery of this world as its content, is so much consolation that art actually prevents a better world from coming about.³⁹ Since Schein has a dual character—at once a satisfying lie that actually annuls a better world *and* truth about the misery of this world—, we would, on this view, be missing something if we simply destroyed the illusion in art. Rather, the real content of illusion, the misery of the world, should be exposed in an

³⁷ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 68 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 50. Michael Shaw’s translation of “semblance” for “Schein” has been retained here, as this is Bürger’s preference when he translates his own text.

³⁸ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 13. Please note that Michael Shaw’s translation includes neither the introduction (“Einleitung: Vorüberlegungen zu einer kritischen Literaturwissenschaft”) nor the first chapter (“Theorie der Avantgarde und kritische Literaturwissenschaft”) of *Theorie der Avantgarde*, but substitutes closely-related essays from Peter Bürger’s *Vermittlung – Rezeption – Funktion* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979) for these: respectively, “Theorie der Avantgarde und Theorie der Literatur” (pp. 9-17) and “Hermeneutik – Ideologiekritik – Funktionsanalyse” (pp. 147-159). See *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. iv.

³⁹ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 68, or translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 50.

ideology critique.⁴⁰ In other words, on Bürger's reading, it is up to *aesthetics* and to *literary criticism* to expose the miserable conditions that produce illusion and which stand in contradiction to it. The notion of art as merely "affirmative" ignores, however, *art's* ability to destroy its own illusions. Artworks are illusions that destroy the illusion of wholeness and balance of some other works. The advanced works throughout history destroy the seeming organicity and poise of certain others: "One artwork is the mortal enemy of another."⁴¹ Yet, as Bürger does not consider aesthetic Schein to be soluble by Schein itself, illusion to be able to destroy illusion, he thinks that the revolutionary works are those that forego Schein altogether.⁴² He considers the advanced aspect of montage to be its failure to create the illusion of reconciliation: "According to Adorno, it is the characteristic of the non-organic work using the principle of montage that it no longer creates the semblance (Schein) of reconciliation. Even if one cannot accept in every detail the philosophy lying behind it, one will not fail to endorse this insight."⁴³ This is, properly speaking, a misreading of Adorno, who leaves in doubt to what extent the revolt against illusion is effective, and claims that what is "legitimate" and what is "illusory" in this revolt are mixed up with each other.⁴⁴ As Bürger later clarified his position, the revolt against illusion and aura was advanced because it

⁴⁰ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 10.

⁴¹ Quoted in GS, vol. 7, p. 59, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 35.

⁴² Bürger sees the attempt to redeem illusion and to maintain the separation between art and life praxis as "the core of Adorno's anti-avant-gardism": "Since he cannot conceive of the attempt to return art to praxis as a necessary step in the development of art in bourgeois society, but can only proclaim a regression into barbarism, his critique of idealist aesthetic categories ends in their recovery. This is equally true for the category of semblance." Peter Bürger, "Adorno's Anti-Avant-Gardism," *Telos*, no. 86 (Winter 1990-91): pp. 49-60, here p. 56, or in German, Peter Bürger, *Zur Kritik der idealistischen Ästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), p. 71. Nota bene: Bürger's self-translated essay in English "Adorno's Anti-Avant-Gardism" does not exactly correspond to the excursus from *Zur Kritik der idealistischen Ästhetik* entitled "Zum Anti-Avantgardismus Adornos" (pp. 128-135). Certain passages, such as the one quoted, are revised translations of passages appearing elsewhere in *Zur Kritik der idealistischen Ästhetik*.

⁴³ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 105, or translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 78. Michael Shaw's translation of "semblance" for "Schein" has been retained here, as this is Bürger's own preference.

⁴⁴ GS, vol. 7, p. 158 as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 103.

attacked the categories (such as genius) so easily recuperable by Fascism;⁴⁵ Adorno's criticism of Benjamin's theory of advanced art as based on the loss of aura had to be, according to Bürger, "a false sublation of aesthetic semblance."⁴⁶ Bürger considers Schein to be an ideological category of German Idealism insofar as it legitimizes the dissimulation of labour, and he even goes so far as to suggest that montage in itself de-legitimizes this dissimulation.⁴⁷ Yet Schein cannot be an ideological category purely and simply because, as Norbert Rath, points out, "Adorno shows that the concept of illusion is dialectical in itself, that it has itself a dialectical structure."⁴⁸ This dialectical structure means that Schein cannot be dismissed out of hand as an Idealist, ideological category. Bound up in antinomies, the concept of illusion must have limited power in legitimizing anything. This dialectic demands reflection, not wholesale rejection, and Rath therefore commends Adorno's approach: "Adorno's reflections on illusion avoid a simple negation of art as a purely ideological sphere."⁴⁹ Aesthetic illusion itself wakens critique. It is no coincidence that, as Bürger himself admits, the "historical" avant-garde movements, Dada and Surrealism, lose art's critical power along with art: "An art no longer distinct from the praxis of life but wholly absorbed in it will lose the capacity to criticize it, along with its distance."⁵⁰ Yet this happens not for the reason that Bürger thinks: art is critical not because it projects a better world, distinct from this world, but because it

⁴⁵ Bürger, *Zur Kritik der idealistischen Ästhetik*, p. 70.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 71 (my translation, retaining Bürger's preference of "semblance" for "Schein).

⁴⁷ Bürger suggests that any determinate negation of the hidden work-character of illusion as ideological today owes itself to the peculiar "development" of art in bourgeois society since at least the historical avant-garde movements, claiming that "the work of the producers becomes obvious in montage" (*ibid.*, p. 62). He makes an exaggerated claim for montage. Although it might be clear to recipients how the *artist* produced the montage, it is by no means clear to them how the individual elements of the montage—buttons and tickets and so forth—were produced.

⁴⁸ Norbert Rath, "Dialektik des Scheins—Materialien zum Scheinbegriff Adornos," in *Kolloquium Kunst und Philosophie*, herausgegeben von Willi Oelmüller, vol. 2, *Ästhetischer Schein* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1982), pp. 51-61, here p. 61 (my translation).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* (my translation).

⁵⁰ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 68 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 50.

disillusions through illusion. If the disillusioning character of aesthetic illusion is not properly grasped, art is not properly grasped; if art is not properly grasped, the failure of the avant-garde is not properly grasped. If the failure of the avant-garde were merely the failure to unite art and life praxis and the failure to destroy art as an institution, then the consequences would be limited. Bürger admits as much: on the side of art, the institution of art is merely strengthened and enriched by the wider range of materials and forms made available to it;⁵¹ on the side of life praxis, nothing is changed: student protests beginning in 1968, which he thinks take up from Russian Futurism, leave hopes for a more democratic society “unfulfilled,” as he surmises in the post-script to the second German edition of *Theory of the Avant-Garde*.⁵² But the historical avant-garde movements do not fail merely to unite art and life; their attempt to unite art and life fails to create a better world. Unaware that art is itself a disillusioning force, the avant-gardes sought to disillusion art from the outside. But in so doing, they destroyed art’s critical edge: not only art’s critique of society, but its capacity to determine what it is itself through self-criticism. In a certain sense, the institutional theory describes reality: lacking language, lacking adequacy, contemporary installations and ready-mades cede their legislation to the dubious third-party management and pseudo-consensus of committees and curators. If the institutional theory holds any weight at all, it lies in art’s real devolution to a mere administrative category. But Bürger’s theory articulates this change poorly. In collapsing art into the art institution, Bürger also collapses artistic aesthetic illusion into mere social illusion, the autonomy of art into the functioning of institutions and concludes from the enduring of museums, literary criticism and art education that art endures. Bürger thus sees the

⁵¹ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 130, or translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 94.

⁵² Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 134 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 95.

continuity of art, specifically as concerns its autonomy, where Adorno observes a profound rupture:

Nothing remains of the autonomy of art—that artworks should be considered better than they consider themselves to be arouses indignation in culture customers—other than the fetish character of the commodity, regression to the archaic fetishism in the origin of art: to this extent the contemporary attitude to art is regressive.⁵³

Bürger does not however acknowledge this decisive shift in the character of culture in the reduction of autonomy to an “ideological category that joins an element of truth (the apartness of art from the praxis of life) and an element of untruth (the hypostatization of this fact, which is a result of historical development as the ‘essence’ of art).”⁵⁴ Bürger is correct to read art’s *separation* from society as an aspect of aesthetic autonomy, yet its truth lies not in correspondence to a real state of affairs, but rather in its *critique* of social illusion, from which every artwork wishes to detach itself. Autonomy’s moment of untruth, however, is aesthetic illusion: art really cannot detach itself from illusion, which is why it has made itself a realm of emphatic illusion. Bürger’s view of autonomy is consistent with his view of organic art as merely affirmative, to which he may contrast a negative and critical avant-garde. But where autonomy is understood merely as the art institution’s relative independence from other institutions or as the specialization of art’s social functions or, at the limit, as a critical yet ultimately compensatory utopian vision, it then becomes very difficult to understand why Adorno thinks that aesthetic autonomy is desirable. But aesthetic autonomy for Adorno is not something identified and established, like a museum or a university programme: “Only in the progress of reflection does the principle of identity prove to be illusory in the artwork as well, because ‘Different’ constitutes its autonomy; in this respect, certainly not even artworks admit

⁵³ GS, vol. 7, p. 33 as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 17.

⁵⁴ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 63 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 46.

of positive negation.”⁵⁵ Autonomy refers not only to art’s critique of other spheres, but also to its self-criticism: art was able to determine itself only by negating its own rules, in ways that were themselves able to become rules. Art is autonomous in that it defines itself not only against the false universality of communicative language, but also against what has become normal in its own domain. Art defines itself *against* the pseudo-consensus of sign systems, of arbitrary unions of concepts and acoustical images imposed on the collective at the expense of their individual expression. Art’s critique of sign-systems indeed separates it from other spheres, yet its *solution*, its *language*, remains at an extreme distance from communicative, non-art language, and so cannot be easily imported into life praxis. Bürger’s theory of the avant-garde does not address autonomous art’s self-criticism. If the avant-gardes negated art’s *autonomy*, then they really negated art’s negativity: its critical power and ability to self-correct, its freedom to define itself, its impulse to break up what had rigidified into mindless laws and habits.⁵⁶ It negated precisely what allows artists to make advances *for the whole* without fear of reprisals against them individually. This is clear in the cases of Mozart, Beethoven and Mahler. Mozart paid no personal price for withholding clear indications of key for many measures at the opening of his String Quartet in C Major, K. 465 (1785).⁵⁷ Rather,

⁵⁵ GS, vol. 7, p. 478, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 323.

⁵⁶ Rose Rosengard Subotnik associates aesthetic autonomy with its resistance towards musical analysis and verbal exegesis, suggesting, somewhat surprisingly, that “perhaps...Adorno is right in his underlying suggestion that nineteenth-century music is not autonomous, either as a sensuous or as a structural medium. Such a lack of autonomy might do much to explain why as far back as the criticism of E. T. A. Hoffmann and of Schumann, attempts at dealing separately with the musical content and with the poetic or philosophical content of post-Enlightenment music have so often been unconvincing; why connections between these two types of critical discussion, when clearly separated, have so often seemed nonexistent or arbitrary; and why the purely musical passages in such criticism have so often seemed its least satisfactory, least explanatory element.” Rose Rosengard Subotnik, “Why Is Adorno’s Music Criticism the Way It Is? Some Reflections on Twentieth-Century Criticism of Nineteenth-Century Music,” in *Developing Variations: Style and Ideology in Western Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), pp. 42-56, here p. 50f.

⁵⁷ Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Quartet, C Major for 2 Violins, Viola and Violoncello, Köchel, No. 465, Composed 1785*, revised and with Foreword [1930] by Rudolf Gerber (London: Ernst Eulenburg, s.a.), I, p. 1, mm. 1-13. In his excellent article on musical allegories of “pre-consciousness” or amorphous states of

all of society was released from the necessity of keys being stated unequivocally at the beginning of each work. Beethoven was not persecuted when he began to write in the fractured, fragmentary style of his late period.⁵⁸ Rather, all of society was released from the necessity of smooth transitions and uniformization of working materials secured through steady tempi. Mahler did not face social exclusion for suspending sonata form in a most unconventional manner in his First Symphony,⁵⁹ developing the second subject gradually through the development section to “produce” it at the recapitulation rather than presenting it in the exposition as was the norm.⁶⁰ Rather, all of society was released from the sonata principle. The autonomy that makes these advances, and others, possible is not incidental to art: art *must* be autonomous, according to Adorno. Thus he is often portrayed as an elitist Eurocentric with a very narrow conception of what counts as art. His interest, however, lies precisely in those instances of permitted resistance and divergence within a system set to perpetuate itself. It is worth remembering that Adorno was active at a time when “autonomous” was a pejorative term cast on art that did not conform to the Soviet doctrine of socialist realism.⁶¹ Given the number of left-leaning intellectuals who were taken in by

consciousness, Marshall Brown argues against Charles Rosen that it is only from bar 13 that the key becomes explicit. Marshall Brown, “Mozart and after: The Revolution in Musical Consciousness,” *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 4 (Summer 1981): pp. 689-706, here p. 699, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343145>.

⁵⁸ See, for example, Ludwig van Beethoven, *Quartett für 2 Violinen, Bratsche und Violoncell, Op. 131, Quartett No. 14* (1863; repr. New York: Dover, 1970), esp. IV. Andante, ma non troppo e molto cantabile, pp. 9-19. International Music Score Library Project, Petrucci Music Library, http://petrucci.mus.auth.gr/imglnks/usimg/4/44/IMSLP04768-Beethoven_-_String_Quartet_No.14_Dover.pdf.

⁵⁹ Gustav Mahler, *Symphony No. 1* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1906), I, pp. 3-47, mm. 1-450, International Music Score Library Project, Petrucci Music Library, <http://petrucci.mus.auth.gr/imglnks/usimg/d/dd/IMSLP17070-Mahler-Symph1fs.pdf>.

⁶⁰ GS, vol. 13, p. 161 as translated by Edmund Jephcott, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), p. 13. Adorno places the return of the tonic at rehearsal number [26]. The theme, which appears fully for the first time at the recapitulation (!), enters at the pick-up to rehearsal number [27]—Mahler, *Symphony No. 1*, I, p. 36, pick up to m. 364.

⁶¹ *The Oxford Companion to Music Online*, s.v. “formalism,” by Jonathan Walker, accessed February 9, 2014, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e2625>.

Stalinism, even in his own circle,⁶² it is understandable that Adorno championed the “autonomy” of Western composers over the restriction endured by their Eastern counterparts, Dmitry Shostakovich and Sergey Prokofiev. The very serious consequences that the charge of “formalism” could bring in the Soviet Union damaged these composers’ production and hung over their lives. The culture industry and McCarthyism in the United States in the same era exercised a similar control as Soviet authorities, providing livelihood only to those who made *no* attempt to advance art. Where artists have not been prevented from resolving the infinitesimal problems that art presents itself, no art is born. Adorno’s deep conviction that art should be autonomous is the least accepted of his theses.⁶³ But it is important to appreciate just how unusual progressive bourgeois European art music was in Europe, or anywhere. Throughout history, individuals have indeed overthrown norms with gestures, but, unlike artists of autonomous artworks, they never had the *right* to do so. Advances in the non-aesthetic realm have always been made at personal cost to individuals who act critically

⁶² See Adorno to Alfred Sohn-Rethel, Frankfurt am Main, July 21, 1958, in Theodor W. Adorno and Alfred Sohn-Rethel, *Briefwechsel, 1936-1969*, herausgegeben von Christoph Gödde, Dialektische Studien (Munich: edition text + kritik, 1991), pp. 120-124. Adorno cites Ernst Bloch’s Stalinism as one reason for their falling out (*ibid.*, p. 121). Adorno’s opposition to the Eastern Bloc comes across very clearly as he deports Sohn-Rethel from accepting an invitation to speak at Humboldt University, then in East Berlin.

⁶³ See Lambert Zuidervaart, “The Social Significance of Autonomous Art: Adorno and Bürger,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 48, no. 1 (Winter 1990): pp. 61-77 and Nikolas Kompridis, “Amidst the Plurality of Voices: Philosophy of Music After Adorno,” *Angelaki* 8, no. 3 (December 2003): pp. 167-180. Zuidervaart charges that “Adorno misreads the autonomy of art and systematically neglects heteronomous art” (“Adorno and Bürger,” p. 61) while Nikolas Kompridis states: “Adorno’s obsession with the putative ‘technical laws of autonomous art’ led him astray” (“Plurality of Voices,” p. 176f.). Both of these authors, however, deign to correct what they perceive as the exclusivity of Adorno’s aesthetics through normative measures. Zuidervaart proposes a “complex normativity” (“Adorno and Bürger,” p. 74). Kompridis aims to create a “shift of normative perspective” within Adorno’s own thought that would successfully link the aesthetic and the rational, which he says Adorno failed to do (“Plurality of Voices,” p. 170). But their normative solutions to expand the scope of art are arbitrary. Adorno himself argues emphatically against the thesis that works are art by dint of their conformity with a norm or with certain norms. This presupposes that the universality claimed by norms is true and legitimate. On the contrary, norms are “badly universal” according to Adorno: “Yet as negation of the bad universal of the norm, art does not admit of normal works and nor therefore of average ones, which either correspond to the norm or else gain their status through their distance from the norm” (GS, vol. 7, p. 280, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 188). Not even Zuidervaart’s notion of *complex* normativity gets around the problem of the arbitrary, external, merely posited nature of these norms.

against the status quo: social exclusion, loss of livelihood, weakening or destruction of capacities, imprisonment or house arrest, torture, rape and execution are expected consequences. Reprisals may be legal or extra-legal, but there is probably not a single material advance in the history of humanity that has not come with individual suffering and sacrifice for its sake. Art is a precursor to freedom in a generally unfree society, where freedom “would obtain for the particular that right that today announces itself, aesthetically, nowhere else but in the idiosyncratic compulsions [Zwängen] that artists have to obey.”⁶⁴ This *right* amounts to the assured absence of social reprisals when the particular, needing to refuse a rule for the sake of material advancement,⁶⁵ makes a gesture against this rule, for “as long as the particular and the universal diverge there is no freedom.”⁶⁶ The courageous individual who acts against social injustice does not have the right of the particular artist who reacts idiosyncratically against the norm or a rule in art. Idiosyncrasies in art are already collective because the subject is not punished for them: “In [the subject’s] idiosyncratic flicker of reaction the collective form of response announces itself.”⁶⁷ If there is something of art that can be translated into life praxis, it is not its critique of communicative language, which makes it autonomous in one

⁶⁴ GS, vol. 7, p. 69, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 42.

⁶⁵ Cf. Peter Bürger, “Das Altern der Moderne,” in *Adorno-Konferenz 1983*, herausgegeben von Ludwig von Friedeburg und Jürgen Habermas (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), pp. 177-197, esp. 181, or in David J. Parent’s English translation, “The Decline of the Modern Age,” *Telos*, no. 62 (Winter 1984-85): pp. 117-130, esp. p. 120. Adorno’s support for the advance of the musical material is not the chimerical enterprise that Bürger and others make it out to be. None of Adorno’s critics would deny that an advanced society is one in which *all* members benefit integrally from its material comforts, rationally gained. No one would intellectually sanction the current situation, in which some people have access to highly refined material (burning so-called ethical oil in driving 1000 km weekends to, from and around second homes in Canmore), while others live in abject poverty (suffering from tuberculosis in overcrowded and substandard reserve housing without potable water, cut off from modern hospitals). Philosophy, the teaching of the right life, demands that we make qualitative distinctions within material, that we be able to recognize that the material state of the reserve system is a regression behind the material state of North American peoples here 500 years ago. The demand to make qualitative distinctions within the material is not suspended in the field of art, and it is no coincidence that the greatest Modern visual artists are all Native—a Wassily Kandinsky always secretly wants to be an Alex Janvier.

⁶⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 69 as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 42.

⁶⁷ GS, vol. 7, p. 198, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 131.

sense, but this *right* to oppose the norm, which makes it autonomous in another sense. For what would be revolutionary would be not for art to become non-autonomous, but for life, the life of the subject, to become autonomous—self-determining—, which it never has been. Instead, individuals fall under categories of persons (or, worse still, under the category of non-person) and are held at the mercy of the administration. The great works of art that Adorno considers at least reacted against the structure of oppression—against the social reprisals destined for the individual who dares to be different—and opened a world where what does not fit in is esteemed. Art is autonomous because it decides itself the particular content of what does not fit in. The importation of particular “political content” into art prioritizes certain instances, types or forms of oppression over others and in fact limits the impact of the artwork. Bürger and Benjamin are wrong to assume that political content encapsulates advanced consciousness: an advanced politics can still be—and as a rule is—regressive with respect to the state of theory. Benjamin, however, considered advanced art to be not only based on politics, but also able to produce an experience that went against the general deficiency in experience, so against the unconscious social processes at the root of this deficiency.

To Benjamin, Baudelaire’s solution to the loss of experience (*Erfahrung*) was to treat mere, unconsciously-imprinted stimuli in such fashion that they might be consciously experienced: in poetry—yet Benjamin’s answer is ambiguous on the point of Baudelaire’s *poetical* solution to a *real* problem. On one hand, Benjamin suggests that Baudelaire was perfectly attuned to the processes of modernity, and that these processes were transferable to poetry. While Baudelaire did not have direct or even passing experience with factory work, according to Benjamin, and did not treat it thematically in his poetry as such, that very poetry nonetheless absorbed the experience of repetitive, mindless labour. Baudelaire expresses

alienated labour by way of “types”: the idler, jostled in the crowd, and the gambler.

Benjamin’s hunch that functional equivalences between the passer-by and the unskilled labourer and between the gambler and the unskilled labourer turns out to be propitious to understanding why shock stands at the centre of Baudelaire’s work. Life had become shock for the millions who found themselves suddenly slotted into a new and seemingly promising situation, yet forced to adopt unnatural positions for hours without the proper recompense.

Benjamin’s passage linking the idler, the labourer and the gambler merits full quotation:

[Baudelaire] was...captivated by a process whereby the reflecting mechanism which the machine sets off in the workman can be studied closely, in a mirror, in the idler. If we say that this process is the game of chance, the statement may appear to be paradoxical. Alain puts it convincingly when he writes: ‘It is inherent in the concept of gambling...that no game is dependent on the preceding one. Gambling cares about no assured position.... Winnings secured earlier are not taken into account, and in this it differs from work. Gambling gives short shrift to the weighty past on which bases itself.’ The work which Alain has in mind here is the highly specialized kind (which, like intellectual effort, probably retains certain features of handicraft); it is not that of most factory workers, least of all the unskilled. The latter, to be sure, lacks any touch of adventure, of the mirage that lures the gambler. But it certainly does not lack the futility, the emptiness, the inability to complete something which is inherent in the activity of a wage slave in a factory. Gambling even contains the workman’s gesture that is produced by the automatic operation, for there can be no game without the quick movement of the hand by which the stake is put down or a card is picked up. The jolt in the movement of a machine is like the so-called *coup* in a game of chance. The manipulation of the worker at the machine has no connection with the preceding operation for the very reason that it is an exact repetition. Since each operation at the machine is just as screened off from the preceding operation as a *coup* in a game of chance is from the one that preceding it, the drudgery of the laborer is, in its own way, a counterpart to the drudgery of the gambler. The work of both is equally devoid of substance.⁶⁸

The rude jolts delivered by the jostling crowd in the street and the fateful “blows” or throws of the dice in the gambling hall are akin to the jolts of the machine that the factory worker’s quick, automatic movements reflect. The figures of the gambler and the idler are thus manners of speaking about the unskilled factory worker, who has become inured to shocks, to the

⁶⁸ Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1.2, p. 632f. as translated, “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” p. 177.

blows of fate, to the point that he is hardly capable of feeling his own disappointment. Yet these are manners of speaking not just about the unskilled factory worker, but about *everyone*. The shocks that the unskilled labourer lives through epitomize modernity. Baudelaire does not choose to write about the paradigmatic case, but expresses the shocks as experience, the modern experience, rather by way of different modern “types.” The isolated shocks then have explicit and conscious import: they are indicative of the modern experience. According to Benjamin, Baudelaire’s work is significant because it grasps the soulless activity that continues without accomplishment or even progress—as *modernity*. In the image of the gambler, Baudelaire condenses general, abstract, diffuse social processes that were lurking invisibly like a spreading damp—the incompleteness, futility and repetitiveness that characterize the gambler’s gestures are finally not specific to a particular class or type. Yet, on the other hand, Benjamin suggests in the above passage that, unlike factory work, “highly specialized” work and “intellectual effort” do *not* lend themselves to a comparison with gambling. Philosophers and critics would thus be spared from the withering of experience in the neutralization of shocks. On this point, Benjamin departs noticeably from Lukács, who claims, as we have seen, that features of capitalism are inherent in all forms of labour. The consequence of affording the critic a privileged position is that art then needs to be saved by signifying language, and the traditional subordination of art to discursive forms of reason is repeated. Yet Benjamin’s thesis is contradicted by the positivism that is nearly everywhere the norm. Even intellectual workers screen moments off from one another, as they are screened off in an assembly-line, so that the tensions pulling each phenomenon in opposite directions, the past hopes and present disappointments, are not really experienced. The tendency even in the humanities and social sciences is to organize research into verifiable facts, while situating

each work or phenomenon in a closed historical period or context. The historical collisions within works and phenomena are ignored or else minimized. This tendency in intellectual work is part of the industrial process that closes everything off into repeatable units, thereby suppressing whatever leads out of the immediate instant. Experience that goes beyond the present is just about as difficult to realize in the domain of intellectual labour as it is in the domain of physical labour. Adorno for his part does not hold that any one type of worker, by dint of some supposedly deeper feeling of alienation, is in a privileged position to overcome mindless repetition and to make experience in the strong sense possible again. A close reader of Proust such as Benjamin should not either.

In reading Proust, Benjamin would have no doubt seen through the false absolutization of social milieux. For one of the arguments in *À la recherche du temps perdu* (The Remembrance of Things Past, In Search of Lost Time) is no doubt that the continuity of a class over time is far more illusory than the ruptures between the classes at a given time. The Proustian hero mistakes a grand duke for a bourgeois from Combray because something in the elderly man's gestures and manners remind him of his own family milieu. But what seems to be the physiognomy of a certain class turns out to be the physiognomy of a certain generation. The discovery of this error causes the narrator to formulate the following theory:

The truth is that the similarity in dress, and the spirit of the age as it is echoed by the face, occupy so much more significant a place in someone than their caste, which occupies a large place only in the person in question's self-esteem and in the imagination of others, that, to be made aware that a great nobleman of Louis-Philippe's time differs less from a bourgeois of Louis-Philippe's time than from a great nobleman of the time of Louis XV, that there is no need to walk the galleries of the Louvre.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Marcel Proust, *Sodome et Gomorrhe*, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, vol. 4. (s.l.: Gallimard, 1989), p. 81 as translated by John Sturrock, *Sodom and Gomorrah*, In Search of Lost Time, vol. 4 (London: Allen Lane, 2002), p. 87. "La vérité est que la ressemblance des vêtements et aussi la réverbération par le visage de l'esprit d'une époque tiennent, dans une personne, une place tellement plus importante que sa caste, qui en occupe une grande seulement dans l'amour-propre de l'intéressé et l'imaginaire des autres, que pour se rendre compte qu'un grand

Here Proust expresses a division between outer and inner aspects of the individual. The inner aspect is not so much consciousness as it is false consciousness—the identification of individuals with particular social milieux. The narrator suggests that social milieux are far less important than we think. Strong self-identification with a particular social milieu is egotism, while strong association of others with social categories belongs properly to the unreal zone of the imagination, remaining subjective in the bad sense. When the narrator goes wrong in trying to judge an individual's social milieu from his appearance, he perceives himself induced in this common error. He surmises that what is far more decisive in determining the outer appearance—all one can read off a portrait—is the era. In *Minima Moralia*, Adorno interprets the Proustian narrator's inability to distinguish between people of different social milieux by sight as a sign of society's relentless process of forming and habituating:

Proust's observation that in photographs, the grandfather of a duke or of a middle-class Jew are so alike that we forget their difference of social rank, has a much wider application: the unity of an epoch objectively abolishes all the distinctions that constitute the happiness, even the moral substance, of individual existence.⁷⁰

In an unreconciled world, social rank is a condition of the fragmentary happiness of individual existence; the vast and swift changes of modernity do not respect social rank, but this does not reconcile the social divisions in a togetherness that would be the whole happiness; it destroys the conditions for individual happiness. Adorno suggests that individuals have become unconscious products of their age, formed by blind forces of history and imprinted with a behavioural code that announces their era with the precision of a punch clock. The problem is not that multi-millionaires dress like everyone else—today, in T-shirts and jeans—, but that

seigneur du temps de Louis-Philippe est moins différent d'un bourgeois du temps de Louis-Philippe que d'un grand seigneur du temps de Louis XV, il n'est pas nécessaire de parcourir les galeries du Louvre."

⁷⁰ GS, vol. 4, p. 28 §6 as translated by E. F. N. Jephcott, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life* (London: Verso, 2005), p. 26f.

people are uniformly formed in ways that they do not realize. According to Benjamin, an *era* is a state of similarity, whether “in actions, physiognomies or speech mannerisms.”⁷¹ A person’s outer aspect cannot be reliably connected to anything properly individual or even to a personal identity or specific background; it indicates the solid chunk of time to which the individual belongs, time in its regular aspects, not changing history as the individual actually lives it. Proust’s defense against this repetitive structure of existence, the *era*, cannot be a narrative because, according to an insight with which Benjamin credits Max Unold, that would be like narrating a dream. Benjamin takes this to mean that an era in a state of similarity is a dreaming era. What resembles itself resembles a dream, which is uncanny. Proust renders this uncanniness by way of the *image*.⁷²

Absolute temporal homogeneity is not simply truth to the illusion of absolute class divisions, but illusion in its turn: the wishes and desires of the past do occasionally surface in the present in what Benjamin calls “a painful shock of rejuvenation.”⁷³ Benjamin understands shock in Proust to perform a fundamentally disillusioning role, as he maintains it does in film and Dada. But unlike film and Dada works, *À la recherche du temps perdu* (Remembrance of Things Past, In Search of Lost Time) does not repel the charge of the past, for the field of Proust’s research is the *mémoire involontaire* (involuntary memory), which encompasses both the aura and shock. Aura and shock turn out to be two characters of *mémoire involontaire*: that of (image) accumulation and that of labour. On one hand, the *mémoire involontaire* harbours aura, because aura is actually nothing but associations that crowd around objects;⁷⁴ but, on the

⁷¹ Walter Benjamin, “Zum Bilde Prousts,” in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2.1, pp. 310-324, here p. 313 as translated by Harry Zohn, “The Image of Proust,” in *Illuminations*, pp. 201-215, here p. 204.

⁷² Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2.1, p. 314, or translated, “The Image of Proust,” p. 205.

⁷³ Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2.1, p. 320 as translated, “The Image of Proust,” p. 211.

⁷⁴ Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1.2, p. 644 as translated, “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” p. 186.

other hand, shock is really the *work* of the *mémoire involontaire*, which is the “rejuvenating force” that is able to pull the past into the present.⁷⁵ This converges more closely with what Adorno understands by *explosion*: the shocks of the most recent artworks, or, what he calls “the explosion of their appearance [die Explosion ihrer Erscheinung],”⁷⁶ are the confrontations of historical differences within each one, within the individual artwork that seems to be a pure expression of its time, to be the *appearance* of an essence in time: “What appears in the artwork is its own inner time; the explosion of the appearance blasts open the continuity of this inner temporality [deren Kontinuität, i.e. die Kontinuität seiner inneren Zeit, the continuity of the artwork’s inner time.]”⁷⁷ Proust’s work does not itself aim to shock: shock is assumed in it and the question becomes rather whether, or how, shock can be experienced, in the sense that shock, which normally repels the past and future, be comprehended in terms of memory and anticipation. Proust, in other words, works on the question as to whether something lived can be given the weight of experience. Benjamin in turn analyzes the shock experience like this:

When the past is reflected in the dewy fresh “instant,” a painful shock of rejuvenation pulls it together once more as irresistibly as the Guermantes way and Swann’s way become intertwined for Proust when, in the thirteenth volume, he roams about the Combray area for the last time and discovers the intertwining of the roads.⁷⁸ In a trice

⁷⁵ Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2.1, p. 320 as translated, “The Image of Proust,” p. 211.

⁷⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 131 as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 84.

⁷⁷ GS, vol. 7, p. 132 as translated except where indicated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 85. Berthold Hoeckner reads “Explosion der Erscheinung” in this sentence as a subjective genitive (it is the appearance that explodes the continuity of the artwork’s inner time), whereas it makes better sense to read it as an objective genitive (the explosion that explodes the appearance blasts open the continuity of art’s inner time), since traditionally appearance does not explode “what appears” (essence). Adorno’s aim is to show explosion to be a category of Modern art that changes the relation between essence and appearance. Berthold Hoeckner, “On Apparition,” preface to *Apparitions: New Perspectives on Adorno and Twentieth-Century Music*, ed. Berthold Hoeckner (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. vii-xiii, here p. ix-x.

⁷⁸ The hero’s discovery that the two customary rambles that he used to take with his family are actually joined occurs at the end of *Albertine Disparue*, so in the thirteenth volume of the 1925 Gallimard edition in 16 volumes, not in the thirteenth volume of the 13-volume first edition, to which Benjamin refers at the opening of the essay: “The thirteen volumes of Marcel Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu* are the result of an unconstruable synthesis in which the absorption of a mystic, the art of a prose writer, the verve of a satirist, the erudition of a scholar, and the self-consciousness of a monomaniac have combined in an autobiographical work.” Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1.2, p. 310 as translated, “The Image of Proust,” p. 201.

the landscape jumps about like a child. “*Ah! que le monde est grand à la clarté des lampes! Aux yeux du souvenir que le monde est petit!*” Proust has brought off the tremendous feat of letting the whole world age by a lifetime in an instant. But this very concentration in which things that normally just fade and slumber consume themselves in a flash is called rejuvenation. *À la recherche du temps perdu* is the constant attempt to charge an entire lifetime with the utmost awareness. Proust’s method is actualization, not reflection. He is filled with the insight that none of us has time to live the true dramas of the life that we are destined for. This is what ages us—this and nothing else. The wrinkles and creases on our faces are the registration of the great passions, vices, insights that called on us; but we, the masters, were not home.⁷⁹

In the passage of the *Recherche* that Benjamin has in mind here, the narrator’s return to the Combray area does not in any way recapture or rekindle the happiness that the places evoked in him as a child. The narrator feels nothing at all in climbing the steep little path by the hawthorn where he first encountered Gilberte Swann, then a little girl, who emerged from the bush as if part of it, hair strawberry-blond of the blossoms and eyes black of the bark. This return jolts him from the illusions he holds about the region and about Gilberte. The impassable distance between the walking path by Swann’s (le côté de Méséglise-la-Vineuse) and the walking path on the way to the Guermantes (le côté de Guermantes) turns out to be a mere product of a childish reason, which concluded from the *habit* of his family to walk either one circuit or the other that some barrier between them existed in reality. The narrator’s initial impression of Gilberte as impudent turns out to be rooted in this same illusion of absolute separation between the two strata. The strangers who make their way into Combray are, according to the narrator’s aunt, people whom they “did not know at all,” and whom the family assumes come from Méséglise.⁸⁰ The young hero thus interprets Gilberte’s gesturing to him with her hand as being perfectly indecent, offensive beyond belief, since it comes from

⁷⁹ Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2.1, p. 320f. as translated, “The Image of Proust,” p. 211f.

⁸⁰ Marcel Proust, *Du côté de chez Swann*, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, vol. 1 (s.l.: Gallimard, 1988), p. 132 as translated by Lydia Davis, *Swann’s Way* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), p. 137.

someone whom he does not know, probably someone from Méséglise.⁸¹ But when Gilberte so much later reveals that what she actually intended by her movement was to invite the narrator to follow her to the ruined dungeons of Roussainville, to play with all the country children, the narrator is shocked. He could have been happy, had he not been so thoroughly informed by the univocal meanings of his “petit dictionnaire de civilité,” his “little dictionary of manners,” that he could not interpret Gilberte’s behaviour, or had he not been so inculcated by mores of his family and so convinced by the rumours surrounding the kind of children who played in the dungeons of Roussainville that he avoided the spot.⁸² From the top of his aunt’s house in Combray, he would spy the tower, rising from the forest into which he would often descend, obsessed with the idea of the trees being somehow alive with Roussainville or Méséglise peasant girls, whom he thought to be able to conjure out by staring hard into the distant trunks disappearing into the dusk:

I would stare endlessly at the trunk of a distant tree from behind which she was going to appear and come to me; the scanned horizon would remain uninhabited, night would fall, hopelessly my attention would attach itself, as though to aspirate the creatures they might harbor, to that sterile ground, to that exhausted earth; and it was no longer with a light heart, but with rage, that I struck the trees of the Roussainville woods, from among which no more living creatures emerged than if they had been trees painted on the canvas background of a panorama, when, unable to resign myself to going back to the house without having held in my arms the woman I had so desired, I was nevertheless obliged to continue along the road to Combray admitting to myself that there was less and less chance that she had been placed in my path.⁸³

⁸¹ Proust, *Du côté de chez Swann*, p. 139f., or translated, *Swann’s Way*, p. 144.

⁸² Proust, *Du côté de chez Swann*, p. 140; *Swann’s Way*, p. 144.

⁸³ Proust, *Du côté de chez Swann*, p. 156, or translated, *Swann’s Way*, p. 162, from “Je fixais indéfiniment le tronc d’un arbre lointain, de derrière lequel elle allait surgir et venir à moi ; l’horizon scruté restait désert, la nuit tombait, c’était sans espoir que mon attention s’attachait, comme pour aspirer les créatures qu’ils pouvaient recéler, à ce sol stérile, à cette terre épuisée ; et ce n’était plus d’allégresse, c’était de rage que je frappais les arbres du bois de Roussainville d’entre lesquels ne sortait pas plus d’êtres vivants que s’ils eussent été des arbres peints sur la toile d’un panorama, quand, ne pouvant me résigner à rentrer à la maison avant d’avoir serré dans mes bras la femme que j’avais tant désirée, j’étais pourtant obligé de reprendre le chemin de Combray en m’avouant à moi-même qu’était de moins en moins probable le hasard qui l’eût mise sur mon chemin.”

The young narrator's association of peasant women emerging from trees is rooted in his experience of encountering Gilberte in the hawthorn, who, although not a peasant girl, makes a gesture that brings up associations of all that is uncouth, ill-bred and backward, which condenses in the name "Roussainville," but only because the narrator has learned these associations from his social and family milieu. Yet at the time he took these associations to be natural. Roussainville wood seems to be moved by spirits, while the Roussainvillageoises seem to be outcroppings of nature itself: "For at that time everything which was not I, the earth and other people, appeared to me more precious, more important, endowed with a more real existence than they appear in grown men. And I did not separate the earth and the people."⁸⁴ This glow of specialness that connects creatures with the earth, but which at the same time eludes the hero, is what Benjamin means by the aura. The jolt or shock that the narrator feels in thinking about the caverns of Roussainville years later is the destruction of the aura as it is revealed to be not a natural phenomenon intrinsic to creatures and the earth, but a mass of associations that society projects onto objects. The life of adventure, drama and pleasure that the young hero longed for and searched for in the Roussainville forest ended up passing him by because he was so well brought-up that the associations that society projected on objects seemed to him entirely natural, qualities of the things themselves. Benjamin reads the lines of withered faces as the expressive short-cuts taken by individuals lacking the time to live the life of variety and drama promised, lacking the time to find experiences so varied that their faces would never take on the same expression twice. Faces crease and wrinkle only there where there is habit, and this is why Benjamin calls creases and

⁸⁴ Proust, *Du côté de chez Swann*, p. 155, or translated, *Swann's Way*, p. 160, from "Car en ce temps-là tout ce qui n'était pas moi, la terre et les êtres, me paraissait plus précieux, plus important, doué d'une existence plus réelle que cela ne paraît aux hommes faits. Et la terre et les êtres je ne les séparais pas."

wrinkles unrealized passions. The physiognomy of a generation, of what seems to be a solid continuum of time, turns out to be the result of a loss of time. It seems too late for these wizened individuals, whose experiences have “set.” Yet, according to Benjamin, Proust’s work aims at constructing the shock that is able to rejuvenate, to come to a realization about experience, to realize life. Shock-construction is also the technique that Beckett, an early interpreter of Proust, carries to extraordinary lengths in *Endgame*. When Clov, responding to Hamm’s queries as to whether his seeds have come up, utters an exclamation of violent despair—“They’ll never sprout!”—Beckett provokes a shock of realization in the beholder: any nourishing plant that really sprouts after Beckett is not just a common vegetable or a stalk of wheat, but life that has (so far) escaped global disaster.⁸⁵ The question is whether it is possible to make *everything* stand out with the same clarity. If only it were possible to live *now* with the perspective of a lifetime, as if the taste of every morsel—and not just that of madeleines dipped in linden tea—, as if the smell of every blossom—and not just that of hawthorn blossoms—, as if the regard of every person—and not just that of an aged duke—were the explosion of its pale, vague impression in memory. An entire life charged with “utmost awareness” would be one liberated from all that merely continues—from habit. This sounds promising. Adorno, however, detects in Proust a strain of idealism absent from Beckett’s work:

Yet art’s imago is precisely what, according to Bergson’s and Proust’s thesis, seeks to awaken involuntary remembrance [unwillkürliche Erinnerung, involuntary memory, *mémoire involontaire*] in the empirical, a thesis that proves them to be genuine idealists. They attribute to reality what they want to save and what inheres in art only

⁸⁵ Samuel Beckett, *Endgame: A Play in One Act*, followed by *Act Without Words: A Mime for One Player*, translated by the author (New York: Grove Press, 1958), p. 13. The corresponding passage in *Fin de partie*, *suivi de “Acte sans paroles”* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1957), p. 28, differs from the English translation, which has an exclamation point and a stage direction—“(Violently).”

at the price of its reality. They seek to escape the curse of aesthetic semblance [Schein, illusion] by displacing its quality to reality.⁸⁶

According to Adorno, attributing being to mind is Idealism. Proust treats remembrance as if it were a real being inhering in empirical things, in the madeleine infused with linden tea or in the grand duke's gesture, which the aesthetic image is capable of bringing out.⁸⁷ But memory is a quality of aesthetic Schein. Benjamin does not address this problem. Furthermore, Adorno strongly criticizes Benjamin for the over-determination of shock in his account of progressive, modern works and new media. Adorno had no great hopes for mechanical reproduction. He considered movies to be not the *realization* of a demand for shocks created by the so-called historical avant-garde, but rather the *exhaustion* of effects that really were shocking in high modernism: "From photographs and movies, one knows the effect produced by the modern grown old, an effect originally used by the surrealists to shock and subsequently degraded to the cheap amusement of those whose fetishism fastens on the abstract present."⁸⁸ Shock is inherent to film because, whether it employs montage or pictorial continuity, it is spliced together from trimmed shots. Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope* is an exception, not the rule. Spectators do not necessarily demand that film be continuous or even that a remaining element of one shot make the transition into the next. Certainly the big-industry films of the 1980s, music videos, were montage. It is doubtful that nowadays an editing "mistake" such as crossing the axis would be jarring to the normal viewer. One film shot does not raise any particular expectations for the subsequent shot; no moment of the film raises expectations at all.

⁸⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 200, as translated except where indicated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 132.

⁸⁷ See Marie-Andrée Ricard, "Proust et le nouveau: une lecture anti-platonicienne de son œuvre," *Symposium* 16, n° 1 (Printemps 2012): pp. 3-29. As Marie-Andrée Ricard remarks, this conception of memory is a point on which Proust diverges sharply from Plato. It should be noted that Ricard does not argue for Proust's anti-Idealism, but establishes his anti-Platonism otherwise—with reference to the place that the category of the New and the senses hold in his work.

⁸⁸ GS, vol. 14, p. 45 as translated, "On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening," in *Essays on Music*, edited by Richard Leppert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 288-317, here p. 311.

Benjamin characterizes the dwindling of the aura as unfulfilled expectation (“What is involved here is that the expectation roused by the look of the human eye is not fulfilled...”⁸⁹). The adaptation to such lack of fulfilment is indeed the movie, the eyes of whose spectators “have lost the ability to look.”⁹⁰ Movie spectators are little different from unskilled factory workers: entirely sunk into the moment, recipients no longer work forward and backward from the individual moment so as to lift it out of its here and now, so as to find the crevices in time through which progress is made. While Benjamin does *not* claim that movies enslave their public, his work on shock makes the character of unskilled labour perceptible in the reception of movies.

Unlike “image-explosion,” “shock” has specific psychological connotations: it seems that consciousness as a psychological category must be distinguished from the notion of political consciousness before the progressiveness of shock claimed by Benjamin can be considered.

True aesthetic experience is becoming a thing of the past, according to Adorno, because this implies a *strong ego* able to see through its own illusion of substantiality. The aesthetic experience itself should convince the ego that its substantiality is merely the denial of its own nature and the sacrifice of nature’s otherness. To be shocked, the individual must already differentiate well enough between inner and outer to be able to have an explicit experience of otherness. The ego that reacts to shocks by neutralizing the aspect of invasiveness that is a mark of nature’s otherness is *weak*, for in its denial of otherness, it conflates outer and inner. In industrialized modern life, the ego constantly faces impulses as threats, but as Adorno suggests, the proliferation of the new media, photography and film,

⁸⁹ Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1.1, p. 648 as translated, “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” p. 189.

⁹⁰ Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1.1, p. 648 as translated, “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” p. 189.

only bring artistic reception into line with the general mode of response, which is to have no or little response to shocks.⁹¹ In *Studies in the Authoritarian Personality*, Adorno, with co-authors R. Nevitt Sanford, Else Frenkel-Brunswik and Daniel J. Levinson, connects ego weakness with conventional thinking:

There is some reason to believe that a failure in superego internalization is due to weakness in the ego, to its inability to perform the necessary synthesis, i.e., to integrate the superego with itself. Whether or not this is so, ego weakness would seem to be a concomitant of conventionalism and authoritarianism. Weakness in the ego is expressed in the inability to build up a consistent and enduring set of moral values within the personality; and it is this state of affairs, apparently, that makes it necessary for the individual to seek some organizing and coordinating agency outside of himself. Where such outside agencies are depended upon for moral decisions one may say that the conscience is externalized.⁹²

In ego weakness, the individual is governed by the “outside agencies” of social norms, conventions and institutions. This is because the ego cannot determine itself: it is not capable of modifying, rejecting or critically taking up for itself whatever norms and conventions are at first just imposed on it from outside, but nor is it capable of organizing its energies itself, to its own benefit. The weak ego is consistent with a lack of shock effect: the ego that does not recognize that its “conscience is externalized” is not likely to have a conscious experience of something external—shock—as external and as directed towards it from without.

The link made in *Studies in the Authoritarian Personality* between a weak ego and authoritarianism suggests that the psychological category of consciousness is not something totally different from political consciousness.

The interest in a conscious experience of shock no doubt lies in its bringing about the separation of inner from outer, of particular self from general social norms, of part from

⁹¹ GS, vol. 14, p. 45, or translated, “On the Fetish-Character in Music,” p. 311.

⁹² GS, vol. 9.1, p. 201f.

whole, of detail from planned structure, because their conflation goes along with conventional thinking and authoritarianism. The demand of art for a strong ego is political.

In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Max Horkheimer and Adorno associate the present form of rationality with a certain psychological structure. As it is, the ego denies sacrifice. While it would be nothing but “the deceit of a priestly rationalization of death” to encourage the *individual* to commit self-sacrifice for a cause; on the other, the *individual* is possible at all precisely because individuals have learned to commit self-sacrifice, and this constitutes the dialectic of enlightenment:

The representative character of sacrifice, glorified by fashionable irrationalists, cannot be separated from the deification of the sacrificial victim—from the fraudulent priestly rationalization of murder through the apotheosis of the chosen victim. Something of this fraud, which elevates the perishable person as bearer of the divine substance, has always been detectable in the ego, which owes its existence to the sacrifice of the present moment to the future. Its substance is as illusory as the immortality of the slaughtered victim.⁹³

The Enlightenment principle of the bourgeois individual is the principle of self-preservation—the continuation of what exists here and now over into the future, and so the denial of sacrifice; yet there would be no individual were it not for the sacrifice of the here and now to some unknowable point in the future. The ego is a permanent defense against a possible danger in the future, maintaining itself even in the absence of threats; its function is protective, which presumably it exercises even when its environment presents no danger. The individual

⁹³ GS, vol. 3, p. 69 as translated by Edmund Jephcott, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, with Max Horkheimer, edited by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), p. 40. Research by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr suggests that Adorno is mainly responsible for the first excursus of *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, “Odysseus oder Mythos und Aufklärung” (GS, vol. 3, pp. 61-99, or in English *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, pp. 35-62). See the afterword by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, “Die Stellung der »Dialektik der Aufklärung« in der Entwicklung der Kritischen Theorie: Bemerkungen zu Autorschaft, Entstehung, einigen theoretischen Implikationen und späterer Einschätzung durch die Autoren,” in Max Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, herausgegeben von Alfred Schmidt und Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, 19 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1985-1997), vol. 5, pp. 423-452, esp. pp. 425-430, translated as “Editor’s Afterword: The Position of ‘Dialectic of Enlightenment’ in the Development of Critical Theory,” in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, pp. 217-247, esp. pp. 219-224.

is bound to miss out on non-threatening aspects of the here-and-now, since the ego sacrifices enjoyment of the present moment for the sake of self-preservation. Yet, oddly, Adorno sees sacrifice of the present in a good light. In a radio discussion with Hellmut Becker, “Erziehung zur Mündigkeit” (Education for Maturity), Adorno associates maturity with “a certain strength of ego, of the ego-bond,” for which the “bourgeois individual” is the model.⁹⁴ A strong ego protects itself against its environment rather than adapting itself to it, and this makes for an individual able to resist the authoritarianism that is the norm. Impulses that have set into a firm ego lose their immediacy, leaving the individual free to “risk unscreened thoughts” and to gain distance from the forming and shaping exercised from without, by the environment or culture, which, in the Modern era, is the economic-administrative system.⁹⁵ But it should not be denied that such a self, which seeks to preserve itself, is at the same time in some sense inured to sacrifice: “Bargaining one’s way out of sacrifice by means of self-preserving rationality is a form of exchange no less than was sacrifice itself.”⁹⁶ The individual who denies sacrifice raises an absolute barrier between the self, which is to be preserved, and the other, which is expendable—between the intact human self and ephemeral nature. The denial of sacrifice thus amounts to the denial of the natural in the human. The human becomes the total ossification of *what is* in defense against an endless flux of nature. While the ego developed by sacrificing the present to the future, its subsequent tendency to rigidity amounts to renunciation of the future for a stagnant present—this is why Horkheimer and Adorno claim that the denial of sacrifice is also exchange. While the sacrifice of the non-existent future to the present might

⁹⁴ Theodor W. Adorno, “Erziehung zur Mündigkeit,” in *Erziehung zur Mündigkeit: Vorträge und Gespräche mit Hellmut Becker, 1959-1969*, herausgegeben von Gerd Kadelbach (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970), p. 143 (my translation).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 135 (my translation).

⁹⁶ GS, vol. 3, p. 71 as translated, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 42.

seem like the sacrifice of nothing at all, it does show up—to reason—as the increasing irrationality of society. An irrational society in fact goes hand in hand with an ego that denies all sacrifice and so cannot sacrifice the present moment for the sake of a rationality to come. Adorno and Horkheimer claim that the irrationality of the twentieth century was already latent in the denial of nature that was the condition for the possibility of reason:

This very denial, the core of all civilizing rationality, is the germ cell of proliferating mythical irrationality: with the denial of nature in human beings, not only the *telos* of the external mastery of nature but also the *telos* of one's own life becomes confused and opaque. At the moment when human beings cut themselves off from the consciousness of themselves as nature, all the purposes for which they keep themselves alive—social progress, the heightening of material and intellectual forces, indeed, consciousness itself—become void, and the enthronement of the means as the end, which in late capitalism is taking on the character of overt madness, is already detectable in the earliest history of subjectivity.⁹⁷

Some have found such paradoxical formulations highly problematic.⁹⁸ But the paradox of irrational rationality appears not because the authors suffered from some weakness in their thinking, but because they are following the object of these contradictions in its dynamic, which has still not terminated, neither in absolute, total and irrevocable insanity nor in truly

⁹⁷ GS, vol. 3, p. 72f. as translated, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 42f.

⁹⁸ See Jürgen Habermas, “Die Verschlingung von Mythos und Aufklärung: Horkheimer und Adorno,” in *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne: 12 Vorlesungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985), pp. 130-157, or translated, “The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno,” in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), pp. 106-130. Habermas claims that since the aporia concerns reason itself, Horkheimer and Adorno remain locked in a “performative contradiction inherent in an ideology critique that outstrips itself” (Habermas, “Horkheimer und Adorno,” p. 154 as translated, “Horkheimer und Adorno,” p. 127). According to Habermas, this position is untenable, for the text's own claims of being reasonable are subject to the critique of reason that it develops, critique which it cannot transcend: the authors are thus driven inevitably into skepticism. Habermas concludes that since there is no way out of this performative contradiction, there is only “the way back”: a descent into the nihilism, irrationality and myth that he associates with Nietzsche (Habermas, “Horkheimer und Adorno,” p. 155 as translated, “Horkheimer und Adorno,” p. 128). Habermas fails to grasp the performative contradiction dialectically—i.e., as a clue to an open reality. Moreover, he equates the philosophy that admits of open reality—whether Nietzsche's “abysmal thought” or Horkheimer and Adorno's dialectic of reason—as pure unreason. As Karin Bauer has pointed out, Habermas, in his insistence that reason be grounded in value judgements, misses that an “ungrounded critique” such as Nietzsche's has an object—instrumental reason. In refusing to recognize this object, Habermas exposes his own theory to the dangers of instrumental reason. See Karin Bauer, *Adorno's Nietzschean Narratives: Critiques of Ideology, Readings of Wagner* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), pp. 33-34.

universal enlightenment. As long as the contradiction persists, the fate of reason is undecided; it is still possible to reflect on the rationality or irrationality of society. Furthermore, Horkheimer and Adorno do not argue that all reason is really insanity, but they determine the irrational part of reason very precisely: what is *irrational* in reason is the denial of nature. Horkheimer and Adorno can speak about social progress and a materially improved life because this denial of nature in the human is not total and fatal. Moreover, the authors do not persist in the contradiction. They are clearly against the sacrifice of the individual life. This does not however force them to deny sacrifice. Rather, out of their work on the contradiction emerges a new idea, that of sacrifice against sacrifice itself:

But society's predicament is that the person who escaped the universal, unequal, and unjust exchange, who did not renounce but immediately seized the undiminished whole, would thereby lose everything, even the meager residue of oneself granted by self-preservation. All the superfluous sacrifices are needed: against sacrifice.⁹⁹

Horkheimer and Adorno have clearly denounced "fraudulent priestly rationalization of murder," so would be giving themselves priestly airs if they were here proposing that the way to a just society would be for individuals to offer each other up for the sake of the whole.¹⁰⁰ This is the usual way in which social progress has been won in the past. The suffering or sacrifice of individuals who act toward a just society has rendered every step toward justice profoundly unjust. Horkheimer and Adorno propose a model of progress whereby the individual sacrifices the present for the sake of an uncertain and perhaps unattainable future in which no individual would need to put his or her life, or anyone else's life, on the line. They thus distinguish between sacrifice of the present moment in the case of ego-construction (sacrifice in the first instance) and the sacrifice of the individual life (sacrifice in the second

⁹⁹ GS, vol. 3, p. 73 as translated, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 43.

¹⁰⁰ GS, vol. 3, p. 69 as translated, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 40.

instance). According to Horkheimer and Adorno, Odysseus is such a one who would perform a sacrifice against sacrifice itself: time and again, he restrains himself from acting immediately on his instincts and desires; yet he saves the life he failed to live by remembering it.¹⁰¹ They claim that Odysseus is an enlightenment thinker, in that he achieves the journey by ultimately subordinating passing temptations and pains to the goal, and that Odysseus' self-control is the model for abeyance of the on-going social coercion: "His lordly renunciation, as a struggle with myth, is representative of a society which no longer needs renunciation and domination—which masters itself not in order to do violence to itself and others but for the sake of reconciliation."¹⁰² The objection may be raised against Horkheimer and Adorno, however, that Odysseus does *not* perform a sacrifice against sacrifice because he exercises surplus domination. There is no real reason for him to kill the suitors, and in such vicious fashion, once he has arrived home to Ithaca. A true sacrifice against sacrifice aims to preserve the lives of everyone in the whole society. It represents the end of surplus repression of the ego against itself, in the aim of ending surplus domination in society. What makes sacrifice against sacrifice a way *out* of the aporia of reason and not a way *back* into the compulsion and dissoluteness of myth is that it implies a transformation of the ego.

Against the prevailing ego-weakness, montage is a form of art adequate to bourgeois reception, to the strong ego and to the bourgeois individual, who, in the shock that shakes the clear division between inner and outer, self and other, sees through the illusion of the ego and its unnecessary, surplus repression. The bourgeois subject must already have a strong ego formation in order to receive the artwork as a shock. But, more than that, in order for the bourgeois subject to *experience* the shock—to learn in it—this reception must be a cognitive

¹⁰¹ GS, vol. 3, p. 73f., *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 43.

¹⁰² GS, vol. 3, p. 74 as translated, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 43.

one. Given the normally non-cognitive character of shocks, experiencing shocks requires a changed cognitive model.

Adorno's grave doubt about shock's productivity for advancing consciousness in contemporary art and new media should not be mistaken for resignation; in another context, he defends the shock experience—for knowledge. Shock is a distinctive quality of negative dialectics.¹⁰³ As submitting individuals to shocks may only reinforce the lack of ego-feeling so easy to recuperate for authoritarian social structures, negative dialectics is a propaedeutic for shock. Ego-weakness is a hindrance for knowledge: when no part of the object falls on the ego, rigid structures stand in for subject-object mediation.

Adorno's endeavour in theory to make the shock-experience possible again opens the question whether the shock experience may happen in art now, or whether, as Bürger claims, shocks have worn off forever and montage can never again advance consciousness.

To test whether this question has really opened requires an interpretation of the passage on cognitive shock: "To produce a yield, cognition throws itself away on the objects à fonds perdu. The dizziness that this causes is an index veri; the shock of the open, appearing

¹⁰³ See Roger Foster, *Adorno: The Recovery of Experience* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007). Foster indeed does well to connect the "shock of the open" to the shock experience associated with Proust's *mémoire involontaire*. Foster, however, does not adequately defend Proust against Idealism, which is essential if he wishes to argue that the materialist Adorno made cogent use of the writer's techniques in the form of negative dialectic (ibid., p. 143) and that "the notion of experience in involuntary memory, as opposed to the everyday work of habitual classification, can be seen as a model for the recovery of experience in Adorno's theory of philosophical interpretation" (ibid., p. 149). Although Proust does not argue for a realm of ideas separate from reality, as in Platonic Idealism, he subordinates Being to mind, which would be idealism in Adorno's sense: "Idealism is a philosophy that either simply attributes Being to mind or else subordinates any being, insofar as it is not mind, to mind" (Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Leo Löwenthal et al., "Wissenschaft und Krise: Differenz zwischen Idealismus und Materialismus Diskussionen über Themen zur Vorlesung Max Horkheimer" (Meeting of January 19, 1932), in Max Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 12, p. 380, in my translation). As far as Adorno is concerned, Proust is an Idealist. See GS, vol. 7, p. 200, or translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 132.

necessarily as negativity within what has been screened and what is ever-same, is untruth only for the untrue.”¹⁰⁴

The first idea here is that cognition is a heady business venture, which, to gain anything at all, must expect to lose its capital investment. According to a rationalized business model, such an investment would be unwise: money is money, and there is no difference between “fonds” and “fruits.” Yet the business paradigm seems to have been adopted by “traditional thinking and the habits of healthy human understanding,” which want to hold on to what they started with—a “frame of reference,” which may come in the form of “dogmatic axioms,” and through which all thoughts are screened.¹⁰⁵ To this business-school paradigm, all knowledge is the same, and consequently it is irrational and impulsive to attempt to gain some small insight if it means risking losing in the process the cognitive model, scientific method and research framework, all secure foundations and safe assumptions. The point of cognition, however, is not the quantitative amassing of bits of knowledge. There is a qualitative difference between the framework with which one starts and the insight that explodes it. Adorno advances that cognition *must* risk losing everything that it started with. To the business-school paradigm of knowledge, the “shock of the open” would be the equivalent of financial failure; the *loss* of the underlying assumptions and foundations in which cognition is invested, “untruth.” But when Adorno speaks of an irrational society, it is not a sudden loss of structure that he has in mind. This distinguishes him from Bürger, who seems to read the lack of structure in art (and in society in general) as a problem for theory. Bürger supposes that a theory of very recent art may not be possible because he assumes that “a field must have a

¹⁰⁴ GS, vol. 6, p. 43, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 33.

¹⁰⁵ GS, vol. 6, p. 43, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 32.

structure if it is to be the subject of scholarly or scientific understanding.”¹⁰⁶ Yet if theory had *to abandon* its object whenever the criterion of rationality was not fulfilled, no knowledge would be possible at all. This is what Adorno implies by a cognition that “throws itself away on the objects”: knowledge abandons itself—cognition abandons an inadequate theory—rather than abandoning the object. The self-relinquishment that Adorno advances does not imply the sacrifice of the individual for the sake of the universal, but consists in a change in comportment of the individual thinker toward the objects of study, which are unlike the subject and which require the subject to liquidate the secure possessions of the intellect and to transform itself. Self-divestiture is at the same time investiture in the objects. Bürger abandons his object rather than theory, which he understands as the repetition of logic already in its object. But clearly knowledge must be *more* than just the repetition of its object (insofar as this is already structured) if Bürger can claim that Adorno’s theory is *not* adequate to the “total availability of material and forms characteristic of the post avant-gardiste art of bourgeois society.”¹⁰⁷ Bürger notices that Adorno’s aesthetics did not exhaust post-war art. But for Bürger’s insight to be at all possible, cognition must also be the cognition of *inadequacy*, the contradiction between theory and the object—in this case, between Adorno’s aesthetic theory and post-war art. In critique, interpretation goes ahead even when there is a lack of structure or unity in a certain field, which is why exhaustiveness cannot be a criterion for it.

In *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno suggests that philosophy should seek *infinite diversity without an underlying structure*:

If it were delicately understood, the changed philosophy itself would be infinite in the sense of scorning solidification in a body of enumerable theorems. Its substance [Gehalt, content] would lie in the diversity of objects that impinge upon it and of the

¹⁰⁶ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 131 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 94.

¹⁰⁷ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 130 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 94.

objects it seeks [oder die sie sucht, or which it seeks], a diversity not wrought by any schema; to these objects, philosophy would truly give itself rather than use them as a mirror in which to reread itself, mistaking its own image for concretion.¹⁰⁸

In the absence of mediation with the object, the cognitive subject lacking an ego-feeling tends to produce schemata—or *images*. Images stand between what is to be reconciled—between subject and appearances, between ego and repressed material, between reality and utopia. Images, for Adorno, obstruct the work of mediation, whether that be dialectical subject-object mediation, “working through” the past in psychoanalytic interpretation or right philosophical practice. Images are “third things” that screen off or veil one opposing side from its other, and so get in the way of interpretation. It is not enough to take the veil away; the veil actually has to be *exploded*, which means that the historical tensions in the immediate image have to be worked on until it springs apart. An unexploded veil can be put to the same use again and again, and the repetitive structure of reified reality reproduced. But where the screen or veil is *exploded*, by contrast, it cannot be put to the same use—that of concealing. What remains, the fragments, must have a different function if they are to be re-used. The new functions of the fragments are released to work towards a future reconciliation of the opposed sides. Mere unveiling not only leaves the opposed sides unreconciled, but also withdraws the resources for coping with the object or repressed material that the veil hid away.

Adorno proposes the idea that “philosophy would truly give itself” to objects as an alternative to the Kantian schemata, which merely posit the likeness between subject and object, coordinating them in a shot.¹⁰⁹ It is perhaps because Bürger retains something of the Kantian model of knowledge, rather than considering such transformed knowledge, which “throws itself away on the objects,” that he despairs of aesthetic theory ever grasping art in an

¹⁰⁸ GS, vol. 6, p. 25 as translated except where indicated, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 13.

¹⁰⁹ GS, vol. 6, p. 25 as translated, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 13.

increasingly irrational society. At a different moment in history, Kant expressed the real divergence of mind and the given as the problem of categories' applicability to appearances: "This question, so natural and important, is really the cause which makes a transcendental doctrine of the power of judgement necessary, in order, namely, to show the possibility of applying *pure concepts of the understanding* to appearances in general."¹¹⁰ Since Kant states at the outset of the chapter that there must be at least an element of likeness for this to be possible, whereas categories and appearances are inhomogeneous, the categories having nothing empirical mixed with them, he solves the problem by positing a "third thing," which would mediate between the category and the appearance: the schema.¹¹¹ This is precisely what Adorno denies, even while supporting Kant's contention that there is a rift between pure reason and the given in general. Adorno reads all rifts in *The Critique of Pure Reason*, or what he terms the "Kantian block," as the expression of real social alienation caused by the exchange relation:

I believe I observed at one point that this Kantian block can be understood as a form of unmediated Cartesian dualism that is reflexive, that reflects upon itself. It is a dualism in which a great chasm yawns between inner and outer, a chasm that can never be bridged. This chasm is the chasm of the alienation of human beings from one another, and the alienation of human beings from the world of things. This alienation is in fact socially caused; it is created by the universal exchange relation. Through the idea that our knowledge is blocked Kantian philosophy expresses as an experience the state of philosophy at the time. In particular, it expresses the idea that in this universally mediated society, determined as it is by exchange, in this society marked by radical alienation, we are denied access to existing reality as if by a blank wall. [...] I believe that it is important in this context for you to realize that this idea of a block, of unbridgeable chasms between different realms, is in fact ubiquitous in the *Critique of Pure Reason*; it does not refer simply to the single point where it first makes its

¹¹⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), A138/B177. The pagination given here and throughout, with "A" and "B" editions noted, corresponds to the Academy of Sciences edition of Kant's works (*Kant's Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin: G. Reimer/ W. de Gruyter, 1902-) and appears in the margins of Guyer and Wood's translation. Boldface type in the translation, reproducing Kant's Fettdruck, appears here in italics.

¹¹¹ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A138/B177.

appearance, namely the question of the unknowability of the so-called things-in-themselves.¹¹²

Kant's demonstration of how pure concepts may be applied to appearances in general seizes the problem quite exactly as that of social alienation. He reasons that, given that *time* makes appearances possible in general, if the pure concepts of the understanding can be presented as different determinations of time, then there is reason to believe that there can in fact be such a translator of these two heterogeneous elements, the appearance and the pure concept. Thus, he proceeds to present each of the twelve categories in terms of time, in what he calls their "schemata." One finds the following among the schemata: "The schema of necessity is the existence of an object at all times."¹¹³ In this, according to Adorno, Kant exactly expresses the contradiction between the fixed, seemingly eternal commodities and the living labour time, considered in its abstraction, needed to produce them. Kant is correct to read this chasm as a problem. Despite his great admiration for Kant's perspicacity and courage to see and to articulate this problem, Adorno rejects his solution. According to Kant, the schemata are simply inborn, making the resolution of the tension between the realms of mind and the given a *natural* component of every healthy human understanding. Schematism might well explain how the human being is able to harmonize vast contradictions in his experience, "behind the back of consciousness," as Hegel would say, but this is a profound failing of reason, according to Adorno, because these two realms really are unlike.¹¹⁴ Clearly, Kant was aware that the pure concepts and the appearances were unlike, and he is utterly correct to distinguish

¹¹² Theodor W. Adorno, *Kants "Kritik der reinen Vernunft" (1959)*, herausgegeben von Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995), p. 263f., as translated by Rodney Livingstone, *Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason" (1959)* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 174.

¹¹³ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A145/B184.

¹¹⁴ G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, Theorie-Werkausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969-71), vol. 3, p. 80, as translated by A. V. Miller, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, with analysis of the text and foreword by J. N. Findlay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 56.

subjective conditions for understanding from objectivity, but if he himself could even think this deep chasm between appearances in general and the pure concepts that were supposed to apply to them, then this shows that mind still can work with heterogeneity in some way: in the form of critique. But then this requires effort from each individual consciousness to mediate contradictions in experience. Kant's packaging of mediating consciousness in a third thing probably appeared to Adorno as unconvincing as the conclusion of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, in which the conflict between the workers and the administrators is to be solved in the person of Freder, "the mediator," who is supposed to go between the realm above and the realm below to ensure the smooth functioning of the whole: "In truth, the subject is never quite the subject, and the object never quite the object; and yet the two are not pieced out of any third [aus einem Dritten, out of a third thing] that transcends them. The third [Das Dritte, the third thing] would be no less deceptive."¹¹⁵ The Kantian schema is like a *screen* between the subject and object. A necessary but insufficient condition for alienation to be overcome in fact is for every individual to be capable of thinking contradictions critically and consciously, which is by no means a universal or natural capacity. But this also means thinking particular contradictions in the concrete, rather than translating static categories into "time-determinations," which are just as abstract as units of labour time. A true critique of the chasms that separate people from one another and people from things would have to seek to overcome the idea of time as a form in general, which is the condition for these rifts.

In contrasting "the screened (das Gedeckten)" to "the unscreened thought (der ungedeckte Gedanke)," Adorno, thereby evoking the Freudian concept of the *screen memory*

¹¹⁵ GS, vol. 6, p. 177 as translated except where indicated, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 175.

(Deckerinnerung), suggests that in productive cognition, the ego yields its defenses.¹¹⁶ A screen memory is a substitute memory aimed at protecting the ego from repressed material by making a more acceptable image of the past.¹¹⁷ Freud explains that the indifferent, almost inconsequential, character of childhood memories is due to a defensive “process of displacement” aimed at managing a traumatic content of the past: “As the indifferent memories owe their preservation not to their own content but to an associative relation between their content and another which is repressed, they have some claim to be called ‘screen memories,’ the name by which I have described them.”¹¹⁸ A screen memory is thus the opposite of an involuntary memory. A screen memory aims at protecting the ego and maintains illusions about the past; involuntary memory points to the ego’s failure to build itself up against nature and has a disillusioning function about the past. On its own, *mémoire involontaire* cannot change philosophy because by definition its content has only been lived through, not experienced consciously and explicitly. Adorno’s negative dialectic attempts to put the “Chockerlebnis” of involuntary memory into a form so that it may be experienced in this way.

Despite his objection to Proust’s Idealism, Adorno’s “changed philosophy” nonetheless owes much to *mémoire involontaire*. In involuntary memory, an overwhelming moment returns without its immediacy—as past. The interest of *mémoire involontaire* is that it indicates to the ego an instance of its own failure to screen out some overpowering feature of the environment. The ego exists to preserve the individual; the preservation of the individual

¹¹⁶ GS, vol. 6, p. 43, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 33.

¹¹⁷ Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 6 *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, trans. James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson (London: The Hogarth Press, 1960), pp. 43-52.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

despite the failure of the ego to screen out stimuli raises severe doubts about the substantiality of the ego and its monopoly on experience, as well as doubts about the dangerousness of the environment and the standing need to preserve the self against it. Adorno speculates on what a form of knowledge that draws the philosophical consequences of involuntary memory would be like. It would be a cognition that realizes that the individual can survive despite the ego's failure to set itself rigidly against ever-changing nature.¹¹⁹ Such cognition would thus not be afraid to "throw itself away on the objects."

Dialectics, like Proust's *mémoire involontaire*, is provoked by what is *left over* from the past, by what therefore stands out from the dull continuity that has seamlessly progressed around it. The etiolated grand duke, whose features express the spirit of the times in which he was brought up, whose kind manners seem destined to die out with his fading generation, actually breaks through the appearance of temporal homogeneity: these manners left over from another time, by their very rareness in a society that has adopted other gestures and other mores, stand out from all that has continued to decline, and for this are able to become something living in the present, far greater than the nostalgic memory of times past. This *remainder* is precisely Adorno's concept of the non-contemporaneous, itself something left

¹¹⁹ Marie-Andrée Ricard links the falling away of the ego's boundaries—in the memory of itself as nature—to the truly utopian moment in Adorno's ethics, to the disappearance of death: "Si, grâce à l'art et à la réflexion, le moi parvenait à se délivrer des limites qu'il érige péniblement autour de lui, à 'se souvenir' de la nature en lui-même, pour paraphraser Adorno, il est plus que probable... que le règne de la mort disparaîtrait. La mort reculerait à un point où la vie en viendrait à ressembler à ce paradis dont Adorno continue malgré tout d'affirmer qu'il pourrait être ici et maintenant." (If the ego managed to free itself from its self-imposed, hard-won limits by way of art and reflection, to "remember" the nature within itself, it is more than likely—to paraphrase Adorno—that the reign of death would disappear. Death would retreat to the point that life would come to resemble that paradise that, as Adorno continues to claim, despite everything, could be here and now.) Marie-Andrée Ricard, *Adorno l'humaniste: Essai sur sa pensée morale et politique* (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2013), p. 185. One is reminded here of Adorno's statement made in conversation with Ernst Bloch that "without the notion of an unfettered life, freed from death, the idea of utopia, the idea of *the* utopia, cannot even be thought at all." Ernst Bloch and Theodor W. Adorno, "Something's Missing: A Discussion between Ernst Bloch and Theodor W. Adorno on the Contradictions of Utopian Longing," in *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature Selected Essays*, trans. Jack Zipes and Frank Mecklenburg (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988), pp. 1-17, here p. 10.

over from Ernst Bloch that he carries forward in his 1958 lecture course on dialectics, and which is indeed the possibility of all dialectics from Hegel on:

In the face of historical reality, it is perhaps one of the most profound pieces of luck that is offered to dialectical thinking that it does not even experience the non-contemporaneous, what is left over, as some kind of disruptive element on the smooth path of historical progress, but that, for its part, it grasps [begreift] that which opposes this so-called progress or that which does not fit in out of the principle of development itself.¹²⁰

Adorno goes on to compare the remainder to a xenocryst. A xenocryst is a piece of crystal that was swept along by hot flowing magma, which then congealed around it, forming new igneous rock. A piece of the past, swept up in natural-historical processes, survives intact within the more recent structure, with the result that two clear geological eras can be taken in at a glance. Experience is rife with examples of these remainders, which can be as local and as seemingly inconsequential a phenomenon as empty beer bottles rattling in a delivery bicycle box on the streets of Montréal several decades after the North American shift to single-use containers in the 1970s—or as widespread and as significant a unit as the family, which still follows a more or less feudal model in its organization of labour within capitalist society, as Adorno illustrates in this lecture.¹²¹ Even whole disciplines, such as art and philosophy, might be understood as remainders, as practices that retained and might still retain certain archaic features of pre-capitalist production, in, for instance, their generally non-rationalized, non-tabulated appointment of working hours. And it is in countries and regions that have not themselves developed their forces in line with the principle of maximization of profit that these not fully rationalized disciplines flourish. Adorno even postulates that Webern and Berg were able to pursue their art because they happened to be in Vienna, and Austria lagged behind the most

¹²⁰ Theodor W. Adorno, *Einführung in die Dialektik (1958)*, herausgegeben von Christoph Ziermann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2010), p. 205 (my translation).

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 207-209.

recent economic developments: “[Webern and Berg] only got by thanks to the economic backwardness of their homeland, which in many ways was still pre-capitalist and offered loopholes for activities that had no exchange-value.”¹²² The relative comfort in which Berg lived had to do with Vienna’s “rigorously enforced rent control” in an Austria that was “still not thoroughly capitalized.”¹²³ It might be very seductive at this point to think that the way forward is the way back. Adorno nowhere suggests, however, that the illusion of expanding exchange value can be deflated and the real social costs of capitalism made good with a re-feudalization of society, as if the solution to capitalism could be ontologized in returnable beer bottles, rent controls or the family economic unit, which have somehow endured into the present. Adorno holds that non-dialectical, superficial thinking looks on all that has not advanced as “relics.” Rather than thinking the family, for example, as a kind of hardened “residue” left over from feudal times, “one should wonder how it is actually possible that, despite this constantly growing rationality, the family keeps itself alive at all.”¹²⁴ Identity thinking views the non-contemporaneous spheres of employment and family life as a simultaneity or “synchronicity.”¹²⁵ But it is striking that there can persist families within high

¹²² GS, vol. 14, p. 166 as translated by Robert Hullot-Kentor and Frederic Will, “The Aging of New Music,” in *Essays on Music*, pp. 181-202, here p. 199.

¹²³ GS, vol. 13, p. 363 as translated by Juliane Brand and Christopher Hailey, *Alban Berg: Master of the Smallest Link* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 31.

¹²⁴ Adorno, *Einführung in die Dialektik*, p. 208 (my translation).

¹²⁵ Regina Becker-Schmidt, “Critical Theory as a Critique of Society: Theodor W. Adorno’s Significance for a Feminist Sociology,” trans. Rebecca van Dyck, in *Adorno: Feminism and Culture*, ed. Maggie O’Neill (London: Sage Publications 1999), pp. 104-118, here p. 115. Becker-Schmidt’s answer to the question of how the family can keep itself alive at all is that, in male-dominated society, the relation of mutual dependence of the non-contemporaneous spheres of the family and employment is masked as they are cut off from one another and placed into a hierarchy in which people of the female gender are generally subordinate: “This synchronicity of separation and relatedness, of hegemony and relative autonomy, can be most clearly seen in the relation between the spheres of employment and the family: private life is a separate area—this is called for by the specific demands of procreation, regeneration, housekeeping and childrearing; yet its time structures and standards of behaviour and discipline are geared towards a working world mediated by the market—the restrictions of employment are carried over into the private sphere. The laws of the market take precedence over the immediate living process” (ibid., p. 115f.). Becker-Schmidt goes on to note that “the hierarchy of the spheres of society,

capitalism, a living practice of bottle return amidst non-price product promotion, a practice of rent controls within a housing-driven economy, independent daily newspapers with large readerships in the context of immense media conglomerates, a crowded library offering the public free access to its four million documents, just down the street from big box bookstores, whose takings represent 40% of the sale of every book (compared to 10% for the author). The non-contemporaneous is not a museum piece or a costume that makes its appearance once a year, but is rather a fixture of daily life—a surviving practice that is out of sync with the prevailing practice. In the example of drink packaging in Québec, the returnable bottle system is restricted to beer, but, if one knows the culture a bit, one knows that it is neither a marginal alternative nor a fading memory—like that of the personal pint pots that used to be kept at the local pub in certain countries. Amidst the vast assortment of variously shaped, one-use drink bottles full of nutritionally negligible pops and fruit juices here in Québec, returnable beer bottles are the past living on into the present. The principles behind single-use containers and returnable bottles contradict one another. According to the principle underlying the first practice, the cost of product promotion should be assumed by society, in the form of garbage collection, recycling programmes, landfills and the healthcare able to respond to the increasing pollution-related illness.¹²⁶ According to the principle underlying the second practice, the minimizing of social costs should take precedence over the maximizing of private profit;

primarily the dominance of the area of employment over the institution of the family, is reflected in the hierarchy of the genders” (ibid., p. 116).

¹²⁶ Heather Rogers, *Gone Tomorrow: The Hidden Life of Garbage* (New York: New Press, 2005), pp. 134-137. Rogers argues that the returnable bottle system blocked the beverage industry’s ambition to capture a larger market share in different ways: on one hand, standardized bottles do not allow for packaging, and so for “branding,” to play a large role in influencing consumers’ choice and, on the other, returnable bottles impose natural geographical limits on the market by tying outlets to regional bottlers. With the labour cost of sorting the returns and the overhead cost of storing empties eliminated, the product does not become cheaper: rather, the price remains the same or rises, with the extra pocketed by the bottler. Thus, as Rogers concludes, the collapse of the returnable bottle system in the United States made value expand by turning a private cost into a social one: garbage.

private companies must take responsibility for the garbage and pollution that their products generate. The conclusions to draw from non-contemporaneous contradiction are, first, the specific problem that the two sides address has not been solved once and for all; and, second, the context in which the contradiction occurs, society, has not reached its right and just form. The thinking that recognizes the surviving life in the non-contemporaneous—as opposed to viewing them as Palaeozoic fossils or quaint dust-collectors—undergoes something analogous to the Proustian hero on his return to Combray: shock. Yet on an Adornonian reading of Proust's *Recherche*, what the hero meets in Combray cannot really be his past, stored in the landscape like the departed souls of Celtic belief system, who migrate, at least according to Proust's imprecise understanding of it, into trees and inanimate objects. What happens in Combray is not the return of the narrator's past from the objects, not the recovery of what he experienced, not the regaining of lost time, but quite the opposite, according to Adorno: the explosion and fragmenting of solid time. What breaks through the appearance of absolute temporal homogeneity may wake us from the dream of the here and now, from the dull continuity of the same: may change life. If development were perfectly even, there would perhaps be no chance of changing its course. The non-contemporaneous is thus what starts progressive dialectics. The "chance" of dialectical thinking is that it grasps or conceives (*begreift*) remainders, as opposed to just running up against a conceptual wall. There are specific answers to the question that each remainder poses, but what the phenomenon of the remainder points to in general is that, for the moment, the situation remains *open*. In other words, we are dealing not with a thoroughly determined reality, but with the *possible*.

Adorno's use of the expression "the shock of the open" brings with it the objective association of possibility, for it was in close connection with the concept of possibility that

Ernst Bloch developed the concept of the open, or what he more commonly calls “the unclosed.” Adorno’s phrase “the shock of the open,” not only evokes Bloch, along with the Blochian progressive utopian consciousness of a not-yet finished totality in the image-explosion of advanced art, but also negates, through Bloch, the habitual form of shock, in which individuals suffering from ego-weakness, lacking any feeling for what is specifically outer and other, mindlessly submit to the existing conventional order. The section of *The Principle of Hope* entitled “Much in the World is Still Unclosed” is certainly a key source for grasping what the concept of the open brings with it:

No thing could be altered in accordance with wishes if the world were closed, full of fixed, even perfected facts. Instead of these there are simply processes, i.e. dynamic relationships in which the Become [das Gewordene] has not completely triumphed. The Real is process; the latter is the widely ramified mediation between present, unfinished past, and above all: possible future. Indeed, everything real passes over into the Possible at its processual Front, and possible is everything that is only partially conditioned, that has not yet been fully or conclusively determined. Here we must of course distinguish between the merely cognitively or objectively Possible and the Real-Possible, the only one that matters in the given context.¹²⁷

Bloch will go on in fact to distinguish many layers within the possible, but his main concern is to argue that there is a kind of possibility that is *more* than that which is able to be conceived without contradiction: productive possibility as opposed to possibility that remains “unfruitful.”¹²⁸ He wants to establish that there is the possibility to do something about the reality that is always too little compared to our hopes and dreams for it, and this is the real possible. But possibility itself is not widely recognized at any level:

Already the fact that a Can-Be can be said and thought is by no means self-evident. There is still something open here, it can be meant differently than it was before, can

¹²⁷ Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, 3 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1959), vol. 1, p. 225 as translated by Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice and Paul Knight, *The Principle of Hope*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), vol. 1, p. 196.

¹²⁸ Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, vol. 1, p. 259 as translated, *Principle of Hope*, vol. 1, p. 225.

be rearranged, connected differently, changed in moderation. Where nothing more can be done or is possible, life stands still.¹²⁹

When cynics and conservatives deny that appalling reality can change, it is because they are missing the specific notion of the real possible. Yet this problem is not limited to cynics and conservatives, for the denial of the real possible runs through the history of philosophy. Bloch sorts the philosophical suppression of the real possible roughly into two types: first, the *logical* kind of suppression, which reduces unclosed reality to unclosed knowledge about reality, then dismisses unclosed reality as simple ignorance, with the result that “the Possible is de-realized to the status of ‘fiction’”¹³⁰ and, second, the *static* kind of suppression, which, positing a totality, fails to think the new, with the result that “this static positing has above all obstructed the space of the Open Possible.”¹³¹ Even “great thinkers”¹³² and “processive philosophers”¹³³ are guilty of a static understanding of possibility, according to Bloch. Earning the title of static philosophers are Kant, due to his conviction that possibility, as a category of modality, does not in any way enlarge the concept to which it is ascribed, and Hegel, for whom real possibility—or what he calls real possibility—“is wholly surrounded by the circle of reality that has already become.”¹³⁴ In short, static philosophers’ denial of real possibility comes down to their equating the possible, even the *real* possible (as in Hegel), with something *fully* formed, but waiting in the material. According to Bloch, only Marxism understands the real

¹²⁹ Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, vol. 1, p. 258 as translated, *Principle of Hope*, vol. 1, p. 224.

¹³⁰ Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, vol. 1, p. 279 as translated, *Principle of Hope*, vol. 1, p. 242.

¹³¹ Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, vol. 1, p. 280 as translated, *Principle of Hope*, vol. 1, p. 242.

¹³² Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, vol. 1, p. 279 as translated, *Principle of Hope*, vol. 1, p. 242.

¹³³ Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, vol. 1, p. 280 as translated, *Principle of Hope*, vol. 1, p. 242.

¹³⁴ Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, vol. 1, p. 283 as translated, *Principle of Hope*, vol. 1, p. 245. As evidence of Kant’s denial of real possibility, Bloch cites the opening of the “Elucidation” to “The Postulates of Empirical Thinking in General” (Kant, A219/B266). As evidence of Hegel’s denial of real possibility, Bloch cites the passage from *The Science of Logic* in which Hegel claims that real possibility is identical with necessity. See Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 6, p. 211 (cited by Bloch as *Logik*, *Werke IV*, p. 211) or translated by George di Giovanni, *The Science of Logic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 484.

possible in terms of non-identity, and it is Marxism's true understanding of possibility as process, and of the world as an "unenclosed world," that lets it get at the problem of changing that world: "The real Possible, which is homeless in every contemplative-static philosophy, is the real problem of the world itself: as the still unidentical character of appearance and real essential being, ultimately of existence and essence within it."¹³⁵ It is noteworthy that what Bloch terms "the real Possible" converges with what Adorno calls "aesthetic inconsistency," or, "contradictions between what the artwork appears as [als was das Kunstwerk auftritt] and what it is."¹³⁶

Given that the concept of the real Possible has been so deeply denied, even amongst great thinkers, Bloch sees himself confronted with the colossal task of showing that the real Possible is neither nothing nor just reality. Yet his "evidence" appears rather quixotic. According to Bloch, *dreams* and *daydreams* are indicative of unclosed reality: "The fact that we can...*sail* into dreams, that daydreams, often of a completely uncovered kind, are possible, indicates the great space of the still open, still uncertain life in man [im Menschen, in human being]."¹³⁷ His multi-volume study of hope is the compilation of dreams, dreams of a better life, ordered according to their strength: first, the "wishful images in the mirror" such as ruins, English gardens, window displays and magic genies in lamps; then different species of utopias such as the social utopias of Plato and More and scientific ones like Bacon's *Ars inveniendi*; the "wishful landscapes" of certain works of high art and philosophy such as Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*, whose figure becomes a landscape herself, and Kant's mature works, which defend progress towards the highest good possible; and finally the "wishful images of the

¹³⁵ Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, vol. 1, p. 284 as translated, *Principle of Hope*, vol. 1, p. 246.

¹³⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 156, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 101.

¹³⁷ Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, vol. 1, p. 224f., as translated except where indicated, *Principle of Hope*, vol. 1, p. 195.

fulfilled moment” such as the motif-based, fragmentary music of Schoenberg and religious mysticism just as well as Marx’s secularism. Bloch maintains that wishful images are neither arbitrary fantasies nor merely subjective feelings, but extend what exists into what is better and are therefore concerned with the Real-Possible:

And so the point is reached where hope itself, this authentic expectant emotion in the forward dream, no longer just appears as a merely self-based mental feeling... , but in a *conscious-known* way as *utopian function*. Its contents are first represented in ideas, and essentially in those of the imagination. In imaginative ideas, as opposed to those remembered ones which merely reproduce past perceptions and thereby shade off more and more into the past. And even these imaginative ideas are not ones which are merely composed of existing material, in arbitrary fashion (stony sea, golden mountain and so on), but extend, in an anticipating way, existing material into the future possibilities of being different and better. So that the thus determined imagination of the utopian function is distinguished from mere fantasizing precisely by the fact that only the former has in its favour a Not-Yet-Being of an expectable kind, i.e. does not play around and get lost in an Empty-Possible, but psychologically anticipates a Real-Possible.¹³⁸

The distinction that Bloch wishes to draw here between the recombined past of fantasy, on the one hand, and progressive images that extend the existing into the future, on the other, is not sustainable in fact. For when Bloch includes the Greek myth of Jason and the Argonauts amongst the geographical utopias, where *what is better* tends to be farther, he locates utopia in the Golden Fleece, that “exotic wishful-dream treasure,” which hangs on an oak in remote Colchis.¹³⁹ A piece of golden fleece somehow escapes the verdict of being merely arbitrarily combined out of existing material that “golden mountain” does not.¹⁴⁰ Certainly the “forward dream” or progressiveness of the myth cannot reside in the Golden Fleece being in a distant

¹³⁸ Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, vol. 1, p. 163f. as translated, *Principle of Hope*, vol. 1, p. 144.

¹³⁹ Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, vol. 2, p. 883 as translated, *Principle of Hope*, vol. 2, p. 755.

¹⁴⁰ Bloch likely picks the example of “golden mountain” from §2 of David Hume’s *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, in which Hume argues that thought is not productive but combinatory: “But though our thought seems to possess this unbounded liberty, we shall find, upon a nearer examination, that it is really confined within very narrow limits, and that all this creative power of the mind amounts to no more than the faculty of compounding, transposing, augmenting, or diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses and experience. When we think of a golden mountain, we only join two consistent ideas, *gold*, and *mountain*, with which we were formally acquainted.” David Hume, “*An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*” and “*A Letter from a Gentleman to his Friend in Edinburgh*,” ed. Eric Steinberg (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1977), p. 11.

place, for Bloch notes that “people believed they would find strange, useful things even at home,” albeit tucked away in some forgotten or mysterious corner.¹⁴¹ It is not even the wishful dream’s quality of being somehow displaced geographically, far away or in a forgotten depth at home, that makes it progressive, for geographical utopias are just one sort of dream of a better life. This is not to say that there is no dream of a better life in the myth of Golden Fleece. But Bloch pins the myth’s wishful content on the *goldenness* of the Fleece: “After all, the Fleece was originally the brilliant glow [der glänzende Schein] which surrounds the hero and which grants him victory.”¹⁴² One would think that, according to Bloch’s own criterion, the myth’s wishful content would lie in Jason’s promises of dethroning the usurper Pelias without recourse to violence and of governing justly from then on. If the Golden Fleece is indeed a wishful image and a progressive one, it is because its return to Pelias is supposed to open an era of just rule. But instead of governing justly, the first thing that Jason does upon his return is to avenge Pelias for the deaths of his parents, thus perpetrating violence against the very person he promised to spare. If the long quest for the Golden Fleece with its many perils was undertaken only to avoid founding a new regime upon violence, it did not serve its purpose. The quest is not even fruitful as a love adventure, for once back in Greece Jason betrays his helper and lover Medeia, who murders their two children.¹⁴³ What the Golden Fleece promised was never realized, and in this sense the myth determines the idea of a just society as something yet to accomplish. From the myth of Jason we do not have any better idea of what a just kingdom would be: all we do know is that a bit of fleece in itself will not

¹⁴¹ Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, vol. 2, p. 882 as translated, *Principle of Hope*, vol. 2, p. 753f.

¹⁴² Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, vol. 2, p. 883 as translated, *Principle of Hope*, vol. 2, p. 755.

¹⁴³ Euripides, *Medeia* 1271-92. In the familiar schoolbook version of the myth, sympathies lie more with Medeia than with Jason. Edith Hamilton, *Mythology*, illustrated by Steele Savage (1942; repr., New York: Mentor/New American Library/Penguin USA, s.a.), pp. 117-130, esp. 130.

get it. Bloch, however, condenses the utopian content in the *image* of the Golden Fleece, and this *imagistic* notion of utopia will spell the fundamental difference between him and Adorno. Bloch appears to be reinvesting in the auratic side of *mémoire involontaire*—namely, image accumulation: a strategy which is quite opposed to that of both Benjamin and Adorno, who were preoccupied with the shattering of these images by the *work* of *mémoire involontaire* (shock)—and even against his own defense of image-explosion in *Heritage of Our Times*.

Despite his advance of imageless materialism, Adorno recognizes the legitimacy of the project motivating Bloch's defense of images: for Bloch, utopian images are supposed to demonstrate a category of *possibility*. Yet in claiming that utopia resides in images, Bloch in no way makes a case for the Real-Possible, which, as he knows, is just what is needed to make it reasonable for us to want to change the world. Bloch's main complaint against the traditional understanding of possibility is that it reduces possibility either to nothingness or to what has already become. Yet in claiming to have discovered the Real-Possible in past *images* of a better life, he is guilty of both errors. On one hand, Bloch accuses logicians of de-realizing possibility "to the status of 'fiction'," ¹⁴⁴ yet he chooses literal fictions as proofs of the Real-Possible. Clearly there is no such thing as the Golden Fleece, so why should it convince us that the Real-Possible is not a fiction? Would it not sooner confirm the belief that the possible is entirely *unreal*? On the other hand, if voyage to distant lands in search of treasure *has become* a daily reality, this only proves the possibility in the Greek myths of adventure by way of what *has become*. But Bloch cannot hold this view because it is exactly the error for which Bloch reproaches Bergson. ¹⁴⁵ For the imagined search for exotic treasure in no way makes the real search for exotic treasure something *different and better*, and Bloch

¹⁴⁴ Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, vol. 1, p. 279 as translated, *Principle of Hope*, vol. 1, p. 242.

¹⁴⁵ Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, vol. 1, p. 232, or translated, *Principle of Hope*, vol. 1, p. 202.

admits as much: “Discovering definitely wants and is able to change things. Even the obsession with profit, the curiosity about unknown distant lands drive us off into the unfamiliar.”¹⁴⁶ If he thinks that only wishful images in the mirror can fall into the wrong hands, that only the weak daydreams of glossy magazines and circuses can be used for good as well as for evil, he is wrong, for even what he considers to be the pinnacle of utopian consciousness and the strongest and most deeply thought-out dreams for a better world, the writings of Karl Marx, can, as Bloch knew, be used as a justification for barbarism: the Soviet forced labour camp for political prisoners is just one example. If Bloch’s strategy is to show that *imagining something new* is just as good as *creating possibility*, he errs once again in concentrating his proof on images. For images are what *has been imagined*; even if imagining the new were as good as making possible, then all that such historic images as the Golden Fleece or *The Land of Cockaigne* prove is that possibility *was* there. Otherwise one confuses simple continuing in time of actual material objects, texts and paintings, with possibility, so mere reality with possibility. But possibility is neither the imagination nor reality. The image wants to be both, and this is why Adorno incisively attacks Bloch’s notion that utopia is concretized in images. Images in fact do no philosophical work. Bloch was actually much closer to an argument for real possibility when he hit upon the concept of the non-contemporaneous. Yet he missed the moment of real possibility in his own philosophy because he ended up reducing the non-contemporaneous to myth, while “Communist language” earned the honour being “totally contemporaneous and precisely orientated to the most advanced economy.”¹⁴⁷ From this starting point, he adopted a strategy completely the opposite to the model of dialectical thinking that Adorno would develop. While Adorno understands the task

¹⁴⁶ Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, vol. 2, p. 876 as translated, *Principle of Hope*, vol. 2, p. 749.

¹⁴⁷ Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*, p. 112 as translated, *Heritage of Our Times*, p. 105.

of dialectic to be the explosion of every immediate appearance, so of the *illusion* of total contemporaneous-ness, Bloch sees dialectic as the instrument for realizing contemporaneousness, for actually advancing all elements of society into the same present, the Marxist society that real non-contemporaneities have prevented:

But even if now, after total proletarianization and insecurity, after the decline of the higher standard of life and all prospects of a career, the masses of employees do not join the Communists or at least the Social Democrats, quite the contrary, then there is obviously a reaction of forces which conceal the process of becoming a commodity not just in subjective-ideological terms (which was certainly solely the case with an unradicalized centre until after the war), but also in real terms, namely out of *real non-contemporaneity*. Impulses and reserves from pre-capitalist times and superstructures are then at work, genuine non-contemporaneities therefore, which a sinking class revives or cause to be revived in its consciousness.¹⁴⁸

Bloch so reasons that the real persistence of *pre-capitalist* structures prevents employees from overthrowing *capitalist* structures. The worsening conditions of life do not appear to be a result of *capitalism* precisely because obfuscating mythical and irrational pre-capitalist elements persist. Their persistence creates continuity with the past, so masks the radical and destructive transition to capitalism taking place, something that is ultimately a benefit to capitalism, which must not be recognized if it is to succeed.¹⁴⁹ These non-contemporaneities also serve capitalism in that the mere tolerance of mythological, magical or fuzzy thinking alongside the cold logic of maximization of profit excuses the real irrationality of capitalism,

¹⁴⁸ Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*, p. 113 as translated, *Heritage of Our Times*, p. 105f.

¹⁴⁹ Since it dropped the “Progressive” from its official name, The Conservative Party of Canada has made full use of this logic. Projecting itself as the safeguard of traditional values and institutions (the monarchy, the army, the family, hunting, hockey and Tim Horton’s), the Harper government is in the midst of a radical and rapid capitalization of Canada that in fact aims to conserve virtually nothing of it. Stephen Harper exploits and reproduces archaic remainders, from a proliferation of Queen Elizabeth II portraits to War of 1812 commemorations, all of which serve to cover this government’s tracks as its moves towards the thoroughgoing destruction of the environment, social programmes, the arts and culture, the humanities, official bilingualism and all forums for debate and criticism, such as free public radio and universities. Liberation from the Harper Conservatives requires vast, public knowledge of their particular sleight-of-hand, which, when unfurling silk banners of tradition and stability, draws attention away from the social upheavals that do not disappear. See Christian Nadeau, *Contre Harper: Bref traité philosophique sur la révolution conservatrice* (Montréal : Boréal, 2010) and the dossier “Que conservent les conservateurs ?,” in *Liberté*, n° 297 (Automne 2012): pp. 7-24, esp. Jean Pichette, “La Grande Confusion,” pp. 8-13.

in which everyone becomes a thing. The backward, regressive elements finally become so successful in supporting capitalism that they become an end in themselves, as in the case of Nazi Germany. Bloch sees a dialectical solution in the raising to consciousness of the contradiction between rationalized capital and the “demonic mythicizing” of the non-contemporaneous:

Petit-bourgeois horror and merely backward stupidity are a clear component in themselves, but it does not exhaust the entire National Socialist complex. Differently ‘non-contemporaneous’ wildness and demonic mythicizing also exist and possibly have a dialectical hook, are at least in strange ‘contradiction’ to capital and the spirit of capital; this contradiction must be helped along.¹⁵⁰

Bloch blames vulgar Marxism for ignoring purely irrational elements in society. According to him, Nazism was able to seduce a great number of young people because it could appropriate the myth, dreaming, primitivism, religion and utopia left available by a Marxism that refused to deal with them in any way:

It is not the “theory” of the National Socialists but rather their energy which is serious, the fanatical-religious strain which does not merely stem from despair and stupidity, the strangely roused strength of faith. This streak could in fact, like every recollection of “primitiveness,” also have turned out differently, if it had been militarily *occupied* and dialectically transformed, on the “enlightened” side, instead of merely being abstractly cordoned off. But since Marxist *propaganda* lacks any *opposite land* to myth, any transformation of mythical beginnings into real ones, of Dionysian dreams into revolutionary ones, an element of guilt also becomes apparent in the effect of National Socialism, namely a guilt on the part of the all too usual vulgar Marxism. Large masses in Germany, above all the young (as a strongly organized and mythically intertwined condition), were able to become National Socialist precisely because the Marxism which presents them does not also “represent” them at the same time.¹⁵¹

Bloch sees the necessity of making a Marxist correlate for every aspect of society, no matter how backward or irrational, because he remains a thinker of totality. He claims that dialectic is an instrument of the “*mastered* final stage or totality,” although, he hastens to add, “naturally not of absolutely every one, but of the critical, the non-contemplative, the practically

¹⁵⁰ Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*, p. 69 as translated, *Heritage of Our Times*, p. 62f.

¹⁵¹ Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*, p. 65f. as translated, *Heritage of Our Times*, p. 60.

intervening one.”¹⁵² Placing dialectic in the service of such a totality nonetheless leaves Bloch in the difficult position of needing to transform and to integrate even irrational contents into the whole. As Adorno is not a thinker of totality, he does not see the necessity for “military occupation” and “dialectical transformation” of myth by Enlightenment. Dialectic may simply negate and dissolve irrational contents without recuperating them and re-appropriating them for the revolutionary ends of Marxism. The problem is not, as Bloch thinks, that beginnings remain “mythical” rather than “real” and that dreams remain “Dionysian” rather than “revolutionary”; the problem is that origins and dreams *seem* to be potentials, the seeds of what can really be, when in fact they prevent a robust, live thinking of possibility. Changing the kinds of dreams that we have or attempting “real” beginnings does not change the world one iota, but it *would* change the world to understand that dreams are not real potentials and that beginnings are just as abstract, empty and indeterminate as dreams, as Hegel argues at the opening of *The Science of Logic*.¹⁵³ Once, however, one ceases to think the non-contemporaneous as merely mythic, primitive, irrational, imaginary and unenlightened, it becomes the site for thinking possibility. Adorno sees the endurance of a non-contemporaneous element as an occasion to reflect on how it is “in fact possible” for opposing practices to have a life in the same society.¹⁵⁴ The non-contemporaneous indicates that a specific reality remains *open*. Thus, it does not point to some specific, concrete, positive, pictured future. An entirely negative and critical action, one which works merely to negate some existing practice, is not necessarily futile if what it seeks to negate contradicts some other existing practice. We are not necessarily wrong or irrational to act to change things that

¹⁵² Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*, p. 124 as translated, *Heritage of Our Times*, p. 115.

¹⁵³ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 5, pp. 73-75, or translated by George di Giovanni, *The Science of Logic*, pp. 51-53.

¹⁵⁴ Adorno, *Einführung in die Dialektik*, p. 208 (my translation).

lie in possibility, here and now. If our universities are run like businesses and, at the same time, administered like public institutions, then it is not necessarily “pseudo-activity” to work to negate aspects of higher education as it exists, even aspects of society as it exists, even in the total absence of any clear image of what a university ought to be or what a just society ought to look like. The *openness* of reality, the indication of possibility, is “imageless”: it is only that things can still always be otherwise.¹⁵⁵ Adorno for his part claims that supplying an imagined content for the possible necessarily excludes utopia, “the consciousness of possibility.”¹⁵⁶ This is clear in his statement that “it is the possible, never the unmediated real, that blocks the way of utopia; that is why in the midst of what prevails the possible appears abstract.”¹⁵⁷ Consciousness of possibility, consciousness that things can still always be otherwise, cannot be reached as long as the alternative to the real is given a determinate content that can be grasped consciously. Only in art does possibility *appear*, but as illusion. Bloch, however, does not recognize the non-practical, memorial character of art. He pursues the idea that images transform nothingness into possibility. If in the artwork there appears a perfect matriarchy, a beautiful castle or just exchange, there is no reason for us to think that these are possibilities that we can realize here and now: the artwork is at any rate what has *survived*. As the enduring past that emphatically appears as the immediate, the artwork asks us not to realize the possibility it presents, but to *explode* its present image by showing it to be at the centre of historical tensions that were not fully resolved when it appeared. What Adorno

¹⁵⁵ GS, vol. 6, p. 207 (my translation).

¹⁵⁶ GS, vol. 6, p. 66 (my translation). This is why Deborah Cook is perhaps not correct to assert that “only possibility affords a critical, utopian perspective on damaged life”: utopia, the consciousness of possibility, is afforded not by *possibility* (which would constitute the positive identity of consciousness and the object of consciousness), but rather by the actual in its contradiction, indicative of unclosed reality. Deborah Cook, “From the Actual to the Possible: Nonidentity Thinking,” in *Adorno and the Need in Thinking: New Critical Essays*, ed. Donald A. Burke et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), pp. 163-180, here p. 176.

¹⁵⁷ GS, vol. 6, p. 66 (my translation).

suggests by the expression “the shock of the open” is a philosophical, interpretative practice that would show each immediate, appearing image to be the site of historical contradictions, so indicative of the possible, which itself does not appear, and which has no image.

Ignoring Adorno’s clear case for an imageless materialism, Gunzelin Schmid Noerr attempts to synthesize Adorno’s position and Bloch’s.¹⁵⁸ Schmid Noerr concludes his essay on the difference between the two thinkers by stating that critical-utopian thinking nonetheless needs images and imagelessness alike: “Critical-utopian thinking however needs images, with a view to giving object and theme reasons and direction, and at the same time needs the power of imagelessness in order to create freedom and distance with regard to each particular lifeworld.”¹⁵⁹ Moreover, Schmid Noerr claims that Adorno’s philosophy admits of images—“dialectical images.”¹⁶⁰ This confusion over whether Adorno’s philosophy admits of images is understandable, since in “The Actuality of Philosophy” Adorno calls constellations “historical images”¹⁶¹ and “images out of the isolated elements of reality.”¹⁶² It should be noted, however, that the mature Adorno of *Negative Dialectics* abandons this vocabulary in connection with constellations. In the paragraph entitled “Materialism Imageless,” Adorno specifically argues that the production of images is a form of Idealism: “A consciousness interpolating images, a third element, between itself and that which it thinks would unwittingly reproduce idealism.”¹⁶³ This is not just a critique of Kant’s schematism, but most palpably also a critique of Bloch. For Bloch, utopia is concretized in images, but these have their source in the

¹⁵⁸ Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, “Bloch und Adorno: Bildhafte und bilderlose Utopie,” *Bloch-Almanach* 21 (2002): pp. 29-69.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 69 (my translation).

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 68 (my translation).

¹⁶¹ GS, vol. 1, p. 338 as translated by Benjamin Snow [?], “The Actuality of Philosophy,” *Telos*, no. 31 (Spring 1977): pp. 120-133, here p. 128.

¹⁶² GS, vol. 1, p. 335 as translated, “The Actuality of Philosophy,” p. 127.

¹⁶³ GS, vol. 6, p. 206 as translated, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 207.

subject's wishes, intentions and desires, which turns his materialist utopia into an Idealist one. A constellation is decidedly anti-imagistic in that it grasps an object independently of the concept that usually just subsumes it, so, independently of the acoustic *image* attached to the concept. The constellation is constructed in such a way as to resist the meaning-laden symbolic and intentional function that characterizes made images. Bereft of subjective meanings and intentions, the constellation negates the linguistic form of social control and the subjective arbitrariness on which it is founded, social control that takes the deceptive form of acoustic images. Schmid Noerr is certainly aware that Adorno upholds the ban against images. But he does not accurately articulate the grounds for it. According to Schmid Noerr, the ban against images has to do with Adorno's defense of "hedonistic utopia."¹⁶⁴ The term "hedonistic" is not at all apt, for this implies that in utopia sensual pleasure would take precedence over spiritual happiness, whereas it is only spirit's character in the current society as sublimated drive, as energy no longer seeking immediate, literal sensual enjoyment, that even gives us the notion of hedonism. In the paragraph entitled "Contemplation" in *Negative Dialectics* Adorno states that sensual fulfilment is not better than the happiness of spirit:

Yet to uphold literal, sensual happiness as something better than the inadmissible one of spirit is to deny that, at the end of the historical process of sublimation, split-off sensual happiness will take on something regressive, in the way that children's relationship to food disgusts adults. Not to be like children in this is a piece of freedom.¹⁶⁵

"Materialism Imageless" nonetheless confirms that the concept of utopia developed by Adorno implies physical fulfilment: "Only were physical urge stilled would spirit be reconciled and become what it for so long has only promised—as it denies, under the spell of

¹⁶⁴ Schmid Noerr, "Bloch und Adorno," p. 66 (my translation).

¹⁶⁵ GS, vol. 6, p. 243, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 245.

material conditions, the satisfaction of material needs.”¹⁶⁶ Schmid Noerr would therefore be more correct to claim that this *material* dimension of utopia is what leads to the ban on images. For in the aesthetic experience of nature, possible only when material needs are satisfied, nature transforms itself from a resource to exploit into a beautiful *appearing*, an *image*: “...the aesthetic experience of nature is that of images. Nature, as appearing beauty, is not perceived as an object of action.”¹⁶⁷ But this means that Adorno’s materialism does *not* have recourse to images to give grounds and orientation to action. Thus, critical theory does not need images “with a view to giving object and theme reasons and direction,” as Schmid Noerr contends, for true images are not practical.¹⁶⁸

The image of reconciliation should form naturally, independently of volition, whenever instrumental reason has been suspended, so, should be the true sign of material fulfilment. A moment of closed, filled, consistent time truly *appears* when no longing opens it up to a future. The only genuine, objective image is the image that coalesces naturally uniquely when, untroubled by want and urge, we are free to behold beauty. Today clearly, as material needs are not in fact satisfied, as physical urges are not stilled, as yearning goes unextinguished, any *created* image plants false evidence from which we are to conclude that nature and spirit are reconciled. The made image thus only *seems* to indicate that we no longer suffer from thirst, hunger, fatigue, insecurity, distress, pain, longing, loneliness, boredom or from intellectual or material poverty. In a passage from *Aesthetic Theory*, cited by Schmid Noerr,¹⁶⁹ Adorno claims that it is in fact impossible to make images:

¹⁶⁶ GS, vol. 6, p. 207, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 207.

¹⁶⁷ GS, vol. 7, p. 103 as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 65.

¹⁶⁸ Schmid Noerr, “Bloch und Adorno,” p. 69 (my translation).

¹⁶⁹ Schmid Noerr, “Bloch und Adorno,” p. 67.

That one should make no image, which means no image *of* anything whatsoever, expresses at the same time that it is impossible to make such an image. Through its duplication in art, what appears in nature is robbed of its being-in-itself, with which the experience of nature is fulfilled [sich sättigt, fills itself up].¹⁷⁰

The ban on images in a certain sense extends to art. A made image is necessarily a representation of the experience of nature free from domination and exploitation; a made image cannot be this experience of free nature itself, for such experiences are not made, but happen. Nature becomes a problematic subject matter for French impressionism, as Adorno indicates earlier in the paragraph cited, “Natural Beauty and Art Beauty Are Interlocked.” A *depiction* of a mountain or of a green forest, just by virtue of *what* it depicts, is liable to be mistaken for the *experience* of nature as reconciled with spirit. Painters who today take Corfu sunrises, Norfolk heath heather or misted Moraine Lake as their subject matter seem to be stacking the odds of their paintings’ success: viewers who suppose that the image-character of art has to do with representation will no doubt find these paintings beautiful. Advanced artists do not paint beautiful, living nature because they want to avoid appealing to the naïve viewer, who does not grasp the transition from natural beauty to art beauty as the control of nature’s seeming to say “more than it is”:

Nature’s beauty lies in its seeming to say more than it is. The idea of art is to divest this “More” of its contingency, to gain control of its illusion, to determine it as illusion, to negate it, also, as unreal.¹⁷¹

To the mythological, pre-artistic mind, there are no coincidences: the blind combinations that the physical world turns out—the array of stars, the colours in the dusk sky, the flight of owls, the dance of a flame, the rustling of oak leaves—are meaningful. The stunning chance events of nature seem to refer to something beyond themselves. Surrealism is anti-art in its

¹⁷⁰ GS, vol. 7, p. 106 as translated, except where indicated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 67.

¹⁷¹ GS, vol. 7, p. 122, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 78.

recuperation of chance, regarding it to be not mindless physis, but somehow the correspondence of nature and human ends: André Breton defines chance as “the encounter of an external causality and an internal finality.”¹⁷² In *L’amour fou* (Mad Love), Breton attempts to substantiate this definition by matching details of his chance meeting with Jacqueline Lamba, who advances toward him, “*scandaleusement belle*” (*scandalously beautiful*),¹⁷³ to elements of an automatic poem he had written about a decade prior.¹⁷⁴ Mere coincidences between the poem and the nocturnal stroll through Paris are supposed to show that the meeting was foreordained. The St-Jacques steeple, which they pass on their wander, the colombophile stamp on the letter that Breton receives a few days after their meeting, the cricket he hears chirping—these are all supposed to be signs that refer to specific lines in the poem, and so, Breton thinks, are proof that the encounter was not blind luck, but *meant* to be. Yet this would seem to eliminate freedom from the resulting relationship. The inner compulsion under which André Breton composed the automatic poem would be the same as the outer necessity that drew him to Jacqueline Lamba. Surrealism reads more into what merely is, yet as necessity. Art is distinct from this tendency in Surrealism in that it finds fault not with the spirit that sees more in what is, but with spirit that attempts to draw meaning, fate or necessity out of something purely coincidental. The “idea” of art is to set apart a field of non-arbitrary referentiality, in light of which the intentional or meaningful depths of beautiful nature flatten out, and the immanence and contingency of nature appear. It is impossible to analyze any particular thing of natural beauty like an artwork. The interpreter of an artwork is not only

¹⁷² André Breton, *L’amour fou* (s.l.: Gallimard, 1937), p. 28 as translated by Mary Ann Caws, *Mad Love* (Lincoln, Nebraska: Bison Books, 1988), p. 21. In the original: “la rencontre d’une causalité externe et d’une finalité interne.”

¹⁷³ André Breton, *L’amour fou*, p. 63 as translated, *Mad Love*, p. 41.

¹⁷⁴ André Breton, *L’amour fou*, pp. 80-94, or *Mad Love*, pp. 55-67.

permitted to refer the isolated moment to something beyond it, but actually *required* to do so, or else no interpretation happens. The goal of art interpretation is indeed to get the artwork to say more than it is. In contrast to the “more” of natural beauty, which is just an illusion, the “more” of art is, or traditionally has been, truth-content. But this suggests that art, in negating the referential character of beautiful nature as illusion, supplies a referent for the “more” of nature: the “more” of natural beauty cannot help but evoke the “more” of art.¹⁷⁵ Once the sphere of art has constituted itself, beautiful nature *does* in a way point beyond itself—to aesthetic illusion. But whenever aesthetic illusion becomes the beyond that nature evokes, at the same time it negates nature’s having a *real* beyond, because seeming is itself non-being. Aesthetic illusion saves the beyond of natural beauty by leaving it indeterminate. When a spot of exceptional natural beauty is made to say something determinate, that it *is* more than just a lake or a pond, its beauty is destroyed. A postcard of Moraine Lake destroys the beauty of Moraine Lake itself. The imitation of some spot of natural beauty produces kitsch, and the ban on kitsch is at the same time the recognition that natural beauty is destroyed in such works. It is easy to see why Adorno claims that “art imitates not nature, not individual natural things that are beautiful, but natural beauty in itself.”¹⁷⁶ The beauty of works by Teniers, Steen, Rembrandt and van Ostade is not in Holland, as the protagonist of *À Rebours* realizes, returning bitterly disappointed from his systematic voyage to the Netherlands.¹⁷⁷ Adorno would consider Des Esseintes’s disappointment to be an indication of the *art* of these Dutch

¹⁷⁵ On the other hand, Lorraine Markotic notes that the “more” of natural beauty is not entirely other than the “more” of art because “like nature, art is also something more than a socio-historical phenomenon,” which shows up in its enigmatic character: “Art cannot be fully encompassed by a social whole that it nevertheless eludes....art reflects, but also resists, society.” Lorraine Markotic, “Enigma, Semblance, and Natural Beauty in Adorno’s Epistemological Aesthetics,” *symplokê* 20, nos. 1/2 (2012): pp. 293-307, here p. 300.

¹⁷⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 113, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 72.

¹⁷⁷ J.-K. Huysmans, *À Rebours*, préface et commentaires de Daniel Mortier, Pocket classiques (Paris: Pocket, 1999), p. 179f.

painters, for what they imitate is indeterminate, not ever really there: “The being-in-itself to which artworks are devoted is not the imitation of something real but rather the anticipation of being-in-itself that does not yet exist, of an unknown that—by way of the subject—is self-determining.”¹⁷⁸ Art’s model is natural beauty in itself: art imitates the self-determination of a nature to come, not any existing natural beauty, which nowhere determines itself. Nonetheless, nature is not thereby everywhere determined by its other; natural beauty is indeterminate. The indeterminacy of beauty leaves space for a self-determining nature, which does not yet exist. Adorno follows Nietzsche in his critique of the Scholastic tradition, which considered beauty to be a kind of being.¹⁷⁹ Art is the illusory beyond of natural beauty, yet one that is produced historically. Adorno expresses the conversion of the “more” of natural beauty into illusion in the artwork as the mediation of the “more” in alienated social relations; like all made things, the artwork is a form of socially necessary illusion: “The image of nature survives because its complete negation in the artefact—negation that rescues this image—is necessarily blind to what exists beyond bourgeois society, its labour and its commodities.”¹⁸⁰ While beauty in nature is the quality of seeming to refer beyond itself, art does not give itself to be the beyond of natural beauty: it *is* the beyond of natural beauty only when it turns its back on nature, reifies itself, *seems* to have nothing to do with nature. The made, reified side of artworks, their *social* illusion, separates art—and its aesthetic images—from nature and from what would count as an image in nature: from the reconciliation of nature with spirit. Aesthetic images in art do not offend against the ban on images because they are reified, closed in on themselves—not representations of the unrepresentable used as intermediaries, “third things”

¹⁷⁸ GS, vol. 7, p. 121 as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 77.

¹⁷⁹ Theodor W. Adorno, *Ästhetik (1958/59)*, herausgegeben von Eberhard Ortland (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2009), p. 167.

¹⁸⁰ GS, vol. 7, p. 108 as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 69.

between this world and what would be different. This is clear in the Paralipomena to *Aesthetic Theory* in which Adorno claims that artworks are actually *imageless images*: “As their sedimentation [the sedimentation of the subject’s experiences], artworks are imageless images, and these experiences mock representational depiction.”¹⁸¹ Artworks are images, appearances of momentary, solid inner time, only thanks to their having become made things, and the made thing is the exact opposite of nature as beautiful image. The image in Proust may seem like the concretization of the individual Proust’s own unique experiences at Illiers. But the “subjective experiences” conveyed by artworks are not the inward feelings originating in hypersensitive selves, in these selves’ peculiar histories, the formation of their psychological characters or with their specific filial or erotic relationships. The aesthetic image in art does not transmit some actual personal experience of nature in its appearing beauty, as if Proust had found a way to reconcile nature and spirit and to satisfy his material needs in life. For his work denies such satisfaction explicitly, as it registers the jolt of *desire* and *regret* in which the narrator realizes that happiness was denied him. Precisely in those moments in the novel where happiness is denied the narrator do what we think of as its images coalesce: in the image of the hawthorn, in the image of the Roussainville tower, in the image of the agate marble. The image in Proust is not the sign of a concordance between one’s writing and one’s essential life encounter, as it is for Breton, but it is the expression of the discrepancy between literature and life: “The image of Proust is the highest physiognomic expression which the irresistibly growing discrepancy between literature and life was to assume.”¹⁸² Thus, “the subjective experiences” sedimented in *À la recherche du temps perdu* are negative images, indications that spirit and nature are *not* reconciled. Expressed in aesthetic images, these moments of

¹⁸¹ GS, vol. 7, p. 422 as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 283.

¹⁸² Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2.1, p. 311 as translated, “The Image of Proust,” p. 202.

happiness denied the individual, these eternally ruined possibilities of love, render all psychological explanations inadequate. The aesthetic image determines the individual's unstilled longing as social: "Yet in aesthetic images is just what eludes the 'I', their collective aspect: therefore society is inherent in the truth content. The appearing, by which the artwork towers high above the mere subject, is the breakthrough of its collective essence."¹⁸³ What the Proustian narrator realizes on his return to Combray is not that a personal decision or character flaw prevented him from living, but that social illusion, the dumbly conventional and routine, came between him and happiness. Happiness was denied him by society, by the conventions, opinions and projections that fall on objects. While the Proustian narrator's unhappiness is rooted in social conditions from which the whole collective suffers, the self is not therefore the source of happiness. Proust's narrator aspires to that happiness that can only come from what is other than himself. He mentally composes the letter he would love to receive from Gilberte, but then realizes that just by imagining those lines, he excludes the very possibility of ever receiving them with the surprise and delight that must be part of the happiness that he seeks:

Even if through an improbable coincidence it had been precisely the letter that I had invented that Gilberte on her own account addressed to me, recognizing my work in it I would not have had the impression of receiving something that did not come from me, something real, new, a happiness external to my mind, independent of my will, truly given by love.¹⁸⁴

Adorno goes further: happiness immanent to mind and dependent upon the subject's will would be no happiness at all. Rather than being reconfirmed and duplicated in the outer realization of its inner dreams and projects, the self in happiness becomes other: "If the role,

¹⁸³ GS, vol. 7, p. 198, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 131.

¹⁸⁴ Proust, *Du Côté de chez Swann*, p. 402 as translated by Lydia Davis, *Swann's Way* (London: Penguin Books, 2004). P. 426, from: "Même si par une invraisemblable coïncidence, c'eût été justement la lettre que j'avais inventée que de son côté m'eût adressée Gilberte, y reconnaissant mon œuvre je n'eusse pas eu l'impression de recevoir quelque chose qui ne vînt pas de moi, quelque chose de réel, de nouveau, un bonheur extérieur à mon esprit, indépendant de ma volonté, vraiment donné par l'amour."

the heteronomy prescribed by autonomy, is the latest objective form of an unhappy consciousness, there is, conversely, no happiness except where the self is not itself.”¹⁸⁵ In inventing the letter that one pines to receive from the adored or in picturing the society in which one longs to live, one destroys in advance the surprise that these extremely unlikely events’ incredible coming-to-pass would ever bring with them. If happiness is never the fulfilment of what was already planned, thought, imagined, conceived, but what one receives from the other out of love and beyond all expectation, then the representation of future happiness in an image necessarily destroys possibilities of happiness, happiness which it misconceives. And Adorno avers that artworks do instil happiness. Yet this happiness is furthest from hedonism:

The happiness gained from artworks [Das Glück an den Kunstwerken, the happiness in artworks] is that of having suddenly escaped, not a morsel [Böckchen, bit or scrap] of that from which art escaped; it is accidental [stets nur akzidentell, always only accidental] and less essential to art than the happiness in its knowledge; the concept of aesthetic pleasure as constitutive of art is to be superseded [der Begriff des Kunstgenusses als konstitutiver ist abzuschaffen, the concept of aesthetic pleasure as constitutive is to be given up]. If in keeping with Hegel’s insight all feeling related to an aesthetic object has an accidental aspect, usually that of psychological projection, then what the work demands from its beholder is knowledge, and indeed, knowledge that does justice to it: the work wants its truth and untruth to be grasped. Aesthetic hedonism is to be confronted with the passage from Kant’s doctrine of the sublime, which he timidly excluded from art [das er, befangen, von der Kunst eximiert, which he in his bias excluded from art]: happiness in artworks would be the feeling they instil of standing firm. This holds true for the aesthetic sphere as a whole more than for any particular work.¹⁸⁶

In this passage Adorno contrasts the happiness in artworks and the happiness in their knowledge. As he clearly understands happiness to be Glück in both senses, both happiness *and* luck, it cannot be what makes a thing art. This is because art casts a critical eye on nature’s seeming to say more: what seems to mean in nature is really just accident,

¹⁸⁵ GS, vol. 6, p. 277 as translated, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 281.

¹⁸⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 30f. as translated, except where indicated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 15.

meaningless coincidence and blind happenstance. Art could have made its critique of seeming in nature by shunning all seeming and illusion right from the start. But then it would not have been different from other spheres in bourgeois “enlightenment” society, all of which purport to be reality purified of illusion. But art really is different because it saves illusion rather than deluding itself about escaping it entirely. The wish animating mythological thinking, the wish for intelligible nature, is not wrong in itself, but it is distorted and fulfilled fictitiously when meaning is attributed to blind accidents. To avoid this temptation, art removes itself from blind accidents, transparent meaning and facile symbolism. It is therefore counter to the very idea of art for something contingent, a feeling, to be constitutive of the artwork. Art critically grasps that nature’s speech is not referential, not a sign that points to something outside itself, to human dealings, but is truly shut up in itself, “monodological confinement.”¹⁸⁷ Artworks translate natural beauty’s language of the imprisoned into their own stringency: “What in artworks is gapless, structured, resting in itself, is afterimage taken of the silence out of which, there alone, nature speaks.”¹⁸⁸ Here Adorno reworks a metaphor that Kant uses for the pictorial arts, that of the ectype.¹⁸⁹ Rather than considering only the plastic arts and painting to be the imprints or expressions of aesthetic (aconceptual or indeterminate) *ideas*, Adorno considers such expression to be only one moment of artworks including but not, however, limited to the pictorial arts—the moment in which they are impressed by the silence of *nature*. This is why, for Adorno, expression and construction are bound up with one another: expression is the expression of suffering nature, which takes the character of a total system,

¹⁸⁷ GS, vol. 7, p. 108 as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 69.

¹⁸⁸ GS, vol. 7, p. 115, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 74.

¹⁸⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 5:322. The pagination given here and throughout corresponds to the Academy of Sciences edition of Kant’s works (*Kant’s Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin: G. Reimer/ W. de Gruyter, 1902-), and appears in the margins of Guyer and Matthews’s translation.

locked in on itself. Contrary to Kant, Adorno understands expression in art to be afterimage not of the spontaneous, human imagination, but rather of suffering nature that can voice no protest against human domination. The non-arbitrary, systematized serial compositions of the Second Viennese School are truer to happiness than is the music of chance, in that they make no pretense of supplying the lack of material happiness in this world. For *happiness* is also chance, and the *music* of chance confronts the problem of happiness with embarrassing naïveté: a world in which all is planned, administered and commodified excludes true happiness, as it is not possible to bottle true happiness, which has an element of surprise; yet the “canned chance” of John Cage, by contrast, is supposed to open a zone of possibility, where some randomly-generated notes hap to please. Emphasis on the happiness that artworks might occasion misses art’s double critique: critique of the false attribution of meaning to arbitrary nature on one hand and, on the other, critique of the society that reproduces nature’s confinement in wordlessness as a totally administered immanent system of packaged satisfactions. Consequently, correct reception consists not so much in being happy as in grasping what is non-arbitrary in the artwork. If grasping what is non-arbitrary in the artwork can yield a kind of happiness, then this second-order happiness, Adorno claims, is more essential to artworks than the happiness that the artworks themselves elicit. Here is why.

The happiness in the knowledge of artworks is nothing less than the *explosion* of their image character, image character which *seems* to say that we are happy, materially satisfied, blessed as gods.

The aesthetic image is the *illusion* of a happiness from which all contingency has been emptied—the illusion not of Glück, but of Seligkeit, blessed bliss. Image-explosion, which

Bloch associates with Expressionism as a higher order of montage, is the rejection of *Seligkeit* and the demand for material happiness, from which nature, as contingent, is not cut out.

The explosion of the aesthetic image swings the artwork back towards the expressive extreme, since expression and *Seligkeit*, which is closely associated with Schein, are polar opposites: “Bliss would be expressionless.”¹⁹⁰ Montage is a vehicle for expressing dissatisfaction with a definition of aesthetic happiness that excludes contingency.

Shock became false in art because it had been reduced to the *effect* of a (historical) avant-garde technique, montage, whereas the avant-garde works of Modernism were advanced, according to Bloch and Adorno, not because they occasioned a shock response, but because they maintained a split between whole and part.

In other words, it is the negation of organicity, the seeming harmony between whole and part,—rather than montage or expression—that is advanced. This would be an adequate reading of Bloch, who claims that *organic* montage is not advanced.¹⁹¹ Likewise, the organic aspects of musical expressionism—its representation of different states of a *living body*—are not advanced. The *negation* of the artwork as a harmony between whole and part figures as the most advanced consciousness, but the ways in which organic unity may be negated are diverse.

In this light—advanced art of the Modern period as a negation of organicity—Peter Bürger’s theory on what constitutes the definition and claims of the avant-garde—advanced, Modern art—should be re-evaluated.

Bürger agrees that inorganicity characterizes the avant-garde work, but he interprets the avant-garde’s inadvertent renewal of the category of *work* as the seal of their failure: “The

¹⁹⁰ GS, vol. 7, p. 169, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 110.

¹⁹¹ Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*, p. 221, or translated, *Heritage of Our Times*, p. 202.

category 'work' is not merely given a new lease on life after the failure of the avant-gardiste attempt to reintroduce art into the praxis of life; it is actually expanded."¹⁹² Bürger's abstract definition of the work as the "unity of the universal and particular" is itself complicit with the illusion that perpetuates the category of work.¹⁹³ He implies that the unity of universal and particular is real. In the bourgeois society that Bürger admits as the context for the avant-garde work, any unity between the actual hours of living labour that go into the work, in their particularity, and the universal thing that emerges from them must, on the contrary, be ideal or a fiction. Works in exchange society are ideal, *abstract* unities, abstractions of concrete, living labour. To negate the category of work, it would be necessary to organize labour differently, so that the *illusion* of abstract labour dissolves. On one hand, the historical avant-garde movements (Dada and Surrealism) aimed to negate the category of work as such. But theirs was an abstract negation: live, spontaneous "manifestations" merely pose an *abstract* alternative to the work, because they assume that the work can only be dead and non-spontaneous. This reinforces the illusion of the work as a mere inanimate thing, when it is really in contradiction with the particular labour that went into it—what the worker lived—, which is forced to take on a universal form—illusory convertibility into value. But on the other hand, as Bürger points out, the historical avant-garde movements did indeed produce works. So representatives of the historical avant-garde movements also *determinately* negated the category of the work: "The avant-gardist work does not negate unity as such....but a specific kind of unity, the relationship between part and whole that characterizes the organic work of art."¹⁹⁴ So, one could say that the historical avant-gardes failed to negate the category

¹⁹² Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 78 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 57.

¹⁹³ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 76 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 56.

¹⁹⁴ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 77 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 56.

of work as such, but succeeded in negating an aspect of it. Bürger, however, interprets the avant-gardes' attempts to negate the work *as such* as attacks on art and on the institution of art, attacks which the institution countered by their recuperation. The shocks of the provocations may have quickly worn off, as Bürger explains, but a more likely reason for the failure of manifestations to negate the work as such is the abstract, non-specific character of their negation. It is not clear, in fact, whether these manifestations are aimed at the work-based character of the art institution or at works in general, both artistic and non-artistic, or at art in general. The historical avant-garde movements had to provide explanations—often in the form of manifestoes—to specify the targets of their abstract actions. According to Richard Huelsenbeck, “Dada is neither politics nor an art movement,” and “because Dada is the most direct and vivid expression of its times, it turns against everything that strikes it as obsolete, mummified, ingrained.”¹⁹⁵ Dada, then, according to one of its actors, is directed against reification, not specifically against art. As Huelsenbeck goes on to say, “Dada has chosen a cultural realm for its activity, although it could just as well have chosen to make its appearance as an importer, stockbroker, or manager of a chain of cinemas.”¹⁹⁶ The Dada manifestation, however, does not consider that reified reality admits of degrees, but blindly sets forth its own alternative, which, for a time, the world of conventions could safely ignore—until performance art showed that the “spontaneity” of the historical avant-gardes also admitted of degrees. As “happenings,” manifestations are reified, insofar as they are planned or recorded, and recognizable as an artistic genre in their own right within the institution of art. While Dada manifestations are directed against the work as such, which it

¹⁹⁵ Richard Huelsenbeck, introduction to *Dada Almanach*, herausgegeben von Richard Huelsenbeck (New York: Something Else Press, 1966), pp. 3-9, here p. 4, as translated by Derk Wynand, introduction to *The Dada Almanac*, ed. Richard Huelsenbeck (London: Atlas Press, 1993), pp. 8-14, here p. 10.

¹⁹⁶ Huelsenbeck, introduction, p. 5, as translated, p. 10.

takes to be wholly reified, performance art happenings are implicitly directed against the anti-art aspect of Dada manifestations. For art implies reification.

Bürger rejects the avant-garde theories of Adorno and Georg Lukács for failing to take into account what he believes is the historical avant-garde movements' attack on the art institution;¹⁹⁷ the exact object of the avant-garde attack, however, is most probably reification. The difficulty in specifying the object of the Dadaists and Surrealists' critique has to do with their relation to that object—if reification is, in fact, that object. The Dadaists and Surrealists appear to be countering the fixed and unchanging character of reified reality with vague, variable gestures of a critique that is supposed to be involuntary, spontaneous, imaginative, immediate, direct, live, new and unsystematic—even a product of luck. Sheer opposition is not critique, however; it merely blocks the way from one extreme towards the other. The avant-gardes' pretences of detaching themselves completely from their object in criticizing it create confusion, if anything else. Their tendency to replace works by acts of provocation cannot be considered anti-artistic necessarily. While replacing works with acts certainly goes against the need of art to reify itself, the emphasis on *acts* is a broad tendency—existentialism and psychoanalysis are also currents of it. Bürger claims that the historical avant-garde movements liquidated the category of the *work*, which should leave open the question of whether Dada and Surrealism attacked *artworks* or *works* in general—i.e., all products of labour. It does not follow from his claim that the avant-garde movements evoked the category of *work* “by negation” that their critique was aimed at art as an institution.¹⁹⁸ Manifestations such as the Dada excursion to an obscure, empty church, St. Julien le Pauvre, on April 14, 1921 and the Dada trial of Maurice Barrès (by proxy) on May 13, 1921 at the Salle des Sociétés Savantes

¹⁹⁷ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 121, as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 86.

¹⁹⁸ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 77, as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 56.

might negate the category of the work, but do not necessarily negate the category of artwork, and do not therefore necessarily attack the institution of art.¹⁹⁹ These manifestations are activities that resemble labour in the domains of tourism and law, yet diversion and justice were not produced, and nor, it seems, was anyone paid. These manifestations aim to be provocative, not to fulfil a need or to produce some satisfaction. The works expected in these contexts are not artworks, but, respectively, a *tourist* sight and a *juridical* judgement. The institution of art was unlikely the target of these actions, although, in retrospect Dada, manifestations have been subsumed under the category of “art.”

Bürger’s strategy in *Theory of the Avant-Garde* can be guessed by the final chapter: the argument for the failure of the historical avant-garde to destroy the art institution allows *Bertolt Brecht* to emerge as the superior avant-garde hero. Since Brecht wished to change the function of the theatre, not to abolish it altogether, suggests Bürger, Brecht’s works are far more adequate to his claims for them than the works of the Surrealists and Dadaists are to their claims:

What they [the representatives of the historical avant-garde movements] and Brecht share is, first, a conception of the work in which the individual elements gain autonomy [Selbständigkeit, independence]...and, second, the attention he devotes to art as an institution. But whereas the avant-gardistes believe they can directly attack and destroy that institution, Brecht develops a concept that entails a change of function and sticks to what is concretely achievable [entwickelt Brecht ein Konzept der Umfunktionierung, das sich an das real Mögliche hält, Brecht develops a concept, “change of function,” which holds fast to the real-Possible].²⁰⁰

Bürger’s analysis is not exactly fair to the historical avant-gardes. While he freely draws on Brecht’s theoretical writings to measure the success of his theatre, he does not similarly draw on Dada and Surrealist manifestoes for the criterion of those movements’ success, but rather

¹⁹⁹ These manifestations, while not art, are described by RoseLee Goldberg in *Performance Art from Futurism to the Present*, revised and enlarged edition (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1988), p. 85f.

²⁰⁰ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 124 as translated, except where indicated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 89.

interprets the possible intentions behind the provocations. What Bürger means by the avant-gardes' "failure" is their failure to realize their aims. Those aims, however, are far from clear—Huelsenbeck even claims a lack of aims for Dada: "Dada does not burden its actions with 'goal'-oriented motives."²⁰¹ Meanwhile, Bürger considers Brecht's effectiveness both as a theorist and as a practicing artist. Brecht's effectiveness speaks for the concept of possibility that guides his theory and practice—the concept of the Real-Possible.

In the end, however, Bürger minimizes Brecht's achievement when he claims that "engaged" works, of which Brecht's, *succeed* only by becoming organic wholes (!). Despite Brecht's theoretically avowed anti-organicism,²⁰² Bürger claims: "The engaged work can be successful only if the engagement itself is the unifying principle that articulates itself throughout the work (and this includes its form). But this is rarely the case."²⁰³ It is far from clear, however, in what sense Brecht's works are "engaged."

Brecht's *epic theatre* is engaged without becoming an organic whole in the following way.

Epic theatre seeks to show that things can still always be otherwise, not necessarily to offer particular protocols for political action outside the theatre. As such, it takes aim at tragedy, which traditionally has been considered to be superior to epic.²⁰⁴ In his essay "Was ist das epische Theater?" (What Is Epic Theatre?), Walter Benjamin describes the preliminaries

²⁰¹ Huelsenbeck, introduction to *Dada Almanach*, p. 8 as translated, *Dada Almanac*, p. 13.

²⁰² In a short text from 1929, Bertolt Brecht attacked the notion of "organic fame." Criticizing the self-preserving system of theatre renown, in which the public appears to be reduced to a bodily function, Brecht evokes the organic unity of the capitalist system (described by Marx in the *Grundrisse*). He concludes: "To think or write or perform a drama means...to alter society, to alter the state, to control ideologies...Organic fame (as credit) would never be adequate to such a task, but above all can never be obtained. For this (enormous) task fame must be organized." Bertolt Brecht, "Gegen das 'Organische' des Ruhms, Für die Organisation," in *Werke*, vol. 21, pp. 327-331, here p. 329, lines 34-39 (my translation). For Adorno's criticism of the alternative proposed by Brecht, organized fame, see GS, vol. 7, p. 360, or translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 242.

²⁰³ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde* p. 125 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 89.

²⁰⁴ Aristotle, *Poetics* 26.1461b26-1462b15.

of the writer of epic theatre as articulating the joins of source material, of the fable that gives itself to be an integral entity, gapless and all of a piece: “‘It can happen like this, but it can also happen in a completely different way’ is the basic position of one who writes for epic theatre. He relates to his fable like the ballet master to his student. The first thing that he does is to loosen up its joints to the limits of the possible.”²⁰⁵ The epic theatre writer discovers a range of movement in an old story, like a supple dancer discovers a range of movement of her limbs, like, one might add, dialectics first discovers a range of movement in a concept. The different ways in which something can happen in a fable are not real, of course, but imaginary. Although Brecht seeks to expose the articulations of fables, he is also true to the “‘monadological confinement” that is the inarticulate expression of natural beauty.”²⁰⁶ As the 77th thesis of his “Kleines Organon für das Theater” (Little Organon for Theatre) bears out, the sort of praxis proposed by his plays is not, as Bürger thinks, the adoption of specific political contents for the life outside, but aesthetic experience:

The portrayals must, to be exact, recede before what is portrayed—the social life of human beings—, and the pleasure at the perfection of the portrayals should be heightened to a higher pleasure, the pleasure that the rules revealed in this social life are treated as temporary and imperfect. In this, the theatre lets the spectator be productive [produktiv], above the show. In his theatre, the spectator may enjoy his frightful and never-ending labours—which should give him sustenance [Unterhalt]—but as diversion [Unterhaltung], and may enjoy them along with the fright of his unceasing transformation. Here he might turn himself out [produziere er sich] in most effortless fashion; for the mode of livelihood [Existenz] requiring the least effort is in art.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ Walter Benjamin, “Was ist das epische Theater? Eine Studie zu Brecht (Erste Fassung),” in *Versuche über Brecht*, herausgegeben von Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1966), p. 15 (my translation, with gender-specific language preserved).

²⁰⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 108 as translated, *Aesthetic Theory* (1997), p. 69.

²⁰⁷ Bertolt Brecht, “Kleines Organon für das Theater,” in *Werke*, herausgegeben von Werner Hecht et al., große kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe, 30 vols. (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag; Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1988-2000), vol. 23, pp. 65-97, here p. 97, lines 20-31 (my translation, with gender-specific language preserved).

Here Brecht is making no exaggerated claim for his theatre. He does not imply that theatre gives the audience solutions that they can put into practice. He claims almost the inverse: he claims that life gives the audience frightful work that theatre might put *out* of practice. Epic theatre's momentary exposure of itself as a perfect construction should show that *not much* is possible for the characters on the stage, who are forced to work by hardly perfect rules, and that *not much* is possible for the actors, who have a script to follow. The spectators enjoy being outside the rules and above the show, as they should. Even where the actors are totally powerless, *things can still always be otherwise*. First, epic theatre's un-tragic hero "is nothing but a scene of contradictions, which make up our society."²⁰⁸ These contradictions do not correspond to the ideal of an autonomous individual thinking and acting in free self-determination. Where we find such *objective* contradiction the reality given must be open. A thing, however, cannot really be *a* and not-*a*. Where we find such objective contradiction, *a* and not-*a*, the thing can be other than what it is: it can have a new quality. Epic theatre's contradictions merely evoke the not-yet existing quality, absent from the play and from society: Brecht does not determine the new as a possible, realizable this or that. Yet this is the beauty of epic theatre, in which beauty itself turns out to be political. No determinate quality makes a thing beautiful, just as no determinate quality would make society a utopia. Present society is not an irredeemable chaos, disconnected from utopia: its contradictions show it to be merely one *possible* order, not reality. Secondly, a particular form that Brecht hit upon to run whole and part into contradiction with one another was the "quotable gesture."²⁰⁹ The text that

²⁰⁸ Walter Benjamin, "Was ist das epische Theater? (Zweite Fassung)," in *Versuche über Brecht*, herausgegeben von Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1966), p. 24 (my translation).

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 26 (my translation). Walter Benjamin gives examples of "quotable gestures" from *Happy End* and *Die Maßnahme* (The Measures Taken), to which we may add a third from *Threepenny Opera*: the parents of Polly Peachum mock and belittle their daughter's interest in the criminal kingpin Mack the Knife by reducing it

quotes itself, as Brecht's texts do, seeks "to interrupt its context."²¹⁰ A play that cites gestures is not wholly closed, sealed, harmonious—a thing of its own—, but it models the comportment of scholarly reception, by taking the first step for the audience caught up in the here and now of the action: it breaks a first piece out of the play that seems to go rushing past according to consequential logic, and then drops it in a new spot. The scholarly reception of artworks requires analyzing the play into pieces and then re-assembling the elements in a new way. The spectator who lives "in art" in this way does not copy what the *actors* act out on stage, who must recite their lines and move where the director has blocked out the action for them. Rather, Brecht suggests that work be transformed so that life become as unlaboured as it is for *spectators* of a play, who freely rearrange it. Unlike the actors, the spectators are unaffected by what happens on the stage; universal decrees can be pronounced, terrible conditions created and horrific suffering and death threatened, but the audience should never react as though the universal decrees applied to them, that the terrible conditions affected them or that the threat of horrific suffering and death intended them. They are not swept along with the forward flooding out of the action, but, being outside it, they can still it and rearrange its sequence. This contrasts with the position of workers. Nuclear power plant workers are hardly spectators. They are forced to follow time's arrow, and there is no going backwards from the point at which the damaged and burning nuclear plant starts to melt down: they are forced to take care of it over looking out for their own lives. The spectators of a play of epic theatre are not expected to copy the actions portrayed, but to adopt a critical stance toward the actions, so that they themselves not live tragically at every moment, so that they not live out the

to a number of functional but empty love-scene clichés, which Mack the Knife and Polly Peachum later recite in their love scene. Bertolt Brecht, *Die Dreigroschenoper* (Nach John Gays "The Beggar's Opera"), in *Werke*, vol. 2, pp. 229-322, here p. 239, line 26-p. 240, line 8 and p. 254, lines 18-23.

²¹⁰ Benjamin, "Was ist das epische Theater? (Zweite Fassung)," p. 26.

consequences of thinking that things cannot be otherwise, that it *is* so, and that “I” must absolutely do this one thing and only that. The livelihood that Brecht hopes for his audience is not *currently* practicable outside the theatre. For Brecht hopes that the audience will live *in art*; art, meanwhile, is critical of (current) practice, which is really unnecessary for human life, as Adorno has rightfully pointed out in his second thesis on theory and praxis: “Praxis was the reflection of the necessities of life; praxis is distorted where it would give these up. In this respect, art is critical of praxis as unfreedom; therewith begins its truth.”²¹¹ Praxis would be the undistorted reflection of the necessities of life. Only when human beings are liberated from anxiety, suffering and pain, fed, clothed and sheltered can they live in ease, as recipients, in art, where nothing is a matter of life and death, where nothing is forced, where the construction of the whole never leads to tunnel vision and drastic, destructive actions.

Brecht changed the institution of art from within by making production pass into reception and reception into production, much in the way that Marx mediated production and consumption in the introduction to the *Grundrisse*, in order to explode the middle terms “circulation” and “exchange” in the Robinsonades of Smith and Ricardo.²¹² The spectator, who, in bourgeois society, is supposed to consume the play, becomes “productive” according to Brecht’s model. Meanwhile, the writer for epic theatre is not just a producer, but also a recipient, the recipient of already-produced material—the fable—, which arrives as if completely finished and actual. The play of epic theatre is supposed to explode the normal procedures and schemata that the spectators employ to understand theatre in general.

²¹¹ GS, vol. 10.2, p. 762, or prefer to my translation here that of Henry W. Pickford, *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 262..

²¹² Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* (Berlin: Europäische Verlaganstalt, 1953), pp. 5-31, esp. pp. 10-21, or translated by Ernst Wangermann, “Economic Manuscripts of 1857-58 (First Version of *Capital*),” in Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works*, 50 vols. (New York: International Publishers, 1975-2004), vol. 28, pp. 17-48, esp. pp. 26-37.

A side-effect of Brecht's importation of Marx's dialectical techniques into theatre is that the aesthetic illusion that Marx thereby aimed to exorcise from economic theory is also dispelled where it has its true place—art. As the audience becomes productive in reception while the playwright becomes receptive in production, the aesthetic illusion of independence, which Bürger criticizes in organic, bourgeois art, dissipates.²¹³ Brecht demonstrates the mutual dependence of producer and recipient through their exchanging roles. To put it in Schiller's terms, epic theatre allows the audience "to experience only pure illusion alone in the living thing" and to notice, rather than overlook, "the life in illusion."²¹⁴

That Schiller can even speak of life in aesthetic illusion and aesthetic illusion in living beings stands as evidence against Bürger's claim that "the insights formulated in Kant's and Schiller's aesthetic writings presuppose the completed evolution of art as a sphere that is detached from the praxis of life."²¹⁵ Schiller presumes life in the aesthetic illusion, just as he presumes that dependent life, chained to reality ("living feminine beauty") can be experienced *as if* it were independent and *as if* it sincerely renounced all claims to be real.²¹⁶ "We" would have to have a high degree of aesthetic education to be able to see beautiful women as independent, whereas, according to the realistic attitude, feminine *beauty* is pleasing only insofar as *women* are actually dominated and subjugated. If Schiller himself considered art to be an entirely separate sphere, then there could be no experience of enslaved and subjugated

²¹³ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 64, or translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 48.

²¹⁴ Friedrich Schiller, *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*, in *Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden*, herausgegeben von Otto Dann et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1988-2004), vol. 8, pp. 556-676, here p. 664, lines 36-37 and lines 37-38 (letter 26), or prefer to my translations here those of Reginald Snell, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1965), p. 129.

²¹⁵ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 34 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 26.

²¹⁶ Schiller, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 8, p. 664, lines 27-28 as translated, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, p. 128.

people as emancipated and independent, nor of practical things as liberated from use. These are *aesthetic* experiences. Some of the communicating paths between art and the praxis of life in Schiller's aesthetics have already been charted by Ernst Bloch:

For if indeed freedom from the *reality* of purpose was the objective correlate for the subjective illusion, then not even the theatre illusion is an illusion. In fact, this illusion may be the very least one, as we shall see soon, even if Schiller himself called it a "beneficial illusion [wohltätige Illusion]." However, here this beneficence neutralizes its illusionary character decisively, once and for all. "The theater, regarded as a moral institution," is what is meant here: "We shall be given back to ourselves. Our feelings will awaken. Wholesome passion will shake our slumbering nature and our blood will well up anew."—In the same sense, the alleged mere illusion settles in reality, refreshes it, and points toward a stronger one, a reality that can be set free. The effusive declaration by Schiller, quoted above, sparked his early essay about the program of the theater, which is rooted so little in illusion, the theater regarded as a moral institution, consequently not at all free from reality. But if the theater is such an institution and in that it is, then the character of illusion is incompatible with it, because no illusion activates the realizing will and the will to reality.²¹⁷

Bloch goes on to say that it was the *bourgeoisie* who detached art and reality, whereas both Schiller and Brecht considered theatre to be a moral institution—although, for Brecht, "moral" had to be in keeping with theatre's basis in pleasure and fun. Epic theatre enlists a number of techniques to show the life in illusion—the lively movement between production and reception in a Brecht play is not illusion. But this does not seem any more a rebellion against illusion than Schiller's demand for a theatre that is an *awakening* indicating a reality that is more than the merely existing one—a reality that "can be delivered." Yet neither Brecht nor Schiller would destroy illusion completely—generally, art is making something other of reality, as opposed to receiving reality just as it is. An important premise on which Bürger's defense of Brecht is based—that Brecht is writing after a *gap* in the history of bourgeois art,

²¹⁷ Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, 3 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1959), vol. 1, p. 491 as translated by Jack Zipes and Frank Mecklenburg, "The Stage Regarded as a Paradigmatic Institution and the Decision within It," in Ernst Bloch, *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature*, pp. 224-244, here p. 236, or prefer the translation by Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice and Paul Knight, *The Principle of Hope*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), vol. 1, p. 423f.

the historical avant-garde²¹⁸—loses all meaning. To defend this, Bürger would have to conceive of the history of bourgeois art as continuous up until the avant-garde movements, whereas Brecht is a reaction to and against Schiller no less than the “historical” avant-garde movements are. Bürger has determined the historical specificity that he claims for the avant-garde (including the “engagement” of Brecht) in opposition to the separation of life and art in the so-called autonomous bourgeois artwork; one of the paradigmatic theorists of the bourgeois artwork, however,—Schiller—does not promote the autonomy thesis that Bürger attributes to him. Brecht might be closer to Schiller than to Dada.

At the same time, the “failure” that Bürger attributes to the historical avant-garde movements is far from self-evident. For Bürger also admits of failure on the side of avant-gardist works’ interpretation.

Bürger interprets the continuing rift between inorganic montage works and their reception as a problem for methodology—rather than as an indication that the art institution cannot completely absorb and control the challenges made to it by individual works.

Even while arguing for the control of the art institution over the political effect of the individual works, Bürger acknowledges the confusion of literary theory (which is part of that institution) when it is confronted with inorganic works:

In the process of reception, the avant-gardist work...provokes a break, which is the analogue of the incoherence (inorganicity) of the work. Between the shocklike experience of the inappropriateness of the mode of reception developed through dealing with organic works of art and the effort to grasp the principles of construction, there is a break: the interpretation of meaning is renounced. One of the decisive changes in the development of art that the historical avant-garde movements brought about consists in this new type of reception that the avant-gardist work of art provokes. The recipient’s attention no longer turns to a meaning of the work that

²¹⁸ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 123 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 88.

might be grasped by a reading of its constituent elements, but to the principle of construction.²¹⁹

Bürger goes on to claim that non-organic works defy the hermeneutic method, which posits a harmony between whole and parts. He makes the further claim that the change to reception that inorganic works necessitate is a change to reception in general—not just to the reception of non-organic works. He goes wrong, however, and contradicts his earlier quite trenchant and perfectly just critique of Hans-Georg Gadamer,²²⁰ in speculating that the new mode of reception would be a *synthesis* between the hermeneutic and formal methods.²²¹ A synthesis would not split the difference between hermeneutic and formal methods, but would end up *being* the hermeneutic method, which aims at *unity* and *harmony*. Brecht's theatre itself models a different kind of reception altogether *for the spectators*—detached, analytic reception—which is itself a model for confronting the contradictory nexus of constraints outside the theatre, perhaps as something absurd and merely socially necessary, rather than as a reality in which we see ourselves and with which we identify. This detachment is quite practical outside the theatre, considering the mechanism of ideology, whereby false views that are effectively useful or even indispensable to the existing, external order are imposed on subjects who then see themselves in this order and appropriate the views, even though this goes against their interests, needs and real happiness.

Bürger was closer to an adequate appreciation of Brecht's contribution when he attributed its superiority over Dada and Surrealism to Brecht's fidelity to the *Real-Possible*—even though he himself failed to grasp the rift between inorganic works and literary theory as an indication of the Real-Possible. As a result of this misunderstanding, Bürger claims that

²¹⁹ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 109 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 81.

²²⁰ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 9f.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 110f. as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 82.

Brecht's theory was more advanced than that of both Adorno and Lukács, who were, according to Bürger, "incapable of understanding the most important materialist writer of our time (Brecht)."²²² Yet the Real-Possible is one of Adorno's criteria for avant-garde art no less than it is Brecht's—which is hardly surprising, considering that Brecht and Adorno moved in the same circles. The convergence of Adorno's philosophy with Brecht's epic theatre is especially striking. Bloch describes Brecht's work as mediate montage, "without exploitation," which "takes its parts from the surface chopped to pieces," but which "does not put them into new closed unities," so which avoids becoming a closed "kaleidoscope."²²³ According to this description, the shock that Brecht's theatre pieces occasion would be a shock of the open, which, in Adorno, is a truth moment. Furthermore, quotable gestures—idiosyncratic, non-referential movements that become language in their iterance—would qualify as language *sui generis*, hence as the universal element upon which Adorno suggests a convergence of art and philosophy.²²⁴ The sort of praxis that Adorno thinks artworks should aim at is not far off from the praxis for Brecht of "Kleines Organon für das Theater." Quotable gestures have a cognitive character, in that they model the work of scholarly reception for the audience, and it is this implicit element of *analysis* that brings Brecht's montage-art closer to philosophy. But Brecht's theatre only suggests reception—reception which in important features goes beyond the present society and its imperatives to consume.

In contrast to Bürger, the conclusion that Adorno draws from the contradictions amongst methodological approaches is that non-organic works *explode* the secure methods, schemata and habits of reception that already exist, leaving the recipient on the open sea of the

²²² Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 123 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 88.

²²³ Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*, p. 227 as translated, *Heritage of Our Times*, p. 207.

²²⁴ GS, vol. 7, p. 197, or translated *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 131.

possible. Adorno and Brecht, along with Bloch, are generally agreed that, in their time, advanced art and philosophy are “unclosed”: advanced art and philosophy allow an experience of division or of non-identity between opposites—part and whole, particular and universal, inner and outer, theory and object—and the anticipation of their eventual reconciliation.²²⁵ Through them, the illusion of the work’s unity may be dissolved. No specific technique (such as montage) nor a specific reaction (shock) nor even a specific “open” form (such as the rondo) is advanced in itself or necessarily brings about the conscious and explicit experience of unclosed, contradictory reality. Yet the artist and the theorist are always dealing with specific techniques or methods, movements, schools, forms, particular details and different wholes. The artist and the theorist must present the most advanced consciousness in particular, but no particular element can “mean” advanced consciousness or the unclosed or the non-identical. No particular artistic technique is advanced in itself because advances are made only where reality is unclosed, and this contradiction is not something that particular artistic techniques in themselves have or do not have.

Bürger claims that the invalidation of single forms or techniques *as norms* was a particular contribution of the historical avant-garde movements: “Once the historical avant-garde movements revealed art as an institution as the solution to the mystery of the

²²⁵ Cf. Marc Jimenez, *Adorno et la modernité: Vers une esthétique négative* (s.l.: Klincksieck, 1986). Jimenez neglects the utopian aspect of Adorno’s aesthetics in claiming that *Aesthetic Theory* “demeure très largement ‘expérimentale’ et, de ce fait, non close, hostile à toute forme de réconciliation” ([*Aesthetic Theory*] remains “experimental” to a very large extent and therefore unclosed, hostile to any form of reconciliation, *ibid.*, p. 28) and that “l’esthétique d’Adorno n’est pas une esthétique de la réconciliation” (Adorno’s aesthetics is not an aesthetics of reconciliation, *ibid.*, p. 57). One could cite against this view Adorno’s statement from *Aesthetic Theory* that correct consciousness today, much more than “vague timeliness,” is “the most advanced consciousness of contradictions on the horizon of their possible reconciliation” (GS, vol. 7, p. 285 in my translation). Adorno does not exclude the possibility of reconciliation, but he does bar representing that state positively.

effectiveness or ineffectiveness of art, no form could any longer claim that it alone had either eternal or temporally limited validity.”²²⁶

Bürger begrudges Adorno the failure of his concept of the New to take into account the historical break that the avant-gardes made with art,²²⁷ for the result of this break, Bürger claims, is that “no movement in the arts today can legitimately claim to be historically more advanced *as art* than any other.”²²⁸ A correct appreciation of the historical avant-garde movements and their failure would, it would seem, render all discussion of a more or less advanced *art* null and void. The historical avant-garde movements, Bürger claims, made the entire gamut of techniques, materials and forms available for use in art, shattering the illusion of the absolute value of any one of them.²²⁹ Bürger sees Adorno’s category of the New not as the correlate to true artistic improvement and development, but rather as an ideological pendant to the planned, faddish novelty under commodity exchange. Collage placed all historical periods, all techniques, on the same level. Afterwards, any artwork that gives itself to be new, according to Bürger, is simply naïve—a fashion victim of capitalism. For Bürger, the “new” artwork is not an independent and honest illusion, but rather something that covers up the hard reality of globalized total capital, so, no better than the next commodity fetish.

Advanced art, however, is not necessarily New according to Adorno’s theory of Modernism.

While Bürger considers *inorganicity* to be a point of rupture that marked the historical avant-gardes out from everything that preceded them, Bloch and Adorno tend to see inorganicity not only as specific to Modernism, but also as part of a general tendency previous

²²⁶ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 121 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 86.

²²⁷ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 83f., or translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 60.

²²⁸ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 86 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 63.

²²⁹ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 130, or translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 94.

to Modernism. For Adorno and Bloch, realization of an absolute historical break in art history would cut art off from all communication with the possible, but Bürger mistakes the lack of neat historical periodization for Adorno's failure to develop his concept of the New historically and to establish it as a historical category.²³⁰ The contradictoriness of all concepts around the New, however, is a sign that the time of Modern art is not closed and sealed. On the one hand, inorganic art made its appearance well before Mahler, Dada, Surrealism, Brecht and other Moderns; on the other hand, inorganicity had its moment in the early part of the twentieth-century in Europe, and is bound up with a sweeping political situation particular to that setting. On the one hand, inorganic art and anticipations of it constitute the advanced form of art in every period; on the other hand, inorganicity was absolutely advanced only in Germany of the 1920s and 1930s, and it is by the light of this inorganic art that past inorganic art is advanced. On the one hand, inorganicity is *something*, a definite technique and form, montage; on the other hand, it is *nothing*, merely a negation of organicity. On one hand, it is New, and it is its newness that is advanced; on the other hand, it is Romantic, and it is its return to what was advanced that is advanced in present regression. On the one hand, inorganicity is something actual; on the other, it is only an indication of the Real-Possible. On the one hand, inorganicity awakens memory; on the other, it shakes free all the associations of the past, turns into something else. On one hand, inorganicity is so broad a category as to be meaningless; on the other hand, not everything fits into it.

Anti-organic art was not new at the beginning of the Modern period, but it was the most advanced art at that historical moment. It might still be.

²³⁰ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 86 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 63.

The Moderns' adoption of inorganic montage is advanced not merely because it went back to the advanced art of another time: it also went against the most regressive current of *its* time: against Nazism. By as early as 1920, Alfred Rosenberg, who would be tried and hanged in Nuremberg in 1946, had codified the Nazis' programme for German thought, in a pamphlet of anti-Jewish hate propaganda, *Unmoral im Talmud* (Immorality in the Talmud), where he prescribed the ways and forms of thinking that would enable the Nazis to become acceptable, to attain power and to carry out their anti-Jewish programme, unhindered by public opposition.²³¹ Rosenberg explicitly denounced not only dialectic, but also the dialectical necessity to linger over little things and the inorganic content that set the dialectic in motion. More broadly, Rosenberg banned lengthy disputation and any philosophical writing that was difficult, obscure, bifurcating, ambiguous or complicated. Against this, he wanted to see promoted ideas such as the living unity, essence, meaning, authenticity and race: what he called the "authentic essence" of the "German mind." Rosenberg retained much of the same vocabulary from *Unmoral im Talmud* in his best-selling book, *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts* (The Myth of the Twentieth Century), first published in 1930.²³² In that tract's concluding chapter, "The Unity of Essence," Rosenberg contrasts "unfruitfulness"²³³ to "organic truth"²³⁴ and at one point maintains that "the *authentically* Germanic [das

²³¹ Alfred Rosenberg, *Unmoral im Talmud* (Munich: Deutscher Volksverlag, 1920), p. 11. This document was made available to me through the interlibrary loan service of the Université de Montréal. Please note that, as hate literature, it falls under sections 318 and 319 of the Criminal Code of Canada. Passages of it are cited here with the intention to point out, for the purposes of removal, matters that tend to produce hatred towards identifiable groups in Canada.

²³² Alfred Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts: Eine Wertung der seelisch-geistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit*, 49.-50. Auflage (Munich: Hoheneichen Verlag, 1935). This document was made available to me through the interlibrary loan service of the Université de Montréal. Please note that, as hate literature, it falls under sections 318 and 319 of the Criminal Code of Canada. Passages of it are cited here with the intention to point out, for the purposes of removal, matters that tend to produce hatred towards identifiable groups in Canada.

²³³ Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts*, p. 678.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 683.

E i g e n t l i c h-Germanische],” in its world of heroic gods, was resistant to the “decline” attributed to the influence of, in Rosenberg’s words, “the Eskimo race.”²³⁵ The notion of truth as organic was not incidental to Rosenberg’s programme against the people who did not correspond to his inflexible definition of the “*authentically-Germanic*.” In *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Rosenberg, in denying Schopenhauer’s claim that “inner truth is a contradiction,” proposed “the idea of a completely different truth,” which, he declared, “I want to call organic truth and which this entire book is about.”²³⁶ Rosenberg named three parts to this supposed organic “truth”: a logical part (in which reason and understanding would be handled as tools), an intuitive part (supposedly self-evident in art, fairy tales and religious myths) and a part related to the representation of the will (in which ethical doctrines and forms of religion would be reduced to the mere function of symbolizing the will): “All of them—when they are genuine [echt]—go in the service of organic truth, in the service of the national traditions [Volkstums] tied to race.”²³⁷ Rosenberg appealed to Goethe’s famous saying “What is fruitful, alone is true” to give his opinions resonance; he did not interpret the passage, but attributed a meaning to it: “the essence of all that is organic.”²³⁸ Further to that, Rosenberg equated the so-called organic German truth with the programme of the Nazi party: “Already today, the symbol of organic German truth is incontestably the black swastika.”²³⁹ Since Rosenberg would have the reader accept that ethics and religion be reduced to symbols of the *will*, he could not but have the intention of putting out of practice all non-voluntaristic aspects of moral doctrine and of religious law—for example, spontaneous compassion. At the same

²³⁵ Ibid., p. 679.

²³⁶ Ibid., p. 683.

²³⁷ Ibid., p. 684.

²³⁸ Ibid., p. 685.

²³⁹ Ibid., p. 689.

time, he would have logic become entirely practical: thus he promoted the notion of a completely instrumental reason. *Furthermore, Rosenberg denied art and storytelling any illusory character, but alleged each artwork, tale and myth really to be some self-evident display of real characteristics of a Volk.* In Rosenberg's schema, then, non-voluntaristic ethical doctrines and religion were to be put out of practice so that thinking would serve only the preservation of myths, which, in his entirely false thinking, would be reality. His strategy was to exploit both the population's acceptance of the "Germanic Volk" as ultimately real *and* the underlying presumption that what is ultimately real cannot be challenged. Rosenberg employed the term "unity" to promote the identity of present and future with some völkisch mythic past:

A people [Volk] is lost as a people and, as such, dead, even, if, in surveying its history and testing its will to the future, it no longer finds any unity. No matter what forms the past may have gone through, if the nation gets to the point where it actually and properly denies its parables of the first awakening, then it negates the roots of its Being and Becoming, and condemns itself to unfruitfulness.²⁴⁰

Rosenberg was able to summon the regressive elements in Germany to Nazism by appealing to the widespread acceptance of organicism. Rosenberg did not merely co-opt past cultural figures such as Goethe for the purposes of Nazism; he strategically capitalized on the organicist current in the philosophy of his own times, taking advantage of the weak critical defenses of conservative Neo-Kantianism. Hans Vaihinger had already developed the concept of the organic in the first chapter of his general introduction to *Die Philosophie des Als Ob* (The Philosophy of "As If") and in terms somewhat similar to those employed by Rosenberg,

²⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 678.

with reference to the “purposefulness of the organism” and to the “soul.”²⁴¹ Vaihinger claimed: “Logical thought, with which we are especially concerned here, is a spontaneous appropriation of the outer world, it is an organic, purposive processing of the material of sensation. Logical thought is therefore an organic function of the psyche.”²⁴² Vaihinger unwittingly helped to create the context in which Rosenberg could make a notion of race pass as a wholly natural phenomenon, beyond question. Supported by the popularity of Vaihinger’s book, by popular acceptance for the thesis that thinking was essentially an *organic* and natural process, Rosenberg gave license to the marked savagery of his thought. Rejecting concepts altogether, Rosenberg replaced universals by “organic truth.” Such “organic truth” banishes the need to confront concepts with their *claims* because it eradicates all notion of claim: things simply are what they are. Rosenberg so entirely sheds the critical, anti-illusory aspects of Vaihinger’s thought. With Rosenberg, organicism becomes thoroughly uncritical. This makes it attractive to readers lacking in philosophical resources, but at the same time it positions them to accept anything. Rosenberg’s replacement of universals by some such “organic truth,” going unremarked by his readers, was instrumental in making that the notion of “race” pass as natural, as it circumvented not only inquiry into how Rosenberg had constructed that notion, but also inquiry into whether that notion actually captured what it claimed to capture. But it is not this most extreme *consequence* of organicism that makes it false; there is a hidden claim in organicism—the claim that it refers to something real—, and this is false.

The young Adorno was so sensitive a thinker that by late 1928, he had already claimed anti-organicism as an advanced artistic norm, publicly flagging his opposition to the

²⁴¹ Hans Vaihinger, *Die Philosophie des Als Ob: System der theoretischen, praktischen und religiösen Fiktionen der Menschheit auf Grund eines idealistischen Positivismus, mit einem Anhang über Kant und Nietzsche*, 7.18. Auflage (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1922), p. 1f. (my translations).

²⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 3 (my translation).

real organicist current, while calling on truth's need of dialectic, in his essay "Schubert."²⁴³ It is likely that he would have come into contact with regressive organicism by way of Schoenberg's text "The Relationship to the Text."²⁴⁴ Arnold Schoenberg voiced an organicist view of the artwork even after having composed all his important Expressionist works up to

Pierrot Lunaire:

I concluded that work of art is the same as any perfect organism. It is so homogeneous in its composition that it reveals its true inner essence in each detail. If you cut any part of the human body, the same blood will flow. If you hear one verse of a poem, one measure of a piece of music, you are able to comprehend the whole. In the same way, one word, one glance, one gesture, the gait, even the colour of the skin is enough to distinguish the character of a man. I had completely understood Schubert's lieder—including the lyrics—through the music alone, Stefan George's poetry through the sound alone.²⁴⁵

Here, manifestly, organicism is inseparable from racism. Twentieth-century organicism is not just the idea that an artwork is like an organism; it contains the notion that outer is the same as inner—or, part is the same as whole. Implicit in this notion of the identity of inner and outer is that the "inner" is "truth" and "essence" and "character," while the outer is appearance—for example, the appearance of a person's skin. The consequence is that any single random exterior quality of a person can be picked out, isolated, then taken to be the sum total of the individual, his intrinsic, essential "character." A single word is supposed to say everything

²⁴³ GS, vol. 17, pp. 18-33, or translated by Wieland Hoban "Schubert," in *Night Music: Essays on Music, 1928-1962*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (London: Seagull Books, 2009), pp. 19-46. "Schubert" first appeared in *Die Musik* in October 1928. Its particular political perspicuity may be owed, at least in part, to the influence of Walter Benjamin. In his letter of September 1, 1928, Benjamin acknowledges reception of Adorno's Schubert essay and promises a word about it; however, his next surviving letter to Adorno is dated March 29, 1930. See Benjamin to Adorno, Berlin, September 1, 1928, in Theodor W. Adorno and Walter Benjamin, *Briefwechsel, 1928-1940*, herausgegeben von Henri Lonitz (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1994), pp. 11-13. The reference to the essay is on p. 12.

²⁴⁴ Adorno mentions Schoenberg's text in his essay "Situation des Liedes" (GS, vol. 18, p. 347f.), which was first published in the November/December 1928 issue of *Musikblätter des Anbruch*, so, closely following the publication of "Schubert."

²⁴⁵ Arnold Schoenberg, "The Relationship to the Text," in *The Blaue Reiter Almanac*, ed. Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc, trans. Henning Falkenstein, with the assistance of Manug Terzian and Gertrude Hinderlie (Boston: MFA Publications, 2005), p. 95 [p. 32f.].

about the person: a person who happens to be saying “upstanding” while passing by would be upstanding; a person who happens to be saying “criminal” would be criminal. But this is arbitrary, and as arbitrary as any “meaning” or “essence” one would ascribe to a person’s skin colour. As organicism is the thinking that attempts to see each individual thing as continuous, homogeneous and everywhere animated by the same quintessence, organicism is helpless before truly regressive attitudes. For in order to recognize these lapses back into stages that humanity had abandoned for its own good, a thinker would have to wonder whether the present is not in fact heterogeneous: an aggregate of ideas, customs and behaviours that have not merely continued, but which have broken in from eras considered closed. Organicism can only lead to a naïve standpoint, for it balks at breaking up a text to consider the pieces in new, non-contiguous relations with one another, and to consider them in light of history and in the light of the world to come. Schoenberg’s intention was probably not to advocate discrimination, but to assert the equivalence of words and tones in successful Lieder, such as those of Schubert. Regardless, the opinion expressed in the passage is false, and, with it, the unity of lyric and its musical setting becomes false as an aesthetic criterion by which to judge any work. An advanced music critic will have to make his argument for Schubert’s greatness on the basis of inorganicity—wherever found in Schubert’s music.²⁴⁶ In his article “Schubert,” Adorno compared Schubert’s work with sonata form favourably to a “growing crystal,” claiming that a truthful analysis of Schubert’s form “would, before anything else, have to follow the dialectic that prevails between the sonata schema set in advance and Schubert’s

²⁴⁶ In his eloquent essay on both Adorno’s “Schubert” and responses to it, Kofi Agawu evokes the suggestion that Adorno’s musical analysis was a form of protest: “As often with Adorno, it is not the overarching verdict—about form, in this case—that matters, for anyone can cite counterexamples to undermine every one of his attributions; rather, it is the material contours of a particular characterization and the way those contours inspire dissent or rapture [rupture?] that matter...For Adorno, the site of description becomes the site of provocation.” Kofi Agawu, “What Adorno Makes Possible for Music Analysis,” *19th Century Music* 29, no. 1 (Summer 2005): pp. 49-55, here p. 53.

second, crystalline form.”²⁴⁷ This essay, turning constantly around the theme of death, indeed prepared this metaphor of the crystal to direct it emphatically against organicism: “At the beginning [Schubert’s work] is already the inorganic, volatile, brittle life of stones, and for it death has sunk too deep for it to have to fear it.”²⁴⁸ Adorno expressly protests against the interpretation that claims Schubert for organic unity. He argues that the *inorganicity* of Schubert’s music comes across in its potpourri character—that is, in its tendency to collect together extremely dissimilar themes, which repeat rather than develop. Adorno claims that, rather than reduce music to mere pieces, Schubertian potpourri “wants to recover the lost unity of artworks on the off-chance [auf gut Glück].”²⁴⁹ Adorno, however, emphatically distinguishes the unity that Schubert’s music only *hopes* to come upon by *chance* from organic unity, which is *necessary* unity, inextricable progress:

Now, admittedly, this seems like a way to get around the common conception of Schubert, which errs in its judgement on the lyrical—the conception, namely, that sees Schubert’s music as a plant-like unfolding essence, which grows out of itself and refreshingly blooms without regard for those preconceived forms—and perhaps without itself any form. Only it strictly denies such organological theory, precisely by way of the construction from potpourris. Such organic unity would necessarily be teleological: each cell in it would make the next necessary, and its inter-relatedness [Zusammenhang] would be the moving life of the subjective intention, life that has died and whose restitution certainly is not in accordance with the meaning of potpourri.²⁵⁰

The critique of organicism levied here applies back to Novalis. By employing the term *organology*, Adorno alludes to the “doctrine of instruments” that Novalis set down in an

²⁴⁷ GS, vol. 17, p. 27, or prefer to my translation here, “Schubert,” p. 35.

²⁴⁸ GS, vol. 17, p. 24, or prefer to my translation here “Schubert,” p. 30.

²⁴⁹ GS, vol. 17, p. 22, or prefer to my translation here “Schubert,” p. 27.

²⁵⁰ GS, vol. 17, p. 22, or prefer to my translation here “Schubert,” p. 27.

aphorism of his 1798 fragments on Goethe.²⁵¹ Adorno associates organology with organicism, and is perhaps not wrong to do so insofar as Novalis is concerned. On one hand, Novalis claims that Goethe is not only “a completely practical poet,”²⁵² but also an “applied practical philosopher, as every genuine artist down through the ages has been nothing but.”²⁵³ On the other hand, Novalis in his *Miscellaneous Remarks* of 1797 connects the intellect to the service of biological functions: “How can a human being have a feeling for a thing, without having the germ of it within [in sich]? What I shall understand must develop organically within me – and what I seem to learn is only food – stimulus [Incitament] of the organism.”²⁵⁴ He furthermore holds that truth itself is organic: “The difference between delusion [Wahn] and truth lies in the difference of their vital functions. Delusion lives off truth – truth has its life in itself.”²⁵⁵ According to Novalis, then, the understanding is practical in that it ultimately serves the organism, making “learning” an illusion; Novalis supposes that knowledge is in fact serving the organism’s drives. In 1928, Adorno turned his attention to a Romantic composer who could not be simply assimilated to Novalis’s organological-organicist theory. Furthermore, his essay points out the self-defeating character of organicism, by making the link between organology and organicism—that is, between instrumental reason and the demand for organic unity in art. From there, Adorno is able to point out that the organic artwork, which supposedly “blooms because it blooms,” would not be without reason, but would become part of the dominant form of reason, instrumental reason, as it would be

²⁵¹ Novalis, “[Über Goethe],” in *Schriften*, herausgegeben von Paul Kluckhohn und Richard Samuel, 2., nach den Handschriften ergänzte, erweiterte und verbesserte Auflage, 6 vols. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1960-), vol. 2, pp. 640-647, here p. 644 § 458 (my translation).

²⁵² Novalis, *Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 644 § 458 (my translation).

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 461 § 445 (my translation).

²⁵⁴ Novalis, “Vermischte Bemerkungen,” in *Schriften*, vol. 2, pp. 412-470 (even-numbered pages), here p. 418 §

19.

²⁵⁵ Novalis, *Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 414 § 8 (my translation).

subservient to an end outside of itself—that of the biological organism.²⁵⁶ Goethe’s demand that truth be organically productive follows from his organology. Novalis compares Goethe’s works to Wedgwood plates, those English “commodities” known for their sturdy beauty. Attractive serviceableness turns out to be a perfect excuse for capital accumulation, for Goethe’s industriousness evokes natural economy—the natural industry of beavers—, which then conveniently excuses the aristocratic prestige of his works, because Goethe bought his title with the refinery of the fruits of his labours: “Like the English, he has a taste whose economy is natural and whose nobility was purchased by the intellect.”²⁵⁷

Adorno not only explicitly rejects organicist theories, but also adopts an inorganic form for his own text. Max Paddison shows that, in “Schubert,” Adorno works in a “montage or mosaic-like manner,” ‘setting’ a poem that Schubert himself set—Goethe’s “Grenzen der Menschheit” (Limits of Humankind).²⁵⁸ Paddison shows how Adorno’s montage works to negate the appeal to totality through an inversion of the original imagery. This interpretation could be pursued further: for as Goethe was a well-known proponent of organicism, the fragmentation and recomposition of one of his own poems, specifically, reads both as a protest against his organicism and as the attempt to rescue him from what organicist theory had become in the early twentieth century. Adorno’s political sense for language goes wrong,

²⁵⁶ Angelus Selesius, “Ohne Warum” in *Der cherubische Wandersmann in Sämtliche poetische Werke*, herausgegeben und eingeleitet von Hans Ludwig Held, neu überarbeitete dritte Auflage (München: Carl Hanser, 1943-), vol. 3, Erstes Buch, p. 39, Nr. 289. The poem runs: “Die Ros ist ohn warum; sie blühet, weil sie blühet,/ Sie acht nicht ihrer selbst, fragt nicht, ob man sie siehet” (The Rose is without Why; it blooms because it blooms./It heeds not itself, asks not whether it is regarded). The publication details here indicate a consistency between organic poetry and regressive society.

²⁵⁷ Novalis, *Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 640 § 445 (my translation).

²⁵⁸ Max Paddison, “Reading History in the Ruins of Nature,” in *Expression, Truth and Authenticity: On Adorno’s Theory of Music and Musical Performance*, ed. Mário Vieira de Carvalho (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2009), pp. 41-58, esp. pp. 51-56, here p. 55. Paddison remarks that Schubert’s setting is not particularly well known (*ibid.*, p. 54). It is interesting to note that Alban Berg also set “Grenzen der Menschheit” (Jugendlieder, vol. 1), which is probably even less well known, but probably known to Adorno.

however, when he claims that “the authenticity [Echtheit] of Schubert’s perspectival atmospheres is inseparably bound to the authenticity of the identical content that they revolve around.”²⁵⁹ The vocabulary here is too close to that of Rosenberg; the appeal to Echtheit carries the association of some essence of German mind. The thinking that emerges from this vocabulary is also false. The truth of Schubert’s music indeed resides in its profusion of diverse themes whose strikingness prevents the whole thing from dissolving into chaos. But Adorno is wrong to justify Schubert’s repetitions on the grounds of the authenticity of *what* he repeats, and wrong, too, to contrast Schubert’s use of repetition to the use of repetition in *both* of Robert Schumann and Richard Wagner.²⁶⁰ It is true that “Wagner’s music, established according to the image of the organic, does not admit of potpourris.”²⁶¹ Wagner’s music works by way of Leitmotive, in a symbolic fashion, and this is what lends it so easily to semiotic analysis. The Leitmotive are supposed to guarantee the unity of the work, so, unlike the repetition in potpourri construction, their repetition is not gratuitous and not, therefore, joyful. Before Adorno, Proust had seen into Wagner’s organicism in a particularly penetrating fashion, and has his fictional narrator discover it at the piano in *La Prisonnière* (The Prisoner), first published, in French, in 1923. The Proustian narrator observes that Wagner’s themes do not so much repeat, as return:

I realised how intensely realistic Wagner’s work is, as I recalled those insistent, fleeting themes which appear in one act, fade away only to return and, sometimes distant, muted, almost detached, are at other times, while still vague, so immediate, so pressing, so internal, organic, visceral that their return seems not so much that of a motif as of a nerve pain.... It was a double diversity. Just as the spectrum makes the composition of light visible to us, the harmonies of a Wagner, the colour of an Elstir let us know the qualitative essence of another’s sensations in a way that love for another being can never do. Then there is the

²⁵⁹ GS, vol. 17, p. 26, or prefer to my translation here “Schubert,” p. 34.

²⁶⁰ GS, vol. 17, p. 26, or prefer to my translation here “Schubert,” p. 34.

²⁶¹ GS, vol. 17, p. 22, or prefer to my translation here “Schubert,” p. 27.

variety within the work itself, achieved by the only means there is of being genuinely diverse: bringing together different individualities. Where a lesser musician would claim he is depicting a squire or a knight, while having them sing the same music, Wagner, on the other hand, places under each name a different reality, and each time his squire appears, a particular figure, at once complex and simplistic, bursts, with a joyous, feudal clashing of lines, into the immensity of sound and leaves its mark there. Hence the fullness of a music which, in fact, is filled with countless different musics each of which is a being in its own right. A being, or the impression given by a fleeting aspect of nature. Even the thing which is most independent of the feeling it arouses in us, the song of a bird, the note of a huntsman's horn, the tune a shepherd plays on his pipe, all these leave on the horizon the silhouette of their sound. Certainly, Wagner was to bring it closer to us, appropriate it, work it in to an orchestral score, subordinate it to the loftiest musical ideas, but while still respecting its original character, as a woodcarver does the grain, the individual essence of the wood he sculpts.²⁶²

Here Proust brings together several elements of Wagner's organicism. The narrator considers that what is "real" in Wagner's work is the organic behaviour of the leitmotifs: they are "organic" because they come and go in the way of nerve pain. They return rather than repeat, just as the second appearance of a living individual is that person's return, not repetition. The narrator is impressed by the diversity of Wagner's work, but insists that it is a diversity in unity, the refraction of a single ray of light into its spectrum. This diversity has a phantasmagoric aspect: Wagner's work is peopled with figures such as shepherds, hunters and

²⁶² Marcel Proust, *La Prisonnière*, éd. Pierre-Edmond Robert (s.l.: Gallimard, 1989), p. 149f. as translated by Carol Clark, *The Prisoner*, in "*The Prisoner*," "*The Fugitive*" (London: Allen Lane, 2002), pp. 1-384, here p. 142f., from: "Je me rendais compte de tout ce qu'a de réel l'œuvre de Wagner, en revoyant ces thèmes insistants et fugaces qui visitent un acte, ne s'éloignent que pour revenir, et parfois lointains, assoupiés, presque détachés, sont à d'autres moments, tout en restant vagues, si pressants et si proches, si internes, si organiques, si viscéraux qu'on dirait la reprise moins d'un motif que d'une névralgie... Diversité double. Comme le spectre extériorise pour nous la composition de la lumière, l'harmonie d'un Wagner, la couleur d'un Elstir nous permettent de connaître cette essence qualitative des sensations d'un autre où l'amour pour un autre être ne nous fait pas pénétrer. Puis, diversité au sein de l'œuvre même, par le seul moyen qu'il y a d'être effectivement divers : réunir diverses individualités. Là où un petit musicien prétendrait qu'il peint un écuyer, un chevalier, alors qu'il leur ferait chanter la même musique, au contraire, sous chaque dénomination, Wagner met une réalité différente, et chaque fois que paraît son écuyer, c'est une figure particulière, à la fois compliquée et simpliste, qui, avec un entrecroisement de lignes joyeux et féodal, s'inscrit dans l'immensité sonore. D'où la plénitude d'une musique que remplissent en effet tant de musiques dont chacune est un être. Un être ou l'impression que donne un aspect momentané de la nature. Même ce qui est le plus indépendant du sentiment qu'elle nous fait éprouver, garde sa réalité extérieure et entièrement définie, le chant d'un oiseau, la sonnerie de cor d'un chasseur, l'air que joue un pâtre sur son chalumeau, découpent à l'horizon leur silhouette sonore. Certes, Wagner allait la rapprocher, s'en saisir, la faire entrer dans un orchestre, l'asservir aux plus hautes idées musicales, mais en respectant toutefois son originalité première comme un huchier les fibres, l'essence particulière du bois qu'il sculpte."

birds. Yet they serve “the highest musical ideas,” according to the narrator,—as, one might remark, commodities serve the idea of growth in presenting themselves as identical with their value. The narrator indeed evokes the motifs’ identity, which he thinks is assured by their first origins. The narrator compares Wagner to a cabinet-maker who respects “the grain, the particular essence of the wood he sculpts.” The essentialism of organicism is, then, service of diversity to the highest ideas, on one hand, and, on the other, the shaping of the individual in line with his or her origins. The Leitmotives are supposed to be like living characters in different situations or moods who nonetheless maintain identity. As such, they turn a blind eye to the reified, repetitive structure of reality. The same claim cannot be made about Schumann’s themes.

Schumann, who goes unnamed in Adorno’s slipshod allusion to Schubert’s “divine length”²⁶³—where we expect “heavenly length”²⁶⁴—wrote compositions whose inorganicity rivalled that of Schubert’s, not, however by way of potpourri assemblage, but rather in their brinks, in rifted structures of a seismic imagination that parted and distanced the similar, and which nonetheless created groundswells back towards it that changed the face of it. In his review of the Great C Major Symphony, Schumann was praising not so much the reach of Schubert’s phrases as the spontaneous eventfulness of his long work, that untiring spontaneity, which fed the spontaneity of the listener’s imagination, and which thus put its completion beyond itself, in what it, inspired, would inspire. Schumann was farthest removed from the notion of an artwork that took no notice of what lay before it and which anticipated no further artwork, but which grew only according to its own inner will until coming to a total fruition.

²⁶³ GS, vol. 17, p. 31 as translated, “Schubert,” p. 43.

²⁶⁴ Robert Schumann, “Die C-Dur-Sinfonie von Franz Schubert,” in *Robert Schumann in Eigenen Wort*, zusammengestellt und herausgegeben von Willi Reich (Zurich: Manesse Verlag, 1985), p. 396 (my translation).

Schumann would not be fooled by those who advertized the music-makers of his present, Wagner and Liszt, as “the musicians of the future.”²⁶⁵ Wagner’s irresponsible, symbolic usage of the diminished seventh chord would use it up completely, leaving nothing of it for the future generations, as Arnold Schoenberg bitterly begrudged him.²⁶⁶ The inorganicity of Schumann’s own music, its perfect brokenness that makes no *image* of completion, shows up later, in the music of the Second Viennese School, in the endless profusion of ideas that it inspired. Reaction to the total artwork, which has come to complete fruition, can only go backwards, not into the future: the regressive reaction to Wagner’s used-up diminished seventh chords was the culture industry, which, no more capable of carrying them forward than Schoenberg, accepted the sign system in which they had ended up, and so used them in film soundtracks to signify—usually something horrible, creepy or weird. The defense of Schubert’s potpourris, which had become a pejorative title, cannot be made by an appeal to the *genuineness* of its identical content, which Adorno finds lacking in Schumann and Wagner. Potpourri is the particular appearance of inorganicity in Schubert’s music. But Schubert’s music is inorganic in another way: it goes beyond itself, beyond its particular appearance as a delimited body of work. Schumann took up things that Schubert left undone, yet in a qualitatively different manner. Inorganicity goes counter to the notion of each composer as a singular, independent naturally blossoming genius whose work is a natural extension of himself. It should also go against the notion of *Echtheit*. The essay’s main thesis comes out damaged but recognizable. Despite its flaws, to which the mature thinker would freely

²⁶⁵ “What you take to be musicians of the future, I consider to be musicians of the present, and what you take to be musicians of the past (Bach, Handel, Beethoven), seem to me the best musicians of the future.” Robert Schumann to Richard Pohl, Düsseldorf, February 6, 1854, in *Robert Schumann in Eigenen Wort*, p. 336 (my translation).

²⁶⁶ Arnold Schoenberg, *Harmonielehre* (s.l.: Universal Edition, 1922), p. 288f.

admit,²⁶⁷ “Schubert” was resistant toward the regressive ideas of its time. Adorno’s response to the rise of Nazism did not end with this essay; his whole philosophy, in its sustained criticism of authenticity, meaning, essence, of any appeal to nature as the measure of true and false, of any appeal to a supposed unity of whole and part or of inner and outer, is a response to Nazism. Adorno’s adoption of dialectics was political, but as was his unapologetic refusal to simplify or to clarify ideas; political, too, was his inclusion of mundane objects for micrological interpretation and study, as was the criterion of inorganicity that served for both the form and content of his work; his resulting analyses were political solutions in their spirit of contestation, in their level of detail and in their style, which was resented far and wide for its brilliance and difficulty. For in each of these aspects of his philosophical *politics*, Adorno went directly against the specific Nazi prescriptions for thinking published by Rosenberg in *Unmoral im Talmud*. Doing philosophy in ways counter to the Nazis prescriptions—breaking their fetish concepts into pieces, while accentuating philosophy’s powerlessness and idleness—constitutes practice in the fullest, best sense of the term.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁷ GS, vol. 17, p. 10.

²⁶⁸ Axel Honneth, “Communication and Reconciliation: Habermas’s Critique of Adorno,” trans. Vincent Thomas and David Parent, *Telos*, no. 39 (1979): p. 45-61. Honneth finds fault with the lack of practical applications for Adorno’s philosophy: “His critical theory does not address any social group, nor can it provide a socialization model translatable into practice. Thus Adorno’s premises leave critical theory with both dogma and resignation” (ibid., p. 56). Furthermore, Honneth claims that Habermas succeeds where Adorno fails, for the reason that Habermas turns the lack of *addressee* for revolutionary theory (its “empirical indeterminacy”) into a theory of subjects who address one another: “While for Adorno this empirical indeterminacy gradually becomes resignation, Habermas confronts it with an historical and philosophical alternative. Using ‘interaction’ as a form of action viable in all social systems, and therefore also in the context of historical reification, Habermas is able to salvage the possibility of a theoretically guided political practice” (ibid., p. 58). Honneth fails to see, however, that, Adorno indeed recognized the particular context of domination in which he found himself in 1933 as *determinate*. It was a historical and philosophical context in which philosophy was expected to address a particular social group (so-called “Aryans”) and dictate theses that would translate into direct action against other social groups. It is true that Adorno’s critical theory “foregoes any theoretical claim concerning possible political solutions,” but, because philosophy was being co-opted for the ends of Nazism, philosophical practice itself had become political. Adorno’s philosophy was itself a practical solution, so did not need to make theoretical claims about the possibility of one. Honneth is also wrong when he claims that Habermas is justified in taking whatever of Adorno he finds useful to his theory of *action*: “Habermas can use Adorno’s theses systematically only by disregarding their historical and philosophical context” (ibid., p. 49). This implies, however, that the systematic

With a remarkable political astuteness sharpened no doubt by his intellectual circle,²⁶⁹ the 25-year-old Adorno closed his essay by blocking the reading that would equate the Schubertian landscape, the concept he had so consistently developed against the notion of “personality,” with a particular existing country or region, whether that be Austria, Germany or a frozen Northern land: “There is no homeland here except the remembered one.”²⁷⁰

development of Habermas’s theory of communicative action is more important than the ethical demand to consider whether anything of the historical and philosophical context of Nazism against which Adorno developed his theses has continued into the present era. For evidence supporting the claim that academic philosophy was part of the Nazis’ programme, see George Leaman, “Philosophy, Alfred Rosenberg and the Military Application of the Social Sciences,” *Jahrbuch für Soziologiegeschichte* (1992): pp. 241-260.

²⁶⁹ This intellectual circle is formidable to say the least: “Beginning in 1927 Adorno spent much time in Berlin. He visited his future wife, Gretel Karplus, and their circle there included Walter Benjamin, Siegfried Kracauer, Ernst Bloch, Otto Klemperer, Moholy-Nagy, and, importantly, Bertolt Brecht and his friends: the composers Hanns Eisler and Kurt Weill and Weill’s wife, the actress Lotte Lenya.” Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and the Frankfurt Institute*. New York: The Free Press, 1979, p. 20.

²⁷⁰ GS, vol. 17, p. 33, or prefer to my translation here “Schubert,” p. 45.

{Chapter VI} The question as to whether montage is more or less advanced than expression collapsed with the introduction of the concept of *image-explosion*; *anti-organicity* was found to be the criterion of advanced, modern art.

The question now is whether any notion of *advanced* art or even *art* is possible, in light of challenges posed first by G. W. F. Hegel, then also by Adorno and Peter Bürger.

In the conclusion to *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Bürger claims that the impossibility of advanced art after the failure of the historical avant-garde movements has already been registered by Hegel, in his criticism of the “prose” that characterizes the extreme form of Romantic art: “What we deduced for post avant-gardiste art from the failure of the avant-gardiste intentions, the legitimate side-by-side existence of styles and forms of which none can any longer claim to be the most advanced, is already observed by Hegel with reference to the art of his time.”¹ Bürger’s claim raises the interesting question whether the avant-garde movements were actually the *rear-guard*, straggling behind the theory of Hegel, who, in the third of the three parts of his lectures on aesthetics, articulates, as the outcome of the dissolution of the Romantic *form* of art, a *system* of art, where Symbolic, Classical and Romantic art exist on the same level, in the same historical moment, but as individual arts—architecture, sculpture, painting, music and poetry. What characterizes the dissolution of the Romantic form is the appearance of art that “becomes not only what romantic art is more or less throughout, i.e. portrait-like,” which “completely dissolves into the presentation of a portrait, whether in the plastic art, painting, or descriptive poetry,” and which “reverts to the imitation of nature, i.e. to an intentional approach to the contingency of immediate existence

¹ Peter Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, 2. Auflage (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980), p. 130, as translated by Michael Shaw, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 93. Please note that only chapters 1-4 of *Theorie der Avantgarde* are translated in *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (as chapters 2-5).

which, taken by itself, is unbeautiful and prosaic.”² For Hegel, it follows that one would wonder whether “such productions in general are still to be called works of art.”³

The “prosaic” works raise the question of their status because the standard of art is *Ideal*—the Idea of the beautiful. The question of the status of prosaic works can equally be a question of the standard of art. Whether the Ideal had to be abandoned completely and art made natural or whether the Ideal had to be fully embraced was the actual issue in contemporary art and aesthetics in 1828, which Hegel expressed by the question: “Is art to be poetry or prose?”⁴ Hegel’s question is rare and stirring, for it engages with the art that was currently on exposition in Berlin: paintings of the Düsseldorf school, which were *poetic* to the point of being, Hegel admits, “sugary and dull.”⁵ Yet the *prose* of genre Dutch paintings, on the other hand, struck the proponents of the Ideal as “vulgar.”⁶ Ideal beauty no longer looks essential to art once it reaches the point of ludicrous vacuity in the works of Wilhelm Schadow, whose senseless choice and flat treatment of tasteful subjects—such as a dancer performing an arabesque—renders them a mere calligraphy next to the works coming up on the horizon—epitomized in the drawings, engravings and, to a lesser extent, paintings by Adolph von Menzel, whose depth and sensitivity for everyday subjects has no equal.⁷ While Menzel flourished only after Hegel’s death, his would be a post-Romantic art modelled on the Dutch genre paintings that constitute the break with *Ideal beauty*. To appreciate how Hegel

² G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, Theorie-Werkausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969-71), vol. 14, p. 223 as translated by T. M. Knox, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), vol. 1, p. 596.

³ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, p. 223 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 596.

⁴ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 213 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 161.

⁵ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 214 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 162.

⁶ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 222 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 168.

⁷ On Menzel’s prose aesthetic, see Michael Fried, *Menzel’s Realism: Art and Embodiment in Nineteenth-Century Berlin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), esp. chapter ten, pp. 140-165.

resolved the question of his day, one might consider where this debate fits into the structure of his lectures:

PART I. THE IDEA OF ARTISTIC BEAUTY, OR THE IDEAL

...

Chapter I. CONCEPT OF THE BEAUTIFUL AS SUCH

...

Chapter II. THE BEAUTY OF NATURE

...

Chapter III. THE BEAUTY OF ART OR THE IDEAL

A. THE IDEAL AS SUCH

1. Beautiful Individuality

2. The Relation of the Ideal to Nature

B. THE DETERMINACY OF THE IDEAL⁸

The discussion of prosaic artworks fits under the heading “The Relation of the Ideal to Nature.” And its heading, “The Ideal as Such [Das Ideal als Solches],” is special in that it has only *two* moments, “Beautiful Individuality [Die schöne Individualität]” and “The Relation of the Ideal to Nature [Das Verhältnis des Ideals zur Natur],” rather than the usual three.

“Beautiful Individuality” is thus special in that it falls precisely between the chapter on natural beauty, which terminated in the rejection of nature as the ground for beauty that attains to the “*freedom*” and “*infinity*” implied in its concept,⁹ and the counter-movement, “The Relation of the Ideal to Nature,” art’s striving to rejoin the nature of which the Ideal purified itself. The unusual bipartite structure of “The Ideal as Such” makes a gesture toward a suspended moment in history, toward what in art was still open and undecided when Hegel was lecturing. Yet the whole of Hegel’s lectures on aesthetics can be read as his resolution of the conflict between poetry and prose: ultimately, he throws his weight behind poetry—the Ideal.¹⁰ As

⁸ Hegel, table of contents to *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, pp. xv-xvi.

⁹ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 201, or translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 151.

¹⁰ In this chapter and the following one, I extend Adorno’s critique of the bourgeois, Hegelian Ideal of art into areas of art and aesthetics that he either did not consider or did not consider closely. For a critique of Ideal that

Bürger points out, Hegel was nonetheless able to think beyond his system in conceiving of a post-Romantic art.¹¹ Post-Romantic art raises a different standard of beauty: “das Scheinen als solches für sich”¹²—as opposed to “das sinnliche Scheinen der Idee.”¹³ Dutch genre paintings are beautiful not in that the idea shines in them, but in that they are indeterminate shining, from which the Idea has departed: the fleetingness of shining on its own:

The one thing certain about beauty is, as it were, appearance for its own sake, and art is mastery in the portrayal of all the secrets of this ever profounder pure appearance of external realities [Vom Schönen wird gleichsam das Scheinen als solches für sich fixiert, und die Kunst ist die Meisterschaft in Darstellung aller Geheimnisse des sich in sich vertiefenden Scheinens der äußeren Erscheinungen]. Especially does art consist in heeding with a sharp eye the momentary and ever changing traits of the present world in the details of its life, which yet harmonize with the universal laws of... appearance [mit den allgemeinen Gesetzen des Scheinens], and always faithfully and truly keeping hold of what is most fleeting. A tree, or a landscape, is something already fixed, independent and permanent. But the lustre of metal, the shimmer of a bunch of grapes by candlelight, a vanishing glimpse of the moon or the sun, a smile, the expression of a swiftly passing emotion, ludicrous movements, postures, facial expressions—to grasp this most transitory and fugitive material, and to give it permanence for our contemplation in the fullness of its life is the hard task of art at this stage.¹⁴

It seems, then, that art can be given a new lease on life with a change to its concept. In the introduction to his lectures, however, Hegel suggests the opposite: “Art, considered in its highest vocation, is and remains for us a thing of the past.”¹⁵ Why this is, according to Hegel, has to do with the arbitrariness and complete relativity that the prose aesthetic has made of all materials: “Bondage to a particular subject-matter [Gehalt] and a mode of portrayal suitable for this material [Stoff] alone are for artists today something past, and art therefore has

does *not* take into account Adorno’s work in the area, see Hans-Heino Ewers, *Die schöne Individualität: Zur Genesis des bürgerlichen Kunstideals* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1978).

¹¹ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 129, or translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 93.

¹² Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, p. 227, or *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 598, where it is translated “appearance for its own sake.”

¹³ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 151, or *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 111, where it is translated “the pure appearance of the Idea to sense.”

¹⁴ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, p.227 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 598f.

¹⁵ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 25 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 11.

become a free instrument which the artist can wield in proportion to his subjective skill in relation to any material [Inhalt] of whatever kind.”¹⁶ The modern artist is not bound to any particular form, material, period, art or theme, but draws freely from all. As Hegel says of Jean Paul’s work: “We see nothing develop, everything just explodes.”¹⁷ The cessation of historical development with Jean Paul’s “scarcely guessable combinations” of notions, and his orders “alien” to his whimsically collected material and meanings, oversteps the criterion set by the Dutch masters of genre painting: shining as shining for the sake of shining.¹⁸ Of the artists coming *after* Jean Paul (who died in 1825), there can be no avant-garde, because Jean Paul turned the whole idea of development and progress in art into utter meaninglessness. When Hegel, lecturing after Jean Paul’s death, saw the end of the “development of art,”¹⁹ he was not engaging in “speculation”—in the sense of crystal-ball-gazing, as Bürger distorts this philosophical term of art.²⁰ As far as Hegel was concerned, post-Romantic art put all material and forms on the same level, whereas *he* wanted to show that they were steps in the necessary development of the concept. This is why art is a thing of the past to Hegel. With Jean Paul’s continual combination and recombination of the inorganic fossils of past art came the halt of art’s organic growth: art is dead. Bürger claims that Hegel *predicted* “what did not definitively occur until after the historical avant-garde movements”—i.e., the *legitimacy* of inorganic art—when in fact inorganic art was the art of Hegel’s time.²¹ That there could no longer be a *more developed* technique, theme, form or material after Jean Paul calls into question Bürger’s claims that Dada and Surrealist were avant-garde, and that their manifestations had levelled

¹⁶ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, p. 235 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 605.

¹⁷ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, p. 230 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 602.

¹⁸ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, p. 230 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 601.

¹⁹ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 130 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 93.

²⁰ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 130 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 94.

²¹ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 130 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 94.

the tradition. Claims for avant-garde art after *Jean Paul* would appear to be trailing behind Hegel's theory of art. But there is no reason to accept Hegel's theory of art history, which posits continual development, the historical unfolding of the concept. Adorno considers the history of art to be itself discontinuous, heterogeneous, inorganic and explosive. But Bürger dismisses Adorno's theory as "historical" for allegedly not taking into account "the total availability of material and forms," which, to Bürger, characterizes art *after* the historical avant-garde movements.²² Adorno's aesthetic theory is *not* based upon the historical avant-garde, as Bürger maintains. Its object is the art that takes historical discontinuity and inorganicity as its premises, and which indeed draws on whatever forms and styles of the past it needs. Adorno considers all great works of bourgeois art to presume the total availability of forms and styles, but also to make *critical distinctions* within this totality. At the same time, Adorno does not throw out the idea of advanced, progressive art, which results from the most advanced critical consciousness exercised in selecting from within that aesthetic totality:

Truth content becomes historical by the objectivation of correct consciousness in the work. This consciousness is no vague timeliness, no kairos that would justify the course of a world history, that is not the development of truth [kein vages An-der-Zeit-Sein, kein kairos, das gäbe dem Weltlauf recht, der nicht die Entfaltung der Wahrheit ist, not vague timeliness, not a kairos that would justify the course of the world, which is not the unfolding of truth]. Rather, ever since freedom emerged as a potential, correct consciousness has meant the most progressive consciousness of antagonisms on the horizon of their possible reconciliation. The criterion of the most progressive consciousness is the level of productive forces in the work, part of which, in the age of art's constitutive reflectedness, is the position that consciousness takes socially. As the materialization of the most progressive consciousness, which includes the productive critique of the given aesthetic and extra-aesthetic situation, the truth content of artworks is unconscious writing of history bound up with what has until now been repeated vanquished. Admittedly, just what is progressive is never so obvious as the innervation of fashion would like to dictate; it too has need of reflection. The determination of what is progressive involves the state of theory as a whole, for the decision cannot be resolved on the basis of isolated elements.²³

²² Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 130 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 94.

²³ GS, vol. 7, p. 285f. as translated by Robert Hullot-Kentor except where indicated, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 191f.

In this passage, Adorno contrasts the “course of the world” (or, the “way of the world”)—which Hegel’s philosophy of history takes to be the “unfolding of truth”—with the unconscious historiography that is the truth content of artworks. The individual artist, faced with the overwhelming objective mass of techniques, styles, forms, materials, themes and colours, does not think that the process of making the work is telling history; but the most progressive consciousness that forces the artist’s decisions and the greatest resistance to empirical reality that sparks the artist’s impulses will nonetheless result in a work that stores a history of the defeated in an externalized form of consciousness, so, bereft of consciousness. Adorno’s theory of advanced art takes into account Hegel’s theory that, at a certain point, art ceased to develop. Between Hegel’s theory of unfolding truth and artworks that turned against his theory, Adorno considers Hegel’s *theory* to be regressive. The artworks that took into consideration the stage to which Jean Paul had brought art—*explosion* rather than development—were, despite themselves, “advanced.” The advanced artwork is not more developed than the others; rather, it drives the aesthetic and social contradictions further—until they explode. A condition for the advanced artwork is the total availability of styles, forms, traditions and materials. The question then is the point at which post-development art burst onto the scene. According to Bürger, the *legitimate* co-existence of traditions, forms and materials “occurred definitively” only after the demise of Dada and Surrealism.²⁴ On the one hand, Bürger does not show in what respect post-Romantic work does *not* presuppose the total availability of equally-weighted materials, which he attributes to post avant-gardiste work; on the other hand, he posits the equal level of all materials as a fixed criterion that will endure forever more (“definitively”). The seeming *definitiveness* of an aesthetic transformation

²⁴ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 130 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 94.

cannot be the work of an avant-garde, but might indicate rather the advance of the rear-guard. The works of the historical avant-gardes, as art movements, must therefore fall behind the art of the closest readers of Jean Paul. Robert Schumann—whose surprising recourse to Baroque counterpoint in the context of a song cycle ostensibly about Romantic love is just one example of the legitimacy of past techniques and material²⁵—would have already realized what Bürger claims for the post avant-garde, while the historical avant-gardes would have made no specifically *artistic* advance, something which they themselves never claim to have done. Bürger may complain of Adorno’s lack of accounting for what is specific to Dada and Surrealism, but his own paralleling of prosaic works of Hegel’s day (and previous) with post avant-garde works, in reference to Hegel’s notion of “Schein as such for its own sake,” ignores the “rebellion against illusion” that is a mark of Modern works, and which is supposed to distinguish them from Dutch genre paintings. Adorno considers the rebellion against illusion to be the most recent event to throw into question the survival of art at all. Yet the period of realism that set in with a vengeance in 1848 could also be considered a revolt against illusion, no less important than the period of Modernism in the twentieth century. That depends on whether realist works like Menzel’s aim to capture the momentary, airy and fleeting *as permanence*, as Hegel claims for Dutch genre painting, or whether they renounce the former renunciation of reality, and aim to rid art of its free-standing illusoriness, as Adorno claims for Modern art. It is the revolt against illusion that endangers progressive art, for if artworks make no claims to attach to reality, they are in a sense honest about their illusoriness, and cannot be charged with ideology in the way that philosophical texts can be. Artworks of illusion make no claims to be real or to refer to anything real, so their failure to do so cannot

²⁵ Robert Schumann, *Dichterliebe*, *op. 48*, ed. Hansjörg Ewert (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2011), VI, pp. 10-11.

be considered false. As Adorno stated, with reference to Wagner: “Many works of the highest quality are true as the expression of a consciousness that is false in itself.”²⁶ A work such as *Die Meistersinger* fully exposes false consciousness and puts it on display so that it may be recognized—and its false consciousness *was* recognized when it was first presented, to judge by the hisses that greeted Beckmesser’s “serenade.”²⁷ It was not *universally* recognized as false consciousness when it appeared, although, with proper scholarship, all of humanity may yet be liberated from the illusion that the consciousness displayed in Wagner’s works is correct—on the day when we have achieved a society free of all stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination, no matter the group. Progressive art is possible because art can negate its own illusions through illusion, and part of its correct consciousness is the survival of illusion beyond the negation of illusion. By remaining illusory, progressive art does not claim to solve the real problems in society when it criticizes shapes of backward consciousness. The dwindling of aesthetic illusion—not the levelling and co-existence of all forms, techniques, styles and traditions—endangers the progressivity of art. The revolt against illusion would be an important difference between Dutch genre paintings (which, according to Hegel, are true to aesthetic Schein) and later artworks of the prose aesthetic—such as Menzel’s drawings, Webern’s Expressionist miniatures or even the post avant-garde works of realia occupying contemporary art museums today. Hegel’s question—whether art is to be poetry or prose—has

²⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 196, as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 129.

²⁷ With reference to this and other historical evidence, Jean-Jacques Nattiez argues convincingly that Beckmesser’s “serenade” is a parody of synagogue music. To support his claim that *Die Meistersinger* itself is anti-Semitic, Nattiez not only cites historical evidence of performance practice—such as the deliberate casting of a poor singer for the part of Beckmesser—, but also registers a number of aspects common to both the “serenade” and a work written for a synagogue cantor (alternation of vocal part and accompaniment, declamatory and melismatic style, long organ-points at the ends of phrases, descending fourths and rising thirds in the vocal part, presence of tremolos and the unusually high register demanded of the male voice). Jean-Jacques Nattiez, “Le Contenu antisémite des œuvres de Wagner: examen de leur contenu dramatique, de leurs livrets et de leur musique,” (lecture, Université de Montréal, Montréal, November 14, 2013).

been answered in favour of prose. But the criterion that Hegel raised in order to include works in the prose aesthetic under the umbrella of art—Schein—can rarely be applied to the prosaic works of his future. This is because Schein, along with Spiel, belongs to the side of poetry and the Ideal; the post-Romantic works in the wake of Jean Paul lodge a far more devastating critique of the Ideal than did the Dutch masters. This critique is extremely risky, but necessary. On the one side, the regressiveness of German Idealism and the rise of irrationalism after the modest advances of the Enlightenment aligned progressive consciousness against the Ideal. On the other side, aesthetic illusion, which is a condition of progressive art, is an aspect of the Ideal. While the historical avant-garde movements (some members of which, avid readers of Hegel) did not want to answer Hegel's question in favour of one side or the other, but rather exploited the recognized split *in art* between life and ideal in order to bring art-life and life together, *artists* faced the difficulty of making a critique that could destroy the very conditions of the possibility of that critique. Perhaps the most successful criticisms of the Ideal in art, Paul Celan's "Todesfuge" (Deathfuge) and Eduard Mörike's "Auf eine Lampe" (On a Lamp), are spread out amongst a number of its aspects—these works criticize not only illusion, but also *play* and *meaning*, in more or less oblique engagements with German Idealism as represented by Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Schiller and G. W. F. Hegel. Mörike's poem looks Classical, a throw-back to an earlier time, but it is actually a montage. Written about one century later, "Todesfuge" is incantatory and expressionless, yet so close to discourse that poetry no longer seems possible after it. In what look to be condemnations, Adorno seems to have come to too-hasty conclusions about each. These two works are philosophical accomplishments, in light of the double role of poet-philosopher played by the main object of their critique, Schiller. Yet their medium is fully language. Mörike's poem pre-

dates Dada and Surrealism, yet it negates the unity of whole and part that Bürger claims characterizes the avant-garde work of art.²⁸ Celan's poem follows Dada and Surrealism, a point at which, according to Bürger, the art institution can no longer be challenged, yet it raises the most serious questions about the continuation of culture at all when life has become interminable suffering. Adorno's belief that Schoenberg's "new music" took a polemical stance towards play and illusion requires a critical assessment with reference to Mörike and Celan.

Modern works negate specific aspects of the *Ideal*: illusion, play and meaning.

For Hegel, the *Ideal artwork* is a seeming synthesis of Being and the Idea that gives the appearance of liveliness: "The task of art must therefore be firmly established in art's having a calling to display the appearance of life [Erscheinung der Lebendigkeit, appearance of liveliness], and especially of spiritual animation (in its freedom, externally too) and to make the external correspond with its Concept."²⁹ The Ideal work is an appearance of liveliness insofar as it removes the fleetingness and blind arbitrariness of appearances of nature on which it draws. According to Adorno, art removes itself from accidents so that its beauty may perform a "saving critique" of the beauty of nature: in negating arbitrariness while being beautiful, art negates the idea that arbitrary nature really *means* something, yet supports the idea that nature can speak. For Hegel, by contrast, art's evacuation of the arbitrary is just a critique of the inherent illusoriness of arbitrariness itself:

In the ordinary external and internal world essentiality does indeed appear too, but in the form of a chaos of accidents, afflicted by the immediacy of the sensuous and by the capriciousness of situations, events, characters, etc. Art liberates the true content of phenomena from the pure appearance and deception of this bad, transitory world [Den Schein und die Täuschung dieser schlechten, vergänglichen Welt nimmt die Kunst von

²⁸ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 77 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 56.

²⁹ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 202 as translated except where indicated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 152.

jenem wahrhaften Gehalt der Erscheinungen fort, art removes the illusion and deception of this bad, transitory world from the content of appearances], and gives them a higher actuality, born of spirit.³⁰

For Hegel, the mere illusion of reality lies in fleetingness, arbitrariness, immediacy and sensuousness. These constitute *otherness* with respect to ego-feeling and subjectivity. Schein in art, the realm purified of accidents, is to Hegel not as objectionable as the Schein of bare existence, for his Idealism subordinates existence to thought. Hegel places the artwork hierarchically midway between the merely existing thing and the idea. Unlike a merely existing thing, the artwork is *doubly* determined as Schein. Aesthetic Schein for Hegel is the fleeting transition between bare, real, contingent, sensuous existence *and* the idea, where each *seems* to be the other:

Thereby the sensuous aspect of a work of art, in comparison with the immediate existence of things in nature, is elevated to a pure appearance [Schein, illusion], and the work of art stands in the *middle* between immediate sensuousness and ideal thought. It is *not yet* pure thought, but, despite its sensuousness, is *no longer* a purely material existent either, like stones, plants, and organic life [organisches Leben]; on the contrary, the sensuous in the work of art is itself something ideal, but which, not being ideal as thought is ideal, is still at the same time there externally as a thing [Ding].³¹

The artwork is an *appearance of liveliness* insofar as it is situated in between nature and divinity. *Appearance* (Erscheinung) in Hegel's system is the middle term between being and the Idea: the perfect centre of *The Science of Logic* is "Appearance."

An avowed source of Hegel's concept of *life* is Schiller's poem "Das Ideal und das Leben" (The Ideal and Life), whose opening stanza contrasts *divine life*, which flows on eternally, meeting no opposition to trouble or ripple its waters, with the waves of *human* generations, each tossing between the delights of the senses and peace of mind:

Ewigklar und spiegelrein und eben
Fließt das zephyrleichte Leben

³⁰ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 22 as translated except where indicated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 8f.

³¹ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 60 as translated except where indicated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 38.

Im Olymp den Seligen dahin.
 Monde wechseln und Geschlechter fliehen,
 Ihrer Götterjugend Rosen blühen
 Wandellos im ewigen Ruin.
 Zwischen Sinnenglück und Seelenfrieden
 Bleibt dem Menschen nur die bange Wahl.
 Auf der Stirn des hohen Uraniden
 Leuchtet ihr vermählter Strahl.

(Ever-clear, mirror-pure, strife unknowing,
 Life the zephyr-light is flowing
 In the Olympus of the blest.
 Moons wax and wane and generations fly
 Roses in their youth of gods blossom high
 Changeless in timeless ruins' rest.
 Humankind quivers, endlessly torn
 Between sensual joy and soul's content.
 On the brow of the high Uranus-born
 Their mingled beam of light is bent.)³²

This opening stanza sets out the task of the poem: to address the endless human dilemma between satisfying one's body and satisfying one's conscience. What follows reads like a wildly overexcited rewriting of Kant's three *Critiques* in reverse order as a single unit sprung under the pressure of an enthusiasm that hurtles against every limit, crashes headlong against every obstacle and breaks through them. "Das Ideal und das Leben" rehearses a wild array of ideas for overcoming the limits of close, cramped, purely sensuous or purely moral-conventional forms of existence, and strives after experiences to rival the bliss of the gods on Olympus, which it sets as a goal for human life.³³ Borrowing the imagery of wings and flight from *The Phaedrus*, Schiller alludes to the passage in Plato's work most suggestive of a

³² Friedrich Schiller, "Das Ideal und das Leben," in *Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden*, herausgegeben von Otto Dann et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1988-2004), vol. 1, pp. 152-156, here p. 152, lines 1-10, with my translation.

³³ This suggests that Schiller is defending the use of transcendent principles against Kant. See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), A295f/B352f. NB: The pagination given here and throughout, with "A" and "B" editions noted, corresponds to the Academy of Sciences edition of Kant's works (*Kant's Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin: G. Reimer/ W. de Gruyter & Co., 1902-) and appears in the margins of Guyer and Wood's translation.

traversable boundary between the things on earth and the ideal, divine world of the Forms.³⁴

The “frightful choice” that seemed the lot of human beings is not really a choice, on Schiller’s reading, for each alternative is false when something of the ideal world, which knows no such conflict, is open to human beings:

Nur der Körper eignet jenen Mächten,
Die das dunkle Schicksal flechten,
Aber frei von jeder Zeitgewalt,
Die Gespielin seliger Naturen
Wandelt oben in des Lichtes Fluren,
Göttlich unter Göttern, die *Gestalt*.
Wollt ihr hoch auf ihren Flügeln schweben,
Werft die Angst des Irdischen von euch.
Fliehet aus dem engen, dumpfen Leben
In des Ideales Reich!

(Only the body may those powers grieve,
Those powers that Fates the evil weave,
Free yet from time’s violence and storm,
The mistress of those blessed and serene
Strolls high above in great halls’ bright sheen,
Godly amongst gods, Itself, the *Form*.
If you wish to soar up high on your wings
Throw away your fear of the earthly real.
Fly out of this life of close, musty things
Into the Ideal!)³⁵

As the ideal Platonic form of beauty holds out the most hope for a transition from the changeable world of the senses to the eternal, supra-sensible realm, the greater part of the poem is dedicated to the aesthetic. Beauty opens a third way between physical compulsion and moral necessity by transforming not only sensible objects, but also the character of the recipient’s gaze. Beauty is the transformation of the sensuous mere thing’s pure Schein into *image*. In the second stanza, Schiller warns of a certain danger for the viewer who considers the brilliant surfaces of things to be a “feast for the eyes” and who revels in such pure Schein.

³⁴ Plato, *Phaedrus*, ed. Harvey Yunis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 55-60, lines 250e-256e.

³⁵ Schiller, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 1, p. 152, lines 21-30, with my translation.

The recipient is not to take pleasure in earthly things, which, according to the Platonic doctrine, are nothing but Schein lacking all reality:

An dem Scheine mag der Blick sich weiden,
Des Genusses wandelbare Freuden
Rächet schleunig der Begierde Flucht.

(The gaze may graze on the shining surface,
Desire's flight revenges in all swiftness
Changeable, inconstant pleasure's delight.)³⁶

The viewer must therefore be protected from the seductive powers of changeable, earthly surfaces. The image, Bild, is a perceptible, sensible thing that stands before the gaze "as if sprung out of nothing," no longer enticing the viewer to consume it, because something that looks insubstantial, "wispy and light," can hardly offer sustenance. A material thing's illusion of nothingness occasions a sort of reception other than consumption: the gaze is "enraptured" by the image that stands facing it, rather than driven to feast itself on an alluring sheen:

Aber dringt bis in der Schönheit Sphäre,
Und im Staube bleibt die Schwere
Mit dem Stoff, den sie beherrscht, zurück.
Nicht der Masse qualvoll abgerungen,
Schlank und leicht, wie aus dem Nichts gesprungen,
Steht das Bild vor dem entzückten Blick.
Alle Zweifel, alle Kämpfe schweigen
In des Sieges hoher Sicherheit,
Ausgestoßen hat es jeden Zeugen
Menschlicher Bedürftigkeit.

(But press through into the sphere of beauty
And leave in the dust all difficulty
Along with the matter that it conquers!
Not cut from the stone with agonizing,
But wispy, light, as if sprung from nothing,
Stands the image before enchanted eyes.
All doubts and qualms, all struggles still and cease.
In the victory of higher certainty
Comes the expulsion of all witnesses
To human need and poverty.)³⁷

³⁶ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 152, lines 14-16, with my translation.

³⁷ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 154, lines 81-90, with my translation.

Schiller here avows that the “sphere of beauty” is possible only through a difficult transformation of material, material which does not itself enter into that sphere. The aesthetic image must disavow both material and the signs of difficulties experienced in “dominating” the material—in other words, it must disavow the artwork’s *work* character.³⁸ The sphere of beauty might make good the inherent deceptions of material satisfactions, but at the price of material’s subordination to spirit and the exile from beauty of “all witnesses to human need.” The aesthetic image closes our eyes to the actual longing and neediness in humanity. “Das Ideal und das Leben” occupies an unusual position. It divulges in art what art must hide to be art. The poem reflects on itself and on artistic production in general, going behind the scenes of beauty, to perform a self-reflexive critique of aesthetic illusion and of affirmative images.³⁹

A second avowed source of Hegel’s concept of *life* is another work by Schiller: the Prologue to *Wallenstein*. In the Prologue, Schiller makes an appearance—or rather, makes the appearance of an appearance, seeming to step out from his play to address his audience as author, yet in poetic form. The “life” here is not divine life, but serious, suffering human life, which art seems to take on, while removing its seriousness. The last stanza elevates poetry’s *right to play* above criticism, then defends art as a realm of emphatic or “aufrichtig” (forthright) illusion. Schiller claims that poetic inspiration does indeed make the dark image of truth pass into the “cheerful” or “light-hearted” realm of art, but he concludes that this “deception” or “illusion” truly destroys itself rather than deceitfully insinuating truth:

³⁸ Peter Bürger notes that it belongs to Schiller’s concept of aesthetic illusion that “*labour* becomes hidden.” Peter Bürger, *Zum Kritik der idealistischen Ästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), p. 62 (my translation).

³⁹ Hans-Heino Ewers makes the general remark that the artistic Ideal is a self-critique of bourgeois society because it acts out the atomization and division of labour in a separate sphere of illusion, which is able to provide a point of contrast against the real state of bourgeois society (which hypostatizes in earnest). Ewers largely retains the conception of Schein as surface (Oberfläche). Ewers, *Die schöne Individualität*, p. 266.

Und wenn die Muse heut,
Des Tanzes freie Göttin und Gesangs,
Ihr altes deutsches Recht, des Reimes Spiel,
Bescheiden wieder fordert – tadelts nicht!
Ja danket ihr's, daß sie das düstre Bild
Der Wahrheit in das heitre Reich der Kunst
Hinüberspielt, die Täuschung, die sie schafft,
Aufrichtig selbst zerstört und ihren Schein
Der Wahrheit nicht betrüglich unterschiebt,
Ernst ist das Leben, heiter ist die Kunst.

(And if today the muse,
Unbounded goddess stirring dance and verse,
Her ancient German right, the play of rhyme,
Demands, however meekly—find no fault!
Yea, for her knack that turns the image grim
With truth into the cheerful realm of art
Give thanks, and for her honest will to spoil
The trick that she invents, without a mind
To pass off her illusion as the truth,
Life is in earnest, cheerful is all art.)⁴⁰

These lines give evidence against the criticism that aesthetic illusion is merely the affirmative and ideological masking of real suffering, gloom and dismal dusk by beautiful, bright consolation. Art does not consist in passing illusion off as truth, according to Schiller, but in combusting the rosy picture that the imagination makes out of what is really dark. In the prologue, Schiller not only discursively defines art as the cheer that critically destroys *itself*, but he also performs such an act of self-negation aesthetically. For however dark *Wallenstein* may seem, Schiller avows that it is cheerful in relation to *life* during the Thirty Years' War. It is really art's *illusion* that is affirmative, the illusion that makes the claim that life is cheerful. To consider aesthetic illusion to be a mere "conceptual residue of idealist metaphysics" that contemporary theory would be best to do without is to ignore the self-critical beginnings of the

⁴⁰ Friedrich Schiller, prologue to *Wallenstein*, in *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 4, pp. 13-17, here p. 17, lines 129-138, with my translation.

concept in Schiller.⁴¹ For while the concept of aesthetic illusion may well belong to German Idealism, Schiller developed it in a dialectical, exceptionally critical manner. Schiller's concept of Schein contains not only a positive moment, the shining picture that art paints in the face of dark truth, but also a negative moment, art's determination of this *shine as illusion*. While Adorno judged the double character of Schiller's concept of illusion sufficiently advanced to have it enter into his own theory of aesthetics, it does not follow that Adorno's philosophy therefore contains an Idealist element. Adorno transforms Schiller's concept of Schein precisely to remove its Idealist elements.

While Adorno admits, with Schiller, that each artwork negates its own moments of Schein, he emphasizes the self-critical movement of art as a *whole*:

The truth content of artworks is fused with their critical content. That is why works are also critics of one another. This, not the historical continuity of their dependencies, binds artworks to one another; "each artwork is the mortal enemy of the other"; the unity of the history of art is the dialectical figure of determinate negation.⁴²

Schiller's work suffers from an excess of authorial intention. He anticipates the criticisms of theory and attempts to defend his work against them on the critics' own terrain, which is also his own: that of discourse. This attempt to manoeuvre not only his work but also poetry as a whole into a position of critical unassailability misunderstands the manner in which artworks dissolve the aesthetic illusion. Schiller's Prologue appears to dissolve aesthetic illusion by equipping *Wallenstein* with a theoretical apparatus that takes over the task of philosophy of art. But the dissolution of artworks' illusion of being independent, natural, effortless wholes does not come about through any such self-mastery, self-consciousness, intellectualized over-monitoring of artistic labour, in the thematization of criticism and of art. Art that defends itself

⁴¹ Nikolas Kompridis, "Amidst the Plurality of Voices: Philosophy of Music after Adorno," *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 8, no. 3 (December 2003): pp. 167-180, p. 178.

⁴² GS, vol. 7, p. 59f., as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 35.

against criticism in advance merely justifies the domination of material by spirit in carrying it to an extreme; on the contrary, the *necessity* of dominating material is the very illusion to be dissolved. The dissolution of illusion therefore happens not through the pure intellect, but through the material, specifically through the advance of the material, through material's escape from the centripetal force of illusion, from the unifying force of each individual work. Furthermore, art's self-critical movement as a whole does not render theoretical considerations superfluous; theory informs the advance of the material, even if at the moment of advance, it cannot be theoretically articulated. While Schiller is correct in his claim that art destroys its own illusion, albeit not in the way that is suggested by the behaviour of his own poetry, art's self-critique does not then justify a naïve, unthinking, playful reception. Art's *play*—the play of rhyme, the play of sensations—is its appearance, its appearance of liveliness. Adorno so departs from Schiller on a second point: he does not presuppose the “ancient German right, the play of rhyme,” which in Schiller's view places art as a whole above criticism. Rather, art's appearance of life—its playfulness—must be criticized, confronted with the death and reification that the artwork is. In other words:

Adorno suggests that art's status as *poetry*, removed from the accidents and caprices of life, must be questioned, confronted with art that would be life—prose.

The right to existence of poetry as a whole was perhaps unquestioned in philosophy of art until 1951, when Adorno made his contentious statement on poetry after Auschwitz: “It is barbaric to write a poem after Auschwitz, and that also corrodes the verdict voiced on why it has become impossible to write poems today.”⁴³ By turns Adorno maintained,⁴⁴ qualified,⁴⁵

⁴³ GS, vol. 10.1, p. 30, as translated by Samuel Weber and Shierry Weber, “Cultural Criticism and Society,” in *Prisms* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), pp. 17-34, here p. 34.

revised⁴⁶ and partially withdrew⁴⁷ this statement under the pressure of rebuttals such as that of Hans Magnus Enzensberger in *Merkur* in 1959, who defended poetry, that of Nelly Sachs above all, against the alternative: the loss of language, of speech itself.⁴⁸ The upshot of this line of counter-argument is that language guards society against forms of barbarism that are far more serious and which follow from Nazism much more directly than the barbarism of pure escapism that Adorno seems to be attacking. These are: descent into inarticulate rage and vengeance, the erasure of the face of the victim, even the incapacitation of life itself. For Enzensberger, Nelly Sachs is exceptional in her rescue of what could also be considered a victim of Nazism: “Phrase after phrase, she gives us back alone what we threatened to lose: language.”⁴⁹ This argument, however, does not engage with the question of art’s illusory

⁴⁴ “I do not want to soften my statement that it is barbaric to continue to write poetry after Auschwitz; it expresses, negatively, the impulse that animates committed literature. The question one of the characters in Sartre’s *Morts sans Sépulture*...asks, ‘Does living have any meaning when men exist who beat you until your bones break?’ is also the question whether art as such should still exist at all; whether spiritual regression in the concept of committed literature is not enjoined by the regression of society itself. But Hans Magnus Enzensberger’s rejoinder also remains true, namely that literature must resist precisely this verdict, that is, be such that it does not surrender to cynicism merely by existing after Auschwitz. It is the situation of literature itself and not simply one’s relation to it that is paradoxical.” GS, vol. 11, p. 422f., as translated by Shierry Weber Nicholsen, “Commitment,” in *Notes to Literature*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991-1992), vol. 2, pp. 76-94, here p. 87f.

⁴⁵ “The statement that it is not possible to write poetry after Auschwitz does not hold absolutely, but it is certain that after Auschwitz, because Auschwitz was possible and remains possible for the foreseeable future, light-hearted art is no longer conceivable.” GS, vol. 11, p. 603, as translated, “Is Art Lighthearted?” in *Notes to Literature*, vol. 2, pp. 247-253, here p. 251.

⁴⁶ “The concept of a cultural resurrection after Auschwitz is illusory and absurd, and every work created since then has had to pay the bitter price for this. But because the world has outlived its own downfall, it nevertheless needs art to write its unconscious history. The authentic artists of the present are those in whose works the uttermost horror still quivers.” GS, vol. 10.2, p. 506, as translated by Henry Pickford, “Those Twenties,” in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 41-48, here p. 48.

⁴⁷ “Perennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured man has to scream; hence it may have been wrong to say that after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems.” GS, vol. 6, p. 355, as translated by E. B. Ashton, *Negative Dialectics* (1973; repr., New York: Continuum, 1997), p. 362.

⁴⁸ Hans Magnus Enzensberger, “Die Steine der Freiheit,” in *Lyrik nach Auschwitz? Adorno und die Dichter*, herausgegeben von Petra Kiedaisch (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1995), pp. 73-76. This volume assembles materials on the debate on poetry after Auschwitz: the relevant excerpts from Adorno’s texts and the responses from both literary theory and literature.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 73 (my translation).

character. Enzensberger might be claiming that what was appropriated by the Nazis in reality can be returned to reality by the realm of illusion. But he could just as well assume that poetry has ceased to be a realm of illusion. It is an open question whether Enzensberger is correct to claim that a poem that cites from the (written) Torah *really* delivers the German language from the Nazis, who, he states, cut German off from *itself*, from a long history springing out of a decisive meeting between Jewish poetry and Luther.⁵⁰ Yet there is something paradoxical in claiming that poems after Auschwitz really undo the damage that the Nazis wrought on language. If poems are actually effective against the strongest and most brutal reality, if they actually come out of their sphere to act in the world, then poetry has lost its own language, art language, which closes poetry to purposes, communication and real effectiveness by virtue of its entirely inward, self-critical movement. For poetic language really to act in the world, it would no longer be poetry—language under the illusion of having nothing to do with the greater illusion.

Art itself had refused illusion prior to Auschwitz, and Adorno was keenly aware of such refusal in the interwar period. In 1938, publication date of his essay “On the Fetish-Character of Music and the Regression of Listening,” Adorno claimed that Western music had *always* had an anti-illusory element in dissonance, “which refuses to give credence to the illusion [Trug] of prevailing harmony”; moreover, he claimed that such “asceticism,” regressive in other times, had become the mark of the advanced art of his era, Modern art.⁵¹ In that same essay, Adorno claims explicitly that in the current situation, art must do without

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 75f.

⁵¹ GS, vol. 14, p. 18, or prefer to my translation here the uncredited translation modified by Richard Leppert, “On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening,” in *Essays on Music*, selected, with introduction, commentary and notes by Richard Leppert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 288-317, here p. 291.

illusion: “Only where...illusion is absent is faith with its possibility kept.”⁵² If the redemptive side of illusion is impossible to separate from its deceptive side, it becomes necessary for art to forego illusion altogether so that it can remain true to what the unity of illusion in the great music of Haydn and Mozart once registered: “the image of a social condition in which those particular moments of happiness, alone, would be more than mere appearance [Schein, illusion].”⁵³ In order to undo the unity of illusion, new music withheld the “moments of happiness” that Adorno names: “sensory stimulation as the gate of entry into the harmonic and eventually the coloristic dimensions; the unbridled person as the bearer of expression and of the humanization of the music itself; ‘superficiality’ as a critique of the mute objectivity of forms.”⁵⁴

Paul Celan’s “Todesfuge” prohibits the moments of happiness promised by illusion.⁵⁵ The surface of the unornamented monody rouses physical aversion. The poetic subject is not free but makes the demand for expression and humanity in the face of extreme restriction of his powers, demand which is articulated in tight lexical fields whose elements shrink, through repetition, to markers—markers of stone and markers of eye, of hair, of time. Not superficiality, but seriousness and depth form its critique, critique not of mute objectivity, but of objectivity that has made mute. So this poetry should make itself imageless, as the first works of Expressionism. Yet the loss of illusion in “Todesfuge” is qualitatively different from the disillusionment in works of Modern music. The loss of illusion in new music can be

⁵² GS, vol. 14, p. 19, or prefer to my translation here “On the Fetish-Character in Music,” p. 292.

⁵³ GS, vol. 14, p. 17 as translated except where indicated, “On the Fetish-Character in Music,” p. 290.

⁵⁴ GS, vol. 14, p. 17 as translated, “On the Fetish-Character of Music,” p. 290.

⁵⁵ Paul Celan, “Todesfuge,” in *Werke*, Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe, 1. Abteilung [division], *Lyrik und Prosa*, begründet von Beda Allemann, herausgegeben von Rolf Bächer und Axel Gellhaus, vol. 2/3, “*Der Sand aus den Urnen*” und “*Mohn und Gedächtnis*”, herausgegeben von Andreas Lohr unter Mitarbeit von Holger Gehle in Verbindung mit Rolf Bächer, 2 Teile (parts) (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003), Teil (part) 1, pp. 99-102.

explained in art-immanent terms alone, as a particularly severe crisis in the constant aesthetic cycle that goes from illusion to expression: “Because [the traits of expression], as artworks, however indeed remain illusion, the conflict between illusion—form most broadly understood—and expression has not been had out and fluctuates historically.”⁵⁶ “Todesfuge” certainly criticizes illusion in art-immanent terms. Yet the loss of illusion in “Todesfuge” is *also* motivated by an extra-aesthetic event that permitted no illusion, and which made naïveté in itself an evil. Art’s disavowal of labour is barbaric when social labour takes on the specific form of forced labour organized to fulfil not the needs of life but the administrative objective of genocide. Poetry’s domination of its material—arbitrary and rule-bound natural languages—, its process of spiritualization, which, in Schiller’s words, leaves material “in the dust,” becomes barbaric when the *human individual* has become material, a body to torture and to dispose of. In ceasing to disavow work, in ceasing to dominate material, poetry makes its critique of the extreme example, in society, of such disavowal and domination—at the price of poetry itself. Celan’s evocation of Spiel, a word that becomes a kind of noble, time-honoured aureole with which Schiller crowns German poetry in his line “Ihr altes deutsches Recht, des Reimes Spiel” (Her ancient German right, the play of rhyme), his association of Spielen with an overseer in a death camp who “plays” and “writes,” whose “playing” is the caprice that decides the fate of lines of people, and whose “writing” commands the death of the Jews, by Germany, refutes utterly any such claim to a peculiarly German right to rhyme.⁵⁷ The single end-rhyme in “Todesfuge” reaches the absolute of the poem’s horror: in it, poetry falls from paradise; the music of poetry, its rhythm and rhyme, gave a logic to the accidents of

⁵⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 169, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 110.

⁵⁷ Celan, *Werke*, division 1, vol. 2/3, part 1, p. 101, line 5, as translated by John Felstiner, “Deathfugue,” by Paul Celan, in John Felstiner, *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 31-32, here p. 31.

language, but this stuff of childhood curdles and sours, and the logic of poetry is revealed to be the satisfaction of a sadistic, unreasonable demand, like those of the man who is distinguished by his living in a house, whose whistling is a command, and who commands playing, dancing and fiddling:

der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland sein Aug ist blau
er trifft dich mit bleierner Kugel er trifft dich genau⁵⁸

this Death is ein Meister aus Deutschland his eye it is blue
he shoots you with shot made of lead shoots you level and true⁵⁹

What rhyme is possible after this one? In it is determinately negated not merely the aesthetic norm of rhyme, but the logic of artistic norms in general. “Todesfuge” demands that every poem place itself definitively after Auschwitz, in real history, in order to be considered a poem. This goes against the idea of art, whose spirit is not to respect the natural laws of time, but to exercise its freedom in breaking through historical divisions, in opening moments that dreaming and forgetting had closed. If “Todesfuge” demands that every poem thereafter be judged according to its subsequence—whether it acknowledges that it comes after Auschwitz—, then poems must be not illusions at all, but must really be *historical appearances*, of their time, which is “after Auschwitz.” Then poems can no longer be judged advanced or regressive within the history of poetry, but rather must be judged in relation to an absolute, real event. The criterion of subsequence may be a demand *in* autonomous art for the end of autonomous art; or it might be a demand *in* art for the end of art. Celan’s poetry itself therefore cannot be the object of Adorno’s ban on poetry after Auschwitz: for it first raised the question of such a ban.

⁵⁸ Celan, *Werke*, division 1, vol. 2/3, part 1, p. 102, lines 30-31.

⁵⁹ Celan, “Deathfugue,” in Felstiner, *Paul Celan*, p. 31.

Adorno's reasons for declaring poetry after Auschwitz barbaric may be traced to the very beginning of his career, to his aesthetics course of 1931/32, which has come down in the form of preparatory notes.⁶⁰ According to the notes for the lecture of February 19th, Adorno planned to open the concept of Schein by analyzing the "Mignon-Lied," "So laßt mich scheinen, bis ich werde," in which Goethe associates seeming (scheinen) with the living.⁶¹ According to Adorno's notes, Mignon's song from *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahr* (Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship) presents the "reversal of beautiful illusion into illusionless presence (as consolation: at death),"⁶² whose affirmative moment lies not so much in the lines

So laßt mich scheinen, bis ich werde,
Zieht mir das weiße Kleid nicht aus!

(So let me seem until I become;
Do not take my white garment off!)⁶³

as in the lines that form their "dialectical answer":⁶⁴

Und keine Kleider, keine Falten
Umgeben den verklärten Leib.

(And neither garment nor drapery
Surrounds the transfigured body.)⁶⁵

The revealed, transfigured body is "the key figure of the loss of illusion" because, one surmises, it has left behind all fabrication and production, all artifice and disguise.⁶⁶ But at the same time, this happens only at death. What is in truth the reduction of the human to the naked

⁶⁰ Theodor W. Adorno, "Aufzeichnungen zur Ästhetik-Vorlesung von 1931/32," in *Frankfurter Adorno Blätter I*, im Auftrag des Theodor W. Adorno Archivs, herausgegeben von Rolf Tiedemann (Munich: edition text + kritik, 1992), pp. 34-90.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 85-88.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 88 (my translation).

⁶³ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, in *Sämtliche Werke: Briefe, Tagebücher und Gespräche*, herausgegeben von Friedmar Apel et al., 40 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985-), Abteilung 1, vol. 9, pp. 355-992, here p. 895, lines 1-2, with my translation.

⁶⁴ Adorno, "Aufzeichnungen zur Ästhetik-Vorlesung von 1931/32," p. 86 (my translation).

⁶⁵ Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, p. 895, lines 11-12, with my translation.

⁶⁶ Adorno, "Aufzeichnungen zur Ästhetik-Vorlesung von 1931/32," p. 86 (my translation).

body is not supposed to be poverty, but heaven: thus the transformation of illusion into illusionless presence is consolation, for we should really see this uncloaking as poverty and as loss.⁶⁷ Thus, as these notes indicate, the young Adorno did not locate art's affirmative aspect in illusion itself. Affirmation lies rather the in *loss* of illusion; in "So laßt mich scheinen, bis ich werde" its locus is the naked body at death, which is called "transfigured." In art, this may take the form of an advance in the artistic material or in a general crisis of illusion. Reading the "Mignon-Lied" as an allegory of artistic practice, as the model for the modern aesthetic category of Schein, as Adorno would have done, we can reconstruct the motivations for his condemnation of poetry after Auschwitz. Adorno condemned poetry not because he opposed beautiful illusions, but because he opposed bare existence. Goethe turned the body at death into something positive, but Auschwitz altered forever what it is to be naked at death, and forbids any positivity around it. In order for Auschwitz to become an impossibility, we must be inconsolable over every particular death, over every form of bare existence, over every uncloaking. This is what throws art into question.⁶⁸ For through the poetry of Goethe and Schiller, uncloaking came to be associated with the moment of truth in art, with the dissolution of illusion, which is art-logic. But every artwork must make a claim to truth, must dissolve the illusions of other artworks. The criterion of subsequence to Auschwitz, in and of itself, did not seem to preclude a new self-critical movement in art, a new inner history, which could begin

⁶⁷ Mignon's loss of illusion is the loss of sexual ambiguity, and with it, the loss of a sexual utopia beyond the sexes, as Elisabeth Lenk reads Goethe through Adorno's course notes. Elisabeth Lenk, "La catégorie de la féminité chez Adorno: Une contradiction secondaire qui a survécu à la contradiction principale," trans. Nicole Gabriel, in "Adorno critique de la domination: Une lecture féministe," edited by Sonia Dayan-Herzbrun, Nicole Gabriel and Eleni Varikas, themed issue, *Tumultes*, n° 23 (novembre 2004): pp. 11-27, esp. p. 26.

⁶⁸ The truth content of artworks should be realized in reality, not in the unreal world of art, and this demand becomes pressing after Auschwitz. The mature Adorno interprets the Mignon-Lied consistently in this sense: "The historical perspective that envisions the end of art is every work's idea. There is no artwork that does not promise that its truth content, to the extent that it appears in the artwork as something existing, realizes itself and leaves the artwork behind simply as a husk, as Mignon's prodigious verse prophesies" (vol. 7, p. 199 as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 132).

in 1945. But since the moment of criticism in art, the dissolution of illusion, implies consolation, it is not clear whether it is still possible for art to have a self-critical movement. Art would have to dissolve the magic of consolation that has become associated with every dissolution of illusion.

In *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno maintains that just by *existing*, artworks are necessarily affirmative to some extent: “No [art] leaves no trace of affirmation, if any [art], by its sheer existence, rises above the neediness and degradation of the merely existing.”⁶⁹ To make art is necessarily to defend a certain indifference to crude want. Dmitry Shostakovich’s long and arduous “Leningrad” Symphony No. 7, op. 60, (1941) did not at all adapt itself to the conditions of starvation of its times: during rehearsals musicians fell out of their chairs from sheer physical weakness. Olivier Messiaen’s *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* (1940/41) did not take into consideration what is physically comfortable for healthy musicians, let alone musicians in a prisoner of war camp: James Campbell remarked in 2000 that he practically had to go into training to perform it and, in 2012, that no piece had ever demanded more from the clarinetist. Every performance of these works is regarded as a wonder, proof that music possesses the power of faith or of the human spirit to overcome the most extreme physical limitations and humiliation. Multitudes, however, did not survive these conditions. The idea that the human spirit survives, despite it all, is affirmed absolutely in poetry, which in order to realize itself does not require performance, its becoming. Weighted towards existence, considered complete in its lay on the page, a poem does not spend most of its time failing, as music does. If poetry were lyric, it would be less barbaric, not more. Yet performance would not cancel out its affirmative character. This is because Auschwitz falsifies art’s universal

⁶⁹ GS, vol. 7, p. 239, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 160.

moment. Traditionally, the realizations of every particular artwork are already advances for the whole. A single work, the “Walzer” from Schoenberg’s *Fünf Klavierstücke*, op. 23, realized twelve-tone technique and offered it to all of humanity: the universality of twelve-tone technique was already living and substantial even when his “Walzer” was alone. After Auschwitz, art can no longer content itself with advancing the material according to its own laws, for Nazi barbarism tainted all art, culture and civilization. After, then, the particular artwork is faced not with developing inner-aesthetic laws, but with negating the extra-aesthetic Nazi appropriation and barbarization of culture. But because of the peculiar nature of aesthetic universality, art cannot oppose the Nazi barbarization of culture in the particular instance without affirming at the same time that Nazi barbarism has been universally overcome and that culture has been universally restored. But in fact, no single poem can realize *civilization* universally as Schoenberg’s “Walzer” realized twelve-tone technique universally. This would require more than aesthetic universality. Every work now and in the foreseeable future starts out from barbarism, and it is not in the power of any one work, alone, definitively to overcome it. After culture’s failure to inoculate society against absolute barbarism, the very logic of artworks inadvertently makes exaggerated claims for culture’s restoration—or else these are just part of the continuing barbarism. Thus, art’s affirmative character is hardly harmless consolation, but weaves the lie that civilization exists. The deciding question in the debate, then, becomes not whether poetry can register negativity, but rather whether, after Auschwitz, art can lose its affirmative character. *Ultimately*, art’s affirmative element lies not in its choice of subject—Enzensberger mentions the prohibition on forget-me-nots—,⁷⁰ but rather in the moment of art language: “This moment of affirmation passes out of the immediacy of

⁷⁰ Enzensberger, “Die Steine der Freiheit,” p. 74.

artworks and what they say and passes into the fact that they say it at all.”⁷¹ The Nazis’ destruction of language in particular, their enlisting of all rhetorical forces and powers of speech in the winning of the population to systematic murder, has made it impossible to write poetry without affirming that there is yet language. Figures of speech carry with them not inner history, but outer history: their use under Hitler to adjust individuals to totalitarian reality corroded their figurative aspect.⁷² The idea that a poem re-establishes language after Auschwitz, that there is still language after Auschwitz, is the undeniable affirmative moment in every *single* act of writing poetry in this era.

In his judgement against poetry, Adorno included those artworks that attempted to erase their similarity to language. But new music’s distance from all *language-like* elements proved to be a position difficult to maintain, even in an art form that does not share its elements with signifying language, as does poetry:

The movement that is subsumed under the name of the new music could easily be represented [darzustellen, presented] from the perspective of its a collective allergy to the primacy of similarity to language [Sprachähnlichkeit, language-likeness]. At the same time, precisely its most radical formulations have tended more toward the extreme of similarity to language than toward the impulse that is hostile to it. With these formulations, the subject took aim against the burdensome, conventionalized weight of traditional material. But today it is evident that even those elements of the new music that, to a conventional way of thinking, are considered subjectivistic contain within them a second element that tends to work against the notion used the nineteenth century to designate musical similarity to language—expression. The emancipation of

⁷¹ GS, vol. 7, p. 240, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 160.

⁷² Andreas Musolff, “What Role Do Metaphors Play in Racial Prejudice? The Function of Antisemitic Imagery in Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 41, no. 1 (January 30, 2007): pp. 21-43, doi: 10.1080/00313220601118744. Musolff examines Hitler’s metaphor comparing the German state to a diseased body. He concludes that Hitler’s illness/cure metaphor served at the outset to “transfer” individual consciousness into accepting the genocide and ignoring the reality of the atrocities: for those familiar with the metaphor, “the awareness of its genocidal dimension would...not have come as a completely new ‘insight’ but at least partly as a recognition of a conceptual pattern that was now being ‘turned into reality’ and thus confirmed. The ensuing reinterpretations of the metaphor may have ranged from the more or less self-conscious use of the *illness-cure* scenario as a way of glossing over unpalatable experiences or witness accounts to its deliberate use as a cover for referring to the atrocities. Once the latter point had been reached, any ‘metaphoric’ quality would have been lost: it would have been on a par with the specialized code of Holocaust perpetrators and administrators that included terms such as ‘concentration’, ‘deportation’, ‘special treatment’ etc.” (ibid., p. 43).

dissonance is often identified with the untrammelled desire for expression, and the aptness of this equation is confirmed by the development from *Tristan* to *Elektra* to Schoenberg's *Erwartung*. But precisely in Schoenberg, the opposite also makes itself known early on.⁷³

This exact difficulty does not escape Enzensberger, who grasps it as a paradox: "Thus the power of speech can be recovered only in dialogue with the speechless."⁷⁴ Even Man Ray's *Poem* of 1924, a page of dark horizontal marks of varying lengths, does not give up its status as language. It may be a poem whose every line has been blacked out, as if it had met with the censors, yet it both maintains recognizable features of poetry—header, lines and stanzas—and goes against the norm in poetry, which is to use words. Man Ray bars all words, carrying his refusal even farther than Heinrich Heine did in *Ideen: Das Buch Le Grand*, whose twelfth chapter consists of a page of short horizontal marks, but for the words "Die deutschen Censuren" (The German censors) at the beginning and, at one point, the word "Dummköpfe" (blockheads).⁷⁵ Yet a poem without words might not be a poem at all, but a picture, simpler and purer than Klee's colourful strips, which have been compared to scripts. Even in that case, Man Ray's *Poem* still maintains the language-character specific to art, for it evokes and negates the ancient runic quality of Klee's paintings, to become even more opaque than a rune. But no matter how far the work may go in its refusal of the language character, the work still exists, and this is also affirmative, according to Adorno. It seems, then, that to rid art of its affirmative character, it would be necessary to destroy all physical traces of artworks, reducing them to mere ideas. This, however, would set society backwards, for while autonomous

⁷³ GS, vol. 16, p. 654 as translated by Susan H. Gillespie except where indicated, "Music, Language and Composition," in *Essays on Music*, pp. 113-126, here p. 118.

⁷⁴ Enzensberger, "Die Steine der Freiheit," p. 74 (my translation).

⁷⁵ Heinrich Heine, *Ideen: Das Buch le Grand*, in *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe der Werke*, herausgegeben von Manfred Windfuhr, Düsseldorf Ausgabe, 16 vols. (Hamburg, Hoffmann und Campe, 1975-1997), vol. 6, pp. 169-222, here chapter 12, p. 201.

artworks do not strive to intervene politically, their possibility of advancing society is tied to their existence: “The effect of artworks is hardly that they present a latent praxis that corresponds to a manifest one, for their autonomy has moved far beyond such immediacy; rather, their effect is that of recollection [Erinnerung, memory], which they evoke by their existence.”⁷⁶ For artworks to lose their affirmative side at the expense of the social effect of memory is not a sustainable position either, for it is the need, after Auschwitz, not to forget that places the ban on affirmative, cheerful art in the first place. If the only social effect of artworks is to bear memory, and if they must exist in order to bear it, then it seems that society gains nothing and loses everything by reducing art to the non-existing, to a kind of thought experiment or possibility, even if such de-realization of art is motivated by a justifiable repugnance towards affirmation. With the move to locate art’s social effect solely in memory, Adorno differs from Benjamin, who considers art to effect change by way of political consciousness. Adorno’s anti-Idealist thesis on the disunity of being and mind deters him both from attributing political being to political consciousness and from grounding political being in political consciousness; Benjamin, by contrast, considers it his theoretical task to offer an explanation as to how the modern artwork brings about political consciousness: it is to be recalled that, according to him, the modern artwork brings about political consciousness by *generally* heightening consciousness in its use of shock. Benjamin overshoots the mark in making political consciousness the presynaptic terminus of the advanced artwork, for he already understands shock as a specific form of memory, one which, in his proposal for a “new, dialectical method of doing history,” necessarily implies awakening from illusion and

⁷⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 359 as translated except where indicated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 242.

dreaming.⁷⁷ As the future just society must remain abstract and imageless to us, the best that art, history and philosophy can do in terms of social effect is to negate what is concrete, present and enduring by determining the existing, here and now, as illusory, as unreal, as irrational. In this way, these disciplines show that utopia cannot be ruled out and suppressed on the grounds that it is illusory: it is the present, real, enduring society that is truly steeped in illusion. But the real social effect of philosophy, history and art does not amount to lucid dreaming, but must be awakening, the effective dissolution of social illusion. Shock (or “explosion,” in Adorno’s word) shatters the social illusion that things cannot be otherwise because it really opens difference in the ever-same, in what has merely continued, the illusion of permanence wrought by habit:

Scars of damage and disruption [Die Male der Zerrütterung, The marks of destruction] are the modern’s seal of authenticity [Echtheitssiegel]; by their means, art desperately negates the closed confines [die Geschlossenheit, the closed unity] of the ever-same; explosion is one of its invariants. Antitraditional energy becomes a voracious vortex. To this extent, the modern is myth turned against itself; the timelessness of myth becomes the catastrophic instant that destroys temporal continuity; Benjamin’s concept of the dialectical image contains this element.⁷⁸

The anti-illusory effect of memory—modern artwork’s explosion of the ever-same, its blasting into the temporal continuum that negates the here and now—is the artwork’s *social* effect because there has been a *social* injunction to forget. Yet the memory evoked by works that pose both language and illusion as a problem does not absolve art of its guilt. The *fact* that these works constitute the illusory sphere of art points to a deep wrong. For Auschwitz demanded changed life, life itself so beautiful, so expressive, so free, so luxurious, conscious and whole in every human being, so filled with memory and expectation, so as to dissolve the

⁷⁷ Benjamin, “[Pariser Passagen II],” in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, pp. 1044-1059, here p. 1058 as translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin except where indicated, “<The Arcades of Paris>Paris Arcades II,” in *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 873-884, here p. 884.

⁷⁸ GS, vol. 7, p. 41 as translated except where indicated *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 23.

need to write poems. But if barbarism is untransformed reality, the continuation of conditions that were also present under fascism, then *all* activities are barbaric. Adorno makes an example out of the activity that seems to be civilization par excellence in order to attack the notion that there could be any sphere above the taint of barbarism, notion expressed, for example, in the statement by Richard Wagner that through art all men are saved. What could be evidence more contrary to such an opinion than the footage of Furtwängler conducting the final movement of the Ninth Symphony, Beethoven's setting of Schiller's "An die Freude," for an audience of Nazi officials and their guests on the occasion of Hitler's birthday?

If culture as a whole can be judged barbaric, then the position of such criticism itself is unsustainable. Criticism does not take place outside culture and civilization; its most advanced technique, that of determinate negation, depends on the total delusion-context as a whole, and in this dependence on the whole it is not radically different from what it criticizes. But for a piece of civilization to judge all civilization barbaric is no mere performative error, but a futile and desperate reaction of horror before the end. The often-neglected second half of Adorno's pronouncement against poetry after Auschwitz goes in this sense: a cultural sphere so compromised by barbarism that critique can write the whole of it off as garbage must be a thing so powerful and inescapable that it would corrode even what is said against it. Ultimately, criticism would be powerless if the act of writing a poem were itself barbaric. Cultural criticism alone cannot successfully negate art's affirmative character: such criticism would have to be a blanket criticism of all art, and it is this assumption of art as a sphere that is affirmative. Affirmation, rather, should be made needless by life, life fulfilled at every point and pointing towards more.

Criticism that makes a blanket condemnation of *all* art on the basis of its affirmative character is itself affirmative, in that it leaves off its divisive work; it so annuls itself. Poetry, however, that determines art's affirmative character and negates this determinate aspect does not annul itself; nor does it become barbaric.

Celan negates the idea that there can be any ancient *German right* to the play of rhyme, whose exercise would stand above all criticism, anymore. With "Todesfuge," play becomes the arbitrary whim of tyrants. Schiller describes the play impulse as the "partnership between the formal and material impulse," which "fulfils the conception of humanity."⁷⁹ But when humanity fails its concept so radically, even in the presence of art, then this is clearly an exaggerated claim for the play impulse. Play is an affirmative aspect of art, for "art as play seeks to atone for its illusion."⁸⁰ As illusion, art determines the illusory as human, for in Schiller's aesthetics "all appearance [Schein, illusion] comes originally from man [von dem Menschen, from human being]."⁸¹ But when art is play, then it claims to be humanity already, rather than the occasion to judge whether humanity is adequate to its conception, and the collective guilt over the discrepancy between what humanity takes itself to be and what it actually *is* thus seeks to be absolved instead of becoming a spur to substantial humanity. As such, the play impulse itself falls under prohibition.

In light of Celan's "Todesfuge," it seems that Schoenberg's music is more advanced than Mahler's: the critique of play is more advanced than the critique of conventions through play. Yet the critique of play first presented itself in art out of its own movement :

⁷⁹ Friedrich Schiller, *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen*, in *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 8, pp. 556-676, here p. 610, lines 23-24 and line 27 as translated by Reginald Snell, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1965), p. 77.

⁸⁰ GS, vol. 7, p. 64, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 39.

⁸¹ Schiller, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 8, p. 663, lines 16-17 as translated except where indicated, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, p. 127.

Schoenberg's pieces are the first in which nothing can in fact be otherwise: they are case studies and constructions in one. In them nothing is left of the conventions that guaranteed the freedom of play. Schoenberg adopts just as polemical a position toward play as toward illusion.⁸²

Conventions had lost their substance through their facile use in salon music; the serious music of late Romanticism consequently treated such forms with the “ironic play” worthy of Nietzsche.⁸³ The next step was to ask why these hollow conventions should be maintained at all. Since *play* was the means through which Mahler could maintain a shop-worn form like the Ländler, in the highly ironic second movement of his Ninth Symphony, then *play* was the target of Schoenberg's critique. Convention, not play, was actually Schoenberg's prime target. Schoenberg's works thus aim at total rationalization and absolute literalness. Adorno, however, wildly exaggerates the degree to which Schoenberg realized these ideals, for what is supposed to eliminate play, the strict application of twelve-tone technique, necessarily implies it, in the breaks between permutations of the row.⁸⁴ Adorno reads the intention of twelve-tone technique as the total bindingness of every note. He takes the example of “the first of Schoenberg's published twelve-tone compositions,” arguably the Menuett from the Suite, op. 25,⁸⁵ claiming that “every tone of the composition is determined by this row: there is no longer a single ‘free’ note.”⁸⁶ This is clearly false because nothing in the technique itself determines which note will follow any single horizontal permutation of the row. Schoenberg starts the Trio of the Menuett by having the left hand state the prime set: E – F – G – D-flat –

⁸² GS, vol. 12, p. 46, or prefer to my translation here that of Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Blomster, *Philosophy of Modern Music* (New York: Seabury, 1980), p. 40f.

⁸³ GS, vol. 12, p. 45 as translated, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 39.

⁸⁴ Adorno admits that the “playful quality of the permutations” is unmistakable, but maintains that revolutionary art is critical of play. GS, vol. 7, p. 154, as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 100.

⁸⁵ Arnold Schoenberg, “Menuett,” from *Suite für Klavier, op. 25* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1925), pp. 17-19.

⁸⁶ GS, vol. 12, p. 63, as translated, p. 62.

G-flat – E-flat – A-flat – D – B – C – A – B-flat.⁸⁷ The F-flat following it is free.⁸⁸ Once all twelve notes of the row have been heard in sequence absolutely nothing predetermines what should come next, hence which note should come next. There are forty-eight permutations from which to choose: the row in its four linear aspects plus all the transpositions of these. Since all transpositions are possible, any of the twelve notes is possible. The prime set here happens to be followed by its inverted sequence, but this is not determined by the *row*, but by the needs of the composition. Furthermore, Schoenberg's Menuett is *not* a sequence, unlike Luciano Berio's *Sequenzas*, which render the whole notion of twelve-tone serial technique absurd.⁸⁹ Schoenberg's twelve-tone technique may be serial, but his music is not. In the Trio of the Menuett, Schoenberg has the right hand enter with a different permutation of the row before the prime set has run its course in the right hand.⁹⁰ Adorno appears not to consider the composition as a whole, but only one voice at a time. He claims: "The row rationalizes what is instinctive in every conscientious composer: sensitivity towards the too-early recurrence of the same pitch, except for cases in which it is immediately repeated."⁹¹ This is also false. Twelve-tone technique does not guarantee the too-close repetition of individual notes or intervals because the simultaneity or staggering of different permutations of the same row interferes with the principle of even distribution of pitches that Adorno claims for the row. One of the characteristics of Schoenberg's row as it first appears in the Trio of the Menuett is the mini-

⁸⁷ Schoenberg, "Menuett," p. 19, m. 34-35, l.h. The prime set here is identified after George Perle, *Serial Composition and Atonality: An Introduction to the Music of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern*, 4th ed., revised (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), p. 62, ex. 83. Adorno gives the set rather as C-sharp – A – B – G – A-flat – F-sharp – B-flat – D – E – E-flat – C – F, but without a reference to the score. See GS, vol. 12, p. 63, or in English *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 61f.

⁸⁸ Schoenberg, "Menuett," p. 19, m. 36, l.h.

⁸⁹ See, for example, Luciano Berio, *Sequenza IXa per clarinetto solo* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1980).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 19, m. 35.

⁹¹ GS, vol. 12, p. 65 as translated, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 64.

sequence at its close: the half-tone shift from B to C, followed by the half-tone shift from A to B-flat.⁹² This pair of minor seconds corresponds to the minor ninth that opens the set. The minor second in its simple or compound form thus should mark off each linear expression of the set as a unit, for this interval appears nowhere else in the row. In the preparation for the repeat, however, the characteristic finish to the inverted expression of the row in the left hand, A' – A-flat' – C-flat'' – B-flat' in sixteenth notes, is followed immediately by A' again, the sixth tone of the permutation P-6, which is meanwhile continuing in the right hand.⁹³ For Schoenberg has constructed the piece so that the linear expressions of the row overlap at the middle, and this produces the effect of a decoration around the A, which is thus emphasized. The row is not rhythmically determined in advance, so the A, as a dotted quarter-note, is more important in the scope of this passage, not least of all because it falls on the downbeat of the last bar of the first section of the Trio (in both first and second endings). For all these reasons, A takes on the function of a tonic. The emphasis on A at the end of the first phrase of the Trio is not governed by twelve-tone technique. It can thus hardly be claimed that, with twelve-tone technique, “the tone which recurs too early, as well as the tone which is ‘free’ or coincidental in the face of the totality, becomes taboo.”⁹⁴ Schoenberg’s critique of play, therefore, is not as radical as Adorno claims it is. It might be wondered meanwhile whether Schoenberg’s recourse to old forms emptied of their life and breath, which Mahler treated at a critical remove, is not simply naïve restoration. The second movement of Mahler’s Symphony No. 3 subjects the minuet to disconcerting fluctuations in tempo, timbre, intensity and even *time signature*, and this very dramatic contouring of the musical space ends up dislodging the

⁹² Schoenberg, “Menuett,” p. 19, m. 35, l.h., third quarter-note-value.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 19, mm. 37-38.

⁹⁴ GS, vol. 12, p. 65 as translated, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 64.

priority of the traditional form, which does not at any rate follow the conventional Minuet-Trio-Minuet da capo sequence.⁹⁵ The Trio, or the contrasting material in nonstandard—or even impossible—minuet time signatures in two and in nine, is in fact interspersed with the minuet material, which is itself so variously represented colouristically that there is never an authentic da capo moment. Schoenberg, by contrast, upholds the traditional Minuet-Trio-Minuet da capo form, which maintains its priority over the occasional idiosyncrasies in tempo and time signature by way of the strongly contrasting character of the Trio, which is entirely *martellato* (“hammered”) to the innig (“heartfelt” or “intimate”) of the Menuett. It so appears that Schoenberg failed to appreciate what was genuinely advanced about the music that just preceded him: its own critique of convention.⁹⁶ In order for his critique of play to be decisive, he should take a critical position on the old dance forms as well. In Celan’s poetry, the problem of play is of a completely different order. It is posed not only by Romanticism or by

⁹⁵ Gustav Mahler, *Symphony No. 3*, II, in *Symphonies Nos. 3 and 4 in Full Score* (New York: Dover, 1989), pp. 103-131.

⁹⁶ Mahler’s ironic play of forms, against which Schoenberg appears merely conventional, is as another reason why Anne Boissière is right to oppose Stravinsky and Mahler rather than Stravinsky and Schoenberg. As she explains, “La conception critique du progrès qu’Adorno développe dans *Philosophie de la nouvelle musique* en mettant côte à côte Schoenberg et Stravinsky ne doit pas être confondue avec l’aspiration à une musique critique, qui reste un point de visée à ce stade non abouti de sa pensée de la musique. Aussi est-il hâtif de penser le trouver du côté de Schoenberg et, *a fortiori*, dans la volonté qu’avait eue le compositeur d’opérer une révolution du langage musical, d’abord en émancipant la musique de la tonalité, puis en inventant la méthode dodécaphonique. Si Adorno s’est passionnément intéressé à cet aspect du champ compositionnel de son époque, il n’est pas sûr qu’il y ait trouvé les modalités de la réconciliation avec la nature qu’il espérait trouver à travers la musique et qui, seule, pouvait permettre de sortir de cette logique infernale du progrès à laquelle il ne cessait de réfléchir dans sa philosophie. L’antithèse entre Mahler et Stravinsky qu’on a vue se profiler atteste que la problématique du passé et du souvenir risque de s’avérer bien plus pertinente pour saisir l’orientation de fond de son travail philosophique sur la musique.” (The critical conception of progress that Adorno develops in *Philosophy of New Music*, where he juxtaposes Schoenberg and Stravinsky, must not be confused with the aspiration for a critical music, which remains an unrealized goal at this stage in his thought on music. As well, it is hasty to think that he aligns himself with Schoenberg and, *a fortiori*, with the composer’s intention to create a revolution in musical language by first emancipating music from tonality and by then inventing the twelve-tone method. Although Adorno took a passionate interest in this aspect of the compositional production of his times, it is not certain that he would have found the terms and conditions for the reconciliation with nature that he hoped to find by way of music, and which was the only thing that could offer an escape from that infernal logic of progress to which he devoted unceasing reflection in his philosophy. The antithesis between Mahler and Stravinsky raised above suggests that the problematic of the past and memory will turn out to be far more relevant to an understanding of the basic direction of Adorno’s philosophical work on music.) Anne Boissière, *La pensée musicale de Theodor W. Adorno: L’épique et le temps* (Paris: Beauchesne, 2011), p. 109.

Modernism, not only by Romantic irony or by Modern literalness, but also by overwhelming inhumanity, and it is posed to culture as a whole.

The question as to whether culture as a whole has become barbaric is articulated through *play* not only because the play impulse in Schiller's aesthetics is supposed to fulfil the concept of humanity, but also because in Kant's aesthetics the task legislated for the faculty of judgement gains all of its legitimacy from its capacity to arbitrate specifically on the universal and necessary communicability of aesthetic feeling, which results from the "free play of the faculties of cognition with a representation through which an object [Gegenstand] is given."⁹⁷ According to Kant's own table in the "Introduction" to the second edition of the third *Critique*, there are three faculties of cognition: the faculty of understanding, which applies itself to nature; the faculty of the power of judgement, which applies itself to art; and the faculty of reason, which applies itself to freedom.⁹⁸ The application of each of these faculties to its specific matter produces cognitions, which have two components, intuitions and concepts.⁹⁹ The question that Kant raises in the third *Critique* is whether these faculties can produce something *other* than determinate cognitions that, like determinate cognitions, attains to universality and necessity. The question is whether, when faced with "a representation through which an object is given,"¹⁰⁰ which is to say, whether, when faced with an *intuition*,¹⁰¹ the faculties of cognition can do something *other* than synthesize it with a concept *and* still secure universality and necessity for their activity. How can the judgement of taste ever lay claim to

⁹⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 5:217. The pagination given here and throughout corresponds to the Academy of Sciences edition of Kant's works (*Kant's Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin: G. Reimer/ W. de Gruyter, 1902-), and appears in the margins of Guyer and Matthews's translation.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5:167 and 5:198.

⁹⁹ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B146.

¹⁰⁰ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 5:217.

¹⁰¹ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B146.

necessity? The faculty of judgement would have something to arbitrate if the judgement of taste were based on concepts: it would then be a legitimate judging power. Whether the judgement of taste is based on concepts is unclear: on one hand, “de gustibus non est disputandum” (there is no disputing taste); on the other hand, arguments, discourse, on what is tacky, kitschy, shoddy, flaky, middling, passé or tasteless are legion. The judgement of taste appears to be entirely subjective, persisting in its refusal to call “a building, a view, or a poem” beautiful, despite the “hundred voices who all praise it highly,”¹⁰² and, at the same time, the judgement of taste appears to be entirely objective, as if beauty could really be ascribed to the object, as if the judgement were made “only in accordance with that quality in it by means of which it corresponds with our way of receiving it.”¹⁰³ This contradiction constitutes the antinomy of taste.¹⁰⁴ Kant claims that this antinomy, like all antinomies, arises due to a natural, inevitable illusion:

There is no possibility of lifting the conflict between these two principles underlying every judgement of taste...., except by showing that the concept to which the object is related in this sort of judgement is not taken in the same sense in the two maxims of the aesthetic power of judgement, that this twofold sense or point of view in judging is necessary in our transcendental power of judgement, but also that the semblance [Schein] involved in the confusion of the one with the other is, as a natural illusion [Illusion], unavoidable.¹⁰⁵

Schiller’s claim that “all appearance [Schein, illusion] comes originally from man [von dem Menschen, from human being]” appears to have a target—Kant.¹⁰⁶ The illusion that generates the antinomy may be necessary, but Kant should not be any more convinced of its naturalness

¹⁰² Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 5:284.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 5:282.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 5:338f.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 5:339. Please note that “semblance” here appears to be a stylistic choice to avoid repetition: transcendental Schein is not a species of natural Illusion, for Kant will also mention “transsendentale Illusion” at A695/B723. He also employs “Schein” to refer to the (non-transcendental) optical illusion by which the rising moon, close to the horizon, seems larger than a fully risen moon (A297/B354).

¹⁰⁶ Schiller, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 8, p. 663, lines 16-17 as translated except where indicated, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, p. 127.

than is Schiller. For Kant states outright in the above passage that a conflict arises because a single concept is taken in two different senses. In effect, Kant attempts to solve the antinomy of taste by making a finer distinction in the concept of the concept: the contradiction comes about because in the thesis that the judgement of taste is not based on concepts, *determinate* concepts are meant, whereas in the antithesis, that the judgement of taste is based on concepts, *indeterminate* concepts are meant.¹⁰⁷ But this contradiction is nothing other than what dialectical thinking calls the movement in the concept, which is historical, not natural. What Kant takes to be an aberration is on Hegel's account the norm. Furthermore, the concept's inherent contradictoriness is a result of labour, which, as Adorno does not cease to emphasize, is social. While Kant is right to explain the antinomy by starting out from the double-sided concept, he does not draw the conclusion that these different determinations of the concept are due to intellectual work performed on the concept in an antagonistic society. Today we would say that the antinomy of taste is a material and objective contradiction having its basis in a society that is in the process of de-realizing its objects. The objective side of the antinomy of the judgement of taste, which claims to judge about real qualities in the object and which claims that beauty can really be attributed to a particular sensible object, is ceding its way to merely subjective consumer satisfaction that wants to impose its likes on others. Kant showed himself uncritical of this tendency in society, in that he found his solution to the antinomy not in the realm of the senses, in the cold and lonely suffering and deprivation that come about when objects' *qualities* do not enter into consideration, when an object's miserable *existence* is a matter of indifference, but he found it rather in the supersensible sphere:

But now all contradiction vanishes if I say that the judgement of taste is based on a concept (of a general ground for the subjective purposiveness of nature for the power

¹⁰⁷ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 5:340f.

of judgement), from which, however, nothing can be cognized and proved with regard to the object, because it is in itself indeterminable and unfit for cognition; yet at the same time by means of this very concept it acquires validity for everyone (in each case, to be sure, as a singular judgement immediately accompanying the intuition), because its determining ground may lie in the concept of that which can be regarded as the supersensible substratum of humanity.¹⁰⁸

With the move in which the supersensible is evoked to ground the sensible, Kant attempts the “redemption of illusion,” as Adorno called it.¹⁰⁹ When thought stops in an inevitable and impassable illusion, Kant will strive to save objectivity by evoking the necessary and universal condition that produces the illusion. The contradiction comes out of the way our faculties are naturally set up, out of the natural tendency of reason to apply the categories of the understanding beyond the limits of possible experience.¹¹⁰ But an understanding of *why* this contradiction comes about permits us to say with objective certainty that we *all necessarily* have experience only of appearances, not of things in themselves. In this way, Kant presumes to ground the universality of the judgement of taste: “For if one did not assume such a point of view, then the claim of the judgement of taste to universal validity could not be saved.”¹¹¹ He adopts the same strategy here as he does in the other *Critiques*, which is to put the consistency of reason with itself, the architectonic of reason and the unity of the faculties, before the sensible feelings that give the lie to the harmony of reason:

Thus one see that the removal of the antinomy of the aesthetic power of judgement takes a course similar to that followed by the *Critique* in the resolution of the antinomies of pure theoretical reason, and that in the same way both here and in the *Critique of Practical Reason* one is compelled, against one’s will, to look beyond the sensible and seek the unifying point of all our faculties *a priori* in the supersensible: because no other way remains to make reason self-consistent.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 5:340.

¹⁰⁹ GS, vol. 6, p. 386, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 393.

¹¹⁰ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A295/B352.

¹¹¹ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 5:340.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 5:341.

Kant effectively claims that arguments that seek to establish the beauty of a particular object do not *need* to bring real concepts to bear on it, but can make an appeal to the “supersensible substratum of humanity.”¹¹³ Instead of saying *why* an object is beautiful, the Kantian judge of beauty can communicate the *feeling* that results from the free play of her faculties in the perception of an object, which proves their essential harmony and self-consistency. In claiming that the object is beautiful, the Kantian judge of beauty is effectively saying that in the perception of the object her faculties of cognition are engaged in free play, but she is not however synthesizing intuition and concept when she makes this judgement because the decisive concept here, “freedom,” does not relate to the object. If an object of sense were free, then something free would be determined at least in time; freedom, however, is precisely what is not subject to natural laws.¹¹⁴ Along with God and immortality, freedom constitutes an “unavoidable” problem of dogmatic metaphysics.¹¹⁵ The universality and necessity in the judgement of taste are not assured by the object of sense somehow falling under the concept of freedom, but by a general, timeless feature of all human beings’ faculties showing up when the beautiful object presents itself. The beautiful object shows that perception of an object of sense does not *necessarily* engage the production of cognitions; instead, what can happen is that all the faculties of cognition can work together to produce a *feeling*. Such feeling draws universality from the freedom of every individual’s faculties of cognition. This feeling says something essential about all our cognitions: they could be or not be, they are born of freedom, something different from what they purport to capture—what really is and what must be, the object of sense. Understood this way, the judgement of taste is based on a concept, just this

¹¹³ Ibid., 5:340.

¹¹⁴ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Bxxviii.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., A3/B7.

indeterminate concept, which refers to the form of cognition in general. This is compatible with claiming that the judgement of taste is not based on any *determinate* concept, which would unite a given manifold of an object.¹¹⁶

To Kant's resolution of the antinomy of taste, Hegel would argue that an *indeterminate* concept is really no concept at all because determinateness belongs to concepts essentially: "And because this determinateness is the determinateness of the concept, and hence the *absolute determinateness, singularity*, the concept is the ground and source of all finite determinateness and manifoldness."¹¹⁷ Even the suggestion of such things as "thoughts without content" or "intuitions without concepts"¹¹⁸ strikes Hegel as nonsensical, for intuitions and concepts are not intrinsically separate:

If on the superficial view of what the concept is all manifoldness falls *outside* it, and only the form of abstract universality or of empty reflective identity stays with it, we can at once call attention to the fact that any statement or definition expressly requires, besides the genus which in fact is already itself more than just abstract universality, also a *specific determinateness*. And it does not take much thoughtful reflection on the implication of this requirement to see that *differentiation* is an equally essential moment of the concept.¹¹⁹

The feeling of satisfaction that is supposed to accompany beautiful objects would not be any kind of concept at all, according to Hegel, for it is entirely indeterminate, so if there are arguments to be made for why a work can be called beautiful, they imply real, determinate concepts. Kant, however, is not as formal a thinker as Hegel makes him out to be, and Hegel knows it, for Kant's indeterminate concept is just that of a "supersensible substratum of

¹¹⁶ Ibid., B137.

¹¹⁷ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 6, p. 261 as translated by George di Giovanni, *The Science of Logic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 520.

¹¹⁸ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A51/B75.

¹¹⁹ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 6, p. 260 as translated by G. di Giovanni, *The Science of Logic*, p. 519.

appearances.”¹²⁰ Kant so much as admits that already a purely conceptual element underlies appearances, which, by definition, are supposed to be undetermined, as evidenced by the following statement: “The undetermined object of an empirical intuition is called **appearance**.”¹²¹ The function of the indeterminate concept is precisely to determine the object of sense as an *appearance* as distinct from the thing in itself: “A concept of this kind, however, is the mere pure rational concept of the supersensible, which grounds the object (and also the judging subject) as an object of sense, consequently as an appearance.”¹²² The beautiful object appears *as* appearance, rather than as some reality whose relation to subjects is unclear or which is wholly independent vis-à-vis sensing subjects. The beautiful object’s appearance *as* appearance should in fact ground all appearances as already implicitly determined in some way, or, as Hegel would say, as grounded in the concept. If “sensible” is understood in the sensible subject’s experience of the sensible object, if the experience of the sensible in some sense says “I am sensible,” then the supersensible is already implicit in all objects of sense, so, in appearances. Even in the terms of Kant’s own philosophy, then, transcendental schematism should not in fact be necessary for the synthesis that characterizes knowledge in the robust sense—non-tautological, *new* knowledge that has a relation to its objects. Hegel’s entire dialectical project, which is to produce what attains to the Kantian concept of *knowledge* out of the *already* supersensible part of the sensible, out of the so-called indeterminately conceptual part of the appearance, part whose potential Kant merely raises but does not realize, aims to demonstrate the redundancy of the transcendental schema, that “third thing” that Kant thinks “is always requisite for a synthetic proposition in order to connect with

¹²⁰ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 5:341.

¹²¹ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* A20/B34.

¹²² Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 5:340.

other concepts that have no logical (analytic) affinity.”¹²³ Schematism is unnecessary even within the parameters of Kant’s philosophy, Hegel would argue, because objects of sense are not just indeterminate appearances, but also intelligible, so are already determined (as “intelligible”). They are already to some extent conceptualized. While Adorno is opposed to all forms of schematism, he recasts the transcendental schemata in *materialist* terms—that is, linguistically and historically—as “constellations.” Even without the term “necessity,” we can still circumscribe its object, as Kant does: “the existence of an object at all times.”¹²⁴ The actual Kantian schemata are fixed and ready devices, limited in number, that *eternally* guarantee adequacy not only between subject and object, but also between *any* heterogeneous concepts that are to come, for all human beings. But schemata, like the one just cited, can be models for rethinking any concept. When we express an object clearly even while suspending use of the *existing* term for that object, then Saussure’s claim that nothing but thoughtless murk ever precedes the arbitrary union of signifier and signified is false. If an object can be recognizably expressed not through its existing concept, which has been arbitrarily attached to an acoustic *image*, but through a configuration of other concepts centred around the object, then we do not *really* need an arbitrary sign system in order to think, nor, by extension, intersubjective agreement on the meaning of gestures in order to communicate. Signs, and the concepts that constitute them, are social illusion, however necessary, and the objectivity of constellations is drawn from the force of *demonstrating* that signs are social illusion. A constellation is the determinate way in which many previously determined (i.e., historically determined) concepts come together to represent what an existing concept already represents faultily on its own: the object. It is objective not in that it perfectly captures or corresponds to

¹²³ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A259/B315.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, A145/B184.

reality, but in that it resists the social domination that gives the arbitrary relation of concepts and images a seemingly objective allure. It succeeds when it temporarily suspends a sign, disturbing its seeming consensus. The ability to express and to recognize an object in new combinations of old concepts, and not by way of the concept that would subsume it, is nothing other than the survival of the mimetic gift, the capacity for similarities. This way of proceeding, and not any non-signifying artistic “gesturing,” is precisely what of mimesis Adorno proposes philosophy should adopt in its comportment: “The concept is able to represent [vertreten] the thing, whose mimesis it drove out [verdrängt], in no way other than by taking on something mimetic in its own conduct, without giving itself up to it.”¹²⁵ It is not a question of philosophy abandoning conceptual practice to restore the former mimetic one, returning to the original exercise of the mimetic faculty in improvising new names for things. The concept in the form of a constellation is not art, for it must still be able to represent the thing. Adorno’s critique of schematism, then, does not wipe out the difference between art and non-art in his philosophy. Unlike Hegel, Adorno maintains that art is “without a concept,” where “concept” implies the (determinate) representation of a thing.

When one looks more closely into how *Kant* defines the arts, however, one discovers that the concept there is *not* indeterminate, but always involves *play*. Kant defines all the arts in his tripartite system of the fine arts in terms of this concept. The arts of speech, rhetoric and poetry, involve the free *play* of the imagination: “**Rhetoric** is the art of conducting a business of the understanding as a free play of the imagination; **poetry** that of carrying out a free play

¹²⁵ GS, vol. 6, p. 26, or prefer to my translation here, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 14.

of the imagination as a business of the imagination.”¹²⁶ Pictorial art also depends on a free *play* of the imagination, one which animates lifeless things:

But how pictorial art can be counted (by analogy) as gesture in a language is justified by the fact that the spirit of the artist gives a corporeal expression through these shapes to what and how he has thought, and makes the thing itself speak as it were in mime: a very common play of our fantasy, which attributes to lifeless things, in accordance with their form, a spirit that speaks from them.¹²⁷

Kant calls the third kind of fine art “the art **of the play of sensations**,” in which he classes music and the art of colour.¹²⁸ All other arts derive from or combine one or more of these forms.¹²⁹ Furthermore, Kant makes the general claim that “all stiff regularity (whatever approaches mathematical regularity) is of itself contrary to taste.”¹³⁰ The *natural* beauty of birdsong also lies in its irregularity: “Even the song of the bird, which we cannot bring under any musical rules, seems to contain more freedom and thus more that is entertaining for taste than even a human song that is performed in accordance with all the rules of the art of music.”¹³¹ The free play of the imagination would be most sustained by the freedom of English gardens and Baroque furniture; hence these would be the most beautiful art objects.¹³² From the whole of this evidence, one concludes that, if the beautiful art object sets the faculties in free play, it is because it is itself a kind of play and evokes the concept of play, which would appear to contradict Kant’s thesis that the beautiful pleases universally without a concept. Beautiful *art* (but not beautiful *nature*) engages the concept of *play*. Play turns into a historical invariant, a *permanent* aspect of beautiful art, because the beautiful is just what

¹²⁶ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 5:321.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 5:324.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 5:321.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 5:325f.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 5:342.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 5:343.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 5:342.

engages the play of the faculties, necessarily referring us to those *permanent* features of ourselves that make cognition possible.

Modern art's critique of play evokes the Kantian concept of play, which has not only to do with the *play of the faculties*, but also with the beautiful art object. The critique of play in Celan's "Todesfuge" is, however, a far more serious critique of Kant than Schoenberg's dodecaphonic music. The object of criticism is not so much the old and unquestioned determination of beauty, inherited from German Idealism, as it is aesthetic illusion as the reflection of an a priori harmonized and civilized human reason. The beautiful object itself may be without a concept, in the sense that it does not pick out, collect together and subordinate some part of the manifold under it, but the judgement that an object is beautiful is not critical if it presumes to draw its universality from a notion of humanity that excludes the suffering, sensible aspect of the thing. Celan negates the seemingly natural determination of aesthetic illusion as *play* by determining appearance instead as *historical* appearance.¹³³ In the same moment, play picks up its non-aesthetic sense, the arbitrary "play of chance" that Idealism excludes from the beautiful, while history breaks into the poem as this arbitrary and inhumane play, which ends up taking the aesthetic concept of play with it.¹³⁴ One cannot, after Celan, speak of appearance as play, much less rehabilitate play as an aesthetic category, as Ruth Sonderegger¹³⁵ and Martin Seel¹³⁶ have recently attempted.

¹³³ See Felstiner, chapter 2, "A Fugue after Auschwitz (1944-45)," in his *Paul Celan*, pp. 26-41. Felstiner brings out not only the many literary and cultural references in "Todesfuge," but also the poem's documentation of historical elements, such as the Nazis' forcing of Jewish fiddlers to play tangos during tortures in the Janowska camp at Lemberg (ibid., p. 28).

¹³⁴ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 5:331.

¹³⁵ Ruth Sonderegger, *Für eine Ästhetik des Spiels: Hermeneutik, Dekonstruktion, und der Eigensinn der Kunst* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000). Sonderegger defends the need of the concept of play as a way out of the "unfruitful" impasse between hermeneutics and deconstruction: "I will therefore propose a new beginning made possible by the concept of aesthetic play, which makes a restitution of the matter that hermeneutics *and*

In “Is Art Light-Hearted?” Adorno revises the ban on poetry after Auschwitz to cover only art that is “heiter”—cheerful or light-hearted: “Because Auschwitz was possible and remains possible for the foreseeable future, light-hearted art is no longer conceivable.”¹³⁷ This essay takes as its point of departure the last line of Schiller’s prologue to *Wallenstein*: “Ernst ist das Leben, heiter ist die Kunst.”¹³⁸ Adorno, however, reads this line as voicing a hard and fast dichotomy between life and art that affirms the present-day split between work and leisure as an “eternal law.”¹³⁹ This may reflect the facile way the bourgeoisie of Adorno’s day used the line, quoting it out of context. But Schiller’s lines previous to “Ernst ist das Leben, heiter ist die Kunst” deny any such compartmentalization of life and art: poetic inspiration presents the possibility for the “dark image/Of truth” (“düstre Bild/ Der Wahrheit”) to pass over to the cheerful realm of art.¹⁴⁰ If anything, Schiller could be accused not of making eternal, iron-clad categories, but of the opposite: of presupposing no limit that could not be overcome. Clearly the intention of the line is not to claim all art for leisure. Then Adorno’s claim that cheerful art is inconceivable after Auschwitz would be just as facile, amounting to the claim that art should

deconstruction takes as their concern, but each in its extreme one-sidedness” (ibid., p. 10, my translation). Spiel, however, does not open a new beginning, but rather returns aesthetics to the past.

¹³⁶ Martin Seel, *Ästhetik des Erscheinens* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2000), trans. John Farrell as *Aesthetics of Appearing* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); and *Die Macht des Erscheinens: Texte zur Ästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2007). Seel’s argues that perception and its objects are central to aesthetics. He defines aesthetic perception in terms of the category of *play*: “Aesthetic perception is play, and it is attentiveness to a game. It is a playful going along with a game that is not solely *its* game” (*Aesthetics of Appearing*, p. 135). Seel does not consider the need felt by Adorno and Kant to save the possibility of a subject *not* “going along with a game that is not solely *its* game,” but rather exercising freedom with respect to sensuous givenness. In his reflections on what of the German tradition could still be taught after Auschwitz, Adorno advocates saving precisely *this* aspect of Kant’s autonomous subject—the “Nicht-Mitmachen” of the autonomous subject, the refusal to just go along with whatever is given (GS, vol. 10.2, p. 679). In Seel’s aesthetics of appearing, by contrast, *play* becomes a screen-concept that cuts off serious reflection on the repressed concept of Auschwitz, and on the real “Macht des Erscheinens”—the *power* of appearances to force subjects “to go along with the game.”

¹³⁷ GS, vol. 11, p. 603 as translated, *Notes to Literature*, vol. 2, p. 251.

¹³⁸ Schiller, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 4, p. 17, line 138.

¹³⁹ GS, vol. 11, p. 599 as translated, *Notes to Literature*, vol. 2, p. 247.

¹⁴⁰ Schiller, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 4, p. 17, lines 133-34.

not be entertainment. But a more serious misreading of Heiterkeit is lodged in Adorno's claim that Schiller defines art according to the *effect* that it has on the recipient. Adorno even attempts to enlist Hegel as an ally against Heiterkeit:

The possibility that things might sometime become truly different is hidden from Schiller the idealist. He is concerned with the effects of art. For all the noblesse of his gesture, Schiller secretly anticipates the situation under the culture industry in which art is prescribed to tired businesspeople as a shot in the arm. Hegel was the first to object, at the height of German Idealism, to an aesthetics of effect [Wirkungsästhetik] dating back to the eighteenth century and including Kant, and with it to this view of art: art was not, he stated, a mechanism for delight and instruction à la Horace.¹⁴¹

Hegel, however, cites that despised line of Schiller with approval:

In this respect, amongst the fundamental characteristics of the Ideal we may put at the top this serene peace and bliss, this self-enjoyment in its own achievedness and satisfaction. The ideal work of art confronts us like a blessed god. For the blessed gods ..., there is no final seriousness in distress, in anger, in the interest involved in finite spheres and aims, and this positive withdrawal into themselves, along with the negation of everything particular, gives them the characteristic of serenity and tranquillity. In this sense Schiller's phrase holds good: "Life is serious, art cheerful." Often enough, it is true, pedants have poked fun at this, on the ground that art in general, and especially Schiller's own poetry, is of a most serious kind; and after all in fact ideal art does not lack seriousness—but even in the seriousness cheerfulness or serenity remains its inherent and essential character. The force of individuality, this triumph of concrete freedom concentrated in itself, is what we recognize especially in the works of art of antiquity in the cheerful and serene peace of their shapes. And this results not at all from a mere satisfaction gained without struggle, but on the contrary, only when a deeper breach has rent the subject's inner life and his whole existence. For even if the heroes of tragedy for example, are so portrayed that they succumb to fate, still the heart of the hero recoils into simple unity with itself, when it says: "It is so." The subject in this case still always remains true to himself; he surrenders what he has been robbed of, yet the ends he pursues are not just taken from him; he renounces them and thereby does not lose *himself*. Man, the slave of destiny, may lose his life, but not his freedom. It is this self-reliance which even in grief enables him to preserve and manifest the cheerfulness and serenity of tranquillity.¹⁴²

Referring the reader to Schiller's own, often tragic, poetry, Hegel argues against interpreting "cheerful" as an *effect*, as the feeling it instils in the recipient. Hegel does not interpret Schiller's notion of cheerfulness this way because effects are contingent, and he has just

¹⁴¹ GS, vol. 11, p. 599f. as translated, *Notes to Literature*, vol. 2, p. 247f.

¹⁴² Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 208f. as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 157f.

defined the Ideal as what has removed itself from contingency: “The Ideal is actuality [Wirklichkeit], withdrawn from the profusion of details and accidents.”¹⁴³ According to Hegel, the cheerfulness of the artwork relates *precisely* to the elimination of contingency and of particularity, carried out in tragedy by the hero himself, who appropriates every pain and ego-alien force and lives out every external event, even death itself, as a higher logic and as his own individuality. The operation of tragedy is the conversion of fate, of what the external reality forces on the individual, into freely chosen and self-determining reason, into the expression of individual power. But the concept of Heiterkeit that Adorno is attacking is properly *Hegel’s*, not Schiller’s. Hegel’s adage that “human beings may lose their lives, but not freedom” expresses art’s supreme consolation and the pinnacle of what is false and cruel in art: that death is not supposed to be the absolute limit on the individual, not doom, pain, suffering and heartless social necessity, but rather freedom.¹⁴⁴ Heiterkeit is supposed to raise the particular thing out from the scattering of miserable moments into the unitary sphere of art:

The thesis of art’s lightheartedness is to be taken in a very precise sense. It holds for art as a whole, not for individual works. Those may be thoroughly devoid of lightheartedness, in accordance with the horrors of reality. What is lighthearted in art is, if you like, the opposite of what one might easily assume it to be: not its content but its demeanor [Verhalten, comportment], the abstract fact [das Abstrakte] that it is art at all, that it opens out over the reality to whose violence it bears witness at the same time.¹⁴⁵

Adorno’s clarification that art’s cheerfulness lies not in *what* art the artwork is, but that it is art at all corresponds quite recognizably to what, in one passage of *Aesthetic Theory*, he called art’s moment of affirmation, to quote it again: “This moment of affirmation passes out of the

¹⁴³ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 207 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 156.

¹⁴⁴ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 209, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 158.

¹⁴⁵ GS, vol. 11, p. 600, as translated except where indicated, *Notes to Literature*, vol. 2, p. 248.

immediacy of artworks and what they say and passes into the fact that they say it at all.”¹⁴⁶ It is the cultural sphere as a whole that consoles the individual over daily loss of life, whether that individual is an inarticulate lovesick teenager scribbling poems in a basement bedroom or Samuel Beckett reading Proust. As Adorno clearly associates art’s affirmative moment with art as a sphere, advanced works have not been able to negate it. In order for particular artworks to negate art’s affirmative character, they would have to be in solidarity with one another, rather than the mortal enemies of one another—on at least one point. They would have to reach a consensus on the decision to abandon cheerfulness. To rid art of its cheerfulness, *every* particular work and not just the advanced works would have to negate art-in-general. This negative zone is difficult to find, as art’s affirmative character appears to be generated from without and from within, pertaining as much to art’s place in society as to what art makes of itself. Adorno’s thesis that art can and must rid itself of its cheerfulness is itself caught in these contradictions of affirmation:

Art, which is no longer possible if it is not reflective, must renounce lightheartedness of its own accord. It is forced to do so above all by what has recently happened. The statement that it is not possible to write poetry after Auschwitz does not hold absolutely, but it is certain that after Auschwitz, because Auschwitz was possible and remains possible for the foreseeable future, lighthearted art is no longer conceivable.¹⁴⁷

Adorno here makes a paradoxical claim: extra-aesthetic circumstances force art to surrender cheerfulness *yet* art must renounce cheerfulness “of its own accord,” according to its own aesthetic laws and out of its own immanent movement. This paradox is precisely the structure of cheerful, ideal art: the tragic figure “surrenders what he has been robbed of,”¹⁴⁸ and this is

¹⁴⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 240, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 160.

¹⁴⁷ GS, vol. 11, p. 603 as translated, *Notes to Literature*, vol. 2, p. 251.

¹⁴⁸ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 208 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 158.

called “freedom,” according to Hegel.¹⁴⁹ Thus Adorno claims that art’s *renunciation* of cheerfulness must have the structure of aesthetic cheerfulness, and so he ultimately takes the side of cheerfulness. But if art were really to renounce cheerfulness, it would have to refuse absolutely to appropriate or to make aesthetically logical the extra-aesthetic event, Auschwitz, which breaks into art and diverts it entirely from its course. Art is forced by Auschwitz to abandon its language, its universality, its logic and itself, its free self-determination, at least at a point, the point of expression: the event. But this *event* must not in any way be called art’s freedom and life, and this goes against Hegel’s concept of beauty, the Ideal, which is essentially the idea of a kingdom of death through which life still flows. In “Das Ideal und das Leben,” the “silent shadow land of beauty” is figured as a kind of reward for the life that has overcome barriers:

Aber der, von Klippen eingeschlossen,
 Wild und schäumend sich ergossen,
 Sanft und eben rinnt des Lebens Fluß
 Durch der Schönheit stille Schattenlande,
 Und auf seiner Wellen Silberrande
 Malt Aurora sich und Hesperus.
 Aufgelöst in zarter Wechselliebe,
 In der Anmut freiem Bund vereint,
 Ruhen hier die ausgesöhnten Triebe,
 Und verschwunden ist der Feind.

(The river of life, when met with a block,
 Gushes wild and spuming against the rock,
 But gentle and even runs life’s river
 Through the silent shadowland of beauty,
 And on the silver rim of the swells’ sea
 Aurora and Hesperus there figure.
 Dissolved in tender, shifting love
 In the grace of a free bond united,
 The reconciled drives find calm above.
 And the adversary has vanished.)¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 209 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 158.

¹⁵⁰ Schiller, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 1, p. 153f., lines 61-70, with my translation.

To lose its cheerfulness, art would have to resist turning out the image of death as freedom and as bliss, as does Hegel when he explicates the single line in which Schiller's philosophy of art is concentrated:

Schiller in his poem *Das Ideal und das Leben*... contrasts actuality [Wirklichkeit] and its griefs and battles with the "still shadow-land of beauty." Such a realm of shadows is the Ideal; the *spirits* appearing in it are dead to immediate existence, cut off from the indigence of natural life, freed from the bonds of dependence on external influences and all the perversions and convulsions inseparable from the finitude of the phenomenal world [Erscheinung, appearance]. But all the same the Ideal treads into the sensuous and the natural form thereof, yet it still at the same time draws this, like the sphere of the external, back into itself, since art can bring back the apparatus, required by external appearance for its self-preservation, to the limits within which the external can be the manifestation of spiritual freedom. Only by this process does the Ideal exist in externality, self-enclosed, free, self-reliant, as sensuously blessed in itself [sinnlich selig in sich], enjoying and delighting in its own self. The ring of this bliss resounds throughout the entire appearance of the Ideal, for however far the external form [Außengestalt] may extend, the soul of the Ideal never loses itself in it. And precisely as a result of this alone is the Ideal genuinely beautiful [wahrhaft schön], since the beautiful exists only as a total though subjective unity; wherefore too the subject who manifests the Ideal must appear collected together in himself again into a higher totality and independence out of the divisions in the life of other individuals and their aims and efforts.¹⁵¹

To grasp the possibilities of art overcoming its cheerfulness, at least on the terms of Hegelian aesthetics, it is important to grasp where this passage falls in the dynamic organization of Hegel's lectures. This passage forms the latter half of the introductory paragraph (c), the third moment of "Beautiful Individuality," in Hegel's opening discussion of art beauty, "The Ideal as Such." Thus it belongs to considerations of the dissolution of the Ideal, poetry, and the passage to non-Ideal art, prose.

Adorno's statement that poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric can be read not as a ban on the *artistic form* of poetry, but as a new answer to Hegel's question—whether art should be poetry or prose—, upon the exhaustion and invalidation of cheerful, Ideal art by historical circumstances.

¹⁵¹ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 207f. as translated except where indicated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 156f.

Yet poetry (as opposed to prose) may have been invalidated some one hundred years before Auschwitz.

Eduard Mörike's "Auf eine Lampe" criticizes Hegel's resolution of the conflict between poetry and prose, Ideal and Life, on the side of the Ideal. "Auf eine Lampe" takes up vocabulary from Schiller's high-flown "Das Ideal und das Leben," then uses these words to praise an aesthetic experience of an object of use, somewhat kitsch, found in a nineteenth-century European interior.¹⁵² The tiny fragments salvaged from a founding text of Idealist aesthetics are keyed utterly differently in "Auf eine Lampe" and function against the Ideal, rather than for it. In other words, "Auf eine Lampe" is an inorganic montage that changes the function of its fragments—and this, over half a century before Modernism. Some of the words common to both poems are common everywhere—for example, "Noch," "an," "und," "der" and so forth. But the occurrence in both poems of forms of rarer words—such as "Marmor," "Rand," "sanft," "ernst" and "ergossen"—is enough for one poem to recall the other:

Noch unverrückt, o schöne Lampe, schmückest du,
An leichten Ketten zierlich aufgehangen hier,
Die Decke des nun fast vergeßnen Lustgemachs.
Auf deiner weißen Marmorschale, deren Rand
Der Epheukranz von goldengrünem Erz umflieht,
Schlingt fröhlich eine Kinderschaar den Ringelreihn.
Wie reizend Alles! lachend, und ein sanfter Geist
Des Ernstes doch ergossen um die ganze Form –
Ein Kunstgebild der ächten Art. Wer achtet sein?
Was aber schön ist, selig scheint es in ihm selbst.

(Not yet removed, O lamp of beauty, pendant, you,
Suspended here with delicacy on light chains,
Still grace the ceiling of this near-forgotten room.
On the white shade of marble yours, whose running rim

¹⁵² This interior is a Lustgemach, a gallery. As Christopher Middleton points out, "Lustgemach," is idiomatic: the word "denotes a special room, found in grander eighteenth-century houses, for the entertainment of guests; it need not be large." Christopher Middleton, notes to "Auf eine Lampe," in Friedrich Hölderlin, Eduard Mörike, *Selected Poems*, translated and with an introduction by Christopher Middleton (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 250.

Of golden-greening bronze weaves round an ivy wreath,
 A ring of children blithely dance a roundelay.
 How lovely all is! laughing, and a spirit mild
 In earnest gushes, though, around the form entire—
 A work of art, the genuine. Who pays it heed?
 The beautiful so seems with bliss in that itself.)¹⁵³

Where Schiller uses a word to describe the Ideal, Mörike uses it to describe the everyday:

Mörike transforms the pure Platonic Forms,¹⁵⁴ exalted in Schiller's poem, into the literal shape or "Form" of the existing lamp, so transforms Being itself into an existing thing. In this vein, Mörike literalizes Schiller's metaphor. The metaphorical "silver rim," or "Silberrande"¹⁵⁵ of the waves in Schiller's poem becomes the literal rim of the lamp in Mörike's.¹⁵⁶ Mörike also performs the inverse procedure: where Schiller means literal marble,¹⁵⁷ Mörike means metaphorical marble—the ersatz-marble shade of a commodity fixture.¹⁵⁸ Mörike also synthesizes terms that Schiller opposes and contrasts. In both "Das Ideal und das Leben" and in the prologue to *Wallenstein*, Schiller registers Ernst on the side of work and difficulty, opposing it to Spirit and to the life that runs gently and unperturbed through beauty: "sanft und eben rinnt des Lebens Fluß/ Durch der Schönheit stille Schattenlande" (Yet gentle and even runs life's river/Through the silent shadowland of beauty);¹⁵⁹ Mörike combines these opposites into a new kind of spirit: "ein sanfter Geist/des Ernstes" (a spirit mild in earnest).¹⁶⁰

While Schiller contrasts the life that bursts its bounds to *gush forth* in a wild foam with the life

¹⁵³ Eduard Mörike, "Auf eine Lampe," in *Werke und Briefe*, herausgegeben von Hubert Arbogast, Hans-Henrik Krummacker, Herbert Meyer und Bernhard Zeller, Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, s.a.), vol. 1, Teil (part) 1, p. 132, with my translation. The added underlining indicates the elements common to "Das Ideal und das Leben."

¹⁵⁴ Schiller, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 1, p. 155, line 122.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 152, line 65.

¹⁵⁶ Mörike, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 1, part 1, p. 132, line 4.

¹⁵⁷ Schiller, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 1, p. 152, line 80.

¹⁵⁸ Mörike, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 1, part 1, p. 132, line 4.

¹⁵⁹ Schiller, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 1, p. 152, lines 63-64, with my translation.

¹⁶⁰ Mörike, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 1, part 1, p. 132, lines 7-8, with my translation.

that beauty has tamed into a peacefully flowing stream, Mörike condenses these two moments into a single contradictory image. While the river of life in Schiller's poem overcomes the cliffs that hem it in and gushes forth, eventually to reach the calm of beauty, the mild spirit in earnest in Mörike's poem gushes around the lamp:

Aber der, von Klippen eingeschlossen,
Wild und schäumend sich ergossen,
Sanft und eben rinnt des Lebens Fluß
Durch der Schönheit stille Schattenlande,
Und auf seiner Wellen Silberrande
Malt Aurora sich und Hesperus.

(The river of life, when met with a block,
Gushes wild and spuming against the rock,
Yet mild and even runs life's river
Through the silent shadowland of beauty,
And on the silver rim of the swells' sea
Aurora and Hesperus there figure.)¹⁶¹

The cliffs in Schiller's poem represent a natural barrier or limit dividing work and seriousness from beauty and tranquillity. But the declamation "Ein Kunstgebild der ächten Art" (A work of art, the genuine), referring to the beautiful lamp, rules out the beauty of the *lamp* as natural beauty.¹⁶² This statement brings the poem into the main debate of Hegel's aesthetics: whether art should be poetry or prose. The ode on the ceiling lamp might appear at first to raise a mere real thing into the aesthetic sphere, as suggested by its initial vocative: "o schöne Lampe" (O lamp of beauty).¹⁶³ But the first lines situate the lamp in the private sphere: if the gallery and its past entertainments are by now almost forgotten, they are still too close for the lamp to appear really elevated, aesthetic. The lamp even hangs on light chains, so it is not lofty through its own power, but through the power of what binds it. Its tendency is to fall,

¹⁶¹ Schiller, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 1, p. 153f., lines 61-66, with my translation.

¹⁶² Mörike, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 1, part 1, p. 132, line 9, with my translation.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, part 1, p. 132, line 1, with my translation.

submitted as it is to the force of gravity, “Ernstes” (earnest).¹⁶⁴ The question “Wer achtet sein?” (Who pay it heed?) solicits a reflection on the position or status of the poem’s speaker, who is implicit only, disembodied, and does not so much appear.¹⁶⁵ Perhaps the lamp can become an object of attention at all because the speaker is alone, gazing at whatever *happens* to present itself in the field of vision from an occasional perspective. Furthermore, as it is described, the lamp gives reason to inquire into the speaker’s qualification of it as “schöne” (beautiful).¹⁶⁶ A white form in a material like marble, which presents interest in itself, just by its irregular colouring, by its smooth, polished surface and by its quality of lightness, becomes kitsch when anything is figured on it or around it, particularly anything human, particularly anything childish. It is funny to note that this kitschiness, which can still be observed in ceiling lamps of today, particularly those that aspire to marble, is not new. Kitsch, not the Ideal, is immortal. The lamp sins against the Ideal in another way: it breaks into outright laughter, which Hegel condemned. The sole exclamation in the poem is not an expression of awe before serious and profound beauty, but is an unserious reaction to charm: “Wie reizend Alles!” (How lovely all is!) is a squeal from one of the laughing children in the roundelay figured on the lamp.¹⁶⁷ This laughter does not concord with the “spirit mild in earnest gushes, though, around the form entire,” itself a paradoxical image. The last line of “Auf eine Lampe” is composed almost entirely of fragments of “Das Ideal und das Leben.” Divergent translations have been suggested for the last line, with incommensurable results for the interpretations of the poem, depending on the resolution of three ambiguities: “aber” can intensify “schön” or mark a caesura with what has preceded; “scheint” can be read as “shines” or “seems”; the

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., vol. 1, part 1, p. 132, line 8, with my translation.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., vol. 1, part 1, p. 132, line 9, with my translation.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., vol. 1, part 1, p. 132, line 1, with my translation.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., vol. 1, part 1, p. 132, line 7, with my translation.

pronoun “ihm” could refer to “es,” which itself could refer to the adjective “schön” or to “Was,” or “ihm” could be dialect for the reflexive pronoun “sich.”¹⁶⁸ One hears in it an unmistakably Hegelian accent:

Was aber schön ist, selig scheint es in ihm selbst.¹⁶⁹

One might say that this line has been recomposed from Schiller previously—by Hegel. It has two sources. First, it vaguely echoes Hegel’s description of art beauty, the Ideal, as “sinnlich selig in sich,” sensuously blissful in itself, in the sentence “Dadurch allein steht das Ideal im Äußerlichen mit sich selbst zusammengeschlossen frei auf sich beruhend da, als sinnlich selig in sich, seiner sich freuend und genießend.”¹⁷⁰ Second, in its wording “scheint es in ihm selbst” recalls the first section of the second book of *The Science of Logic*, “Das Wesen als Reflexion in ihm selbst,” where, in its first chapter, Hegel introduces the concept of Schein: “Das Scheinen des Wesens in ihm selbst ist die *Reflexion*.”¹⁷¹ It may be argued that Hegel’s peculiar use of the pronoun “ihm” enacts alienated reflection itself. The pronoun is not reflexive in standard usage, but it can have a reflexive sense in Swabian dialect, which, according to Adorno, is not incidental to Hegel’s philosophy: “The often-repeated remark, originally Horkheimer’s, that only someone who knows Swabian can really understand Hegel, is no mere aperçu about linguistic idiosyncrasies; it describes the very gesture of Hegel’s language.”¹⁷² Horkheimer and Adorno’s opinion that Hegel expressed himself in Swabian is

¹⁶⁸ See, for example, the various positions on this expressed by Albrecht Holschuh, Berel Lang and Herbert Lindenberger in the forum, “Interpreting a Pronoun in Mörike,” *PMLA* 106, no. 2 (March 1991): pp. 312-314.

¹⁶⁹ Mörike, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 1, part 1, p. 132, line 10.

¹⁷⁰ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 207, translated as “Only by this process does the Ideal exist in externality, self-enclosed, free, self-reliant, as sensuously blessed in itself, enjoying and delighting in its own self” in *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 157.

¹⁷¹ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 6, p. 17, or translated by G. di Giovanni, *The Science of Logic*, p. 341: “The shining of essence within it is *reflection*.”

¹⁷² GS, vol. 5, p. 350 as translated by Shierry Weber Nicholson, *Hegel: Three Studies* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), p. 118.

more likely a residual piece of Volksideologie. It should be pointed out that in the phrase “Das Scheinen des Wesens in ihm selbst” and in the title “Das Wesen als Reflexion in ihm selbst,” the use of the pronoun “ihm” disambiguates the antecedent: essence is reflection in *essence* itself, as opposed to being reflection in reflection itself; reflection is shining (or seeming) of essence in *essence* itself, not in shining (or seeming) itself. The illusion of an essence in itself, of an essence through and through essence, occurs within essence, not outside it. This is absolute reflection: “Reflection, as absolute reflection, is essence shining within [das in ihm selbst scheinende Wesen, essence that shines in essence itself], essence that posits only shine [Schein], only positedness, for its presupposition; and as presupposing reflection, it is immediately only positing reflection.”¹⁷³ The consequences of all this for the last line of Mörike’s poem is a speculative grammar, whereby the antecedent of “ihm” is “es,” whose antecedent must be the *adjective* “schön,” so that through the middle term “es,” which can substitute both nouns and adjectives, “ihm” replaces a noun that never appears in the poem, but can only be drawn out by inference, in reflection: “das Schöne,” the essence of the Beautiful:

But what is beautiful seems so blissfully in that itself.¹⁷⁴

The last line of Mörike’s “Auf eine Lampe,” here unmetered for clarity, can be read in these Hegelian terms: what is beautiful loses its essence—i.e. seems or, in George di Giovanni’s translation, *shines*—blissfully within essence itself. The unusual thing about absolute reflection is that, in the scope of Hegel’s *Logic*, it is the moment of reversal: the *Logic* presupposes forward movement, but absolute reflection discovers this presupposition, and to

¹⁷³ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 6, p. 28 as translated by G. di Giovanni except where indicated in square brackets, *The Science of Logic*, p. 348.

¹⁷⁴ Mörike, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 1, part 1, p. 132, line 10 (my translation).

discover this presupposition to be merely posited, set up at the start, absolute reflection had to go backwards. But backwards motion to the presupposition that logic only goes forwards is not illogical because forward movement was merely posited, as only backward motion can discover. So absolute reflection deposes the absoluteness of forward movement as sheer illusion. Forward movement is not absolute, but only something within essence itself. Movement does not thereby become relative; movement is determined, rather, as that which in essence is without essence.¹⁷⁵ The last line of the poem, then, claims that what is beautiful loses its essence, ceases to participate in the beautiful itself, becomes movement only within the beautiful itself, in the discovery of what the beautiful was presumed to be. Yet this last line contrasts sharply with the rest of the poem, which determines the beautiful imagistically, as a beautiful lamp—albeit a lamp that is a montage of a broken-up Ideal. The “aber” is a conjunction of contrast; however, the last line is not completely cut off: it still clings within the circle of the beautiful evoked in the first line: “o schöne Lampe.” Mörike’s “Auf eine Lampe” in the end seeks to free itself from images and its time, even from all that has gone on before. The closing gesture sounds restorative, a rejection of the lamp in favour of Hegel’s Idealist philosophy of art. However, Mörike is doubtless baiting crypto-Idealist thinkers. A naïve reading of the poem, which reduces it to Hegel in a nutshell, would face the criticism that Adorno raised in *Negative Dialectics*: “The power of language proves itself when expression and thing separate in reflection.¹⁷⁶ Language becomes a measure of truth only upon the consciousness of the nonidentity of an expression with what is meant.”¹⁷⁷ In his 1960/61

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Peter Bürger, *Zur Kritik der idealistischen Ästhetik*, p. 59 and p. 72. As Schein is the loss of essence, the claim that Schein is the *essential* characteristic of art is absurd.

¹⁷⁶ Vgl. [Cf.] Hermann Schweppenhäuser, Studien über die Heideggersche Sprachtheorie, in *Archiv für Philosophie* 7, 1957, p. 304 [Adorno’s note].

¹⁷⁷ GS, vol. 6, p. 117 as translated, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 111.

lectures on ontology and dialectics, Adorno called it the mark of critical thinking since Bacon to *reflect* on the difference between language and object, instead of following the tradition of language analysis, formalized by Aristotle, which simply took the forms of speech to be the forms of being.¹⁷⁸ The claim cannot be made that Mörike follows Hegelian doctrine; such a viewpoint would assume that Hegelian aesthetic language always already *is* what it expresses, the Ideal. Mörike's montage is not random for all that. Not only is the ordering of the fragments important, but the separations between them also speak eloquently. The dash places "Die ganze Form" (the form entire) and "Ein Kunstgebild der ächten Art" (A work of art, the genuine) in apposition, joining them, while the "aber" marks contrast, setting the last line off by itself.¹⁷⁹ Besides detaching the last line from the rest of the poem, the "aber" also negates the point of view that the beautiful is something in the form of an authentic artwork under observation. What is beautiful, rather, is the blissful negation of essence in Schein that starts to move by itself. This is different from Hegel's idea of the beautiful artwork that "stands there" in sensuous bliss.¹⁸⁰ The model for the Ideal is the state enjoyed by Greek gods, far removed from the seriousness of ascetic gods of monotheistic religions: artworks lie in intense luxury and take on the jovial, gently mocking, amused attitude of the Olympians towards mere mortals. Mörike leaves the "sinnlich" out from what seems to be a concluding paraphrase of Hegel. It may be granted that sensuousness is implied by "scheint," which can refer back to the "Scheine" of sensual pleasures in the opening of "Das Ideal und das Leben,"¹⁸¹ or, more generally, to the strong tradition since Plato of associating sensuousness with illusion. But this

¹⁷⁸ Theodor W. Adorno, *Ontologie und Dialektik (1960/61)*, herausgegeben von Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002), p. 57.

¹⁷⁹ Mörike, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 1, part 1, p. 132, respectively line 8, line 9 and line 10.

¹⁸⁰ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 207, or prefer to my translation here "does...exist" from *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 157.

¹⁸¹ Schiller, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 1, p. 152, line 14.

“scheint” in itself constitutes an important divergence from Hegel’s initial characterization of the Ideal: Hegel does not claim that art beauty *seems* sensuously blissful in itself nor that it *shines* in sensuous bliss in itself, but that it *stands there* in sensuous bliss.¹⁸² Thus, in Hegel’s lectures, the first appearance of the Ideal as sensuous bliss, as the cheerfulness of gods, has *not* to do with art’s illusory character, but with its presence and its capacity to stay up, with its integrity, steadfastness, persistence, viability and structural success: its Being. Mörike denies the beautiful its bliss, its *standing*, not only in his concluding enunciation of the beautiful, but also in his choice of a particular beautiful object. His last line takes on an almost bitter tinge: what is beautiful does not rejoice in its own free-standing success and presence, in its bodying forth before the viewer, like the Ideal, but is blissful only shining in itself: in its reflecting, alienated condition. Furthermore, the lamp does not stand there, self-sufficient, but hangs on chains.¹⁸³ Thus, Mörike suggests that the truly beautiful does not turn the fact of its existence into affirmation, self-contentment and self-satisfaction, as Hegel claims that the Ideal does. In this way, then, Hegelian language is employed to say the opposite of what Hegel expressed with it. Likewise, Schiller’s words, placed in different constructions, say the opposite of what Schiller expressed. A word-montage refutes the identity of expression and thing.

Yet Adorno missed Mörike’s critique of German Idealism because, to judge by his 1958/59 lectures on aesthetics, he took Mörike’s Hegelian language in the last line of “Auf eine Lampe” *to be* Hegelian philosophy. Adorno, in good philosopher fashion, actually misquotes the line, leaving out the notion of “scheinen” altogether, so biasing the reading toward Hegel’s notion of the Ideal artwork as sensuously blissful in itself:

¹⁸² Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 207, or see *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 157, where Knox translates “steht...da” as “does...exist.”

¹⁸³ Mörike, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 1, part 1, p. 132, line 2.

So I think one only then gets beyond the bad, purely bourgeois, contemplative concept of beauty, which satisfies itself in an artwork that is blissful in itself—as it goes in the beautiful poem by Mörike—, if one is capable, in the perception and in the experience of significant artworks, of recognizing them as that play of forces that they really are according to their essence, play of forces which is not external to their concept of beauty, but rather that in which their own beauty has its substance—and this, not by way of a belated intellectualization and interpretation, but rather through the experience of their inner connection, of the moments that constitute them.¹⁸⁴

The critical reference to Schein precludes the thesis that Mörike's poem unequivocally promotes a purely contemplative and static concept of beauty over and above the actual engagement with works as a process. Plato reserved contemplation for Being, the pure, immortal forms, as distinct from Schein, the changing, fleeting, scattered things of this world. But in denying that what is beautiful *is* simply, in drawing out the aspect of Schein in what is beautiful, Mörike implicitly denies that the beautiful is an object of pure contemplation. Changing the directional tendency of Schiller's words puts the simple identity of the lamp and the concluding "definition" of beauty out of circulation: left indeterminate is whether the lamp is an artwork, whether it is really beautiful, whether it participates in the really beautiful or whether what is beautiful completely cuts itself off from objects and subjects. The elements of the poem are, however, determined, also—to overturn the presuppositions of Idealist aesthetics. Mörike deposes the Ideal in the prose aesthetic ultimately rejected by Hegel, but which would go on to reach perhaps its deepest expression in the drawings of Adolph von Menzel. Hegel does indeed accept the criticism, voiced by von Rumohr, that Ideal art can be empty, and even admits that ideal beauty "lapsed into flatness, lifelessness, and superficiality

¹⁸⁴ Theodor W. Adorno, *Ästhetik (1958/59)*, herausgegeben von Eberhard Ortland (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2009), p. 169.

without character.”¹⁸⁵ But he ends up defending Ideal art against the prosaic world of Dutch genre paintings, which simply makes a selection out of what exists:

Now one might suppose that the artist should select here and there the best forms in the world confronting him and collect them together, or even as has happened, hunt through collections of etchings and wood-cuts for faces [Physiognomien, physiognomies], postures, etc. in an endeavour to find the genuine forms for his topic. But with this collecting, and choosing, nothing is achieved, for the artist must act creatively and, in his own imagination and with knowledge of the corresponding forms, with profound sense [Sinn] and serious feeling, give form and shape throughout and from a *single casting* to the meaning [Bedeutung] which animates him.¹⁸⁶

Mörike indeed collects and chooses out of what confronts him rather than creating a poem out of a “meaning,” but whether his poem is beautiful and expressive does not reduce to a “purely empirical question,” which is the danger that Hegel sees in such a procedure.¹⁸⁷ For Mörike did not proceed empirically, by choosing the most beautiful words in the German language, which he happened to find already collected for the most part in “Das Ideal und das Leben.” “Auf eine Lampe” escapes Hegel’s criticism because Mörike arranges the terms of his “controlled vocabulary” to negate the meanings of the past, which load these expressions down with a false dignity and pseudo-intelligence that they do not possess in and of themselves. But at the same time, Mörike’s constellational procedure baffles Hegelian aesthetics, which assumes the necessity and primacy of *meaning*.

While “Auf eine Lampe” escapes the charge of empiricism, Hegel is right to claim that everyday art, arrangements of things picked out from what simply exists, cannot bring down the Ideal without working against meaning at the same time. Yet far from invalidating Mörike’s poem, the dissolution of meaning that follows inevitably from the attack on the Ideal

¹⁸⁵ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 212 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 161.

¹⁸⁶ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 229 as translated except where indicated in square brackets, but preserving the emphasis of the original, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 174.

¹⁸⁷ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 227 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 173.

in fact distinguishes Mörike as a progressive artist. The artwork's critique of meaning goes beyond the critique of cheerfulness. For in the context of affirmative culture, any claim to have clarified and grasped the meaning of what exists is bound to ignore the impermissibility of questioning the sense of things:

Under the ban on thinking, thinking sanctions what merely exists. The genuinely critical need of thought to awaken from the phantasmagoria of culture is brought under control, channelled, fed to false consciousness. The culture in which thinking bathes cured it of questioning what this was all about and to what end; this question, loosely put, of the meaning [Sinn] of it all becomes ever more pressing, the less self-explanatory some such meaning is to any human being any more, and the more completely the cultural management replaces it. Instead of what, as culture, claims to have meaning, "that's-just-the-way-it-is-and-none-other" is set on the throne. Under the weight of existing culture, it is just as little demanded whether the meaning claimed by culture is fulfilled as it is demanded how meaning effects its own legitimation.¹⁸⁸

Increasing cultural administration—now even its formalization as a branch of commerce—cancels questions about the process by which, on one hand, cultural objects gain a seeming inherent meaningfulness and, on the other, meaning itself becomes, it seems, intrinsically good and right. In the face of the total organization of culture, senselessly performed in astounding ignorance of the particularities of works, to ask pointed questions about meaning is necessary but impossible. Questions about meaning can be asked, provided they are asked on the most general level—about the meaning of Being. But, as Adorno has pointed out, the question of the meaning of Being, of access, cannot be adequately answered.¹⁸⁹ He recognizes that the ontology behind this question comes from a real place, from an "ontological need" that arises when "what is is relative to others, irrelevant in itself."¹⁹⁰ Thinking that asserts the primacy of inquiry into Being over inquiry into any particular being, determined in time and space, seems truthful to the contemporary subject in need of the consolation that it "will survive the

¹⁸⁸ GS, vol. 6, p. 93, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 85f.

¹⁸⁹ GS, vol. 1, p. 336f.

¹⁹⁰ GS, vol. 6, p. 73, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 65.

functional context,” the world of total administration.¹⁹¹ The priority that the new ontology accords to substantial, whole Being over and above relative, determined beings provides such reassurance. Ontology thus “became untruthfully affirmative,” for it developed a method without inquiring into whether its object was legitimate, real and knowable.¹⁹² The result ultimately only affords consolation, rather than actually opening up the twentieth-century experience through, say, the real concept of meaning, which implies an object. In the context of totalitarian racism, the decisiveness with which the facts of existence played in dooming the particular human being to relations of domination, atrocious forced labour, torture and death clearly expose any claim to the meaningfulness of existence as false affirmation:

After Auschwitz, after events that make a mockery of constructing meaning on the immanence that emanates from affirmatively posited transcendence, there is an objective side to the feeling that refuses any claim for the positivity of existence as sanctimonious, as wronging the victims, that balks at squeezing any kind of sense, however faint, out of the victims’ fate.¹⁹³

The artwork that negates meaning is therefore of a more advanced consciousness than the one animated by meaning. Such an advanced artwork, which collects and arranges what simply exists, empties these elements of the illusory meanings with which the “phantasmagoria of culture” has filled them. The artwork of everyday prose however escapes the randomness of what simply exists insofar as it responds to the specific extra-aesthetic historical experiences that universally call affirmative meaning into question. Like Modern works, Mörike’s “Auf eine Lampe” is part of the “crisis of meaning,”¹⁹⁴ in which “it becomes ever harder for artworks to cohere as a nexus of meaning [Sinnzusammenhang, context of meaning].”¹⁹⁵ A

¹⁹¹ GS, vol. 6, p. 73 as translated, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 65.

¹⁹² GS, vol. 6, p. 73 as translated, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 65.

¹⁹³ GS, vol. 6, p. 354, or prefer to my translation here *Negative Dialectics*, p. 361.

¹⁹⁴ GS, vol. 7, p. 231 as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 154.

¹⁹⁵ GS, vol. 7, p. 229 as translated except where indicated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 152.

single meaning cannot be *behind* “Auf eine Lampe” because it is the break-up of what previously constituted a context of meaning. Its paradoxical descriptions, its shifts from second to third person and its re-ordering of fragments of texts from Schiller and Hegel all fend off interpretation by breaking the work’s closed cell open onto other texts and other perspectives. Its fractured re-composition of Schiller and of Hegel has an analogue in certain of Menzel’s drawings in which legs, arms, trees and heads abruptly cut by the paper’s edge are continued elsewhere on the same page, so that reality appears as a provisional arrangement of collected treasures or mementos: feet, hands, boughs, a woman’s chignon float in cameos. The material, the physical limitation of the page’s edge, intrudes on the idea of drawing a picture *of* something. Montage is a determinate negation of Idealist aesthetics and of the art it upholds, which is supposed to flow out of meanings, rather than, say, out of the material. “Auf eine Lampe” cannot be a *symbol*, for it drives a wedge between the material, language, and what that language expressed in the past. The iterancy of Idealist language is thus short-circuited.

{Transition to Chapter VII}

Contrary to Hegel's reckoning that art is to be poetry, and so, the advance of the Ideal, we have seen that a prosaic work, Eduard Mörike's "Auf eine Lampe," is "advanced" in light of what Ideal, with its priority of meaning, has become: affirmation. According to the usual historical divisions, "Auf eine Lampe" heralds a new, anti-Ideal phase in art, realism. Yet it is not clear whether Ideal implies self-critique and even its own dissolution.

For in his Lectures on Aesthetics, Hegel splits the "Ideal as Such" between two moments—(1.) the moment of *beautiful individuality*, which posits *the Ideal* only to see it dissolve from within, and (2.) the moment in which the Ideal *relates back to Nature*, in an attempt perhaps to give itself a lease on life by borrowing from the "prose of the world" that it had cut out. What Peter Bürger calls "post-romantic art" may actually be Romantic, according to certain passages from Hegel's lectures.¹ The *prosaic* works that Bürger has in mind, exemplified by Dutch genre painting, fall under two headings. On the one hand, Hegel treats the work of genre painters—he names Adriaen van Ostade, David Teniers II, and Jan Steen—under the category of Romanticism, at the *dissolution* of the Romantic form.² Romantic art is always implicitly the dissolution of the Classical Ideal, and it is still Romantic even when it realizes this potential, as Hegel claims at the end of the second part of his lectures on aesthetics: "The last matter with which we now still have to deal in more detail is the point at which romanticism, already *implicitly* the principle of dissolution of the classical ideal, now

¹ Peter Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, 2e. Auflage (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980), p. 129 as translated by Michael Shaw, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 93. Please note that only chapters 1-4 of *Theorie der Avantgarde* are translated in *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (as chapters 2-5).

² G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, Theorie-Werkausgabe, vols. 13-15, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), vol. 14, p. 227 as translated by T. M. Knox, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, by G. W. F. Hegel, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), vol. 1, p. 599.

makes this dissolution appear clearly in fact as dissolution.”³ Hegel, however, conceives of his system as an organic unity, in which possibility just lies latent in whatever is. A leap into a completely different form of art does not belong to his conception of art as a system. It is inherent to ideal, classical art, according to Hegel, that it will decay and degenerate. Ideal art is always working against its sensuous form, because what it wants is not sensuous—the Absolute. But on the other hand, Hegel elsewhere suggests that genre painters do not posit the Ideal, but that their interest is fed by another source: they take their content “out of their own life in the present.”⁴ Hegel admits that art has at least tried to make progress through a renewed interest “in the older Italian and German painting, as well as in the later Dutch school,” yet this new art does not seem to presuppose anything ideal at all: “Art in general” but “painting in particular, influenced by other stimuli, has moved away from this mania for so-called ideals.”⁵ The art that would spring from another principle altogether—nature in all its contingency—seems to pose an obstacle to Hegel’s system. Ultimately, however, Hegel is able to find subtle ways in which genre paintings admit of the Ideal, so that the apparently trivial and random choice of subject does not have the final word. He claims that, even in the midst of needy, insalubrious conditions, Seligkeit shines through the characters depicted in the genre paintings *The Toilette* and *Boys Eating Grapes and Melon* by Bartholmé Esteban Murillo.⁶ Hegel seems particularly taken with the second of these:

We see that [those boys of Murillo] have no wider interests and aims, yet not at all because of stupidity; rather do they squat on the ground content and serene [selig], almost like the gods of Olympus; they do nothing, they say nothing; but they are people all of one piece without any surliness or discontent; and since they possess this

³ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, p. 220 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 593f.

⁴ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 222 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 169.

⁵ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 213 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 161.

⁶ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 224 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 170.

foundations of all excellence, we have the idea that anything may come of these youths.⁷

Here Hegel subsumes the paradigmatic prosaic works under poetry; works that take their inspiration from *life*, under the Ideal; works that admit of contingent nature, under art.

In the contradictory terms of Hegel's system, Dutch genre paintings may have failed to supplant Ideal with Life as the principle of art—in which case they fail as *post-Romantic* works—, or, alternatively, as *Romantic* works, they may have failed to dissolve the Ideal fully from within, for selig (serene, blissful) in the face of life, they mastered and resolved their contingency.

This becomes clear when one considers the three moments that go to build beautiful individuality, or, the “poetry” side of the Ideal as such: (a) the harmony of inner and outer; (b) the negation of contingency; and (c) Seligkeit (the result). These three moments are stages in a process by which *outerness* becomes *innerness*. Hegel understands beautiful individuality to be art's way of making the outer manifestation, surface or appearance of external reality into subjectivity: art, he says, “has to convert every shape in all points of its visible surface into an eye.”⁸ Art so makes all that we see look back at us, yet with a look that we ourselves cannot give, for eyes in life have a veiled regard, just as much surface as “actions and events” are:

And it is not only the bodily form, the look of the eyes, the countenance and posture, but also actions and events, speech and tones of voice, and the series of their course through all conditions of appearance that art has everywhere to make into an eye, in which the free soul is revealed in its inner infinity.⁹

Hegel then breaks art's process of making the outer an inner into its three moments. In the first moment, (a), he rejects merely formal expressions of inwardness, both those due to a wrong

⁷ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 224 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 170.

⁸ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 203 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 153.

⁹ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 203f. as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 154.

choice of object, inherently finite ones,¹⁰ and those due to what could be called the laziness of spirit, the inability of spirit to raise manifestation to universality, universalization through which the artwork grasps its freedom, according to Hegel.¹¹ Hegel posits the criterion of truth in art as the *harmony* of inner and outer: “Thus the truth of art cannot be mere correctness, to which the so-called imitation of nature is restricted; on the contrary, the outer must harmonize [zumsammenstimmen] with an inner which is harmonious in itself, and, just on that account, can reveal itself as itself in the outer.”¹² Another way in which Hegel expresses the agreement between inner and outer is “this harmony [of art] with its true Concept.”¹³ The second moment, (b), is the negative one. Art criticizes the abstraction and formality of the first moment by determinately negating “chance and externality”: it “casts aside everything in appearance which does not correspond with the Concept and only by this purification does it produce the Ideal.”¹⁴ This is the moment in which the arbitrary is cut out from the artwork. Hegel cites the example of Raphael cutting out from his Madonnas everything that did not express their concept, motherly love. The third moment (c), is really the moment in which the Ideal first appears, as godly bliss, Seligkeit.

Seligkeit itself is broken into three moments, the first of which is properly the moment of cheerfulness and affirmation, which relates to the achievement of the work, its “Beschlossenheit,” this conclusiveness, decidedness and resolve,¹⁵ even, we might add, in the face of a “breach” between the inner life of the subject and external circumstances, as in

¹⁰ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 204 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 154.

¹¹ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 205 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 155.

¹² Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 205 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 155.

¹³ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 205 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 155.

¹⁴ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 205f. as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 155.

¹⁵ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 208 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 157.

tragedy.¹⁶ Closure represents the truth moment of art for Hegel. If art can make itself whole and coherent even when obvious ruptures rent life apart, then it has succeeded on Hegel's terms: it is cheerful. Tragedy is "cheerful" in the sense that through the conversion of blind, outer circumstances into the freedom of inner subjectivity it produces an individual whose autonomy consists of his resignation to fate. Tragedy, as Hegel understands it, is affirmative, for he reduces freedom to consciousness or to an attitude about misfortune; however, being reconciled to one's fate covers over the actual breach between the universal and the individual in which the universal endures while the living, breathing material individual perishes. Knowledge does not deliver the tragic hero from his fate. Such deliverance would be substantial freedom. In the absence or impossibility of such deliverance, one would expect criticism of the unreconciled and unfree state of the world or at least some expression of the painful rift between theory and praxis. Instead, the tragic hero turns this negative into a positive.

Hegel associates the second and third moments of *Seligkeit*—*sustained disunity* and *irony*—with Romantic artworks, as stages in decline. Thus, in a way, what Bürger calls "post-romantic" is, according to Hegel's schema, pre-Romantic: Dutch genre paintings, automatic writing, objective chance, aleatory music, art informel and other artforms that embrace rather than spurn contingency are even pre-Ideal, in that they refuse the *bliss*, the *Seligkeit*, that is to reconcile harmony and chaos, and which is the real *beginning* of the Ideal of beauty. On this schema, the "emancipation from the concept of harmony" associated with the Second Viennese School would have overcome an even more fundamental principle: the harmony of

¹⁶ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 208 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 158.

inner and outer to which contingency constitutes the antithesis.¹⁷ Bürger suggests that the “shift of the form-content dialectic in favour of form” observed by Hegel “characterizes the further course of art”—which may be correct, but this describes not a new kind of art, post-Romantic art, but rather Symbolic art.¹⁸ The Classical Ideal is the perfect balance of form and content, of outer shape and inner subjectivity, while imbalances in favour of one or the other result in either Symbolic art (where form predominates) or Romantic art (where content predominates). A truly post-Romantic art would have to break out of the Hegelian schema and its imperatives of harmony, balance, unity, cheeriness and blessed bliss. Hegel himself claims that art is not the place for reconciliation:

The absolute Spirit is, as spirit, not an immediate topic for art. Its supreme actual reconciliation within itself [höchste wirkliche Versöhnung in sich] can only be a reconciliation and satisfaction in the spiritual as such; and this in its purely ideal element is not susceptible of expression in art, since absolute truth is on a higher level than the appearance of beauty [der Schein des Schönen] which cannot be detached from the soil of the sensuous and apparent [Erscheinenden].¹⁹

Bürger rejects the organicist premise of Hegel’s schema, in which art follows the natural pattern of germination, growth and decay. By rights, art should have come to an end, died of its inherent contradictions between life and ideal, sensuousness and spirit, external appearances and subjective innerness, Bürger seems to say.²⁰ The continuation of art after the failure of the avant-garde movements to bring these contradictions to their crisis indicates that art does not follow an organic pattern in the least. But at the same time, works that pursue an open and continued divisiveness are Romantic, not anti-art, to Hegel’s mind. Art does not die of its contradictions, but rather of their resolution. Art, according to Hegel, seeks to satisfy its

¹⁷ GS, vol. 7, p. 154 as translated by Robert Hullot-Kentor, *Aesthetic Theory*, edited by Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 100.

¹⁸ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 130 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 93.

¹⁹ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, p. 154 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 539.

²⁰ Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, p. 130 as translated, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 93.

longing for the absolute in a sensuous realm, which can never fulfil it. Art overcomes this inadequacy by moving into other, spiritual realms. From the fact that art has not disappeared, not even a century after the Dadaists and Surrealists began their manifestations, one cannot conclude that Hegel's theory is false: art may be declining much more slowly than expected, tarrying longer before finding the true spiritual regions for its Ideas. Yet, in a way, the continued emptying of meaning from the artistic sphere, notably through the use of montage, brings art very nearly to the end: as a "shining as shining for the sake of shining," art is a lustrous collection of open and split shells, beautifully nacre'd within, deserted by their departed ideas. It seems restorative and timid to judge the great twentieth-century anti-organicist movement of advanced consciousness by the standard of Hegel, who remains a thinker of organicism. Yet the totalizing system does not admit of any other standard but its own. This is why, in this last chapter, the test will be made to break Hegel's system apart from within. Even a work that to all appearances fits in with Hegel's definition of the Romantic artwork goes beyond Romanticism and Hegel. Far earlier than the post avant-garde period, art had become a collection of dead, spent forms of co-existing traditions and times, among which the advanced artist could choose.

This chapter aims to detail an anti-Ideal that is not decline and degeneration, but rather critical choice and combination of what remains of fled life, inorganic and still, after the *explosion* of Jean Paul, arresting the aesthetics of growth and development. It is itself divided into seven sections.

{Chapter VII} The thesis defended is that Robert Schumann's song cycle *Dichterliebe*, op. 48, (1840) is a true artwork.²¹ To this end, each of the seven sections of this chapter treats a separate dimension of the work's "progressiveness": i) its character as a Romantic artwork; ii) its character as an Expressionist artwork *avant la lettre*; iii) its position, as a "cycle," on the unity debate in Homeric studies; iv) its inorganic, cleft form; v) its handling of the folk idiom in the context of rising German nationalism and concomitant interest in the *Nibelungenlied*; vi) its technical progressiveness, Schumann's discovery of a hidden key to a world beyond tonality; and vii) the work's social praxis against reification, in the form of remembrance.

{Section i} Schumann began his career not long after Hegel delivered his lectures on aesthetics. Hegel died exactly one week after Schumann saw the publication of his Opus 1, the "Abegg" Variations, on November 7, 1831.²² Although, according to Thomas Alan Brown, "there is no evidence that Schumann systematically read Hegel,"²³ he was an avid reader of Jean Paul's novels and aesthetics, even paying a visit to his widow in Bayreuth in May 1828.²⁴ Jean Paul was not a mere influence on Schumann; certain ones of Schumann's compositions, notably *Papillons*, op. 2, were musical versions or transfers²⁵ of Jean Paul.²⁶ Of multifarious talents and wide-ranging culture, Schumann was well-versed in the Romanticism disparaged by Hegel: "If the artist himself is devoid of the core and support of a mind filled with genuine

²¹ Robert Schumann, *Dichterliebe*, op. 48, ed. Hansjörg Ewert, translation of song texts by Richard Stokes (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2011).

²² John Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a "New Poetic Age"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 65.

²³ Thomas Alan Brown, *The Aesthetics of Robert Schumann* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975), p. 20.

²⁴ Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, p. 36.

²⁵ Maxime McKinley has coined the term "Wirkunst" to designate an artwork inspired by work or works in another medium. See his doctoral thesis, which consists of eight musical "Wirkünste" (such as "Wirkunst-Fellini: pour ensemble de 12 instruments," based on the films of Federico Fellini) and a written component entitled "Intermédialité et composition musicale: les arts visuels, la littérature et le cinéma comme fondements d'une musique narrative" (PhD diss., Université de Montréal, 2009).

²⁶ See Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, pp. 79-93.

objectivity, humour readily slips into what is namby-pamby and sentimental, and of this too Jean Paul provides an example.”²⁷

Dichterliebe combines the negative moments of Seligkeit—*sustained disunity* and *irony*—to negate the affirmative, Ideal art favoured by Hegel.

According to Hegel, the negativity of the second moment of Seligkeit appears clearly in extreme forms of Romantic art, where the opposition between outer and inner remains unreconciled: “It is true that in romantic art the distraction and dissonance of the heart goes further and, in general, the oppositions displayed in it are deepened and their disunion may be maintained.”²⁸ Hegel accepts Romantic art as long as a particular spirit of cheerfulness—*Heiterkeit*—is present, even in the avowal of the rift between inner and outer, the particular cheerfulness that he expresses as “smiling through tears”: “Tears belong to grief, smiles to cheerfulness, and so smiling in weeping denotes this inherent tranquillity amidst agony and suffering.”²⁹ But Hegel finds fault with Carl Maria von Weber’s *Der Freischütz*, which he criticizes for breaking up the affirmative harmony into separate, abstract moments of unrestrained mirth on one side and inconsolable grief on the other:

But laughter and tears may fall apart in abstraction from one another and in this abstraction they have been used inappropriately as a motif for art, as for instance in the laughter’s chorus of von Weber’s *Der Freischütz*. Laughing as such is an outburst which yet ought not to remain unrestrained if the Ideal is not to be lost. The same abstraction occurs in the similar laughter in the duet from Weber’s *Oberon* [1826] during which one may be anxious and distressed for the throat and lungs of the prima donna! How differently moving, on the other hand, is the inextinguishable laughter of the gods in Homer, which springs from the blessed tranquillity of the gods and is only cheerfulness and not abstract boisterousness. Neither on the other side, should tears, as unrestrained grief, enter the ideal work of art, as when, for example, such abstract inconsolability is to be heard in Weber’s *Der Freischütz*, to mention it again. In music in general, song is this joy and pleasure in self-awareness, like the lark’s singing in the freedom of the air. Shrieking, whether of grief or mirth, is not music at all. Even in

²⁷ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, p. 230 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 602.

²⁸ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 209 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 158.

²⁹ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 209 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 158.

suffering, the sweet tone of lament must sound through the griefs and alleviate them, so that it seems to us worthwhile so to suffer as to understand this lament. This is the sweet melody, the song in all art.³⁰

One presumes that in his criticisms of *Der Freischütz* Hegel has in mind moments such as the “Hee-hee-hee” of “Schau der Herr mich an als König”³¹ and the cry from the heart that opens “Wie? Was? Entsetzen!” in Act Two.³² The repressive Hegel is generally opposed to extreme displays of emotion in art, but especially to the grief that is not alleviated by sweetness and to the suffering that is not rewarded by understanding. Hegel’s criticism of Romanticism is not aimed at its dissonance and disunity per se; rather, he takes issue with “the retention of disunion” to the point that the Ideal breaks up and is ultimately lost in abstract points of uncontrolled emotion.³³ It is this disintegrating—one could say “analytic”—aspect of Romanticism that is problematic for Hegel. The negation of cheerfulness consists not in dissonance as much as in the sudden collapse of the artwork into discrete, contradicting, emotional moments—in sudden events that resist assimilation not only into the whole work, but also into the aesthetic corpus, in those detached, unrestrained and inconsolable moments, in outbursts and in “shrieking.” Advanced Romantic art refuses to appropriate the external events that cause the individual suffering: instead of making the outer inner, Romantic works go into inner contradictions, making the suffering subject the measure by which to judge what is external to the subject, the objectivity under which the subject suffers. It must be admitted that, in *Der Freischütz*, the few emotional outbursts do not exert as much critical force as they could: the essential conflict between the bad universal and the suffering individual is resolved

³⁰ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 210 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 159.

³¹ Carl Maria von Weber, *Der Freischütz: Romantische Oper in drei Aufzügen*, Text von Friedrich Kind nach den Quellen herausgegeben von Joachim Freyer (Leipzig: Peters, 1976), Act 1, I, p. 42f., mm. 108-116.

³² *Ibid.*, Act 2, IX, p. 133, mm. 2-4. Agathe’s upper neighbour-tone on the second syllable of “Entsetzen!” forms a dissonant ninth to the minor chord (f⁶) under it.

³³ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 209 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 158.

by way of a Deus ex machina in the figure of the Holy Hermit. The reconciliation between *Max*, who has stepped outside the bounds of his society in order to meet its arbitrary, unreasonable demand, and *that society*, a Bohemian community of hunters, is brokered by way of compromise: on one hand, Max must wait a year before he can marry Agathe; on the other, the ancient custom of the marksmanship contest for suitors is abolished. Max's recourse to the supernatural to win his bride reveals itself to be recourse to the super-social: to the idea of a society other than the merely existing one, with its unchallenged customs and glorification of hunting, hunting which only seems to be synonymous with survival. Prepared to win the marksmanship contest with magic bullets, Max recognizes that there is no longer a real necessity for each suitor to prove himself an excellent shot on his own strength. The necessity would be real if marriage were the mere establishment of an economic unit and if the family's survival depended solely on the husband's hunting abilities. At the conclusion of the opera, the whole society recognizes that it can admit a less than apt marksman, although it is not clear how Max and Agathe will live in this changed community. The abstraction of the opera's emotive moments is connected to the abstraction of the society yet to come. Yet those unrestrained passages, detaching themselves from the fabric of the opera, rising beyond what this work could fulfil and the expectations that it sets up, lose something of their power through the Deus ex machina ending, in which a heaven-sent mediator forces the reconciliation between inner subjectivity and external norms and conditions. Hegel does not particularly treat this reconciliation, but it is interesting to note that even it does not overcome the prolonged disunity that forms his criticism of Weber's Romanticism.

Dichterliebe forces no reconciliation between the individual and the collective such as that found in *Der Freischütz* by C. M. von Weber: its moments of unrestrained emotion find

no final acknowledgment within the world of conventions. While individual expression in *Der Freischütz* points toward its universal recognition in the determinate negation of the norm that causes suffering, the marksmanship contest, Schumann raises the spectre of a completely futile expression of suffering in an *alienated* and *reified* world. While Hegel accepts moments of radical divergence between subject and object into his aesthetics, for him it is necessary that such moments not be free-standing, but constitutive of truth in their reconciliation; Schumann asks whether such opposing moments of abstraction may find no place in a final reconciliation. In a sense, the individuals in *Der Freischütz* do not suffer in vain: they suffer entirely as a result of mindless conventions, which they recognize, resist and overcome. Striving to go beyond existing society, they appeal to supernatural powers—Max to Samiel’s diabolic magic and Agathe to God and to the starry heaven—, yet the wolf’s den and starry heaven turn out to be social forces, secret channels through which suffering individuals communicate with the universal. And, indeed, the universal in *Der Freischütz* is neither cold nor vengeful toward the individual who challenges it. Like Max and Agathe, the poet of *Dichterliebe* is oppressed by the universal: the world of conventions, marriage, the social necessity to make his love universally comprehensible through words. This is as true of *Dichterliebe* as it is of Schumann’s source material, Heinrich Heine’s *Lyrisches Intermezzo* from the 1827 edition of the *Buch der Lieder*.³⁴ Instead of the abstractly speaking nature that the narrator seeks, signifying human speech of unbearable clichés (“Ich liebe dich!”³⁵) greets his astonishing offering of literary transformations, of flowers and of nightingale lyric not

³⁴ Heinrich Heine, *Lyrisches Intermezzo (1822-1823)*, in *Buch der Lieder* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1827), pp. 105-171. This edition may be consulted in a circuitous fashion via the Heinrich-Heine-Portal, from link [D¹](#) at http://www.hhp.uni-trier.de/Projekte/HHP/Projekte/HHP/werke/baende/D01/index_html?widthgiven=30 or directly via the Deutsches Textarchiv at http://www.deutschestextarchiv.de/book/show/heine_lieder_1827.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

plucked ready-made but produced ingeniously out of his own tears and sighs.³⁶ Contrary to Agathe, the narrator of Heine's text discovers in nature no higher law by which social custom can be effectively challenged. Rather, he becomes sensitive to nature as a mere second nature that is incapable of passing judgement on society—for it *is* society. Second nature is indifferent to the poetic subject's sufferings because it is self-alienated, so, does not know itself to have a *work character*, to *be* the objectification of these sufferings: flowers do not recognize themselves to be *made* of his tears; nightingales do not recognize their song to be *made* of his sighs. If they did, they would alleviate his pain:

Und wüßten's die Blumen, die kleinen,
Wie tief verwundet mein Herz;
Sie würden mit mir weinen,
Zu heilen meinen Schmerz.

Und wüßten's die Nachtigallen,
Wie ich so traurig und krank,
Sie ließen fröhlich erschallen
Erquickenden Gesang.

Und wüßten sie mein Wehe,
Die goldenen Sternelein,
Sie kämen aus ihrer Höhe,
Und sprächen Trost mir ein.

Sie alle können's nicht wissen,
Nur Eine kennt meinen Schmerz;
Sie hat ja selbst zerrissen,
Zerrissen mir das Herz.

(And if it were known to the flowers
How deeply the wound cuts my heart;
They would weep with me for hours,
To take away the smart.

And if it were known the nightingales
How ill and mournful I be,
They'd send ringing joyous o'er vales
A song to enliven me.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 113.

And if they knew my plights,
The gold little stars beyond reach,
They would descend their heights,
And console me with their speech.

Not one of them could know it,
One only knows my smart:
The one herself who gave it,
The one who broke my heart.)³⁷

But the suffering subject is himself alienated in the process of artistic objectification. Pain loses its social character, apparently becoming a unique, conscious creation. The lover believes his beloved to be the sole cause of his anguish, to have inflicted suffering knowingly on him, to have risen up as an individual out of society to relegate him, personally, to a private, peculiar hell. He is a lonely subject among the mute, unconscious, indifferent nature of poetic tropes, which prove inadequate for expressing the new grief of an atomized individual, whose pain does not seem in any way connected to society. In *Dichterliebe*, what is supposed to admit the individual into a relation with the universal—signifying language—becomes the poet’s nemesis. The lover’s refusal of signifying language is apparent in certain poems of *Lyrisches Intermezzo* that Schumann did not set: “Es stehen unbeweglich,” in which the lover reveals that the stars, fixed at impossible distances from their loves, speak a language whose beauty makes it incomprehensible to philologists, but which he avers to have learned by reading its grammar off the face of his beloved,³⁸ “Du liebst mich nicht, du liebst mich nicht,” in which he denies being troubled by her verbal rejection of him, happy as he is gazing into her face, key to a natural language,³⁹ “Die Welt ist dumm, die Welt ist blind” in which the

³⁷ Ibid., p. 128, with my translation.

³⁸ Heine, *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, VIII, p. 116. The poems, numbered but untitled in the text, are mentioned here and further by their first lines.

³⁹ Ibid., XII, p. 121.

lover recognizes his beloved in her kiss, not in the society gossip about her.⁴⁰ Signifying language is already conventional—gossip, vows, and clichés—; it brokers agreement between the universal and the particular, but only under duress. Yet Heine does not oppose the bad universal by one-sidedly asserting the particular’s sheer sensuousness as truth, as the poem “O schwöre nicht und küsse nur” might suggest.⁴¹ From “Es stehen unbeweglich,” it becomes apparent that the sensuousness of the beloved is not sheer sensuousness, but the key to reading nature. In adopting Heine’s critique of the merely conventional, Schumann also avoids becoming prey to facile sensualist notions. Here and there, he ‘sets’ “Es stehen unbeweglich” without words, by opening language, both linguistic and musical, onto abstraction, in his delicacy in freeing tones from functions. Chords no longer fulfil their contract with listeners always to orient them to the tonic. In tonal music, the particular sonorities—major triads, dominant seventh chords and so on—correspond each to one or more scale degrees, or, in the influential functional harmony of Hugo Riemann, to one of three *functions*: the subdominant function, the dominant function and the tonic function. Normally, these three functions, respectively, represent increasing proximity to the resolution. In Schumann, correspondence between sonority and degree of tension or position in the progression is not guaranteed. Chords that escape their roles in tonality become enigmas and ciphers—abstract sounds to which no definite meaning can be affixed. The abstraction that Hegel rejects in the only very occasionally emotive music of Carl Maria von Weber he would certainly have strongly condemned in the highly feeling music of Robert Schumann. Heine, by contrast, does not make recourse to this kind of abstraction.

⁴⁰ Ibid., XV, p. 123.

⁴¹ Ibid., XIII, p. 122.

Hegel would not only reject Robert Schumann’s music for its abstract emotional extremes, but also Heinrich Heine’s text for its *irony*—, which constitutes the third moment and downfall of Seligkeit. Irony is, in Hegel’s words, “this art of annihilating everything everywhere [diese allseitige Vernichtungskunst].”⁴² Hegel does not appear to oppose comedic irony, which takes critical aim at what should rightly be criticized—empty forms that have lost their substance, but which still seem to stand for something. Hegel claims, however, that irony indiscriminately levels what has lost its substance *and* what still has its substance. In negating what is null and void, irony brings out the inherent nullity, but when it applies its procedure to what is sound, it merely destroys for the sake of destroying. Irony in all cases is opposed to the Ideal, which “requires an inherently substantive content.”⁴³ For irony’s content is emptiness, not substance. Now implicit in Hegel’s concept of substance is the notion of unified, full participation of all the members of a reconciled whole:

This substance is equally the universal *work* [*Werk*] produced by the action of all and each as their unity and identity [Gleichheit], for it is the *being-for-self*, the self, action. As *substance*, Spirit is unshaken righteous self-identity; but as being-for-self it is a fragmented being, self-sacrificing and benevolent, in which each accomplishes his own work, rends asunder the universal being, and takes from it his own share.⁴⁴

There has never existed a society, however, that really resulted from the uncoerced, equal and equally rational participation of all its members. Every society systematically excludes certain individuals from social production right from the start, often in a completely overt and rigorously codified way. Such excluded have been the slaves and Metics of the Greek polis, women of most societies and the migrant workers, sans-papiers and prisoners everywhere

⁴² Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 211 as translated in *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 160.

⁴³ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 211 as translated in *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 160.

⁴⁴ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 3, *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969), p. 325 as translated by A. V. Miller, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, by G. W. F. Hegel, foreword by J. N. Findlay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 264 ¶ 439.

today. Although social exclusion may not be the declared intention of the state, there is no denying that certain individuals really are systematically left out of the processes by which their lives are determined. We cannot say with Hegel that in any given society literally *all* act, *all* accomplish their own work and *all* receive their share: as long as some people are excluded from the social whole, as is evident in their want and lack, as long as individuals—not Spirit—sacrifice themselves, only to receive nothing, then there is no *substance*.⁴⁵ Romantic irony, therefore, is never out of place.⁴⁶ Yet, in another sense, Hegel is correct to distinguish the comedy that is critical of empty nonsense from Romantic irony, which he thinks is critical of everything. This distinction is clear in Heine, who concerns himself with forms that are empty from one point of view, since they are unquestioningly, mindlessly upheld, but, from another point of view, have force and power in the suffering that they cause the individual. This is why Heine’s irony is not actually funny. Hegel recognizes the lack of comedy in Novalis and reacts

⁴⁵ Charles Taylor does not take issue with the idealism of Hegel’s concept of ethical substance in his classic *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). Revelatory on this point is his definition of alienation—or, the *loss* of ethical substance—as the survival of a practice beyond the norms or ends that gave it life (ibid., p. 384). This definition cannot account for the present condition under capitalism, in which things are hollow *not* because their purposes no longer animate them, but because the purposes that do still animate them were *never* good and sound. What Taylor calls the “meanings expressed in the public life of...societies” surely cannot be of substance when conditions are so poor for certain individuals that they cannot participate in the public life of their societies (ibid., p. 386). Belief in the notion of substance itself prevents this society from seeing its alienated condition. Taylor, however, seems to think that the alienated condition is the exception:

Thus what is strange and contestable in Hegel’s theory of the state is not the idea of a larger life in which men are immersed, or the notion that the public life of a society expresses certain ideas, which are thus in a sense the ideas of the society as a whole and not just of the individuals, so that we can speak of a people as having a certain ‘spirit.’ For throughout most of human history men have lived most intensely in relation to the meanings expressed in the public life of their societies. Only an exaggerated atomism could make the condition of alienated men seem the inescapable human norm (ibid., p. 386).

While the condition of “alienated men” is not inescapable, it is nonetheless the norm; however, the “exaggerated atomism” that creates it is not individualistic thinking, as Taylor means by this term, but the systemic *lack* of consideration for individuals in the adoption of norms and practices.

⁴⁶ On the other hand, Adorno claims that today “there is not a crevice in the cliff of the established order into which the ironist might hook a fingernail.” GS, vol. 4, p. 241 §134 as translated by E. F. N. Jephcott, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life* (London: Verso, 2005), p. 211. For interpretations on this quote, see Deborah Cook, *The Culture Industry Revisited: Theodor W. Adorno on Mass Culture* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996), p. 85; and Martin Jay, *Adorno* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 43.

against it according to his conviction that the individual who engages in unfunny ironic critique only annihilates what still has substance. It does not much occur to Hegel that the real being of the object of ironic Romantic critique *is* substantial—“substantial” in the pain and suffering of those who run afoul of universally imposed norms and practices. Emotional extremes in *Dichterliebe* thus work to cut short the Hegelian critique of Romantic irony. The unrestrained outbursts of suffering in the musical setting suggest that the object of Heine’s irony—conventional marriage, words, showy precious stones—cannot really be solid, upstanding and excellent in a world of unconsolated suffering. So, they do not have their substance. Thus Schumann’s setting supports Heine’s irony against a would-be Hegelian charge of nihilism. If *Dichterliebe* is ironic, it is because, on one hand, so comprehendingly is it set that the music cannot be detached from Heine’s ironic text, and, on the other, the second and third moments of Seligkeit in Hegel’s schema share the quality of lacking restraint, making outbursts and irony inseparable on this point. The music of *Dichterliebe* in no way deals ironically with Heine’s text: rather, the music supports its ironic conviction that conventional society is bad and hollow, whereas society wants us to believe that it is good and solid. Since the expression in *Dichterliebe* provides the key to the irony of Heine’s text, Schumann cannot be accused of the “organic irrationality,” with which Adorno charged twentieth-century Expressionism.⁴⁷ Adorno sees the basic distinction between Surrealism and Expressionism in this “position towards the organic”: the rigidity of Expressionism is slumber, whereas the rigidity of Surrealism is death; the contradictions of Expressionism have to do with different states of the living body; the contradictions of Surrealism have to do with

⁴⁷ GS, vol. 12, p. 54 n11 as translated by Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Blomster, *Philosophy of Modern Music* (New York: Seabury, 1980), p. 51 n15.

reification.⁴⁸ Expressionism and Surrealism think the problem of irrationality differently: Expressionism understands irrationality to be different states of a single, unpredictable body, but what Surrealism understands irrationality to be is death, and social death. *Lyrisches Intermezzo* deals thematically with both sleep and death: the ambiguity between sleep and death is precisely its problematic. *Dichterliebe* is itself an inorganic work critical of backward, irrational tendencies. Its inorganicity is expressed largely in two characteristics: its microstructure and its split between chords and functions. Schumann tears up the surface of Heine's text, disassembles it and reconstructs it to form a second structure, a musical microstructure, whose connections between distant passages criss-cross one another, cracking the work, inorganically, into pieces. At the same time, *Dichterliebe* shows a way out of the irrationality of death by its notable use of musical quotation, which opens the work onto scholarly reception. Secondly, the moments of expression in *Dichterliebe* do not merely contradict one another, but are in themselves contradictory. In them, qualities come into conflict with conventions and functions. The moments that detach from the surface of the work are not only expressions of suffering, but also keys to the cause of suffering. They hint at the commodity form, at other basic forms of ideology, and society is imprinted in them; but *Dichterliebe* as a whole does not claim that these are any guarantee of a solution and an end to suffering. The moments of expression do not ultimately bring about a changed society even within the cycle, as those in *Der Freischütz* do; in this, Schumann's song cycle takes *alienation* into account, the objective forms of separation that prevent the subject from connecting a particular, subjective feeling of suffering to large social forms of domination, to see it as *more* than personal and peculiar. This is not the fault of the individual consciousness;

⁴⁸ GS, vol. 12, p. 54 n11, or prefer to my translation here *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 51 n15.

society as a whole is organized so that woes appear only as “personal problems,” and individuals, if they are to survive, must say that they have “dealt with” them, found “closure” and “moved on.” The final cadence of *Dichterliebe* is not reconciliation, but alienation: expression plus irony. But these two negatives do not make a positive: irony plus expression make the negation of bliss and cheerfulness—and the negation of Hegel’s affirmative aesthetics, the heritage of the Schillerian Ideal.

{Section ii} Besides supporting the ironic conviction of the text, the expression of *Dichterliebe* is also a solution to an objective music-specific problem. This problem results from the seeming necessity for the moving element of music to serve the static element of key. This necessity meant that a great deal of musical time was already spoken for. The root progression, which was tonality’s advance over modality, the grounding of merely passing time in history, had turned into its opposite: the ever-same of the working hours in which *nothing* could actually happen historically. The abstract outbursts of emotion in *Dichterliebe* are history-making events that advance music and resist the mere flowing out of homogeneous time. Expression is art-historical movement in the concept of tonality. The contradictions of *Dichterliebe* show that the concept of key is not the static thing that it gives itself to be: it proves to be a complex and historically changing concept, not something identifiable by a single mark, such as the key signature. As expression is part of Schumann’s critique of tonality’s falling behind its own claims to be historically grounded in a definite progression, *Dichterliebe* is also a highly constructed work. Expression flares up momentarily as a compressed critique of system: a small death of the times. In their Expressionist works, Schoenberg, Berg and Webern multiply the moments of expression that Schumann, by contrast, holds in reserve. Negating the constructed, law-abiding order with a gesture,

Schumann dramatizes moments of abstract emotion as differences in the ever-same. Moments of abstraction are windows that give onto deeply-felt, living time freed from the homogeneous labour-time of functional chord meanings, for example:

- (a) the unresolved dissonance on which closes the first Lied;⁴⁹
- (b) in the fourth Lied, the *far* secondary dominant on *deinen Mund*, which opens a series of harmonic diversions that delay the home key cadence until the close of the piece;⁵⁰
- (c) the dissonant *sf* acciaccatura chord in the cadenza of the piano postlude of the tenth Lied;⁵¹
- (d) the series of distortions, drawing peculiar advantage of a legal loophole in the rules of harmony governing figuration in applied Phrygian key areas, that accompany the first occurrence of the line *Es flüstern und sprechen die Blumen* in the twelfth Lied, including a “resolution” on a figured major-minor *seventh* chord;⁵²
- (e) the incomplete “apparent” Neapolitan seventh chord ending the brief D-flat major passage of the thirteenth Lied;⁵³
- (f) the bar of silence in the thirteenth Lied;⁵⁴ and, finally,
- (g) the unusual figuration following the diminished seventh block chord marked with the *crescendo-decrescendo* swell on a single block chord, impossible to render literally on a keyboard instrument, both in the postlude of the twelfth Lied⁵⁵ and in quotation at the beginning of the *Andante espressivo* of the last Lied.⁵⁶

⁴⁹ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), I, p. 3, m. 26.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, IV, p. 6, mm. 5-6. The first cadence in the home key, G Major, occurs first in measures 17-18 (*ibid.*, IV, p. 7). The Lied shortly thereafter closes on this plagal cadence in measures 19-21 (*ibid.*).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, X, p. 21, m. 24.

⁵² *Ibid.*, XII, p. 24, mm. 7-9, last half of m. 9 for the “resolution.”

⁵³ *Ibid.*, XIII, p. 27, m. 29.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, XIII, p. 27, m. 34.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, XII, p. 25, m. 24.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, XVI, p. 37, m. 54.

Expression in Schumann's *Dichterliebe* is double-sided: it is at once the subjective reaction to rude, harsh bad objectivity, on the one side, and, on the other, the objective state of subjective reactions as seemingly private. Schumann's music draws its critical dimension from this double character. Objective conditions have become so powerful and decisive that, for the subject to say anything critical against them, he must appear not to be talking about them at all; yet this very split then raises the possibility of never being able to connect subjective suffering to objective conditions, and that is the genuine problem with which expression concerns itself. This is why expression in *Dichterliebe* is always the possibility of futile suffering, of protest that might never be read back into unfree society, and which might never serve, subsequently, to negate the oppressive practices and backward schooling and conventions that provoke it. Thus Schumann's advanced music of expression decisively denies any identity between concept and object. *Dichterliebe* is an objective artwork in that it does not pretend to be above the necessary illusion—Schumann sets poems that adopt the secret language of feeling and which raise personal recrimination into an art. On the other side, his song cycle actually opens the possibility of subjective freedom, for it does not itself represent the change to the objective order that would really spell the poet's joy, after the fashion of C. M. von Weber, who in *Der Freischütz* clearly presents the cause of the couple's grief as the obligatory marksmanship contest. It is perfectly safe for Weber to depict a society freeing itself of the norm of the marksmanship contest, a norm which has outlasted its usefulness, because this norm is not at all a norm of the society in which he lives. As Schumann is a modern composer insofar as he is dealing with contemporary norms in their contemporary state: as puzzles hovering around individuals less and less apt to recognize them as badly objective, manmade creations that ensnare the whole, not the mere, private individual alone.

The enigmatic character of his music is a sign of its advanced and critical *abiding negativity*—precisely what Hegel attacks in the Romantic artwork. It is left to the recipients, listeners and interpreters, to un-riddle the poet’s overwhelming grief; the music does not guarantee its own comprehensibility, neither in anagnorisis nor in reconciliation, as in tragedy. Yet if *Dichterliebe* had been really comprehensible, if its critique had been philosophically realized at the moment of its appearance, it would have been a liability to the towering bad objectivity and social illusion of its time. Since the puzzling character has a distant, twice-removed potential to change the society outside the artwork, then this sign of something other, the sign that something is *not* given in the work, runs the risk of turning into its opposite, into affirmation. The overtly enigmatic work appears to be *harbouring* a magical solution. If “works, particularly those of supreme dignity, wait for their interpretation,” then they must take care to counter-balance their enigmatic aspect.⁵⁷

Nineteenth-century bourgeois art is deeply enigmatic: Schubert and Schumann musically grasped reification, fetishism, phantasmagoria, alienated labour, uneven development, surplus value, total administration and ideology before these were truly conceptually grasped, notably by Karl Marx. Yet even after Marx alienation runs so deep that Schumann’s *Lieder* are still sometimes considered to be the sighs of a fiancé, rather than the objective ciphers of heartless industrialization and rationalization. That the process of alienation can be recognized at all is thanks to illusion that splits itself off into social illusion and aesthetic illusion. The divergence between the two is a condition for interpretation. To escape all detection, social illusion would require its identity, absolute proximity, with everything, including aesthetic illusion. The more aesthetic that society appears to be—taking

⁵⁷ GS, vol. 7, p. 193, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 128.

on the allures of arbitrary, indeterminate play—, the less recognizable illusion is in general: the profusion of images outside art today (in advertising, magazines, movies, television and so forth) has the effect of collapsing aesthetic and social illusion into one. The wilfully constructed illusion of society is a grotesque parody of poetry. The difficulty that artworks present to interpreters is an indication of the divergence of artistic aesthetic illusion and mere social illusion: continuing alienation. Romantic art's outbursts of emotion may offer the thought of a vain suffering that the sufferer is never able in his or her lifetime to attach to its objective cause—but for objective reasons.

Hegel interprets abstraction in art as recalcitrance towards resolution—as the preference for immediacy over mediation, which is why he—and philosophers at large—tend to cut emotion off from thinking. So domination is perpetuated, for the displays of suffering indicating that reality does not yet have its concept are dismissed as a clinging to immediacy, rather than traced to objective conditions. Hegel cannot but condemn the suffering inherent to art when he condemns feeling. Censuring emotion not only erases important clues that would put the concept into contact with its object, but it also places the burden of dialectical change on the sufferers, who are themselves to objectify or forget their distress in the attainment of the philosophical concept. Romanticism's shrieks of mirth and pain, dissolving meaning into abstraction, its moments of high expression attaching to no concept, would give the lie to identity thinking, which takes concept and reality to be in harmony. The alienation that Hegel wants to overcome is only compounded by his objection to emotional displays in art. The new art, for whom beauty comes from elsewhere, strange like the “schöne Fremde”⁵⁸—, does not

⁵⁸ Robert Schumann, “Schöne Fremde,” in *Liederkreis Opus 39 für Singstimme und Klavier: Fassungen 1842 und 1850*, herausgegeben von Kazuko Ozawa (München: G. Henle, 2010), pp. 15-17 (1850)/ pp. 45-47 (1842). Schumann set the poem “Schöne Fremde” by Joseph Freiherrn von Eichendorff in 1840.

solve its own enigma; its strange expression therefore seems to be mere ‘feeling for the sake of feeling,’ organic irrationality, to those who expect resolution in art. Hegel’s influence is so strong that, even in times when resolution can no longer be taken for granted, the expressive extremes in Schumann’s art are nonetheless called “powerful musical representations of pathological states of feeling”⁵⁹ and in some cases provoke intense speculation on his medical history and psychological states.⁶⁰ Authoritative source books such as the *Werkverzeichnis* uncritically link Schumann’s moods to illness, without considering that Schumann was engaged in a process of social contestation.⁶¹ Schumann’s moods cannot automatically be put down to psychological dysfunction: depression and elation are likely responses of a healthy individual caught up in challenging the objective order. Not even the controversial *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-5* claims that elation or periods of intense creativity (or “goal-directed activity”⁶² in the jargon) are pathological in themselves, because it builds into all of its categories “the generic diagnostic criterion requiring distress or

⁵⁹ Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 648.

⁶⁰ Dagmar Hoffmann-Axthelm, “‘Der Werth der Compositionen nimmt deutlich ab’ versus ‘Ausdruck eines Genius auf der Höhe seiner schöpferischen Kraft’: Kann ein großer Komponist ‘Wahnsinns-Musik’ schreiben?,” in *Der späte Schumann*, herausgegeben von Ulrich Tadday, special issue, *Musik-Konzepte* (Munich: edition text + kritik, 2006), pp. 29-49, esp. p. 49.

⁶¹ Margit L. McCorkle, *Robert Schumann: Thematisch-Bibliographisches Werkverzeichnis=Robert Schumann: Thematic-bibliographical Catalogue of the Works*, herausgegeben von der Robert-Schumann-Gesellschaft Düsseldorf, unter Mitwirkung von Akio Mayeda und der Robert-Schumann-Forschungsstelle (Mainz: Schott, 2003). McCorkle uncritically accepts a popular notion of the psychiatric category of manic-depressive illness without examining whether the concept actually refers to anything real or whether Schumann in fact falls under it:

Like so many of his Romantic contemporaries, Schumann was subject to periods of elation and melancholy that more or less affected his creative activities. In fact, he probably suffered from what today would be diagnosed as manic-depressive illness. In productive times he typically composed at “white heat,” often drafting works at a seemingly frenzied pace; these periods would be followed intermittently by months of depression and general malaise during which little was created (ibid., p. 61*).

⁶² American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-5*, 5th ed. (Arlington, Va.: American Psychiatric Association, 2013), p. 124.

disability.”⁶³ Yet those who have been trusted with the task of writing history⁶⁴ toss off the suggestion that Schumann was manically depressed and then somehow escape with the insinuation that the evidence for this lies in his quickly produced works—like *Dichterliebe*, which was essentially composed in nine days,⁶⁵ and in joy, from what we can tell from surviving documents.⁶⁶ *Dichterliebe* may have been composed quickly and joyfully, but that does not imply that it was composed in a manic or even hypomanic state.⁶⁷ The question, unexamined by Schumann’s reactionary biographers, interpreters, historians and critics, is whether he was in distress or disabled while composing “at a seemingly frenzied pace.”⁶⁸ The psychotic features of Schumann’s final illness, which are undeniable, do not retroactively alter the character of his working methods and habits some ten or fifteen years previous from healthy to unhealthy. But even practicing psychiatric professionals have made the armchair

⁶³ Ibid., p. 21. In 2005, Rachel Cooper argued convincingly that the description for mania in the fourth edition of the DSM did not necessarily imply illness. A case for bipolar disorder cannot be made today solely on the basis of bits of evidence showing that for weeks at a time Schumann composed intensively, made far-reaching connections rapidly, rated his own work highly, felt persistently elated and functioned less well socially, even though these descriptors resemble the symptoms listed for a manic episode (ibid., p. 124). According to the new DSM-5, the individual who does not experience distress or disability does not count as mentally ill. Yet where the individual *does* experience distress or disability, the DSM leaves it up to clinical practitioners to decide whether this results from a dysfunction in the underlying “psychological, biological, or developmental processes” or whether this is the social *consequence* for a healthy individual who deviates from some norm or has a conflict with society (ibid., p. 20). In other words, the individual practitioner must somehow be above ideology, able to separate social contestation and just “being different” from psychological dysfunction—a tall order. See Rachel Cooper, *Classifying Madness: A Philosophical Examination of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (Berlin: Springer, 2005).

⁶⁴ For example, McCorkle, *Werkverzeichnis*, p. 61*.

⁶⁵ Rufus E. Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann’s “Dichterliebe”: A Source Study* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1979), p. 23.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 21f.

⁶⁷ John Worthen is one of the rare biographers of Schumann to question received notions: “What have been declared to be manic episodes might also be seen as a concentrated mind working very hard under the kind of self-imposed pressure that Schumann knew well (he was recognized from his schooldays as capable of great concentration).” John Worthen, *Robert Schumann: Life and Death of a Musician* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 367.

⁶⁸ McCorkle, *Werkverzeichnis*, p. 61*.

diagnosis of bipolar disorder for Robert Schumann,⁶⁹ despite the most glaring piece of evidence mentioned in the autopsy report, which has been available since 1986, —“a rather large quantity of a yellowish slushy mass” around the pituitary gland.⁷⁰ The evidence of haemorrhage at the base of the brain and the consistency of the yellowish mass, suggestive of liquefaction-necrosis, would support pituitary apoplexy as the cause of final illness and death.⁷¹ Although it is rare that pituitary tumours present as psychosis, such cases have been recently documented.⁷² The tendency in the literature is to attribute the psychosis to bipolar depression⁷³ or to syphilis;⁷⁴ however, the mass mentioned in the post-mortem report should

⁶⁹ For an example, see Ta-Wei Guu and Kuan-Pin Su, “Musical Creativity and Mood Bipolarity in Robert Schumann: A Tribute on the 200th Anniversary of the Composer’s Birth,” *Psychiatry & Clinical Neurosciences* 65, no. 1 (published electronically January 26, 2011): pp. 113-114. The authors would treat Robert Schumann for bipolar disorder regardless of any other medical condition, if found: “With modern psychiatry guidelines, Mr [sic] S, the great composer Schumann, should be assessed soon after admission with comprehensive physical and laboratory examinations for any correctable organic causes. He should then be treated with a second-generation antipsychotic agent (e.g. olanzapine and quetiapine) for acute psychotic bipolar depression, with or without a mood stabilizer” (ibid., p. 114).

⁷⁰ W. Jänisch and G. Nauhaus, “Der Obduktionsbefund der Leiche des Komponisten Robert Schumann—Veröffentlichung und Wertung eines wiederentdeckten Dokuments,” *Zentralblatt für allgemeine Pathologie und pathologische Anatomie* 132 (1986): pp. 129-36, here p. 132. In their commentary on the autopsy report, W. Jänisch and G. Nauhaus state that it gives evidence neither for nor against “endogenous psychoses” such as schizophrenia and manic-depressive disorder, that it provides insufficient grounds for a diagnosis of neurosyphilis and that it gives no grounds for the diagnosis of hypertension (ibid., p. 134f.). On the other hand, they claim that, while the report does not provide ample information to diagnose the yellowish mass, its description nonetheless “likely represents a pathological finding” (ibid., p. 134, my translation).

⁷¹ On the subject of pituitary apoplexy, see Milton Brougham, A. Price Heusner and Raymond D. Adams, “Acute Degenerative Changes in Adenomas of the Pituitary Body—with Special Reference to Pituitary Apoplexy,” *Journal of Neurosurgery* 7, no. 5 (September 1950): pp. 421-439. The symptoms that Schumann experienced in February 1854 (tinnitus, psychosis) could be attributed to the rapid change in the tumour.

⁷² See Y. Izci et al., “Diencephalic Tumours Presenting as Psychosis,” *Acta Neuropsychiatrica* 15 (2003): pp. 97-101, doi: 10.1034/j.1601-5215.2003.00014.x. See also Arnab Kumar Ghosh, Rajesh Jacob, and Satya Rayapureddy, “Pituitary Tumour Presenting with Psychotic Symptoms Without Neurological Signs,” *Singapore Medical Journal* 53, no. 7 (July 2012): pp. 499-500, <http://sma.org.sg/publications/smjcurrentissue.aspx?PID=186>.

⁷³ See, for example, Peter Ostwald, *Schumann: The Inner Voices of a Musical Genius* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985), p. 303. Ostwald had access to the then-unpublished autopsy report at the time of writing, but rules out pituitary apoplexy because he believes that “there would have been a history of a sudden and massive collapse quickly leading to death” (ibid., p. 298). This is untrue. In one case of pituitary apoplexy, the patient had experienced mental confusion for a period of three years before the sudden collapse, then lived an additional six months. See Brougham et al., “Acute Degenerative Changes,” under “Case 3,” pp. 425-427.

⁷⁴ See, for example, Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, pp. 482-488 and esp. p. 568 n82. Daverio believes that the irregularities signalled in the autopsy report are indications of syphilis. Worthen is more cautious than Daverio:

count as a significant finding deserving of discussion in the literature. Rampant speculation into Schumann's personal life, sanctioned by nothing but merely social illusion, has caused the public release of the medical reports of one of Schumann's attending doctors, Dr. Franz Richarz, who wanted them withheld to keep the professional secret.⁷⁵ But the demands of science should not contradict the ethical compunction of Dr. Richarz. While no diagnosis for Robert Schumann can be made definitively today,⁷⁶ the suggestion that he suffered from bipolar disorder is reactionary and absurd—emotions and the work of progress are not illnesses, nor even disorders. It is in the interests of the status quo to ban all emotion and gesture as sick and irrational. Domination is effectively perpetuated by the ideology that subjugated groups like women and indigenous peoples are by their nature driven by emotion, that they are therefore irrational and that any expression of suffering therefore does not relate to anything real or objective outside them—such as poor wages, social exclusion, lack of access to basic services or any of the other things that prejudice and discrimination bring. The denial of thought, reflection and critique to the emotional extremes in Schumann's music is merely part of this perpetuation of the current wrong state of things, but to prohibit feelings in music is no less ideological: the greatest thinkers and musicians are agreed that in imagination

“It is possible that what is being described is a syphilitic gumma, but the terms are far too vague to allow any final identification of the abnormality” (Worthen, *Robert Schumann*, p. 395). If, however, the mass were a syphilitic lesion, or *gumma*, the causes of Robert Schumann's psychosis and death would still go *unexplained* because the presence of gummas indicates *benign* late-stage syphilis rather the life-threatening kinds, such as paresis, which has the psychotic manifestations. It should also be mentioned that the physical complaints that support a diagnosis of tertiary neurosyphilis—headaches, tinnitus, unequal eye pupil size, aphasia, convulsions, paralysis—are identical with the symptoms that support a diagnosis of pituitary tumour, and are thus inconclusive. See *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, academic edition, s.v. “syphilis,” accessed April 12, 2013, <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/578770/syphilis>>.

⁷⁵ Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, p. 567 n69.

⁷⁶ More information would be required to identify the mass that the autopsy report signals, especially considering the many sorts of tumours and lesions that can be present around the pituitary gland, and also considering the heterogeneity and non-specificity of symptoms associated with these different growths—symptoms which, furthermore, do not necessarily all show up in the same patient.

feeling and understanding cannot be divided.⁷⁷ Schumann's Hegel-fed detractors⁷⁸ are merely assuming the conventional separation between reason and emotion in their mistaken view of his music as immediate, subjective feeling. Any *immediacy* of expression in Romanticism is farthest from a psychological output: it indicates the *non-immediacy* of resolution—a continuing split between appearance and reality.

Schumann's scoring of *Dichterliebe* for high voice puts distance between the sentiment expressed and its presentation, defeating the possible Hegelian charge of a clinging to immediacy. The score asks that sopranos sing an "ich" that patently expresses a grown man's point of view—for instance, in the passage where the flowers address the narrator as *du trauriger blasser Mann!*⁷⁹ This contradiction in the work, however, is rarely heard:

Dichterliebe has generally always been sung by men. There are even formally educated singers today who are surprised to learn that *Dichterliebe* was written for high voice, so far has the performance practice departed from the score.⁸⁰ One would do well, however, to reflect on why such a split between performance and score has occurred, especially since it started so early in the life of the work, in a precedent set by none less than Johannes Brahms and Julius Stockhausen, in 1861.⁸¹ On one hand, the rarity of soprano performances of *Dichterliebe* is a sign of the general irritation with illusion, unreality and magic in art, as

⁷⁷ See Theodor W. Adorno, *Zu einer Theorie der musikalischen Reproduktion: Aufzeichnungen, ein Entwurf und zwei Schemata*, herausgegeben von Henri Lonitz (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001), p. 126f.

⁷⁸ See, for example, Richard Pohl [Hoplit, pseud.], *Das Karlsruher Musikfest im October 1853* (Leipzig: Hinze, 1853), esp. pp. 51-55, <http://www.mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn/resolver.pl?urn=urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10599227-7>.

⁷⁹ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), XII, p. 25, mm. 17-20.

⁸⁰ Unsatisfactory on this point is Arthur Komar, "The Music of *Dichterliebe*: The Whole and Its Parts," in Robert Schumann, *Dichterliebe: An Authoritative Score, Historical Background, Essays in Analysis, Views and Comments*, ed. A. Komar (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971), pp. 63-94. After arguing that the keys in *Dichterliebe* are essential to understanding the work, Komar implies that its register is not essential: he accepts that "women rarely sing the cycle in public because of its poetic content" (ibid., p. 93) and includes tenors in his list of "acceptable recordings" (ibid., p. 93 n16), yet declares in the same breath that "Schumann dedicated the cycle to the famous soprano, Schröder-Devrient" (ibid.).

⁸¹ McCorkle, *Werkverzeichnis*, p. 207.

Schumann's scoring of Heine's masculine voice for a feminine voice is indeed a manifestation of aesthetic illusion: "In the contradiction between its curdled state in writing, and the liquid state it implies, music has a part in the illusory character of mature art."⁸² The idea that a narrator could be telling someone else's story, someone who is no longer present, strikes the listener in high positivism as nonsensical. Somehow the literalists have not gone so far as to insist that the male singer produce flowers out of his tears and nightingale choruses out of his sighs, as the song goes.⁸³ Expressed by a woman, the poet's experiences seem utopian or imaginary, either because the history only comes from a witness at second hand who, as a woman, must certainly be—according to the common understanding—an unreliable interpreter of a man's experience in love, or else because some magical transformation must have occurred for the man to appear in the guise of a woman, like the goddess Athena appears to Telemachos in the form of a man. This second, mythical, reading is possible. The voice seems like the poet's spirit; or that of the poet as a boy, as if returned to innocence; or that of the beloved herself, who alone knows the poet's grief,⁸⁴ so who is the one apt to sing of it; or, judging by the Phrygian references, both the Phrygian chord⁸⁵ and the Phrygian mode,⁸⁶ the voice could belong to a Bacchante mourning the tragic dissolution of the godlike hero. Yet apart from this bad, mythical aspect of Schein, there is its utopian, social aspect. The dissatisfaction with soprano performances of *Dichterliebe* has also in part to do with the refusal on the part of audiences to allow the transcendent—the society to come—into the artwork. The scoring for high voice is incomprehensible within the current and past states of

⁸² GS, vol. 16, p. 517, or prefer to my translation here "Vers une musique informelle," in *Quasi una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 1992), pp. 269-322, here p. 296.

⁸³ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe*, (2011), II, p. 4, mm. 1-8, with pick-up.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, VIII, p. 16, mm. 27-28, with pick-up.

⁸⁵ See, for example, *ibid.*, VIII, p. 14f., mm. 10-11.

⁸⁶ See, for example, *ibid.*, XIII, p. 26, mm. 1-6, with pick-up.

gender and their relations. The transfer of poetic subjectivity only seems supernatural in a society where the limits of the self are considered absolute. The “correction” of inconsistency in Schumann’s cycle, the emendation of *Dichterliebe* to low voice, not only covers up a contradiction in the artwork; it strengthens the social illusion that would have us believe that the Ich is always and everywhere the impermeable, personal self in a world of irreducible others. Adorno calls this “Ich of lyric” a mask for what actually speaks in art, the We: “Out of artworks, even the so-called personal ones, a We speaks and not ‘I’, and, in fact, all the more plainly, the less it expressly adapts itself to a We and its idiom.”⁸⁷ The woman who sings the masculine “I” gets in the way of the “illusion that poetic subjectivity goes without saying”—that is, of the unchallenged belief that an “I” in poetry signals personal confession, never anything that has its source in something deeper than personal reactions and inclinations.⁸⁸ Irritation with artistic aesthetic illusion turns out to be an attachment to mere social illusion, to the comfortable thinking that prefers an ironclad division between the sexes, particularly as regards subjectivity. The masculine voice of Heine’s poems is tangential to their poetic language, as far as Schumann’s setting goes. The soprano voice increases the feeling of alienation, strengthening the demands for the society yet to come.

{Section iii} Schumann’s critique of immediacy also operates in his ostensible adoption of the *cycle* as his aesthetic form. That *Dichterliebe* seeks to engage in the question of unity polemically is clear from its original subtitle: “Liederzyclus aus Heinrich Heines *Buch der Lieder*.”⁸⁹ In his letter of August 6, 1843 to the Breitkopf & Härtel publishing house, Schumann offered, in his words, “a cycle (Cyklus) of 20 songs, which form a whole, but also,

⁸⁷ GS, vol. 7, p. 249 and vol. 7, p. 250, or prefer to my translations here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 167.

⁸⁸ GS, vol. 7, p. 249, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 167.

⁸⁹ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), p. III.

individually, self-contained entities unto themselves.”⁹⁰ Schumann here refers to “20 songs,” not 16, because four of the 20 songs were never published as part of *Dichterliebe*, but eventually became parts of other works—“Dein Angesicht” and “Es leuchtet meine Liebe” as nos. 2 and 3 of *Fünf Lieder und Gesänge*, op. 127, and “Lehn’ deine Wang’” and “Mein Wagen rollet langsam” as nos. 2 and 4 of *Vier Gesänge*, op. 142.⁹¹ The removal of the four songs to other works might raise questions about the musical whole of *Dichterliebe*, but Schumann’s statement is cited here not as proof that he was working with a specific unifying plan for the *twenty* songs that made up the song cycle he offered his publisher, nor as proof about the real unity of his art, but rather as a demonstration that Schumann was working with the antinomical concept of the *cycle*. Schumann’s preference for the Greek “Cyklus” over the German “Kreis” in the sub-title of *Dichterliebe* evokes the Trojan Epic Cycle—a matter of debate among his contemporaries and no less a tormented notion in his day than in ours. On one hand, the Epic Cycle can refer to diverse poems, once circulating, now lost, that tell different stories around the origin of the universe, the Trojan War and the Theban War. On the other hand, the Epic Cycle can refer to the stories on the origins of the universe, the Trojan War and the Theban War *as if* worked into a single, all-embracing narrative. There is debate even today over whether individual poems sprang up to give accounts of parts missing from the whole, or whether the idea of stitching all the poems together into a single unit came later. Jonathan S. Burgess supposes that “the conceptual basis of the Epic Cycle was probably in existence long before its actual manufacture.”⁹² Yet to claim that the Greeks had an existing

⁹⁰ Robert Schumann to Breitkopf & Härtel, August 6, 1843, quoted in McCorkle, *Werkverzeichnis*, p. 207 (my translation).

⁹¹ These are included as an appendix in R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), pp. 38-49.

⁹² Jonathan S. Burgess, *The Tradition of the Trojan War in Homer and the Epic Cycle* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), p. 15.

concept of the Epic Cycle before composing the poems of the Epic Cycle says nothing, for Burgess himself demonstrates that there is always an even greater whole beyond whatever part of the Cycle we take to be the whole:

In my view this manufacture of the Epic Cycle would involve the interference with fixed texts by individuals who stood outside any authentic compositional or performance tradition for these poems. ... The textual boundaries of the Cycle poems that are found in Proclus cannot be the dimensions of their oral traditions or the fixed texts arising from them... It seems to me most plausible to explain such manipulation as resulting from editorial activity imposed on the fixed texts of the poems. Rhapsodes, however, may have prefigured an editorial manufacture of the Epic Cycle by joining together song performances from different epics.... Theoretically rhapsodies could have been presented in this manner, for example (comparable with the Trojan War section of the Epic Cycle), or even the sum of the mythical past in all its theogonic and heroic material (comparable with the Epic Cycle in its entirety). A presentation of the Trojan War in this manner would not be a complete, detailed account, but rather a rough suggestion of the story through the use of epic from various sources.... In mythological terms the Trojan War would have always existed as a loosely unified story, and so the tradition itself can be described as a "cycle" (itself part of the larger cycle of the mythological past). Even if an epic about the Trojan War was never actually used in connection with other epics to present the larger story of the war, its inherent nature as belonging to the tradition of the Trojan War would qualify it as part of the "potential performance" of the whole story.... If a patchwork narrative of the Trojan War was ever constituted by means of rhapsodes performing epic material from different sources, this presentation would be conceptually related to the Trojan War section of what became known as the Epic Cycle.⁹³

To Burgess, epics on the Trojan War are part of the Epic Cycle, which is part of the larger cycle of hearing and handing down stories, which is itself part of the even larger cycle of generating myths about the past. The "cycle" suggests a totality whose illusory closure is broken by its expansion into an even greater whole. On this reading, the Greeks did not have a fixed idea of the Epic Cycle in advance of the stories generated. Or rather, once they had the idea of a limited number of stories that would make *the* totality of the Cycle, they cut themselves off from the very process of manufacture that generated the Cycle, the largest ring in Burgess's circle of circles: in abiding by the *concept* of totality, they would have ceased to

⁹³ Ibid., p. 13f.

be creative, and in fact would have lost the whole—the collective in which every actual individual is a spontaneous generator of myths. With the Epic Cycle fixed as a definite totality, myth passes into Enlightenment, for the Cycle implies a rationalization of wild, spontaneous, endless confabulation. With increasing rationalization, the idea of *whole* is transferred from the story-generating collective to the individual great Classical work, and, subsequently, to the canon of great Classical works. The “unity” conventionally sought for great works of art implies this act of closure of the work from infinitely expansive creativity. Different social roles and categories perform the function of closing off a totality. First, the birth of the category of *bard* restricts story-telling to a specific group. Then, in order to become writing, the epics pass another process of selection, so imply acts of judgement: they are selections of the many songs available. Yet if editors may have manipulated texts to be able to form rational wholes, this process of rationalization was already present if, as Burgess supposes, the rhapsodes themselves manipulated songs to form logical narratives out of parts arising from different oral sources. The ultimate rationalization of all this myth, the aesthetic judgements by Aristotle that Homer ranks as the best poet⁹⁴ and that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are qualitatively superior to the rest,⁹⁵ have the consequence of changing the sense of “cycle,” such that it refers only to the rhapsodic and disunified epics, not to the Homeric epics. With the subsequent loss of works of the Epic Cycle, such as the *Cypria* and the *Little Iliad*, the concept of Cycle is able to realize itself, but as its opposite: as a *definite* whole, which Aristotle calls “unity” or “artificial whole.” The basis of Aristotle’s aesthetic judgement on the cyclic poets,⁹⁶ however, suffered severe damage during Schumann’s lifetime. Leipzig was not

⁹⁴ Aristotle, *Poetics* 23.1459a30.

⁹⁵ Aristotle, *Poetics* 23.1459a37-b7.

⁹⁶ Aristotle, *Poetics* 23.1459b2-4.

only the cultural milieu in which Robert Schumann would produce most of his innovative, early piano works and songs, but also the scene of a dispute in a century-long debate in Classical philology. Studies on Homer in nineteenth-century Germany turned largely around the famous Homeric Question: the question of the authorship or aesthetic unity of the *Odyssey* raised by Friedrich August Wolf in his 1795 publication *Prolegomena ad Homerum sive de operum homericorum prisca et genuine forma variisque mutationibus et probabili ratione emendandi*.⁹⁷ The period of debate around this question corresponds nearly exactly to the Romantic period: 1795-1912.⁹⁸ The University of Leipzig had a representative of each side of the debate in Gregor Wilhelm Nitzsch, who, as a Unitarian, argued, against Wolf, for the Homeric Epic as a unified artwork created by single author, and Johann Gottfried Jakob Hermann, who, with Wolf, would argue for its multiple authorship on the basis its disunity, so, would defend the new model of Analysis. It was to this Hermann that Schumann was promised a letter of introduction in 1828.⁹⁹ When Analysis challenged the idea that the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* were integral and indivisible works by the unique creator Homer, and the rifts, hard line-breaks, and inconsistencies began to appear, the criterion by which Aristotle judged them superior to other epics, the restriction of their material to just “one part (hemeros)” each of the Trojan War, no longer seemed pertinent.¹⁰⁰ Aristotle had reproached now-lost works of the Epic Cycle, the *Cypria* and *Little Iliad*, for “consisting of many parts

⁹⁷ F. A. Wolf, *Prolegomena to Homer*, translated, with introduction and notes by Anthony Grafton, Glenn W. Most and James E. G. Zetzel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

⁹⁸ Byron Frank Stayskal, “Nineteenth-Century Homeric Analysis: A Kuhnian Critique” (PhD Diss., Indiana University, 1997), p. 3.

⁹⁹ Joachim Draheim, “Robert Schumann als Horaz-Übersetzer,” in *Worte, Bilder, Töne: Studien zur Antike und Antikerezeption*, herausgegeben von Richard Faber und Bernd Seidensticker (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1996), pp. 271-287, here p. 275.

¹⁰⁰ Aristotle, *Poetics* 23.1459b1 (my translation).

(polumerê).”¹⁰¹ But the same reproach could be made of the *Odyssey*: although it deals with only one part of the Trojan war, it does not restrict itself to just one part of Odysseus’s return home. The proliferation of episodes is characteristic of epic form, which Aristotle tolerates as long as, in the composing process, the poet invents the episodes only *after* coming up with the general idea: “When putting stories into verse, whether of one’s own or stories already made, it is necessary to set out something general (katholou), then only after the episodes, and to develop them.”¹⁰² If the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* are in fact patchworks of different stories, conceived each in isolation, without any overreaching plan or notion of the whole, then Aristotle’s judgement of *unity* on them is endangered. With Aristotle’s judgement of the Homeric epics’ aesthetic superiority thrown into doubt, Homer becomes just one poet working amongst many on the collective project of the Epic Cycle. In the decades after the publication of Wolf’s *Prolegomena*, Classical philologists began to turn their attention to the Cycle specifically. At the same time, composers such as Ludwig van Beethoven, Conradin Kreutzer, Leopold Lenz, Fanny Mendelssohn and Felix Mendelssohn, Wilhelm Häser, Heinrich Marschner and, notably, Franz Schubert published loose collections of songs, some bearing the subtitle “Cyclus.”¹⁰³ Schubert’s masterworks in the genre, *Die schöne Müllerin*, op. 25, and *Winterreise*, op. 89, are settings of “songs” by Wilhelm Müller, himself not only a once-student of Wolf, but also a theorist whose *Homerische Vorschule: Eine Einleitung in das*

¹⁰¹ Aristotle, *Poetics* 23.1459a35 (my translation).

¹⁰² Aristotle, *Poetics* 17.1455a35-1455b1 (my translation).

¹⁰³ For a detailed history of the diverse Lieder forms leading up to Robert Schumann’s song cycles, see Barbara Pearl Turchin, “Robert Schumann’s Song Cycles in the Context of the Early Nineteenth-Century ‘Liederkreis’,” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1981), esp. chap. 2 and chap. 4.

Studium der Ilias und Odyssee brought the question of the Epic Cycle to a wider audience.¹⁰⁴

By the time Schumann was composing his Lieder, the term “cycle” had picked up specific connotations available to the general musical public. In calling *Dichterliebe* a “cycle,” Schumann denied that his work needed to correspond to the Aristotelian criterion of aesthetic excellence—that of a general idea, conceived in advance, that guided every moment of the creative process and unified the whole. He denied, too, the Aristotelian benchmark for the superiority of the Homeric epics over the Cyclic epics—that it consist of a single part.¹⁰⁵

Schumann’s anti-Aristotelian sense of “cycle” is confirmed by the letter to Breitkopf and Härtel: Schumann claims that each part that constitutes the cycle is “a self-contained entity [ein Abgeschlossenes],” so, turned in on itself like a windowless monad, without any necessary conscious intention towards or even awareness of the whole.¹⁰⁶ The performance practice of giving the vocal role to men now shows itself to be in some sense a compensation for the lost unity wrought by a single universal conceived in advance; in having the audience believe that the exceptionally diverse material is unified in the male persona who immediately is the poet, however, standard contemporary performance renounces Schumann’s critique of immediacy.¹⁰⁷ Schumann’s resistance towards Aristotelian aesthetics raises the question of *how* the cycle can fulfil his claim that it is a whole if not through a unifying idea conceived in

¹⁰⁴ Wilhelm Müller, *Homerische Vorschule: Eine Einleitung in das Studium der Ilias und Odyssee* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1824), <https://archive.org/details/homerischevorsch00mull>. On Müller’s theory of the cycle and history with Wolf, see Turchin, “Robert Schumann’s Song Cycles,” pp. 104-109.

¹⁰⁵ See Müller, *Homerische Vorschule*, p. 108f. Müller goes further in distinguishing the “Cyclus” from the “Kreis.” In the Kreis, the coherence [Zusammenhang] is natural; in the Cyclus, “genealogical or strictly chronological”: the whole of the Kreis coheres in a central point and “tolerates no gaps,” while the Cyclus loses its centre by breaking the circle and loosening it into the straight line of the chronology or narration (ibid., p. 112f.).

¹⁰⁶ R. Schumann to Breitkopf & Härtel, August 6, 1843, quoted in McCorkle, *Werkverzeichnis*, p. 207 (my translation).

¹⁰⁷ That the male singer lends *Dichterliebe* unity in this way is Hansjörg Ewert’s suggestion, but he is not particularly critical of this innovation. See Hansjörg Ewert, ed., preface to *Dichterliebe*, by R. Schumann (2011), p. IV or p. VII.

advance. Aristotle himself, however, indicates two ways in which *unity*—or an *artificial* whole, as opposed to a whole defined by nature—may be constituted:

For not only is it [oneness], on the one hand, the universal [katholou], or the thing that says something [legomenon] in general on its own, as a whole, so that it is universal insofar as, encompassing the many, it alleges itself [katêgoreisthai] therefore to be, in particular, *all*, together, as a *single one*, like a human being, a horse, a god can be *all*, together, as a *single one*, because all, together, are living; but also, on the other hand, oneness is the continuous stretch related right through, sustaining from beginning to end, whenever *one* is made out of *more*, especially when the more are there in potential, but if not, in actuality.¹⁰⁸

The first kind of unity, which we can call intensive unity, is the kind of unity that Aristotle expects to find in poetry. An intensive unity is wrought by way of the universal (katholou)—a compressed declaration that, as a particular, claims *to be* the many things that it gathers all together. The universal is both a mere manner of speaking *and* real craft, both a claim and reality: it really encompasses many particular, scattered things, but *claims* to do so as a particular single thing, united in itself, so is in some sense a mere allegation.¹⁰⁹ The other type of artificial whole, the extensive type, is really constituted by way of constant relation. What makes this second type of oneness a whole is its unbroken unrolling in time (or spreading in space). It *seems* that an epic would be considered unified in the second way, extensively, by sustained *telling*.¹¹⁰ But in the *Poetics*, Aristotle suggests that poetry is not essentially *this type* of whole; for he claims that poetry proceeds from the universal, the katholou.¹¹¹ To obtain a

¹⁰⁸ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 5.26.2.1023b29-35 (my translation with emphasis added).

¹⁰⁹ In Ancient Greek, “categories” are literally accusations or charges—one equivalent of “katêgoreô” in Latin would be “objicere.” The categories are the universals’ claims to be *particulars*; for to be particulars, the universals need to be contained in something with others, as a whole. The verb “katêgoreisthai” is often translated as “to be predicated of,” but this masks the legal connotations of the word. See, for example, Hugh Tredennick’s translation in the Loeb Classical Library, *The Metaphysics*, by Aristotle (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), vol. 1, p. 281, 5.26.2.1023b30-35.

¹¹⁰ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 5.6.2.1023b33. The sustained character of this telling is expressed by the perfect form of *peperasmēnon*, passive or middle participle of the verb *perainō*, “I relate, I repeat from beginning to end.” *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon Founded upon the Seventh Edition of Liddell and Scott’s “Greek-English Lexicon”*, 1st ed., s.v. “peraino.”

¹¹¹ Aristotle, *Poetics* 17.1455b2.

better idea of what Aristotle means by *katholou* in literature, one can use his examples as a guide. Aristotle gives the *katholou* for two works: the *Iphigenia* and the *Odyssey*. When Aristotle expresses the *katholou* of the *Iphigenia*, he gives not a one-word predicate, but he presents it as a *précis* of the action, the plot.¹¹² The plot that Aristotle provides can serve as a *katholou* because it encompasses the many, or, contains variants. Aristotle records a different version of the *Iphigenia*, by Polyidos, in which the realization by the priestess that the sacrifice victim is her brother occurs as a result of his blurting out, at the last minute, that his sister's fate is also his own, which presumably gives her pause, whereas in *Iphigenia in Taurus* by Euripides, the revelation happens differently: as we know, when the priestess asks Pylades, in Orestes's presence, to convey a written message to her brother in Argos, whom she names with herself, Pylades reacts by handing the letter to the sacrifice victim, whom Iphigenia then questions to arrive at the confirmation that he is her brother.¹¹³ Yet the *Iphigenia* is universal insofar as it claims on its own behalf (*katêgoreisthai*) to be one particular thing that *is* all its different versions, together: the *Iphigenia*. Or, to exploit a different sense of "*katêgoreisthai*," the *Iphigenia* is a universal insofar as *it is told* in general terms as one particular thing. So when Aristotle tells the *Iphigenia* such that his telling encompasses a multiplicity of tellings, his telling itself makes the claim to be a single one: the *Iphigenia* told so that it contains every version of it, but which, as a telling, is a particular amongst others. For instance, Hegel also tells the *Iphigenia* such that it contains its variants.¹¹⁴ While Aristotle gives the variant of Polyidos and that of Euripides, Hegel gives that of Euripides and that of Goethe. In this way, the *Iphigenia* that claims to *be* all its multiple versions, can itself be just one, particular telling

¹¹² Aristotle, *Poetics* 17.1455b2-11.

¹¹³ Euripides, *Iphigenia in Taurus* 769-830.

¹¹⁴ Hegel, *Werke* vol. 13, p. 283; p. 287f.; pp. 297-299, or translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 218; p. 221; p. 229f.

that takes in the Iphigenia's multiplicity—this particular Aristotle Iphigenia or this particular Hegel Iphigenia. However, with Hegel's telling of the Iphigenia, it becomes clear that Aristotle's Iphigenia was *not* the whole Iphigenia in all its multiplicity: it was just an artificial, constructed whole. Thus Hegel destroys the old illusion of the whole Iphigenia—Aristotle's—and creates a new illusion of the whole Iphigenia. From this presentation of the *katholou* for the Iphigenia, it is clear that, for Aristotle, universals are part of the aesthetic sphere. After giving the *katholou* of the Iphigenia, Aristotle proceeds with a like demonstration for the *Odyssey*, where he adopts a slightly different vocabulary, opposing “episodes” not to “universal,” but to “story,” *logos*.¹¹⁵ A poem therefore is a whole *not* by virtue of unbroken telling, but by virtue of its universal (*katholou*), from which the episodes follow, both logically and in the actual process of composition. For Aristotle, then, a poem is unified in the same way that a concept is unified: by the universal. Although the epic is episodic, Aristotle claims that its unity nonetheless rests on the *logos*—the story or subject or principle that guided the composition of the work. Since Aristotle presumes that the *logos* is universal, it can be in the heads of any number of people, so, clearly, poetic unity does not necessarily depend upon a single, individual, personal, unified consciousness that shapes the whole poem in every aspect, from beginning to end, and is alone responsible for it. Poetic unity does, however, depend on the *logos* being given in advance and guiding the work of all the poets. This is not assured if the *Odyssey* and *Iliad* were stitched together after the fact, out of many different stories each conceived in isolation. Once intensive unity appears barred to the epic, it seems reasonable, then, to try to argue for poetic unity on the basis of extensive unity. In fact, according to Gregory Nagy, extensive unity was epic poetry's own criterion. The concept of *cycle* as traced

¹¹⁵ Aristotle, *Poetics* 17.1455b15-23 (my translations).

by Nagy implied two aspects that the Aristotelian concept of artificial whole did not: the craft of cleverly *joining together* what was separate *and* a single, mythical master joiner of *all* poetry:

...let us begin by reconsidering the traditional status of Homer as a prototypical author... The further back in time we reconstruct this figure, the greater the repertoire attributed to him: in the preclassical period, it seems that he is credited with all the so-called Cycle, all the Theban epics, and so on... As we have already noted, the very concept of “cycle”—that is, *kuklos*—had once served as a metaphor for all of Homer’s poetry... But now we discover that this same word *kuklos*, used as a metaphor for the sum total of Homeric poetry, is attested with the meaning of ‘chariot wheel’ in Homeric diction... In the poetic traditions of Indo-European languages, we find a direct attestation of a metaphor that compares a well-composed song to a well-crafted chariot wheel... In the Greek poetic traditions, the specific image of crafting a chariot wheel is implicit: the root of *ar-* of *arariskô*, ‘join, fit together’... is shared by the word that means ‘chariot wheel’ in the Linear B texts, *harma* (Knossos tablets Sg 1811, So 0437, etc.); in another dialectal form, *harma*... becomes, metonymically, the word for ‘chariot’ (*Iliad* 5.231, etc.). I submit that this same root *ar-* is shared by the name of Homer, *Homêros*, the etymology of which can be explained as ‘he who joins together’ (*homo-* plus *ar-*)... If this etymology is correct, then the making of the cycle, the sum total of epic, by the master poet Homer is a metaphor that pictures the crafting of the ultimate chariot-wheel by the ultimate carpenter or “joiner.”¹¹⁶

Leaving aside the question as to whether the etymology for “Homer” is correct or revelatory of the way in which the archaic Greeks thought about Homer, we can glean from Nagy’s research some insight into why the cycle presents such difficulty for aesthetic judgement.

Aristotle’s aesthetic criterion is intensive unity, *yet this conflicts with the aesthetic criterion given by the Homeric song itself: extensive unity*. By its own measure, a divine song is not the result of the priority of the whole in thought over the parts, but it consists of many parts fitted together well. Indeed, in Telemachos’s defense of “mournful song”¹¹⁷—a passage of the *Odyssey* which, incidentally, the twenty-year-old Schumann copied into his daybook¹¹⁸—,

¹¹⁶ Gregory Nagy, *Homeric Questions* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), p. 80f.

¹¹⁷ *Odyssey* 1.340-41.

¹¹⁸ Robert Schumann, *Tagebücher*, Band 1, 1827-1838, herausgegeben von Georg Eismann (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1971), p. 303.

Telemachos describes Phemios’s song as ἐρίηρον,¹¹⁹ which literally means “fitting exactly,” and which contains the “ar-” root to which Nagy refers. This same Indo-European root happens to be in the Greek word “harmonia,” which means both harmony and a join. Moreover, the root “ar-” forms the basis of the English word *art*.¹²⁰ Now the concepts of art and harmony no longer imply masterful joins—and this change should by no means be seen as a “corruption” of these concepts. The gradual suppression of meetness or extensive unity from the concept of art indicates rather increasing rationalization in general, of which Aristotle is himself the arena. Although Aristotle was aware of the aesthetic criterion that the Homeric poems set for themselves, he did not measure them by that criterion. This is something that seems to have escaped the Unitarians. Unable to argue for the great epics’ *wholeness* on the basis of Aristotle’s criterion for them (their unification by a preconceived universal, or, *katholou*), Unitarians argued for a wholeness on the basis of these artworks’ resemblance to natural forms, sweeping aside his distinction between artificial wholes and wholes defined by nature. Unitarians considered works of art wholes not insofar as they were unified by a single *logos*, conceived in advance, but insofar as they resembled organisms. George Curtius notes that Unitarians vaunted their “organic” view over the “atomistic” view of Homeric Analysis, on page five of his “Andeutungen über den gegenwärtigen Stand der homerischen Frage” from the fifth volume of the *Zeitschrift für die österreichischen Gymnasien*.¹²¹ Friedrich Schlegel, however, found an organic metaphor of such cunning that it split the difference between Unitarianism and Analysis before the debate really took place, in his response to Wolf’s *Prolegomena* of 1796—“Über die homerische Poesie mit Rücksicht auf die Wolfischen

¹¹⁹ *Odyssey* 1.346.

¹²⁰ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “art,” consulted February 13, 2013, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/11125>.

¹²¹ Georg Curtius quoted in Stayskal, “Nineteenth-Century Homeric Analysis,” p. 223.

Untersuchungen.”¹²² There, in the attempt to save Homeric unity in the face of Wolf’s challenge, he compares the epic to a natural form, the *polyp*: “The epic is, if you will permit the expression, a poetical polyp, where each smaller or bigger member (which can detach itself from the cohesive whole, without mutilating it or breaking it up into absolutely simple, no longer poetic and epic, components) has a life of its own, with just as much harmony as the whole.”¹²³

{Polyp Excursus} The polyp is a riddle for the taxonomist and for the philosopher, and has been for centuries. Scientific discoveries about its capacities to regenerate itself and even to survive scission inspired French Enlightenment materialism.¹²⁴ The discovery of this creature upset common-sense notions of the individual as indivisible and independent: the polyp may reproduce asexually by fragmenting into a number of separate viable bodies,¹²⁵ or by budding its offspring from an outgrowth of cells somewhere on its body, adding still more to its aggregate form.¹²⁶ In the case of coral, a new polyp formed from a bud generally remains attached to parent polyp by connective tissue to form a colony, one continuous, self-generating body that is everywhere coral,¹²⁷ but whose members may either kill prey, feed, and reproduce independently, and even die off individually, without the whole colony dying. In the case of the sea anemone, the bud may also detach itself from its parent to lead an independent

¹²² Friedrich Schlegel, “Über die homerische Poesie mit Rücksicht auf die Wolfischen Untersuchungen,” in *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, herausgegeben von Ernst Behler (München: Schöningh, 1958-), Abteilung [division] 1, vol. 1, pp. 116-132.

¹²³ *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, division 1, vol. 1, p. 131.

¹²⁴ See Aram Vartanian, “Trembley’s Polyp, La Mettrie, and Eighteenth-Century French Materialism,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 11, no. 3 (June 1950): pp. 259-286.

¹²⁵ Daphne Gail Fautin, “Reproduction of Cnidaria,” *Canadian Journal of Zoology* 80, no. 10 (published electronically November 19, 2002): pp. 1735-1754, doi: 10.1139/Z02-133.

¹²⁶ *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, academic edition, s.v. “budding,” accessed February 17, 2013, <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/83411/budding>>.

¹²⁷ *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, academic edition, s.v. “polyp,” accessed February 17, 2013, <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/468956/polyp>>.

existence. In non-colonial polyps, the break-away bud may turn out to be more polyp of the same genetic make-up, more polyp of different genetic make-up or not polyp at all, but a medusa.¹²⁸ But the concept of polyp with which Schlegel was working in no way embraces the whole baffling, astounding array of what polyp can be, for the connection between the medusa and the polyp was not appreciated until 1843 at the earliest, when the findings of Michael Sars and those of J. G. Dalyell gained a hearing, and polyps and medusas started to be conceived as alternating “generations” in the life cycle of certain coelenterates.¹²⁹ The polyp turned out to be an outward appearance, a body type, not a kind of animal (or kind of plant, as some had thought). The Cnidaria phylum as we know it today contains animals who have only the polyp body form, those who have only the medusa form and those who have both. Nonetheless, by 1758, Linnaeus had gone very far in grouping together, as *Vermes imperfecta*, Cnidaria so diverse as the blue button, the wind sailor, the beadlet anemone, hard and soft corals and the common jellyfish.¹³⁰ Despite all this variety, Schlegel has in mind a very specific polyp: he appears to be referring to what we now know as the body-form of the *hydra*. This solitary hydroid can reproduce asexually by budding, yet its buds do not form medusas, but only single polyps, genetically identical to it: hydras are clonal.¹³¹ Furthermore, the buds assume the specific form of limbs or members, which detach themselves to summersault off to be solitary hydra: a tentacle of a hydra can *literally* take on a life of its own, just as Schlegel describes

¹²⁸ Pierre Tardent, “Gametogenesis, Fertilization, and Embryogenesis: Introductory Remarks,” *American Zoologist* 14, no. 2 (Spring 1974): pp. 443-445.

¹²⁹ C. F. S. Cornelius, “The Linking of Polyp and Medusa Stages in *Obelia* and other Coelenterates,” *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society* 9 (March 1977): pp. 45-57, esp. 46f. and 50f.

¹³⁰ Marymegan Daly et al., “The Phylum Cnidaria: A Review of Phylogenetic Patterns and Diversity Three Hundred Years After Linnaeus,” *Zootaxa* 1668 (published electronically December 21, 2007): pp. 127-182, esp. 128f., <http://www.mapress.com/zootaxa/list/2007/Linnaeus.html>.

¹³¹ J. B. C. Jackson and A. G. Coates, “Life Cycles and Evolution of Clonal (Modular) Animals,” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London, Series B (Biological Sciences)*, 313, no. 1159 (August 14, 1986): pp. 7-22, here p. 7.

it.¹³² It was upon a *hydra* polyp specifically that Abraham Trembley performed his rather cruel experiments,¹³³ whose philosophical implications were worked out by the French materialists.¹³⁴ The polyp plays a memorable role in Diderot's "Le Rêve de d'Alembert." When d'Alembert begins to speak feverishly in his sleep, Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse, who is watching over him, decides to record his words, whose reason or unreason she tests on Dr. Bordeu the following morning, reading out the dictation she took during the night:

On Jupiter or on Saturn, human polyps! Males break down into males; females, into females—that is pleasing... (There he burst into gales of laughter enough to frighten me)... Man breaks down into an infinite number of atom-men they enclose between leaves of paper like eggs of insects known to build up their shells gradually, remain chrysalides for a certain period of time, then crack their shells to emerge as butterflies, a society of moulded men, an entire province peopled with the debris from a single man—the image is utterly delightful... (and then the gales of laughter started up again)... If man breaks down into an infinite number of animalcule-men somewhere—there they must be less adverse to death; there they make up for the loss of a man so easily that it must be little cause for regret.¹³⁵

This passage is a likely source for Schlegel's statement that the member of the polyp has as much "harmony" as the whole. Yet from this passage it emerges that the polyp model is in fact a denial of individuality to any mere part whatsoever. The experiments with polyps seem to have overthrown continuity in space as the mark of individuality: from the scientific fact that a single polyp can split into two or more viable polyps, the dreaming d'Alembert character supposes something like a "Big Bang Theory" of life, whereby all spatially delimited beings are in fact fragments of an original, single, whole being, which alone can be called "individual." Society is formed out of the "debris" of whole humanity, in which the particular

¹³² *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, academic edition, s.v. "hydra," accessed February 17, 2013, <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/278116/Hydra>>.

¹³³ Howard M. Lenhoff and Sylvia G. Lenhoff, "Challenge to the Specialist: Abraham Trembley's Approach to Research on the Organism – 1744 and Today," *American Zoologist* 29, no. 3 (1989): pp. 1105-1117, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3883509>.

¹³⁴ Vartanian, "Trembley's Polyp," p. 259.

¹³⁵ Denis Diderot, "Le Rêve de d'Alembert," in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. H. Dieckmann, Jean Fabre, Jacques Proust et Jean Varloot (Paris: Hermann, 1975-), vol. 17, pp. 23-109, here p. 125f. (my translation).

is subordinate to the whole.¹³⁶ Diderot presented the subordination of the part to the whole as feverish dreaming in his dialogue. But in Schlegel's essay on Homeric poetry, the polyp returns in earnest, this time to break away from the whole to which it has been subordinated in d'Alembert's dream. Schlegel compares the epic poem only to a certain polyp, and then only in a certain respect: it is only in the capacity of the non-colonial polyp to reproduce asexually by budding that it bears a resemblance to epic poetry. Schlegel's polyp is thus not a Portuguese man-of-war dactylozoid polyp, which remains subordinate to the man-of-war, and which has only a lethal function, not a generative function, and whose accompanying tentacles do not detach themselves to take on lives of their own, but merely replenish themselves, as they are periodically bitten off by prey.¹³⁷ Nor is Schlegel's polyp a coral polyp, for coral is colonial. It is not even a coral polyp of the since-discovered species *Anthipathes grandis*, whose capacity to generate a new colony from a detached polyp tentacle—the rather recently formulated concept of 'polyp bailout'¹³⁸—has not been observed in the wild, while even its capacity to reproduce itself from a broken polyp-bearing branch is "rarely successful."¹³⁹ Schlegel restricts his comparison, rather, to the asexual budding of new, solitary, free-swimming, clonal polyps: the metaphor does not extend to the hydra's capacity to regenerate and to fragment. He so sees the model for Epic poetry in the subordinate part that breaks away to gain an independent life. By claiming that the poetic organism's member can

¹³⁶ Ibid., vol. 17, p. 126.

¹³⁷ *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, academic edition, s.v. "Portuguese man-of-war," accessed February 18, 2013, <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/471668/Portuguese-man-of-war>>.

¹³⁸ Paul W. Sammarco, "Polyp Bail-Out: An Escape Response to Environmental Stress and a New Means of Reproduction in Corals," *Marine Ecology*, Progress Series, 10 (November 10, 1982): pp. 57-65.

¹³⁹ Daniel Wagner, Rhian G. Waller and Robert J. Toonen, "Sexual Reproduction of Hawaiian Black Corals, with a Review of the Reproduction of Antipatharians (Cnidaria: Anthozoa: Hexacorallia)," *Invertebrate Biology* 130, no. 3 (published electronically August 8, 2011): pp. 211-225, here p. 222f., doi: 10.1111/j.1744-7410.2011.00233.x.

detach itself to take on a *life* of its own, Schlegel contests the idea, expressed by Diderot's d'Alembert, that life and individuality really belong to the polypic totality. The breakaway progeny has its own life, regardless of the fact that it has the same shape or, as we express it today, the same genetic material, as its parent. After all, the parent polyp and the child polyp may even be clones, but, even then, they do not have the same personal history: they belong to different generations and arose in different historical periods. Different rhapsodies of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* might have arisen in different historical periods, but distinguishing these does not destroy these two surviving epics, according to Schlegel, because the *Vollendung*, the achievement or fulfilment, that characterizes the whole epic also characterizes each part of it.¹⁴⁰ In fact, Schlegel argues that the Homeric epics are the *most* achieved in their parts.¹⁴¹ The sign of the part's achievement is harmony: the peace amongst the different parts of *this* part.¹⁴² Arguing this way, in favour of the harmonious part, Schlegel wishes to save the Homeric epics *as artworks*, from the verdict that their diverse authorship and heterogeneous episodes bring down. Although Schlegel's polyp metaphor is very colourful, it does not show that the *Odyssey* is a unity as far as *Aristotle* is concerned, for, according to the philosopher, a poem is an *artificial* whole of the intensive type, not a *natural, living* whole: the poem is a whole insofar as it *claims* to be many as one, whereas an animal is a whole in virtue of having no part missing.¹⁴³ Schlegel argues for the separate rhapsodies forming independent wholes and, collectively, *one* whole on the basis of how nature defines whole, according to Aristotle. Whether we can consider the new miniature hydra that formed from the big hydra's finger-like projection, and which broke away, *a whole* in its own right has no consequences for

¹⁴⁰ *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, division 1, vol. 1, p. 130.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, division 1, vol. 1, p. 132.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, division 1, vol. 1, p. 130.

¹⁴³ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 5.26.1023b26f.

Aristotle's judgement on the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* because, for these to be wholes according to his criteria, they must have formed from the terse expression of a diverse group of non-continuous particulars, *as one*. Aristotle's representation of the subject of the *Odyssey* is only part of what the idea of the *Odyssey* could be, and at the same time more than any particular teller of the *Odyssey* has told: it is an artificial or technical whole, and not repleteness and closure imposed by nature. **{End of Excursus}**

To evoke the cycle form in connection with extensive unity seems to be a restorative gesture: the demand that the new work be measured against the aesthetics of the distant past.

Schumann, however, by calling his work a "cycle," is not evoking the older aesthetic criterion that epic poetry established for itself, extensive unity; rather, he offers the illusion of a form—a false immediacy.

{Section iv} Important literature on *Dichterliebe* in English has concerned itself with the question of the whole by showing that the work is a linear progression of linked songs. In general, commentators of *Dichterliebe* have argued against its being a potpourri of unrelated things—or even a collection of similar but randomly-ordered things—by claiming that *key relationships* link the songs. The emphasis on linkage between the songs suggests that Schumann's recent interpreters accept extensive unity, unbroken continuity, as a criterion by which to judge the cycle. What counts as a masterful join or logical link, however, is far from clear. Fifth relations are considered logical links, but not all of the Lieder in *Dichterliebe* are linked by fifth relations.¹⁴⁴ More seriously, in the absence of any agreed-upon criteria, the main authors involved in the unity debate fall back on the *organicist paradigm*, despite its

¹⁴⁴ Consider, for example, R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), XII, p. 24, m. 1. One must ask in what sense this German sixth in B-flat major constitutes a link from the final tonic chord in E-flat major of the preceding Lied (ibid., XI, p. 23, m. 46).

political misuse and fundamentally repressive character.¹⁴⁵ Commentators such as Heinrich Schenker do *not* ultimately judge *Dichterliebe* on the basis of extensive unity—the Homeric songs’ criterion for success—, but rather assume access to the “whole” as it is defined by nature, and it is this whole defined by nature, as opposed to a whole established by technique—i.e., unity¹⁴⁶—that serves as their criterion for Schumann’s art. Yet not a single author has convincingly argued for the unity of the cycle.

The decades-long persistence of the unity question is fuelled by a basic contradiction: the dominant method of musical interpretation is the organicist paradigm of Heinrich Schenker; however, Schenker’s influential theory was never intended for multi-part works.¹⁴⁷ Although Schenker is in line with the dominant Western tradition insofar as he equates aesthetic unity and artistic success, what he means by unity is specific to his theory of

¹⁴⁵ David Ferris in *Schumann’s Eichendorff “Liederkreis” and the Genre of the Romantic Cycle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) devotes considerable space to a critique of organicist analyses of *Dichterliebe*. The reader may be referred to his excellent and detailed critique of the individual analyses of Opus 48 made by Arthur Komar, Heinrich Schenker and David Neumeyer (Ferris, pp. 25-58). The interest in evoking these three authors again here is to criticize the concept on which they rely, that of organicism, not merely to demonstrate the inappropriateness or one-sidedness of applying organicist criteria to Schumann’s song cycles. Ferris for his part does *not* argue that Schumann’s music is *inorganic*:

My intent is not to write a history of the [song cycle] genre but to try to place it within the context of Romantic thought by considering how Schumann and his contemporaries were influenced by the early Romantic writers and, in particular, by the ideas of Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel. Obviously, these ideas are no more prescriptive or authoritative for our understanding of the cycle than the organicist model that has so strongly dominated recent scholarship. But they can serve as a kind of corrective to that model by reminding us of how far our historical moment is from Schumann’s and by encouraging us to question our assumptions and expand our vision” (ibid., p. 58).

The position defended in the present work, by contrast, is that Schumann’s *Dichterliebe* is itself a critique of the concept of the organic; it is a source of anti-organic knowledge, not a hermeneutic specimen to which anti-organic thinking is applied or not; the aim in demonstrating the anti-organicism of Schumann’s song cycles is not to appreciate the distance between his historical moment and ours as a matter of curiosity; rather, anti-organicism is to be preferred over organicism because it is the progressive model of philosophy and art, to which no historical period has really advanced.

¹⁴⁶ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 5.26.1023b26f.

¹⁴⁷ Heinrich Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, herausgegeben und bearbeitet von Oswald Jonas, 2. Auflage (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1956) translated by Ernst Oster as *Free Composition*, ed. Ernst Oster, 1 vol. accompanied by a supplement, *Musical Examples*, (New York: Longman, 1979). In subsequent references to *Free Composition*, page number references (p.) refer to the main volume while figure number references (fig.) refer to the supplement.

harmony. For Schenker, the aesthetic unity of a piece of music relates to the fact that it is all in the *same key*. Aesthetic unity is what he calls “fundamental structure,” or “Ursatz,” which is both the unity of bass arpeggiation together with the upper line, on the one hand, and, on the other, a representation of *origin* that becomes *destiny*. Schenkerian analysis assumes that a piece of music unfolds an arpeggio hidden in a single tone stated at the true beginning, which is why it does not apply to whole works with multiple movements or to song cycles, which have several such opening statements. The need to demonstrate unity of the parts *and* of the whole work is an additional demand, which Schenker’s influential theory, however conservative, does not suggest.

Arthur Komar employs Schenker’s methods to analyze *Dichterliebe*, while admitting that he is not “entirely orthodox” in his application of them.¹⁴⁸ He does not state his criticisms of Schenker explicitly, but posits his own criteria for an aesthetic unity that can apply to the work with multiple parts. Komar sets out the concept of “musical totality” in seven additive levels of increasing stringency.¹⁴⁹ He ultimately claims that *Dichterliebe* corresponds to the highest of these: it is a totality because 1) the poems on which it is based are alike; 2) there are many cases of a distinctive progression, piece of a theme or rhythm occurring in at least two different songs; 3) there are many cases of the same pitch grouping occurring in at least two different songs; 4) “elements of local continuity” connect adjacent songs;¹⁵⁰ 5) there is a general principle that governs the key relation of one song to the next; 6) there is a “general compositional plan” that gives a “rationale” for the place at which the work ends,¹⁵¹ and, in

¹⁴⁸ Komar, “The Music of *Dichterliebe*,” p. 67 n3.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

addition to all these, 7) “a single key governs the entire work.”¹⁵² While, in Komar’s reproduction of the tonal plan, different keys govern different individual songs, he suggests that the whole cycle is in A major, with individual songs linked together by the third and fifth relations and passing tone relations that make their respective keys.¹⁵³ Clearly Komar contradicts himself in claiming that *Dichterliebe* is unified according to these seven criteria, for he does not supply a principle that explains the rationale behind linking certain songs by way of third relations, others by fifth relations and still others by passing tone relations.

While disagreeing with certain points of Komar’s supporting analysis, Rufus E. Hallmark does not contest the claims that *Dichterliebe* has a tonal plan, a compositional plan and a single key; these, however, are not sufficient. He argues:

Analysis of the musical cycle as a whole must also be considered with the poetry. In *Dichterliebe* the tonal plan and the narrative sequence support one another. Arthur Komar’s harmonic and modal plan is basically valid, . . . for movement by descending fifth and by rising and falling thirds do bind the cycle together. But his disregard for the narrative junctures of the cycle led Komar to divide the cycle on exclusively musical (linear) grounds into two parts, between Songs 7 and 8, and to minimize the shifts of mood and abrupt harmonic breaks between Songs 4 and 5 and Songs 11 and 12.¹⁵⁴

As he himself does not perform Schenkerian analysis, Hallmark is so able to argue for *Dichterliebe* as an artistic whole on grounds that Schenker would reject: the narrative norm that has governed traditional storytelling. In Hallmark’s own analysis, the harmonic breaks correspond to traditional narrative divisions of “exposition,” “development and crisis” and “resolution.”¹⁵⁵ Hallmark nonetheless accepts the premise, inherited from Komar, that third

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 77f.

¹⁵⁴ Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann’s “Dichterliebe”*, p. 150.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 142.

and fifth relations bind the cycle together.¹⁵⁶ At the same time, he does not examine the theoretical basis that supports the disregard for Heine's lyric in a study such as Komar's.

David Neumeier for his part wishes to retain Schenkerian analysis, but makes the explicit criticism that, in its subordination of all elements to harmonic and melodic closure, such a framework is ill-equipped to deal with vocal, "narrative" works.¹⁵⁷ Despite the insufficiency of Schenkerian analysis in the face of lyric, Neumeier argues that Schenker's methods could be applied to such works if it forswore two assumptions: (1) that the organic unity of works is guaranteed by melodic and harmonic closure and by unity of key; and (2) that the closure of the dominant harmonic structure overrides any other structuring principle.¹⁵⁸ Neumeier suggests that an even higher principle may override the principle of dominant relations: "The multipart vocal work, then, is understood as organically unified on a higher plane, as it were, since the combination of the harmonic-tonal with narrative-dramatic aspects should potentially allow an adequate interpretation of organic structure which either aspect alone could not achieve."¹⁵⁹ Neumeier traces the negligence of the text in previous studies of *Dichterliebe* to the Schenkerian theoretical basis, yet he opts to modify the theoretical model rather than to face the contradictions of such an enterprise. Yet Neumeier's "higher plane" of organic unity remains mysterious. While it is true that tones *and* words must be considered in vocal works, nothing permits us to think that a rent in a song's harmonic fabric is really made good by the text. If we diagnosed every harmonic gap as a need of words and every narrative gap as a need of tones, then there would be almost no need to do harmonic

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 135 and p. 141f.

¹⁵⁷ David Neumeier, "Organic Structure and the Song Cycle: Another Look at Schumann's *Dichterliebe*," *Music Theory Spectrum* 4 (Spring 1982): pp. 92-105, doi: 10.2307/746012.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 94.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 97.

analysis to make the case for Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*'s being a whole: everything harmonically unusual in this multipart vocal work could be explained as yet another illustration of the main character's madness. The same goes for Schoenberg's *Erwartung*. But we would be missing a lot if we put down the breakdown of tonal harmony in these works to the narrative demands of portraying characters going mad. Neumeier suggests that narrative can substitute for harmonic explanation, as if the seventh chord at the end of the first Lied could be resolved by the presence of the word "Sehnen" in the lyric or as if the poet's strange tears of bitterness could become tears of joy in the presence of the authentic cadence (at last in the "right" key) underlying the word "bitterlich." But referring oneself to both words and tones is no guarantee of an adequate interpretation; to affirm, as Neumeier seems to, that this might *possibly* allow adequate interpretation is to say nothing at all.

Neumeier's attempt to extend Schenker's concept of organic whole to narrative works, however, misses what is peculiar to it. Schenker's organicism does not consist only in a comparison between the artwork and a life form, but, more crucially, his theory is organicist in that it assumes an inevitable, organic transition of the inorganic to the organic. Schenker's organicism is problematic because, ultimately, his method requires that the inorganic and natural-historical—i.e., historically produced, anti-subjective or reified aspects of music—be subsumed under the organic or else considered as if it were organic. The consequence for interpretation is that the artwork's illusion of life will be preserved rather than exploded as illusory. To Schenker, the mystery of music is the mystery of life. The question of how a natural, physical phenomenon, sound, becomes a human phenomenon, music, is just the question of how dead, inert matter makes the sudden transition to life. This comparison could be made, if, on one hand, sound were a purely natural, physical phenomenon, and if, on the

other, music were really alive and human. Tempered tuning, however, implies that triads are not purely natural phenomena; reified musical conventions that go unquestioned, sometimes for centuries, imply on the other side that music drags with it a mass of dead matter, to the point that humanity is crushed under the authority of tradition.

Schenker's theory is founded on a naturalistic presumption: he takes the harmonic series to be an invariable natural phenomenon. Schenker conceives of all masterpieces of Western tonal music as having a "fundamental structure" or "Ursatz," which represents music's "background"—as opposed to the "foreground" of chromatic events, modulations, alterations, and other "illusory effects." One aspect of the fundamental structure is its role "as transmitter of the primary arpeggiation."¹⁶⁰ By this, Schenker means that underlying all tonal music is an analysis of the natural overtone series present in a single tone into the basic components of third, fifth and octave, which each composition makes distinct to the ear through their unfolding in time:

In nature sound is a vertical phenomenon.... In this form, however, it cannot be transferred to the human larynx; nor is such a transfer desirable, for the mere duplication of nature cannot be the object of human endeavour. Therefore art manifests the principle of the harmonic series in a special way, one which still lets the chord of nature shine through. The overtone series, this vertical sound of nature, this chord in which all the tones sound at once, is transformed into a succession, a horizontal arpeggiation, which has the advantage of lying within the range of the human voice. Thus the harmonic series is condensed, abbreviated for the purposes of art.¹⁶¹

A second aspect of the fundamental structure is its unity with the upper voice, which Schenker calls the "fundamental line."¹⁶² Schenker conceives of art only as this fundamental unity:

"Neither the fundamental line nor the bass arpeggiation can stand alone. Only when acting

¹⁶⁰ Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, p. 232 § 2, section title as translated in *Free Composition*, p. 10.

¹⁶¹ Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, p. 39 § 1 as translated, *Free Composition*, p. 10.

¹⁶² Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, p. 40 Anmerkung § 3 as translated, *Free Composition*, p. 10 n1.

together, when unified in a contrapuntal structure, do they produce art.”¹⁶³ This forms the contrapuntal “diatony.” Schenker justifies these musical invariants by referring to the harmonic series of the monochord—or, what he calls “the chord of nature”:

After centuries of striving, when creative ears had finally learned to mold several voices successfully into a *contrapuntal complex*, it became possible to fill in the spaces in the arpeggiation in the upper voice of the fundamental structure with passing tones in a manner which did justice to both nature and art. In the process musicians also gradually learned to conform to nature by adjusting the horizontal and vertical aspects simultaneously: they adopted the octave, fifth, and third, which dominate the fundamental arpeggiation of the chord of nature. In addition they learned how to treat the passing tone as consonant or dissonant according to what the practice of strict counterpoint <in composition> revealed.

Within the octave, this first adjustment resulted in a relatedness of the whole structure to a single tone, the fundamental of the chord. The series of tones thus created in the upper voice, the fundamental line, represents diatony (*Diatonie*). In the narrowest sense, diatony belongs only to the upper voice. But, in accord with its origin, it simultaneously governs the whole contrapuntal structure, including the bass arpeggiation and the passing tones.

The same relationship to a fundamental tone prevails also in the foreground: all the foreground diminutions, including the apparent “keys” [scheinbaren Tonarten] arising out of the voice-leading transformations, ultimately emanate from the diatony in the background. I have used the term *tonality* to include the various illusory effects [Scheinwirkungen] in the foreground; yet the tonal sparseness of diatony in the background and the fullness of tonality in the foreground are one and the same.¹⁶⁴

On one hand, Schenker’s attempt to secure a theory of musical structure on the harmonic series fails on its own terms. For, according to Schenker’s own rendering of the harmonic series of Great C, the minor third to C, E-flat, does not occur at all,¹⁶⁵ yet his theory is supposed to apply to works in minor keys: he indeed relies on them in his illustrations.¹⁶⁶ Yet, on the other hand, Schenker’s pretension to have discovered a deep natural basis for all musical structures in tonal music rests on a distorting and “partial” presentation of the harmonic series of the monochord. Firstly, the overtone series does not stop at the fifth partial.

¹⁶³ Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, p. 40 § 3 as translated, *Free Composition*, p. 11.

¹⁶⁴ Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, p. 40f. §4 as translated, *Free Composition*, p. 11.

¹⁶⁵ Schenker, *Free Composition*, fig. 2.

¹⁶⁶ See, for instance, Schenker’s first musical example, the first movement of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata, op. 27, no. 2, in C-sharp minor (Schenker, *Free Composition*, fig. 7a) and the corresponding comment, in which he refers to “the complete triad”(ibid., p. 14 § 17).

The limitation of the scale degrees that can fall within the fundamental structure to the octave, the fifth, and the third is an arbitrary selection, not an already-existing fact of nature.

Secondly, there is not just one harmonic series. Schenker bases his theory on the harmonic series of the monochord, a single-string instrument of Greek Antiquity, whereas, except for perhaps the trumpet marine—whose upper partials well beyond the fifth partial are audible¹⁶⁷—, monochords are excluded from the Western art music that forms the basis of Schenker’s theory. By contrast, the instruments for which Western art music is written include winds, whose harmonic series can be quite different from that of the monochord. Notably, the *even* partials are missing from the harmonic series of the clarinet, which means that if Western harmony were really organized according to the harmonic series, the clarinet would have required its own theory of harmony, based on the division of its first partial, which is the twelfth, not the octave. Acoustically, octaves on clarinets are dissonances, and they do sound rough—a quality that Mahler and the mature Brahms understood, but which some orchestra conductors do not. But, ultimately, Schenker’s recourse to the harmonic series of the monochord to justify great music runs into the same difficulty as Schoenberg’s recourse to it to justify dissonance:¹⁶⁸ the partials of the harmonic series are not equivalent to the musical intervals. Carl Dahlhaus has pointed this out: “There is no ‘just’ intonation—the tuning known by that name suffers from having no acoustical difference between two sizes of whole tones, a difference to which nothing corresponds musically.”¹⁶⁹ In tonal music, twelve equal semi-

¹⁶⁷ See *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “trumpet marine,” by Cecil Adkins, accessed December 31, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/28494>.

¹⁶⁸ Arnold Schoenberg, *Structural Functions of Harmony* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1954), p. 193.

¹⁶⁹ Carl Dahlhaus, *Untersuchungen über die Entstehung der harmonischen Tonalität*, in *Gesammelte Schriften in 10 Bänden*, herausgegeben von Hermann Danuser (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 2000-2008), vol. 3, pp. 11-307, here p. 183, lines 10-13 as translated by Robert O. Gjerdingen, *Studies on the Origin of Harmonic Tonality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) p. 190.

tones make up the interval of an octave; the interval of a perfect fifth is equal to seven semi-tones; the interval of a major third is equal to four semi-tones. In the harmonic series, however, the partial that is supposed to correspond to the major third (the fifth partial, at 386 cents) is not equal to four-sevenths of the partial that is supposed to correspond to the perfect fifth (the third partial, at 702 cents). Stacking three major thirds produces an octave in tonal music; stacking three intervals equivalent to the fifth partial falls short of the octave by close to an eighth of a tone. A progression through the circle of musical fifths spans seven octaves; twelve pure fifths do not equal seven pure octaves. And to our current understanding of the harmonic series, so-called just intonation does not produce merely *two* sizes of whole tone, but almost as many as there are notes. If the ninth partial of the overtone series is the reference, the whole tone corresponds to 204 cents, but as the whole tone is part of a tonal system, it must also be expressible in terms of all the other partials that can correspond to intervals: if the third partial is the reference, then the whole tone is 201 cents; the fifth or seventh partial, 193 cents; the fifteenth, 198 cents; the seventeenth, 210 cents; the nineteenth, 199 cents. As any note in a composition carries on multiple musical interval relations at any given time, both horizontally and vertically, so-called just intonation is nothing but a prioritization of these competing demands: temperament. As Schenker claims to offer “a genuine *theory of tonal language*,” it goes without saying that all music under consideration implies some kind of tempered tuning.¹⁷⁰ In any kind of tempered tuning, never both of the relevant intervals, the third and the fifth, correspond to segmentation in the harmonic series. Temperaments are essentially the illusion of just intonation, different ways of hiding the acoustic incommensurability amongst the different intervals of the tonal system of tonal music. It is to

¹⁷⁰ Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, p. 37 as translated, *Free Composition*, p. 9.

the historical event of temperament and to the collapse of Pythagorean tuning that triadic chordal harmony in tonal music should be related, not to the natural phenomenon of the overtone series. Thirds in the era of Pythagorean intonation were not autonomous, structuring units; rather, major and minor thirds were imperfect consonances, which required the addition of the fifth:

In the 13th and 14th centuries, the harmonic interval of a third was still perceived as an unstable, dependent consonance supported by an adjoining fifth or unison.... The fact that two tones at the interval of a third form a functional unity thus does not presuppose an emancipation of the third to the status of an independent simultaneity. On the contrary, the consonant character of the simultaneity appears as a result of the functional unity of the melodic tones.¹⁷¹

The “emancipation of the third” took place over the course of the fifteenth century. Dahlhaus considers the emancipation of thirds and not the omnipresence of thirds to be the mark of triadic harmony: it was Adam von Fulda at the end of the fifteenth century advocating for the *free* use of thirds who reflected the more advanced stage of consciousness on the tendency in the material, the consciousness of the third as a perfect consonance—and *not* Zarlino in the middle of the sixteenth, who, while decreeing the omnipresence of thirds and fifths, still thought in terms of imperfect and perfect consonances.¹⁷² While musical *perception* knew only an uneven and incomplete transformation from harmony as the mere result of horizontally moving voices sounding together to harmony as a definite root progression of autonomous vertical units, it is clear that by the fifteenth century the harmonic interval of the third was emancipated for *composition*, for it needed no resolution to the fifth or unison.¹⁷³ While the inclusion of the third among the consonances is bound up with the demise of Pythagorean intonation, this is not the result of the relative purity of (selective) thirds in the

¹⁷¹ Dahlhaus, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, p. 70, lines 27-33 as translated, *Studies*, p. 74.

¹⁷² Dahlhaus, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, p. 90, lines 2-21, or translated, *Studies*, p. 92.

¹⁷³ Dahlhaus, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, p. 90, line 26-p. 91, line 15, or translated, *Studies*, p. 93.

so-called just intonation that replaced it. According to Dahlhaus himself, medieval concepts of consonance and dissonance were in fact constellations of many concepts, and could not be reduced to a single aspect, such as the degree of smoothness or harshness of the sound; Dahlhaus names as conditions of consonance “simple numerical proportion, a direct relationship between the tones, the fusing of the pitches, and the autonomy of the sonority.”¹⁷⁴ The inelegance of the Pythagorean ratios that yielded minor and major thirds, at 32:27 and 81:64 respectively,¹⁷⁵ would have disqualified them from the category of consonance, even though they could qualify for it on the basis of other criteria named. It was this partial fulfilment of the criteria for consonance that gave thirds their disputed status in the Middle Ages. Of all the criteria, the demand for elegant ratios prevented thirds from becoming consonances in their own right. The contradictions inherent to the Pythagorean concept of “third” were resolved with an explosion of the entire Pythagorean system. The collapse of Pythagorean tuning was the appearance of a movement in the concept of third, which in turn changed every musical concept—although Dahlhaus does not state it in these terms. The association of major thirds with fifths in tonal music has to do not with the physical phenomenon of the harmonic series, but with the fusion of the imperfect consonance of the major third, or ditone, with the perfect consonance to which it had to resolve in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the fifth, and *this* association still had not to do with the harmonic series, but with the then-practice of intervallic expansion, whereby a smaller interval could transform into a larger interval by opening simultaneously upward and downward by a step and half-step (or the inverse). Imperfect could become perfect by way of intervallic expansion,

¹⁷⁴ Dahlhaus, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, p. 76, lines 3-5 as translated, *Studies*, p. 79.

¹⁷⁵ *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Pythagorean intonation,” by Mark Lindley, accessed January 3, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/22604>.

a technique that Alban Berg revived almost as a form of “resolution” in his Expressionist phase.¹⁷⁶ It was not because the major third and the fifth sounded pleasing together that they were associated; they were associated because, while offering a contrasting sonority, the wide third led easily to the fifth. Dahlhaus suggests that the natural third, which is considerably lower, would not have invited this compositional practice, which was consistent with tuning:

Like the comma, the ditone—the “inharmonic” third—should also be understood as a musical phenomenon rather than as a mathematically motivated acoustical defect. As mentioned, it corresponds to the concept of “*consonantia imperfecta*.” And the hypothesis is unnecessary that in musical practice, as opposed to mathematically theory, the third was intoned as the 4:5 natural third. Even in the Middle Ages it is not out of the question that the harmonic third [4:5] was perceived as a musical fact of nature. This natural third is nevertheless denied by the content of that which was composed. The compositional technique calls attention to the factor of the pitches spreading apart, not of their fusing.¹⁷⁷

Triadic harmony can be understood on the model of quartal harmony: like the fusion of V and I chords that becomes its own autonomous structuring entity in quartal harmony, the triad is the fusion of the imperfect consonance of the third and the perfect consonance of the fifth. On the one hand, triadic harmony melds together the tensions and resolutions of the past, and freezes them together as chords, which make up the “natural history” of tonal music; on the other hand, triadic harmony breaks through the closed world of merely alternating or cycling sonorities, produced by convergence or divergence of voices, and grounds its voices in the harmonic progression, music’s historiography. That which Schenker sees as the horizontalization of the overtone series, and which he poses as an absolute musical foundation, is historiographical unfolding of the past tensions frozen in the tonal music microcosm, the triad, through its contradictions. Schenker treats the horizontalization of the *inorganic* “chord of nature” as an *organic* process resembling natural growth, and this, which is the critical

¹⁷⁶ See, for example, Alban Berg, *Vier Stücke für Klarinette und Klavier, Opus 5* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1924), IV, p. 9, mm. 10-11, with pick-up, cl.

¹⁷⁷ Dahlhaus, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, p. 182, lines 6-14 as translated, *Studies*, p. 188f.

point of his organicism, leads him to ignore the *inorganic* historical tensions and contradictions of music in its dynamic. Organic unity turns out to be not a unity of the organism with itself, but the unity of the organic and inorganic, which is called “organic.”

Despite the conservatism of Schenker’s organicism, he at least acknowledges the extra-territoriality of text to music, in no way insisting that words and music form an organic whole. Schenker betrays a certain disdain for song, for he assumes that the mere presence of words makes music accessible to the masses, who, he claims, can have no understanding of absolute music, which is art in the strong sense:

The history of music reveals that music really began and flourished in ecclesiastical, royal, and aristocratic circles. This is confirmed by the fact that music developed polyphony, which must forever remain alien to the masses. For them music has always been and remains only an accompaniment to dance, march, or song: at best, a kind of utilitarian art, if one can accept the inherent contradiction. A feeling for such music fills head and heart, even those of the masses, but this feeling is not adequate to comprehend the true and lofty art of Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven. Indeed, it tends to lead away from those concepts and responses which are essential to music as an art. Although Haydn offers them his oratorios, the absolute music of his chamber works and symphonies can never assume real importance in their lives. Mozart lets them view his operas, yet they will never comprehend the distance which separates his great operatic art from the operatic music of other composers. Beethoven jubilantly sings the praise of womanly fidelity in the visible *Fidelio*, and in the Ninth Symphony, together with Schiller, he sings the “Hymn to Joy”—nevertheless, the masses will never have access to the rest of his art.¹⁷⁸

Schenker is right to insist here on the cognitive aspect of music. His suggestion, however, that music in ecclesiastical circles was non-utilitarian is debatable. Music was allowed to enter the early Christian Church in order to lead “weaker spirits” to the truth of the holy text. In Augustine’s view, *music* was the sensuous vehicle by which the Psalms could be made accessible to a greater number:

I waver between the danger that lies in gratifying the senses and the benefits which, as I know from experience, can accrue from singing. Without committing myself to an irrevocable opinion, I am inclined to approve of the custom of singing in church, in

¹⁷⁸ Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, p. 26f. as translated, *Free Composition*, p. 4.

order that by indulging the ears weaker spirits may be inspired with feelings of devotion. Yet when I find the singing itself more moving than the truth which it conveys, I confess that this is a grievous sing, and at those times I would prefer not to hear the singer.¹⁷⁹

In its ecclesiastical beginnings, music was not to overstep its role as an accompaniment to holy text, and therefore ecclesiastic music cannot be said to be “absolute,” as Schenker suggests. Polyphony may well have developed as a defense against music’s becoming a mere gratification of the senses and an indulgence in sheer feeling. But music may be said to be “absolute”—or better, non-utilitarian—when it frees itself from norms imposed from the outside, whether by the church, the court, or capital—not when it frees itself from *words*. Schenker passes over the fact that the source of advanced vocal music is *poetry*, which is itself art and therefore in need of interpretation, comprehension and judgement. He does not consider that poetry’s transformation of communicative, signifying language into functionless, non-signifying language blocks access to comprehension. Advanced Lieder increase the demands on the recipient, for the choice of advanced, ambiguous texts for setting requires that the interpreter have abilities not only in music, but also in literary analysis. If we understand by “access” progress in the logic of a particular work, then not lyrics, but universal aesthetic education would open the comprehension of musical works to the people. Schenker conceives of the association of music with elites as an invariant, which makes him unfashionable these days. It was not some such noble birth, but rather individuals’ cultural education and free disposition of time that contributed to the flourishing of music in the select milieux that Schenker names. Those who have made actual advances in music tend not to issue from elites; furthermore, composers’ complementary published contributions to music criticism, theory

¹⁷⁹ Augustine, *Confessions*, translated by R. S. Pine-Coffin (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961), p. 239.

and education are consistent with a democratic model of music, not an elitist one. Schenker himself published his theory in the aim to instruct.

{Section v} The inapplicability of Schenker’s organicist theory to vocal works is a negative indication of the growing alienation of Lieder, which has its basis in the historical difficulty of reconciling music and text. The Romantic Lied is a problematic genre because it purports to overstep the widening gap between poetry and music, which is historical. Adorno treats Lied as a problematic genre in his 1928 essay “Situation des Liedes” (Situation of the Lied), but he builds the claim that “all roads seem equally barred to the Lied” on the assumption that song implies a reconciled singing humanity, and this emphatic concept of humanity, which the human voice cannot but evoke, is embarrassing.¹⁸⁰ If Lieder made children blush in 1928, then the songs in televised musicals decades later had nearly everyone fleeing from the room in embarrassment. Given the suggestion that Lieder reconcile the individual and the collective by lending silent, oppressed humanity a voice, it seems that the inherent problem of the genre can be solved only through sustained disunity. This is why it is surprising that the young Adorno names *Schoenberg* as the saviour of Lied.¹⁸¹ Adorno’s rationale is that the true mode of song is *outwardness*:

Only Schubert’s inscrutably accurate music registers the genuine outward bearing of song. The alternative, however, is for it to become private; carrying the mark of real grief [Trauer] and of unreconciled innerness, even in Schumann it becomes either stupidly average or intolerably vain and ultimately a ghostlike photography of what immediately vanishes and should not be preserved.¹⁸²

Adorno claims that Schoenberg grasps the essentially outward character of song:

“‘Purification’ of the musical organism and its reduction to the ‘essential’ alone supply the

¹⁸⁰ GS, vol. 18, p. 346 (my translation).

¹⁸¹ GS, vol. 18, p. 346.

¹⁸² GS, vol. 18, p. 345f. (my translation).

dialectical motive, in virtue of which Schoenberg explodes the sphere of psychic immanence and restores precisely the genuine outward bearing of song, with which the New Objectivity [neue Sachlichkeit] of today only plays.”¹⁸³ Here Adorno clearly picks up on the organicism of Schoenberg’s *Lieder*, yet instead of taking a critical view of the song that approaches “the indifference of word and tone”—or at least, the inseparability of word and tone, inseparability which mimics the inseparability of parts of a single organism—, he praises Schoenberg’s *restorative* gesture.¹⁸⁴ Adorno suggests that the *Lieder* of Schubert and Schoenberg succeed where the *Lieder* of Schumann fail because the former grasp poetry as essentially musical, possessing an external reality, whereas Schumann retains the silent innerness and “Trauer” of the text. Indeed, poetry is laden with the *remainders* of music—rhythm and bar form, for instance. But Schumann chose to set the text of a poet for whom these remainders were already problematic, and the more mature Adorno of the 1949 text “Toward a Reappraisal of Heine” knew it: “Heine was the first German poet who faced squarely the problem: how is lyrical poetry possible at all in the sober, cold, disillusioned world of early industrialism?”¹⁸⁵

Both Schumann’s music and its poetic source cast suspicion and even aspersion on the harmonizing claims of *Lieder*. In the last *Lied*, the narrator calls for the burial of the “alte, böse *Lieder*.”¹⁸⁶ Heine hardly peddles song as a balm on the soul. Old songs fit together tones and words, denying the inherent contradiction between them. They purport to make the incongruous congruous, to adapt bitter words to sweet music, as if music could reconcile the self to bad experiences. Heine’s poems from the *Buch der Lieder* are far less songs than exhibitions of the claims of song. Schumann grasps the non-identity between songs and their

¹⁸³ GS, vol. 18, p. 348 (my translation).

¹⁸⁴ GS, vol. 18, p. 347 (my translation).

¹⁸⁵ GS, vol. 20.2, p. 443, in English in the original.

¹⁸⁶ Heine, *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, LXVI, p. 170.

claims, as is clear in his choice to cite and not recite the folk music idiom suggested by such features of Heine's poetry as the quatrain stanza and free syllable count in the unaccented parts of the line.¹⁸⁷ Schumann was deeply versed in folk songs, singing them from childhood and collecting them; he was on close terms with the folk song collector Anton Wilhelm Florentin von Zuccalmaglio, whose folk song collection he requested in a letter in 1840.¹⁸⁸ Schumann could very well have adopted folk conventions wholesale; that he did not, even when the folk idiom of Heine's poetry would have been absolutely clear to him, indicates that he read Heine's "Songs" critically. He followed Heine in confronting songs with their claims. The main claim of folk song in 1840 would have been that the individual and the collective were reconciled. This comes out in connection with authorship: folk music claims to be an expression of collective work and enjoyment, not the assertion of property by the private individual. Such a claim to communal ownership becomes highly questionable at a time when the products of collective labour are appropriated by private individuals and their work character hidden. Traditionally, names were not attached to folk songs because these were collective; by 1840, folk songs were no longer collective, but anonymous, like all of the people's labour. The integration of folk music into Classical music can be seen as the silent appropriation of poor people's labour by autonomous individuals. Folk song collectors, though, drew attention to collective, popular sources of Western music. Heine (and Schumann) seized on the timeliness, or actuality, of folk music. Schumann could neither avoid folk elements nor handle them in the way that his predecessors had. His solution in *Dichterliebe* is advanced: on one hand, he employs (German) folk elements—the drone in the

¹⁸⁷ See Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann's "Dichterliebe"*, p. 3.

¹⁸⁸ Eberhard Möller, "Robert Schumann und das Volkslied," *Schumann-Studien* 8 (2006): pp. 199-214, here p. 202f.

third,¹⁸⁹ sixth,¹⁹⁰ ninth¹⁹¹ and fifteenth¹⁹² *Lieder*; the a cappella vocal line in the Phrygian mode in the thirteen *Lied*;¹⁹³ the alternation of 2/4 and 3/4 measures in the fourteenth *Lied*;¹⁹⁴ the unadorned melody to “Hör’ ich das Liedchen klingen,/ das einst die Liebste sang” of the tenth *Lied*¹⁹⁵—; on the other hand, he asserts that the *harmony* between the individual and collective that these folk elements imply no longer holds, if it ever did. The incursion of a tritone leap down in the voice part of the tenth *Lied* negates the folk-character of the melody up to then.¹⁹⁶ In the thirteenth *Lied*, the suggestion of an “apparent” Neapolitan seventh, however missing its third, negates the innocence and simplicity of the monophonic opening.¹⁹⁷ The voice that breaks off mid-cadence at the end of *Lied XIV* negates the closed, unbroken folk world suggested by the song’s meter and simple modulations.¹⁹⁸ The unusual modulations, surprising dissonances and chromatic harmony in these moments of high expression challenge the claims of song to reconcile the part in the whole, which in turn challenges the naturalness of folk song. These moments break the continuum of the folk tradition into abstract moments of pain, suffering, lack and want. In its refusal to restore the old folk forms, *Dichterliebe* prolongs Heine’s problematization of song. Schumann’s setting of poems from the *Buch der Lieder* is an *interpretation* in the critical sense of the word: it finds the resistance and roughness in things that conventional society sands down and would

¹⁸⁹ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), III, p. 5, mm. 17-21.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, VI, p. 10, mm. 21-25.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, IX, p. 17, mm. 1-8 and mm. 17-24; p. 18, mm. 34-42; p. 18f., mm. 51-58; and p. 19, mm. 73-80.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, XV, p. 30, mm. 16-24; p. 31f., mm. 48-57; and p. 32f., mm. 69-80 with pick-up.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, XIII, p. 26, mm. 1-6 with pick-up.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, XIV, p. 28, mm. 8-10 and p. 29, mm. 21-23.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, X, p. 20, mm. 5-8. “Whenever I hear the song/My love sang long ago.” Heinrich Heine, “Hör ich das Liedchen klingen,” trans. Aaron Kramer, in *The Poetry of Heinrich Heine*, selected and edited with an introduction by Frederic Ewen, trans. Louis Untermeyer et al. (New York: Citadel Press, 1969), p. 76.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, X, p. 20, m. 11, G' in voice part (from preceding D-flat" pick-up).

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, XIII, p. 27, m. 29.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, XIV, p. 29, m. 35, in v. part.

varnish over.¹⁹⁹ On Schumann's reading, Heine does not adopt, but rather throws into question the substance of the folk idiom. A non-interpreting, literal-minded tunesmith would have rendered the folk forms of Heine's *Lyrisches Intermezzo* in the musical forms corresponding to these poems' musical remainders—perhaps in a number of unconnected, diatonic folk-melodies and simple harmonizations. Externalizing these musical remainders in music in this way, as the young Adorno in "Situation des Liedes" suggests is proper to song, would not take into account Heine's skepticism about lyric poetry, but would have only produced a pseudo-folk-music, not *Dichterliebe*.²⁰⁰ By way of a great diversity of keys, restless modulation, surprising and frequent recourse to secondary dominants, enormous variegation in the harmony, vocal colour tones, dissonance and density, Schumann reads the denial of unity out of Heine's poems, in the sense that is relevant here: the denial of the unity of the individual with the social whole implied by the folk form that Heine only *seems* to adopt. The collective folk tradition of old cannot be restored with the restitution of the musical remainders in Heine's text to music. In unpoetical, even unmusical moments, Schumann registers the historic splitting of poetry from music in his setting.

¹⁹⁹ See Paul Peters, "Musik als Interpretation: Zu Robert Schumanns 'Dichterliebe'," *Heine-Jahrbuch* 33 (1994): pp. 124-144, esp. p. 125.

²⁰⁰ Almost twenty years after "Situation des Liedes," Adorno claimed that *all* folk art was already fractured and inorganic: "It is possible that the German Fascist professor was right and that real folk-songs already lived on cultural values that had sunk down from the upper stratum. Not for nothing is all folk art fissured and, like the film, not 'organic'" (GS, vol. 4, p. 234 §131, as translated, *Minima Moralia*, p. 205). As an afterlife of fallen cultural values, folk art as a whole would, according to this notion, be "fissured and not 'organic'" only because inorganicity had ceased to be valued in high art. While it is true that at a certain point inorganicity had ceased to be valued in the "upper" cultural sphere, Adorno's blanket condemnations of folk art in this aphorism enter into contradiction with his support for the "radical folklorism" of composers such as Bartók in *Philosophy of Modern Music* (GS, vol. 12, p. 42n) and with his critique of organicism in his essay "Schubert" (GS, vol. 17, pp. 18-33). The opinion of the Fascist professor serves to mask the silent appropriation of musical material from folk traditions by court and bourgeois composers, which was once the norm.

As a cycle of ironically set folk idioms, *Dichterliebe* stands critically to the Volksideologie to come out of a certain irrational strain of Romanticism.²⁰¹ Besides calling for a re-evaluation of the Cyclic poets, the lost unity of the Homeric epics had another consequence: it focussed attention on non-Classical, “nationalist” epic cycles, notably the Niebelunglied. The Niebelungenlied was the subject of part of the third of three series of lectures on fine art and literature that August Wilhelm Schlegel delivered in Berlin over the 1802/1803 year, sparking interest in these legends of chivalry. Throughout his short ninth lecture of that series, Schlegel explicitly compares the Niebelungenlied favourably to the Homeric epics, and implies that this comparison is warranted, even necessary.²⁰² For he concludes his lecture by making an appeal to his listeners to do as the Greeks, not in drawing from the same sources as they did, but in drawing from the analogous source:

This colossal tragedy [The Niebelungen] terminates in the end of a world; it represents the last things of the heroic period, and so much so that after the Nibelungen there really are no mythic epics from this cycle, whose surviving heroic poems must have had antecedents. Greek tragedy took its material in many ways from out of Homer: if it is still at all possible to succeed in renewing our national mythology, then a mass of dramatic tragedies more narrowly restricted in scope can be developed out of this one epic tragedy. Since we have roved around in all corners of the world long enough, we should finally for once begin to use indigenous poetry.²⁰³

Schlegel uses the expression “die letzten Dinge” to suggest of course that the Nibelungenlied refers not just to the death of the heroic period, but also to the life beyond it. In alluding to the

²⁰¹ On the relation between Romanticism and Volksideologie, see George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1964), chap. 1, “From Romanticism to Volk,” pp. 13-30, esp. pp. 28-29, on Heine as the object of “völkish” thinkers’ attacks. Mosse defines “Volk” as follows: “‘Volk’ is a much more comprehensive term than ‘people,’ for to German thinkers ever since the birth of German romanticism in the late eighteenth century ‘Volk’ signified the union of a group of people with a transcendental ‘essence.’ This ‘essence’ might be called ‘nature’ or ‘cosmos’ or ‘mythos,’ but in each instance it was fused to man’s innermost nature, and represented the source of his creativity, his depth of feeling, his individuality, and his unity with other members of the Volk” (ibid., p. 4).

²⁰² August Wilhelm Schlegel, “Das Lied der Nibelungen,” in *Geschichte der romantischen Literatur*, Kritische Schriften und Briefe, herausgegeben von Edgar Lohner, 4 (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1965), pp. 102-114, here p. 102f.

²⁰³ Ibid., p. 114 (my translation).

end of the world depicted in the epic in this connection, Schlegel erects an eschatology of the apocalyptic kind, as if the *Nibelungenlied* had to be largely forgotten and the Germanic tribes dispersed by the Huns so that, he implies, God's justice could be done and a new German literature and a new German nation could emerge. August Wilhelm Schlegel wishes to move the foundation of the "German national character" from its traditional place with Charlemagne backwards to a time shortly after the migration period.²⁰⁴ The invasions that drove the Germanic tribes into the Roman Empire would then become the great historic event that creates German national character, while the *Nibelungenlied*, whose imaginative content is largely based on events after the migration period but before the crowning of Charlemagne and the founding of the Holy Roman Empire, then would become the story on the origins of the Germans, equivalent to the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*. The *Nibelungenlied* thus takes on a special connotation: it appears to support the project of founding a German state. One of the first proponents of German unity, Heinrich Karl Hofmann, who, at the heart of the movement of student societies (*Burschenschaften*) in Heidelberg met with a group of friends twice a week in the first half of 1815 to read the *Nibelungenlied*.²⁰⁵ Of these friends, Franz Josef Mone shortly went on to publish a manual on the *Nibelungenlied*, which he prefaced by voicing his hopes that the *Nibelungenlied* would be taught in schools and that Germans would give it the attention that the Greeks gave Homer.²⁰⁶ Interest in this saga was quite broad, and at some point, perhaps into the 1840s, Schumann himself considered writing an

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

²⁰⁵ Hermann Haupt, "Heinrich Karl Hofmann, ein süddeutscher Vorkämpfer der deutschen Einheitsgedankens," *Quellen und Darstellungen zur Geschichte der Burschenschaft und der deutschen Einheitsbewegung* 3 (1912): pp. 327-404, here p. 361.

²⁰⁶ D. F. J. Mone, *Einleitung in das Nibelungen-Lied; zum Schul- und Selbstgebrauch* (Heidelberg: Oswald, 1818), p. III, digitized by the University of Toronto Library, <https://archive.org/details/einleitungindasn00mone>.

opera based on it.²⁰⁷ But any work inspired by the Niebelungen cycle would no doubt carry along with it August Schlegel's argument that, through it, the "German national character" take root in a certain soil. In a way, to use the Niebelungen cycle as source material was already to heed August Schlegel's appeal, and to agree, in a sense, that the German national mythology had to be renewed by Germanic tribes. Yet August Schlegel suggests not that the whole cycle be reworked by one person, but rather that many smaller works be based on determinate parts of it. The implication here is that the unity missing from the single text of national mythology (and from the scattered Germanic tribes) can be had in other forms—in modern tragic dramas that take consistent parts of it for their subjects. Here the Aristotelian judgement on the superiority of tragedy over epic clearly motivates Schlegel's appeal. For later, indeed, the Niebelungenlied was also judged disunified. One of the most prominent philologists engaged with the Homeric Question and the founder of the genealogical method of textual editing, Karl Lachmann, contested not only the unity of the *Iliad*, but also that of the Niebelungenlied. Applying Analysis to the German epic, Lachmann worked to uncover the work's "antecedents" as August Schlegel calls them.²⁰⁸ According to Lachmann, the Niebelungenlied actually grew out of "individual, romantic-type Lieder," whose contours could be discerned within the whole work that had been handed down.²⁰⁹ He pieced together twenty such Lieder out of the whole. Karl Simrock, who had rendered the whole Niebelungenlied into modern German, went on to make a version based on Lachmann's textual recovery, and happened to publish the resulting *Zwanzig Lieder von den Nibelungen nach Lachmanns Andeutungen* in Bonn in 1840. Like Simrock's *Zwanzig Lieder*, Schumann's

²⁰⁷ McCorkle, *Werkverzeichnis*, p. 699 and p. 918.

²⁰⁸ Karl Lachmann, *Über die ursprüngliche Gestalt des Gedichts von der Nibelungen Not* (Berlin: Ferdinand Dümmler, 1816), <http://www.deutschestextarchiv.de/book/show/17202>.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3f.

“Cyklus von 20 Liedern” involves translation, extraction and reassembly—but his cycle of songs stands critically to the concept of song as it was developed in academic circles. First of all, it was the *Lyrisches Intermezzo* from Heine’s *Buch der Lieder* and not the *Nibelungenlied* that served as Robert Schumann’s source material. Instead of reaching backwards hundreds of years into a mythical founding song for the mythical German Volk, whose connection to nineteenth-century German-speakers was surely imaginary, Schumann took up the forward-thinking poetry of a German contemporary critical of August Schlegel’s mythology. If it were an isolated statement, August Schlegel’s appeal to his contemporaries to use the *Nibelungenlied* as their source material, rather than, say, the *Odyssey*, would not necessarily be exclusionary; however, his articulation of the duty to use “einheimisch” poetry comes at the end of a lecture in which the *Nibelungenlied* is characterized as a national treasure that dates not to the thirteenth-century, the date of the manuscripts, but to the Merovingian era, the beginning of the oral tradition of the *Nibelungenlied*: “Hardly any other European nation has boasted of such a monument of old fame, from perhaps more than 1200 years ago.”²¹⁰ This dating coincides with Schlegel’s dating of the formation of some such “German national character” happening “very soon after the migration period.”²¹¹ When Schlegel finally announces that “we have roved around in all corners of the world long enough,” he subliminally evokes the wandering *Germanic* tribes to which he alluded earlier in his talk. But clearly Schlegel and his audience are not *Germanic tribes*. Given the emphasis that Schlegel lays on the actual historical events underlying the saga, the apocalyptic reference at the conclusion becomes highly questionable. What was destroyed in the invasion of the Huns in 437 did not destroy Worms; Worms then was not at all “the end of a world,” the “heroic”

²¹⁰ A. W. Schlegel, “Das Lied der Nibelungen,” p. 109 (my translation).

²¹¹ *Ibid.* (my translation).

world, awaiting its next world in nineteenth-century German poetry. For at the time of Schlegel's lecture, the city of Worms gave ample evidence of its great history and long life; its synagogue, perhaps the oldest in Europe, the Holy Sand Cemetery with its valley of the rabbis, and Rashi Chapel were to become regular places of pilgrimage and memory in the nineteenth century.²¹² Very shortly before Schlegel's lecture, in 1801, the mayor of Worms had broken the locks of the Judengasse, a promising sign for the community whose allegiance to France had been forced under threat of dispossession of property, army service and even torture.²¹³ Schlegel seems to evoke the historical Worms, but it is only the lost mythical Worms, not the living, historical Worms of his time. He calls for Worms to endure in contemporary art as a destroyed place, as if there were really nothing there. Heine himself may well have been excluded on the terms that his professor August Schlegel strove to establish in the lecture on the *Nibelungenlied*. Heine's own place in Düsseldorf should have been assured, but it was not. Yet Heine was not an "emigrant,"²¹⁴ if by this Adorno was referring to Heine's time in Paris, where, as a subject born in Düsseldorf between 1791 and 1801, he had the right to reside.²¹⁵ Heine's criticism of the working conditions of the Silesian weavers was the ostensible reason for a search warrant; the cultural stereotypes found in this document suggest an underlying motive of anti-Semitism.²¹⁶ Heine had heard August Schlegel's lectures on *German folksong* at the University of Bonn.²¹⁷ His early critique of Volk ideology takes a

²¹² Nils Roemer, *Germany City, Jewish Memory: The Story of Worms* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2010).

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 73 and p. 64.

²¹⁴ GS, vol. 11, p. 99.

²¹⁵ Wolff A. von Schmidt, "Heine und Marx," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 54 (1972): pp. 143-152, here p. 149.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ Heine to Wilhelm Müller, Hamburg, June 7, 1826, in *Säkularausgabe: Werke, Briefwechsel, Lebenszeugnisse*, herausgegeben von den Nationalen Forschungs- und Gedenkstätten der klassischen deutschen

subtle, folk-like form.²¹⁸ Heine imparted to his own poetry only folk form or meter, so resisted appealing to the authority and mystery of the imaginative material, which was the way that Schlegel elsewhere envisioned for his contemporaries to work with the Niebelungenlied: while keeping folk *form*, Heine avowedly let “conventional society [conventionellen Gesellschaft]” provide the *content* of his *Lieder*.²¹⁹ This effectively reduced contemporary conventional society to the status of mythology, legend or superstition, while reflecting onto the folkloric contents of the past something of the banality and stupidity of the present. Schumann, while certainly not above the regressive society in which he found himself,²²⁰ showed good musical instinct. In 1840, he chose to set the words of the poet who in that same year published “Der Rabbi von Bacherach,” in which Worms does not figure as the destroyed seat of the Burgundians awaiting some resurrection, but the birthplace of a cantor singing in a synagogue in Frankfurt, the refuge for the rabbi and his wife, who have narrowly escaped a pogrom in the Rhine town of Bacherach.²²¹ In calling his setting of Heine’s poems a “cycle,” Schumann evokes the mythological status of the contents: good bourgeois marriages and diamond arrays are on the level of sea maidens and magic cloaks.

{Section vi} The song cycle form gives the impression that Romantic love follows the seasonal cycle of nature in its flowering, fruition and decay; individual details of *Dichterliebe*

Literatur in Weimar und dem Centre national de la recherche scientifique in Paris (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag; Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1970-1986), vol. 20, pp. 249-251, here p. 250.

²¹⁸ GS, vol. 11, p. 100.

²¹⁹ Heine to Müller, Hamburg, June 7, 1826, *Säkularausgabe*, vol. 20, p. 250.

²²⁰ Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, p. 69 and p. 197.

²²¹ Heinrich Heine, “Der Rabbi von Bacherach (Ein Fragment),” in *Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe der Werke*, herausgegeben von Manfred Windfuhr, im Auftrag der Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf mit Förderung durch die Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, die Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg, das Kultusministerium des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, 16 vols. (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1973-1997), vol. 5, pp. 107-145, here p. 107f.

destroy this illusion. It seems to be organized according to nature; yet its real organization is not unity, despite its love of common tones.

Dichterliebe appears to make a perfect circle. The opening pitch of the cycle (C-sharp") is conceivably a common tone carried over from the last, D-flat major, triad of the cycle, where the pitch appears as its enharmonic equivalent D-flat", the top note in the final chord. In the autograph, the final postlude is in C-sharp major, which would have made it an extended tierce de Picardie to C-sharp minor of the last Lied, and which would have so confirmed C-sharp as the tonic of the whole cycle. Schumann changed his mind, however, and noted that the enharmonic equivalent key should, in the final postlude, be used instead.²²² The final statement of key in *Dichterliebe* sounds as though it designates the same tonic as the first note of the cycle does, but, in writing, C-sharp and D-flat are non-identical. This necessary divergence between the performance and the score is another indication of that illusory character, noted above, by which music partakes in "mature art."²²³ True to illusion, *Dichterliebe* is distinct from Modern and post avant-gardiste artworks. Schumann's insistence on a nuance that, in the era of equal temperament, should make no difference to the ear, is, again, a strong critique of immediacy. The choice of the enharmonic equivalent of the home key rather than the home key itself not only points to the *artificial* or *constructed* character of key (as opposed to some kind of *essence* of key), but also engages the *problematic* or *dialectic* of tonality, confronting key with its claim to be the guarantor of unity for a work as a whole. It can be assumed that in 1840 Leipzig Robert Schumann was working in the context of equal

²²² Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann's "Dichterliebe"*, p. 110.

²²³ GS, vol. 16, p. 517 or prefer to my translation here "Vers une musique informelle," p. 296.

temperament, and that C-sharp" and D-flat" referred to the same key on the piano.²²⁴ Thus the ending of *Dichterliebe* demands reflection on the difference between C-sharp and D-flat, which, in 1840, would have been not audible, but historical. First, the preference to end the work on the enharmonic equivalent of the home key refers back to the time in the past when C-sharp and D-flat would have sounded differently—in the mean-tone temperament widely in use during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries:

If a piano is tuned in meantone with C-sharp, music can not be used that contains D-flat, unless this particular note is retuned...chromatic pairs in meantone are widely separated by the great diesis, so that, when C-sharp is used enharmonically for D-flat, for example, the sound is distressing.²²⁵

Mean-tone temperament is an unequal temperament; *key* largely dictates the degree of temperament for the specific thirds and fifths. Some triads—generally those with fewer sharps or flats—will be closer to just than others. As mean-tone temperament privileges the purity of the thirds, the fifths are tempered more than they are in equal-temperament tuning, which leaves one fifth, known as the “wolf fifth,” to make up the difference. Thus, the circle of fifths in meantone temperament does not close perfectly. The piano tuner can position the wolf fifth according to the key, so that it may be avoided in playing.²²⁶ Mean-tone temperament does not

²²⁴ See Thomas McGeary, “German-Austrian Keyboard Temperaments and Tuning Methods, 1770-1840: Evidence from Contemporary Sources,” *Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society* 15 (1989): pp. 90-118. McGeary concludes that “for German-Austrian keyboard instruments of the period 1770-1840, the tuning scheme most often used was equal temperament” (ibid., p. 116). Of the twenty-two practical guides surveyed, all five from 1819 on recommend equal temperament (ibid., p. 118). Two of the equal-temperament proponents listed, Johann N. Hummel and Carl Czerny, were influential in Schumann’s formative years.

Cf. Owen H. Jorgensen, *Tuning: Containing the Perfection of Eighteenth-Century Temperament, the Lost Art of Nineteenth-Century Temperament, and the Science of Equal Temperament, Complete with Instructions for Aural and Electronic Tuning* (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1981). Jorgensen situates the common use of equal temperament well after 1840, but the discrepancy between the two authors may be owed to the fact that McGeary surveys German-language sources, while Jorgensen relies heavily on English-language sources.

²²⁵ John W. Link, Jr., “Understanding the Two Great Temperaments: Equal and Meantone,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 13, no. 3 (Autumn 1965): pp. 136-146, here p. 145, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3343668>.

²²⁶ See *The Oxford Companion to Music Online*, s.v. “temperament,” by Jeremy Montagu, accessed December 31, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e6695>.

lend itself to distant modulations within a single piece. “Well” temperament, by contrast, supports modulation into *all the keys*, given the ingenuity of a composer able to take into consideration the different proportions of the particular triads and the characteristics of each. Johann Sebastian Bach’s keys have been interpreted as expression markings by some: Murray Perahia, for example, suggests that, in the Bach Partita No. 6, the key of E minor calls for severity, even when the piece is played in 2012 on a modern piano—equally-tempered in principle.²²⁷ It is an open question whether keys in the nineteenth century suggested particular moods or characters. Robert Schumann the music critic denied, on one hand, a fixed one-to-one relation between key and a particular designation and, on the other, the total indeterminacy of keys’ associations: “One can as little say that this or that sentiment can be expressed only in this or that key (rage in C sharp minor, etc.) as that every key is capable of expressing anything, as Zelter maintained.”²²⁸ Schumann’s insight here applies beyond key-characteristics. A striking parallel may be drawn between it and Adorno’s response to Rudolf Kolisch’s article on Beethoven,²²⁹ on the question of whether particular *tempi* always express certain characters.²³⁰ The diversity of relations in any given work prohibits isolating any one

²²⁷ Murray Perahia, (master class, Pollack Hall, McGill Faculty of Music, Montréal, Québec, October 22, 2012).

²²⁸ Robert Schumann, “Characteristics of the Keys (1835),” in *Schumann on Music: A Selection from the Writings*, ed. and trans. Henry Pleasants (New York: Dover Publications, 1988), pp. 62-63, here. p. 62.

²²⁹ Rudolf Kolisch, “Tempo and Character in Beethoven’s Music,” translated by Arthur Mendel, pts. 1 and 2, *The Musical Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (April 1943): pp. 169-187; no. 3 (July 1943): pp. 291-312.

²³⁰ Adorno to Rudolf Kolisch, Los Angeles, November 16, 1943, Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Frankfurt am Main, typescript copy, used with the kind permission of the Theodor W. Adorno Archiv. Adorno holds that particular tempi do *not* express certain characters. While praising Kolisch’s insistence on the cognitive character of music, he very delicately alerts Kolisch to the danger of positivism presented by the isolated interpretation of any individual element in Beethoven’s music: “Ich glaube, dass eine Konstriktion Beethovenscher ‘Typen’ auf Grund eines isolierten Moments wie des Tempos nicht möglich ist und oftmals ganz Heterogenes zusammenbringt (oft auch sehr überraschend Verwandtes, natürlich). Du machst selbst eine vorsichtige Bemerkung in dem Sinn und spricht davon, dass die Tempo-Charakter-Relation nur *eine*, willkürlich isolierte, sei. Aber schliesslich ist es doch die, auf die alles Licht der Darstellung fällt, und ich möchte wohl fragen, ob ein solches isolierendes Verfahren der Musik, und gar Beethoven gegenüber, angezeigt ist und nicht zu Schematisierungen führen kann, die dem konkreten, immanenten Gesetz seiner Musik äusserlich sind—etwa, um zu übertreiben, so wie die Lorenzschen Schemata sich zu den Wagnerschen Formen verhalten.” (I think that a

relation as completely determinative. For Schumann, the antinomy that key characteristics raise, between fixed signification and total indeterminacy, is not the complete expression of the problem. The interpreter's task consists largely in seeing beyond the stereotypical uses of key: "If it is, indeed, true that in various epochs certain stereotypes have come to be associated with certain keys, then we should assemble all the masterpieces set in any given key and compare their prevailing moods."²³¹ The general tendency that Schumann notes, which is for emotional pitch to rise with increasing sharps or flats, is based on the relative unfamiliarity with the keys whose use was restricted due to limitations of keyboard instruments. This general rule is based on sounded pitches, which puts D-flat major (with five flats) on the same emotional level as C-sharp major (with seven sharps): these keys lie one on each side of what Schumann considers to be the highpoint of the emotional cycle of keys, F-sharp major, with six sharps.²³² The late change of D-flat for C-sharp, therefore, is untouched by Schumann's general observation about key and character. Of course, Schumann's music criticism cannot be taken for personal statements on his own (prospective) compositions and working methods—in the last postlude of *Dichterliebe*, for example, it is not the case that Schumann himself "hits upon the correct key immediately," as he claims for the genius composer.²³³ Rather, Schumann's music criticism lays out contradictions that press heavily on all composers of his time and out of which any one of them would have to advance. His music can therefore be

constriction of the 'types' in Beethoven on the basis of one isolated element such as that of Tempo is not possible, and frequently brings together completely heterogeneous things (often very surprisingly related things, too, of course). You yourself make a prudent remark along these lines and say that the relation between tempo and character is only *one* relation, arbitrarily isolated. But finally it is indeed the one in the spotlight, and I might well ask whether such a method of isolation is advisable in music, let alone with respect to Beethoven, and if it might not lead to schematisations that are external to the concrete, immanent laws of his music—I'm exaggerating now, but a bit in the way Lorenz's schemata act towards Wagner's forms.)

²³¹ R. Schumann, "Characteristics of the Keys," p. 62.

²³² *Ibid.*, p. 63.

²³³ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

measured against the criteria set by his criticism. These are not merely posited norms, but are dialectically determined; they arise out of the contradictions that Schumann grasps in the process of reading, playing and listening his way through musical objectivity and reacting against the society in which he finds himself. The setting of key presents a double task for any composer: on one hand, keys must avoid activating their conventional, stereotypical meanings; on the other hand, they must avoid total indeterminacy—i.e., they must be determined in some way. Schumann’s solution is to negate keys’ autonomous meanings by determining their significance within the individual work. Schumann’s preference, at the end of *Dichterliebe*, for the D-flat major key over C-sharp is decisive for the form of the work.²³⁴ Thereby Schumann relates this conclusion not back to the beginning of the cycle, but to the songs in flat keys, notably to the twelfth Lied, which it cites,²³⁵ and to the thirteenth Lied, which passes briefly through D-flat major.²³⁶ The choice of key for the postlude not only creates a rupture within the last Lied of the cycle, but also within the cycle itself. D-flat major negates the illusion of nature associated with the cycle form, and avoids the platitude that, however hyperbolic the renunciation of pain and love at the end of the work, the poet’s suffering is just part of a natural, regularly recurring process to which he can be reconciled again and again. Schumann ultimately negates this illusion of unity.

To claim that *Dichterliebe* is an illusory natural whole and that it negates its illusion of unity is *not* to claim that *Dichterliebe* is nothing but fragments and pieces.

Recently, the presumption of organic unity adopted by Schenker and others has been deemed inadequate or constraining for an understanding of *Dichterliebe* as a *Romantic*

²³⁴ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), XVI, p. 37, mm. 53-67. Cf. Schumann’s draft of the postlude to Lied XVI transcribed by Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann’s “Dichterliebe,”* p. 111, ex. 16:3, which is in C-sharp major.

²³⁵ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), XII, p. 25, mm. 23-26; cf. XVI, p. 37, mm. 53-56.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, XIII, p. 27, mm. 27-29, starting at the *ritardando*.

artwork and an aesthetic of *fragmentation* adopted instead. David Ferris defends Schenker's contributions to musical analysis,²³⁷ but claims that "the organicist model is ultimately inadequate for explaining Schumann's song cycles."²³⁸ Following Ferris, Julia Beate Perrey also wishes to abandon the unity thesis and argue for *Dichterliebe* as a fragmented work.²³⁹ In fact, neither Ferris nor Perrey abandons organicism. In the case of Perrey, organicism is implied by the hermeneutical method in which she emphatically claims to ground her study—for example, when she declares: "My own point of view is consciously sited in the hermeneutic tradition as developed by Schleiermacher, whose proposed approach to works of art implies the recognition of an insurmountable distance between artist, work and critic."²⁴⁰ This choice of method, the object of a critique that Jürgen Habermas delivered some time ago,²⁴¹ and which is not irrelevant here,²⁴² is essentially a method for establishing a work's organic unity. Hans-Georg Gadamer, whom Perrey claims as a philosophical forebear,²⁴³ explicitly draws attention to the *primacy of the whole* over the part in the hermeneutical tradition: "Schleiermacher follows Friedrich Ast and the whole hermeneutical and rhetorical tradition when he regards it as a fundamental principle of understanding that the meaning of

²³⁷ Ferris, *Schumann's Eichendorff "Liederkreis"*, p. 48.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

²³⁹ Julia Beate Perrey, *Schumann's "Dichterliebe" and Early Romantic Poetics: Fragmentation of Desire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

²⁴¹ See Jürgen Habermas, *Zur Logik der Sozialwissenschaften: Materialien* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), p. 251f. See also *ibid.*, p. 283, where he remarks that "Gadamer turns the insight into the prejudicial structure of the understanding into a rehabilitation of prejudice as such" (my translation).

²⁴² By employing the word "Vorurteil" in a special sense, hermeneutics reserves no word for the concept that schoolchildren learn alongside those of stereotype and discrimination, possibly desensitizing its adherents to all three. Consider the following traditional stereotype of Heinrich Heine that should not have endured into the twenty-first century: "Heine moves like a stranger within his mother tongue, for his uncanny linguistic ability is that of a well-adapted foreigner." Perrey, *Schumann's "Dichterliebe"*, p. 15.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 21f.

the part can be discovered only from the context—i.e., ultimately from the whole.”²⁴⁴

Gadamer traces this priority of the whole over the parts to the need to escape from the hermeneutic circle:

The literal meaning of Scripture, however, is not univocally intelligible in every place and at every moment. For the whole of Scripture guides the understanding of individual passages; and again this whole can be reached only through the cumulative understanding of individual passages. This circular relationship between the whole and the parts is not new. It was already known to classical rhetoric, which compares perfect speech with the organic body, with the relationship between head and limbs. Luther and his successors transferred this image, familiar from classical rhetoric, to the process of understanding; and they developed the universal principle of textual interpretation that all the details of a text were to be understood from the contextus and from the scopus, the unified sense at which the whole aims.²⁴⁵

The way in which the concept of the organic has developed historically implies in the term not only the unity of the whole and the parts, but also the primacy of the whole over the parts in cases where the two come into conflict. The hermeneutic tradition considers Scripture to possess organic unity in that it constitutes a “unified sense” or meaning that serves to bring problematic passages into harmony with one another. In adopting the hermeneutic method, Perrey sets herself the task of developing a unified meaning for *Dichterliebe*. The fact that this particular unified meaning is *fragmentation*, whose meaning connotes a lack of unity, does not destroy the organicism of her hermeneutic approach, for meaning must necessarily exist on a different level from the object of interpretation if it is to offer a veritable escape from the hermeneutic circle. Perrey’s hermeneutic commitments can also be observed in analytical practice, for she reads certain chords almost as if they were words with determinate meanings.²⁴⁶ Her insistence on fragmentation leads her to ignore the many non-fragmentary

²⁴⁴ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, translation revised by J. Weinsheimer and D. G. Marshall, 2nd rev. ed. (London; New York: Continuum, 1989), p. 189.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 176f.

²⁴⁶ Citing her reading of the fully diminished seventh chord, Yonatan Malin notes, “Perrey’s musico-poetic analyses tend to interpret the music in rather literal terms.” Yonatan Malin, review of *Schumann’s “Dichterliebe”*

moments of the work—for example, the many perfect cadences that appear in their expected places. Furthermore, the reading is biased by the unit of analysis, which is in some cases itself a fragment of a recognizable harmonic statement.²⁴⁷ Perrey limits her attention only to particular songs of *Dichterliebe*, not to the collection as a whole, so she is bound to confirm her hypothesis that the Schumann song cycle engages in an “*aesthetics of fragmentation*.”²⁴⁸ Ferris for his part argues that Schumann’s *Liederkreis*, op. 39, is “a Romantic whole, a whole that is open-ended and fragmentary.”²⁴⁹ He argues that a “compositional logic” of roughly alternating weak and strong openings governs the first six songs, but he breaks off his demonstration mid-way through the work.²⁵⁰ In this way, Ferris, too, prejudices his study and sets himself up to confirm his hypothesis: “The complete cycle is as fragmentary and open-ended as the individual songs [which comprise it], and its ultimate coherence and meaning are recreated anew by each individual listener.”²⁵¹ Both Perrey and Ferris remain within the organicist model because they both argue for the fragmentary nature of both the whole and the part. They claim therefore an *agreement* of whole and part, and it is this agreement or harmony between whole and part that characterizes organicism. While the intention of Perrey and of Ferris may have been to understand *Dichterliebe* (and the Eichendorff *Liederkreis*) in their historical specificity as Romantic artworks, the authors err in considering Schumann to be a mere sponge for the historical period in which he was apparently immersed—rather than a cultural figure in his own right, who happened to be swimming against the tide.

and *Early Romantic Poetics: Fragmentation of Desire*, by Julia Beate Perrey, *Music Theory Spectrum* 28, no. 2 (Fall 2006): pp. 299-310, here p. 309.

²⁴⁷ Malin flags this distorting tendency in Perrey’s analysis of Lied I: “If one were to play m. 1 without m. 2, the tonal status of m. 1 would be ambiguous; tonality only emerges in contextual relationships.” *Ibid.*, p. 301.

²⁴⁸ Perrey, *Schumann’s “Dichterliebe”*, p. 1.

²⁴⁹ Ferris, *Schumann’s Eichendorff “Liederkreis”*, p. 92.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 189f.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

The proponents of a fragmentary aesthetic have at least made clear that Schenker's theory cannot properly account for the specificity of Romantic artworks. The difference between Classical and Romantic works for Schenker would be only a matter of the *degree* of tension accumulated and released: "If a differentiation is to be made between 'classic' and 'romantic,' only the degree of tension and fulfilment should be considered. A classical work will exceed a romantic one in the height and extent of its tension and in the profundity of its fulfilment, even if it may be a short work."²⁵² Hegel, by contrast, formulating his aesthetics a century prior to Schenker, realizes that he must give an account of the departure that *Der Freischütz* represents. While Hegel is critical of Romanticism, he at least grasps that its emotional extremes threaten to undermine the Ideal: the beauty, unity, reconciliation, composure and "cheerfulness" of art. An important quality of Classical works, according to Hegel, is their poised acceptance and appropriation of fate; Romantic artworks do not easily accept fate, if they accept it at all. The sustained disunity that characterizes the most radical of Romantic artworks is pointed against the individual's Idealized harmonization of the self with the context that spells his doom, as can be observed in tragedy. For Schenker, on the other hand, accepting fate is an intrinsic part of all musical masterworks: "The origin of every life, whether in a Volk, generation [Geschlecht], or in the individual, is at the same time its fate. Hegel takes fate to be 'the appearance [Erscheinung] of what the determinate individuality is *in itself* as an inner, original determinateness."²⁵³ This origin that is at the same time fate is

²⁵² Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, p. 21 as translated, *Free Composition*, p. xxiv.

²⁵³ Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, p. 2, or prefer to my translation here *Free Composition*, p. 3. It is not supererogatory to note that the passage of Hegel quoted by Schenker is from the chapter of the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* treating physiognomy and phrenology, and there is no doubt a certain degree of irony in Hegel's statement that "fate is, then again, only the appearance of what the determinate individuality is *in itself* as an inner, original determinateness." Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 3, p. 237, or prefer to my translation here *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 188.

what Schenker calls the “*background*.”²⁵⁴ He writes: “The *background* in music is represented by a contrapuntal structure, which I have designated the *fundamental structure* [*Ursatz*]”²⁵⁵— in other words, it is represented by the *unity* of the bass arpeggiation of the “chord of nature” and the fundamental line (*Urlinie*).²⁵⁶ A task of analysis is to demonstrate the unity of bass arpeggiation and upper voice, which is presumed. Thereby the demonstration is made that the composition is the representation of a definite background—of the origin that is at the same time destiny. While Schenker also presumes the unity of background (“origin”), middleground (“development”) and foreground (“present”), the background has priority.²⁵⁷ Anything that differs from the unity of bass arpeggiation and *Urlinie* is a mere derivation of the same, since, in Schenker’s theory, the background is really God’s order, whence everything emerges: “The whole of the foreground, which men call chaos, God derives from His cosmos, the background. The eternal harmony of His eternal Being is grounded in this relationship.”²⁵⁸ Furthermore, Schenkerian analysis rests on the presumption that there is a real, predetermined correspondence between the actual background and the human soul: “In order to comprehend what lives and moves behind the phenomena of life, behind idea in general and art in particular, we ourselves require a definite background [*dazu gehört aber ein bestimmter Hintergrund in uns selbst, it takes a definite background in us ourselves*], a soul predisposed to accept the background [*eine hintergründig vorbestimmte Seele, a soul predisposed toward the*

²⁵⁴ Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, p. 25 as translated, *Free Composition*, p. 3.

²⁵⁵ Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, p. 27 as translated, *Free Composition*, p. 4.

²⁵⁶ Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, [“*Der Ursatz der Einheit*”], p. 40 §3, or translated, *Free Composition*, p. 11. See also Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, p. 28, or translated, *Free Composition* p. 11.

²⁵⁷ Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, p. 25 as translated, *Free Composition*, p. 3.

²⁵⁸ Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, p. 18 as translated, *Free Composition*, p. xxiii.

background].”²⁵⁹ But since the background is the origin that is at the same time fate or destiny, Schenker means that *we* have a definite origin that is at the same time our fate. Understanding the particular musical artwork demands not only a prioritization of the origin—the inner potential or “an sich”—of the beautiful individual artwork over what differs from it; it also demands the prioritization of the tonic triad as a founding structure, as something fateful. There can be no account here of great works that revolt against destiny, hence no account of advanced Romantic artworks. Whatever falls outside the tonic triad must be brought back to it; it can neither conduct an autonomous existence nor say something for itself. Furthermore, whatever is *new* in the work must be shown to be a *derivation* of the original potential, an offshoot of the same living individual, and not the difference that it is.

Schenker’s theory of musical analysis should be able to account for Romantic artworks, considering that his organicism may be traced to a certain organicity in Hegel’s concept of *harmony*. First of all, harmony, for Hegel, is a form of *natural beauty*. In particular, harmony is the third moment of “abstract form”²⁶⁰ and, as such, is the sublation of the contradiction between the beauty of regular and symmetrical forms occurring in nature (inorganic mineral and organic plant and animal forms), on the one hand, *and*, on the other, the dissipation of this beauty once it is revealed to be mere “conformity to law,” lacking the vitality of nature.²⁶¹ Harmony, according to Hegel, is a “totality”:

Therefore at this stage harmony stands higher than mere conformity to law, i.e. harmony is a relation of qualitative differences, and indeed of a totality of such differences, a totality grounded in the essence of the thing itself. This relation advances beyond conformity to law, which has in itself the aspect of regularity, and rises above equality and repetition. But at the same time the qualitative differences

²⁵⁹ Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, p. 26 as translated except where indicated in square brackets, *Free Composition*, p. 3.

²⁶⁰ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 179 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 134.

²⁶¹ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 185 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 138.

assert themselves not merely as differences and their opposition and contradiction, but as a congruous unity which has set forth all its proper factors while yet containing them as a whole inherently one. This congruity [Zusammenstimmen] is harmony.²⁶²

Although harmony is a form of natural beauty, it quickly becomes clear that Hegel does not merely have in mind harmonious meadows of wildflowers and harmonious choruses of nightingales, but is speaking of a nature that has already been spiritualized in some sense:

“Among notes, the tonic, mediant, and dominant, e.g., are such essential differences, which in their difference harmonize unitedly into one whole.”²⁶³ The notes of the tonic triad, then, are an example of harmony, according to Hegel. But the tonic triad on its own is deficient, for it lacks the “free subjectivity” of melody.²⁶⁴ Hegel considers natural beauty in general to be deficient due just to this lack of individuality and subjective freedom. Art beauty, then, is the attempt to leave nature behind—or, least, to leave behind what in nature is inimical to subjectivity. It is in this transition between the beauty of nature and the beauty of art that the antinomies of the concept of harmony come to the fore. For Hegel does not leave harmony behind completely once he makes the transition to the beauty of art. The beauty of art retains this element of natural beauty, and harmony becomes the mode by which the Ideal overcomes the mere externality of natural beauty:

In short, art has the function of grasping and displaying existence, in its appearance [Erscheinung], as *true*, i.e. in its suitability to the content which is adequate to itself, the content which is both implicit and explicit. Thus the truth of art cannot be mere correctness, to which the so-called imitation of nature is restricted; on the contrary, the outer must harmonize [zusammenstimmen] with an inner which is harmonious in itself, and, just on that account, can reveal itself as itself in the outer.²⁶⁵

²⁶² Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 187 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 140.

²⁶³ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 188 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 141.

²⁶⁴ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 188 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 141.

²⁶⁵ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 205 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 155.

This “congruity,” which Hegel will shortly call art’s “harmony [Harmonie] with its true concept,” is not identical with the congruity of natural beauty.²⁶⁶ The form of natural beauty called harmony was supposed to have been a totality, but it was not actually total, but a merely one-sided externality. Art is the harmony of outer *and* inner; thus it is supposed to overcome this deficiency of nature. Harmony seemed to be a totality of differences, but it was only a totality of *external* differences and did not yet contain the difference of inner and outer. Art’s harmony *also* harmonizes the difference of inner and outer, and thus is supposed to overcome the otherness of nature, to achieve totality again. This is precisely the kind of move that Lukács, in his own ambivalent way, found illicit, since, firstly, where there is still nature, the totality is unknowable and, secondly, expanding a concept pertaining to nature so that its external dimension is suddenly subjectivized wipes away what is really particular about nature: its otherness. Since harmony is a mere externality, on Hegel’s own terms, the harmony of *inner* and *outer* in art beauty would not subjectivize nature, but would merely reproduce nature’s alienation on a higher level. Hegel’s concept of harmony itself adopts the movement of organic plant growth, mindlessly incorporating everything in its path, even the inorganic, animal and human. This incoherence becomes clear once Hegel’s concept of harmony is imported into Schenker’s theory of musical analysis. Harmony for Schenker is a continuum between natural harmony, the harmony of the “chord of nature,” and art harmony, the harmony of inner and outer—the harmony of harmony with melody, bass arpeggiation with *Urlinie*, and also the harmony of the “inner law of the origin,” the *background*, with the external events of music, with the chaos of appearances in the *foreground*.²⁶⁷ But because harmony is an externality, the tonic triad is not the living, vivacious element that it seems to

²⁶⁶ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 205 as translated, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 155.

²⁶⁷ Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, p. 25 as translated, *Free Composition*, p. 3.

be, but must in fact be a reified, “second nature” of convention and dead, depleted subjectivity, which only a true dialectics of otherness—negative dialectics—can recognize it to be. One does not find what is indeed beautiful in *art* by harmonizing all musical events with the tonic triad, because harmony is an externality. Schenker’s organicism is not merely metaphorical; his practice really demands that the artistic whole be related back to the concept of *natural* harmony.²⁶⁸ Schenker, however, does not take into account Hegel’s critique of natural beauty—its lack of subjectivity, individuality and freedom. In all great works, according to Schenker, it is the tonic triad that ultimately controls the *Umlinie*—the melody that is supposed to represent the element of free subjectivity, according to Hegel. Furthermore, Hegel’s theory also gives an account of dissonant artworks, which protest against the idealized concept of harmony, against the supposed overcoming of nature’s externality in *Ideal*. Schenker’s method does not recognize anti-harmonic music, so is bound to distort negative, Romantic works, making them out to be affirmative.

Adorno’s declaration that “the emancipation from the concept of harmony reveals itself as a revolt against illusion” also bears some of the contradictions of the Hegelian concept of harmony.²⁶⁹ In this statement, Adorno appears to be referring to advanced Modern music, which indeed emancipated itself from triadic harmony and the cadence, on one hand, and

²⁶⁸ See Robert Snarrenberg, “Competing Myths: The American Abandonment of Schenker’s Organicism,” in *Theory, Analysis and Meaning in Music*, ed. Anthony Pople (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 29-56. Snarrenberg argues that when, in the American reception of Schenker’s writings, the organicist metaphors were translated into scientific language, Schenkerian analysis did not thereby become scientific as opposed to literary: rather one myth was replaced by another. Snarrenberg’s thesis is that these myths or “fictions” play an active role in the work of interpretation: “The central metaphors by means of which authors shape their musical conceptions inescapably affect the kinds of activities and aesthetic attitudes that readers find themselves invited to adopt” (ibid., p. 31). Snarrenberg concludes that Schenker’s central metaphor of procreation personifies the artwork and causes the interpreter to treat the work with “consideration” (ibid., p. 56). Snarrenberg does not, however, much consider Schenker’s philosophical *plant* organicism—his commitment to the idea of the musical masterpiece as the harmony of inner origin (in the “chord of nature”) and outer present, to the idea of the musical artwork as *growth*—, which is implied in Schenkerian analysis even when the metaphors change.

²⁶⁹ GS, vol. 7, p. 154, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 100.

which, on the other, *maintained* “the inner’s rupture and dissonance,” instead of harmonizing the outer with an inner harmonious in itself.²⁷⁰ Modern music appears to have emancipated itself from *natural* harmony—not from the “chord of nature,” but from the chord of *second* nature, which had become a mindless convention, a mere externality. To be fully emancipated from natural harmony, however, would involve more than abandoning triadic harmony: it would involve a completely awake and alive subject and an object whose beauty would at no moment be mere conformity to law or mere externality. In other words, emancipation from natural harmony would be the effective solution to the problem of reification. Modern music made tremendous advances, but it did not, however, overcome reification: it is, among other things, congealed labour-time in a society of unfair exchange and hidden work. In particular, the music of the Second Viennese School hides the work of so-called Romantic composers—particularly the quicksilver advances of Schubert and Schumann that Schoenberg in a sense normalized. Emancipation from the *concept* of natural harmony is a much more modest achievement than the emancipation from natural harmony. We may now have liberated ourselves from the *idea* that there is a harmony, existing in first nature, on which music is based, but we have not actually rid music of reification.

Schoenberg, at least, did not abandon the idea of harmony inherent in the physical divisions of sound; in fact, he used the harmonic series to justify the dissonance in his music:

My school, including such men as Alban Berg, Anton Webern and others, does not aim at the establishment of a tonality, yet does not exclude it entirely. The procedure is based upon my theory of “the emancipation of the dissonance.” Dissonances, according to this theory, are merely more remote consonances in the series of overtones.²⁷¹

²⁷⁰ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 209, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 158.

²⁷¹ Schoenberg, *Structural Functions of Harmony*, p. 193. Here and elsewhere Schoenberg employs the word “tonality” where “key” is often expected. I have retained Schoenberg’s preference for “tonality,” which the Oxford English Dictionary gives as equivalent to “key.” See *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “tonality,” accessed December 31, 2013, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/203142>.

According to this statement, what is decisive for the music of Schoenberg's school is not the tonic triad or the lack thereof, but an expanded notion of consonance. Consonances, as we know, require no special "treatment" as long as parallel fifths and octaves are avoided. However, Schoenberg adopts an empirical point of view to expand the notion of consonance. If the harmonic series were any measure of consonance, then, at fourteen cents sharper than pure, the major third in equal-tempered tuning, which Schoenberg's music assumes,²⁷² would be far more dissonant than the minor second, the major second, and the minor third, which are all within five cents of just.²⁷³ An "emancipation of the dissonance" based on the principle of the harmonic series would not taboo major thirds, as Schoenberg did. If scientific discoveries about the overtone series in and of themselves were any ultimate explanation for changes in music history, then the demise of the major third and the flourishing of the ninth would indicate not so much tolerance of dissonant intervals as intolerance of wildly beating major thirds! It simply is not true that dissonances are less perceptible consonances, for the

²⁷² Schoenberg assumed equal temperament not only for fixed-pitch instruments like the piano, but also for variable-tuning instruments. This can be drawn from various statements on performance practice made by his once-student and later brother-in-law Rudolf Kolisch, who, as a member of both the Wiener Streichquartett and the Kolisch-Quartett, had a particularly close working relationship with him. For instance, Kolisch sharply criticized the resistance of the "string-player sect" to equal temperament: "The attribute of non-fixed-pitch tuning let the strings dispense with the process of chromaticization, which was necessary for the other instruments in order for them to be workable for tonal music. The possibility of being able to produce a continuum of pitches, which puts the strings ahead of the other instruments, and of which they are rightfully proud, was not placed in the service of music. The fact that a physical change to their instruments was unnecessary does not mean, however, that the change in musical consciousness, the mental transformation that the establishment of the tonal system required, was spared them. But the strings did not carry out this mental transformation, and thus they distance themselves from this decisive turning point in the history of Western polyphony of art music. This transformation manifests itself technically in equal temperament, which, necessary for new music, predominated in Western musical practice for some 250 years. *At no time, however, did strings accept this.* In a realm reserved for reactionary ideology, they feel called upon to rescue eternal values that, consequent upon the rationalistic solution to tuning problems by equal temperament, have dwindled away." Rudolf Kolisch, "Religion der Streicher," in *Rudolf Kolisch, Zur Theorie der Aufführung: Ein Gespräch mit Berthold Türke*, herausgegeben von Heinz-Klaus Metzger und Rainer Riehn, *Musik-Konzepte*; 29/30 (Munich: Edition Text + Kritik, 1983), pp. 113-119, here p. 113 (my translation).

²⁷³ *The Oxford Companion to Music Online*, s.v. "harmonic series," by Anthony Baines and John Borwick, accessed December 29, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e3137>.

dissonance par excellence, the tritone, is not even the (virtually indiscernible) twenty-third partial, which, at 628 cents above the fundamental tone, corresponds to no note in equal temperament: the partial corresponding to 600 cents above the fundamental tone is so many light-years distant in the harmonic series that it voids the question. An almost perfectly equal-tempered quarter-tone (between the perfect fourth and the tritone), appears as the eleventh partial, yet Schoenberg sees no need to justify composition with *only* twelve tones. His uncanny perception of the overtone series is extremely selective; while he hears equal-tempered tritones as “merely more remote consonances,” he does not hear quarter-tones as merely more proximate consonances. It is not difficult to understand why microtonality seemed like the way forward. The conclusion to draw, however, is not that the overtone series justifies the use of quarter-tones. The conclusion to draw is that Schoenberg wrongly tried to justify his innovations as products of a natural and inevitable development of the hearing apparatus’s sensitivity to characteristics observable with the help of scientific instruments and verifiable by scientific methods.

The notion of consonance is not based fundamentally on what sounds suave or pleasing, nor that of dissonance on what sounds rough or harsh, and Schoenberg in other moods acknowledges this. In contrast to his justification of dissonance based on perception, he states elsewhere that dissonance, especially in past times, was the sound that “interrupted plain, undeviating understanding.”²⁷⁴ The consonance of the minor third was arrived at historically, through its “emancipation.”²⁷⁵ Given this fluctuation in Schoenberg’s use of terms, the phrase of “emancipation of the dissonance” is ambiguous. If a dissonance is a

²⁷⁴ The quote in full reads: “In earlier epochs, even more than in our times, the inclusion of a dissonant tone—‘foreign’ to the harmony—interrupted plain, undeviating understanding.” Schoenberg, *Structural Functions of Harmony*, p. 192.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

merely more remote consonance (in the sense that it is farther from the home key), then by “emancipation of the dissonance,” Schoenberg means the unrestricted use of these remote relations, which have become musical self-evidences due to a historical shift in understanding. But if dissonance is not a third or a tritone, but whatever *interferes* with the musical self-evidences of the day, then by “emancipation of the dissonance,” Schoenberg calls for music that ceases to give itself as something self-explanatory, a music that deliberately sets out to baffle.

On one hand, Schoenberg is quite against the unrestricted use of dissonant chords. He claims that diminished sevenths and augmented triads gained an autonomy of sound through their overuse in Wagner. The “nomadic” diminished seventh chord has become propertied:

The unusual, flitting, unreliable guest, who was here one day, there the next, settled down, became bourgeois, ended up a washed-up Philistine. It lost the appeal of newness and with it some of its harshness and also some of its radiance. It has nothing more to say to a new time. So it sank out of the higher sphere of art music and into the lower sphere of entertainment music. There it now turns up as the sentimental expression of sentimental affairs. It has become banal and weak. Banal!²⁷⁶

The augmented triad, which was a function of voice leading, used either to make a smoother point of transition between keys, or, contrariwise, in what would amount to an asynchronization of the voices, to give refinement to a square chord change within the same key area, in Wagner becomes an independent unit, needing no treatment or musical justification. However, the “emancipation” of the symmetrical chords does not amount to an understanding of them. In a telling anecdote, Schoenberg relates the reaction of young students and an old composition teacher to the first act of *Tristan*. The young Schoenberg and his fellows attend a performance of the Wagner solely in the aim to hear what this horrid music is, which serves as the comparison of reproach for their composition exercises, but are

²⁷⁶ Arnold Schoenberg, *Harmonielehre* (s.l.: Universal Edition, 1949), p. 288f. (my translation).

no more enlightened by listening to it. The old composition teacher reveals finally that the great number of diminished seventh chords is what makes the first act of *Tristan und Isolde* so boring.²⁷⁷ But the transformation of diminished seventh chords into musical self-evidences—or worse, into mere signals to the listener to feel something—does not actually amount to an understanding of them. The reason why they were kept in reserve by refined composers such as Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert and Schumann had to do not only with the distinctive shapes of these chords, but also with the proportion of symmetrical chords within the whole tonal system of chords: there are only three fully diminished seventh chords and only four augmented triads. *Tristan* is boring to the composition professor who, listening in note names, roman numerals, and figured bass notation, hears not “so many” diminished seventh chords, but rather only the same few chords, repeated so many times. The “emancipation of the dissonance” effectively happened with Wagner’s inordinate hankering for effect, and it was not a good thing. The resolution is supposed to reveal what the dissonance was—a suspension or a pedal point, a seventh chord or a passing tone, an appoggiatura or a kind of buoy or flare that the progression follows into a new key. To have chords function as symbols, as iterative signs that mean something outside the music, it is necessary to suppress the musical justifications as much as possible. Indeed, dissonances that have become fetishes cannot be resolved musically, but must be dissolved philosophically.

But on the other hand, Schoenberg undertook to make dissonance incomprehensible again, because any good theory teacher knows what is really happening with Wagner’s dissonances. Music’s need of enigma comes out in Schoenberg’s writings. His justification for free use of dissonance, however, is no “theory,” but a scientific factoid about sound properties

²⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 290.

that is irrelevant to his music and, for the large part, irrelevant to the temperament that he assumes. If Schoenberg's dissonances may make a claim to being consonances, it should be on the basis of their no longer needing "treatment," not on the basis of the harmonic series; however, in Schoenberg's actual practice, dissonances are *not* consonances, for the experience of his music is not that of an uninterrupted stream of pure comprehensibility. Rameau's harmony was indeed a theory: it aimed at the comprehensibility of the dissonance of his time, the seventh chord. According to Rameau, music *progressed* by posing a new dissonance with every resolution of an old dissonance, and this interlocking chain of dissonances is what properly *propelled* the music along to the cadence, which establishes the key.²⁷⁸ But Schoenberg, in claiming that the *aim* of his school is not the establishment of a key, says simply that the endpoint of a series of dissonances need not be a cadence—i.e., dissonances need not be the means by which music moves to an unmistakable expression of key. This is an emancipated handling of dissonance. The establishment of the key is historically the subordination of dissonance to the status of mere vehicle for arriving there. This instrumentalization of dissonance is what Schoenberg rightfully finds objectionable in tonality. But tonality does not reduce to the obligatory resolution of dissonance, which can be criticized quite independently. The concept of dissonance itself predates tonality. Tonality associates the ultimate resolution of dissonance with the statement of key, but keys can be glimpsed through thickets of passing notes, suspensions and anticipations: there is no reason to think that dissonance annuls the tonal centre or tonality.

The *unresolved dissonance* in Schoenberg's music seems to correspond to the second moment of *Seligkeit*, to the sustained disunity that, according to Hegel, characterizes extreme

²⁷⁸ Dahlhaus, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, p. 29, lines 8-14, with the accompanying illustration beneath, or translated, *Studies*, p. 26.

Romantic artworks, and the difference between advanced Romantic works and advanced Modern works threatens to collapse. It may be argued that Hegel's threshold for dissonance is far lower than that of Schoenberg's rioting audiences, although such a display of concert manners from Hegel is practically unimaginable, and just as out of place as philosophical reflection in the vociferous, jeering crowd. Hegel considers the Ideal lost when individual moments break out of the fabric of the work in a kind of meaningless abstraction. Moments that arise from the artistic material and come into unrepressed conflict with the work as "born of spirit" would constitute the release of the work from the *concept* of artistic harmony. When Hegel argues that the "dissonance" of certain Romantic artworks "goes on" or "continues," he does not imply that an unstable sound is left without resolution.²⁷⁹ Rather, for Hegel dissonance is maintained when individual moments of a work find no justification or basis in the unified *concept* that is supposed to form *every* moment of the work. Hegel comes close to one of Schoenberg's definitions of dissonance—dissonance as the sound that disrupts or blocks an understanding of the work.²⁸⁰ In this sense, sustained dissonance is not everlastingly an unresolved seventh chord, but it is the mark of what exceeds expectations, escapes existing codes or, in general, impedes an easy listening of the work. There are, however, important differences between Hegel's concept of dissonance and Schoenberg's. Hegel specifies that the dissonance of Romantic art is the "Dissonanz der Inneren"—dissonance within the concept, subject or inner potential that is then supposed to harmonize with being, externality and actuality.²⁸¹ Sustained dissonance negates the concept of artistic harmony, the harmony of inner and outer, because the eruption of painful inner contradictions shows innerness to be

²⁷⁹ Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 209, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 158.

²⁸⁰ Schoenberg, *Structural Functions of Harmony*, p. 192.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

something quite different from outerness. In *Dichterliebe*, the moments of extreme sentiment are indeed moments of contradiction within the suffering subject, but they in turn stand in contradiction with the outer appearance of *natural harmony*, itself a second nature of *harmonic conventions*. Schumann's Opus 48 ends on a perfect authentic cadence in D-flat Major and a return to the initial sonority;²⁸² however, the emotional extremes of the work, of lasting effect, colour the harmony of the final cadence of Lied XVI as well. In comparison to these, the final cadence of the sixteenth and last Lied is weak—merely conventional, lacking the subjectivity of, for instance, the last chord in the first Lied, whose key continues to baffle.²⁸³ The “subjective” sonority of the first Lied is indeed dissonant in the Hegelian sense—its personal quality as a major-minor *seventh* chord enters into contradiction with its role, that of concluding a piece. The subject is split between its irreducible quality and its place in the whole, hence the dissonance. The unconventional ending reveals the “natural” way of concluding a piece to be merely a convention and a transitory norm. This colours the final cadence of the last Lied of the cycle. Dissonance for Schoenberg, however, does not so much seek to point up the natural as conventional as to defend the natural over the conventional. Taken in one sense—dissonance as the sound that defeats easy understanding—, dissonance does not necessarily negate *natural* harmony by being emancipated. Such emancipation can just as well be anti-intellectual as subtly intellectual, especially as the use without restriction of dissonance tends to turn into the *necessary* use of dissonance and the reversion to blind, second nature, as occurred with the emancipation of the third. Taken in the other main sense that Schoenberg attributes to it—dissonance as a more distant partial of the

²⁸² R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), XVI, p. 37, mm. 66-67.

²⁸³ Jon W. Finson even claims that “the home key, like love itself, does not exist.” Jon W. Finson, *Robert Schumann: The Book of Songs* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 63.

harmonic series—, dissonance collapses the concept of *artistic* harmony into the concept of *natural* harmony. Thus it does not negate the concept of natural harmony. Schoenberg is unconventional, but he would have a supposed harmony of first nature take over conventional harmony, harmony of second nature. The New in New Music of today or of a century ago indeed points toward the rediscovery of a true first nature, undistorted by reified social forms and habits of thinking, in its momentary escape from conventional society. But Schoenberg's audacious accomplishments also owed themselves to works of the past—something which perhaps has not been fully appreciated.

In *Harmonielehre*, Schoenberg himself admits that “Voll jener Süße,” op. 8, no. 5, and “Lockung,” op. 6, no. 7, were continuations of the advances in “schwebende Tonalität,” made by Beethoven, Schumann and Mahler.²⁸⁴ By “floating” or “suspended” tonality, Schoenberg there understands a tonality aimed not at affirming a single tonic, but rather at exploiting the ambiguities between two somewhat related keys, not only through progressions based around their common chords, but also through the use of the symmetrical, or “vagrant,” chords (augmented triads and fully diminished sevenths).²⁸⁵ What he himself translates as “suspended tonality,” however, itself lies suspended between two different definitions: it floats between the idea of a new type of tonality, which lies suspended between two established tonalities, on one hand, and that of a tonality that never touches down on its tonic, on the other. For instance, when he wishes to illustrate the concept in his *Structural Functions of Harmony*, again presenting the example of “Lockung,” Schoenberg points to its unstated tonic: “Perhaps the most interesting feature of this song, as mentioned in my *Harmonielehre*, is that the tonic,

²⁸⁴ Schoenberg, *Harmonielehre*, p. 459.

²⁸⁵ For a theory of Schweben (suspension) drawn from the work of both Schoenberg and Adorno, see Lydia Goehr, “Adorno, Schoenberg, and the *Totentanz der Prinzipien*—in Thirteen Steps,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 56, no. 3 (Fall 2003): pp. 595-636.

E-flat, does not appear throughout the whole piece; I call this ‘schwebende Tonalität’ (suspended tonality).²⁸⁶ According to his *Harmonielehre*, though, the last movement of Beethoven’s String Quartet No. 8 in E Minor, op. 59, no. 2, is also an example of a key that hovers over its tonic.²⁸⁷ Yet there the tonic does indeed appear, at the *sempre f*.²⁸⁸

The contradiction in Schoenberg’s concept of “floating tonality” arises because his concept of tonality is antinomical.

On one hand, tonality is a specific selection of tones from the twelve available. This is clear when Schoenberg writes, “Distinguishing a tonality from those tonalities which resemble it is the first step towards its unmistakable establishment. C major differs from G major and F major by only one tone, in each case, **f-sharp** and **b-flat** respectively.”²⁸⁹ A passage may *be* in a key, but not *express* this key. Yet Schoenberg’s criterion for the *expression* of tonality is stringent. While most would consider a key expressed at the cadence, for Schoenberg “a tonality is expressed by the exclusive use of all its tones.”²⁹⁰ The question then is at what point it becomes clear that *all* the tones have been used and only those tones. Schoenberg would have to conceive of tonality in diatonic terms to state, as he does, that “the chords which express a tonality unmistakably are the three main triads: I, IV and V.”²⁹¹ For these triads,

²⁸⁶ Schoenberg, *Structural Functions of Harmony*, p. 111.

²⁸⁷ Schoenberg, *Harmonielehre*, p. 459.

²⁸⁸ Ludwig van Beethoven, *Streichquartette=String Quartets, op. 59*, herausgegeben von Jonathan del Mar (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2008), Quartet in E minor, op. 59, no. 2, IV, p. 80, m. 52. Although he does not analyze this example, Michael Spitzer would probably call it “Schein” rather than “suspended tonality.” He describes musical Schein as “bifocal” (as opposed to *bitonal*, or, as it may be surmised, *atonal*). Of the first phrase of Beethoven’s String Quartet in B-flat, op. 130, suspended between tonic and dominant readings, he remarks: “There is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ interpretation. Beethoven has calibrated the metrical and harmonic equipoise in order to lock the texture into *Schein*’s ‘counterpoint’ of perspectives. As with the *Arietta* [Piano Sonata in C, Op. 111, II, opening], the bifocal flicker engages the counterpoles of tonic and dominant.” Michael Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy: Adorno and Beethoven’s Late Style* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2006), p. 101.

²⁸⁹ Schoenberg, *Structural Functions of Harmony*, p. 12.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

which, when strung together in their traditional progression, we recognize as the cadence IV – V – I, contain all seven note names. Thus, B-natural as the third in the V chord not only affirms the key of C major, but simultaneously negates the key of F major suggested by the foregoing IV chord, for there is a simple B “slot” that can be occupied by only one of sharp, flat or natural. Music, however, does not express its tonality at all times. Schoenberg states, rather arbitrarily, that whenever a succession of *three* chords fails to express the tonality, then the harmony is “roving.”²⁹² This raises the question of how to distinguish floating harmony, which expresses two tonics, successively or simultaneously, from roving harmony, which implies a single tonic, but does not express it. What is seen as the *failure* of a progression to express a single diatonic key region can also be seen as its *success* at expressing a double diatonic key region. Likewise, what is normally seen as a successful expression of the key, the cadence, might not be the whole story, for we do not know in advance how many or which tones make up the key: again, “a tonality is expressed by the exclusive use of all its tones.”²⁹³ As Schoenberg points out, the unmistakable expression of key depends on the contradiction to be overcome: in music composed only of V and I chords, the IV chord is not necessary to establish the key: the music everywhere establishes the key.²⁹⁴ One can extend this logic: the IV – V – I progression would establish the tonality in a piece making limited use of secondary dominants—or, as Schoenberg says, “artificial” dominants—, but perhaps not in a piece making extended use of substitutions and vagrant harmonies. Indeed, we find the progression iv – V⁷ – I in the Finale of the Beethoven Op. 59, no. 2, but it is a question whether at this point the cadence on E minor has really conquered the great deal of elements that have

²⁹² Ibid., p. 3.

²⁹³ Ibid., p. 11.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 2; p. 11f.

contradicted the home key of E minor in the preceding fifty bars.²⁹⁵ Even the interchangeability of major and minor, which Schoenberg considers standard practice, would seem to require more than the traditional cadence to establish the tonality credibly. If the parallel minor becomes part of the vocabulary of a piece in major, then clearly IV – V – I, in which the third, sixth and seventh scale degrees occur only once, does not definitively establish the mode—certainly not if previously the altered third, sixths and sevenths have persistently resurfaced. The tierce de Picardie does not necessarily make a piece major: on the contrary. The listener can disbelieve a supposedly unmistakable expression of tonality just as well as infer the tonality from indirect, scattered hints. The cadence can be a merely formal requirement and so *not* substantively expressive of anything: it can be “affirmative,” as Schoenberg himself puts it, in the pejorative sense of the term.²⁹⁶ Schoenberg indeed recognizes the mediated character of tonality insofar as he distinguishes the *affirmation* of the tonality from tonality. Clearly, tonality cannot be decided by a simple immediate perception. Yet if theory of harmony were really to follow the consequences of its insight into the mediated character of tonality, it would see as its task the unfolding of the relations of the tonic or tonics (the anti-harmonic element) to the harmony—that is, to the different classes of wholes: all scale degrees, modes, keys, chords, chord qualities, pitch classes, and progressions used in the work. Yet Schoenberg’s notation in *Structural Functions of Harmony* is too vague to distinguish the different elements of harmonic language, so obscures these relations. He does not use figured bass notation; rather, he indicates any alteration in the chord by striking through the Roman numeral (which is always in upper case), no matter whether the root, the third, the fifth or the seventh is altered. His preference for writing secondary dominants as

²⁹⁵ Ludwig van Beethoven, *Streichquartette*, Quartet in E minor, op. 59, no. 2, IV, p. 80, mm 51-52.

²⁹⁶ Schoenberg, *Structural Functions of Harmony*, p. 2.

altered chords in the same key (so that V/V is represented as \mathbb{H}) opens the possibility of easily grasping stepwise progression in the fundamental bass, but he ruins this possibility at a stroke because it is impossible to tell from the notation if the substitution has occurred at the root. Schoenberg so obscures a certain root progression, the chromatic root progression, in what looks like a theory of diatonic scale degrees. While purporting to lay emphasis on the writing of progressions, Schoenberg's notation and the theory that it represents fail to distinguish harmonic movement from chromatic colouring. In a major key, the Neapolitan chord and V/V are both represented by \mathbb{H} , as a mere colouring of the static II chord: a strange rendering as in fact the Neapolitan and V/V have not a note in common and, used in this succession, would not constitute harmonic iridescence, but a movement up in all the voices. This notation does not even bring out the aspect of harmony that Schoenberg sees as primary: the structural functions of harmony. Schoenberg names three structural functions of harmony: progressions are strong, descending, or superstrong.²⁹⁷ A progression whereby a root becomes a third or a fifth is strong; a progression whereby a fifth or third becomes a root is descending; a progression whereby not one of the root, third, or fifth is picked up by the following chord is superstrong. It is thus vital to know whether the alteration affects the root, the third, or the fifth. Given the major-key ii – V progression, a chromatic alteration of the root of the ii chord down by a semi-tone (N – V) will change the function from strong to superstrong, but a chromatic alteration of the third of the ii chord (V/V – V) will not change it. Yet Schoenberg contends that the borrowed and altered chords never “alter” the structural function of the

²⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 6-9 and p. 11, ex. 23.

progression itself.²⁹⁸ But Schoenberg holds to the inalterability of the progression because his theory of harmony is in some sense a theory of diatonic scale degrees.

Yet, on the other hand, Schoenberg does not conceive of tonality in diatonic terms in the least. Tonality is not a *selection* of seven of the twelve possible notes, but the *control* of all chords, no matter how remote, by a single tonic:

The concept of regions is a logical consequence of the principle of *monotonicity*. According to this principle, every digression from the tonic is considered to be still within the tonality, whether directly or indirectly, closely or remotely related. In other words, there is only *one tonality* in a piece, and every segment formerly considered as another tonality is only a region, a harmonic contrast within that tonality.

Monotonicity includes modulation—movement towards another mode and even establishment of that mode. But it considers these deviations as regions of the tonality subordinate to the central power of a tonic. Thus comprehension of the harmonic unity within a piece is achieved.²⁹⁹

According to the principle of monotonicity, the extension of tonality through the nineteenth century *is* the effective increase of the tonic's power, to the point that the tonic is supposed to be able to control virtually every single chord, even without ever putting in an appearance. What Schoenberg means by "hovering tonality" in *Structural Functions of Harmony* is less tonal ambiguity than this domination of all chords by a physically absent tonic chord. The tonic in "Lockung" is more or less like Kant's universal transcendental subject, which guarantees the formal unity of the pure categories of the understanding but which does not appear. In this light, withholding the tonic is a gesture against the merely formal unity of the transcendental subject, which does not, as the formal harmony of the categories, attain to the free individuality of melody.

Carl Dahlhaus registers a similar collapse of the distinction between diatonicism and chromaticism in the theory of functions of Hugo Riemann, who, by always postulating an

²⁹⁸ Ibid., p. xii.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 19.

imaginary extension of the stacks of thirds in chords, strives to claim a direct relation between chords suggesting different keys. As Dahlhaus notes, “an A-flat major or E-major chord related directly to C major is neither diatonic nor chromatic—the distinction is abolished [aufgehoben, sublated].”³⁰⁰ Yet Dahlhaus points out that, in the mind of Riemann, the concept of tonality referred precisely to this abolition of the distinction between diatonicism and chromaticism: “And it is in this suspension of diatonicism as the basis of chordal relationships that Riemann saw the distinctive feature of ‘tonality,’ as opposed to the ‘older doctrine of key’ founded on the diatonic scale.”³⁰¹ To Riemann, then, it is music, not theory, that becomes insensitive to the distinction between diatonicism and chromaticism; the concept of tonality refers to this insensitivity. But if it were the case that tonal *music* related chords not on the basis of the diatonic scale, but on the basis of *suspending* diatonicism, then certainly cadences would have assumed quite a different role than they did. In effect, to suspend diatonicism, music would have to suspend the final tonic itself, which tolerates no chromaticism. But tonal music regulated the use of chromaticism, making final tonics chromatic-free zones. It is in fact the theory of functions that erases the distinction between diatonicism and chromaticism. For, as Dahlhaus points out, the “functions” in Riemann’s theory of functions—tonic, subdominant, and dominant—could just as well refer to the different moves in musical logic as they could to the diatonic scale degrees.³⁰² Riemann’s theory cannot be a pure theory of functions, Dahlhaus argues, or he would have just postulated the functional equivalence of the subdominant chord and the subdominant parallel chord instead of making the latter a

³⁰⁰ Dahlhaus, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, p. 16, lines 13-15 as translated excepted where indicated, *Studies*, p. 11.

³⁰¹ Dahlhaus, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, p. 16, lines 15-18, as translated, *Studies*, p. 11.

³⁰² Dahlhaus, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, p. 47, line 25-p. 48, line 21, as translated, *Studies*, p. 50f.

derivative of the former;³⁰³ Riemann's theory cannot be a pure theory of chordal scale degrees, or he would not have seen the need to reduce the number of degrees to just three. Yet Dahlhaus does suggest that Riemann's theory of functions would actually be much more successful as a theory of chordal scale degrees. In suggesting this, however, he does not seem to consider that Riemann's suspension of the difference between chromaticism and diatonicism, to which he alluded earlier, is a problem for his theory of functions:

Even according to the theory of fundamental progressions, different chords—**B – d – f**, **B – d – f – a**, **B-flat – d – f**—represent the same chordal scale degree: the supertonic in A minor. And the theory of functions differs from the theory of fundamental progressions only in that it allows, as valid means for modifying a chordal scale degree, not only added dissonances and chromatic alterations, but also the substitution of the sixth for the fifth, or the lower second for the root.³⁰⁴

Dahlhaus so attempts to decide over a fundamental ambivalence in Riemann's theory. But theory that merely acts as a watchdog, ensuring that "valid means" are used "for modifying a chordal scale degree," represses the context-specific associations and the historical charge that these diverse modifications carry. It must be said that Riemann's theory, founded on the naturalistic principle of the harmonic series, is a fundamentally reactionary one, in that it tries to reduce anything new and unusual in the progression, so anything genuinely historic, to the ever-same I – IV – V – I workaday mould, as if nothing really progressed. His theory of the fundamental progression is based on the popular misrepresentation of dialectical logic as the thesis—antithesis—synthesis schema, where the "antithesis" between tonic and subdominant has to do with the fact that the root of the IV chord does not lie in the harmonic series of the I chord. The V – I at the end of the progression is supposed to resolve this opposition because not only does the root of V lie in the harmonic series of I, but the root of I also lies in the

³⁰³ In Riemann's theory, the "parallel" is the relative major/minor relation. In C Major, where the subdominant is the F major chord, the subdominant parallel would be the d minor chord.

³⁰⁴ Dahlhaus, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, p. 48, lines 14-19 as translated, *Studies*, p. 51.

harmonic series of the root of IV. The assumption is that a tone previously heard as an overtone cannot be recognized when it later occurs as the fundamental partial, but that a tone sounding for the first time as an overtone can be connected to its previously heard instance as the fundamental partial—in other words, fundamental partials are prospective and overtones retrospective. Riemann’s static view of I – IV – V – I is as un-dialectical as they come, for instead of recognizing the merely posited character of “I” and “IV”, Riemann clings stubbornly to the idea that this opposition is natural, and that it is only a change of season, so to speak, that resolves the conflict, like the definitive onset of winter that solves the contradictions that the year has thrown out: the crocus blooming in the snow in the spring, the early frost on tomato plants at the end of summer, and the sudden warm days under denuded trees, all, reduce to the frozen stillness and barrenness of January. Music is itself dialectical not in that it “synthesizes,” as Riemann thinks, but in that it unmasks the merely posited nature of themes, keys, voicings, orchestrations, progressions, intervals, cadences, chordal features; it challenges the arbitrariness of any purely given musical self-evidence. But no theory that postulates its own musical givens in advance can discover what in music is dialectical.

Although Schoenberg acknowledges floating tonality and even “sublated” tonality in the music of his predecessors, his own theory of harmony is prejudiced so as to downplay these instances, making his own music appear more radical than it is. *Structural Functions of Harmony* does not purport to be a theory of floating tonality:

It should not be overlooked that harmonies with multiple meaning—the “vagrants”—may occasionally proceed in conflict with the theory of root progressions. This is one of the short-comings of every theory—and this theory cannot claim to be an exception; no theory can exclude everything that is wrong, poor, or even detestable, or include everything that is right, good, or beautiful.³⁰⁵

³⁰⁵ Schoenberg, *Structural Functions of Harmony*, p. xii.

In this way Schoenberg does *not* draw out the consequences of Romanticism’s floating or “wandering” harmonies for harmonic theory. His harmonic theory makes some “tonal” music seem less radical than it is and most “atonal” music seem more radical than it is. He acknowledges that the symmetrical chords, the augmented triad and the diminished seventh, have indeterminate roots, so cannot be tied to any specific key in and of themselves. If the root progression were always the first priority for composition, then these symmetrical chords would require that their roots be identified clearly in a conventional way. But there are no prohibitions on these chords regarding position or octave doubling. Although Schoenberg realizes that compositional practice around these chords gives priority to their ambivalent quality over the single root progression, he himself nonetheless gives priority to *the* root progression, related to degrees. He even suggests that the diminished seventh chord be thought of as a ninth chord with a missing root a major third below one of the tones, so that it can be attached to a definite degree in the progression.³⁰⁶ This rigidity is perfectly understandable given Schoenberg’s objection to the absolute fetishism of the symmetrical chords in the entertainment industry. Schoenberg attempts to escape the antinomies of the concept of tonality by adding bridge concepts—roving harmony and floating or hovering tonality. But occurrences of so-called “tonal ambiguity” are not external to tonality; they are manifestations of an antinomial *concept* of tonality whose different aspects clash. A progression that is seemingly split between two keys may in fact be split between chromatic and diatonic definitions of tonality. Schoenberg’s notation has the unique advantage of allowing readers to see this split at a glance.³⁰⁷ His theory, however, does not mediate the contradictions of

³⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 35f.

³⁰⁷ See Schoenberg, *Structural Functions of Harmony*, p. 21, ex. 38, where chromatically altered chords in one key are simple diatonic chords in another.

tonality. On the one hand, Schoenberg stresses the importance of relating all altered and borrowed chords to definite scale degrees.³⁰⁸ On the other hand, the structural functions of the progression should not depend on the concept of diatonic scale degree because the division into strong, descending, and superstrong progressions is based on the presence or absence of common tones from one chord to the next. Schoenberg, however, in the particular definitions of these progressions, assumes that all chords have definite roots, implying scale degrees.

Kofi Agawu criticizes the musicological practice of pleading ambiguity and argues that, while certain passages of tonal music suggest multiple readings, where these are not disambiguated by the music in its unfolding, the task of theory is to resolve ambiguities: “An analysis that terminates in undecidability represents a conscious or subconscious retreat from theory.”³⁰⁹ A reason he gives for this is that the performer must take a decision on those concrete situations of ambiguity.³¹⁰ Indeed, to conclude that a certain chord or passage of tonal music is frankly undecidable or indeterminate is in a sense to deny that music is a performing art. Furthermore, Agawu suggests that, taken in isolation, a small enough segment of tonal music is bound to sound ambiguous: at the very least, the context in which a certain chord sounds ambiguous must be specified.³¹¹ The critique of ambiguity as a theoretical concept in a sense converges on Adorno’s critique of atomistic listening.³¹² Indeed, Agawu opens his essay with Adorno’s example from that essay, Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony.³¹³ To atomistic listening, all works are merely fragmentary, remaining indeterminate or *ineffable*. Since

³⁰⁸ Ibid., p. xii.

³⁰⁹ Kofi Agawu, “Ambiguity in Tonal Music: A Preliminary Study,” in *Theory, Analysis and Meaning in Music*, pp. 86-107, here p. 107.

³¹⁰ Ibid., p. 98f.

³¹¹ Ibid., p. 93.

³¹² Supra, chap. II.

³¹³ Agawu, “Ambiguity in Tonal Music,” p. 86.

atomistic listening represents normal, average, unschooled listening, advanced musicology must argue for and support the opposite tendency, as Agawu does. Agawu's position, however, that analysis "necessarily includes a mechanism for resolving ambiguities at all levels of structure," is itself a retreat from theory.³¹⁴ This mysterious mechanism, if it exists, is likely to be a social mechanism by which the real contradictions of music are glossed over and forgotten. Theory seeks to dissolve problems, but it is wishful thinking to assert that a theory necessarily possesses or produces a device that will solve them every time. As Agawu insists that "in situations of competing meanings, the alternatives are always formed hierarchically, making all such situations decidable," it becomes clear that theory's "mechanism" would merely prioritize the competing demands on the interpreter instead of actually solving the ambiguities.³¹⁵ This prioritization of competing demands might serve as a quick and easy heuristic for the musician, but it is not the same as a solution to a musical problem.³¹⁶ Musicological analysis, for its part, is not subjected to the same constraints as musical performance practice is. But it is not really differentiated by what seem to be the specific demands of performance—the actual state of audiences, concert halls, instruments and acoustics and the irreversible, linear unfolding of the piece in time. Music, unlike analysis,

³¹⁴ Ibid., p. 107.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ For example, what Adorno identifies as the highpoint of the first subject in Alban Berg's *Sonate für Klavier*, op. 1, presents a technical challenge (GS, vol. 13, p. 379). The instrumentalization to that point has been layered and dense in the central range of the instrument. But at measure 24, the upper voices, forced into a high register, suddenly sound block chords at *ff*, while the left hand, in octaves, marks out a rising line. This represents something new in a texture that has been contrapuntal until then. Rather than a relay of the moving line between upper and lower voices, the upper voices are longer—as Adorno notes in his score ("Oberstimmen länger")—while the lower voices (marked *marcato*) alone move. In a typical performance, this passage sounds thin and strained. But the fault is not with poor orchestration. It is likely that the musician does not read the passage to be the highpoint of the first subject. While the dynamic and phrase marks appear to be at odds in measures 24-27 in Berg's score, the musical solution to these competing demands is not to prioritize one or the other, but to analyze the work. Adorno reads measure 24 as the structural high point and as a *difference* from what has preceded, and, while this will have the effect of prioritizing the phrase markings, it is the *musical* solution to the problem. Alban Berg, *Sonate für Klavier Op. 1*, copy of Adorno's score, Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Frankfurt am Main, used with the kind permission of the Theodor W. Adorno Archiv.

must make a claim to truth through aesthetic illusion, manifested, notably, in the contradiction between score and performance. The decisions taken on the musical problems subsisting in print must oppose the score in such a way that an illusion of independence is created. Despite this particularity of performance, adequate musical reproduction implies analysis.³¹⁷ Analysis for its part must articulate contradictions between the fixed score and the sound in time without claiming that these are truth. Prioritizing competing interpretations hierarchically relinquishes the reflective freedom of analysis to work on what remains open in music. Analysis can recognize music as a performing art much more faithfully by setting out the contradictions in the musical text rather than by prioritizing them. Contradiction appears not to aid the performer at all; however, according to Adorno's notes for his theory of musical reproduction, "true reproduction is *not* simply the realization of the result of the analysis."³¹⁸ True reproduction "must contain the idiomatic element in itself as sublated [aufgehobenes]."³¹⁹ This *idiomatic* element refers to one of three elements of musical

³¹⁷ Rudolf Kolisch to Theodor W. Adorno, Madison, Wisc., February 26, 1956, Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Frankfurt am Main, typescript copy, used with the kind permission of the Theodor W. Adorno Archiv. This letter bears witness to the dependence of performance on analysis as Kolisch describes his experience analyzing and rehearsing Schoenberg's Violin Concerto, op. 36: "Ich habe hier einem sehr begabten, jungen Komponisten gefunden – er hat in Paris bei Leibowitz studiert – der mir hilft, das Stück zu analysieren und es auch am Klavier mit mir durchnimmt. Wir haben sogar eine Aufführung in Minneapolis geplant, die ich aber wegen Zeitmangels aufgeben musste." (I have found here a very talented young composer—he studied with Leibowitz in Paris—who is helping me to analyze the piece and [who] also goes through it with me on the piano. We had even planned a performance in Minneapolis, which I had to abandon due to lack of time.) According to a later interview with Will Ogdon, Kolisch finally brought the work to fruition with the Frankfurt Radio Orchestra at Darmstadt in the summer of 1956. I conjecture that Ogdon, a former student of René Leibowitz, is the unnamed composer mentioned in the letter, for in the interview Kolisch acknowledges their work together on the Concerto for the Darmstadt performance. Rudolf Kolisch, interview with Will Ogdon, Darmstadt, 1964; live sound recording of the Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, op. 36, by Arnold Schoenberg, with the Wisconsin Festival Orchestra, conducted by René Leibowitz, recorded at Madison, Wisc., May 7, 1967, on *In Honor of Rudolf Kolisch [1896-1978]*, Music & Arts Programs of America CD-1045, 2003, compact disc 4 of 6. On Will Ogdon, see Dirk Sutro, "Will Ogdon, Founding Chair of Department of Music, Dies at 92," *This Week @ UCSD*, October 17, 2013, http://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/feature/will_ogdon_founding_chair_of_department_of_music_dies_at_92.

³¹⁸ Theodor W. Adorno, *Zu einer Theorie der musikalischen Reproduktion: Aufzeichnungen, ein Entwurf und zwei Schemata*, herausgegeben von Henri Lonitz (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001), p. 106 (my translation).

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

reproduction that Adorno lists in his notes.³²⁰ It is the social-conventional dimension, as opposed to the mensural (notational) or the neumatic (or mimetic). True reproduction, then, implies the negation, preservation and elevation of the idiomatic element, the social context, which, in the modern age, is inherently resistant towards becoming other than what it is. True musical reproduction must turn its *idiomatic* element, its general, “irrational”³²¹ contemporary context of “conventions,”³²² into a particular content, into a specific *mimetic* gesture, by way of the *notation*, the score.³²³ Music is supposed to get over social repression by forgetting it safely, preserving it as something irreducibly individual. These are the particular demands with which performance is faced, and which musical analysis cannot solve for it.

Recently David Kopp has attempted to account for the unusual handling of key in the first song of *Dichterliebe* by supplying the concept of a key *continuum*, which, to his mind, escapes Agawu’s criticisms of tonal ambiguity while resisting the pressure to resolve Schumann’s puzzle definitively in favour of A major or F-sharp minor.³²⁴ Kopp suggests that

³²⁰ Ibid., p. 88.

³²¹ Ibid., p. 91.

³²² Ibid., p. 88.

³²³ Cf. Andrew Bowie, *Music, Philosophy, and Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Bowie does not clearly show how these three elements are defined and related in his exegesis of Adorno’s theory of true musical reproduction. While he is right to distinguish the kind of understanding required in performing music adequately from the kind of understanding formed in reductive cognition, mimesis—not “fully achieved” understanding—is the goal of playing music. Bowie suggests that “the mimetic” is the instrument by which we achieve an understanding of the Other: “In Adorno’s terms this understanding cannot be fully achieved in conceptual terms, concepts being too general to grasp all that belongs to the individuality of the other, and so it requires the mimetic. Such understanding connects to the appropriate understanding of how to perform music, where the need for ‘idiomatic’ expression and the need to get things technically right are both essential” (ibid., p. 336). Hardly a ready and available capacity today, mimesis is the *telos*, not the *instrument*, of true musical reproduction.

³²⁴ David Kopp, “Intermediate States of Key in Schumann,” in *Rethinking Schumann*, eds. Roe-Min Kok and Laura Tunbridge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 300-325.

interpretations of “Im wunderschönen Monat Mai”³²⁵ are hampered by a model of tonality whereby keys are discrete units; he proposes a different concept of key:

We are accustomed to thinking of keys as definite states of harmony in which a tonic actively organizes pitch-class relations. From Weber to our own time, for example, theorists have characteristically represented keys as nodes within harmonic networks or Tonnetze, showing motion from key to key as directed moves from one node to another. But what if we were to think of the path from one node to another not as a binary switch from one tonic state to another, but as a continuum? Nodes would represent the clear, unmitigated predominance of a single pitch-class as tonic. Along the continuum would be intermediate—not ambiguous—states in which more than one pitch class exerts some tonic force. Thus music could, at times, be understood to be at some specified position *between* keys rather than in them. This could satisfy Agawu’s demand for a definite, theory-backed analytical observation, without resorting either to choosing between alternatives or to hierarchical differentiation. This approach also has some affinity with the conception of key advanced by Schumann’s preferred theorist, A. B. Marx.³²⁶

Kopp does exceedingly well to start his article by unpacking the notion of key, setting out, in good Aristotelian fashion, a dialectic of viewpoints among important nineteenth-century music theorists. It quickly becomes apparent that the concept of key in the nineteenth century could refer to nearly completely opposite things. Kopp’s solution, however, closes the dialectic: he proposes a different model of key, loosely modelled on Adolph Bernhard Marx’s diatonic Stufentheorie, that would account for the key in “Im wunderschönen Monat Mai.” He justifies his concept of key on evidence that A. B. Marx was Schumann’s favourite theorist. Whether A. B. Marx was Schumann’s favourite theorist should not decide the key of the opening song of *Dichterliebe*. Schumann’s Opus 48, No. 1 showed tonality to be an antinomial system; the coherence of “Im wunderschönen Monat Mai” can be grasped only in grasping the incoherence of tonality. Yet Schumann did not remain trapped in the antinomies of tonality; he pointed the way out of them.

³²⁵ The Lieder of *Dichterliebe*, like the poems of *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, are titled only by Roman numerals. The numerals of the one, however, do not correspond to those of the other. “Im wunderschönen Monat Mai” here and in the following refers to the opening words of Lied I.

³²⁶ Kopp, “Intermediate States of Key in Schumann,” p. 312.

Im wunderschönen Monat Mai,
Als alle Knospen sprangen,
Da ist in meinem Herzen
Die Liebe aufgegangen.

Im wunderschönen Monat Mai,
Als alle Vögel sangen,
Da hab ich ihr gestanden
Mein Sehnen und Verlangen.

(In wondrous lovely month of May,
When all the buds exploded
Then deep within my own heart
The love for her unfolded.

In wondrous lovely month of May,
When all birds sang in choir,
Then true to her declared I
My longing and desire.)³²⁷

The statement of key is conventionally taken to “mean” the unity of the work. While Schumann preserves the notion of key, he brings its conventional character into sharp relief. It would seem that an intrinsic, fundamental relation between functions and qualities makes individual chords, taken on their own, stronger or weaker indicators of the tonic. Setting aside the rare case of the melodic minor mode entering the harmony, the mere quality of the major-minor seventh chord points forward to the imminent revelation of key: *whatever* follows is supposed to have the character of a tonic (or of a temporary tonic). However, when chord qualities become disassociated from their traditional scale degrees and traditional, allotted places in the progression, then major-minor seventh chords in themselves no longer orient the listener to the tonic in any technical or real-objective sense. The “dominant” seventh on which Lied I ends throws into sharp relief the conventional—not natural—way in which keys are

³²⁷ Heine, *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, I, p. 112, with my translation.

identified in current practice. The expectation for a further chord is due to the conventional character of cadences, to the seeming necessity to make beginnings and endings “key” moments, as well as to the appointment of the major-minor seventh chord to a specific task of introducing the tonic (or a temporary tonic). Schumann brings out this conventional character by throwing the conventions into contradiction with one another in virtually perfectly equal measure.

The first Lied of *Dichterliebe* shows key to be contradictory concept. To judge by its key signature, this first Lied of *Dichterliebe* would be either in A major or in F-sharp minor, but its first, ambiguous statement fits into neither key: both are almost immediately contradicted by the Great A-sharp.³²⁸ Furthermore, the sharps or flats after the clef have not always indicated the key: there may be fewer sharps in the signature than in the key, what is called a “partial signature.” If the first entry heard is an indication of key, then the Lied can be in C-sharp (major or minor).³²⁹ But this “chord” is incomplete: in fact, it is a single note, which is perhaps not sufficient to put a scale into the ear. But the next two notes sounded are hardly any more definite: an incomplete D augmented chord.³³⁰ If the first cadence is an indication of key, then the Lied can be in A major. But the first full cadence occurs where one would expect a half-cadence.³³¹ If the chord qualities are a clue to scale degrees, and if scale degrees are an indication of the key, then the first Lied is in F-sharp minor. But if the complete tonic chord must appear at least once, then the Lied cannot be in F-sharp minor. If the last chord struck is an indication of key, then the Lied may be in C-sharp major. But if a dissonance discounts the statement of key at the end, then the Lied cannot be in C-sharp

³²⁸ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), I, p. 2, m. 1, pf., l.h.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, I, p. 2, pick-up to m. 1.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, I, p. 2, m. 1, pf., l.h.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, I, p. 2, m. 5, from quarter note value 2, through measure 6.

major. If a major-minor seventh chord portentously placed identifies the root of this chord as the dominant degree of the diatonic scale on which the work is based, then this Lied can be in F-sharp major or minor. But if the leading tone cannot be doubled in a seventh chord, then this major-minor seventh chord is not a dominant seventh chord, and the key is not F-sharp minor, for the E-sharp is doubled, while the B-natural and G-sharp are not.³³² If the degree of diatonicism of the root progression is an indication of key, then the key may be A major or D major, for in each case there is just one chord whose root does not fit in. But this presumes modulation to be an exception, not one of the main characteristics of tonality—if not the main characteristic. If the prominence of the tonic note is an indication of key, then the key is still undecided, for C-sharp and D are about equally prominent: the bass alternates between them in the introduction, interlude and postlude, and there are only a few beats here and there where neither note sounds.

Tonal ambiguity, tonal instability indeterminacy, bitonality, or even polytonality, are easy ways to solve the puzzle of the first Lied's key. More difficult is to recognize that antinomies are rooted in a necessary illusion and to determine what it is, to explode it. Yet more difficult still is to save it. While theory wants to explode tonality's illusion of harmony, musical reproduction is still faced with the task of presenting it. A theorist may sit self-satisfied in the knowledge that tonality is a contradictory system; practicing musicians are forced to take decisions on it, to make a convincing performance. Lied I of *Dichterliebe* could be rhapsodic, moving from F-sharp minor to A major to B minor to D major in a matter of twelve short bars:

³³² Ibid., I, p. 3, m. 26. Please note that this "Urtext" edition has an E-natural where other sources give G-sharp. Cf. R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (1971), I, p. 15, m. 26, and also the autograph reproduction in Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann's "Dichterliebe,"* p. 37, plate 5.

F-sharp minor: $V|^{I} - VI^{+} - iv^{6} - ii^{\circ 4,3}|^{2} - V^{9}|^{3} - VI^{+} - iv^{6} - ii^{\circ 4,3}|^{4} - V^{9}|$
 $||^{5} - A \text{ Major: } ii^{6} - V^{7}|^{6} - I|^{7} - ii^{6} - V^{7}|^{8} - I|$
 $||^{9} - b \text{ minor: } iv^{6} - V^{7}|^{10} - VI^{6,5+9+11\&maj13+13} ||^{11} - D \text{ Major: } iv^{6} - V^{7}|^{12} - I \dots$

This is a functional analysis for present-day performance purposes. When the musicians cannot assume structural listening on the part of the audience, they will be more concerned with presenting each moment as either one of tension or of release, than with presenting a self-referring whole, however contradictory. The above analysis prioritizes the dominant sevenths, which are moments of tension. Of the six in this short excerpt, three resolve as expected; two make a veiled deceptive movement (to the VI chord); one (at the end of the F-sharp minor passage) moves to a pivot chord, iv in first inversion, (ii in A Major). When only half of the dominant sevenths acquit their functions as expected, questions should be raised about the adequacy of functional analysis to Lied I of *Dichterliebe*. The dominant seventh chord here is more than the tension-builder that it normally must be.

When functions dominate qualities according to convention, then the progressive element of harmony, movement from chord to chord, takes on a landscape character: the goal comes into view and disappears, comes close into view and is reached. Schumann's unconventional split between the in-itself of chords and the relation of chords to the tonic is already in a certain sense the demand for music to unfold according to its essence, as a purely temporal medium, for progress to be the mutual determination and self-determination of particulars in time. Yet the enormous potential of liberated time opened in Lied I runs a risk in its musical realization: the risk of affirming that such liberated time really exists, and that this music is it. The enormous, contradictory constraints that Schumann faced at the hour of music's advance express themselves as harmonic buckling.

The last, expressive bar of the first Lied of *Dichterliebe* is new. It combines into a single figure elements of what has until then only presented as two separate, consecutive figures. These two previously appearing figures, which Schumann groups by way of slurs, may be analyzed as a single C-sharp ninth chord.³³³ These two figures are particular in that they make possible the strophic structure of the Lied. A different figuration of what could be the same chord changes expectations at the last bar. The chord in measures 4 and 15 may be understood as a major-minor seventh chord by the second sixteenth note in the left hand. The chord in the last measure, however, substitutes a Small g-sharp for the Small b at the second sixteenth note, so, unlike its models, it can be heard initially as the C-sharp major triad, sustained, to which is added the b' that has in previous instances commenced the second, written-out double-appoggiatura figure that sets up the strophe.³³⁴ A slight modification to the disposition of the figuration momentarily produces a C-sharp major triad, which then transforms into a dissonant seventh chord. Stilled on a fermata, the moving figure freezes, breaking the endless strophic cycle. The first Lied of *Dichterliebe* ends by interrupting its circular form with a sonority that is traditionally used to signal forward, linear movement toward a goal. In its frozen form, the final sonority can be classified as a major-minor seventh chord. But on the basis of this quality alone, it has been called a dominant seventh chord, which is expected to acquit its function as preparer of the tonic, F-sharp, despite the fact that at no point in the song has the C-sharp major-minor seventh chord led to an F-sharp chord. Such an expectation, if there is one, is based on convention. But from the observation that Schumann does not end the piece in the conventional way it should not be concluded that the

³³³ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe*, (2011), I, p. 2, m. 4 and p. 3, m. 15.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, I, p. 3, m. 26 (where Small g-sharp has been incorrectly reproduced as Small e) or prefer R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (1971), p. 15, m. 26.

last bar represents frustrated expectation. According to Rufus E. Hallmark, the end of Lied I is clearly an “unconsummated ending” because “in 1840, . . . the chord C sharp – E-sharp – G sharp – B in the present context (proceeding from the first inversion of a B – D – F sharp triad) had a clear, not vague harmonic meaning.”³³⁵ He argues that this chord is a dominant seventh that arouses “frustrated expectancy” because like progressions in the history of Western music have built such expectancy right into it.³³⁶ But this last gesture should in fact generate expectation: the expectation for something new—not another strophe, to which the b' in bars 4 and 15 leads. For whatever clear “harmonic meaning” the major-minor seventh chord had has been negated in the *construction* of the chord out of remainders of different sonorities that have structured the Lied up to there. Although Hallmark is right to point out that the major-minor seventh chord has a history that an unusual appearance of it does not efface, he claims to position himself at a point in history over a century previous and to have full access to a “harmonic meaning,” which he assumes to be completely determinate and operative.

The major-minor seventh chord placed at the end of the first song of *Dichterliebe* cannot be reduced to a “harmonic meaning” because the chord controls more than harmony: it also controls the concept of “tonal piece” or “tonal work.” The placement of a major-minor seventh chord at the end of a song in a song cycle might be compared to a putting a loop in a video installation video. The video installation art-form is in fact the perfect opposite of the song cycle: a video installation is a linear form that is conventionally presented as an endless loop, while a song cycle makes the claim to being an endless loop, but is always presented linearly. In *Parcours*, Jacynthe Carrier turns the appearances of formal, extra-aesthetic constraints of video installation, the black screen and repetition, into logical, aesthetic

³³⁵ Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann's "Dichterliebe"*, p. 36.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

moments of her ‘loop’ showing an assortment of people running in a large circle at the bottom of what looks to be a former quarry: in her installation, a black screen followed by a repetition of the start of the film turns out not to be another screening of the same video, but a slightly different edit of the footage. The unexpected cuts, especially the jarring one in which the axis is crossed, negate the general, conventional “meaning” that a black screen followed by a repetition of the start of the film takes on in video installation, the “meaning” that “here the loop has come full circle.” The negated sign of the whole then raises the question as to whether *Parcours* is a short repeated video or one long video that lasts as long as the gallery is open—so whether the title means “loop,” “trajectory,” “loops,” or “trajectories.” In a similar challenge to a general convention that merely signals to the recipient’s “aesthetic on/off switch,” the major-minor seventh chord closing the first Lied of *Dichterliebe* negates the chord’s extra-aesthetic function, which is to indicate that “the song isn’t finished.” Once the aesthetic on/off indicator is broken, the artwork can then raise doubts about its own genre and form.

Yet Hallmark ignores the artwork’s self-negation because he implicitly uses the text to justify Schumann’s eccentricity: for Hallmark, the last chord is the mere music-conventional equivalent of the last words of the Lied, *Sehnen und Verlangen* (longing and desire).³³⁷ Schumann, however, is known to resist positivist programme music and word-painting, and this is evident in his reconstructive handling of his source material. Schumann makes no strict one-to-one correlation between words and tones in his setting; rather, words gather different associations so that something transpires between them and through them. Quite the opposite of the amateur musician whose playing does not extend beyond the mere decoding of the

³³⁷ Ibid., p. 16.

musical print, Schumann approaches the static text like a true musician the score: with fluency. Aside from the *actual* condensation implied by Schumann's definitive selection of 16 of the 66 poems forming the 1827 version of *Lyrisches Intermezzo* and the *actual* expansion of the poems in their amplification by music, the setting of Heine's text is a different mode of condensation and expansion. The setting is a tacit analysis, then regrouping and rearranging of the selected poems themselves; it achieves its coherence by way of cross-references in chords, rhythms, textures, vocal contours, figures, and intensities. Schumann is able to activate far-reaching associations amongst dissimilar elements in Heine's text. Eminent amongst these connections is the secret passage between the first Lied and the twelfth.

Am leuchtenden Sommermorgen
 Geh' ich im Garten herum.
 Es flüstern und sprechen die Blumen,
 Ich aber wandle stumm.

Es flüstern und sprechen die Blumen
 Und shau'n mitleidig mich an:
 Sei unsrer Schwester nicht böse,
 Du trauriger blasser Mann!³³⁸

This radiant morning of summer
 I walk in the flowering yard;
 The blossoms gossip and whisper,
 I walk with never a word.

The blossoms gossip and whisper
 And watch me regretful and sad:
 "Do not be cross with our sister,
 You pallid, sorrowing lad!"³³⁹

The C-sharp major-minor seventh chord at the end of the first Lied tends across an immense distance to the F-sharp minor triad falling on the first syllable of the word *Blumen* in

³³⁸ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2010), XII, pp. 24-25.

³³⁹ Heinrich Heine, *Songs of Love and Grief: A Bilingual Anthology in the Verse Forms of the Originals*, trans. Walter W. Arndt, with a foreword and annotated by Jeffrey L. Sammons (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1995), p. 33.

the first occurrence of the line *Es flüstern und sprechen die Blumen* in the twelfth Lied.³⁴⁰ The setting of this line stands out as one of the most transporting in the entire cycle. In the second inversion, the F-sharp minor chord has a figured texture and falling contour that correspond to the figured texture and rising contour of the unresolved dominant of the first Lied. Even the Great B-natural pick-up to the final bar of Lied I matches the Great B-natural in measure 9 of Lied XII. The F-sharp minor triad, when it arrives, however, is not the tonic cadence, but a secondary dominant in the typically dominant inversion—though, curiously, a *minor* dominant, where the third is an A-natural rather than an A-sharp. It in fact follows a dominant chord with the “right” quality of dominant—the major-minor seventh—on *sprechen*. What accounts for this variation in quality? Because these two chords are figured and because they have been applied to flat-II, the Neapolitan chord, they are at once governed by two conflicting harmonic rules: figuration in the applied Neapolitan key area can borrow its notes either from the scale of the Neapolitan or from the scale of the home key. Schumann points out this legal inconsistency by borrowing his notes from both keys at once, effectively breaking his work out of the tonal system of harmony: if the scales of the tonic and of the Neapolitan can be combined within the broken texture, then there is effectively a harmonic progression of chords whose roots can support any of the twelve notes as harmonic tones. Schumann gives an alternative reading of events, one that is not tracked by the root progression, by offering two different versions of the dominant of the cadence, in what appears to be a source of Mahlerian variants, which Adorno compares to versions of a story in oral tradition.³⁴¹ On the first syllable of *Blumen*, Schumann offers a second version of the

³⁴⁰ “The blossoms gossip and whisper.” Ibid., p. 33.

³⁴¹ GS vol. 13, p. 235, translated by Edmund Jephcott, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) p. 88.

dominant chord—an atypical minor dominant in a typical dominant inversion—second inversion. In so doing, he drives a wedge between chord qualities and chord functions, so brings to light the contradiction between intrinsic qualities of things and their functional exchange value. The effect of Schumann’s setting of *sprechen die Blumen/ ich aber...*, the iridescent alterity of its altering, anamorphous figures, opens his work, enmeshed in the contradictions of harmony, out of its time, even beyond Mahlerian variants, towards twelve-tone composition, in which all twelve tones must form the harmonic structures. Schumann is not far off from such all-embracing harmony: in the space of two and a half measures, from the B-flat chord on the first instance of *flüstern* to the C dominant seventh chord on *ich aber*, the piano part incorporates eleven of the twelve tones. The tension in this beautiful passage, between the harmonic re-contextualization of the B-flat at *flüstern* as enharmonic A-sharp at *sprechen* and the sudden appearance, at *Blumen*, of the A-natural that the A-sharp would have barred, evokes the opening phrases of the entire cycle, phrases which gain their enigmatic quality from this very tension between A-sharp and A-natural. The *Blumen* passage in the twelfth Lied does not resolve this tension, the problematic that the work sets out at its opening, but directs its energies towards something outside of the work entirely, something more that the work does not contain. This “more” was in no way exhausted by Schoenberg’s twelve-tone technique, whose pre-determined row and calculated permutations thereof do not solve the objective problem that Schumann had isolated with such perspicuity: that of time already scheduled. Rather, Schoenberg’s tone-row functions modally, in that it determines at the outset a sequence of intervals, which is given to transposition. Nonetheless, twelve-tone technique warned of the sort of conditions that exploited workers find themselves in today: in sometimes unregistered movements, workers today pass from leisure activity to something

work-related—until they find themselves working virtually all the time. The first note of the tone-row finds a contemporary comparison in the pager signal, telephone call, or electronic mail message that ineluctably determines the next hours to come as work. The moments between permutations offer the only freedom and respite. Whatever unexpected things happen in composition with twelve-tone technique, a series goes under them unrecognized, just as workers today almost never really escape work, which follows them in their thoughts and preoccupations. The major-minor seventh at the end of the first Lied of *Dichterliebe* goes beyond text and musical conventions to open history, living time, unscheduled time, the time of love, out of the ever-same of cadences. It is in this sense that the new way that Schumann opened has never been travelled to this day.

The first Lied becomes readable in light of the twelfth Lied as the articulation of the problem that the applied Phrygian key area poses to the very idea of non-harmonic tones within a figured texture. Schumann is not merely throwing into question the opposition between major and minor: for what is really striking about the opening chord of the cycle is the A-sharp, which belongs to neither A major nor F-sharp minor. Schumann is raising the far more radical possibility of twelve-tone harmony, which must follow from the basic inconsistency surrounding figuration in the temporary Neapolitan key area in a major context. The opening of the key region to include potentially all twelve notes is not just the whim of the composer, but is based on widely recognized historical precedents. If Bach in bar 74 of Prelude 17 of the Well-Tempered Clavier, Book II, can figure according to the diatonic scale based on the Neapolitan, but Mozart in bar 53 of the Fantasy in D minor can figure according to the diatonic scale of the home key, then Schumann's figuration in *Dichterliebe* is

not arbitrary, but advances out of the objective contradiction.³⁴² Although it would appear to take only a legal mind to exploit such a juridical grey zone, Schumann is not thereby law-abiding. Schumann pinpoints the moment of possibility in a seemingly closed system of actuality. Yet the objective contradiction, which would be real possibility in society—so a merely negative, imageless indication that things could be somehow otherwise—, in music is aesthetic illusion. It seems as if a potential in *Dichterliebe* were fulfilled by Schoenberg in the Piano Pieces, op. 23, no. 5, but it really still goes unfulfilled as long as society remains antagonistic, cold and loveless. D-Major-as-Applied-Neapolitan is the key in which to analyze the opening Lied of *Dichterliebe* because it shows Schumann's specific technical advance out of the existing musical material. It prioritizes the root progression over functions, so history over social roles, and it explains what has appeared arbitrary and subjective. But Schumann's eminent place as a composer lies also in his musical denial that his aesthetic advances can translate into actual social ones. The musical denial takes the form of a great divergence between the advanced expressive moments and a better order of things. The cycle charts a decline from its most musically advanced moment at the beginning, rather than ending in the utopia promised so early. But Schumann does not compose cynical music: it permits itself hope in the form of memory.

Schumann's musical advance comes out of the properties of figuration itself. In an entirely figured composition, sensory consonance is no longer any indication of musical resolution. There, the immediate psychoacoustic impression of an isolated sound-atom as smooth or pleasant has no bearing on the degree of musical tension within it, whether it needs

³⁴² Edward Aldwell and Carl Schachter, *Harmony and Voice Leading*, 3rd ed. (Belmont, Calif.: Thomson/Schirmer, 2003), p. 502. The examples are drawn from the textbook normally assigned in first-year university harmony courses in North America.

treatment or not. For example, the last F-sharp" in the piano part of bars 12 and 23 of Lied I does not sound dissonant (it forms an expanded perfect fifth with the B in the bass), but it is actually the seventh of a half-diminished chord, so in need of resolution. Figuration demands precisely that music's moving, historical dimension be seized in figures and interpreted. Yet any two differing tones placed in succession should bring to mind some kind of chord, however incomplete: thirds and fifths suggest triads; fourths and sixths suggest inverted triads; seconds and sevenths evoke seventh chords. The tritone seems an exception to this, but depending on the context, it could bring to mind different seventh chords, even an augmented sixth chord with doubly augmented seventh. Furthermore, what is in appearance a non-harmonic note may, in broken texture, actually be a faster harmonic rhythm. Figuration so already throws into question the notion of the non-harmonic note, the subsidiary tone. Schoenberg may have emancipated dissonance, but Schumann emancipated consonance. Each lodges a critique against immediacy, against the notion that key or musical tension or formal closure can be sensed in the immediately given sonic perception. Immediacy is exactly the right object of critique in the positivist age of structural illusion, for the immediately perceiving consciousness can have no experience of illusion as illusion. For that it would need memory.

Dichterliebe opens on C-sharp", the tonic, where "tonic" refers to the root of the first chord of a work. A single tone, the C-sharp, can be the root of an incomplete chord, so can be the tonic. The note is sustained as a pedal in an upper voice over the incomplete D augmented chord. As soon as the Small D is touched, the song slips into the applied Phrygian key area, so the figured Phrygian chord itself undergoes alteration as it unfolds. Fully exploiting the ambiguity in the rules for figuration in the applied Phrygian key area, Schumann is able to

impart colour to every single chord that follows. He renders the notion of altered chords meaningless. The root progression as analyzed in the Neapolitan key area presents Roman numerals that are not at all suggested by the chord qualities, which take on surprising shapes in a harmony whose normally vertical aspect, here more often than not horizontal (in figuration), contradicts the linear, progressive aspect, the movement from chord to chord. The first two bars (excluding the pick-up), analyzed with D as the tonic, translate into the following progression:

D major: |I⁺ – vi⁶ – sharp-iv^{ø4,3} – |VII⁹|

These Roman numerals do not normally support such chord qualities, while the chord qualities suggest other Roman numerals. The augmented chord suggests a scale degree other than the tonic; the half-diminished chord suggests either ii (in minor) or vii (in major); the major-minor chord with an added flat ninth above the bass suggests a dominant chord. To judge by the chord qualities alone, the progression would fit better into f-sharp minor:

f-sharp minor : |VI⁺ – iv⁶ – ii^{ø4,3} – |V⁹|

An analysis in f-sharp minor is the least historically adequate of all, however, as it one-sidedly prioritizes diatonicism over chromaticism and reduces qualities to functions, something which typifies the form of consciousness necessary for the current form of exchange: in truth, there should be no equivalent for quality. Forcing the dominant function—the fifth relation—decide the key, on the other hand, throws up a progression that is just as little comprehensible to traditional theory:

C-sharp major : |II⁺ – flattened-vii⁶ – v^{ø4,3} – |I⁹|

The G-sharp half-diminished chord in measure 1 and the major-minor C-sharp chord with an added flattened ninth can be analyzed as altered dominant and tonic chords. The dominant

relation between the chords suggests an analysis with C-sharp as the tonic. The dominant relation, however, is supposed to indicate resolution, while the “tonic” here is fantastically dissonant. It is the applied Phrygian key area that permits such liberties. Since the B-natural and D-natural of the C-sharp ninth chord do not both fall in either the key of C-sharp major or in the key of C-sharp minor, the C-sharp chord should not be analyzed as the tonic chord in C-sharp major, but rather as a chord based on the ultimate scale degree in the Phrygian key area applied to C-sharp major, which also encompasses the notes falling out of the diatonic key region of D major. Yet these traditional schematic renderings do not really express the idea of the progression. These strings of Roman numerals and figured bass notation give to think that the opening of *Dichterliebe* is a very disjunctive progression.

The opening of *Dichterliebe*, however, presents a great diversity of highly coloured chords—four different proportions of chords built on four different roots—yet without a sense of rupture: it is by a skilful use of common tones that Schumann is able to bring together chords that normally would not be associated in such a brief passage. All of the chords have been fashioned so as to achieve the suppleness demanded by the constraints of this intensely brief Lied. For at the same time, their presentation here is a condensation of the entire song. The third relations among the three heterogeneous chords in bars 1, 3, 14 and 25 (the D augmented chord, the minor B triad in first inversion and the half diminished G-sharp seventh chord in second inversion) allow for very close transitions from one to the other. The common tone B between the G-sharp half-diminished chord and the C-sharp ninth chord lends the first four bars a minimal regularity amidst the rapid changes of proportion of the chords: the sixth sixteenth note b' in the right hand of the piano that repeats in bars 1, 2, 3 and 4 alternates between forming the third of the G-sharp chord and the seventh of the C-sharp chord. This is

why the C-sharp chord in bar 4 should not be identified as a dominant seventh: it does so that the purely musical end may be served. Besides the fact that it is not tonicized, its seventh is a common tone in each octave—both its Small b and its b' occur in the g-sharp half-diminished chord that precedes it and in the b minor chord that follows it—, which means that it has an important historical precedent in the *stören* chord in bar 73 of Schubert's "Gute Nacht!" from *Winterreise*, also a major-minor seventh chord (there, E) whose seventh is a common tone in each octave with the chord that precedes it (there, D major) and the chord that follows it (also D major).³⁴³ Schumann's C-sharp ninth chord is so determined by the need of the music to present the impression of a wildly diverse but essentially unbroken and ever-returning wholeness of nature. Since its shape serves the need for very close connections between chords by way of multiple common tones, the end of the piano introduction should not be analyzed as the end of the progression. Rather the progression should continue, and can continue, to the beginning of the *ritardando* in bar 12 as follows (with note names):

C-sharp major: C-sharp¹ – N: D⁺ – b⁶ – g-sharp^{04,3} |² – C-sharp⁹ |³ – D⁺ – b⁶ –
g-sharp^{04,3} |⁴ – C-sharp⁹ |⁵ – b⁶ – E⁷ |⁶ – A |⁷ – b⁶ – E⁷ |⁸ – A |⁹ – e⁶ –
F-sharp⁷ |¹⁰ – G^{6,5 +9+11&maj13+13} |¹¹ – g⁶ – A⁷ |¹² – D... .

This is a highly unusual progression, in that it traverses every single diatonic scale degree in D major, while departing, however, from the circle of fifths. An important part of the progression is a diatonic stepwise ascent from E to A that includes movement by both tones and half-tones.³⁴⁴ It in fact exactly follows the melody line in Schumann's vocal sketch, a fifth below.³⁴⁵ The underlying reason for this shadowing may be the priority of the text, and hence of the soprano part, in Schumann's compositional process, if the manuscript sources are an

³⁴³ This should not be contentious. See *ibid.*, p. 558.

³⁴⁴ See R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe*, (2011), I, p. 2, mm. 9-11.

³⁴⁵ Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann's "Dichterliebe"*, p. 34, ex. 1:1.

adequate indication of it—according to Hallmark, Schumann made the vocal sketch first, then proceeded to the piano draft.³⁴⁶ But this Lied is something more than a harmonized melody. For the parallel between vocal line and progression is clouded by way of inversions, figuration, and the split between chords and functions. Ultimately, the parallelism between vocal line and progression is cancelled by the intense G-natural: without it, the entire vocal line could be in A major. While stepwise ascent is not unusual in a melody, it is very unusual in a harmony. Progressions that move by steps are what Schoenberg would call “superstrong” root progressions, as opposed to “ascending” or “descending” progressions.³⁴⁷ Superstrong progressions are particular in that, unlike ascending and descending progressions, no note used in the root, third, or fifth of one chord is supposed to be transferred to the root, third, or fifth of the other. Thus they would appear to create ruptures in the harmonic fabric. Schoenberg, however, does not consider the seventh in his schema, so the superstrong root progression does not necessarily manifest the variegated, rapidly changing, discontinuous harmonic movement that the characterization suggests. Furthermore, because chords can be incomplete, an ascending progression can be just as discontinuous as a superstrong progression. The root of the ii chord in first inversion does not necessarily become the fifth of the V chord in ii – V, which Schoenberg gives as an example of an “ascending” progression, for the reason that the seventh chord often lacks its fifth.³⁴⁸ Furthermore, Schoenberg’s classification of the progressions assumes that chord qualities will match diatonic scale degrees, which is not necessarily the case, and which his theory of harmony furthermore does not elsewhere assume. His classification is not only inadequate for grasping how smooth or disjunctive the chord

³⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 34.

³⁴⁷ Schoenberg, *Structural Functions of Harmony*, pp. 6-9.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 6, ex. 10e.

changes are, but also poor at tracking the actual movement in the root progression. The concept of superstrong progression does not differentiate between half-steps and whole steps in the progression, nor between steps up and steps down. But Schoenberg's aim, to be fair, is not to develop a method of analyzing compositions, but rather to teach composition students "to compose harmony progressions from the very beginning," for this is the key to gaining adequate understanding of harmony, as opposed to a "superficial" understanding of harmony "foreign to the procedures of great composers."³⁴⁹ Schoenberg's classification of structural functions is thus expedient: the writing of good root progressions can be reduced to a few rules of thumb: to avoid constant cycling about the circle of fifths in ascending progressions, to resolve descending progressions with ascending progressions, and to limit the use of superstrong progressions.³⁵⁰ As Schoenberg bases his teaching on norms established by important works, including those of Schumann, the great deal of superstrong movement in Schumann's progression must be considered not wrong, but problematic for traditional harmony.

The beauty of an interpretation in D major-as-Neapolitan is that it does not require any special treatment of "non-chord" tones—all the tones can be chord tones in this analysis. This allows music to be interpreted musically. Hallmark, by contrast, must explain "the appoggiatura and melodic peak (m. 10) for *Herz*—" as the registering of irregular stresses in Heine's poem.³⁵¹ Since Hallmark imagines the melodic peak to occur in bar 10, he, in a rare criticism, reproaches Schumann's setting for the melodization of the fourth line: "The melody

³⁴⁹ Ibid., p. xi.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 8f.

³⁵¹ Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann's "Dichterliebe"*, p. 29.

fails only to give prominence to *Die Liebe*, and it overweights *aufgegangen*.³⁵² Furthermore, he recommends that the singer, to compensate for the apparent flaw in the composition, stress *die Liebe* (the love) more than *aufgegangen* (unfolded).³⁵³ But it is Hallmark's interpretation, rather than Schumann's score, that should be corrected. The de-emphasis of *aufgegangen* clearly goes against the musical intention, for there is a *crescendo* over the first syllable of this word. The misinterpretation stems from the identification of the soprano's e" in bar 10 and g" in bar 12 as appoggiaturas, non-chord tones. In the autograph, only the left hand of the piano suspends its note into bars 10 and 12, while the voice changes harmonies on the beat.³⁵⁴ But in going back to his earlier draft for the voice part in bar 10 and matching the voice part in bar 12 to it, Schumann in fact gave the "suspensions" in the left hand of the piano into bars 10 and 12 the quality of chord tones: they form a minor third with the soprano each time. The minor third movement in the right hand of the piano in bar 10 and the corresponding fifth movement in bar 12 imply chords, and it is not any worse to decide the dilemma in the favour of the two upper voices, so that the Small B in bar 10 be struck as an anticipation that resolves on the Small B-flat on *Liebe* in bar 11, while the Small-D in bar 12, as an anticipation that resolves to the Small C-sharp in bar 13. The merit of analyzing these downbeat chords as independent sonorities, incomplete seventh chords in third inversion, is that this reveals the notes in need of dissonance treatment: the bass notes. This analysis so bars the soprano from attacking the e" in bar 10 and the g" in bar 12 as dissonant non-harmonic tones, "appoggiaturas," for in each case her note relates to the other sounding notes as a consonance. On the other hand, Schumann's phrasing marks do not suggest independent chords on the downbeats of 10 and 12. These

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Ibid., p. 182 n6.

³⁵⁴ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), p. 50.

sonorities could also be explained as asynchronous chord changes, coming out of a performance practice of nineteenth-century piano virtuosos: hand asynchronization. Such an interpretation would yield a performance able to accumulate the greatest degree of tension over the longest distance, for it would bar the artificial sudden inflations and deflations, the noisy hyperventilation, that come inevitably with tonality imagined as dissonance and its treatment. It should not be forgotten that in 1840 Schumann praised Schubert's Symphony in C Major for its "heavenly length,"³⁵⁵ which likens it to novels—"never-ending" as those by Jean Paul.³⁵⁶ By "never-ending" Schumann refers less to the literal volumes of a Jean Paul novel than to the possibility that "the reader may go on creating in the same vein afterwards."³⁵⁷ These are not statements of Schumann's personal taste or aesthetic, nor direct declarations of his intentions, nor the ideas that his music embodies, nor even the appearance of the spirit of the times. The first performance of Schubert's "Great" Symphony in C Major, D944, in Leipzig in 1839 placed new binding norms on composers of the day. Schumann, composer and music critic working in Leipzig, and one of the best placed to articulate those norms in words, draws attention to "the brilliance and novelty of the instrumentation, the breadth and expanse of the form, the striking changes of mood, the whole new world into which we are transported," all of which "may be confusing to the listener, like any initial view of the unfamiliar."³⁵⁸ Schumann would have had to have set himself the task of accomplishing all these things in the form of the song cycle. But the long line is historically adequate today

³⁵⁵ Robert Schumann, "Die C-Dur-Sinfonie von Franz Schubert," in *Robert Schumann in Eigenen Wort*, zusammengestellt und herausgegeben von Willi Reich (Zurich: Manesse, 1967), pp. 390-399, here p. 396 as translated by Henry Pleasants from "Schubert's Symphony in C," in *Schumann on Music: A Selection from the Writings*, edited and annotated by Henry Pleasants (New York: Dover, 1988), pp. 163-168, here p. 165f.

³⁵⁶ R. Schumann, "Die C-Dur-Sinfonie von Schubert," p. 396 as translated, "Schubert's Symphony in C," p. 166.

³⁵⁷ R. Schumann, "Die C-Dur-Sinfonie von Schubert," p. 396 as translated, "Schubert's Symphony in C," p. 166.

³⁵⁸ R. Schumann, "Die C-Dur-Sinfonie von Schubert," p. 397f. as translated, "Schubert's Symphony in C," p. 166.

because, after Schoenberg, all chords are free-standing and the split between chord qualities and functions has been driven to its extreme, so the traditional chord “meanings” should no longer interfere with the musical reproduction of the harmonic structures and root progression. The asynchrony of chord changes in the first lied of *Dichterliebe* would counsel against emphatic performance, suggesting rather that there is no absolute break, only a number of overlapping pieces forming a long progression that traverses the stanza and can continue beyond it. Analyzing bars 1-12 in Neapolitan applied to C-sharp major best serves the musical intention of continuing reach that finds rest in the D major tonic triad in bar 12.

It may be argued that an analysis in applied Neapolitan should at least bring out the “tonal” moments of this progression. Tonality, however, does not reduce to dominant relations, much less the dominant seventh chord: not even the major-minor seventh chords should be analyzed as secondary (i.e., tertiary) dominants, for this reading would impute rest to what follows the dominants: *Mai, sprangen, Herzen, sangen, (ge-)standen*. Relaxing at these junctures can only create enormous performance problems, as this contradicts the clear movement of continual ascent in the words, figuration, vocal line, and inner piano parts: the entire musical idea. The reading of the major-minor seventh chords in bars 5, 7, 16 and 18 as dominant seventh chords actually causes the interpreter to mistake the effective dominant for the tonic.³⁵⁹ Hallmark contradicts himself on this point. On one hand, he quotes S. S. Prawer, who notes of *Als alle Knospen sprangen*³⁶⁰ that “the grammatical construction does not allow us to let our voice sink at the end of the second line: and this combines with the hesitant

³⁵⁹ The real dominant is the A⁷ chord. R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), I, p. 2, m. 11, quarter note value 2.

³⁶⁰ *When all the buds exploded...*

movement to induce in the reader a feeling of expectancy.”³⁶¹ In his gloss on Praver’s analysis of Heine’s text, Hallmark claims: “Schumann’s setting fits Heine’s lyric like a glove. The music produces musically the same effect as the poem.”³⁶² On the other hand, Hallmark claims that, “because of the cadence, the singer’s voice does sink at the end of both lines, but the piano prelude denies finality to the cadence.”³⁶³ The singer’s voice sinking for reasons dictated by the harmony, against the sense of expectancy suggested by the text and natural speech-rhythms, would suggest just the opposite: a poor setting of Heine’s lyric. Incoherence between the rhythm of the words and the shaping of the musical phrase will arise in performance if the song is analyzed in A major. Considering the affinity between the first Lied and the *Blumen* passage of the twelfth, the closest connection should be made between the sudden unclenching of the blossoms, and the opening or dawning of love; this link will be missed if the progression through *Knospen sprangen...* is interpreted as a cadence. Flower imagery not only figures prominently in many of the poems that Schumann chose to set, but also forms a special logic of its own in the cycle of those settings. If the progression is broken into two at the midpoint, then the return of flowers in the cycle becomes decorative, instead of logical, as it is, and the love consequently will appear as simply self-generated, against an indifferent floral backdrop. The tension should be carried through *sprangen...da* as this is the root of the dominant chord. If Praver is right to read the poem as a kind of chain of impulses that all lead from one to the next toward the final line, then an analysis in D-major-as-Neapolitan could express this idea clearly, avoiding the performance problem of a cadence in bars 7-8.

³⁶¹ S. S. Praver, *German Lyric Poetry: A Critical Analysis of Selected Poems from Klopstock to Rilke* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952), p. 10f.

³⁶² Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann’s “Dichterliebe”*, p. 134.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

Schumann's advanced, anti-organic practice lies in the contradiction between the three sharps seen in the score of "Im wunderschönen Monat Mai" and what its tonality sounds like to the ear: the Neapolitan region applied to C-sharp major.

This contradiction cannot be overstepped, but, given the universal delusional context of reification, it should be resolved on the side of performance.

The important words *Herzen* (heart) and *die Liebe* (the love) gain their interest not from arbitrary non-chord tones, to which the performers can add emphasis, but from a number of harmonic elements that work together: the most powerful harmonic movement of a half-step up to the subdominant chord on *Herzen*; the number of alterations, liberated by the applied Neapolitan figuration, in this thirteenth chord that takes up the whole of bar 10; the placement of the root almost at the *end* of this figured chord, following the norm of the style *brisé* of Renaissance lute-playing, the advanced music of the past, norm which this Romantic song reinstates as its idiosyncrasy; the high voicing of this root, which is in fact the highest-sounding pitch of the chord; the minor g^6 variant on *Liebe*, indicating an alternative reading of historical progress, this literal progress up the scale. The moment of greatest tension follows on the first three syllables of *aufgegangen* (unfolded). It is interesting to note that the *crescendo* starts over the chord change, but that it does not extend to the high point of the phrase. It leads in each case to a moment of chord asynchrony, where tonal clarity may be expected. The tension is truly dissolved on the last syllable of *aufgegangen*, the tonic chord in all voices. The *ritardando* marking on the second sixteenth note of the second beat of bar twelve (d") suggests the beginning of a new progression, despite the slur indications. On this reading, the last three-quarters of the second beat would be a new chord, a G-sharp half-

diminished chord, that, despite this harmonic departure, nonetheless shares a common tone (the d[♯]) with the preceding D-major tonic triad.

Lied I bears a certain strophic structure, which nonetheless takes on the appearance of being through-composed. The autograph makes use of repeat signs, with the instruction that the second verse be written out in the engraving.³⁶⁴ In that case, an “Erstes Tempo” (*a tempo*) marking should be read into bar 16 so that the end tempo of the *ritardando* in bars 12-15 is not adopted for the second verse, which would make the piano interlude a smooth transition into a slower second verse. Strophic form is exactly what rules out a slower tempo for the second verse, for this is the treatment reserved for repeats in entertainment music. There it is used because what is being heard for the second time tends to be perceived as going faster, so, following this logic, in order for the two identical passages to sound subjectively the same, the repeated passage actually has to be played at a slower tempo. The whole idea of the repeat sign is to deny primacy to the listener’s subjective impressions, and in fact to break the power that illusions of perception have over the subject by revealing them to be appearances. For this reason, the repeat is not incidental to the sonata, which is truly the major form of the capitalist era. However, Schumann emphatically did not want repeat signs for the first Lied of *Dichterliebe*. He had nothing against repeat signs, but avoids them in his Lied.³⁶⁵ This is consistent, for if a second verse is different from a first verse, then the setting of the second verse is not a *repetition* of the setting of the first verse, and the repeat signs are falsifying. In

³⁶⁴ Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann’s “Dichterliebe”*, p. 36f.

³⁶⁵ See, for example, Robert Schumann, *Drei Romanzen, Opus 28*, nach der Originalausgabe herausgegeben von Wolfgang Boetticher, Fingersatz von Walther Lampe, neue verbesserte Ausgabe (Munich: G. Henle, 1977), I, p. 2, m. 8; II, p. 8, m. 8; and III, p. 13, m. 113 and m. 120. The Three Romances constitutes the last work for solo piano that Schumann composed before embarking on his Lied composition in 1840. For a chronology of Schumann’s life and work, see *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Schumann, Robert,” by John Daverio and Eric Sams, accessed January 22, 2013, <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40704pg8>>.

instrumental music, a section in which all the parts but one are repetitions of a previous section needs to be written out again, for this saves confusion in rehearsals; so one wonders why the practice should be different in vocal works. Schumann's demand for the music for each verse to be written out, instead of the words of the first verse copied under those of the second, suggests that strophic form is not the same music repeated with different words, but rather, different words that actually change the same music. But where the words are the same, as they are at the beginning of each verse, the music, it seems, can be the same. The strophic form can best be realized, then, with the choice of a single tempo that can go with both verses, on one hand, and, on the other, with a placement of the beats within that tempo that varies according to the words. The piano interlude is very close to the prelude, but the differences indeed bring out a slightly different reading of that progression. In measure 13, as well as in the corresponding measure of the postlude, measure 24, Schumann amends the quarter notes in the bass of bar 2 to a dotted quarter note, a sixteenth note rest and a sixteenth note. This slight change draws attention to the last two sixteenth notes of the measure: a G-sharp diminished triad and a C-sharp triad, both missing their thirds, make the slightest of cadential gestures. When the pattern returns in bar 15, the tied quarter notes in the bass are not amended, but bar 13 re-contextualizes this low C-sharp as a tonic pedal. The (incomplete) C-sharp triad stands out more in bar 23 than the same sonority in measure 13, where it is grouped with the preceding two sixteenth notes. The Peters Edition, which the Bärenreiter Urtext follows, does not actually repeat. Unlike the autograph, these editions show different slur markings between interlude and postlude and delay the second *ritardando* by full measure.³⁶⁶ The late second

³⁶⁶ Robert Schumann, *Dichterliebe: Liedercyklus aus dem Buch der Lieder von H. Heine für eine Singstimme mit Begleitung des Pianoforte componirt und Frau Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient zugeeignet von Robert Schumann, Op. 48* (Leipzig: C. F. Peters, [s.a.]), Heft 1, I, p. 4, m. 24, IMSLP,

ritardando invites everything from the downbeat of bar 23 up to the *ritardando* to be read as a single chord, very closely modelled on the *Herzen* measure chord, —here a g-sharp half-diminished chord with added ninth, eleventh, thirteenth and even a flattened fifteenth (G-natural).³⁶⁷ The first two sixteenth notes of the *ritardando*, much like the Liebe/Sehnen chord, present a variant of what preceded: the chord based on g-sharp is re-told as a diminished triad. What happens next, unbelievably, is the C-sharp major triad. This slightly distorted cadence should spell the end of the applied Neapolitan key region and the return to C-sharp major. But immediately thereupon the D is struck again, plunging the Lied back into D-major-as-Phrygian. The Lied has another chance to end on this idiosyncratic outline of a cadence on C-sharp, but the ultimate measure does not follow its models in the prelude and interlude, measures 4 and 15. Instead, a completely different event occurs, which in a sense has been prepared by the substitution of the tied quarter note D of measures 1 and 3 by a sixteenth note rest and a Great B-natural sixteenth note in each of measures 12, 14, 23 and 25. Schumann draws particular attention to B in order to anticipate the final chord, which would be a complete C-sharp major triad, but for the very last note struck, the B-natural. The *ritardando* goes deeper into bar 26 than into the analogous bar, bar 15. In the autograph, the last bar is marked *Adagio*.³⁶⁸ In the context of a *Langsam* movement, this marking would be more of an expression marking than a tempo marking. The last bar can indeed be the slowest part, but the *Adagio* would indicate the slowness of ease or leisure, as opposed to that of grandeur or

http://imslp.org/wiki/Dichterliebe,_Op.48_%28Schumann,_Robert%29; R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), I, p. 3, m. 24. Cf. Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann's "Dichterliebe"*, p. 37, plate 5. Cf. also R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (1971), I, p. 15, mm. 23-24.

³⁶⁷ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), I, p. 3, mm. 23-24.

³⁶⁸ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe*, p. 53.

tension. The idea would have been for the sonority C-sharp – E-sharp – G-sharp³⁶⁹ – B-natural to be understood as an independent unit distinct from the rest of the piece. This marking did not, however, transfer to the editions. Schumann recognized the expression of this moment, but ultimately did not direct attention to it.

If smooth transitions assure the integrity of the circle, and of the work, then the cyclic form of *Dichterliebe* is in fact imperilled at many points. The last bar of the first Lied is the striking example. In light of Heine's imagery, this interruption of the strophic form established suggests an interruption in the cycle of nature, a break from inevitable, unstoppable recurrences. The new sonority that arrives instead of yet another strophe introduces the history-making of through-composition, which will be the choice method of setting all but one other song in the cycle. But despite the suggestion that the last bar breaks out of the peaceably ongoing state of first nature, *Dichterliebe* is not all about the Fall, original sin and man's expulsion from the Garden of Eden, for this would be to read the buds and birds of May literally, as pieces of nature untouched by human activity. The final bar of Lied I is also an interruption in human-made conventions. It appears to be the interruption of the cadence, the withholding of the tonic that would dissolve the harmonic ambiguity of the song and solve all the antinomies of key, but it is indeed the tonic of the song and of the cycle, C-sharp. The close of Lied I is so a real contradiction in the blind activity of second nature, which turns actual passing moments, diverse instants, history, into single, frozen immediacies to be repeated indefinitely—in other words, into myth, into the illusion of what has always been.

³⁶⁹ Please note again that the Bärenreiter Urtext Edition (2011) has an E-natural where other sources give G-sharp. Prefer here R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (1971), I, p. 15, m. 26 or R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (Peters, s.a.), Heft I, I, p. 4, m. 26. Cf. the autograph reproduction in Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann's "Dichterliebe,"* p. 37, plate 5.

The discontinuousness of the cycle lies not in itself, but between itself and the mass of accumulated, merely resting history.

In allowing *discontinuity* to enter his dialectical composition in such jarring fashion, in opening the apparently complete work to history, Schumann in fact goes quickly to the solution to the problem of dialectical indifferentiatedness that Adorno would articulate in his 1932 address “The Idea of Nature-History”:

History, as we have it, behaves as something thoroughly *discontinuous* insofar as it contains not only disparate facts and bodies of evidence, but also disparities of a structural sort.... Now this discontinuity, which, as I said, has no right to be forced into a structured totality, appears first of all as that between the mythic-archaic, natural material of history, of what was, and what surfaces in history, dialectically new, where “new” has yet to be spelled out.³⁷⁰

Adorno’s aim in this short piece is “to sublimate [aufzuheben] the usual antithesis of nature and history.”³⁷¹ This antithesis has arisen, according to Adorno, because phenomenology has finally emptied being of subjective reason. If the huge question of the meaning of being arises, it is because subjective reason and the existing have become isolated from one another; otherwise, philosophers would always be drawing the meanings out of particular beings, and these meanings, depending on the more or less meaningful particulars, would be so diverse and would take up so much of the work of philosophical interpretation that it would make no sense to stop short and ask about *the* meaning of *Being* in totalizing fashion.³⁷² Considering that the phenomenological-ontological concept of the existing excludes the subject, Adorno does not see how ‘meaning’ could be anything but what the *subject* puts into the existing, and,

³⁷⁰ GS, vol. 1, p. 361f., or prefer to my translation here that of Bob Hullot-Kentor, “The Idea of Natural History,” *Telos*, no. 60 (Summer 1984), pp. 111-124, here 122.

³⁷¹ GS, vol. 1, p. 345, or prefer to my translation here “The Idea of Natural History,” p. 111.

³⁷² GS, vol. 1, p. 347, or translated, “The Idea of Natural History,” p. 112.

therefore, does not see therefore how the existing could be anything but *meaningless*.³⁷³

Draining the existing of all subjectivity from the outset, then engaging various large-scale efforts to reconcile reason and the real, the phenomenological-ontological school falls prey to Idealism. Rather than work on actual, historical objects, phenomenology just spins out catch-all categories, such as historicity³⁷⁴ and “vitality [Lebendigkeit],”³⁷⁵ in which nothing can actually go,³⁷⁶ finally ending up with a definition of the whole that is not a system, but a “structured totality or unity.”³⁷⁷ In other words, phenomenology does not conceive the whole critically, as did Marx, as a system, whether “the monetary system” or “the gang-system” or the “credit system” or “the capitalist system of production”: as a real web of relations, spun out of a few abstract principles. The explanatory power of Being is not and cannot be verified against actual historical, existing things. The other large-scale effort engaged to reconcile reason and the real is the reduction of the meaning of being to *possibility*.³⁷⁸ Adorno considers the priority of possibility over actuality to be yet another throw-back to Idealism: “I see an Idealist moment in the supremacy of the realm of possibility, for, in the scope of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the conflict of possibility and actuality [Wirklichkeit] is nothing other than

³⁷³ GS, vol. 1, p. 347f., or translated “The Idea of Natural History,” p. 112f.

³⁷⁴ George L. Mosse signals the importance of the concept of historicity in the “völkish” thinking that led to Fascism: “This concept of historicity gave the individual a further link with the landscape and with membership in the Volk. It also expanded the concept of the landscape to include not only the mountains, valleys, trees and fields, but also the legendary exploits of those who had lived within this ‘genuine’ environment for centuries.” George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1964), p. 16.

³⁷⁵ GS, vol. 1, p. 347f. Hullot-Kentor translates “Lebendigkeit” as “life” in “The Idea of Natural History,” p. 116.

³⁷⁶ As Jan Christiaens points out, nothing can actually go into the category of historicity because it is a junk category; this is a “spurious solution” to the incompatibility between universality and particularity: “In his [Adorno’s] view, the problem of historical contingency is not solved by subsuming particular things and events under the *category* of historicity. In fact, subsuming all things that are ill-fitting under the category of contingency and fortuity is tantamount to admitting the failure of philosophy to encompass the multifariousness of the empirical world.” Jan Christiaens, “Analysis as Mediated Immediacy: Adorno, Hepokoski & Darcy, and the Dialectics of Musical Analysis,” *Dutch Journal of Music Theory* 13, no. 2 (May 2008): pp. 145-158, here p. 147.

³⁷⁷ GS, vol. 1, p. 352, or prefer to my translation here “The Idea of Natural History,” p. 115.

³⁷⁸ GS, vol. 1, p. 347, or translated, “The Idea of Natural History,” p. 112.

that of the categorial, subjective structure against the empirical manifold.”³⁷⁹ Adorno therefore sees it necessary “to criticize the segregation of actuality and possibility from the side of actuality.”³⁸⁰ The specific form that this criticism takes within Adorno’s address is a confrontation of the concept of *symbol* with the concept of *allegory*. The symbol is independent from the symbolically meant, whereas allegory *was* on a continuum with the allegorically meant, for “allegory is expression,” the *face* of the person undergoing death.³⁸¹ While the semiotic tradition stemming from Saussure authorizes sharp separations between beings and meanings, so between nature and history, right from the start, expression is a remnant of the past that contests the rule of arbitrary signs: what shows up as expression flows from what is undergone. Allegory is not free expression, but, to broaden Benjamin’s insight in connection with Proust, it results only from what had the power to age us. Allegory, in Adorno’s words, is not merely the ongoing process of suffering as it is etched on the human face, but emphatically the endpoint of this process in the *facies hippocratica* and worse: “Everything about history that is untimely, painful, unsuccessful from the start, shows itself in a face—nay, in a skull.”³⁸² Adorno here seems to fall back on just the superstitious thinking of physiognomy and phrenology that Hegel attacks in the famous chapter of *Phenomenology of Spirit*. But Adorno is claiming that not all the readings of things are mere subjectively inserted meanings. A face or skull having passed through death gives some indication [Bedeutung], but only as the convergence of history and nature. Allegorical physiognomy and phrenology do not aim at deciphering the inner essence of the individual personality and spelling out its future and potential deeds. The Hippocratic face and the memento mori are there only when

³⁷⁹ GS, vol. 1, p. 353, or prefer to my translation here “The Idea of Natural History,” p. 116.

³⁸⁰ GS, vol. 1, p. 354, or prefer to my translation here “The Idea of Natural History,” p. 117.

³⁸¹ GS, vol. 1, p. 358 as translated, “Idea of Natural History,” p. 119.

³⁸² GS, vol. 1, p. 358, or prefer to my translation here “The Idea of Natural History,” p. 120.

the individual can do no more, so interpreting them cannot run afoul of the Hegelian criticism aimed at physiognomy and phrenology, which use meanings and intentions to predict the individual's future deeds, hidden propensities and potential dangers, all of which become—at least in the mind of the diviner—far more important than anything actual, even the person herself. The Hippocratic face and the memento mori are ciphers because they are history and nature in one: each is a manifestation of the individual human history that was subjugated to massive forces of human nature, to the conditions of existence.³⁸³ If we want to know “how it is possible to understand, to interpret, this alienated, thingly, dead world,” then we should look to the allegory, which goes to the precise point of connection between what phenomenologists and ontologists have historically separated absolutely into meaning and being.³⁸⁴ At this point, however, Adorno is worried that he wins interpretation back for the reified world of merely existing things at the cost of history and nature becoming indistinguishable from one another. Worse, his account seems to recommend that we look at everything historical as allegorical, so that it will be able to signify.³⁸⁵ This is where Adorno calls on the concept of *discontinuity*, so as to avoid hypostatizing the continuity between expression and thing expressed that occurs in allegory. In particular, it is the *discontinuity* between myth and the new that shows where there was previously *continuity* of subjective reason and existing thing. For it is in being able to distinguish where there *was* subjective reason living in the thing that one knows what to interpret. This discontinuity is at the heart of illusion, which Adorno calls “second nature.”³⁸⁶ Second nature is what at the same time seems totally meaningful and comprehensible in itself and is actually just loaded with subjectively inserted meanings. Illusion is not just unreality.

³⁸³ GS, vol. 1, p. 358f., or translated “The Idea of Natural History,” p. 120.

³⁸⁴ GS, vol. 1, p. 356, or prefer to my translation here “The Idea of Natural History,” p. 118.

³⁸⁵ GS, vol. 1, p. 361, or translated, “The Idea of Natural History,” p. 122.

³⁸⁶ GS, vol. 1, p. 364, or translated, “The Idea of Natural History,” p. 123.

The mythic moment of illusion is its real moment, according to Adorno: it is just that we experience illusion *as expression*, which means that we cannot describe *what* illusion expresses independently from that expression.³⁸⁷ Interpretation that remains dependent on expression does not break the ban on investigating the future. This dependence of significance on its particular expression, this trace of archaic form of mimetic communication, contrasts with the new, which is the unreal moment of illusion, its promise of reconciliation, “where at the same time the world is most snugly walled off from all ‘meaning’ [»Sinn«].”³⁸⁸ The “appearing new [Neues Erscheinende]” has broken off from the past continuity of thing and mind.³⁸⁹ The appearing new is just a symbol, a symbolically inserted meaning. There we *cannot* interpret, for not only would that amount to prophecy, and so break the ban on investigating the future, but it would also be arbitrary. It would not at any rate attack the problem of alienation, which is the reason why we interpret in the first place.

The expression of *Dichterliebe* is illusion. The interruption of the strophic cycle of nature in Lied I of *Dichterliebe*, the new dissonant ending that seems to make musical history, seems also to present as expression, as flowing from the pain of the subject in natural longing. A great ambiguity in the final bar of the first Lied of *Dichterliebe* obtains: it is not clear whether its rupture is a rupture with cyclical nature or with music history. The confusion of nature with history marks at the same time an abrupt discontinuity between the past and the new—between the sonority so peculiar for a closing, between the idiosyncratic expression that seems to close in on itself, losing all sense, on the one hand, and, on the other, the so-called emancipation of the dissonance that it appears to herald. Schumann’s *Dichterliebe* is

³⁸⁷ GS, vol. 1, p. 365, or translated “The Idea of Natural History,” p. 124.

³⁸⁸ GS, vol. 1, p. 365, or prefer to my translation here “The Idea of Natural History,” p. 124.

³⁸⁹ GS, vol. 1, p. 346, or prefer to my translation here “The Idea of Natural History,” p. 111.

advanced, but not because its dissonant ending appears to be a potential that will eventually reach fruition in the music of the Second Viennese School. Appearing possibility is the mere unreal aspect of aesthetic illusion. The continuity between Schumann and Schoenberg is illusory, because *Dichterliebe* would be satisfied with nothing less than the real reconciliation of nature and spirit. The other aspect of aesthetic illusion, its real, historical aspect, is what interpretation aims to save. Adequate interpretation breaks with second nature, with the reproduction of forgotten subjectivity. In opposition to both nature and history is memory, the rescue of the defeated longing and desire of the past, which have been carried close over the vastness of paltry, emptying time.

The applied Neapolitan key area continues to haunt the non-figured second Lied, in A major. The slow undulation in the bass part of the first Lied, from C-sharp to D and back to C-sharp, is recapitulated by the voice part in the antecedent of the first period of the second Lied.³⁹⁰ The applied Phrygian key region can explain the series of seemingly disconcerting harmonic leaps accompanying the highpoint of the lines *Und wenn du mich lieb hast, Kindchen, schenk' ich dir die Blumen all' / und vor deinem Fenster soll klingen das Lied der Nachtigall* (here underlined).³⁹¹ For the progression is not at all unusual if one imagines that the harmony enters the applied Neapolitan area on *Blumen*. The G-sharp half-diminished seventh chord on *Blumen* and the C-sharp major triad that follows it on *all'*, form an oddly proportioned cadence. The clear V – I relation between the roots of the chords conflicts with their qualities, the B-natural and D-natural included from D major having given the V chord a quality that a V chord would never naturally have. The I chord, however, indeed has a I

³⁹⁰ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), II, p. 4, mm. 1-2, with pick-up.

³⁹¹ Ibid., II, p. 4, mm. 11-12. “And, darling, if you love me/I'll give all my flowers to you;/And nightingales at your window/Shall sing the whole night through.” Heine, “Aus meinen Tränen spriessen,” trans. Aaron Kramer, in *The Poetry of Heinrich Heine*, p. 70.

quality. Unlike the C-sharp chord in the last measure of the first Lied, this C-sharp chord is a major triad, so provides what would have been the conventional ending of the first Lied. The chords repeat, almost coquettishly, then, as if out of nowhere, appears an A major-minor seventh chord, creating an impressive rupture in the harmonic fabric. Yet this instantaneous transition into D Major is not inexplicable: for a few measures, the applied Neapolitan key region maintains, whose tonics swap off as the cadential goal. As D is the *second* cadential goal, we have not yet left the double tonic key area to return to the key suggested by the first note of the cycle—the key of C-sharp major.

Arthur Komar remarks the importance of both C-sharp and D in the opening of the second Lied, but reads the A major triad (supporting C-sharp in the voice) in measure 1 as the point of arrival of the first Lied: “In view of the B left hanging at the end of Song 1, the initial C-sharp of Song 2 can be regarded as a local passing-note to the neighbour D, which resolves directly to C-sharp in the same measure.”³⁹² The A major chord is consequently, according to Komar, the revelation of the true tonic of the first Lied and so the temporary dissolution of its tension.³⁹³ Komar so reads the D here as mainly subordinate to C-sharp, which is supported by the tonic of the first *two* Lieder. He nonetheless takes stock of Allen Forte’s controversy with Heinrich Schenker over which of the two notes—C-sharp or D—is subsidiary to the other in the second Lied:

In spite of the marked harmonic difference between mm. 1 and 13, Schenker analyses the two passages alike—D is, in each case, a neighbour to the two adjacent C-sharps. Forte disagrees with Schenker, viewing the last phrase as essentially different from the first, and places the return of the headnote, C-sharp, in m. 14 *after*—rather than preceding—the tonicized D.³⁹⁴

³⁹² Komar, “The Music of *Dichterliebe*,” p. 72.

³⁹³ “Song 1 is in the key of A but makes a point of hanging onto B.” Ibid., p. 70.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 72.

Komar attempts to resolve the controversy by arguing that the alternation of roles between C-sharp and D has two functions: When D is subsidiary to C-sharp, it clarifies A major as the key of the first two Lieder. But when C-sharp is subsidiary to D, it is to serve as an intermediary between it and **B**,³⁹⁵ which will, over the course of the first five songs, gain greater harmonic support until it becomes the tonic.³⁹⁶ Komar's attempt at reconciliation, however, subordinates the new, the prominent alternation between C-sharp and D in these first two Lieder, to what is already known and familiar: clear statements of monotonal keys. That either C-sharp or D can be subsidiary suggests that neither one truly is. The disunity amongst Schenker and his followers on just what constitutes the unity of the opening two songs of *Dichterliebe* suggests that *Dichterliebe* springs out of a fundamental disunity. If one grasps this disagreement as contradiction, one grasps the structural illusion that is the condition for the possibility of such an antinomy: the definition of music as fundamental unity, expressed in the establishment and confirmation of a single tonic.

For Schenker, however, it is completely out of the question that both the tonic and the flattened supertonic be admitted into the fundamental structure: "In the fundamental structure a Phrygian supertonic can no more exist than can a mixture."³⁹⁷

In taking issue not with the concept of tonic, but rather with the exclusionary aspect of harmony, the relegation of certain notes to a *subaltern* category of "non-harmonic tones," which needs no further comment, Schumann at his most advanced holds fast to the hope of transcendence (in modulation), yet determines transcendence not as the pure creation or break-in of the utterly different, but as a different organization of *what is* already. The exception to

³⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 73.

³⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 76.

³⁹⁷ Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, p. 77 § 104 as translated, *Free Composition*, p. 41, with scale degree written out.

this is the E Minor passage in Lied IV, where the modulation coincides with an as-yet unheard tone, the D-sharp.³⁹⁸ It is no coincidence that the e minor passage accompanies the lines: *Wenn ich mich lehn' an deine Brust, Kommt's über mich wie Himmelslust.*³⁹⁹ With the breakthrough of D-sharp here, Schumann suggests that heavenly rapture would be something completely Other, a true transcendence from without. The reservation of the transcendence from without for paradise is confirmed by the return of e minor as the home key of the sixth Lied, in which the beloved takes on the allure of the sacred. It should be noted also that the enharmonic equivalent of D-sharp, E-flat, becomes the tonic of “Dein Angesicht,” the song that would have followed Lied IV, but which Schumann removed in the course of publication; in it, the voice reaches E-flat on the word *Himmelslicht* (heaven’s light).⁴⁰⁰ With the unequivocal destruction of the beloved’s heavenly aura in the seventh Lied, however, so too is destroyed all hope of a pure transcendence from without. From then, D-sharp/E-flat loses its special, inherently transcendent status to occur in completely profane contexts, such as Lied XI. Through the course of *Dichterliebe*, we are disabused of the idea of transcendence as the incursion of the qualitatively alien; every genuine moment of transcendence in *Dichterliebe* is a new arrangement of known elements, each bearing a history.

{Section vii} Like Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu*, Schumann’s *Dichterliebe* owes its revolutionary form to inorganic transformation wrought under internal pressures, not to processes of natural growth. In the case of Proust, the logic of rupture and eruption literally followed the artistic forming impulse. The idea for the *Recherche* crystallized spontaneously in a single, perfect form, so suddenly that the crystal trapped inner tensions whose counter-

³⁹⁸ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), IV, p. 6, m. 9.

³⁹⁹ “And when I lean upon thy breast,/No dream of heaven could be more blest.” Heine, “Wenn ich in deine Augen seh,” trans. Alma Strettell, in *The Poetry of Heinrich Heine*, p. 70.

⁴⁰⁰ R. Schumann, “Dein Angesicht,” op. 127, no. 2, in *Dichterliebe*, p. 38, m. 15, with my translation.

pressures eventually split it into two, but with the strange result that the split and not the crystal became the true generator of the work, work whose originating halves lie remote in time and space from one another. The idea for *À la recherche du temps perdu*, preserved as a sketch in one of the earliest notebooks that Proust kept for his novel, Cahier IV, is the discovery of the secret passage between two separate walking paths.⁴⁰¹ In a matter of just a few pages, Proust passes from a description of the two walking paths to the discovery of their secret communication: “Car je sus alors que le côté de Meséglise et le côté de Garmantes n’étaient pas aussi inconciliables que je le croyais autrefois et qu’on pouvait parti [sic] du côté de Meséglise pour couper par Garmantes” (Because I knew then that the Meséglise way and the Garmantes way were not as irreconcilable as I had believed them to be before and that it was possible to set out on the Meséglise way to cut through Garmantes).⁴⁰² According to Claudine Quémard, the presentation of the two seemingly irreconcilable “ways” and the “conclusion,” in which they are immediately reconciled, were composed together and form a running whole, in which the theme of the planned novel emerges.⁴⁰³ But Proust’s art was incapable of such immediate resolution. Thousands of pages separate the description of the two walks in the first volume of *À la recherche du temps perdu*, where the narrator assumes the paths to be completely isolated from one another,⁴⁰⁴ from the discovery of the hidden communication between them at the end of what becomes the sixth volume, *Albertine*

⁴⁰¹ Claudine Quémard, “Sur deux versions anciennes des ‘côtés’ de Combray,” in *Études proustiennes*, n° 2 (1975): pp. 159-282, with excerpts from Marcel Proust’s cahiers: Cahier IV, pp. 161-177 and Cahier XII, pp. 177-210.

⁴⁰² Marcel Proust, “Cahier IV,” in Quémard, “Sur deux versions anciennes des ‘côtés’ de Combray,” p. 176 [f° 42], with my translation.

⁴⁰³ Quémard, “Sur deux versions anciennes des ‘côtés’ de Combray,” p. 224f.

⁴⁰⁴ Marcel Proust, *Du côté de chez Swann*, *À La Recherche du temps perdu*, vol. 1 (s.l.: Gallimard, 1988), p. 133, or translated by Lydia Davis, *Swann’s Way* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), p. 137f.

disparue.⁴⁰⁵ The work is literally generated out of the contradictions, the social contradictions, contained in the secret passage between the path of the aristocracy and the path of the bourgeoisie. Unlike the writing of *À la recherche du temps perdu*, the composition of *Dichterliebe* did not begin with an unsustainable resolution of real contradiction. Preliminary sketches indicate that the cleft was there in the earliest conception of the work: the first idea that Schumann conferred to his oblong manuscript pages consists of the vocal line for the first song, little different from the final copy, followed by the broken C-sharp dominant seventh chord, which he indicated for the ending: “Schluß.”⁴⁰⁶ Three sharps are given in the key signature. The vocal line does not yet contain its one accidental, the g-natural, although, the piano part shows a courtesy accidental: the b' is marked natural. The first idea noted for the work was indeed an unresolved dominant seventh at the end of a piece. With the composition of the piano part, however, the field of research expanded: the question was not only whether a piece of a work could end on a dissonance, but also whether the tonic could be recognized independently from the presence of dissonance and consonance, from the immediate perception of harsh and gentle sounds. Tonic in Schumann is what underlies experiences. Dissonances inevitably arise when there are two such subjects, which not only trade perspectives, but also hold together contradictions in their opposition, confront their experiences with one another and transform one another. *Dichterliebe* indeed begins and ends with the same pitch: C-sharp/D-flat. But when this pitch asserts itself in the final measure of the work with all dissonance removed, it does not represent real harmony and resolution, but

⁴⁰⁵ Marcel Proust, *Albertine disparue*, édition présentée, établie et annotée par Anne Chevalier, nouvelle édition revue, *À la Recherche du temps perdu*, vol. 6 (s.l.: Gallimard, 1992), p. 269, or translated by Peter Collier, *The Fugitive*, in “*The Prisoner*,” “*The Fugitive*”, In *Search of Lost Time*, vol. 5 (London: Allen Lane, 2002), pp. 385-658, here p. 654.

⁴⁰⁶ Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann’s “Dichterliebe”*, p. 34, ex. 1.1.

rather presents the loss of the other subject—final loneliness and the consolidation of self in an illusory unity. Schumann is the true dialectical composer: he does not throw out the notion of the tonic, but determines it by steps in a different way so that by the conclusion of *Dichterliebe*, it has passed into its opposite. The citation in the final postlude⁴⁰⁷ underlines the deep schism in the work: it returns not to the beginning of the cycle, which would complete the circle, but to the near-end of the twelfth Lied,⁴⁰⁸ missing by fourteen bars the F-sharp minor figured chord on the first syllable of *Blumen*,⁴⁰⁹ which seems to be the missing half to the C-sharp dominant seventh chord with which the first Lied broke off.⁴¹⁰ The reference to the postlude of the twelfth Lied in the final postlude thus makes a circlet that takes in the last four Lieder, which are characterized notably by the poet's retreat into dreams, happy ones, as well as dark ones that offer no relief from the reality principle, and in which the lonely subject lives through a depth of horror that it cannot consciously bear, in waking life. The fourteen bars that go between these two worlds, the waking world and the dreaming world, do not serve to unite, but stage the moment of greatest disharmony between nature and spirit: the poet, reduced to silence, drained of his expressive gifts, sick of his flowers of rhetoric, stands accused by the rhetoric of flowers. As in Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*, the secret, connecting passage between the two circuits is not a unifying moment, but a moment of disappointment, disillusionment and alienation, precisely because, through it, the contradictions of the work are revealed. The belated F-sharp minor triad on the first syllable of *Blumen* has the right quality, but the wrong function, so cannot still the poet's longing that the

⁴⁰⁷ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), XVI, p. 39, mm. 53-56.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, XII, p. 25, mm. 23-26.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, XII, p. 24, m. 9.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, I, p. 3, m. 26.

opening Lied left unfulfilled.⁴¹¹ Similarly, the F-sharp dominant seventh chord on *sprechen* has the right root, but the wrong quality.⁴¹² Yet these chords *do* name the object of the poet's longing, which was in fact never named, but only assumed to be the beloved; however, they name it only as something displaced to unreality, as the late recognition of what has been lost. The true object of longing, revealed in music alone, never explicitly announced in the course of the lyric chosen for *Dichterliebe*, would have been speaking flowers, a truly unsocietized language, free of second nature. The misreading of poetic longing, the necessity to refer it to conventions and a determinate content, deforms the objects that would fulfil it, finally missing them. Occurring as these chords do, in the exceptional world of a brief applied Phrygian key area, in which qualities and functions have split apart, the estrangement of the object becomes readable as the result of reification, for where chord qualities are no guide to chord functions, the fetishism that reduces the former to the latter must give itself up.

And everything that transpires from the poet's confession of longing to the moment in which the flowers speak, when it becomes clear what the true object of longing was, once it is missed, becomes readable as a *history* of that reification.

The poet's confession of longing in the first Lied opens directly onto his suffering in the second. There the poet objectifies his tears and sighs in what will become a second nature—flowers and nightingale song, which seem natural, but are manmade transformations. At the same time, he entirely displaces his longing, it would seem, onto the one to whom he made the confession. A duplicate of what he also loves, the flowers, becomes an instrument, a means to winning the beloved.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., XII, p. 24, m. 9.

⁴¹² Ibid., XII, p. 24, m. 8.

In Lied III, the poet withdraws his love of the spreading nature that served as a conduit to the beloved, the manifold of roses, lilies, dove, and sun, in exclusive favour of their pure synthesis, the beloved herself, who goes by the epic epithet of *die Kleine, die Feine, die Reine, die Eine* (the fine one, tiny one, refined one, only one).⁴¹³ This Lied corresponds to the moment of fetishism, in which the unified thing, which is really made of suffering nature, is considered only in its purity, outside of time and work, as source rather than as product. Wild nature is thus subordinated to spirit. Yet *she herself* does turn out to be produced, something of a poetic creation in the industrial age: the constant off-beats cease only on the final *Eine!*—as if the song were an assembly line that produced units of love and the “Eine!” were simply the finished thing falling off the conveyor belt.

In Lied IV, the poet then suffers the consequences of the consolidation of his love into a single one. His bitter tears at her words *ich liebe dich!* (I love you!) might seem an odd reaction, yet he suffers from the requirement for unity that he himself has imposed on his love. On one hand, he perhaps already fears that his beloved’s love is not exclusive; on the other, her human speech becomes for him a painful reminder of his first wish: for *nature* to speak. Something different almost happened in the song’s genuinely enigmatic moment on the *sprichst...ich* chord: the prolonged delay, demanded by the *ritardando*, in resolving this diminished seventh lets the music hang in the vague realm in the middle of the many possible keys to which this symmetrical chord can resolve.⁴¹⁴ The experience of love opened the possibility of a different ego, one that does not adopt the standpoint of a single key; however, in the resolution of the chord, the suffering ego of frozen drives becomes the basis of speech.

⁴¹³ Ibid., III, p. 5, mm. 7-8, with pick-up, here with my translation.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., IV, p. 7, m. 13.

The failure of speech to fulfil its promise seems to drive the poet to find an objective expression for the “wonderfully sweet hour” and the hopes it held: in Lied V, he thinks to capture the fleeting hour spent with the beloved by way of a lily, which would be able to play back her song off his soul like a quivering phonograph, reproducing the shudder of her kiss, shudder that Schumann renders mimetically with animated chords in thirty-second notes. Recorded music is an extreme example of a dislocated love of nature, and it is perhaps no coincidence that the horns of certain gramophones were indeed shaped like lily calyxes. The second nature of Schumann’s lily gramophone is curious in that it not only would record external events—songs—, which it would then repeat indefinitely, but would also register subjective impulses, the quivering or shuddering that Adorno characterizes as the living reaction to being captured, objectified, reified: the “life in the subject is nothing but what shudders, the reaction to the total spell that transcends the spell.”⁴¹⁵ The poet’s demand for the lily’s song to shudder and waver like the beloved’s kiss expresses his wish for the process of objectification itself to open onto something beyond objectification: something new.

However, in Lied VI, the poet discovers that his beloved has already been captured in something old: in the painting of the Blessed Virgin Mary that he studies in Cologne Cathedral. This is an antiquated, constructed composition with a massive Baroque texture in flowing, horizontal sequences, which suggests a divine logic and order to the powerful current of the Rhine:

Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome,
Da spiegelt sich in den Well’n,
Mit seinem großen Dome
Das große heiligen Köln.

⁴¹⁵ GS, vol. 7, p. 489f. as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 331.

(The Rhine, the holiest waters,
In whose mirror an image is shown:
The great cathedral spires
Of mighty, holy Cologne.)⁴¹⁶

Schumann's use of the pedal point, now and then harmonically functionless, harkens back to a period when this mere gesture towards the upcoming tonic freed time up for restless key shifts and unresolved dissonances. This same throw-back to a less mediated era occurs at the end of the third Lied, where the tonic pedal begins right after the offbeats are suspended for a measure.⁴¹⁷ The return of the off-beats with the addition of a tonic (and, later, dominant) pedal suggests something like non-contemporaneity: the juxtaposition of assembly-line production and craft production, laid out as a bare contradiction, so that the persistence of the more ancient form can no longer serve to disguise capitalism's radicality. The antiquated character of Lied VI, with its tonic pedal point that underlines *in meines Lebens Wildnis* (in my life's wilderness) suggests that the solution to reification lies in a return to craft production.⁴¹⁸ Yet the past is not only the place of hope, but also terror: an expedition into it reveals that reification is much older than suspected and even has its origins in cult. The poet's love of the beloved is tied up with his aesthetic, even religious, experience of the painting in Cologne Cathedral. The beloved exactly resembles the transcendent icon that brings light to the poet's *Lebens Wildnis* (life's wilderness). She has become all the more rarefied through it: in Lied III, she was made up of heterogeneous, spreading nature, of roses, lilies, dove and sun, but here she contrasts with it utterly, allied with the painting that illuminated the wild, spreading nature of the *poet's* life. The painted Virgin Mary is surrounded by floating flowers and angels, and it is perhaps the association with the painted flowers that inspired the poet to

⁴¹⁶ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), VI, p. 10, mm. 1-15, with pick-up, here with my translation.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, III, p. 5, mm. 17-21.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, VI, p. 10, mm. 21-25, with my translation.

love a likeness of the painting. There comes an intimation of the object of the poet's longing: a half-diminished F-sharp seventh chord falls on the first syllable of *Blumen*,⁴¹⁹ although rendered in a chiselled, texture utterly different from the delicate filigree textures that created an affinity between the *Blumen* chord in Lied XII to the close of Lied I. In Lied VI, it becomes doubtful whether the poet ever loved first nature, mediated as it is through its representation in art. His love for the beloved flows out of his love of nature or of art, yet it is no less powerful for that. In the time of reification, however, he is made to pay the price for his love of a living human being, who just happens to carry associations of something that could be beyond the reified world. The transcendent moment that in *Der Freischütz* would have put the individual into communication with the objective forces causing his suffering, helping him to surmount them and to win the beloved, in *Dichterliebe* only further isolates the individual and intensifies his pain. The poet's revelation that the beloved resembles a holy object enshrined in the Cologne Cathedral should constitute a super-social moment: in this space beyond existing society, the poet should be able to call forth a society in which he has his heart's desire. Yet, in the secret art-logic of *Dichterliebe*, the discovery of the beloved's resemblance to the painting in the Cathedral seems to drive her from him for good. Here an important difference between the sequence of songs in *Dichterliebe* and the sequence of poems in *Lyrisches Intermezzo* has consequences for the interpretation. Schumann did not set the poem in which the beloved is revealed to be the intended of someone else, "Wie die Wellenschaumgeborene."⁴²⁰ He only implies the content of this poem musically, foreshadowing the revelation of the beloved's

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., VI, p. 11, m. 32 (flowers).

⁴²⁰ Heine, *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, XVII, p. 125.

unfaithfulness by way of the cuckoo calls, in the second Lied.⁴²¹ By not setting “Wie die Wellenschaumgeborene,” Schumann leaves out a single, obvious explanation for the poet’s misery—the bare fact that he is a jilted lover. Lied VII is not the rupture itself, but the poet’s reaction to it: the lacuna demands a reconstruction of the actual event. In one of the last creative decisions that he took on *Dichterliebe*, the cutting of four songs from the original 20-song version of the cycle during the publication process,⁴²² Schumann seemed to insist on both the brevity of the love and the *strange* suddenness of the loss. Originally, four songs separated the settings of “Wenn ich in deine Augen seh’...” and “Ich grolle nicht....” In Schumann’s definitive, 16-song version, between reciprocal yet troubling love and the irrevocable loss of love there are only two songs—the settings of “Ich will meine Seele tauchen...” and “Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome...”—songs in which the poet seeks to reproduce the physically absent beloved, to keep her only as aesthetic language—as a song, then as a painting. With the excision of “Dein Angesicht” and “Lehn’ deine Wang’ an meine Wang’,” so disappears the clear association of extremely passionate love with death that could have served as an explanation both for the poet’s need to withdraw into the aesthetic realm and for the beloved to seek love in its stable, socially-recognized form, marriage. In the published version, the beloved’s words and the poet’s tears would appear to conclude their love, rather than announce it and begin its transformation into dark, macabre passion, as happens in the version of the cycle that Schumann offered for publication. The beloved’s words, met with such grief, thus take on a particular importance: her declaration, not the morbid intensity of passion, seems to move the poet to seek solitary aesthetic experiences, as if he preferred a likeness of

⁴²¹ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe*, II, p. 4, mm. 3-4; mm. 7-8 and mm. 15-17—the falling third motif starting on the sixteenth note each time.

⁴²² Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann’s “Dichterliebe”*, p. 125.

her to her, his own words to hers, his poems to her declarative statement that made him cry bitterly. But if the poet does indeed *decide* to withdraw into the aesthetic realm, it cannot be thereby assumed that he lays all his hopes in a totally successful sublimation of a problematic desire for a fickle woman. The discovery of the likeness of the beloved to the painting in Cologne Cathedral brings with it a sense of awe or fear, owing to the nested structure of Heine's poem, in which the Rhine contains a reflection of all of Cologne, which includes the Cathedral, which holds the painting. Saved to the end, the beloved's likeness *in* the painting, becomes like the last, other, thing within nesting boxes, the last thing that cannot contain any other thing, so what should be the profoundest truth and the end of the secret and mystery. The artistic work of objectification, which seemed to be a way out of love's pain, is revealed to be at the origin of artistic love, which lends this love something inescapable. In seeking to preserve his experiences in something other, the lily, the poet has not made a substitute for his love; he has merely returned his love to its source—to resemblance in repetition.

To his horror, the poet still loves, as can be drawn from his reaction to the definitive loss of the beloved in Lied VII. But if he glimpsed something of a logic in his love in Lied VI, he does not go on to draw the conclusion that a *social* logic is at work. The poet does not trace the definitive loss of the beloved to anything other than to her cruelty: thus the poet lays the entire blame for his private suffering on this other private individual. Yet the appearance of a purely personal pain is a true sign of the inadequacy between the subject and social objectivity, inadequacy which is really something objective. The poet would not suffer if he did not find himself at odds with the alienated world, if his eye knew no distance and if he did not expect his gaze to be returned. The catastrophe is able to happen at all because the poet remains a believer in aura. What the poet took to be the beloved's aura was not any intrinsic

quality, but simply the memory of things in his experiences of art and nature, the flowers with which she had become randomly associated in an encounter with the sacred. The association of the beloved with the sacred, which, in *Der Freischütz* is the seal of Agathe's goodness and fidelity and the proof that Max's love for her is grounded in the real, in *Dichterliebe* is a guarantee of nothing. If, as Benjamin advances, the dreaming world of capitalist phantasmagoria is characterized by resemblances, then any resemblance that a human being bears, whether to a dove or to a portrait, is not likely to be traced, but will continue to operate on the subconscious level. There can be no waking human relations when operating resemblances are automatically screened out, just part of the annoying repetitive character of life under mass production. The poet can place resemblances, but, it would seem, too late. The poet's consciousness of what precise association animates his love does not actually release him from his misery. For at the root of this misery lie the objective processes of reification, which he cannot accuse, even if he knows them well, for he is equally caught up in them. *Dichterliebe* does not end with the loss of the beloved in Lied VII because the problematic it sets out is not merely that of interpersonal relations, but rather something closer to that of the possibility of immediacy for the artist, who is determined to objectify, but must struggle against the objectified. It is never a question for the poet of how to win back the beloved, but it may be rather a question of how to render or imitate the beloved, whose beauty has already been the subject of another artwork. She is claimed just as much by another man as by the weight of the past, suggested by the grand Baroque style of Lied VI. The delicate, intimate composition in much of the cycle indeed arises from the urge to rescue all love from its traditions and its legacy, from the ideas about it prevalent in "die alten, bösen Lieder" (the

horrid, olden Lieder).⁴²³ Yet the past persists in distorted, alien, mythological forms, as suggested in Lied VII by the dream in which the poet sees a serpent feeding on his beloved's heart. Schumann sets this hideous tableau to a backward cycle through the circle of fifths in the bass that does not serve to orient the listener in a key, the keys having anticipated on the bass voices (in parallel octaves) so that the chords built on E and A are in D minor, the next fifth down, while the following chords, built on D and G, are in C minor, the fifth down from G.⁴²⁴ The C chord follows belatedly, but not in the mode anticipated.⁴²⁵ This splitting of dominant relations from keys is the mark of the alienation that the text here would have us believe does not exist.

In Lied VIII, hints of alienation enter the text. The poet realizes that the flowers, in which he deposited his feelings, are senseless to them. The lily that, in Lied V, was supposed to absorb and make retrievable the most wonderful hour of the poet's life, fails him in VIII, when he seeks in flowers, nightingales and stars some recognition of what he has suffered. He does not find the knowledge, compassion and consolation that life returning to life should offer, the love that he himself put into the object. Little flowers, nightingales and stars do not register the poet's feelings in a dynamic fashion. They claim innocence as to the complete breakdown in the human relations fundamental to their production, in the true manner of commodities, which mask human antagonisms that have replaced the collective work of love:

Sie alle können 's nicht wissen,
Nur Eine kennt meinen Schmerz;
Sie hat ja selbst zerrissen,
Zerrissen mir das Herz.

⁴²³ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), XVI, p. 34, mm. 4-5, with pick-up, text; with my translation. See also Heine, *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, LXVI, p. 170.

⁴²⁴ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), VII, p. 13, mm. 28-29.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, VII, p. 13, m. 30.

(Not one of them could know it,
One only knows my smart:
The one herself who gave it,
The one who broke my heart.)⁴²⁶

Here Heine, writing when the much junior Marx was still a child, recognizably describes alienated labour as if from the perspective of the factory worker who personalizes social processes. This poem differs from those in which Heine points out the conventional, mindlessly social background to the jilted lover's agony, such as "Ein Jüngling liebt ein Mädchen." Here he captures the subjective experience of the process of alienation without naming it. Schumann's sequence, in which "Und wüßten's die Blumen, die kleinen" follows immediately "Ich grolle nicht...." To the poet of *Dichterliebe*, there is no bourgeoisie, only the woman who wants to make a good marriage. Furthermore, by going off to be bourgeois ("Diamantenpracht"—!),⁴²⁷ she is supposed to be fully aware of the suffering she is causing the fashioner of songs. The speaker attributes a great deal of self-consciousness, agency and intentionality to the oppressor. This attribution is itself an aspect of capitalism, which flourishes as long as its ills are presumed to result from the isolated, immoral actions of wicked individuals. Yet the jilted lover of *Dichterliebe* does not *symbolize* the proletariat, but, emphatically poet, is really a worker active in a domain of not yet thoroughly capitalized work: the arts. The other member of his working collective has indeed broken away to go after diamonds. In Schumann's songs, love is haunted by the memory trace of the historical trauma that occurred with the shift to capitalism, the real heartbreak. Yet the poet lives through this loss without full, waking consciousness that he is indeed experiencing the historical desertion of the working class by the bourgeoisie. Opening the path for Marx, Heine's text formulates

⁴²⁶ Heine, *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, XXII, p. 128, with my translation.

⁴²⁷ *diamond splendour*

the multiple alienation that comes with the rise of the bourgeoisie: alienation of each worker from himself or herself; alienation of each worker from other workers; alienation of each worker from each thing produced. The one who is left behind to work with the material of nature finds particular objects of labour just as alien as the universality that conditions them:

...the worker is related to the *product of his labour* as to an *alien* object. For on this premise it is clear that the more the worker spends himself, the more powerful becomes the alien world of objects which he creates over and against himself, the poorer he himself—his inner world—becomes, the less belongs to him as his own. It is the same in religion. The more man puts into God, the less he retains in himself. The worker puts his life into the object; but now his life no longer belongs to him but to the object. Hence, the greater this activity, the more the worker lacks objects. Whatever the product of his labour is, he is not. Therefore the greater this product, the less is he himself. The *alienation* of the worker in his product means not only that his labour becomes an object, an *external* existence, but that it exists *outside him*, independently, as something alien to him, and that it becomes a power on its own confronting him. It means that the life that he has conferred on the object confronts him as something hostile and alien.⁴²⁸

Marx's manuscripts of 1844 indeed belong to his Paris period, which was also marked by his friendship with Heine, with whom he was at times in daily contact: the two met in December 1843.⁴²⁹ Whatever views Heine may have expressed, whatever the level of his political consciousness and activity, however much he was committed or not committed to communism,⁴³⁰ the poet's extremely close work with language and keen understanding of social (and aesthetic) illusion brought him to register the alienation of the products of labour, albeit in a veiled form, years before Marx. Schumann's final choice and setting of 16 poems of the *Lyrisches Intermezzo* are extremely revelatory of such alienation as social, particularly in the expansion of the harmony.

⁴²⁸ Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works*, 50 vols. (New York: International Publishers, 1975-2004), vol. 3, pp. 229-346, here p. 272.

⁴²⁹ Schmidt, "Heine und Marx," p. 143.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 145 and p. 150.

The split between individual and society reaches acute expression, both in Heine's text and in Schumann's setting, in Lied IX of the cycle. The ninth Lied dramatizes the marriage of the beloved to the other man, event foreshadowed in the second Lied by the cuckoo calls, where the text calls for nightingale choruses,⁴³¹ and in the fourth Lied by the poet's tears.⁴³² The poet narrates the celebration with absurd, almost random voice-leading, consecutive leaps up of fourths and minor thirds, disconnected from the piano's whirring of running sixteenths, from the waltz that plays on as if in the background, louder as he enters the dance hall, softer as his attention is caught by the sight of his beloved dancing, louder as he is overcome by events, softer as his beloved disappears. The discrepancies between the dynamic level of the voice and that of the piano suggest that the subject is somehow unequal to the external reality, which he can observe but in which he cannot intervene.⁴³³

In Lied X comes the poet's melancholy rumination, high in the forest, in phrases tracing deep valleys, on just what it might inflict on him to hear his beloved's song again. The repetition of song for which he longed in Lied V here becomes something fatal to him. So he arrives at a complete disillusionment not only over the claims of song, but also over the real return of what has been.⁴³⁴ The dissonant *sf* acciaccatura chord of an almost Bergian

⁴³¹ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), II, p. 4, m. 7, descending major third in pf., r.h., and its repetition in m. 8. The cuckoo motif also occurs in measures 3-4 and measures 15-17. Cf. Gustav Mahler, *Symphonie No. 1*, 2nd ed. (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1906), I, p. 5f., mm. 6-4 before [2], cl. 1, International Music Score Library Project, Petrucci Music Library, <http://petrucci.mus.auth.gr/imglnks/usimg/d/dd/IMSLP17070-Mahler-Symph1fs.pdf>. The fact that the interval of a perfect fourth illustrates the cuckoo call in Mahler's First Symphony does not invalidate my claim that an interval a major third illustrates the cuckoo call in Schumann's *Dichterliebe*. Common cuckoos are not equally tempered—nor are Mahler's, in fact.

⁴³² R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), IV, p. 7, m. 15.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, IX, p. 17, mm. 5-7, where the voice is marked *mf* and the piano is marked *p*, and p. 18, mm. 25-31 and p. 19, mm. 59-65, where the voice is marked *p* and the piano *f*.

⁴³⁴ As Eric Sams has remarked, the beloved's "song" recurs in the right hand of the piano (stemmed up) in syncopated entries, which, out of joint with time, strongly suggest involuntary memories breaking in on the "distraught mind." Eric Sams, *The Songs of Robert Schumann*, foreword by Gerald Moore, revised and enlarged 3rd edition (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 117. Sams also alludes to a musical citation in bars

sonority⁴³⁵ in the cadenza of the postlude, cadential six-four chord gaining unusual dissonance not only from a lower neighbour tone in the melody but especially from the persistence of the augmented sixth of the bar previous, very dissonance that the cadential six-four was supposed to resolve, so, extraordinary dissonance, blatantly contradicts the poet's affirmation in the text that his cathartic release of tears in the forest heights have cured him of love's pain.⁴³⁶

Thereafter the poet descends, in Lied XI, into cynicism at the way of the world.

Through each of these progressive displacements of the object, forced by the pursuit of fulfilment itself, the poet is alienated from the initial experience of natural beauty of May, removed and again removed from nature, so that when his wish for speaking nature is fulfilled, in Lied XII, it is completely other, and he does not recognize it:

Am leuchtenden Sommermorgen
Geh' ich im Garten herum.
Es flüstern und sprechen die Blumen,
Ich aber wandle stumm.

Es flüstern und sprechen die Blumen
Und shau'n mitleidig mich an:
Sei unsrer Schwester nicht böse,
Du trauriger blasser Mann!

This radiant morning of summer
I walk in the flowering yard;
The blossoms gossip and whisper,
I walk with never a word.

The blossoms gossip and whisper
And watch me regretful and sad:
"Do not be cross with our sister,
You pallid, sorrowing lad!"⁴³⁷

24-25, without however identifying it: "it occurs in the *Abegg* variations, *Papillons*, *Carnaval*, and elsewhere, in contexts suggesting the idea of remembered music" (ibid., p. 117 n3).

⁴³⁵ See Janet Schmalfeldt, "Berg's Path to Atonality: The Piano Sonata, Op. 1," in *Alban Berg: Historical and Analytical Perspectives*, ed. David Gable and Robert P. Morgan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 79-109, esp. pp. 92-94.

⁴³⁶ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), X, p. 21, m. 24.

⁴³⁷ Heine, *Songs of Love and Grief*, p. 33.

The moment of high emotion in Schumann's setting transpires not at *Sei unsrer Schwester nicht böse, du trauriger blasser Mann*,⁴³⁸ point at which the flowers say *something*, but from the entry into the Phrygian key area,⁴³⁹ continuing in the movement from abstractly but sensuously speaking flowers to silent man. The compelling singularity of this moment, compared to the more conventional progression to which Schumann set the flowers' actual discourse, casts suspicion on their self-righteous moralizing and derision. They confirm themselves to be flowers of the garden variety: a second nature, not the wild speaking first nature that the poet seeks. The *ich* of *ich aber wandle stumm* is completely alienated from the flowers that were the actual goal of the original longing; the self is then left to contend with nature that it has distorted through speech. Second nature, of which the poet is a part, condemns him to silence; yet silence was what beautiful nature asked of him. This is the self-reflexive moment of the cycle, and its dramatic reversal. But once the artwork raises the possibility of the paradox of a real realization that arises out of the realm of illusion, art, it heightens its aesthetic illusion. Over the course of the last four songs, the poet withdraws more deeply into dreams, rather than changing his comportment towards the flowers, which have turned on him. Whatever the poet experienced in the garden cannot convert to a truth that he can then bring to bear on his life.

Schumann shows his fidelity to illusion, against the affirmative vocation of art as a dispenser of morals, truths and practical knowledge, by closing his cycle with a profusion of dreams.

⁴³⁸ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), XII, p. 25, mm. 17-20.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, XII, p. 24, m. 8, on *sprechen* (speak).

The first of these, in Lied XIII, is the darkest moment of the cycle. The song speaks to a reality principle so powerful and far-reaching that it has found its way even into dream, revoking every last consolation. The materials are sparse in the extreme. The opening a cappella vocal line, *Ich hab' im Traum geweinet* (In a dream I was weeping),⁴⁴⁰ follows the same contour as the first vocal phrase of Lied II, *Aus meinen Tränen sprießen* (Out of my teardrops burgeon).⁴⁴¹ Yet this time no flowers will come from the dreamer's tears, which is in a sense a hopeful sign, a promise of something different. Without harmonic supports, the opening vocal statement of Lied XIII is analyzable both in E-flat minor and in the Phrygian mode transposed down a semi-tone, so, starting on the note E-flat rather than E. The particularity of the Phrygian mode, which makes it so recognizable, is that each of its tetrachords begins with a semitone. This is why the Neapolitan sixth is also called “the Phrygian”: it is built on the second scale degree as it would appear in the Phrygian mode, a half-step up rather than a whole step up from the first scale degree. The mode of the opening statement of Lied XIII is so also a veiled reference to the Phrygian key region of Lied I. The Phrygian here, however, lacks its beloved co-tonic. The Phrygian is the mode of song in the Dionysian rites, of songs of mourning for the dismembered self. But by transposing the mode down a semi-tone, Schumann only *references* the wild emotion that Aristotle and Plato claim that it spontaneously unleashes. Furthermore, the opening melody lies as much within modality as within tonality. The a cappella song is then punctuated by the ominously conclusive $I - V^7 - i^{6,4} - V^7 - i$ progression, a play on the basic unit of harmony, which appears here as a pattern of hard reality.⁴⁴² The last two syllables of *geweinet* (wept) suggest

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid., XIII, p. 26, mm. 1-2, with pick-up (with my translation).

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., II, p. 4, mm. 1-2, with pick-up (with my translation).

⁴⁴² Ibid., XIII, p. 26, mm. 3-4.

sighing; the piano counters with a deaf perfect authentic cadence, in minor. The Phrygian mode continues into the second line,⁴⁴³ which is met with another tonal statement.⁴⁴⁴ The first moment of awakening is dramatized in the piano part by an augmented triad,⁴⁴⁵ which recalls the incomplete augmented chord at the opening of the cycle.⁴⁴⁶ But the waking world does not provide any solace: the piano confirms the dreamer's deceived hopes with its own falling rejoinder to his tears, suggesting that the disappointed hope has sunk in and that the loss is finally real, and realized as such. Yet "reality" looks to be nothing more than the coercive reality principle, to judge by the threatening character of the piano's confirmations. Yet, from another angle, the tears in which the dreamer awakes suggest that something of the nightly dark production of the unconscious may be retained and brought safely into conscious, waking existence. This too seems to be a hopeful sign, yet it is none other than the Cartesian model of truth: the restriction of truth to what could be true whether produced in a waking state or in a dreaming state, to what could be true even if the producer be utterly mad.⁴⁴⁷ For tears produced by dreams turn out to be tears no less in the waking state. Spanning dreaming and waking, truth may be completely distilled and abstracted from the thinking (or dreaming, producing) subject, without heed to feelings or dispositions. Truth so becomes a kind of residue of illusion. Yet such residues do not necessarily enable the subject in Lied XIII to lead a conscious, waking existence. The last dream is an escape into beautiful, warm D-flat major,

⁴⁴³ Ibid., XIII, p. 26, mm. 5-6, with pick-up, v.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., XIII, p. 26, mm. 6-7, with pick-up, pf.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., XIII, p. 26, m. 8, pf.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., I, p. 2, m. 1, first two sixteenth notes, pf., l.h.

⁴⁴⁷ Dirk Setton, "It Is Possible, but Not Now" (paper presented at the Second Potentiality and Normativity Workshop, Exzellenzcluster "The Formation of Normative Orders" (in collaboration with the Department of Philosophy at the Université de Montréal), Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main, June 8, 2012). Reading Paula's line "I am mad" from George Cukor's 1944 film *Gaslight* as an allegory of the divided cogito, Setton derives "the irony in the unity of the 'I think'."

dramatizing a sudden turn: *mir träumte, du wärst mir noch gut* (I dreamed you still were good to me).⁴⁴⁸ The moment of awakening, dramatized on *auf* with an ambiguous, dissonant sonority, lies on the frontier of the two key areas, D-flat major and A-flat minor.⁴⁴⁹ In D-flat major, the chord could be an apparent Neapolitan seventh chord in first inversion. An apparent Neapolitan seventh is really a IV chord that coincides with a passing supertonic—which here would be the E-double-flat—that *appears* to be the root of a seventh chord built on the Neapolitan. If again the E-double-flat is considered to be a passing tone, the chord could be VII in natural A-flat minor. Yet, lacking thirds, spare and dissonant, the chord produces a striking, unusual sonority, with a slight harmonic halation. The unusual chord promises that this awakening will be different; but no, the scene repeats itself: the flood of tears flows unceasingly. The musical advance that gives to hope that the world may be released from socially structured illusion only produces a cycling around the circle of fifths, then, on *Tränen* (*tears*) where the circle reverses, regression. In this way, D-flat major becomes the key of dreams of something better, that was continuing, dreams from which we await the awakening, as Benjamin writes, to which all dreams point. The dreams in Lied XIII are conversions of the strongest experiences, whether wonderful or horrifying, into a form that de-realizes them so that they may be lived. Meanwhile, it seems that the repressed has been driven so far underground as to be virtually irretrievable, lost for interpretation: a bar of silence follows. The “reality principle” pattern and the perfect authentic cadence have the last words.

While the tears in Lied XIII suggest that there is a term that can go between dreaming and waking, less is transferred from dreams to waking in Lied XIV and almost nothing at all in Lied XV. The final Lied calls upon the listener to bury the loathsome dreams altogether, so

⁴⁴⁸ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), XIII, p. 27, mm. 26-28, starting at the *ritardando* (with my translation).

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, XIII, p. 27, m. 29.

that they may not be retrieved. The last songs slowly close themselves off from remembering, *Eingedenken*, retreating from the awakening to which all dreams point.

The dreamer in Lied XIV remembers most of his dreams of his beloved, but he wakes finding himself bereft of the spray of cypresses that she gave him and the soft word that she spoke to him. Although Heine never reveals the beloved's *Wort* (word),⁴⁵⁰ Schumann links it to *Zypressen* (cypresses)⁴⁵¹ by way of a similar setting: an F-sharp major dominant chord in root position.⁴⁵² Schumann reads the beloved's speech as consistent with the cypress boughs, which traditionally are given to those in mourning. According to the conventional "meaning" of cypresses in the language of flowers, then, the beloved would offer consolation to the poet in mourning. The cypress chord conventionally offers consolation in another way: as an F-sharp major triad, it can be the missing half of the cadence of Lied I, as a Picardy third. However, in the B major context of Lied XIV, the F-sharp major triad is the dominant. This "means" that, in conventional terms, what would have been fulfilment and rest in May is ongoing longing now when it finally appears, too late, in a dream. But this is not how Schumann's setting actually remembers the dreamed speech. Just as the actual content of the word escapes the awakened dreamer, it escapes the music: the music gives the forgotten *Wort* as I in root position,⁴⁵³ when it was V.⁴⁵⁴ Musical memory substitutes fulfilment for a consolation that does not give closure. Yet according to convention, the music is called upon to produce the actual *Wort* chord at the end: at the cadence. The six-four cadence is touched

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., XIV, p. 29, m. 30, with my translation.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., XIV, p. 29, m. 34, with my translation.

⁴⁵² The E-natural in measure 30 (ibid., XIV, p. 29) may be analyzed as a passing tone or as an added seventh.

⁴⁵³ Ibid., XIV, p. 29, m. 37.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., XIV, p. 29, m. 30.

midway through *vergessen* (forgotten).⁴⁵⁵ There is an uncomfortable pause, then the startled resolution of the suspension and dashed-off tonic. The botched cadence is an unsuccessful repression. The music cannot fully accept and legitimize its own substitutions, its manipulation of memory, its transformation of the traditional expression of longing (V) into its traditional form of fulfilment (I). As it is, the conventional expression of fulfilment changes its function utterly: it becomes revisionism.

Lied XV almost celebrates the return of repressive capacities. The images are magical, fantastically merry, but a closer reading reveals that Heine draws from the lexical field of “*Da ist ein Flöten und Geigen.*” The poet must have in fact dreamed of his beloved’s wedding, yet this seems entirely hidden from his awareness. The same words now appear washed of their traumatic associations. Not wedding trumpets,⁴⁵⁶ but simple birds⁴⁵⁷ *schmetternd(a)rein* (ring out). What beams *mit bräutlichem Gesicht* (with the mien of a bride) is not his beloved who dances in her wedding roundelay,⁴⁵⁸ but rather flowers blooming in twilight—metaphorical beaming brides.⁴⁵⁹ The “ring” or *Reigen* is no longer the wedding roundelay,⁴⁶⁰ but paths traced by mere mist rising from the ground.⁴⁶¹ In his setting, Schumann follows Heine in reinscribing the traumatic event as a happy one, exchanging dissonance for consonance and major for minor, in a song made almost entirely of major chords. When *Reigen* re-appears in Lied XV, Schumann sets it to a jolly tonic triad in the home key, rather than to the diminished

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., XIV, p. 29, m. 37, with my translation.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., IX, p. 17, mm 8-15.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., XV, p. 30, mm. 35-36.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., IX, p. 17f., mm. 20-27, with my translation.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., XV, p. 30, mm. 23-24.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., IX, p. 17, mm. 22-24.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., XV, p. 31, m. 46.

seventh chord that attacks it in Lied IX.⁴⁶² The piano introduction of Lied XV briefly references the piano postlude of IX, but the atmosphere is utterly changed. The tugging between the tonic and subdominant chords at the beginning of Lied XV⁴⁶³ recalls wild glancing back and forth between major tonic and minor subdominant at the end of Lied IX.⁴⁶⁴ While the progression in Lied IX represents a dramatic case of mixture (tonic and subdominant should both be minor or both be major), in XV, both I and IV are affirmatively major. Lied XV negates the equivocal use of minor and major in Lied IX at a second juncture: while the trumpets “blare out” the emblematic IV – V – I progression in F major, jarring effect in the minor context,⁴⁶⁵ the birds in Lied XV “blare out” an expansion of a V chord and then move to the tonic to make the cadence of the brief, escalating modulation to the dominant, so remaining in major.⁴⁶⁶ Schumann also repeats elements of the harmony of Lied IX while changing their character. The V⁷/V chord and resolution immediately preceding the singer’s entry in Lied XV⁴⁶⁷ refer to the last chords of each section in Lied IX, where they move with fury and impulsion to complete the loop of the infernal strophic form.⁴⁶⁸ While, in Lied IX, they have an emphatic effect, in Lied XV, this secondary dominant is coquettish. The IV – V – I emblem, referring to the trumpet emblem, dominates the most affirmative passage of the cycle:⁴⁶⁹ the setting of the lines marked *Mit innigster Empfindung* (with most inward feeling):

Ach, könnt’ ich dorthin kommen,
Und dort mein Herz erfreu’n,

⁴⁶² Ibid., IX, p. 17, m. 23.

⁴⁶³ Ibid., XV, p. 30, from the fourth eighth note value of m. 1 to the third eighth note value of m. 3.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid., IX, p. 19, mm. 76-79.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., IX, p. 17, mm. 10-12.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., XV, p. 31, mm. 35-36.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., XV, p. 30, last eighth note value of m. 7 (V⁷/V) and the first five eighth note values of m. 8 (V).

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., IX, p. 18, mm. 33-34 and p. 19, mm. 67-68.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., XV, p. 32, mm. 68-69 and mm. 77-78.

Und aller Qual entnommen,
Und frei und selig sein!

Ah, could I only go there
And free my heart of pain,
And banish all my woe there,
Be free and blest again!⁴⁷⁰

The one thing that is “off” about Schumann’s setting is his disposition of the bass notes of the *frei und selig* measures.⁴⁷¹ The F-sharp and B in the *frei und selig* bars spell out a V – I; as they are the lowest notes we might expect them to ground the chords that overlie them, but the chords are not V and I, but rather ii and V. The actual cadence occurs a bar later, supported by the correct bass notes. The pseudo-cadence suggests that the reconciliation inherent in the words *frei und selig* is illusory. The similar bass notes at the song’s close ground the final cadence, but they depart rhythmically from the bass notes in the *frei und selig* bars, as if the music feels guilt over its earlier affirmative role and can no longer follow the poet in its delusion that he could be free and blissful (or blessed) even in dreams. The poet’s unconscious strategy of recoding the traumatic event as a benign one turns out to be an extension of the reigning ideology of exchange, in that it treats images as if they were just tokens to which negative or positive meanings could be arbitrarily assigned. Lied XV makes the overt claim that dreams are really nothing—“idle foam”—, whereas the system of references in which Heine and Schumann enmesh this declaration denies it. The dreams are non-arbitrary manifestations of what the subject has suffered, albeit caught in a magical form in need of adequate interpretation.

⁴⁷⁰ Heinrich Heine, *The Complete Poems of Heinrich Heine: A Modern English Version*, trans. Hal Draper (Cambridge, MA: Suhrkamp/Insel Publishers Boston, 1982), p. 66.

⁴⁷¹ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), XV, p. 33, mm. 81-82 (“free and blest” in Draper’s translation).

Lied XVI follows directly from Lied XV: if dreams are mere foam, rationalizes the dreamer, then let us rid ourselves of them for good. Heine's final "Lied" of the *Lyrisches Intermezzo* is an attempt to spirit away the work's enigmatic character. The narrator ends with a direct appeal to the readers to bury the "nasty olden Lieder," to bring a mammoth coffin that will contain them (and much else, yet unrevealed) and to organize the stupendous materials and labour necessary to tip the whole thing into the sea. In the lyric that Schumann set, it is not clear how far along the audience members advance in their work, for the last verb has a form common to both indicative and subjunctive tenses. It is possible to translate

Wisst ihr warum der Sarg wohl
So groß und schwer mag sein?
Ich senkt' auch meine Liebe
Und meinen Schmerz hinein!⁴⁷²

as

Do you know why the coffin
Must be so great and heavy?
I'd like to bury there my love
And my sorrow too⁴⁷³

or as

Do you know *why* the coffin
Might be so large and heavy?
I laid deep all my love
And all my pain therein!⁴⁷⁴

In the first translation, the fantastic plan has not yet been carried out. The last lines are a challenge: "Would you *still* do all this for me, knowing that you would also be ridding the world of my love and my pain?" Knowing now what the coffin contains, the addressees are left to decide whether to continue to assist the poet in his intended removals. Schumann's

⁴⁷² R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), p. XIII. Cf. Heine, *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, LXVI, p. 171, which has *legt'* where *Dichterliebe* has *senkt'*.

⁴⁷³ As translated by Richard Stokes, in R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), p. XIII.

⁴⁷⁴ My translation.

setting might support the second translation, although the status of musical events as real or imaginary cannot be determined absolutely. The breaking of the vii of vii fully diminished chord into a first block, consisting only of the root, doubled, in the deepest bass and the seventh in the soprano, and a second block, of extreme density, marked with a *sforzando*, indeed suggests a long mass tilting up off a ledge, then tipping down quickly with a sharp clap, then into indistinctness.⁴⁷⁵ The sinking of the coffin appears to occur on a different plane or at a different stage from what comes before. The arrest of the eighth notes (which have been incessantly running from the vocal entry⁴⁷⁶) sharply separates the lines “die sollen den Sarg forttragen,/und senken in’s Meer hinab” from everything that has preceded.⁴⁷⁷ In this reading, the continual scheming or planning ends with the end of the running eighth notes, whereupon the plan appears to be carried out. According to such a translation, the listeners would be complicit in burying the coffin, even though the narrator openly avowed that he was withholding knowledge of the contents. The last lines are a revelation of what has been lost. The truly miserable, heartless ones would be the listeners who agree to see buried what they do not know, who still might not realize what has been lost, who think not “What have we done?” but rather “Ah, the poet has finally come to terms with his bad love affair.” Only fools would agree to the definitive suppression of a thing, without even bothering to find out what it contains. But the appeal of Heine’s “Lied,” now old, to bury *die alten, bösen Lieder* is almost gentle irony, compared with the implicit accusation behind Schumann’s broken diminished chord. Ostensibly demurring all help, sympathy and understanding, the poet tests to see if his listeners are so stupid and so cold as to consign him to oblivion, whether they really could be

⁴⁷⁵ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), XVI, p. 34, m. 39.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, XVI, p. 34, pick-up to m. 4.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, XVI, p. 36, mm. 36-39, with pick-up (*who should bear away the coffin/and sink it into the sea*).

cajoled into wiping away the clues that would explain his intense love and unbounded grief: with the broken chord, it seems that they really are that stupid and that cold. Yet, in another sense, the coffin sinking into the sea is also illusion. The old songs may be non-extant, yet not utterly lost to the advancing consciousness, which, seeing beyond the work's abnegation, strives desperately to return the whole cycle in memory, to solve the enigma of the poet's grief. It is a simple, observing consciousness that accepts what has happened, believing the coffin's contents to be unrecoverable, safely forgotten. The last song, darkly negative, leaves its own fate undecided, rushing headlong against all notion of self-preservation in its attack on the old, horrid songs. It recognizes the power of formalism, the basis of total administration, where planning happens in complete ignorance of the inner content. Heine's personalization of social conditions obscures the notion that there can be no individual heartlessness, for the burial of the old, evil songs would be an act of socially-imposed forgetting, which hardened, loveless society imposes on itself. Heine at least makes no illusion about the prevailing hatred of expression, hated for the memory trace of mimetic language that expression evokes.

The common reading of Lied XVI is that the poet, unburdened by the weight of the past, reaches reconciliation in the "reflective" postlude, with its reference back to Lied XII. Neumeyer argues that *Dichterliebe* possesses organic unity by virtue of this citation, within the concluding postlude in D-flat major. He reads the return affirmatively, as a reflection on the flowers' "address" and therefore as the poet's acceptance and appropriation of his external circumstances: "The postlude in the major after the minor of the song proper mitigates the element of bitterness undoubtedly present in the text and adopts a tone of 'coming to terms with the situation.'"⁴⁷⁸ Yet nothing gives to think that the reference to the postlude of the

⁴⁷⁸ Neumeyer, "Organic Structure and the Song Cycle," p. 97.

twelfth Lied in the conclusion of the work indicates that the poet has somehow accepted the flowers' judgement on his character. The final postlude does not mitigate the bitterness of Heine's text, certainly not by the sheer fact that it is in a major key, for throughout the work Schumann advances a critical position towards the affirmative use of major keys, often by a pointed use of mixture: the C Major of Lied VII ("Ich grolle nicht"—!)⁴⁷⁹ is so much false bravura at the early break-in from C minor of the half-diminished seventh chords on *Herz*,⁴⁸⁰ while the Picardy third, in Lied IX, with which the last, frantic glancing between major and minor, intensified in chromatic descent, finally settles can only incite the cringe that soft-focus portraits do today, blurred as it is by a grace note, sounded at *pianissimo*, as if it offered a perspective on the departing happy newlywed couple through the rejected lover's bitter tears.⁴⁸¹ Schumann has also associated major keys with a loss of subjectivity, a kind of automatism, in, for example, the driving assembly-line song factory of Lied III, the facile truism of Lied XI, the resolutely pseudo-happy compulsion of Lied XV. Yet the final postlude of the cycle is not in the B-flat major of Lied XII, which it references, but in D-flat major. It so recalls the thirteenth Lied, the lines

Ich hab' im Traum geweinet,
 Mir träumte, du wärest mir noch gut.
 Ich wachte auf, und noch immer
 Strömt meine Tränenflut

In a dream my tears were falling;
 I dreamed you were true to your vow.
 I woke, and my torrent of sorrow
 Is pouring even now⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁹ *I don't complain.*

⁴⁸⁰ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), VII, p. 12, m. 3.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, IX, p. 19, m. 84.

⁴⁸² Heine, "Ich hab im Traum geweinet," trans. Aaron Kramer, in *The Poetry of Heinrich Heine*, p. 78.

in which the passage ...*wärst mir noch gut. Ich wachte (auf)*... brightens fleetingly to a warm D-flat major.⁴⁸³ The ultimate return to D-flat major in the postlude of the sixteenth and last Lied of *Dichterliebe* is too good to be true. It suggests that there has been neither a real, positive transformation of existing structures nor a full comprehension of the disaster on the part of the poet—only a retreat into the pure interior, from which he does not wake: the cycle closes on a perfect authentic cadence in the key of dreaming and illusion, D-flat major. The citation therefore does not suggest that the poet has somehow gained reflective distance on the events and has so reconciled himself to them. The postlude of the last Lied is indeed a reflective, memorial moment in the work. But the intensification of the illusory character from the point in the cycle whence it cites to the end attests to the non-affirmative character of Schumann's music, which does not assume that reflective distance alone reconciles. The poet's need to love *and* to experience his love at a distance put him at odds with himself and the world: objectification cannot reconcile itself and love, for reconciliation is implicitly reciprocal.

Yet the conclusion of *Dichterliebe* gives reason to hope that there may yet be awakening. The postlude of Lied XII, from which the postlude of Lied XVI cites, is not a mere extension of the sung words, for, while the falling arpeggio motif continues through it, entirely new melodic material, a beautiful, syncopated rising line, joins a harmony that remembers certain harmonic events in the cycle up until there. The postlude of the sixteenth Lied is thus twice-removed, citing from a reconstruction or narration of events in the twelfth. It is “progression” not merely in the musical sense, but also in the historical sense, a progression of events, remembered.

⁴⁸³ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), XIII, p. 27, mm. 27-(29) (...*were still good to me. I woke (up)*...).

The four-bar citation of the postlude of the last song begins on the dominant over a tonic pedal, then proceeds to $IV^7 - V^{4,2} - I$, the large piece of the most common progression in Western music. In Lied XII, it recalls the first Lied, where Schumann uses the sequence $iv^6 - V^7 - I$ to set the high-points (here underlined) of the lines *Da ist in meinem Herzen die Liebe aufgegangen* and *Da hab' ich ihr gestanden mein Sehnen und Verlangen*.⁴⁸⁴ The restoration of the major IV chord in the major key in the twelfth Lied also refers to a more recent instance of the emblem—the three bars in the ninth Lied, in F major, starting on the first occurrence of the word *schmettern* of the opening lyric *Das ist ein Flöten und Geigen, Trompeten schmettern darein*.⁴⁸⁵ The return of this progression condenses two declarations—the poet's declaration of longing to the beloved and the trumpet's declaration of the marriage of the beloved. In those songs, the ambivalence of the progression, referring at once to the love that came over the poet in a private dawning and to the beloved's love for someone else, announced in a boisterous, public blaring, expresses not a mere paradox, but, in a temporal medium, experience—the experience of what seems to be a purely arbitrary reversal of circumstances. The rising line, supported by the emblematic harmony, is tinged with pathos.

The German sixth that follows the $IV - V - I$ progression in Lied XVI touches on the poet's un-heroic cast in this misery, picking up on several important moments of his alienation earlier in Lied XII. The opening progression of Lied XII is incomplete: the piece begins on the German sixth. The German sixth in fact introduces each of the first three two-line segments in Lied XII.⁴⁸⁶ The exception is the fourth and last two-line segment, which is led in by an

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., I, p. 2, mm. 11-12 and p. 3, mm. 22-23 (*Then in my heart I felt/The love for her unfold....Then I confessed to her/My longing and desire*).

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., IX, p. 17, mm. 10-12 (*There is a fluting and fiddling/And trumpets blaring in there...*).

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., XII, p. 24, m. 1; m. 6, second dotted quarter note value; and m. 11, second dotted quarter note value.

augmented chord that serves as a clever transition between B-flat major and G major/minor passages.⁴⁸⁷ The German sixth does indeed appear in the setting of these last two lines of the poem, as a transition out of the G major/minor passage, and, for the first time, it is set to words: it falls on the *blasser* (pallid, “white” with envy) from the flowers’ speech.⁴⁸⁸ So, the German sixth first offers a possible point of convergence between wordless flowers’ speech and human silence, but it is then tied to a particular content. Falling on *blasser*, the German sixth picks up the association of an external view of the poet, of the man drained of life and speech, through the eyes of a second nature that has learned the distorted, cruel and perspectivistic language of man. The piano postlude of Lied XII in a sense attempts to return the German sixth to wordlessness.

The German sixth in the postlude of Lied XVI is followed by the *crescendo-decrescendo* chord: a diminished seventh chord applied to the supertonic.⁴⁸⁹ The entry into the enharmonic equivalent of C-sharp major, D-flat major, in the last Lied would seem to have signalled the definitive exit from the applied Phrygian key area, so it is noteworthy that the secondary tonic of the cycle, D, here returns briefly in the guise of this vii^o/ii seventh chord (vii^{o7}/ii in D-flat major=D^{o7}). The prior resolutions of vii^o/ii to ii (on *Kindchen, schenk’ ich dir die...*⁴⁹⁰ and, repeatedly, on *sprichst: ich liebe dich, so muss ich...*⁴⁹¹) are upward movements of a half-step, so reiterate the first half-step movement into the applied Phrygian key region. Resolving in this way, the diminished seventh chords cleared up their tonal ambiguity. This resolution is different. It neither opens onto a fully chromatic key region nor resolves to ii.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., XII, p. 25, m. 16, second dotted quarter note value.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., XII, p. 25, m. 19, for the value of the second dotted quarter note.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid., XVI, p. 37, m. 54.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., II, p. 4, mm. 10-11 (...*my child, I’ll send you the...*).

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., IV, p. 7, mm. 13-14 (...*say: I love you, so I must...*).

It is unclear what a pianist asked to *crescendo* and *decrescendo* on a singly struck chord is to do. There is a performance practice that takes Schumann's impossible piano swells to address themselves purely to the non-sensuous ear. These "lozenge" markings or "hairpins" may be akin to the marginal illuminations of medieval books, the mnemonics, which could not have been completely foreign to Schumann, whose father was a book dealer.⁴⁹² Their purpose is to aid in the study of the text, to open a way back into the specific page from life:

Such images are not iconographical, nor do they illustrate or explain the content of a particular text. They serve the basic function of all page decoration, to make each page distinct and memorable, but their content is not only specific to the particular page on which they are drawn. One should consider them as images which serve to remind readers of the fundamental purposes of these books – Bibles, Psalters, decretal collections, prayer books – books that are made for study and meditation, to be mulled over. They contain matter to be laid down and called again from their memorial storehouses, shrines, fiscal pouches, chests, vases, coops, pens, cells, and bins.⁴⁹³

Images with a purely memorial function did not break the ban on idolatry: they were an extension of the formal divisions introduced into the running text as topics. Yet despite its memorial function, Schumann's "illuminated" chord nonetheless demands to be played. Interpreters confronted twice with the seemingly impossible demand of a *crescendo* on a singly struck chord are forced to find a solution, but whether they break the chord, accent it strongly, treat it as a fleeting intensification of the *espressivo* or take time and draw it out, the struggle in achieving one makes the passage difficult to forget. The first "illuminated" chord in Lied XII must be retained in memory, so that its return in Lied XVI does not produce a mere vague familiarity, but actually rouses the memory to put these two precise moments together. The marking, a miniature of the expressive swell of the Romantic phrase, demands that even the single sixteenth note be read as full of history, changing, and recalls the

⁴⁹² In familiar, musicians' language, "hairpins" seems to be the term of choice. Although the *crescendo-decrescendo* is not exactly a lozenge in Schumann's scores, in Beethoven's autograph scores, it can be.

⁴⁹³ Mary J. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 323.

memorial character of art—for the Muses were the offspring of Memory. The marking is not only a way of cross-referencing the two postludes; it also references other diminished seventh chords applied to the supertonic: that on *Kindchen* of Lied II,⁴⁹⁴ but especially that on *sprichst:* from Lied IV.⁴⁹⁵ The marked chord is different from these, for it does not resolve as expected. It is followed not by the ii chord, as in the other cases, but by another applied chord, the dominant applied to the dominant.

There are slight discrepancies between the postlude of Lied XII and its citation in the postlude of Lied XVI. In Lied XII, a seventh chord follows the memory chord, whereas in Lied XVI, the chord after it is missing its seventh. This discrepancy shows the mnemonic chord diverging in two different tonal directions. The extra tone in Lied XII makes the chord a dominant seventh, which is typically employed to orient the listener: this C dominant seventh chord strongly indicates that the tonic is F.⁴⁹⁶ While it disambiguates the diminished seventh chord preceding it, this secondary dominant also alludes to a like moment: to the secondary dominant on the word *weinen* (weep) in Lied IV, another dominant seventh in first inversion, also applied to the dominant, but which does not resolve to the dominant.⁴⁹⁷ So the two chords in Lied XII, diminished seventh applied to the supertonic and dominant chord applied to the dominant,⁴⁹⁸ are in fact a condensation of the passage setting the words *doch wenn du sprichst: „Ich liebe dich!“ so muss ich weinen bitterlich,*⁴⁹⁹ so:

*sprichst: „Ich...“ [weinen].*⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁴ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), II, p. 4, m. 10.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, IV, p. 7, m. 13.

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, XII, p. 25, m. 25 (the extra tone is the b-flat, pf., r.h. Cf. XVI, p. 37, m. 55, where there is no corresponding D-flat).

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, IV, p. 7, m. 15.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, XII, p. 25, mm. 24-25.

⁴⁹⁹ *But when you say: “I love you!” then I must weep, and bitterly.*

⁵⁰⁰ say: “I.....weep.....”

Just as the German sixth in the postlude attempted to undo the determinate, declarative content of the flowers' signifying speech, this condensation likewise skips the determinate content of the beloved's speech act, proceeding directly to expression, the tears. In Lied IX, the V/V chord in fact gives the very distinct impression of bawling or howling, where it forms the racing, accented conclusion to each of the poet's strophes, so drives the music around in a circle with unstoppable, infernal impulsion.⁵⁰¹ In it, the poet seems compelled to replay the horrible marriage scene: the roundelay, the noise and the beloved in the midst of it all. The outburst at the end of each verse suggests that the poet receives absolutely no therapeutic benefit from describing the scene: words are useless in alleviating his suffering, which repeats itself endlessly. Added to this, another instance of this applied dominant, the V⁷/V chord on *ich* of *ich aber wandle stumm* suggests that the poet, silenced, has in fact become his tears.⁵⁰² The postlude so reiterates the poet's shift into wordless grief by drawing this movement together in the V of V chord.

The substitution of a major triad for a dominant seventh in the citation of Lied XVI gives an utterly different sense of harmonic movement away from the illuminated chord. In Lied XII, the second beat of bar 25, occupied as it is by the dissonant major second of the dominant seventh, inverted, remains a moment of harmonic tension. Some sense of rest comes at on the fourth sixteenth note value, when the G finally resolves the A-flat of the illustrated chord. But the dominant seventh impels the progression forward, and consequently a movement around the circle of fifths is felt very strongly thereafter.⁵⁰³ The sense of rupture between the illustrated chord and the applied dominant is in some sense repaid by the fifths

⁵⁰¹ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), IX, p. 18, mm. 33-34 and p. 19, mm. 67-68.

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, XII, p. 24, m. 10 ("I walk with never a word" in Arndt's translation, *Songs of Love and Grief*, p. 33).

⁵⁰³ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), XII, p. 25, mm. 25-26.

that follow. In the final Lied, XVI, the corresponding transition out of the mnemonic chord evokes a subtle, momentary floating off the ground. Effectively, we have moved up a semi-tone, from a D-natural diminished seventh chord (the mnemonic chord) to an E-flat major chord.⁵⁰⁴ Although the two chords do not share a single note and belong to no common tonality, the movement between them is clearly perceptible once the indicator of key, the dominant seventh, is removed. It recalls the semi-tone movement from one tonic to the other, from I to the Neapolitan in the first Lied.⁵⁰⁵ But the wonderfully expressive music here does not simply repeat in remembering: it twins moments of its experience. The expected resolution of the diminished seventh applied to ii is ii, as it was indeed resolved in Lied II and Lied IV of the cycle.⁵⁰⁶ The E-flat chord is not far off from this, however: it can in fact be analyzed as a *major* II chord, as the expectation for a resolution to ii is so strong.

The major II chord is the last step in the history of the supertonic that Schumann has told in this cycle. The supertonic first appears as the Neapolitan chord, which is able to become a second tonic, a collective subjectivity, throughout Lied I and briefly in XII.⁵⁰⁷ Second, it appears as the minor ii chord, which in Lieder II, III and IV becomes associated with a suffering ich not yet entirely detached from nature. In Lied II, the ii chord encompasses first, second and third persons—the relation of I and thou made possible by flowers is a harmonic identity.⁵⁰⁸ In Lied III, the ii chord surfaces notably on the first syllable of *Liebeswonne* (delights of love)⁵⁰⁹ and that of *Liebe* (love).⁵¹⁰ In Lied IV, it links *Leid*

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid., XVI, p. 37, mm. 54-55.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid., I, p. 2, pick-up to m. 1 (C-sharp) and m. 1, first sixteenth note, pf., l.h. (D-natural).

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid., II, p. 4, mm. 10-11 and IV, p. 7, mm. 13-14.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., XII, p. 24, mm. 8-9, from *sprechen*.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., II, p. 4, m. 11 on *schenk' ich dir die* (I'll send you the) of *schenk' ich dir die Blumen all'* (I'll send you the flowers, all).

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., III, p. 5, m. 4 .

(suffering) and *ich* (I).⁵¹¹ Third, the supertonic appears as the ii^{ø7} chord, associated in Lieder V, VII and VIII with the peculiar suffering due to the objectified, mediated poetical love, reified in song, but nonetheless denied by the reified world of conventions.⁵¹² The half-diminished chord on ii also punctuates the end of the poet's confession in Lied X.⁵¹³ The dramatic reappearance of the half-diminished seventh chord on the last sung syllable of the entire work⁵¹⁴ suggests the disappearance into the grave of the sea of all the things that were supported by this chord: song,⁵¹⁵ love,⁵¹⁶ the speech of stars⁵¹⁷ and much else. Fourth, the supertonic later takes the form of a Neapolitan chord that *fails* to open onto a chromatic region, in the eighth⁵¹⁸ and tenth⁵¹⁹ Lieder. Fifth, the supertonic is the simple second scale degree, the lonely floating atom, the clinamen that, passing under the accented incomplete IV chord in Lied XIII, gets caught in its gravitational field to form the "apparent" Neapolitan seventh chord, the moment of awakening from happy dream and beautiful illusion of *you were still good to me*, where every last consolation with which the ego could indulge himself has been rudely stolen from him.⁵²⁰ The subject becomes the floating supertonic, atomized, part of a larger, solid structure but in appearance. The major II chord is the last form of the

⁵¹⁰ Ibid., III, p. 5, m. 10.

⁵¹¹ Ibid., IV, p. 7, m. 3 and m. 5.

⁵¹² Ibid., V, p. 8, m. 1 with pick-up on *Ich will meine* (I would that my...); V, p. 8, m. 3 on *Kelch* (calyx); V, p. 8, m. 9 on *Lied* (song); V, p. 9, m. 11 on *Kuss* (kiss); V, p. 9, m. 15 on the first syllable of *wunderbar* (wonderfully); VII, p. 13, m. 21 on *Herz* (heart), in a notable case of mixture; VII, p. 13, m. 29 on *Lieb* (love); VIII, p. 14, m. 7 on *heilen* (heal); VIII, p. 15, m. 23 on *sprächen* (would speak); and VIII, p. 16, m. 30 on the first syllable of *zerrissen* (rent, broken).

⁵¹³ Ibid., X, p. 21, m. 20, for the value of the second quarter note.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., XVI, p. 36, m. 51.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid., V, p. 8, m. 9.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid., VII, p. 13, m. 29.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., VIII, p. 15, m. 23.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., VIII, p. 14f., mm. 11-12 (*traurig und krank*) and p. 15, mm. 19-20 (*Sternelein*).

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., X, p. 20, m. 10 (*von*).

⁵²⁰ Ibid., XIII, p. 27, mm. 29.

supertonic.⁵²¹ The history of the supertonic in this cycle, as a history of the suffering subject, enters into the unusual, isolated event and the breakthrough moment in the last Lied becomes readable as subjectivity, even in its abstraction. This moment of expression, the major II chord, is, as Adorno claims, “fully mediated”:

The instant of expression in artworks is however not their reduction to the level of their materials as to something unmediated; rather, this instant is fully mediated. Artworks become appearances [Erscheinungen], in the pregnant sense of the term—that is, as the appearance of an other—when the accent falls on the unreality of their own reality.⁵²²

The V/V chord heard as II has consequences for what follows: the fifths progression clear in the twelfth Lied (C – F – B-flat)⁵²³ is here less strongly felt, while the subdominant seventh chord⁵²⁴ is granted greater prominence. The peculiarity of the subdominant seventh chord is that the F in the upper voice *and* the G-flat in the bass of the IV chord can both be analyzed as passing tones. Yet it does seem however odd to consider these prominent outer voices to be merely auxiliary, especially given the relative note values and the fact that for the value of one eighth note *only* these voices are heard. Again, the tendency of the Phrygian is toward twelve-note harmony. On this, the passage repeats up to and including the German sixth. The mnemonic chord is not, however, repeated. In Lied XII, an incomplete V/V chord in second inversion replaces the diminished seventh mnemonic chord,⁵²⁵ whereas in Lied XVI an incomplete minor seventh ii chord in second inversion finds its place there.⁵²⁶ The citation continues for two more bars on a prolonged cadential six-four.

⁵²¹ Ibid., XV, p. 37, m. 55, for the value of the first dotted half note.

⁵²² GS, vol. 7, p. 123 as translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 79.

⁵²³ R. Schumann, *Dichterliebe* (2011), XII, p. 24, mm. 10-11.

⁵²⁴ Ibid., XVI, p. 37, m. 55, reading a seventh from the G-flat dotted half note in the bass and the F half note in the treble.

⁵²⁵ Ibid., XII, p. 25, m. 26, for the value of the last sixteenth note.

⁵²⁶ Ibid., XVI, p. 37, m. 56, for the value of the last eighth note.

The last postlude so casts suspicion over the poet's claims to have buried his pain and his love, the old songs and dreams; it suggests that such a radical, wilful act of forgetting only leads surely to deeper dreaming and delusion, the projection of all happiness into the past, mere dreams of how good people were to one another once upon a time: "Since Platonic anamnesis, the not-yet-existing has been dreamed about in remembrance [Eingedenken], which alone concretizes utopia without betraying it to existence. Illusion goes with existence: even then, existence had never been."⁵²⁷ *Dichterliebe* ends up in the pure illusion of happiness, but if Schumann does not shatter it, he leaves open the possibility that the moment of awakening may happen outside his work, that it may be the moment of awakening "to which every dream at last refers."⁵²⁸ Schumann's music might forgive forgetting, but it awaits remembrance.

⁵²⁷ GS, vol. 7, p. 200, or prefer to my translation here *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 132.

⁵²⁸ Walter Benjamin, "[Pariser Passagen II]," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 6 vols. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972-1987), vol. 5, pp. 1044-1059, here p. 1058 as translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, "The Arcades of Paris" (Paris Arcades II)," in *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 873-884, here p. 884.

{Epilogue} Adorno's concept of aesthetic illusion seems like an outmoded subject today. Its redemption was long ago dismissed as unnecessary¹ and as reactionary.² But illusion was never completely abandoned in art. Perhaps the most important living painter to come through its crisis, Gerhard Richter, is emphatically committed to Schein, although his is a "homeless semblance," in the words of Hal Foster—an aesthetic illusion that survives after its exile.³ Richter presents the dilemma between modernism and post-modernism but does not succumb to its force: his solution "is not a progressive form of critical art, but neither is it a cynical kind of posthistorical pastiche. It does not resolve its contradictions so much as it performs them and, again, in doing so, suspends them."⁴ Richter dismantles the conditions of the possibility of his own art. He is able to bring representation back into art, but only by default—his material, photographs, just happens to be a representing medium. On the one hand, his work is based in fiction and illusion—he exposes photography as openly subject to manipulation and, indeed, employed to manipulate. On the other hand, his work is anti-illusory, in that it sheds light on the mechanism of *social control* in real photographs—the condition of his work's possibility. This dialectic of illusion indicates that aesthetic illusion cannot be written off,

¹ Günter Figal and Hans Georg Flickinger, "Die Aufhebung des schönen Scheins: Schöne und nicht mehr schöne Kunst im Anschluß an Hegel und Adorno," *Hegel-Studien* 14 (1979): pp. 197-224. In their confrontation of traditional aesthetic categories with modern art, Figal and Flickinger claim that no "redemption of illusion" is necessary because illusion takes on a different aspect when art is no longer beautiful: "the illusoriness of mediating rationality" (*ibid.*, p. 219). They suggest that understanding modern art as the sublation (*Aufhebung*) of illusion rather than as the *crisis* of illusion takes up the critical position of "no-longer-beautiful art vis-à-vis conceptual rationality" (*ibid.*, p. 215). While it is true that Adorno speaks of the "crisis of illusion," he does not subsume all modern art under this concept: the crisis of illusion refers not to all modern art equally as a whole, but to the final, uncritical stage of a nominalist strain of modernism (GS, vol. 7, p. 156, or translated, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 101f.). Without citing any examples of actual works, Figal and Flickinger reduce all modern art to the category of "no-longer-beautiful art," then argue for the sublation of the category of illusion, whereas the slow section of the Gigue from Arnold Schoenberg's Opus 29 is no less beautiful than the gorgon from Greek mythology is ugly.

² Peter Bürger, *Zur Kritik der idealistischen Ästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), p. 71.

³ Hal Foster, "Semblance According to Gerhard Richter (2003)," in *Gerhard Richter*, ed. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, October Files 8 (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009), pp. 113-134, here p. 127. Foster is alluding to Clement Greenberg's notion of "homeless representation."

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

despite its continued disgrace in post-modern art. Richter's paintings are determined in such a way that the only alternative to artistic aesthetic illusion seems to be pure social illusion. Aesthetic illusion in Richter means for once *not* to be manipulated by the claims of the media; but it does not mean that manipulation by the media does not still continue in reality. Paintings sourced from old newspaper photographs stand as reminders of past barbarism and fabrications, of the old sacrifices and ancient coercion, while, in the present, new forms of control and stupefaction do their work. Unlike Anselm Kiefer's facile references to Paul Celan, which by no means guarantee correct consciousness for his toxic productions, Richter's reference to Celan does not advertize itself: it can be detected only in his artworks' determination not to advance, not to react against the imperative that "Todesfuge" evokes, and in their movement to refuse affirmative culture. His paintings do not pretend to be above the barbarism, but they are not completely barbaric. They hold onto aesthetic illusion because social illusion has not passed.

The recent focus on appearance and apparition, on the vanishing or performative side of art, wishes to spare aesthetics and art the ideology critique that is the real dynamo powering Adorno's brilliant dialectics of illusion. This tendency has representatives on either side of the Analytic/Continental divide, lending weight to Adorno's thesis that the forming process of late capitalist development is so strong that no distinction can resist its homogenizing forces.⁵ On the Analytic side, David Davies conceives of all art as performance: art is the artist's act of painting a picture or the musician's act of playing a composition.⁶ But by making art the artist's or artists' *intentioned* activity, Davies ignores the atomization of consciousness

⁵ GS, vol. 4, p. 28 §6 translated by E. F. N. Jephcott as *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life* (London: Verso, 2005), p. 26f.

⁶ David Davies, *Art as Performance* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2004).

brought about by the division of labour, which also traverses art—particularly the highly industrialized forms of film, installation and multimedia performance. While Davies does not ignore other aspects of art—his approach is highly syncretic, drawing impressively on the entire roster of major Analytic thinkers of art—, he sees performance as the essential element, and this focus directs attention away from the intentionless, reified object and art’s unconscious contributors, who are inadvertently forced to make art by dint of a system of taxation and the division of labour.⁷ In other words, art conceived one-sidedly as performance never comes up against the contradiction between production and work produced, between performance and art object—the artistic aesthetic illusion that is the way into a reflection on mere social illusion. A similar avoidance of the contradiction can be seen on the Continental side, notably in Martin Seel, who refuses it by privileging *perception*, which is not really a factor in the traditional antagonism between the aesthetics of Sein and the aesthetics of Schein: “From one of these perspectives or the other, aesthetic consciousness is regarded almost as the total lack of attention to the concrete Here and Now of the observable world”—something which he finds deplorable: “We should not accept this disastrous consequence.”⁸ His aesthetics of appearing, by contrast, conceives of aesthetic consciousness as *attentiveness* to the present: aesthetic comportment revolves around the “momentary and simultaneous

⁷ It is difficult to circumscribe the “collaborators” in a highly specialized art such as film. Individual members of the crew are certainly aware that their actions aim at a completed film, but due to the atomization of their roles, they do not know what foci of appreciation they are helping to specify, even while being aware of certain interpretive norms pertinent to their tasks. Davies suggests that only artists have the consciousness to specify intentions, whereas their assistants, clueless as to the artistic statements they are inadvertently helping to articulate, are not part of the authorial collective. The assistant’s actions are thus “intentionless.” Yet the idea of art informel is intentionless art, in which all artists to work like artists’ assistants. Art informel is correct insofar as the division of labour cuts means off from ends, from the final purpose of work itself. All art is intentionless in the sense that no one actually knows or has control over what will become of his or her own product, how it will be received, what it will accomplish. In this sense, the lived moment is “obscure” (Bloch) and social activity “intentionless” (Adorno, Benjamin). By making art the artist or artists’ intentioned activity, Davies not only obligingly stops thought at the division of labour, but also attributes to artists an autonomy that they do not in fact possess.

⁸ Martin Seel, *Die Macht des Erscheinens* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2007), p. 13 (my translations).

richness of appearing.”⁹ Propped up by a misconception—the Adornian aesthetics of illusion in fact requires *very* keen observation of and attention to the passing sound or isolated patch of colour for aesthetic consciousness to obtain at all—, Seel’s aesthetics of appearing goes counter to the Modernist, critical, dialectical aesthetics, which directs itself to the non-simultaneous or non-contemporaneous (*ungleichzeitig*) contradictions in the object. However diverse their views on art, aesthetics, politics, religion and philosophy may have been, Theodor Adorno, Ernst Bloch, Walter Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht all saw the contradictions of uneven development as indications that the seemingly closed and total reality could still be different—i.e., that it was really open. Once grasped as a non-simultaneity and not as separate spheres existing simultaneously on the same plane, the conflict between the old and the new can be worked on productively. From critique within these rifts and brinks something other than what exists can see the light of day. With the knowledge that contradictions cannot be so easily avoided or overstepped comes the knowledge of what exactly is open in reality. It is reasonable to hope that what exists may be freed from ideological repetition compulsion, reasonable to hope for the end of contradiction and reasonable to act with these aims. While practical aims have no place in art, contradictions attest to its element of social reality. In Robert Schumann’s *Dichterliebe*, op. 48, no. 1, social reality inheres in the contradiction between the three sharps in the key signature on the printed page and the secret key that the ear hears (the Neapolitan region of C-sharp major). This contradiction indicates that there is a real, social dimension to art, which gives itself to be merely a world of illusion. While *Dichterliebe* does not possess a solution to reification, it permits the thought that the universal delusional context of reification has not had the last word. Things can still be different than

⁹ Ibid. (my translation).

they are. When “existence is magically turned into its own ideology by its faithful duplication,” then the consciousness that things may be different from the concrete Here and Now of the observable world is correct as much in art as in life.¹⁰ But an aesthetics of appearing, along with the kind of aesthetic reception that it promotes, is not apt to bring forth this consciousness. Today this is not a mere disadvantage to theory, but actually irresponsible.¹¹ The redemption of illusion is more than the redemption of an aesthetics of illusion.¹²

The disdain for illusion in the domain of aesthetics is moved by the positivist spirit, which considers suspect anything that goes beyond the Here and Now of the observable world. In a sense, art’s own disdain for illusion also belongs to positivism. Adorno suggests that the crisis of illusion was touched off when artworks themselves began to make their claim to truth by direct expression, rather than through illusion.¹³ Such change in the criterion by which the artwork itself asks to be judged invites confusion in the sphere of letters. In “Der Essay als

¹⁰ GS, vol. 3, p. 301 (my translation).

¹¹ GS, vol. 4, p. 283 § 153, or translated *Minima Moralia*, p. 247.

¹² J. M. Bernstein, “Why Rescue Semblance? Metaphysical Experience and the Possibility of Ethics,” in *The Semblance of Subjectivity: Essays in Adorno’s Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Tom Huhn and Lambert Zuidervaart (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), pp. 177-212. Bernstein is entirely right to want to redeem illusion: “If immanence were self-sufficient and complete, then despair would be rational and final” (ibid., p. 184). His philosophical grounding, however, is Idealist rather than materialist. Bernstein claims that “the question of aesthetic semblance is the question of the possibility of possibility” (ibid., p. 195). But Adorno claims not that illusion, *Schein*, but that “the reality [Wirklichkeit] of artworks bears witness for the possibility of the possible” (GS, vol. 7, p. 200, in my translation). Bernstein claims that the redemption of illusion “recognizes that transcendence is, finally, not vertical but horizontal, a promise—toward a future habitation of this world” (“Why Rescue Semblance?,” p. 208). But transcendence must be more than a promise about the future in order for hope to be rational, since promises can be broken (and often are). Bernstein claims that because, in art, the “formation of meaning and interaction is riveted to the conditions of possible perception, the exposure of the subject to a singular object, it [the rescue of semblance] is materialist” (ibid., p. 208). A formation of *meaning* “riveted” to existing conditions of the possibility of perception, however, is still Idealist, not materialist. Adorno for his part claims that “since death is irrevocable, it is ideological to assert that a meaning might rise in light of fragmentary, albeit genuine, experience.” GS, vol. 6, p. 371 as translated by E. B. Ashton, *Negative Dialectics* (1997 repr., New York: Continuum, 1973), p. 378.

¹³ GS, vol. 18, p. 60, or translated by Wieland Hoban, “Nineteen Encyclopaedia Articles on New Music,” under “Musical expressionism,” in *Night Music: Essays on Music, 1928-1962*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (London: Seagull, 2009), pp. 269-321, here p. 275.

Form,” Adorno argues, against Lukács, that the essay is not an *artform*, for concepts are its medium, and that it makes a claim to “truth devoid of aesthetic illusion.”¹⁴ But when art also makes a claim to truth devoid of aesthetic illusion, all that is left to divide the essay from the artistic sphere is the essay’s conceptual medium. For Habermas, the conceptual medium is not sufficient to distinguish the essay from the artwork: he concurs with Axel Honneth “that even as a theoretician Adorno assimilated his mode of presentation to the aesthetic mode.”¹⁵

Habermas implies that having an aesthetic mode of presentation disqualifies theory as theory.¹⁶ He seems to view art as a realm of sensuous, expressive particulars of the here-and-now observable world, which is perhaps why he sees, mistakenly, Adorno’s category of the most advanced works of modern art as a “junk category” in which all the truth that does not fit into concepts goes, and which would be accessed by way of a theory that has become aesthetic: “Because it has to do with concepts, critique can only show why the truth that escapes theory finds a refuge in the most advanced works of modern art—out of which we surely could not coax it without an aesthetic theory.”¹⁷ From there, Habermas tends toward what Brian O’Connor has called “virtual ‘mind meld’”—the habit of Adorno’s interpreters to assimilate him to other thinkers.¹⁸ Habermas claims that Adorno’s position “on the theoretical

¹⁴ GS, vol. 11, p. 11, or prefer to my translation here that of Shierry Weber Nicholsen, “The Essay as Form,” in *Notes to Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), vol. 1, pp. 3-23, here p. 5.

¹⁵ Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*, vol. 1, *Handlungsrationalität und gesellschaftliche Rationalisierung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), p. 516 as translated by Thomas McCarthy, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, *Reason and the Rationalization of Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), p. 385.

¹⁶ This supports Raymond Geuss’s rather bald statement that “the oddest thing about this whole discussion [positivist Ideologiekritik] is the extent to which Habermas is himself infected with the positivism against which he is struggling.” Raymond Geuss, *The Idea of a Critical Theory: Habermas and the Frankfurt School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 30.

¹⁷ Habermas, *Handlungsrationalität und gesellschaftliche Rationalisierung*, p. 515f. as translated, *Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, p. 385.

¹⁸ For Brian O’Connor’s oppugnation of the “mind meld” tendency in Adorno scholarship, see his book *Adorno’s Negative Dialectic: Philosophy and the Possibility of Critical Rationality* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005), p. 149. Facile assimilation of Adorno’s categories and concepts to those of easier thinkers may not

claims of objectivating thought and of reflection”¹⁹ is close to the neo-ontologist one. But the “most advanced works of modern art” is not a junk category, or “project,” like the new ontologists’ project of historicity.²⁰ The truth of the most advanced modern artworks is not a quality or characteristic that theory does not possess; there is no truth without negation. In truth, illusion can be determinately negated by the most advanced Modern artworks or by discursive criticism, but this does not conflate art and philosophy: truth is not something existing, contained in a given domain.

It should perhaps be underscored that in “The Essay as Form,” Adorno does not claim that the essay is devoid of aesthetic illusion—only that it makes a claim to *truth* devoid of aesthetic illusion. Habermas’s charge that aesthetics gave the line to Adorno’s theoretical manner of presentation remains inconsequential as long as that theoretical work makes a claim to truth other than through the generation of contradictions, their dialectic. Adorno’s essays indeed each make a claim to wholeness, each operating on the aesthetic mode of presentation. His *Aesthetic Theory* is no less prone to illusion, moving constantly between what a thing appears as and what it is. But his work is true not by dint of its highly aesthetic quality, which no interpreter fails to remark. The criterion of truth that it sets itself is quite other—it is the specificity of what in the total delusional context he negates. Adorno’s contribution to philosophy is not his condemnation of the culture industry, jazz, television, radio, Stravinsky, new ontology, existentialism, phenomenology, positivism, astrology, propaganda, bourgeois mores, capitalism or communism. Rather, his contributions are micrological—out of a number

be a product of intellectual laziness, as O’Connor suggests, but could be the manifestation of identifying thinking, of the general social tendency to wipe out distinction. To counteract the “mind meld” tendency, O’Connor shows that Idealism is an important point of divergence between Adorno and the ontologists. See *ibid.*, p. 162.

¹⁹ Habermas, *Handlungsrationalität und gesellschaftliche Rationalisierung*, p. 516 as translated, *Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, p. 385.

²⁰ See GS, vol. 1, p. 351f. for Adorno’s critique of historicity.

of tiny determinations and manoeuvres, an *idée reçue* becomes visible, lights up, then goes out. The measure of the truth of his work is surgical precision—a precision that saves. Adorno's criticism does not destroy jazz, new ontology, logical positivism or anything else; it attaches to very specific problems, in different areas of research, that endanger the whole. For example, his essay "On Jazz" may have been motivated by the intention to bring down jazz; what actually transpires in "On Jazz" is the dissolution of certain received ideas about jazz—for example, the dissolution of the notion that the lead singer in a jazz number is a free lyrical subject.²¹ Likewise, Adorno may have personally detested logical positivism, but what actually transpires in his masterwork *Negative Dialectics* is the determinate negation of illusions that feed positivism—for example, the notion that contradictions in a philosophical text are errors, for which the thinking subject alone is responsible.²² Finally, Adorno's supposed anti-illusion position, associated with his apparent defense of the Modern music of the Second Viennese School, is a mere generalization when held up to his compliment of Alban Berg's *Lyric Suite* as "true to illusion."²³ Certainly the aesthetic forms of Adorno's texts provide the precision with which he is able to negate illusion, but these aesthetic forms are not themselves the measure of truth. If the aesthetic form were the measure of truth, Adorno would have failed by it. In his most programmatic text on philosophical composition practice, "The Essay as Form," Adorno ridicules Descartes's four rules for thinking;²⁴ yet he succumbs to them himself in *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, which starts out with a typology of

²¹ GS, vol. 17, pp. 74-108, esp. p. 95f., or in the translation by Jamie Owen Daniel modified by Richard Leppert, "On Jazz," in *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 470-495, esp. p. 488.

²² GS, vol. 6, esp. p. 154, translated by E. B. Ashton as *Negative Dialectics* (1997 repr., New York: Continuum, 1973), esp. p. 151.

²³ GS, vol. 13, p. 451, or prefer to my translation here that of Juliane Brand and Christopher Hailey, *Alban Berg: Master of the Smallest Link* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 104.

²⁴ GS, vol. 11, pp. 22-26, "The Essay as Form," pp. 14-17.

listening behaviour.²⁵ Obviously, the point of Adorno's typology is not to present and to negate an aesthetic form. Adorno's point is the following: the decline in the category of the "good listener" mirrors the decline in general musical education, and this makes the vast population easy prey to manipulation by the culture industry. Adorno makes virtually the same point in the first chapter of *Aesthetic Theory*, but in a highly un-schematic, dialectical open form.²⁶ The literary philosophical forms that Adorno adopted—aphorisms, essays, meditations—should not enter into judgments on the truth or falsity of his work. Philosophical texts indeed have aesthetic illusion—the illusion of naturalness and independence. But this is not the illusion that they aim to determine and to dissolve. The illusions that they aim to determine and to dissolve are the specific contents of a contradictory society, different every time. It seems that aesthetic illusion—the illusion of naturalness and independence—in the philosophical context only confuses the issue of that text's truth. Yet the positivist spirit that insists on standardized forms for research considers neither the consequences of imposing a homogeneous form on all writers nor the *raison d'être* of literary philosophical form. Non-conceptual, autonomous form is generated out of the need to let suffering speak in a world of repression and domination. Literary form acts as a container for the aggressive or frustrated energies generated in critique, energies generated whenever the social critic tries to undo the bonds of surplus repression—the bonds of repression over and above what is needed to fulfil the needs of society. This is why, when treating something serious, philosophers cannot be faulted for the highly unusual forms that their work takes. The more difficult the material, the more courageously the philosopher takes it on, the more alien the form. As we have seen, pre-

²⁵ GS, vol. 14, pp. 178-198.

²⁶ GS, vol. 7, p. 17, translated by Robert Hullot-Kentor as *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 6.

given, accepted schemata can be easily recuperated by regressive movements, and the schematism peculiar to the academic setting is no exception. Organic unity received broad, unquestioning acceptance in arts and letters before the Nazis appropriated it. While organicism in itself may have a regressive element, its widespread acceptance made it easy to recuperate. But because anything at all can be distorted and recuperated, the best strategy against recuperation cannot be to cling to what has been pure and incorruptible, to what was resistant to Nazi interference—the “entartete Kunst.” Rather, among the best defenses against heteronomous interference are critique, debate, a dialectic of forms—in short, *freedom* toward the object to determine the form of the text that speaks to it.

In the Western tradition, form serves memory. Form was a latecomer—often the work of a scribe whose task was “to punctuate,” or, to divide up and mark the text.²⁷ Today, form is normally the forerunner of the work itself. Formally, this thesis, however, has followed the older model, taking as its criterion not the faithful execution of a preconceived plan, but rather *remembrance*—the degree to which its form lends the work to memory. Adorno’s paragraph titles do not completely block the social tendency to group materials formally prior to composition, because these “Stichworte,” or “keywords,” control the text invisibly from above. I have returned to the old tradition of naming the work or each part of the work by its incipit in order to contest Adorno’s title fetishism through form.²⁸ The effect is to close the work off to what it is about, or, better, to embed what the work is about so closely within the work itself that the thing becomes loaded with the history of its concept. The present work, if it succeeds, must be more than it is—a carrier for repressed history, for what cannot be said.

²⁷ Mary J. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 281.

²⁸ See GS, vol. 11, pp. 325-334, translated by Shierry Weber Nichol森 as “Titles: Paraphrases on Lessing,” in *Notes to Literature*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), vol. 2, pp. 3-11.

Even those “daubing away”²⁹ are deterred by the powerful, are indeed the violated who scream.

²⁹ See GS, vol. 17, pp. 272-291, esp. p. 254, as translated by Susan H. Gillespie, “Difficulties,” in *Essays on Music*, pp. 644-679, esp. p. 645.

{Bibliography} Since the apparatus makes frequent recourse to shortened forms of citation, the main consideration in compiling the bibliography was the ease of reference to the complete publication details of the works cited. The list of works cited therefore makes do with a minimum of divisions:

- a. Musical Scores
- b. Books, Articles, Essays, Lectures, Letters, Theses, Interviews, Sketches, Sound Recordings

This division by medium accommodates a different indexing scheme for musical works, which are more suitably arranged alphabetically by composer and then numerically by opus number (or, if need be, year).

These choices render the list of works cited little helpful as a guide to reading on particular topics or authors. In order to compensate for this weakness, I supply the following remarks on the literature.

The main work consulted was Theodor W. Adorno's *Gesammelte Schriften*, abbreviated in the notes as GS. Complete bibliographical details for the translations may be found in section (b.) of the works cited. The particular texts of the GS referenced in the present study are as follows:

“Die Aktualität der Philosophie” (vol. 1, pp. 325-344, translated as “The Actuality of Philosophy”);

“Die Idee der Naturgeschichte” (vol. 1, pp. 345-365, translated as “The Idea of Natural History”);

Dialektik der Aufklärung: Philosophische Fragmente, with Max Horkheimer (vol. 3, translated as *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*);

Minima Moralia: Reflexionen aus dem beschädigten Leben (vol. 4, translated as *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life*);

Zur Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie: Studien über Husserl und die phänomenologischen Antinomien (vol. 5, pp. 7-245);

Drei Studien zu Hegel (vol. 5, pp. 247-381, translated as *Hegel: Three Studies*);

Negative Dialektik (vol. 6, pp. 7-412; translated as *Negative Dialectics*);

Ästhetische Theorie (vol. 7, translated as *Aesthetic Theory*);

“Die revidierte Psychoanalyse” (vol. 8, pp. 20-41);

“Studies in the Authoritarian Personality [excerpts],” with Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson and R. Nevitt Sanford (vol. 9.1, pp. 143-509);

Prismen (vol. 10.1, pp. 9-287, translated as *Prisms*), especially “Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft” (pp. 11-30, translated as “Cultural Criticism and Society,” pp. 7-34);

“Die Kunst und die Künste” (vol. 10.1, pp. 432-453);

the essays collected in the two published volumes and planned third volume of *Kritische Modelle* (*Eingriffe: Neun kritische Modelle*, vol. 10.2, pp. 455-94; *Stichworte: Kritische Modelle 2*: vol. 10.2, pp. 595-782; “Kritische Modelle 3”: vol. 10.2, pp. 783-799, translated collectively as *Critical Models*), especially “Jene zwanziger Jahre” (vol. 10.2, pp. 499-506, translated as “Those Twenties, pp. 41-48), “Erziehung nach Auschwitz” (pp. 674-690, translated as “Education After Auschwitz, pp. 191-204) and “Marginalien zu Theorie und Praxis” (pp. 759-782, translated as “Marginalia to Theory and Praxis,” pp. 259-278);

Noten zur Literatur (vol. 11, translated in two volumes as *Notes to Literature*), especially “Der Essay als Form” (pp. 9-33, translated as “The Essay as Form,” vol. 1, pp. 3-23), “Engagement” (pp. 409-430, translated as “Commitment,” vol. 2, pp. 76-94) and “Ist die Kunst heiter?” (pp. 599-606, translated as “Is Art Lighthearted?” vol. 2, pp. 247-253);

Philosophie der neuen Musik (vol. 12, translated as *Philosophy of Modern Music*);

Mahler: Eine musikalische Physiognomik (vol. 13, pp. 149-319, translated as *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*);

Berg: Der Meister des kleinsten Übergangs (vol. 13, pp. 321-494, translated as *Alban Berg: Master of the Smallest Link*);

“Über den Fetischcharakter in der Musik und die Regression des Hörens” (vol. 14, pp. 14-50, translated as “On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening” in *Essays on Music*, pp. 288-317);

“Das Altern der Neuen Musik” (vol. 14, pp. 143-167, translated as “The Aging of New Music,” in *Essays on Music*, pp. 181-202);

Einleitung in die Musiksoziologie: Zwölf theoretische Vorlesungen (vol. 14, pp. 169-433, translated as *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*);

Quasi una fantasia (vol. 16, pp. 249-540, translated as *Quasi una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*), especially “Vers une musique informelle” (vol. 16, pp. 493-540) and “Musik, Sprach und ihr Verhältnis im gegenwärtigen Komponieren” (vol. 16, pp. 649-664, translated as “Music, Language, and Composition” in *Essays on Music*, pp. 113-126);

Moments Musicaux: Neu gedruckte Aufsätze (vol. 17, pp. 7-161, translated as *Moments Musicaux*, in *Night Music*, pp. 1-266), especially “Schubert,” (vol. 17, pp. 18-33, translated as “Schubert” in *Night Music*, pp. 19-46) and “Über Jazz,” (vol. 17, pp. 74-108, translated as “On Jazz,” in *Essays on Music*, pp. 470-495);

Impromptus: Zweite Folge neu gedruckter musikalischer Aufsätze (vol. 17, pp. 163-344), especially “Schwierigkeiten” (pp. 253-291, translated as “Difficulties” in *Essays on Music*, pp. 644-679) and “Kleine Häresie” (pp. 297-302, translated as “Little Heresy” in *Essays on Music*, pp. 318-324);

Theorie der neuen Musik (vol. 18, pp. 55-176, translated as *Theory of New Music*, in *Night Music*, pp. 267-473), esp. “Neunzehn Beiträge über neue Musik” (vol. 18, pp. 57-87, translated as “Nineteen Encyclopaedia Articles on New Music,” pp. 269-321) and “Über das gegenwärtige Verhältnis von Philosophie und Musik” (vol. 18, pp. 149-176, translated as “On the Current Relationship between Philosophy and Music,” in *Night Music*, pp. 426-473 and as “On the Contemporary Relationship of Philosophy and Music,” in *Essays on Music*, pp. 135-161);

“Situation des Liedes” (vol. 18, pp. 345-353); and

“Toward a Reappraisal of Heine” (vol. 20.2, pp. 441-452).

The collection *Essays on Music* reproduces two essays that Adorno wrote and published in English in his lifetime, and which do not appear in the GS: “The Radio Symphony (An Experiment in Theory)” (pp. 251-270) and, with the assistance of George Simpson, “On Popular Music” (pp. 437-469). I draw on both of these.

Other primary sources consulted were the gradually appearing volumes of the *Nachgelassene Schriften* (NaS), edited by the Theodor W. Adorno Archiv in Frankfurt and published by Suhrkamp. These posthumous works are arranged into six divisions or “Abteilungen”—(I.) Fragments; (II.) Philosophical Notes; (III.) Studies on Poetry; (IV.) Course Lectures; (V.) Extemporaneous Talks; and (VI.) Talks, Discussions and Interviews. In the notes, I refer to these works by the titles of the individual volumes, rather than by Abteilung (division) and Band (volume) of the NaS. Of the works published as *Nachgelassene Schriften* (NaS), the most thought-provoking and productive for the present research was *Zu einer Theorie der musikalischen Reproduktion* (NaS, division I, vol. 2 translated as *Towards a Theory of Musical Reproduction*). Adorno’s lectures were also instructive. *Einführung in die Dialektik* serves as an excellent propaedeutic to dialectical theory (NaS, division IV, vol. 2). *Ästhetische Theorie* in some sense supersedes the 1958/59 lectures *Ästhetik* (NaS, division IV, vol. 3). As editor Eberhard Ortland notes, Adorno reviewed the transcript of the recorded lectures for his work on *Ästhetische Theorie*, notating and even striking out particular passages (p. 395 n2). Nonetheless, *Ästhetik (1958/59)* contains unbound insights, spared in Adorno’s editing work on the transcripts, yet never built into *Ästhetische Theorie*.

A selective consultation of the letters was made. Suhrkamp has published a good deal of Adorno’s voluminous correspondence in the series “Brief und Briefwechsel.” Edition Text + Kritik has brought out other of Adorno’s correspondence and is responsible for another source of note, the *Frankfurter Adorno Blätter*. This serial publication, also edited by the Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, contains previously unpublished material by and on Adorno and related figures, such as Walter Benjamin.

Gracious permission was granted by the Theodor W. Adorno Archiv to cite from copies of the correspondence between Adorno and Rudolf Kolisch held in its collections, as well as from copies of certain annotated musical scores that were in his possession.

In selecting the secondary literature for the present study, I took into consideration Brian O'Connor's observations and criticisms of the influence of Jürgen Habermas's reading of Adorno on contemporary German philosophy (see below, Brian O'Connor, *Adorno's Negative Dialectic*, pp. 165-170, esp. p. 165). In reading Jürgen Habermas, Axel Honneth and Albrecht Wellmer, I found support for O'Connor's claim that these interpreters are oriented toward Adorno's philosophy by way of a "linguistic turn" that Adorno himself avoids (*ibid.*, p. 190 n1; p. 168). Yet other Germanophone interpreters of Adorno seem perfectly happy not to discuss the communicative theory of action, and figures so towering as Regina Becker-Schmidt, Peter Bürger and Carl Dahlhaus exhibit such independence of spirit and originality that they can scarcely be classed under "secondary literature."

Indispensable for any study on Adorno are *The Origin of Negative Dialectics* by Susan Buck-Morss and *The Melancholy Science* by Gillian Rose. Thirty-five years of research have accrued since their publication, but the questions and debates that these studies raise have not been exhausted.

The classic general introduction to Adorno's thought is *Adorno* by Martin Jay, whose early interest and work on the Frankfurt School (see below) received Max Horkheimer's gratitude (see Horkheimer to Jay, Montagnola, December 1971, in Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 18, p. 789f.). I also relied on Simon Jarvis's ambitious *Adorno: A Critical Introduction*. Raymond Geuss's *The Idea of a Critical Theory* may also serve as an introduction, but it is more appropriate in the context of Anglo-American philosophy. More recent introductions to Adorno include *Adorno* by Brian O'Connor (London: Routledge, 2013) and *Adorno and the Ends of Philosophy* by Andrew Bowie (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2013).

Of the many available biographies of Adorno, Stefan Müller-Doohm's *Adorno* served as my guide for the present study. To gain an understanding of the historical and institutional contexts in which Adorno matured, I relied on two monographs: Martin Jay's *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research* and Rolf Wiggershaus's *The Frankfurt School*.

An important English-language source of Critical Theory articles and translations is the periodical *Telos*.

A number of anthologies of diverse essays and excerpts have appeared in the years since Adorno's death. For the present study, I consulted *Adorno and the Need in Thinking* (ed. Donald A. Burke et al., see below), *Theodor Adorno: Key Concepts*, edited by Deborah Cook (Stocksfield: Acumen Publishing, 2008), *The Cambridge Companion to Adorno* (ed. Tom Huhn, see below), *The Semblance of Subjectivity*, edited by Tom Huhn and Lambert Zuidervaat (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), *Adorno: A Critical Reader*, edited by Nigel Gibson and Andrew Rubin (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002, uncited), *Theodor W. Adorno* (Simon

Jarvis, ed., see below) and *The Actuality of Adorno: Critical Essays on Adorno and the Postmodern*, edited by Max Pensky (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997, uncited).

Adorno-Konferenz 1983, edited by Ludwig von Friedeburg and Jürgen Habermas (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983) remains the primary collection of Adorno-related conference proceedings. *Les Normes et le Possible: Héritage et perspectives de l'École de Francfort*, edited by Pierre-François Noppen et al. (s.l.: Éditions de la maison des sciences de l'homme, 2012, uncited) constitutes the proceedings of “Une critique des pratiques culturelles? Évolution et actualité du modèle de l'École de Francfort,” an international workshop on critical theory and culture held at the Centre canadien d'études allemandes et européennes, Université de Montréal, September 22-24, 2010.

I consulted several monographs and articles on particular aspects of Adorno's philosophy. *Adorno: The Recovery of Experience* by Roger Foster and *Adorno's Negative Dialectic* by Brian O'Connor tackle the notorious difficulty of Adorno's thought responsibly—by showing his deep level of engagement with different philosophers and (in Foster's case) art. The strong point of Foster's book is his chapter on Husserl (“Failed Outbreak I: Husserl,” pp. 89-111), while Brian O'Connor is strong on Adorno's relation to German Idealism and to its surviving vestiges in, for example, new ontology. J. M. Bernstein's *Adorno: Disenchantment and Ethics* attempts to derive from Adorno's existing works the Magna Moralia that he never wrote. While Deborah Cook justly criticizes the Ideality of Bernstein's “complex concept” in her “From the Actual to the Possible: Non-identity Thinking,” he is right to raise the incompatibility of the simple concept with embodied ethical life, especially considering Hegel's endorsement of the simple concept and rejection of “the composite [zusammengesetzte] concept” as “something worse than materialism” in *The Science of Logic* (*Werke*, vol. 6, p. 291 as translated by G. di Giovanni, p. 542). Yet, more recent and focussed than Bernstein's book on Adorno's ethics is *Adorno: l'humaniste: Essai sur sa pensée morale et politique* by Marie-Andrée Ricard. Both books evoke childhood, art and metaphysical experience at their close, but Ricard manages to avoid affirmation while remaining determinedly utopian. This balance is missing from “Adorno's Dialectical Realism” by Linda Martín Alcoff and Alireza Shomali. Neither this article nor Alison Stone's “Adorno and Logic” convincingly argues for the adoption of negative dialectics. Closer to aesthetic themes, *Mimesis on the Move* by Karla L. Schultz is an engaging work; however, some slight misreadings there are magnified in works by subsequent authors, notably by Yvonne Sherratt in *Adorno's Positive Dialectic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, uncited), which Cook also criticizes in “From the Actual to the Possible.” Gilles Moutot's *Adorno: Langage et réification* is perhaps too brisk a treatment of its subject; it requires closer readings of specific passages from the corpus to gain depth. Nonetheless, the present study owes much to it.

There are numerous comparative studies now available, but not all those who seek “to mediate between two bold thinkers” have “the eye to see uniqueness,” as runs the Nietzsche aphorism that Adorno includes in his “morality of thinking” (*Minima Moralia*, §46). Karin Bauer remembers it in her *Adorno's Nietzschean Narratives: Critiques of Ideology, Readings of Wagner* (p. 3). For the present study, I also consulted *The Fate of Art: Aesthetic Alienation*

from *Kant to Derrida and Adorno* (University Park, Penn.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992, uncited in the present work) and “Negative Dialectic as Fate: Adorno and Hegel,” both by J. M. Bernstein, Deborah Cook’s *Adorno, Habermas, and the Search for a Rational Society* (London: Routledge, 2004, uncited), “The Concept of Totality in Lukács and Adorno” by Martin Jay, *The Sovereignty of Art: Aesthetic Negativity in Adorno and Derrida* by Christoph Menke and “From Speculative to Dialectical Thinking – Hegel and Adorno” from Gillian Rose’s collection of essays *Judaism and Modernity*.

I achieved a better understanding of Idealism by consulting the dissertation of my senior colleague Pierre-François Noppen. Completed at Paris IV, “Marx, Horkheimer, Adorno et le projet d’une théorie post-hégélienne de la dialectique” concerns two competing models of dialectical theory.

Adorno has not escaped the necessary evaluation of the philosophical canon in light of feminist critique. Since Susan Buck-Morss’s statement “Adorno was not a feminist,” a number of feminist readings of his work have appeared (Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics*, p. 206 n188). Karin Bauer devotes a section of her book *Adorno’s Nietzschean Narratives* to the views of Adorno and Nietzsche on women and gender (pp. 102-116). Furthermore, entire collections of feminist readings of Adorno have appeared: *Adorno: Culture and Feminism*, edited by Maggie O’Neill (London: Sage, 1999), the themed issue “Adorno critique de la domination” of *Tumultes* edited by Sonia Dayan-Herzbrun et al. (n° 23, novembre 2004) and *Feminist Interpretations of Theodor Adorno*, edited by Renée Heberle (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006). Of special note is Regina Becker-Schmidt’s article “Critical Theory as a Critique of Society: Theodor W. Adorno’s Significance for a Feminist Sociology” in the O’Neill volume. I also consulted Lisa Yun Lee’s *Dialectics of the Body: Corporeality in the Philosophy of T. W. Adorno*.

Adorno’s Aesthetic Theory: The Redemption of Illusion by Lambert Zuidervart succeeds in its aim at providing an accessible introduction to Adorno’s aesthetics. In a different sense, it is a foil to another engaging introductory text, Marc Jimenez’s *Adorno et la modernité*, which denies—unfairly, I think—reconciliation and redemption to Adorno’s aesthetics (see, for example, Jimenez, p. 202). Shierry Weber Nichol森’s *Exact Imagination, Late Work* stands out as being conscientiously adequate to Adorno’s aesthetic theory, in both form and content. Rüdiger Bubner’s “Kann Theorie ästhetisch werden? Zum Hauptmotiv der Philosophie Adornos” is not adequate to Adorno’s aesthetics, but certainly shows the tensions in it. Perhaps the most serious and challenging criticisms of Adorno’s aesthetics may be found in Peter Bürger’s *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, which, while not a book specifically on Adorno, marks both a rupture and transition from *Aesthetic Theory*. His subsequent essay “Adorno’s Anti-Avant-Gardism” attacks Adorno more directly. Bürger, however, does not treat musical works, whereas Adorno draws very heavily from music to build his aesthetics. Adorno himself treated the question of the unity of the arts in his essay “Die Kunst und die Künste,” where he came down heavily against the total work of art and suspicious syntheses (GS, vol. 10.1, pp. 432-453).

Art’s other “torn half” is the culture industry. Without pretending to treat these two unreconciled halves in a balanced manner, I wished at the very least to juxtapose art and its

other (supra, Chapter II). Deborah Cook's well-researched *The Culture Industry Revisited* sets out Adorno's thought on the culture industry by way of a dialectic of viewpoints drawn from the secondary literature. Karin Bauer's *Adorno's Nietzschean Narratives* problematizes the relation between the culture industry and high art in the figure of Richard Wagner (see esp. pp. 117-171). Two articles on a topic related to the culture industry, the decline of listening, may be found in the *Cambridge Companion to Adorno*, edited by Tom Huhn: Lydia Goehr's "Dissonant Works and the Listening Public" (pp. 222-247) and Robert Hullot-Kentor's "Right Listening and a New Type of Human Being" (pp. 181-197, uncited in the present work). Challenging objections to Adorno's model of listening may be found in Rose Rosengard Subotnik's essay "Toward a Deconstruction of Structural Listening: A Critique of Schoenberg, Adorno, and Stravinsky" in *Deconstructive Variations*.

Works consulted on Adorno's concept of aesthetic illusion include J. M. Bernstein's "Why Rescue Semblance? Metaphysical Experience and the Possibility of Ethics," the chapter "Rettung des Scheins?" in Peter Bürger's *Zur Kritik der idealistischen Ästhetik* (pp. 59-82), Günter Figal and Hans Georg Flickinger's "Die Aufhebung des Schönen Scheins: Schöne und nicht mehr schöne Kunst im Anschluß an Hegel und Adorno," Thomas Huhn's "Adorno's Aesthetics of Illusion," the chapter "The Crisis of *Schein*" in Fredric Jameson's *Late Marxism: Adorno, or, The Persistence of the Dialectic* (pp. 165-176), Lorraine Markotic's "Enigma, Semblance, and Natural Beauty in Adorno's Epistemological Aesthetics," Hyung-won Min's *Zur Kritik und Rettung des Scheins bei Th. W. Adorno*, Norbert Rath's "Dialektik des Scheins—Materialien zum Scheinbegriff Adornos," Albrecht Wellmer's "Wahrheit, Schein, Versöhnung: Adornos ästhetische Rettung der Modernität" and Lambert Zuidervaart's *Adorno's Aesthetic Theory: The Redemption of Illusion*.

Adorno's Aesthetics of Music by Max Paddison remains the main reference in English for Adorno's philosophy of music. My readings on Adorno's philosophy of music include "What Adorno Makes Possible for Music Analysis" by Kofi Agawu, *La pensée musicale de Theodor W. Adorno: L'épique et le temps* by Anne Boissière, Chapter 9 ("Adorno: Musical Philosophy or Philosophical Music?") of Andrew Bowie's *Music, Philosophy and Modernity*, "Analysis as Mediated Immediacy: Adorno, Hepokoski & Darcy, and the Dialectics of Musical Analysis" by Jan Christiaens, "Adorno and Schoenberg's Unanswered Question" by Murray Dineen, "Dissonant Works and the Listening Public" and "Adorno, Schoenberg, and the *Totentanz der Prinzipien*—in Thirteen Steps," both by Lydia Goehr, "Amidst the Plurality of Voices: Philosophy of Music After Adorno" by Nikolas Kompridis, "Reading History in the Ruins of Nature" by Max Paddison, *Music as Philosophy: Adorno and Beethoven's Late Style* by Michael Spitzer, selected essays in *Deconstructive Variations: Music and Reason in Western Society* and *Developing Variations: Style and Ideology in Western Music*, both by Rose Rosengard Subotnik, and *Kunst als begrifflose Erkenntnis: Zum Kunstbegriff der ästhetischen Theorie Theodor W. Adornos* by Martin Zenck. I made selective use of *Apparitions: New Perspectives on Adorno and Twentieth-Century Music*, edited by Berthold Hoeckner (London: Routledge, 2006) and of *Expression, Truth and Authenticity: On Adorno's Theory of Music and Musical Performance*, edited by Mário Vieira de Carvalho (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2009).

The literature consulted on Robert Schumann was directed by the unity question, and may not be suitable for research on other questions. Nonetheless, some general works can be recommended. Despite the apparently honest efforts of John Daverio in his *Robert Schumann* and John Worthen in his *Robert Schumann*, the abuse that Robert Schumann has suffered at the hands of biographers has still not been put right—and perhaps cannot be. This is why I preferred *Robert Schumann im eigenen Wort* to biographies. Despite its incongruity with the academic milieu, this handsome florilège compiled by Willi Reich (no less!), by and large lets Robert Schumann speak for himself. Margit L. McCorkle’s *Werkverzeichnis* is an important resource, marred, however, by its judgements on Robert Schumann’s personal history, medical details and work habits. Thomas Alan Brown’s *The Aesthetics of Robert Schumann* includes historical and philosophical background to Schumann’s music, as well as concise, pointed analyses of selected works. Eric Sams’s classic *The Songs of Robert Schumann* comments on each of the 246 songs of the Peters edition. The serial publication *Schumann Studien*, brought out by the Robert-Schumann-Gesellschaft (Zwickau), is a repository of articles on and around Schumann. The main score consulted was the 2011 Bärenreiter edition of *Dichterliebe*. Also consulted were the Norton critical score edited by Arthur Komar and the undated Peters (first?) edition available electronically via the Petrucci Music Library. A sensible starting point for any research on *Dichterliebe* is *The Genesis of Schumann’s “Dichterliebe”: A Source Study* by Rufus E. Hallmark. Barbara Pearl Turchin’s PhD thesis, “Robert Schumann’s Song Cycles in the Context of the Early Nineteenth-Century ‘Liederkreis,’” provides noteworthy historical background to Schumann’s song cycles. Besides Komar’s essay in the Norton Critical Score, I consulted on the unity question David Neumeyer’s “Organic Structure and the Song Cycle,” David Ferris’s *Schumann’s Eichendorff “Liederkreis” and the Genre of the Romantic Cycle* (especially chapter 2, “Analyzing *Dichterliebe*”), and the Yonatan Malin’s review of Julia Beate Perrey’s book, *Schumann’s “Dichterliebe” and Early Romantic Poetics*. Two notable essays touching on Schumann are Kofi Agawu’s “Ambiguity in Tonal Music: A Preliminary Study” and David Kopp’s “Intermediate States of Key in Schumann.”

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