Adorno's Critique of Judgement: the recovery of negativity from the philosophies of Kant and Hegel

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Abstract

This thesis has four primary aims. Firstly, I develop an account of Adorno's critique of Kant and Hegel's philosophy. I argue that the role and structure of judgement is key to his critical analysis. Adorno's discussion of their metaphysics, epistemology revolves around an immanent critique of judgement. This critique reveals, in the dialectical sense, the irreducibility of the 'negative moment' within judgement.

This critical exposition grounds the second aim of the thesis. Analysis of Kant and Hegel's philosophies enables us to discern a number of key concepts in Adorno's own thought, concepts which will help us to understand his notion of negativity. In particular, his dialectical critique produces a constellation of critical - or negative - dialectical concepts: conceptless [*begriffslose*], non-identity [*Nichtidentität*], mediation [*Vermittlung*].

The generation of these concepts and their elucidation provides the basis for the third aim: to give a textually viable and philosophically fruitful explanation of key commitments in Adorno's negative dialectics. I argue that negative dialectics does not amount to a system, a standpoint, or even a set of principles. Rather, it is a critical activity. The commitments, which revolve around the constellation of concepts outlined above, indicate a critical sensitivity to the limits of epistemology and metaphysics and the problem that these limits pose for judgement.

Finally, I develop the resources to answer Michael Rosen's claim that Adorno's rejection of Hegelian determinate negation leaves his dialectics without any dynamic force. Drawing upon aesthetics, we can better understand the dynamics of negative dialectics. Aesthetic engagement with artworks not only demonstrates an appropriate orientation of philosophy to material, it is also an appropriate medium through which we can gain a clearer understanding of the philosophical commitments elucidated above.

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List of Abbreviations

Works By Adorno

AT	(1997) *Aesthetic Theory*. Trans. R, Hullot-Kentor. Ed. G, Adorno and R. Tiedemann. Continuum: London.
AE	(1985) *Against Epistemology: A Metacritique - Studies in Husserl and the Phenomenological Antinomies*. Trans. W. Domingo. MIT: Cambridge.
ATb	(1970) *Ästhetische Theorie*. Suhrkamp Verlag: Frankfurt.
HTT	(1993) *Hegel: Three Studies*. Trans. S.W. Nicholson. Intro. S.W. Nicholson and J.J. Shapiro. MIT Press: Mass.
HaF	(2006) *History and Freedom*. Trans. R Livingstone. Ed. R. Tiedemann. Polity Press: Cambridge.
KCPR	(2001) *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. R. Livingstone. Ed. R. Tiedemann. Polity Press: Cambridge.
LoND	(2008) *Lectures on Negative Dialectics*. Trans. R. Livingstone. Ed. R. Tiedemann. Polity Press: Cambridge.
MCP	(2001) Metaphysics: Concepts and Problems. Stanford University Press: Stanford.
MM	(2005) *Minima Moralia*. Verso: London.
ND	(2004) *Negative Dialectics*. Trans. E.B. Ashton. Routledge: London.
NDb	(1966) *Negative Dialektik.* Suhrkamp Verlag: Frankfurt.
PoMM	(2003) *Philosophy of Modern Music*. Trans. A.G. Mitchell &
W.V.	Blomster. Continuum: London.
CM	(1998) 'Subject and Object'. In *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*. Trans. H. Pickford. Columbia University Press: New York.
CI	(1991) *The Culture Industry*. Routledge: London.
INH	(1984) The Idea of Natural History. Trans. B.Hullot-Kentor. In *Telos*, No. 60 Summer.
JoA	(2007) *The Jargon of Authenticity*. Trans. K. Tarnowski and F. Will. Routledge Classics: London.

Works by Hegel

EL	(1991) *The Encylopaedia Logic*. Trans. T.F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting and H.S. Harris. Hackett Publishing Company: Cambridge.
LoHP	(1990) *Lectures on the History of Philosophy: The Lectures of 1825-1826*. Trans. R.F. Brown and J.M Stewart. Ed. R.F. Brown. University of California Press: Oxford.
PoS	(1977) *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans. A.V. Miller. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
PoH	(1956) *The Philosophy of History*. Trans. J. Sibree. Dover Publications: New York.
PoM	(1971) *Philosophy of Mind*. Trans. A.V. Miller. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
SoL	(2002) *Science of Logic*. Trans. A.V. Miller. Routledge: Oxon.
PoR	(2005) *The Philosophy of Right*. Trans. S.W. Dyde. Dover Publications, Inc: New York.

Works by Kant

CPR	(1996) *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. W.S. Pluhar. Hackett: Cambridge.
CoJ	*Critique of Judgement*. Trans. W.S. Pluhar, Hackett: Cambridge.

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Introduction

In *Minima Moralia,* Adorno offers the following: "Advice to intellectuals: let no-one represent you." (MM: 128). We will see that issues of representation play an important role in his thinking — from the consideration of discursive representations of objects in judgements through to representation as some form of artistic goal. In all cases, however, he worries that the processes and resources required for the various representations we make result in distortions of that which they are intended to represent. Furthermore, he worries that the representation is often taken as sufficient to, or a substitute for, the object represented. In this move we run the risk of losing touch with the unique, irreducible particularity of that which we were trying to represent. From worries of distortion through to the occlusion of our objects of concern, underpinning Adorno's concern with representation is essentially ethical: how do we think about objects, about the world and about ourselves in a way which does justice to that which we are considering?

It is no surprise that he also considers representation as a meta-philosophical concern: that the very representation of one's philosophy by another generates the risk of misrepresentation and distortion. Various forms of discursive representation such as précis, distillation, interpretation, etc., all attempt to convey a set of ideas in some other form. Adorno's concern is that the other form may not be amenable to the ideas represented. For Adorno, as we will see, the form of presentation must adapt itself to the content of the ideas if the form itself is not to distort the content of the idea. Form and content operate together, they *mediate* each other. For Adorno, you cannot simply detach one from another and 'plug' either into a different context without serious distortion.

Adorno's complex, fastidious style is a function of this concern. The style and form of his writing was an attempt to develop a mode of expression amenable to

the representation of certain ideas without distorting them. The implication is that if we try to represent the content differently, distortion is inevitable. Hence his concern that he be able to represent himself, with all its legalistic connotations.

In this thesis, insofar as I am offering an interpretation of certain aspects of Adorno's philosophy, I am attempting to represent him. I am attempting something that Adorno did not wish to happen. The problem is, as a result of Adorno's style, understanding him is extremely difficult. It is also arguable that understanding involves some form of representation. As a function of understanding Adorno, I have to represent his thought in a manner that is intelligible to myself. Therefore, it may be that representation is unavoidable and it may also be that Adorno's style lends itself to representative distortion.

Adorno was aware of these points. He says at the beginning of *Negative Dialectics* that no theory escapes the marketplace: that all theories enter into forces of exchange, repackaging, consumption. He also states that thinking his own theory would escape this fate would be no more than 'self-advertising' (ND: 4). It is a humble moment. In immediate response to this concern, he says that dialectics is, in its most simplified and reduced expression, the idea that "objects do not go into their concepts without remainder" (ND: 5). What he means by this is not yet clear, analysis is required to understand this claim and it will be considered in due course. Indeed, I will argue that this sort of claim should not be understood as an axiom in a system or a transcendental principle. Rather it is a generalized commitment derived from and justified by particular dialectical analyses of particular objects and concepts. However, this statement is a clear indication that no matter how involved Adorno's philosophy becomes, he himself acknowledges that there are commitments which can be picked out and analyzed. It is the aim of this thesis to locate these core commitments, analyse and provide a coherent account of them.

Adorno's theories have a history of interpretation within social, cultural and musicological domains. However, his explicitly philosophical work has been somewhat neglected in Anglophone philosophy until about the last fifteen years:

including excellent studies by Jarvis (1998), Zuidervaart (1991), O'Connor (2004), Bernstein (2001), Hammer (2006), Foster (2007) and recently Cook (2004 & 2011). In this thesis, I will be considering issues of epistemology and metaphysics within Adorno's thinking and so will be primarily concerned with the interpretations offered by O'Connor and Foster.

Whilst I think that both of these studies have much to recommend them, I am in disagreement with certain claims. Exactly what those problems are will be discussed shortly. Aside from specific issues, I think there is a general strategic problem with their accounts: they, particularly O'Connor, have tried to give a 'representation' of Adorno's philosophy. That is, a determinate, systematic position which counts as 'Adorno's philosophy'. Such an ambition, I think, misses an important subtlety in Adorno's thinking: philosophy, for him, is a critical *practice*, with commitments certainly, but it is not a reified 'position' (ND: 6) — a theme I will return to. Furthermore, philosophy can be analyzed in its own right but the practice of philosophy is an integrated critical activity, mediated through other critical enquiries such as sociology, history, musicology, economics, etc. Wresting the philosophy from other modes of critical enquiry and discourse will result in its distortion.

In this thesis, I offer another interpretation of Adorno's critical thinking. I try to maintain his own presence in the interpretation through close readings of both well-known and slightly less well-known texts — in particular drawing upon many of his recently translated and published lectures. My interpretation will also develop from within his own critical analysis of two of his primary influences: Kant and Hegel. Following Adorno's thinking enables us to develop key philosophical commitments in his various critiques of epistemological and metaphysical positions.

To develop the analysis of these commitments, I will use debates from contemporary philosophy: for example, I think the metaphysical debate over material constitution is instructive for developing Adorno's thinking about nonidentity. This may appear to stray too far from Adorno's own idiom. What I believe it indicates is that Adorno's thinking is neither as esoteric and obtuse as is

often believed and that his dialectical thinking is amenable to analysis – albeit analysis which is sensitive to the particular modality of dialectical thought. Furthermore, it suggests that Adorno has interesting and relevant points to make in contemporary philosophical debate. The key concern in developing these commitments is not to reify his thinking. Rather than presenting his thought as a 'system', I instead attempt to show how these commitments work within particular critical activities — the analysis of an artwork, for example. In this way we maintain what was so important to Adorno: dynamic, fluid, responsive, critical thinking.

The Argument and Aims

The primary aim of this thesis is to provide an interpretation of Adorno's epistemological and metaphysical commitments. These commitments underpin his 'negative dialectics' - the name he gives to his critical mode of thinking. Strategically, these commitments will be developed through an analysis of Adorno's critique of Kant and Hegel. When he critiques both thinkers, he explicitly engages with them over issues of epistemology and metaphysics. As such, his engagement with these two thinkers provides excellent resources and insight into his own views on epistemology and metaphysics. I argue that the motivation for his core commitments revolves around a concern for how we *judge*. That is, how we represent ourselves and the world to ourselves and to each other. It becomes apparent that this concern with judgement and representation is intimately related to concerns over the complexity of the objects we are attempting to judge.

I argue that Adorno's philosophical commitments are captured by a constellation of concepts: the conceptless [*der begriffslose*], nonidentity [*Nichtidentität*], mediation [*Vermittlung*]. This constellation emerges from Adorno's critiques of Kant and Hegel, their accounts of judgement and their accounts of what it is that we judge. Awareness of the commitments captured by these concepts is important if our judgements are to have claim to truth and also if they are to be sensitive to the particularity of the entities we are attempting to judge. We find that the purpose of these concepts is to re-orientate our thinking back towards

material objects and the import of their irreducible difference to mind. This difference acts as a limit to epistemology and metaphysics. In turn this limit entails that our attempts to achieve a positive, unified, systematic and complete knowledge of world is impossible. The persistence of the limitations of knowledge and on our philosophical endeavours is what Adorno's negativity consists in. I will argue that 'negativity', for Adorno, entails both epistemic humility and a predominantly critical inflection to our knowledge-making activities.

In line with my claim that Adorno's philosophy is more critical practice than a determinate position, I apply the theoretical resources I have developed in my interpretation to a key concern for Adorno: how do we judge an object to be an artwork? In keeping with Adorno's commitment to particular, bespoke analysis, I will examine the case of a specific object, Duchamp's *Fountain*, and how we might judge it to be an artwork. This analysis is provided in order to deepen our understanding of Adorno's thought. However, inasmuch as it is a compelling analysis of an artwork, we have reason to believe that Adorno's approach 'works' — Rosen argues, given Adorno's reconfiguration of Hegel's dialectics, that Adorno's method lacks essential resources to fulfil its aims. I suggest Adorno's dialectics do work if we interpret its commitments correctly. Furthermore, the analysis of an artwork goes some way to justifying Adorno's critical approach: that if objects are really complex in the way Adorno believes they are and if making judgements about them requires the sort of critical approach adopted by Adorno, then we have some reason to take Adorno's philosophy seriously on issues of judgement.

I bring my analysis to a close by reconsidering Adorno's critiques of Kant and Hegel in light of my presentation of Adorno's thinking. I argue that whilst we have seen Adorno critique Kant and Hegel and that his commitments have emerged from these critiques, it would be false to understand them as a rejection of Kant and Hegel. Rather, these commitments are best understood as a mutual critique of Kant and Hegel. That is, Adorno's negative dialectics is itself a dialectical consequence of Hegel's critique of Kant but also of a Kantian critique of Hegel: negative dialectics is the interpenetration of Kantian and Hegelian philosophy.

The Structure

The thesis is separated into three sections[1]: Sections One and Two deal with Adorno's 'immanent critiques' of Kant and Hegel respectively. The idea of immanent critique is developed by Hegel (PoS: 58 & 9) and is intimately associated with dialectical method. Put simply it is the idea that critique of a position operates by making explicit the contradictions, or tensions, within it. The contradiction itself provides the grounds for determining what is wrong with a position and how the position must be reconsidered in order to dissolve the contradiction. Hence the critique is objective in the sense that it does not develop according to the opinions of the critic but according to a *real* contradictions or tensions within the position itself. For thinkers as concerned with dogmatism as Hegel and Adorno, such a method is extremely attractive.[2]

Section One

It is clear from Adorno's lectures on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and in scattered analyses on Kant that he thinks there are contradictions – or at least aporias or tensions – in Kant's thinking. It is not the purpose of this thesis to argue for either the validity of his analysis or how it fares against contemporary Kantian scholarship. Whilst I do think that Adorno's criticisms are insightful and compelling, the intention is to understand Adorno's critique of Kant insofar as it enables him to develop his own thought.

This section is divided into three chapters. The first chapter provides an orientation of Adorno's critique of Kant. He argues that the primary tension in Kantian philosophy is captured by the theoretical tensions between the *'constituens'* and '*constitutum*'. These are Adorno's own terms and are quite

[1] The thesis is divided into 'sections' comprising of 'chapters' which in turn comprise in 'parts'. Clarity over these terms is relevant for reference in cross-referencing.

[2] Finlayson argues in a footnote that Adorno moves away from a theory of immanent critique. (2009: 627). This is a complicated issue and beyond the scope of this thesis. It should be noted that whilst Adorno does argue that there is an element of self-delusion in immanent-critique - it is impossible to conduct an entirely presuppositionless critique - it is still an appropriate method for developing a notion of aporias and tensions. What is also required is a critique of immanence and its own tensions. He does not however, given the problems with aspects of immanent critique, opt instead for transcendental critique. See AT: 199, 237, 323 & 380.

obscure. As they are central notions for him, it is necessary to understand what exactly they mean and what they refer to. It will be argued that these terms refer to a number of different dualities in Kant's thinking. In turn, Adorno argues that these dualities enable Kant to fix one side of the dualism in order to provide a stable basis for the determination of the other side. Two of the key dualisms highlighted by Adorno are: empirical subjectivity and transcendental subjectivity; cognizing, discursive subjects and the material objects which they cognize.

As we will see, Adorno wishes to argue that these dualisms emerge in Kant's philosophy due to its epistemic ambitions: to produce an *objectively valid* basis for knowledge from subjectivity itself. In turn, this particular account of objectivity requires a theory of judgement orientated around 'identity-thinking'. Adorno's criticism of identity-thinking concerns the presumed sufficiency of our conceptual resources for the representation of particular objects: he thinks this sufficiency is misguided. So the analysis of *constituens* and *constitutum* leads us to an analysis of Kant's theory of judgement.

In the second chapter, I consider identity-thinking. I propose two possible interpretations each operating with a particular mode of 'sufficiency': the qualitative interpretation — that our concepts are not sufficiently *fine-grained* enough to capture the particularity of their referents; and the quantitative interpretation — which takes the critique of identity-thinking to be a *numerical* insufficiency of conceptual resources for the representation of a particular referent. I argue against both these interpretations for textual and for theoretical reasons. Instead, I argue that what Adorno has in mind is a metaphysical concern: the way objects are is such that our conceptual representations of them may well be conceptually valid but they cannot sufficiently represent the object as a totality. This insufficiency is, on the one hand, a point concerning the difference between the form of concepts and the material form of the world which judgements attempt to represent. On the other, it is an awareness of the history of objects: any set of judgements may be correct at a particular time; however, there will always be more to be said of an object as it undergoes changes as a result of the influence of historical change on it. Therefore, our

conceptual determinations of an object can never be entirely sufficient at any one time.

In the third chapter, I develop why Adorno thinks that Kant's philosophy is a mode of 'identity-thinking' and why such a way of thinking is problematic. Adorno argues that the dualisms analysed in chapter one are structured such that one side of the dualism can fix and determine the other side. In particular, the subject is able to fix and conceptually determine the objects of its cognition and then represent those determinations in judgement. The validity of this fixing, of the object by the subject is determined transcendentally. I will analyse Kant's theory of judgement, propositions and his associated theory of objects — as referents of conceptual determinations — and show how this theory of judgement is wedded to the sort of identity-thinking Adorno criticises.

Adorno worries that when we take our discursive, conceptual representations of the world as sufficient to how the world really is, we both substitute and distort the rich particularity of experience for a generalised representation of it and we also lose the limits to subjectivity. In turn, the loss of the limits to subjectivity has a two-fold problem: without a substantial, objective limit to discursive representation which arises from the insufficiency of our general conceptual representations to particular material objects, we lose the conditions for genuine objectivity; secondly, and relatedly, our subjectivity comes to mistake itself for objectivity. Not only does this latter point indicate an epistemic confusion, Adorno argues that there is a deeper psychological worry that the thoroughly subjective ego becomes unstable.

Section Two

Having analysed Adorno's key criticisms of Kant, I turn to his critique of Hegel. Again, this is an immanent critique whereby Adorno argues that there are tensions and contradictions in Hegel's thinking that dialectical critique is required to overcome. Like the first section, the intention here is not to justify Adorno's critique of Hegel, interesting as I think it is, but to use this critique in order to

understand his own thinking. At the end of this section, we will be in a position to appreciate commitments in Adorno's thinking which emerge from the analysis of this and the first sections. These commitments are captured in the conceptual constellation, referred to earlier, of conceptlessness, nonidentity and mediation.

We will also be left with a possible problem. As Adorno's critique of Hegel involves a rethinking of dialectics, we will have to consider Rosen's concern that Adorno's dialectics is unable to generate the motoric force essential to dialectics. Through analysis of this conceptual constellation and a demonstration with a particular case in aesthetics, I show in the third section that Adorno's dialectics still 'works'.

In this section I will argue that Adorno is in some ways Hegelian and in some ways very anti-Hegelian. To make sense of the fine-grained distinctions in his reception of Hegel, I will present in the first chapter an account of the key aspects of Hegel's philosophy which prove to be particularly influential on Adorno. The account will cover Hegel's theory of judgements, propositions, essences and modality, the dialectical ontology we find in the *Science of Logic*, the structure of dialectics itself and what may count as truth within Hegel's thought. The account offered here is certainly controversial and I acknowledge that, just as with Kant, there are very different interpretations available to us in contemporary philosophy. However, the account offered is intended to capture a conception of Hegel's philosophy which Adorno appears to hold. In turn this will enable us to come to an understanding of Adorno's own commitments.

In the second chapter of this section, I consider the ways in which we may see Adorno as an Hegelian thinker. I argue that Adorno is impressed by Hegel's dialectical view of judgements — that judgements contain nonidentical elements which cannot simply be equated in the form of predication. Associatedly, I argue that he is greatly influenced by Hegel's critique of Kant's dualism of form and content; Hegel argues that they are always 'mediated' and Adorno agrees. That is, form and content are inseparable and determine each other through their mutual instantiation. He is also impressed by Hegel's rethinking of modal concerns — the way that an object is is not determined according to the

transcendental conditions of mind but according to objective ways the world is. Most importantly, perhaps, Adorno is also convinced by the dynamic character of judgement within Hegel's thinking. I then conclude with a meta-philosophical concern which, I think, motivates Adorno's sympathy with Hegelian dialectics: like Hegel, he sees dialectics as a way to think about the world in a way which is non-dogmatic.

In the third chapter, I examine the ways in which Adorno rethinks Hegel's philosophy. I consider his concerns with the apriorism and rationalism of Hegel's dialectics. In line with Adorno's materialism, he considers a priori thought as a socio-historical construction to be understood according to its context — thought can never detach itself from his material conditions in history and in society. Indeed, Adorno argues that the unified totality which Hegel's dialectics achieves at the end of both the *Logic* and the *Phenomenology* are another moment to be negated dialectically. We see that Adorno's immanent critique of Hegel's dialectics leads to a transition to 'negative dialectics'. The attempt of thinking to transcend contingency and produce a thoroughly systematic and unified body of knowledge, fails for Adorno. What is left is the persistence of negativity, the dialectical moment of nonidentity. What such a dialectics consists in will be the subject of the final section.

I conclude this section with a brief analysis of the concepts which capture the philosophical commitments emerging from the critiques of the first two sections. Adorno argues that philosophy needs to reorientate itself back towards that which is *conceptless* — i.e., the material world. Conceptlessness simply indicates the categorical difference between material objects and the conceptual entities which we use to represent those objects in thought and in language. Adorno's concern with the conceptless is a concern with this categorical — or ontological — difference which acts as an immanent limit on our knowledge-making activities.

This difference is then captured by *nonidentity*. There are various nonidentities in Adorno's philosophy — the nonidentity of mind and world, the nonidentity of material objects and the discursive representations of them and also there are ways that material objects are nonidentical to themselves.

Finally, *mediation* is an important modal notion which captures the way that objects are. Mediation is a distinctly Hegelian notion and is one that persists in Adorno's thinking. The idea of mediation is that entities are not pure, simple and discrete; rather, the way that an object is, and indeed what it is, relies on the *way* that other objects are, i.e., the modality of an object's existence relies on heterogeneous elements. For Adorno, the fundamental mediation of material objects is through their socio-historical context.

Section Three

In this section, I analyse the conceptual resources and commitments developed in the first two sections. The intention is to show how Adorno's philosophical commitments — to conceptlessness, nonidentity and mediation — underpin his understanding of philosophy as a critical practice.

I begin with a chapter on conceptlessness. In this chapter I consider another substantial interpretation of this notion, found in the work of Foster and O'Connor, that Adorno is working with a theory of non-conceptual content in experience. I argue that this is both a mistranslation of *der begriffslose* and when formulated, strains intelligibility. Instead I wish to argue that this term, as Adorno uses it, emphasises the ontological difference between concepts and their material referents such that material entities are *not conceptual*. It is therefore, a quite thin notion. However, it not a trivial point for Adorno. He argues that epistemology is tasked to overcome this difference. That is, mind and world may be different but it is our philosophical ambition that this difference be dissolved or that we find a way that mind can sufficiently represent the world. Adorno's thought is that this is an impossible ambition and one that has led to a great many problems in philosophy.

In the second chapter, I develop Adorno's account of nonidentity and mediation. I argue that not only does he see a substantial difference between the conceptual identifications we make of objects, but that objects themselves are in some way different to themselves - they have moments of nonidentity internally. I think

that this is one of the most obscure aspects of Adorno's philosophy. However, despite its superficial strangeness, I argue that we can make sense of this notion, at least in the first instance, through a debate in contemporary metaphysics over the issue of material constitution. I show how a thesis of co-locating objects can help us to understand Adorno's theory of nonidentity and mediation.

I then develop this analysis towards a deeper more Adornian conception of nonidentity by analysing an actual artwork: *Fountain* by Duchamp. Again, the primary role of this analysis is to understand Adorno's position rather than attempting to provide a definitive analysis of this artwork. However, that we can provide what appears a compelling analysis of *Fountain* does speak in favour of Adorno's dialectics. Furthermore, and more importantly for the aims of this thesis, the analysis shows that Adorno's dialectics still functions without determinate negation. Hence we have a possible solution to the worry raised by Rosen that Adorno's dialectics may not work.

Finally, I reconsider Adorno's critiques of Kant and Hegel. I show that whilst my analysis of the critique of Kant highlighted the critical aspects of Adorno's view, the development of Adorno's negative dialectics reveals important ways in which Adorno appears indebted to Kant. I argue in this final chapter that the best way to understand Adorno's philosophical commitments is as a dialectical sublation of Kant and Hegel's thought. That is, Adorno uses Hegel to criticise Kant and is influenced by Hegel in such matters; however, Adorno's counter critique of Hegel and some of the motivations for that critique has distinctly Kantian elements. In short, I represent Adorno's negative dialectics as the interpenetration of Kantian and Hegelian philosophy to produce a dynamic conception of philosophy as a critical practice.

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Section One

Adorno's Immanent Critique of Kant's Philosophy

Introduction

In this section I consider Adorno's critique of Kant. The intention is two-fold: firstly it is to develop Adorno's own philosophical commitments and secondly, to provide an account of his critical encounter with Kant. In the first chapter, I highlight a conceptual constellation which Adorno takes as indicating a structural tension in Kant's philosophy: the *constituens* and *constitutum*. Adorno's usage of these terms is, however, fluid and at times obscure. The reason for this obscurity is largely because these terms denote a type of relation that occurs in Kant's philosophy but which has many particular forms. However, the general idea is that there is that which constitutes [*constituens*] and that which is constituted [*constitutum*]. What is important for Adorno is that both the constituter and the constituted are fixed and the relation between them is fixed.

Having determined the general idea behind these terms we can develop particular important instances of fixity. I will follow Adorno's own focus on the relation between the transcendental subject which constitutes the essential grounds of the empirical subject and also on the relation between cognizing subjects and objects of cognition. I argue that Adorno's concern is fundamentally that the epistemic and metaphysical fixity which underpins Kant's thinking, systematically distorts the rich particularity of experience. Here we develop the beginnings of Adorno's philosophical commitments. That philosophy, and the modes of thinking it underwrites, must be fluid and sensitive to the dynamic richness of experience. When philosophy loses this dynamism it lapses into what Adorno refers to as identity-thinking.

In the second chapter, I consider the notion of identity-thinking. Insofar as Adorno understands Kant's philosophy as fixed and static, he thinks that Kant is an identity-thinker. I analyse this notion and offer two common interpretations of it, both of which I reject. Instead I suggest that it is a concern that we can read ontological commitments off our language - that the world is how it is

represented in language. Adorno is not therefore saying we cannot talk about the world successfully nor identify objects. Rather we need to understand that there is a fundamental difference between the way material objects are and how we represent those objects in language. Awareness of this difference is requisite for maintaining a sensitivity towards objects as such. This awareness acts as a bulwark against substituting the real world for abstract *conceptual* models of it.

In the final chapter I consider the import of identity-thinking in Kant's philosophy. Due to the fixity discussed in the first chapter, Kant believes he has developed a systematic basis for the development of objectively valid, determinative judgements. Operating with this model of judgement, our judgements just are sufficient representations of objects for Kant. Adorno wishes to break down the fixity of Kant's transcendental thinking and with it he critiques the model of judgement which it gives rise to. His critique of Kantian judgement sets the scene for the next section where he moves towards a more dialectical mode of philosophising which in turn provides the grounds for a dialectical model of judgement.

1. '*Constituens*' and '*Constitutum*'

In his lectures on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, Adorno says that the problem of 'the *constituens* and *constitutum*' is a central critical concern (KCPR: 138). In order to understand his engagement with Kant, therefore, we will have to make sense of this pair of concepts.

We will see that in giving an account of the *constituens* and *constitutum*, Adorno argues that there are irreducible tensions in Kant's philosophy. Kant attempts to fix the elements of his philosophy yet the very fact that those elements are not really amenable to such fixing leads to tension within the system. The primary tension which arises as a result of this fixity grating against the inherent dynamism of the elements is that of dynamic character of objects of perception on the one hand and the autonomy and priority of our cognitive agency on the other. According to Adorno, Kant tries to fix what objects and subjects are and that the former is sufficiently determined in judgement by the latter. Adorno believes that neither subjects nor objects are amenable to this fixity.

Adorno argues that these tensions led Kant to make claims which rely on pre-critical assumptions which overstep the critical limitations of epistemology and metaphysics upon which transcendental idealism is supposedly based. To develop Adorno's analysis, I will draw upon Strawson's seminal work. This is instructive in its similarities to Adorno's position and also in the way in which the two thinkers differ. Adorno's critique is not orientated towards what can be 'saved' within Kant's thinking; rather it is to develop an understanding, through the problems in Kant's philosophy, of what he believes are constitutive problems which we face in philosophy.

Piecing together various critical analyses of Kant, the conceptual pair *constituens* and *constitutum* highlights, for Adorno, reification in Kant's philosophy (in particular, reification of the transcendental subject). He argues that this reification is necessary to produce a stable basis for the generation of an

objectively valid epistemology.

> [S]ubjectification and reification do not merely diverge, they are correlates. The more knowledge is functionalized and made a product of cognition, the more perfectly will its moment of motion be credited to the subject as its activity, while the object becomes the result of the labour that has congealed in it — a dead thing. (ND: 91)

The reification of subjectivity is concomitant with a reification of the objects of experience. Reification is an important notion in Adorno's thinking and refers to the process of turning a dynamic, particular entity into something abstract and rigid, divorced from the socio-historical conditions within which the object is produced.[3]

It becomes apparent, however, that Adorno does not merely see reification as a problem endemic to Kantian philosophy, but indicates a general trend. Therefore, analysis of the *constituens* and *constitutum* will lay the foundation for orientating our attention on a key philosophical concern in Adorno's critical philosophy: identity-thinking. This is a mode of philosophising which Adorno argues is key to understanding why we end up reifying both subjects and objects. So in order to develop an understanding of this more general concern, we will move from a critical analysis of the tensions in Kant's theory of the subject into a discussion of Kant's theory of determinative judgement in the next chapter.

Adorno's hermeneutic analysis is controversial and idiosyncratic compared to much Kantian scholarship. It is not the intention, here, to argue Adorno's position against other scholarly interpretations. I will note, when appropriate, the moments when Adorno is either in line with or at odds with contemporary debates. However, the primary concern is to develop a critical account of the key issues in his analysis of Kant's philosophy.

1.1 Elucidation of Terms

The terms *constituens* and *constitutum* form a conceptual constellation for

[3] See ND: 189 - 91, 370, 374 - 5. On the background of the concept of reification, see Lukács, 1971: 83 - 110. Jay ,1984: 109 - 111. Reification may also refer to 'natural' entities.

Adorno. A constellation is a number of related concepts which are not reducible to each other but are required to mutually make sense of each other.[4] Furthermore, Adorno holds that constellations of concepts must be fluid in order to account for their own history of use and also to account for the historical character of their referents. Consequently, considering concepts as historical clusters of related notions is to consider them in a particularly fluid way. This fluidity puts pressure on our ability to understand and define such concepts.

At its most general the *constituens* and *constitutum* constellation, unsurprisingly, refers to issues of constitution within Kant's thinking: how things are constituted and how things constitute and the relationship between the two. Yet this general, thematic notion is too broad to be helpful. We must consider the particular ways and instances of the theme to develop a substantial understanding of what is being referred to and what is at stake in the notion. Adorno considers the different ways this theme of constitution appears in Kant's philosophy: in particular, he analyses it as it concerns the relationship between empirical, individual subjectivity and transcendental subjectivity.

Adorno introduces the terms *constituens* and *constitutum* but does not provide explicit, definitions.[5] He says the *constituens* is 'the pure consciousness through which the actual world comes into being' and that the *constitutum* is 'the world in the broadest sense' (KCPR: 147). The definition of the *constituens* is unhelpfully esoteric and the definition of the *constitutum* is unhelpfully thin. Elsewhere Adorno defines the *constituens* as the 'constitutive sphere' (KCPR: 155) and also as the realm of the transcendental.[6] In *Negative Dialectics*, he uses the same terminology of *constituens* and *constitutum* which he uses to make a pejorative characterisation of the empirical realm within a certain mode of enquiry:

[4] See ND: 53, 104, 127 and esp. 162.
[5] These terms have a history in the rationalist tradition but as verbs denoting an ontological idea. Spinoza (1883) uses it ontologically in the *Ethics*, for whatever 'constitutes' the *essence* of an entity: see for example, Axiom 4 and Proposition 10. Leibniz (1909) also uses the French verb, *constituer*, in the *Monadology* to denote the ontological relation of the soul and bodies of monads to living things or animals: See section 63 for example. It is likely that Adorno has this ontological connotation in mind when he uses this constellation.
[6] See also: "The *reductio ad hominem* thus becomes the collapse of anthropocentrism. The fact that man as a *constituens* is in turn man-made disenchants the creationism of mind." (CM: 251) & ND: 91.

> Reflections on the instrument of scientific knowledge have long ceased to touch its substance; they only touch upon what may be cognoscible [*sic*] at all, on the validity of scientific judgments. To such reflection, any definite knowledge is subaltern, a mere *constitutum*. (ND: 72)

Adorno's point is that when enquiry only concerns itself with the conditions of empirical knowledge, the form and content of knowledge — that which pertains to the individual objects of empirical experience — becomes relevant only insofar as it can be underwritten by those universally valid conditions. Particular experiences are relevant only insofar as they can be subsumed within the general conditions of experience. Already then, a concern with sensitivity to our judgements about particulars is emerging from elucidation of these terms.

As presented, the distinction between a constituting judgement and the constituted objects of judgement seems commensurable with Kant's transcendental philosophy: it is concerned to provide the conditions for empirical cognition and knowledge of that which obtains in sensible appearance. That is, we focus on what does the constituting and from there we can make claims about what is constituted. Adorno links his term *constituens* to Kant's own lexicon in the form of *konstituieren*:

> In a Kantian sense the objectification of character could be localized only in the realm of the *constitutum*, not in that of the *constituens*. Otherwise, Kant would be committing the same paralogism of which he convicts the rationalists.
>
> The subject is to be free, however, as it posits—"constitutes," [*konstituiert*] in Kant's language—its own identity, the basis of its legality. That the *constituens* is to be the transcendental subject and the *constitutum* the empirical one does not remove the contradiction, for there is no transcendental subject other than one individualized as a unit of consciousness—in other words, as a moment of the empirical subject. The transcendental subject needs the irreducible nonidentity which simultaneously delimits the legality. Without that nonidentical element there would be neither identity nor an immanent law of subjectivity. (ND: 241)

Here we can see Adorno use this constellation in relation to divisions in Kantian subjectivity itself. There is a 'constituting' transcendental subject which determines the 'constituted' empirical subject. We can see then that Adorno uses

the constellation to refer to different issues which will be discussed in detail shortly.

However, his attribution of this thematic notion to Kant is perplexing on a number of levels. Kant does not use the term *konstituiert* — at least in the *CPR*. Furthermore, this term means 'constituted' and is passive rather than active; Adorno's linking of it to positing, which is in the active voice, seems strange.

There is a more important worry that Kant appears to reserve the family of terms revolving around *konstituieren* [constitute] to *konstitutiv* which is the adjective, constitutive. He then uses these terms to talk about the distinction between *constitutive and regulative principles of understanding and reason*. Constitutive principles are any a priori principles which tell us what to think. For example, the dynamic principles of understanding are constitutive. In contrast, regulative principles are the a priori rules for thinking as such.[7] Therefore, Adorno's linking of his terminology to Kant's in the context seems somewhat inappropriate.

Finally, Kant seems at pains to point out that for transcendental reasons, the constitutive import of subjectivity is severely limited; for the most part, the a priori principles of understanding are taking a regulative *as opposed* to constitutive role in the determination of phenomenal appearances. This seems directly counter to Adorno's contention.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that Adorno does not have a valid point to make about Kant's philosophy using these terms. It is clear from the quotation in *Negative Dialectics* that Adorno is considering the transcendental subject, even in its *regulative* role, as having a *constitutive influence* on both the contents of

[7] See Kant CPR: 634, A664/B692; 640, A672/B700 on the regulative rather than constitutive use of reason. CPR: 650, A686/B714 & 652, A690/B718 - idea of supreme being as regulative rather than constitutive. CPR: 655 A694/B722 on the role of the systematic unity of nature as regulative not constitutive. CPR: 518, 509/537. Cosmological principle of reason is also regulative not constitutive: it does not tell us what to anticipate, only how to anticipate the expansion of experience and its 'parts'. CPR: 519, A510/B538 - the cosmological principle is the rule, or regulative principle by which we acquire a complete concept of an object [*Objekt*] but it does not tell us what the object is otherwise it would be constitutive. The regulative principles contained in the analogies of experience as opposed to the constitutive principles of the axioms of intuition and the anticipation of perception, see CPR: 250 A179/B221. Reaffirmed in the distinction of phenomena and noumena: CPR: 304, B295- 6/A236.

experience and the empirical subject engaged in those empirical experiences. Even if Kant argues that the a priori, transcendental principles of subjectivity are not telling us what there is, they are nevertheless playing a constitutive role in setting the parameters of what and how something exists:

> What was first to Kant, the synthetic unity of apperception, suffered the same fate. To Kant, every definition of the object is an investment of subjectivity in unqualitative diversity—regardless of the fact that the defining acts, which he takes for spontaneous achievements of transcendental logic, will adjust to a moment which they themselves are not; regardless of the fact that we can synthesize only what will allow and require synthesis on its own. (ND: 138)

Kant argues, transcendentally, that the objective sufficiency of subjectivity for the valid determination of the objects of experience should not worry us because the regulative role of subjectivity is itself determined according to what *actually obtains* experientially. Hence our transcendental subjectivity does not play any *constitutive* role in determining what there is in the speculative sense; it simply determines what is the case. However, we will see that Adorno's critique is aimed at undermining just this very contention as it appears in Kant's theory of subjectivity, judgement and method.

It appears that what Adorno has in mind with the constellation of *constituens* and *constitution* is the following: the *constituens* is the a priori, transcendental aspect of human subjectivity; the *constitutum* is some 'object of cognition' — both as our determined empirical subjectivity — i.e. an individual person — and as the determined phenomena of experience. So, Adorno's contention is that the *constituens* both determines and generates the conditions for the empirical subject and phenomenal experience (both *constitutum*) in some manner. And implicitly, he sees problems with this constitutive relation.

As it is not yet clear how the *constituens* and *constitutum* map directly onto elements of Kant's own system we can consider these terms as referring to a concern with what the 'constituting' subject [*Subjekt*] and the object [*Objekt*/*Gegenständ*] of that thought are and how they affect and relate to each

other.[8] From there we can return to Kant. Adorno makes an immediate link between *constituens* and *constitutum* and some notion of subject and object in his essay z*u Subjekt und Objekt* and in the quotation above with the synthetic unity of apperception. Semantically this seems a reasonable correlation as it focuses on general entities where one is constituted by the other and their metaphysical and epistemic relations.[9] Put in this fashion, *constituens* and *constitutum* seem to fall in line with explicitly Kantian concerns.

Adorno uses the terms *constituens* and *constitutum* to structure and develop an antinomy in Kant's philosophy. He argues that on the one hand the subject — the thinking agent — and object — the phenomenal 'object' as a determinate, unified presentation of the mind — are interdependent (CM: 246 & KCPR: 148). Kant certainly acknowledges some form of interdependence because the subject determines the phenomenal object as a particular such and such in its judging capacity — a claim grounded in the transcendental power of judgement (CPR: B172). Also, the phenomenal object is the condition for the unified consciousness of the judging subject — a combination of the theses of the transcendental imagination, the analogies of experience and the refutation of idealism (Kant, 1996: B137 & 8; B218; and B277 & 8).[10] Therefore, in Kant's transcendental theory of cognition, mind and world require each other and are to some degree determined, formally, by each other.

Yet, at the same time, it is a theoretical requirement that the object of empirical consciousness is nothing more than a determination of the judging subject in the sense of being only *subjective*. Furthermore, the transcendental conditions of subjectivity must not be constitutively transformed through the flux of phenomenal experience. If they were, they would be unable to provide the transcendental grounds for objectively valid cognition.[11] In other words,

[8] Pluhar translates *Objekt* and *Gegenstand* as synonyms of the English term, 'Object', in his version of *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Kant, 1996: 5 - 6, Avii, ft. 7).
[9] See CM: 255 - 6.
[10] Note Kant's 3rd comment in the refutation of idealism that this phenomenal object is not a condition in regards to its putative *existence* but in regards to the *experience* of the phenomenal object as such (B278 - 80).
[11] See the transcendental foundation of the analogies of experience in the unity of apperception (CPR: B220).

phenomenal objects and thinking subjects must enjoy some *independence* from each other despite the determination of the former by the cognizing subject.[12]

If neither the subject nor the object have any autonomy from the other then they would be unable to provide the objective epistemic and metaphysical grounds from which the other can be theorised. That is, Kant's transcendental philosophy, insofar as it is able to talk about the subject and object intelligibly, requires that the subject and object are both *dependent* on each other and be *independent* of each other. Adorno see these as competing, even incompatible aims.

Yet Adorno's most acute criticism is not even that there is a tension in Kant's philosophical intentions. After all, there is no reason to think, as it stands, that this tension cannot be resolved and Kant thinks that it can. Indeed, it is the fact that this tension can be resolved within Kant's transcendental thinking that Adorno takes issue with. Whatever independence phenomenal appearances have from the subject — such as their transcendental grounds in things-in-themselves[13] — the subject must be able to thoroughly, objectively and validly determine the phenomenal appearance. It is this epistemic ambition which lies at the heart of Adorno's concern with Kant's account of subjectivity.[14] Indeed, it underpins his entire critique of Kant because he believes that it is in virtue of these epistemic aims that Kant compromises the independence of phenomenal

[12] See, for example, the First Analogy of Experience (CPR: 253 - 4, B255 - 6).

[13] Here a two-world metaphysics is being adopted (KCPR: 105) somewhere in line with Ameriks' view that the non-ideal has ontological priority over the ideal (1992: 334) and Strawson's conclusion that appearances are the result of our being affected by an unknowable thing-in-itself (1982: 250). Such a reading stands against Allison's 'epistemological reading' of transcendental idealism (2004: 16). This reading also differs from Langton's metaphysical, realist distinction of phenomena and noumena according to ascribability of predicates delineated according to intrinsic rather than relational properties (Langton, 2007: 50). As we will see, however, he does share a sensitivity to Kant's thought as a form of Scientific Realism, see Langton, 2007: Chpt. 9.
Adorno appears somewhat muddled in his view of things-in-themselves. He notes the same tension as Strawson (1982: 255 - 6), that we can know nothing about them but that they are also the cause of our affectations (KCPR: 67); he claims that causality is not naturalistic and only a condition of the synthetic unity of subjectivity, yet he contradicts this by saying that things-in-themselves cause appearances independently of us - contrast, KCPR: 91 & 99. Charitably he is aware of the contradiction as per his earlier claims but he is not clear. He also makes a number of claims that things-in-themselves are beyond knowability - KCPR: 128 - and the product of reason in its own self-consciousness (KCPR: 209). What Adorno means by this is opaque. Regardless, he views appearances and things-in-themselves as distinct and that this, insofar as it constitutes Kant's transcendental idealism is both a dubious and unnecessary thesis (KCPR: 228).

[14] Understanding Kant's transcendental idealism as securing an ambition rather humility is antithetical to much Kantian scholarship. See Bird, 1982: 91 and Langton, 2007: 2.

experience and its irreducible particularity.[15] Adorno argues that Kant settles the antinomy of simultaneous independence and mutual determination of subject and object by covertly siding with one over the other — the subject over the object. Whatever does the constituting — *constituens* — takes epistemological and metaphysical priority over whatever is constituted — *constitutum*.[16] Yet the truncation of what is cognized, the *constitutum*, entails a truncated cognition which in turn limits the cognizer to what is required for that cognition.

Kant argues that as long as we determine the object 'correctly' according to the coherent, consistent, logical co-ordination of subjective judgement, then we are entitled to talk of the objectively valid determination of phenomena (See CPR: A333/B390 & KCPR: 143). And in the same move, we cease to concern ourselves with the reality of the phenomenal object beyond this sufficiency. Ultimately therefore, the independence of particular, unique 'objects' is dissolved in Kant's thinking. In order to motivate this as a genuine concern, Adorno must be able to argue that the accounts of experience and the objects of experience are somehow false, or at least truncated, without himself traversing the bounds of sense — if he is to take this criterion seriously, which I suggest he does. Giving a richer account of experience will be the subject of the final section of the thesis.

It is a concern with experience, and the dual accounts of subjects and objects, which brings us through a critique of Kantian subjectivity into a specific critique of Kantian judgement (see chapter three). We will see that Adorno agrees with Kant that there is a difference between our mental determinations of objects and how those objects 'really are'. However, he thinks the characterisation found in transcendental idealism — through what he takes to be an ontological distinction between noumena and phenomena — is an attempt to eliminate the problem; furthermore, rather than eliminating it, it merely repositions it as an immanent tension within transcendental idealism itself (KCPR: 148 & 165). Rather, for Adorno, this dualism must be worked with not transcended, or bracketed.

[15] See KCPR: 177 and Adorno's view that Kant's philosophical ambitions to think beyond the limitations of his own system.
[16] See KCPR: 165 - 7.

Adorno expresses this antinomy as follows:

> [The difference between Kant and what is usually taken to be idealism is as follows:] … while Kant does situate the unity of existing reality and also the concept of Being in the realm of the consciousness, he simultaneously refuses to generate everything that exists from that realm of consciousness. The consciousness of what the modern expression calls 'ontological difference', that is to say, of the fact that a thing is not fully reducible to its concept, that object and subject are not to be collapsed into each other — this consciousness is powerfully developed in Kant. (KCPR: 18)[17]

So, here Adorno emphasises, favourably, the import of independence of subject and object in the form of 'ontological difference.' However, he quickly points out that this metaphysical difference comes at a price:

> This gives rise to not inconsiderable difficulties, for at the same time Kant's aim is to create a system. As early as the Preface he remarks that pure reason cannot be conceived other than as a system, that is to say, as a coherent deductive unity. The idea of such a system actually precludes the non-identical, that is, whatever does not fit into it…We might even say that in a sense the vital nerve of Kant's philosophy as a whole lies in the conflict between these two aspects, the impulse towards system, unity and reason, and, on the other hand, consciousness of the heterogeneous, the block, the limit. These two elements are in a state of constant friction and he is always being brought up short by this block. (KCPR: 18)

In other words, the metaphysical and epistemological demands on Kant's transcendental philosophy require a separation of subject and object. However, we see in the second quotation that the epistemological demands of transcendental philosophy, secured by the structure of a coherent, unified system, demand that these radically different elements — the subject and the object — are brought together in an homogenous unity with the former sufficient to knowing the latter.

In order for the subject to be able to determine objects 'correctly', Kant must be able to present objects in such a way as they are amenable to cognitive determination. Kant achieves this 'amenability' by positing the ontological distinction between the noumenal and the phenomenal (Kant, 1996: A249 - 50;

[17] The idea of ontological difference is important for Adorno and I use this phrase in my own interpretation of Adorno's concept of *Begriffsloslichkeit* - see Chapter Eight.

A254 - 257/B310 - 12). The latter is the proper object of epistemological enquiry whilst the former — which we can only infer to be the ontological ground of phenomenal object — is inaccessible to our cognitive faculties and not a valid object of knowledge. Interestingly, however, the unknowable object — the noumenon — is then reintegrated back into the system as well in the form of a 'known unknown'. Or, as Adorno puts it, a 'noble feature' (KCPR: 128)

Adorno does not see this metaphysical division of being into phenomena and noumena and a corresponding epistemic limitation of knowledge to the phenomenal as a solution to the problem but rather the beginnings of another programmatic issue:

> This contradiction [between *constituens* and *constitutum*] is one that cannot be resolved by philosophy; it must instead be comprehended in its truth. If there is a point at which the transition to a dialectical conception of philosophy is compelling, this would seem to me to be the place to start. (KCPR: 148)

Instead, Adorno wishes to suggest that the heterogeneity of mind and world and the limits that this places on our epistemology and its ambitions, cannot be transcended, hypostatized or circumvented — heterogeneity and limitation and the tensions they generate must be worked with and, in fact, taken as the dynamic condition of knowledge. What this means exactly will be developed currently. However, the tension between metaphysical commitments and epistemological ambition underlies two charges. Adorno argues that Kant traverses the strictures of his own limitation thesis in the transcendental subject and the noumenal. According to Adorno, Kant also truncates objects and our experience of them.

The transgression of Kant's limitation thesis is key to Adorno's critique of Kant and is in fact similar to a criticism offered by Strawson in *The Bounds of Sense*:

> In two ways he draws the bounds of sense, and in a third he traverses them. He argues, on the one hand, that a certain minimum structure is essential to any conception of experience which we can make truly intelligible to ourselves; on the other, that the attempt to extend beyond the limits of experience the use of structural concepts, or of any other concepts, leads only to claims empty of meaning. Dogmatic rationalism exceeds the upper bound of senses, as classical empiricism

> falls short of the lower. But Kant's arguments for these limiting conclusions are developed within a framework of a set of doctrines which themselves appear to violate his own critical principles. He seeks to draw the bounds of sense from a point outside them, a point which, if they are rightly drawn, cannot exist. (Strawson, 1982: 11 - 2)

Kant argued against making metaphysical claims which superseded what could be known either directly or indirectly according to sensible experience. However, Adorno argues that due to pre-critical assumptions concerning the scope and structure of our epistemology, Kant was drawn to make claims about subjects and objects which could not be derived either directly or indirectly from sensible experience. Rather, Kant would have to make speculative assumptions about subjects and objects in order to derive the transcendental system upon which he could found his critical epistemology. Therefore, his point of disagreement with Kant is not the mutual limitation of subject and objects but rather that those limitations are circumvented through the rationalist strain in transcendental philosophy (KCPR: 64).

Despite similarities with Strawson, the originality of Adorno's critique is already apparent. In the above quotation (KCPR: 18), we see that the conflicting elements and demands of Kant's transcendentalism produces new and enigmatic concepts: the non-identical, the heterogeneous, the block and the limit (KCPR: 66). Furthermore, Adorno's conception of this problem leads him to the claim that dialectics is required for its negotiation. Before we explore these key terms, it is necessary to analyse how Adorno believes this dualism leads to a traversal of the bounds of sense.

1.2 Traversing the Bounds of Sense: the Transcendental Subject and Pure Apperception.

Thus far the basis of a tension concerning the relationship between (the knowing) subject and (phenomenal) object — and also within the transcendental and empirical aspects of subjects themselves — has been outlined. The results of Kant's delineation of the subject and object, Adorno thinks, results in a system with competing, incompatible demands: epistemic certainty and objectivity which simultaneously requires total, systematic integration of heterogeneous

elements as well as their independence. We are then led to Kant's notoriously uncomfortable epistemological and metaphysical conclusions: that there is a distinction between the noumenal and the phenomenal: we can only know the latter and yet the phenomenal is somehow, in an unknowable way, dependent on the noumenal realm.[18] In turn, if we understand this in the two-worlds fashion, we have a genuine ontological distinction between appearances and things-in-themselves. However, far from allaying empirical scepticism, it appears that Kant may have exacerbated it.

Yet, this picture is incomplete. Kant's transcendental idealism is both a recognition of the tensions of dualism and an attempt to provide a system that dissolves those tensions. The limitations of epistemology and metaphysics are not a starting point in Kant's thinking but grow out of transcendental thinking about experience. Furthermore, transcendental philosophy is an attempt, not only to provide a critique of reason but to provide a model of subjectivity and objectivity capable of acknowledging the problems of dualism and of securing a positive epistemology and metaphysics — even if this positivity exists within the boundaries of limitations.

We find that this positive aspect of Kant's critique, that secures objective knowing and the identity conditions for subjects and objects over time is secured by the key to Kant's transcendental project: the discovery of the transcendental subject. Like Descartes' cogito, the transcendental subject is the a priori necessary basis of subjectivity. Kant's transcendental subject differs in its deduction as it is derived transcendentally — according to the conditions for phenomenal experience — and cannot therefore be rationally separated as a substantial entity from empirical subjectivity.

Adorno argues that the 'transcendental subject' might provide the philosophical solution to the tensions implicit within Enlightenment dualisms; however, its construction through transcendental argument requires Kant to traverse the very

[18] See Guyer for an alternative characterisation of this relationship: Kant dogmatically claims that appearances are spatio-temporally determined and their difference to things-in-themselves consists in the fact that the latter do not have spatial or temporal properties (Guyer, 1987: 333 - 4).

limitations of epistemology and rationality which lie at the heart of his critique. In other words, the transcendental subject is intended to supply the conditions from which we can develop a critical epistemology and metaphysics instead of a dialectical philosophy, but the transcendental subject is, in fact a product of speculative thinking — the very thinking Kant is attempting to limit.

Adorno characterises this transcendental subject as variously: a product of rationalism (KCPR: 30 with 146 & 7); a will to abstraction (KCPR 150 - 3); and a vindication of bourgeois subjectivity (KCPR: 10 with 54).[19] Here the claim will be explored that Kant's transcendental philosophy takes him beyond the limitations set by his own project. I will draw upon Strawson to help make Adorno's claims explicit and intelligible where they appear to agree. This will also enable us to be clear about what Adorno thinks when it transpires that they are in disagreement. Both Adorno and Strawson share the notion that whatever the transcendental subject can be, its abstract nature renders its relationship to the empirical subject unintelligible. In this context we should interpret *constituens* and *constitutum* as referring to these two selves — transcendental subjectivity and empirical subjectivity respectively — and a tension that evolves according to competing commitments.

1.2.i The Reification of the Subject

Key motivations in Kantian philosophy revolve around the concerns: how do we gain objectively valid, empirical knowledge? What sort of subject is required for such knowledge? Kant's transcendental philosophy, actually answers the former questions by the final question: at a fundamental level, what sort of subjects are we? He begins with experience, and develops an account of subjectivity which could secure such an experience.

Kant's analysis of subjectivity begins with an immediate logical distinction which will be elucidated and justified by transcendental distinctions: "[E]ven though all our cognition starts with experience, that does not mean that all of it arises from

[19] See Jay, 1973: 265 on Adorno and Horkheimer's analysis of the relation between Kant, bourgeois subjectivity and its 'reverse image' in De Sade. See also Jarvis' claim that Adorno's philosophy 'allows the entanglement of fact with value to become visible' (Jarvis, 1998: 48).

experience."(CPR: A44). Adorno acknowledges and works with this distinction as central to his own critique of Kant. Transcendental analysis of empirical cognition, along with an analysis of the metaphysical conditions for such cognition, amount to an account of a 'transcendental subject' (KCPR: 147). This subject is constituted by the transcendental conditions of sensible experience — these include the transcendental faculties and the synthetic unity of apperception.

This transcendental subject is distinguishable from the empirical subject which is any individual subject — a particular token of transcendental subjectivity and is the medium through which a set of transcendental faculties is subjected to particular empirical experiences.[20] Adorno emphasises this distinction between transcendental and empirical subjects and questions their relation (KCPR: 144). The empirical subject is no more than the necessary, a priori condition for discursive (conceptual), phenomenal experience. We need eyes, ears and a brain to provide experience for the transcendental subject to process but, in a sense, this is all the empirical subject is good for (KCPR: 122).

The problem for Adorno is that the empirical subject, in its transcendental function is no more than a vessel for transcendental subjectivity; it is not the grounds of a personal identity as such — this is reserved for the 'I' which affirms the synthetic persistence of the empirical subject as such. Yet the basis of this 'I' is universal, human cognition. This knotty problem deepens when we consider that the transcendental basis of this subjectivity is this empirical self — despite the transcendental subject also being employed to provide the objective basis of the empirical self with the transcendental unity of apperception.

Adorno thinks that there are problems of circularity here (KCPR: 145). He argues that the transcendental detachment of the 'I think' — the synthetic unity of apperception — stands apart from the particularity of empirical subjectivity.

[20] Contrast Adorno's understanding and analysis of transcendental and empirical subjectivity in Kant with Carr. Carr distinguishes them as the same entity considered differently according to content of subjective experience - the former according to intentional content and the latter according to ascribable properties (Carr, 1999: 43). Yet Carr also reaches a paradox of a similar vein to Adorno: the empirical self stands in a relation of inclusion and thus a part-whole relation to the world; the transcendental self stands in an intentional or subject-object relation to the world (Carr, 1999: 45 - 6).

Ultimately, the transcendental subject, inasmuch as it is divorced from empirical subjectivity, is a speculative piece of philosophy:

> Kant says repeatedly that concepts without intuitions are empty; and he criticizes the ontological proof of the existence of God by saying that the pure concept of a thing, regardless of what properties are ascribed to it, does not permit us to infer anything about its existence. When he makes these criticisms, we ought really to apply his arguments to the idea of the transcendental subject, that is, to the forms of thought as such. (KCPR: 146)

Adorno sees reification at work here. The concern is that Kant takes what he understands to be the structure of experience and provides the conditions for that experience which is understood in their unity as transcendental subjectivity. The notion that this subjectivity can have any generality, universality or necessity over and above the particular experiences which gave rise to it, entails that it is a kind of subjectivity in its own right. Adorno is concerned that Kant is drawing general conclusions about the nature of subjectivity when really, to do so, is to overstep the valid scope of our critical reflections. What is found in particular experience is reified, or preserved in the form of a general subjectivity. This subjectivity can then be taken as sufficient to any particular experience and not susceptible to the flux of any particular experience.

Implicitly, Adorno is arguing that an 'objective argument' — i.e., in this case a non-transcendental argument or an argument which does not begin with the subject — is required to the effect that all the content of experience can be rendered entirely and sufficiently by the transcendental conditions of sensibility — the pure forms of intuition. It seems impossible for Kant to give such an 'objective' argument precisely because he thinks that transcendental argument properly limits the scope of arguments sufficient to knowledge-making activities. Yet, if he is to avoid the charge of arbitrariness, he must be able to prove that there are no valid, non-speculative objects of experience which are not distinguished and determined according to their appearance in space and time. Not only does he not provide such an argument, it seems at least possible that there are such objects of experience as will be argued in the final section.

Secondly, Adorno requires an 'objective' argument that Kant had the right to go from an analysis of individual, particular cognition, to the universal conditions of human cognition as such. Again, such an argument would probably have to be of the a priori kind that Kant stipulates against. Yet the fact that he still arrives at this putative moment of objectivity, suggests that his transcendental arguments are more rationalist than Kant would admit to.

No doubt these concerns would be baffling to Kant whose modest claims and method were an attempt to avoid any major presuppositions. For example, he did not assume rational intuition is sufficient to claims about the self precisely because such intuitions do not have an objective basis in sensible experience. Rather he takes what obtains in experience and works from there. Surely the onus is on Adorno to say what it is about experience that Kant has made such serious assumptions about such that he ought not to have derived his transcendental theses about human subjects as such. I think the burden of proof does lie with Adorno as he has to motivate the worry that the particularity of both experience and subjectivity is somehow coerced according to pre-critical assumptions which result in speculative theories. Throughout the course of this thesis, particularly when artworks are considered in Chapter Nine, I suggest that Adorno does meet this challenge.

Adorno follows this distinction between the empirical and transcendental subjects to its heart in the analytic unity of apperception (KCPR: 201 - 3). He points to Kant's 'Paralogisms of Pure Reason', where Kant argues against deriving or confusing the *identity of the person* with the *transcendental condition for the identity of the manifold of a subject's representations*. For Kant the identity of the manifold representations of a subject, as a singular subject's representations is an analytic proposition:

> That the *I* of apperception, and hence in all thought, is a *singular* that cannot be resolved into a plurality of subjects and therefore designates a logically simple subject — this lies already in the concept of thought and hence is an analytic proposition. (CPR: B407 - 8)

In other words, singular identity is contained in the identity of a manifold

representation — it is not a synthetic proposition. However, this analytic proposition does "not mean that I am, as an object, a being subsisting by myself or [i.e.] *substance*." (CPR: B407). By extension, Kant presses the argument as it affects the 'I' of apperception: such an 'I' is not a substantial, particular subject, but rather an abstract transcendental condition which guarantees the unity of the manifold of consciousness.

Kant is strict about the limits of apperception and the conclusions which can be drawn from it:

> The *I think* must be *capable* of accompanying all my presentations. For otherwise something would be presented to me that could not be thought at all — which is equivalent to saying that the presentation either would be impossible, or at least be nothing to me. Presentation that can be given prior to all thought is called *intuition*. Hence everything manifold in intuition has a necessary reference to the *I think* in the same subject in whom this manifold is found. But this presentation [i.e., the *I think*] is an act of spontaneity; i.e., it cannot be regarded as belonging to sensibility. I call it *pure apperception*, in order to distinguish it from *empirical apperception.* (Kant, 1996: B131 - 2) [21]

Here, Kant is distinguishing pure apperception from the sort of fundamental identity of the subject we find in his synthetic unity of apperception. Analytic apperception may be the transcendental grounds of empirical apperception, or an enduring self which persists. However, it is not to be taken as anything substantial or knowable through pure rational enquiry; rather, it is a function of the possibility of empirical subjectivity, the unity of empirical subjectivity (empirical apperception), and its experience of the empirical world.

As Strawson suggests, we should not confuse the experience of unity with the unity of experience (Strawson 37 - 8) and then try to draw epistemological and metaphysical conclusions from that abstract unity. This limiting is what Kant intends when he calls pure apperception an analytic principle rather than a synthetic principle: it can be posited through the analysis of the singular unity of

[21] Empirical apperception is a reference to our inner sense whereby empirical intuitions are brought into determinate, a priori relations by the synthetic unity of apperception. (Kant, 185: B143, §20) That is, it is distinguished from pure apperception as the latter is the logical condition for the *possibility of subjective unity* and not bound to the condition for a *determinate unity*.

experience but it is not a unity that can be abstracted from that experience as an object of knowledge itself.

Nevertheless, Adorno is quite clear that despite the abstract, analytic generality of apperception, and the fact that it is not a proper object of knowledge in the Kantian sense, it is the foundation of personal identity; it is the essential self to which my empirical subjectivity is referenced (KCPR: 201 - 2).[22] The analytic unity of apperception is the grounds of transcendental subjectivity itself. Adorno goes on to point out that insofar as this apperception distinguishes the singularity of my identity from all other empirical subjects, my identity as an individual lies beyond my own empirical individuality — it even lies beyond something that 'I' can experience:

> The fact is that all my experiences are defined as mine and not those of anyone else. They tell us nothing about the objective, substantive identity of the individual. It is not the case that this identity is permanently present in me in concrete terms. So what we have here is a confusion between the pure conceptual form of identity and a material identity, something actually existing. (KCPR: 202)

Not only does this strike Adorno, and Strawson, as strange, it will come to pose problems for the tenability of the relationship between transcendental and empirical subjectivity. These two selves are dependent on each other but radically separated from each other as well. Adorno is implying that Kant's solution is to give priority to transcendental subjectivity and in fact determine empirical

[22] The scholarly reception of apperception is controversial and beyond the scope of this thesis - I am attempting to understand Adorno not fully justify his position against other positions in Kantian scholarship. It should be noted that Stephen Priest (1987: 20) and Ameriks (2000: 281 - 3) claim that Hegel (1991: p.84, §42 Add. 1) reifies Kant's subject as only subject not object and that this is a false interpretation. It might be thought that Adorno is doing the same. This is not the case, however, as Adorno's concern reflects a tension in Kant between sensitivity to objects and systematic unity and the effect of this tension on subjectivity (KCPR: 184). He does not take the Hegelian route that Kant's a priori analytic claims have epistemic and metaphysical import. Furthermore, the inclination to do so - to develop a transcendental subject with ontological import - is part of Hegel's program that Adorno critiques: (HTT: 15 - 7) and see Chapter Six.
Other worries over Kantian subjectivity could include Kant's notion (CPR: B131 - 2) that any thought may have reference to an 'I think'. This is unconvincing: as Ameriks points out this is an epistemic reference not an ontological, possessive notion. Or Guyer's contention that Kant (CPR: A117, n. 138) is confused over the status and derivation of apperception as analytic. This is, I think, refuted by Allison (2004: 166 - 7).
On this note Ameriks criticises (1982: 138 & 140) Bennett (1974: 109) and Henrich (1976: 58) who do hold rationalist interpretations of Kant's subjectivity with ontological consequences.

subjectivity according to his objective epistemological aims, hence reversing the polarity of Kant's Copernican Turn.

This account of apperception and its role in grounding a fundamental subjectivity is problematic for Strawson as well. He analyses Kant's arguments for pure apperception and, whilst acknowledging that the arguments work, they require far more modest epistemological and metaphysical conclusions than Kant himself draws (Strawson, 1982: 117). Furthermore, he implies that Kant's transcendental subject — the subject as constituted by the transcendental conditions of objectively valid empirical experience which is at root pure apperception as well as the categories and the pure forms of intuition — fails to dissolve some of the original tensions we have discussed and in fact generates new concerns (Strawson, 1982: 247 - 9). Specifically, Strawson's more modest conclusions cast doubt as to whether or not the transcendental subject provides a sufficiently accessible object of enquiry for developing a stable reconstruction of the objectivity of empirical experience. Like Adorno, Strawson concludes that whatever this subject is, a new tension arises: between this subject — transcendent, abstract, hypothetical and necessary — and the empirical subject — immanent, concrete, verifiable and contingent.

1.2.ii The Intelligibility of Kantian Subjectivity

To properly understand Adorno's position, I will continue to consider it against Strawson's position. Through this contrast we are able to pin-point both the distinctiveness and relevance of Adorno's critique of Kant. In turn we will be able to continue to develop a nuanced account of Adorno's own thought.

Adorno certainly agrees that Kant's account of subjectivity falls short of its systematic requirements. However, Adorno argues, unlike Strawson, that Kant's transcendental subject does a great deal more philosophical work than the Deduction allows for. Adorno then agrees with Strawson that there is a radical detachment between the empirical and transcendental subjects. However, as I will show, because Adorno thinks that Kant's transcendental subject does more work than it is allowed for in the structure of his transcendental philosophy, the

discrepancy between the two subjects (transcendental and empirical) has far greater negative consequences for Kant's thinking both philosophically — epistemologically and metaphysically — and also politically. I will then show how Adorno's criticisms of Kant's account of subjectivity fit into his programmatic concerns of the *constituens* and *constitutum*.

In his discussion of pure apperception, Strawson agrees with Kant that despite his limitation of the empirical subject to empirical experience, he still requires a substantial account of a persisting subject which can properly be an object of epistemological and metaphysical enquiry:

> What we are in quest of is precisely the fundamental ground of the possibility of empirical self-ascription of diverse states of consciousness on the part of a consciousness capable of knowledge of its own identity throughout its changing (or its constant) determinations. (Strawson, 1982: 93 - 4)

It is not sufficient for subjectivity that we are able to locate an empirical subject which can be the subject of empirical experience. We require a transcendental subjectivity which is able to ground those experiences as ascribable to a single, unified and persisting subject.

'Pure apperception', and the transcendental subjectivity based on the singular unity of the claim 'I think', is an analytic notion derived from the conditions empirical subjectivity, i.e., that the abstract 'I' of 'I think' is a necessary condition of the empirical, or intentional, 'I' in 'I think that…'[23] The question is: how satisfying is this notion both in terms of its place in Kant's transcendental system and as an important aspect of what sort of beings we are? Certainly, if Kant cannot offer an *epistemic account* of a substantial enduring 'I' which persists beyond the flux of one's inner presentations of empirical experience, his transcendental philosophy and its Copernican Turn is undermined.

Strawson raises these concerns. Having agreed with Kant that rationalist psychology will not yield an account of the self — i.e., that we cannot confuse

[23] See Kant, 1996: A123 & 4/ B169 - 70.

the unity of our experience with an experience of unity itself from which a transcendental self may be deduced — Strawson analyses Kant's argument concerning the analytic of pure apperception. Again he agrees with Kant that this is a tenable argument and that it does produce a coherent theory of an enduring transcendental self. He considers what he takes to be the primary potential criticism of Kant's theory, that this analytic principle is simply insufficient for providing the grounds for the self-ascription of unified empirical experiences:

> [Kant] speaks of the "abiding self" of transcendental apperception; but he certainly does not mean by this the (at least relatively) abiding man, an object among others in the world, a point of application for empirical criteria of personal identity. Yet if he rejects this interpretation of the "abiding self", does he not evacuate the notion of ascription of experiences to a subject of its ordinary meaning, without producing anything to fill the vacuum? He is really in no better position than the theorist of sense-data who maintains that a possible experience, the contents of consciousness, could theoretically consist of a succession of intrinsically disconnected sensory data somehow linked by memory and expectation. (Strawson, 1982: 102 - 3)

Nevertheless, Strawson rejects this charge. Here he acknowledges the concern that the analytic proposition seems quite flimsy considering the metaphysical and epistemological importance of the notion of an enduring, fundamental self. However, he argues that:

> The bark of this objection is worse, it might be answered, than its bite. For its main point may be conceded without detriment to the Kantian position. It is not essential for Kant to maintain that his provisions are *sufficient* to explain the actual occurrence of self-ascription of experiences. It is enough if they are *necessary* to its possibility. (Ibid)

The claim is that it is not necessary for us to 'know about' such subjects, merely that they are a necessary requirement for the sort of experience we do have. Furthermore, as this pure apperception is not identical with the transcendental subject or our fundamental human subjectivity, it does not have to provide a full account of such subjectivity. It needs only to be a viable explanation of a necessary requirement not a fully sufficient account.

Yet, despite the seeming viability of Kant's argument, Strawson is critical of the transcendental subject as a satisfactory account of subjectivity, i.e., one that

provides genuine metaphysical and epistemological insight into the nature of human agency. He points out that Kant's theory of pure apperception — and the pure elements of the Transcendental Analytic and Aesthetic — leads to a very general and abstract notion of subjectivity:

> that any course of experience of which we can form a coherent conception must be, potentially, the experience of a self-conscious subject and, as such, must have such internal, concept-carried connectedness as to constitute it (at least in part) a course of experience of an objective world, concerned as determining the course of experience itself. (Strawson, 1982: 117)

This seems to be as much as we can claim and it is hardly detailed at that. Furthermore, Strawson argues that Kant seems to be at the limits of intelligibility in making this distinction between the experience of unity and the unity of experience and how we can process this difference both epistemologically and phenomenologically:

> I really do appear to myself temporally; but I do not really temporally appear to myself. But what does "really do appear" mean? The question is unanswerable; the bounds of intelligibility have been traversed, on any standard. (Strawson, 1982: 39)

He points out that if, as it appears, apperception lays beyond the bounds of a critical epistemology then the systematic limitations of Kant's metaphysics and epistemology lead us towards an unacceptable position: we place the very object of enquiry beyond intelligible enquiry. The concern regards how satisfactory Kant's account is as a theory of human subjectivity; the fact that what we are as such remains, in principle, beyond the limits of our own enquiry, thoroughly mysterious to ourselves, seems highly problematic.

At this juncture, a comparison of Adorno's theory with Strawson's enables us to situate the ideas of the former in a more familiar framework. Adorno shares similar concerns over the abstractness of the transcendental subject and its relationship to the empirical subject. He will agree that this generalised, abstract subject is an impoverished account of human subjectivity. However, he takes a very different view of the constitution of the transcendental subject and its

metaphysical and epistemological role in Kant's thinking.

The problem for Adorno is that the transcendental conditions of knowing are beyond the limits of the very knowing it provides conditions for. Whilst we can offer an analytic account of apperception, if we make any claim to it as a piece of knowledge, it becomes speculative and beyond the bounds of sense. Whilst Kant does not make claims about the apperception which go beyond the limits of his critical epistemology, the very claim that we can know anything (empirical) is radically undermined by the fact that objective condition of knowledge is unknowable and is ontologically distinct from ourselves as knowing subjects. As it stands, the antinomy of subjectivity threatens to undo the system (KCPR: 150 - 3). Without being able to reference a substantial transcendental self which underpins the transcendental conditions of empirical cognition, our ability to know that these transcendental conditions persist is undone. Indeed, we cease to be in a position to properly know ourselves.

Adorno argues that Kant arrives at the transcendental subject, which has been painstakingly separated from the empirical subject on both systematic and metaphysical grounds, through a stripping away of all that is empirical about the self in order to arrive at what is universal about the self. That is, the transcendent subject, insofar as it underwrites the possibility of any individual empirical subjectivity, must be purged of the contingency associated with the individual in order to provide the grounds for any and all subjects (KCPR: 144 - 5). Obviously this is a very different interpretation to the story provided by Strawson above. Indeed, it is very different to Kant's own thinking on the matter. However, Adorno realises this and argues that his interpretation of the derivation and construction of the transcendental subject not only properly represents the Kantian line, it is in fact more consistently Kantian than Kant is on this issue. That is, if we are to think the general from the individual, there will be some way that this general is limited by its origins in the individual:

> It will at once by objected — Kant too would have joined in the protest — that this is a misunderstanding because the transcendental subject is what makes possible the multiplicity of individual, empirical human subjects. It is precisely at this point that we encounter the difficulty

> and that we see that this is one of the problems in which the dialectic is grounded in Kant's philosophy. For how can I feel justified in talking about such a universality if my starting-point is simply the individual subject? (KCPR: 145)

Adorno's point here is that one cannot, despite the analytic arguments of transcendental philosophy, derive pure universality from individuality, even analytically. He presses the point by inverting the argument saying that one cannot start from a multiplicity either — i.e., from the point of view of no particular subject but of any subject — as this simply assumes the very conclusion one is trying to draw (KCPR: 145).

Adorno is thinking along the same lines as Robert Stern. Making a critical turn towards an internalist account of the self, which privileges an abstract self over our interaction with the world, other people and even our own empirical subjectivity, suggests that the inner world will provide more fruitful and secure grounds for theorising the necessary conditions of apperception. That is, that we have more chance of knowing what is necessary about ourselves through internalist arguments arrived at through reflection on the self as such. Stern simply asks: why should we think that?

> [According to Pippin,] Kant himself made his critical turn to the 'I' because he believed he had reason to think that here we could establish genuinely necessary claims: but why is this so obviously so? Why is there any reason to think that the necessary conditions for apperception are any easier to establish than the necessary conditions for reality as such? (Stern, 2009: 50)

Through Adorno and Strawson's concerns, it appears that the internal world remains entirely opaque to us — yet it is the knowledge of the internal world which was intended to justify knowledge of the external world. One may object that we do not need to know how the instrument works in all its details, or even properly what the instrument is, in order to use it. However, Adorno has the associated worry that this obscurity is indicative of a more serious concern: that Kant has transgressed his own critical programme.

The transcendental separation of the inner from the outer, or of transcendental subjectivity from empirical subjectivity, seems not only dubious

methodologically, it leads to serious concerns. Transcendental subjectivity may provide us with the conditions of empirical subjectivity. Yet given the fact that we can know no more about it than what is required for particular, individual subjectivity, how are we to make any genuinely universal claim about it? This concern is exacerbated because we cannot know anything about subjectivity other than what can be transcendentally deduced from the conditions of empirical subjectivity and what it *appears* to consist in. What then are the objective standards by which we have a right to talk about transcendental apperception as a universal and necessary feature of human subjectivity as such, which stands apart from the flux of empirical experience? Adorno contends that we simply cannot answer this question without traversing the bounds of sense.

Adorno argues that the transcendental subject, from pure apperception through to the pure categories and intuitions of the Analytic and Aesthetic, is constructed through the elimination of the constitutive influence of the richness of individual subjectivity on transcendental subjectivity. This elimination and detachment is the only way that Kant can argue for the persistence and objectivity of the transcendental conditions of subjectivity. What Kant suppresses, is that the way things appear is a function of individual, socio-historically mediated, particular subjectivity. Kant would protest: what is socio-historical about sensible appearances being presented in time and space? Adorno's response is that the truncation of individual sensible experience and of objects to what can be presented in time and space is already a reification of the richness of experience and what objects actually are. This discussion between Kant and Adorno will be on-going because an example must be given of what Kant could be missing in his account of sensible experience that does not simply disregard his critical attack on speculative metaphysics.

Adorno's claim, as it is emerging, is that Kant has not given the necessary transcendental conditions of individual subjectivity, he has hypostatized, or reified, empirical subjectivity in the form of universalised claims and assumed that these propositions are good for all people, all valid experience and at all times; he also assumes its sufficiency to the determination of objects even as they appear to us.

1.2.iii Transcendental and Empirical subjectivity: Regulation and Repression

Adorno's criticisms are not merely methodological — the implication being that where Kant deduces the fundamental subject transcendentally, he is in fact engaged in an act of dogmatic thinking. Adorno argues that there are consequences of this mysterious, governing subjectivity, at once removed from individual subjectivity but law-giving upon it. He then makes a number of telling hermeneutic analyses of Kant's theory of the subject. Not only does the transcendental subject have epistemic and metaphysical priority over the empirical subject — in the sense that it is the seat of both objective validity of cognition and is also that about us which is necessary and therefore essential to us as humans — it takes a governing role over the particular self. This separation bifurcates subjectivity as it proposes an unknowable, mysterious entity as a legislator over our phenomenal self. Of course this is not an argument against Kant's position; but it develops the themes of Adorno's analysis and gives a clearer indication of what Adorno believes is at stake in this critique.

Adorno's interpretation of the Kantian transcendental subject is that it is an abstract entity which is fixed, necessary and mysterious and yet, given its primacy over empirical subjectivity, is in fact the substantial object of Kant's critical enquiry. Adorno clearly states his position in the following:

> The pure 'I think', the absolute 'I', the secret basis for the establishment of these connections or of this process of synthesis, is just as deeply concealed as the transcendent, that is, as the transcendent thing-in-itself. When it comes down to it, Kant had no right to speak undialectically of such things existing in themselves, of such fixed forms given to us in reality once and for all. (KCPR: 155)[24]

It is obvious that Adorno shares Strawson's concern that Kant's transcendental subject is simply too abstract, too mysterious and evidence of unworkable

[24] Adorno's reservations about the intelligibility, provability and import of the thing-in-itself are undeniably Nietzschean: "The 'thing-in-itself [is] nonsensical. If I remove all the relationships, all the 'properties' all the 'activities' of a thing, the thing does not remain over; because thingness has been invented by us owing to the requirements of logic, thus with the aim of defining communication." (1967: 558, p302) See also Nietzsche, 1998: 6,19.

metaphysics. However, in the second sentence we see how Adorno draws much stronger conclusions about the status of Kant's analytic than Strawson. Whereas Strawson accepts the analyticity of the pure apperception, Adorno is arguing that the fixed essentialism of Kant's account of the transcendental subject indicates an adherence to an 'essential I' despite Kant's own protests to the contrary — that his transcendental analytic is different in kind to a metaphysical essentialism that can posit a human soul or the like.[25] However, Adorno's contention that Kant has no right to talk about such a fixed subject not only results from his balking at the mysteriousness of this transcendental subject but, more importantly for Adorno, the fact that the transcendental subject is, as suggested, radically contingent on the empirical subject. As it stands, according to Adorno, the empirical subject is determined according to the fixed conditions of transcendental subjectivity. The import of this fixed relation and determination will be discussed in the next section when we consider identity-thinking and judgement.

In order to emphasise the appearance of this contingency, he recites, in the lecture, the following passage:

> That I distinguish my own existence as that of a thinking being, from other things outside me — among them my body — is likewise an analytic proposition; for other things are such as I think them to be distinct from myself. But I do not thereby learn whether this consciousness of myself would be even possible apart from things outside me through which representations are given to me, and whether, therefore, I could exist merely as a thinking being (i.e. without existing in human form) [translation modified].[26] (Kant, 1996: B409/ KCPR: 203)

We can be under no doubt how seriously he takes this passage because he goes on to say:

> I read this passage out to you with a certain muted exclamation of

[25] See Kant's treatment of absolute subjectivity in terms of a soul (CPR: 387, A348).

[26] I have used Rodney Livingstone's translation here as the final, bracketed phrase emphasises the empirical point being made by Adorno more forcefully than Pluhar's rendering. [(4) Ich unterscheide meine eigene Existenz, als eines denkenden Wesens, von anderen Dingen außer mir (wozu auch mein Körper gehört), ist eben so wohl ein analytischer Satz; denn *andere* Dinge sind solche, die ich als von mir *unterschieden* denke. Aber ob dieses Bewußtsein meiner selbst ohne Dinge außer mir, dadurch mir Vorstellungen gegeben werden, gar möglich sei, und ich also bloß als denkend Wesen (ohne Mensch zu sein) existieren könne, weiß ich dadurch gar nicht.]

> triumph because it is the passage in the *Critique of Pure Reason* where Kant directly expresses the idea that I have rather laboriously been trying to convey to you. This is the idea that all the talk of an 'I' and all the other features that are claimed to be transcendental elements in Kant actually presuppose something like an empirical individuality. (KCPR: 203)

Taken out of context this could appear a rather strange 'triumph' for Adorno to claim. Firstly, it would surely have to be a concession or admission of a contrary position and Kant gives no indication of this. Furthermore, the passage seems entirely consistent with Kant's position. The analytic of pure apperception is merely the proposition, as Strawson points out, that there is necessarily a possible 'I' which guarantees empirical subjectivity. By extension, if there is no empirical subjectivity there is no necessity for this possible 'I'. Regardless, the analytic of pure apperception explicitly 'presupposes something like an empirical individuality'. This is not a suppressed premise but an explicit part of Kant's thinking. The question is: why does Adorno take this to be admission of the validity of his own concerns?

The answer lies in Adorno's comment (KCPR: 155. See above.) that Kant has no right to talk about subjects — transcendental or empirical — *undialectically*. This gives us a specific insight into the sort of relationship Adorno envisages and which precludes an analytic postulation of the 'I'. When Kant deduces, transcendentally, the constitutive requirements of an empirical subject capable of being the accusative of empirical experience, it is obvious that he thinks of this 'I' as a 'thin' notion, i.e., something we can say next to nothing about. Despite the putative thinness of Kant's analyticity, Adorno seems correct to think that insofar as the transcendental elements of subjectivity — pure apperception, the categories and the pure forms of intuition — are necessary elements such elements constitute something like a fixed essence of subjectivity.

Throughout his essay *On Subject and Object*, Adorno emphasises a problem within Kant's transcendental philosophy: the subject becomes detached and self-sufficient from the object upon which it is in fact predicated: "in fact, subject is also object; it merely forgets, as it becomes autonomous form, how and by what it itself is constituted." (CM: 254 and also 246, 249). The fact that this essence

can only be known analytically and that we can have no direct knowledge — through intuitions or through phenomenology — of this subject, does not mean that this transcendental subject is not an absolute 'I'. No matter how abstract and general a theory of an absolute 'I' it amounts to, Kant would obviously balk at this metaphysical conclusion — and its implication of knowledge of our 'essential self'. For Adorno it seems difficult to see how he can avoid it.

Adorno bolsters his argument by pointing out how much in Kant's ethics revolves around this 'essential self': it is not that these elements are simply 'inert' necessary, analytic conditions inferred from the gaps in our self-knowledge, this transcendental subject is put to serious philosophical work in the second critique.[27] That is, the transcendental subject is the *basis* of Kant's ethics; such a move is not possible were the transcendental subject no more than a set of conditions. Adorno argues:

> Kant's every concretion of morality bears repressive features. Its abstractness is a matter of substance, eliminating from the subject whatever does not conform with its pure concept. Hence the Kantian rigorism. The hedonistic principle is argued against, not because it is evil in itself, but because it is heteronomous to the pure ego: "Insofar as the pleasure of the idea of a thing's existence is to be a determining cause of desire for the thing, it rests upon the subject's receptivity because it depends for a thing, it rests upon the existence of an object; it thus belongs to the senses (feelings) and not to the intellect — which employs concepts to express how the idea relates to an object, but does not employ feelings to express how it relates to the subject.[28] (ND: 256)

Adorno's point is that the condition of and basis for Kant's rational ethics is a pure ego, the transcendental subject, which transcends the contingencies of individual subjects and their fleeting desires. Adorno argues that Kant's moral system is determined in character by precisely the pure, abstract, mysterious subject discussed. Such a foundation of Kant's ethics belies the minimal analyticity of the transcendental subject in the first critique; indeed, Kant favours this 'analytic' subject over the empirical subject.

Adorno elaborates on this ethical critique which continues to shed an interesting

[27] See also CPR: B566 - 87 for Kant's theory of causality and transcendental freedom.
[28] Quoted from Kant, *Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft*. See Kant, 2002: §21, p. 33.

light on how he understands the transcendental subject and its role in Kant's architectonic. Characteristically he draws on Freudian thinking to dissolve the veneer of disinterested analysis within which Kant couches his exegesis. Adorno argues that the elimination of the empirical subject, in not only its contingency, but also in its agency and motivations, amounts to a fundamentally repressive construction of human agency and the freedom it implies: Kant cannot "visualize the concept of freedom otherwise than as repression." (ND: 256). The transcendental subject, the 'pure ego', is for Adorno a super-ego of sorts which provides the transcendental possibility of the pure, unwavering moral law of the categorical imperative and its applicability to the empirical self.

Interestingly, Adorno presents a psychoanalytic interpretation of Kant's account of subjectivity which sheds further light on the discussion. For Adorno, the situation is evidence of an extremely unhealthy ego/super-ego relation. Adorno's understanding of Freud's Oedipus Complex indexes it to a particular socio-historical moment.[29] As a theory of socialisation and civilisation, the Oedipus Complex shows us how particular social models produce particular models of socialised individuals. As Adorno takes this model as historically mediated, the view of repression is understood as an essential feature of *Modern* civilisation.

Bourgeois repression finds its apotheosis in Kantian subjectivity where the empirical subject, in its dynamic contingency, underpinned by our desires, tastes and caprices, is repressed in favour of the pure transcendental subjectivity - the basis of rational law. The problem is the repression does not eliminate our drives just as the transcendental subject cannot eliminate the empirical subject and our motivations. Adorno diagnoses in Kantian subjectivity a sublimation of the drives of the id in the super-ego which then becomes the seat of violent self-oppression. It is then afforded delimited authority over all other (contingent or individual) aspects of the ego — the empirical self:

> Every bit of knowledge we have of the genesis of character is incompatible with the assertion of such an act of original moral gestation. The ego that is supposed to perform it, according to Kant, is

[29] For Freud's analysis of the Oedipus Complex. See Freud, 2010: 278 - 82; 1976: 313 - 322.

> not something immediate. The ego itself is indirect. It has arisen; to speak in psychoanalytical terms: it has branched off from the diffuse energy of the libido. Not only all of the specific substance of the moral law refers constitutively to facts of existence, but so does its supposedly pure imperative form. This form presupposes the internalization of repression as much as the full development of the ego as the solid identically maintained authority which Kant absolutizes as the necessary premise of morality. (ND: 271 - 2)

Indeed, the fact that Kant's pseudo super-ego is posited analytically rather than developed through social consciousness merely places it beyond the realm of further enquiry. For Adorno, what we discover in Kant's analytic origins of the self, is not an account of subjectivity as much as a prior social distortion of our psyches which causes us to think about ourselves — and morality — in such abstract, reified ways (ND: 275). The fact that this transcendental subject cannot be subject to further analysis and enquiry entails that we are forced to accept its transcendental necessity; this betrays, for Adorno, an irrational dogmatism which lurks beneath the neutral, rational veneer of Kant's analytic (ND: 261).

Obviously these claims are highly contentious and to fully justify them would take us away from the primary concern in this part of the thesis: construction of Adorno's critique of Kantian epistemology and metaphysics of subjects. Yet, to that end we have learnt a great deal more about Adorno's understanding of Kant's account of subjectivity. Whilst he agrees with Strawson that Kant has developed an abstract and very general account of subjectivity, he rejects analytic talk about subjects and he perceives this transcendental subject as an active feature in Kant's architectonic.

1.3 Conclusion

Adorno holds that the transcendental subject, which at heart is pure apperception, is not merely a condition of empirical subjectivity. He is making two claims: one is that the transcendental subject functions as an absolute 'I'; secondly, that this absolute 'I' is fixed in such a way as to ground other abstract theses with distinctly undesirable import. We can now see what precisely Adorno is referring to when he speaks of the *constituens, constitutum* and what is at stake in these concepts.

> [What] Kant calls the constitutive sphere, the *constituens*, should not be made into an absolute, any more than should the *constitutum* … [To do so] is to succumb once more to the very pitfall he had unearthed in Leibniz and exposed so incisively. It is to succumb to the amphiboly of the concepts of reflection, in other words, the confusion between abstract concepts and what they represent, what they refer back to, just as truly as these referents point back to those concepts. (KCPR: 155 - 6)

His charge is that Kant regresses to the sort of pre-critical rationalism which his own philosophy set out to eradicate; it is to traverse the bounds of sense — with all its ethical as well as epistemological and metaphysical consequences — in order to lay down those bounds.[30] When the *constituens* becomes fixed and detached from the particularity of individual subjects, as is the case with the transcendental subject, we not only generate mysterious, abstract entities, not only do we make ourselves unknowable to ourselves, we force heterogeneous elements — transcendental and empirical elements — together in dangerously unworkable unities.

Despite the focus of Adorno's analysis of *constituens* and *constitutum* revolving around general problems of epistemology and metaphysics of subjects, we will see in the next section that these concerns are focussed into a direct critique of representations of objects and their determination in Kant's theory of judgement.[31]

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[30] See also: "But philosophy was in error when it supposed that it could simply cut the umbilical cord, thus separating the abstractions from the things from which they were being abstracted." (KPCR: 153) This becomes an issue about the status of transcendental method and argument. Inasmuch as transcendental arguments aim at producing fixed conditions which can then be considered apart from that which they supply conditions for, Adorno is sceptical of transcendental argument.
This is a vexed issue in Kantian scholarship. It concerns what level of justification a transcendental argument can provide and what the scope and method of transcendental arguing must be in order to provide such justification. For example, Stroud and Cassam attacks the warrant of transcendental argument - Stroud, 1968: 255 - 6 & Cassam, 1987: 377 - 8; Pereboom argues for a deflationary view of transcendental arguing as not a priori rationalist (Pereboom, 1990: 41) but genetic and epistemically humble. See also Stern, 2000: Chpt 2 for discussion of these issues. These issues are also tied to the success of Kant's arguments against scepticism - a point duly noted by Adorno later.

[31] A point emphasised by Allison: "The identification of apperception (as a faculty for producing synthetic unity) with the understanding is the pivotal move. Given this identification, Kant is in a position to connect apperception with the representation of objects and through this with judgment, which leads, in turn, to its connection with the categories." (Allison, 2004: 173)

Whilst Kant has a variety of motivations for his construction of empirical and transcendental subjectivities, its primary philosophical import for Adorno is its importance for judgement. He is concerned with Kant's account of the transcendental subject because it underpins the objectivity of empirical judgements at a technical level and, as such, governs the sort of epistemic relations possible for knowing, judging subjects to have with empirical objects. These concerns have surfaced if we consider the constitutive and sufficient role of the *constituens* for the conditions of the *constitutum* as a *determination of the latter by the former*. This avenue of analysis enable**s** us to develop an Adornian critique of Kant; it helps us to understand how and why Adorno uses the term constitutive when it does not seem to directly correspond to Kant's usage. The transcendental subject is both an indicator of and a lynchpin for a particular world-view associated with 'identity-thinking' which, for Adorno, becomes deeply problematic for philosophical as well as ethical reasons. It is to identity-thinking which I now turn.

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2. Kantian judgements, Representations and Identity-Thinking

The analysis of the previous section focussed on the development of Kant's reified transcendental subject. We find that Adorno is concerned that the aim of fixing subjectivity is to generate a fixed conception of empirical subjectivity; he is also concerned with the objects about which we make judgements. Kant erroneously fixes the subject primarily so that he can fix the conditions of knowing. In turn this provides the fixed conditions through which we can generate fixed and sufficient determinations of objects of knowledge. In other words, the transcendental subject is the condition of a form of identity-thinking.

In *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno is quite explicit that his philosophical target is identity-thinking (ND: 5). In this section, Adorno's account and critique of identity-thinking will be considered and then related to his critique of Kant in the next. What we find is that identity-thinking, which may take many philosophical forms, implicates a multitude of Kantian ideas: representations, objects and Kant's account of judgement. Philosophically therefore, motivated by his worries regarding identity-thinking, Adorno's critique of Kant revolves around the form, content and status of judgement. Unfortunately, Adorno does not make this entirely explicit in his analysis of Kant. Nevertheless, it can be developed as the most appropriate interpretation of his critique of Kantian philosophy.

I will argue that Adorno takes into consideration Kant's socio-historical situation. He considers Kant's response to particular philosophical problems of his time — primarily to Hume and the Rationalists — but also to particular socio-economic developments such as the rise of the bourgeoisie. In this situation, Kant is faced with a set of problems but also commitments, particularly epistemic commitments to reason, objectivity and autonomy[32] which in turn ground his metaphysical commitments. Despite having a great sensitivity to the problems of scepticism and the scope of our claims to knowledge, Adorno reads Kant as turning these philosophical problems into conditions for objectivity and validity.

[32] See KCPR: 10, 55, 64, 77, 118 and then critically, 81, 110, 115.

Adorno understands Kant as configuring the other elements of his transcendental system to support, justify and make possible epistemic objectivity and validity. Adorno's deepest critique, already hinted at, is that Kant's pre-critical commitments to objectivity and validity are not justified within his system of thinking. His view of subjects and objects, their determination in judgement, and the very structure of determinate judgement are gerrymandered to fit these pre-critical commitments. So, in addition to questioning Kant's pre-critical commitments, Adorno is led to criticise Kant's account of subjects, objects and judgements.

2.1 Adorno on Identity-Thinking

I have suggested above that Adorno's critique of Kant, of transcendental subjectivity and notion of the *constitutum*, is properly aimed at the epistemic and metaphysical relations between the transcendental structure of subjectivity and consciousness. The determination of the latter, which we have seen Adorno discuss provocatively through Freudian thinking, aims to consider how we come to judge and determine ourselves and the empirical world about us. The fixed subject is then used to ground fixed relations with objects: in virtue of having a fixed subject we have the conditions by which we can fix our determinations of objects. Since objects of cognition are, properly speaking, mind-dependent entities for Kant, the fixing of our mental and cognitive activities provides the conditions for the fixing, or reifying, of the world. This fixing takes place in judgement and, as we will see, is characterised by Adorno as a form of identity-thinking.

We can see that if the *constituens* is essentially that about the subject which judges and makes possible objectively valid determinations — of both ourselves and objects — and the *constitutum* is the object of determination *qua* material object, then these two terms are intimately linked to issues of judgement. Identity-thinking and its consequences lies at the heart of *Negative Dialectics* and understanding it provides the key for the extrapolation of all aspects of Adorno's philosophical thought.

> Initially, the name (of dialectics) says nothing more than objects do not go into their concept; that they come to contradict the traditional norm of adequacy. Contradiction…is the index of the untruth of identity, the fact that the object of conception does not go into its concept without remainder. (ND: 5 - Trans. Modified)[33]

That is, our conceptual determinations of objects, structured by and represented within judgements do not fully represent the object of concern. This putative discrepancy between our representations and the objects of our representations may seem exceptionally strange to philosophers who, following Frege, think that the reference relation between the name and the object just is sufficient.[34] Sortal identification of the object, expressed via the subject term, is sufficient to identify an object just in case the correct sortal is invoked. Of course there is a great deal of philosophical work to be done to construct this identity. However, what is the reason to think that there is a fundamental discrepancy between our predicate and subject terms and the objects they identify?

Adorno discusses judgements in greater detail with his examination of Hegel; however, we can gather what he is intending to criticise in the quotation above. In some way, the predications we make of objects are insufficient for the identification of those objects — and for representing the ways that an object is. What precisely Adorno means by this, i.e., by insufficiency, is opaque at this point and much of the remainder of the present thesis is geared towards making sense of this notion.

The target, here, appears to be some notion of analytic identity. That is, as posed in the quotation, he rejects identity insofar as a conceptual determination of an entity in cognition is sufficient for the determination of a material referent of the cognition in its unique particularity. This is a difficult issue to discuss because Adorno's use of concept [*Begriff*] is in line with Hegel's usage which denotes the

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[33] Ashton translates "*Ihr Name sagt zunächst nichts weiter, als daß die Gegenstände in ihrem Begriff nicht aufgehen, daß diese in Widerspruch geraten mit der hergebrachten Norm der adaequatio. Er ist Index der Unwahrheit von Identität des Aufgehens des Begriffenen im Begriff.*" as "the name of dialectics says no more, to begin with, than that objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder, that they come to contradict the traditional norm of inadequacy. [Contradiction] indicates the untruth of identity, the fact that the concept does not exhaust the thing conceived." He therefore obscures an important semantic distinction concerning the use of names which Adorno evidently intends.

[34] See Frege, 1948: 210.

Notion of a thing which is something like an essence; this understanding of concept will be fully discussed in Section Two. What Adorno has in mind when he understands identity-thinking is already a non-Analytic idea.[35] Nevertheless, it is useful to consider identity-thinking analytically to contrast it with Adorno's more Hegelian idea at a later point.

Adorno's initial explanation of identity-thinking has a couple of reasonable analytic interpretations within which Adorno's worry may appear false. We can successfully identify specific empirical objects, such as tables and chairs, using, for example, indexical or demonstrative judgements. Also, we seem to successfully and validly predicate properties of objects all the time. Furthermore, the co-ordination of sortal judgements and property judgements can be logically and *conceptually* co-ordinated and properly refer to objects.

How ought we to interpret Adorno's concern? As he does not really provide any *analytic* analysis of the concept of identity, it is hard to tell. I will argue that there are at least two interpretations of Adorno's critique of identity-thinking that we should reject[36]:

- The Qualitative Interpretation:
  - The weaker claim — our conceptual resources *are not* fine-grained enough to determine the unique complexity of particulars.
  - The stronger claim — our conceptual resources *cannot* be fine-grained enough to determine the unique complexity of particulars.

- The Quantitative Interpretation:
  - The weaker claim — we *do not have* enough conceptual determinations to sufficiently determine the unique complexity of particulars.
  - The stronger claim — we *cannot have* enough conceptual determinations of objects to determine the unique complexity of particulars.

[35] See Coffa's insightful reworking of Quine's dictum "meanings are what essences became…when wedded to the word" to "Meanings are what concepts became when wedded to the word." (Coffa, 1991: 8).

[36] I will argue that our conceptual resources are both qualitatively and quantitatively inadequate for the determination of their referents, but these interpretations need reformulating to reflect explicitly metaphysical rather than semantic concerns. See Section Three.

Neither of the weaker claims can be seriously considered as grounds for Adorno's worry concerning identity-thinking. If they are true, they are only true trivially and do not, by themselves, present any serious philosophical worry. Therefore, if Adorno intends one or both of these positions, he would intend the stronger claim. Furthermore, he would need an argument why, if either of these positions were true, that it would be a philosophical worry. Whilst I suggest that he does not adopt either position, the structure of these issues will have to form part of my interpretation: namely the interpretation must take some strong form that there is a problem in principle with identity-thinking and that this is a bona fide worry.

Both interpretations could be considered consistent with Adorno's thought and implied by his own formulations of identity-thinking. However, I will reject them because they are unconvincing in themselves — if they did constitute Adorno's thinking on the matter, it would be good reason not to take Adorno particularly seriously on these issues. More importantly, we can present a stronger argument which is consistent with aspects of Adorno's thought elsewhere and which makes for a far more compelling position.

2.1.i The Qualitative Interpretation

This interpretation takes the strong position that our conceptual resources are necessarily insufficient to determine their referent insofar as there could always be a more fine-grained conceptual identification of the particularity of the referent — an argument highlighting an endemic qualitative discrepancy between our conceptual resources and objects.

If this were Adorno's claim it would be at least trivial and probably false: the problem would not concern the possibility of identification but merely qualitative differences in the precision of different judgements. So, for example, if I were to say 'this chair is red' whilst this may be true, one may complain that the predicate 'is red' does not capture the specificity of *this red,* and is therefore insufficient to the proper identification of the redness of this chair, however we wish to understand 'being red' metaphysically.

Yet one may always say, more specifically, 'this chair is red; although in fact, technically, it's puce." Or, to put even further pressure on this concern about the potential precision of a predicate for identification of a property, one could appeal to McDowell's rejoinder to Evans over this issue (McDowell, 1996: 57). Evans defends a form of non-conceptualism by arguing that our conceptual resources do not represent the same level of fine-grained discrimination as our colour perception (Evans, 1982: 229 & 270). Therefore we could see a colour for which we have no specific concept — that is not to say that the concept does not exist necessarily, just that the person cognizant of such a colour does not have the appropriate concept for it. Does this mean that this person does not experience a colour, Evans asks? McDowell replies that even if they do not have a readily available concept to identify the colour, this does not amount to non-conceptual experience and — for our purposes — a fundamental paucity in our conceptual resources.

McDowell, in line with Sellars[37], argues that experience is semantically indexical such that even those things for which we do not have any concept, we experience it semantically as 'this thing (or property)' which is intensionally directed, via ostension, to the 'thing' identified (McDowell, 1996: 57 - 8). 'That thing (or property)' could be successfully re-identified with the same qualitative sample and ostension at any moment. So, even without the specific concept, the logico-semantic structure of experience, according to this theory, is sufficient to any experience. What is happening in McDowell's rejoinder is that the referent is successfully identified yet our conceptual capacities do no more than indicate the referent.[38] Whilst this is a live debate, it certainly suggests that a principled objection to the qualitative sufficiency of concepts for identification seems tenuous at best.

[37] See, for example, W. Sellars' 'Some Remarks on Kant's Theory of Experience' where he argues that Kantian intuitions are 'broadly conceptual' insofar as they have semantic and indexical content (1967: 637).

[38] One may worry that this still indicates a paucity in our concepts - that the qualitative complexity of objects is such that we can only point at objects, in order to continue to identify them. However, this is still not a problem for conceptual capacities vis-à-vis identity. The identification is successful and will continue until the cognizer gains or invents a concept for the referent at which point they will presumably substitute bare ostension with a richer, conceptually laden judgement - which will be sufficient for the identification of the referent.

2.1.ii The Quantitative Interpretation

There is also no reason to think that there is a problem if Adorno's point is that our conceptual resources are insufficient to the quantitative complexity of any referent. That is, without more argument, there is no reason to think that we could not, in principle at least, list all the propositions which together would exhaust all the properties of the referent of any concept.

So, for example, if Adorno's concern is that our concept of a 'Table' is insufficient for the sufficient identification in judgement of the particular complexity of one particular table, this does not put pressure on the notion of identity, it may simply mean that many propositions are needed which would amount a total identification of a particular table. [39] If the concern were that no concept at any one time could be sufficient for determining the quantitative complexity of its referent there would again be no worry. We do not and ought not to expect one concept to be sufficient to the quantitative complexity of an object. Importantly, even if this were the objection, it would still not raise concerns about identity per se.

So even if we were to grant either interpretation, which I suggest we should not, there does not appear to be an evident problem for judgement in either case. Insofar as our conceptual resources are in some way impoverished such that they are insufficient for rendering sufficient determinations of material objects, this impoverishment and insufficiency seems easily negotiable. Analytic philosophers have many ways for fine-tuning their conceptual resources and getting their propositions 'correct' *qua* objective determination of material entities. And where they fall short, this is more a pragmatic concern rather than some fundamental flaw in naming, identifying and predicating.

[39] Of course there is Quine's suggestion that reference is impossible to substantiate and justify, c.f. his 'gavagai' example (Quine, 1968: 118). Adorno cannot have anything of the sort in mind, however: his concern is the semantic, epistemological and metaphysical status of identity, not the possibility of reference. Adorno explicitly takes it that we can and do refer to objects. I do not wish to pursue this issue here.

2.2 Textual Evidence

Despite the problems I have raised with each of these interpretations of Adorno's worry, there is good textual evidence to think that he is committed to some such critique of identity-thinking. In particular, there is some textual evidence to suggest that the second interpretation outlined above appears to be a fairly reasonable interpretation of what Adorno may understand by the problem of identity-thinking — that the idea of an object falls short of the object such that the idea fails to 'grasp' the object in some fashion. This seems especially likely given his use of the word *aufgehen* which means 'go into' in a mathematical sense — which is undeniably quantitative. Adorno also uses the term *mehr* to convey the idea that there is 'more' to the particular object than how we conceive of it. Again, this appears explicitly quantitative.

If this interpretation was textually correct then Adorno's position would be distinctly unpromising for the reasons offered above. Fortunately, there is a much more compelling interpretation of Adorno's objection which will be developed throughout the rest of this thesis and which properly motivates his philosophical critique of judgement. Following Hegel, he understands predicates as *non-identical* determinations of entities according to our ideas of what the objects are; where those conceptual determinations, whilst valid, fail to properly disclose the *ontological* structure of the entities they determine.

This does not mean that we cannot successfully identify objects. I will contend that Adorno's point is both more modest and subtle: when we identify objects and their properties, we can be misguided if we think that we can read off our ontology from our language; we can be led to make assumptions about subjects and objects which are false. Attention to the complex ontology of objects - of artworks for example - which Adorno approaches through aesthetics as opposed to Ontology, reveals that the way many objects are is more complex than is indicated by the surface structure of our judgements. There is no reason why we cannot engage with this complexity and Adorno certainly thinks that we can. However, it does require us to realise that our conceptual identifications of objects, within the paradigm of identity-thinking, simplify them. Furthermore,

given Adorno's complex account of objects, which will be considered in depth in Chapter Eight, there can be change in objects over time without change in material properties. For Adorno our judgements are quantitatively insufficient for deep metaphysical reasons. The idea, therefore, that we can sufficiently represent the world, at any one time, is false for Adorno. We can make sense of this claim without commitment to the Quantitative Thesis as expressed above.

Some qualifications are necessary at this point. It may appear that Adorno is arguing that we should 'think differently': if this picture of judging is wrong, we should try to work out a new way to reference which somehow avoids identity-thinking. Adorno regards this as impossible: he is a conceptualist insofar as our experience of the world is conceptually mediated — or constructed by and through our conceptual resources — and identification, of some form, is endemic to that mediation: "Yet the appearance of identity is inherent in thought itself, in its pure form. To think is to identify. Conceptual order is content to screen what thinking seeks to comprehend." (ND: 5). Identity, even as he attacks it, is the characteristic function of thought: we identify our perceptions with the entity perceived; and, we cognize our perceptions as this entity being this kind of thing or this kind of way. We cannot help but identify objects.

Returning then to Kant, it would appear that Kant's theory of judgement operates with the sort of sufficiency that Adorno is attacking. As Hanna argues, the logical and semantic co-ordination of concepts within Kantian judgements provides the conditions for logical coherence of our judgements such that the mediation of the world through our conceptual schemas is both a sufficient and valid determination of the world. Hanna argues that whilst Kant does not have a semantics in a contemporary Analytic sense, and situates objective validity in the structure of transcendental cognition, judgement, indexed to the world, is sufficient for the representation and determination of the world (Hanna, 2001: 105).[40]

[40] It is worth noting that for Kant that when we say that an object is a particular way, i.e., when we make an objective, determinative judgement, we determine the modality of this claim according to the transcendental conditions of cognition. See Kant: "The modality of judgments is a very special function of them. What distinguishes this function is the fact that it contributes nothing to the judgment's content. Rather, modality concerns only the value that the copula has in

Adorno's concern is that we take our conceptual resources to be adequate to the determination of the world, what there is in it and how those things are. Yet he also sees that this is a function of thinking and it cannot be bypassed: "I have no way but to break immanently, in its own measure, through the appearance of total identity." (ND 5). There is no external position to be taken outside of identity-thinking such that we can think against it — all thought is involved with and implicated by 'identity-thinking'. Therefore, any attack on identity-thinking must operate from within.

What Adorno has in mind when considering identity, in this context, is how we identify objects in our conceptual determinations of them. His concern, however, is when we take our conceptual determination of objects as sufficient *representations* — as opposed to the more simplistic and less robust claims of qualitative or quantitative sufficiency. So whilst identity-thinking is unavoidable for Adorno, he has a much richer notion of identity (in that it includes metaphysical and epistemological concerns of nonidentity) than found in identity-thinking — the way that objects are such that they are not sufficiently represented in conceptual representations.

Nevertheless, the issues of the sufficiency of our conceptual capabilities and resources to the determination of ourselves and to the empirical world pertain to Kant inasmuch as Kant is an identity-thinker.[41] Yet, given the fact that there is no external position from which identity-thinking can be attacked and that it is an irreducible characteristic of thinking, we may immediately wonder what the

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reference to thought as such." (Kant 1996: A74/B100, 127). This is criticised by Hegel, SoL: 129 - 30 and will be considered in Chapter Four and Five. That modal claims are settled according to the transcendental objectivity of the subject is again telling in light of Adorno's critique of the *constituens* and *constitutum*. It also helps us to make sense of Adorno's claim that Kant salvages ontology through the subject (KCPR: 31).
For commentary on Kant's theory of modality see Baldwin (2002), Hanna (2001: 105) and Leech (2010). We will see in Section Three that Adorno, like Hegel, baulks at this subjective conception of modality.

[41] See CPR: 21-2, Bxvii - iii & 67, B30; Hanna: "The representational content is the essential - or individuating - part of a cognition in the sense that it determines precisely which object the cognition refers to. That is, it determines the object directedness, aboutness, or intentionality of the cognition. Put this way, and recalling that we have momentarily abstracted away from the purely mental or conscious aspects of cognition, then we can clearly see that Kant's fundamental philosophical question is effectively equivalent to the question: how are meanings possible?" (Hanna, 2001: 3) & (Coffa, 1991: 9).

problem is and, if there is a problem, what we could conceivably do about it. I discuss the epistemological and metaphysical concerns in more detail in Section Three. However, Adorno has an immediate social concern for identity-thinking: identity mirrors a form of social domination and at the linguistic level, plays an important role in this form of social domination:

> Identity is the primal form of ideology. We relish it as adequacy to the thing it suppresses; adequacy has always been subjection to dominant purposes and, in that sense, its own contradiction. After the unspeakable effort it must have cost our species to produce the primacy of identity even against itself, man rejoices and basks in his conquest by turning it into the definition of the conquered thing: what has happened to it must be presented, by the thing, as its "in-itself." (ND: 148)

The concern regarding domination is central to Adorno's thinking and, as we can see, motivates his concerns over identity and its role in thinking. Without significant digression, I cannot discuss the political validity of Adorno's theory here.[42] However, we can at least see how this domination works semantically and that it has wide philosophical import for Adorno.

What precisely this domination is, however, is difficult to determine. Given what has already been said about identity-thinking, the concern is that the sufficiency of our conceptual resources, secured through the determination of the empirical in judgements, is in some way false. Put this way, the claim seems open to an obvious objection: the identity of the conceptual determination of a state of affairs is only taken as true just in case it does indeed correctly represent that state of affairs. Surely then the state of affairs is not 'dominated' by how we take the world to be, unless we are subjective idealists, because if our judgements do not correctly represent the state of affairs it purports to then the judgement is simply false. Propositional contents such as concepts are *only sufficient* insofar as they correctly answer to the world; our thoughts about the world are beholden to the world, not the other way around. In short, Adorno simply seems to have misunderstood the truth-making relation: even in Kant, the world, as it appears to us, still dictates which propositions are true and this truth-making relation is a necessary condition of any sufficiency between propositions and the world.

[42] See Hammer, 2006: 46 - 7.

Fortunately, I do not think that Adorno makes this mistake because it is not what he has in mind. Again, his point is more subtle. Our conceptual determinations of the world may well be objectively valid; however, in ways which will be discussed in Section Three, our conceptual determinations of the world do not correspond, in their metaphysical structure, to the way the world is. Therefore, if we take our judgements as valid and also as sufficient to the representation of how the world is, and not significantly limited according to metaphysical concerns, then we do a disservice to the world — with, in Adorno's view, serious consequences.

That is, we are not dealing with issues of truth-making as such. Rather we are concerned with how our conceptual resources, through propositions and their propositional contents *represent* their referents in judgement. It is at this point that Adorno's politically charged terms can be introduced: propositions, in order to represent their referents, coerce them into a form that is both different to how they really are and which also systematically transforms the particular way that referents are into a way that they are not. The simple gloss for this point is little more than there is an ontological difference between propositions and their referents — they are different kinds of things. The representation of one type through another requires a fundamental change in articulation of the one within the other. This could appear a trivial truism — language is different to world — yet the deeper, more complex way of putting this point, is that the way the world is represented in propositions and rendered semantically in judgements, either for simple pragmatic reasons or due to more complex logical and semantic constraints, results in a distorted view of the world and also of our knowledge-making activities. Hence the difference between the world and representations of the world are important for Adorno.

Obviously this thesis is highly controversial. However, I will defer the elaboration and consideration of Adorno's position. At least we now have some idea of what motivates him by which we can understand his primary concern with Kant's philosophy. That is, the current import of the above is to give us the basic tools by which we can properly understand the heart of Adorno's critique of

Kant. In *Negative Dialectics,* Adorno argues:

> In idealism, the highly formal identity principle had, due to its formalization, an affirmative substance. This is innocently brought to light by terminology, when simple predicative sentences are called "affirmative." The copula says: It is so, not otherwise. The act of synthesis, for which the copula stands, indicates that it shall not be otherwise—else the act would not be performed. The will to identity works in each synthesis. As an a priori task of thought, a task immanent in thought, identity seems positive and desirable: the substrate of the synthesis is thus held to be reconciled with the I, and therefore to be good. Which promptly permits the moral desideratum that the subject, understanding how much the cause is its own, should bow to what is heterogeneous to it. (ND: 147)

There are a number of claims here: firstly, idealism has a 'highly formal' identity principle; identity in idealism is simultaneously modal and existentially committed, i.e., it helps determine how and what something is; identity claims are synthetic; identity-thinking in idealism not only determines a referent within the medium of thought but it 'reconciles' the referent to the subject; and as we saw before, there is an ethical dimension to this reconciliation: insofar as the referent, determined in terms of the laws of thought — that is, language — rather than according to its own terms (whatever those terms would be), is re-articulated as something foreign to its own way of being.

In the above quotation, Adorno justifies my claim that we ought to understand his critique of transcendental subjectivity in terms of a critique of judgements. The three key claims all relate directly to Kant (although as we will see, also to Hegel): identity in judgements affirms what is the case (or that *x* is thus and so); identity in judgements determines what is objectively the case through the medium of subjectivity — i.e. the object is represented through a medium which is heterogeneous or foreign to it but which is homogenous with the subject — that medium being language; and finally, there is the ethical dimension to this second point that the unavoidable imposition of the subject onto objects in thought constitutes a form of coercion[43].

This final point might seem somewhat hysterical and inappropriate. If we are

[43] See Bernstein on idealism and the constitutive subject, 2001: 212 - 3.

talking about material, non-sentient objects, the implied ascription of some moral patiency to them seems perverse. Nevertheless, we can make sense of this worry and it is directly relevant for understanding Adorno's philosophical motivations. Firstly, that we distort objects in language, in some way, is unavoidable for Adorno. It becomes a problem when we don't care to acknowledge or reflect on that distortion. I think he sees this as indicative of a general, and rather worrying attitude towards the world, which systematically or methodologically ignores the limitations of thinking. It is also a worry for Adorno because he thinks that taking seriously the fact that objects are not how they appear in language is in fact a point of critical departure in itself. If we are simply satisfied with our linguistic conceptions of objects we will miss how they contain, through 'non-identical elements', crucial truths about problems in the world.

For now it is sufficient to see how these three points take the problem of identity, as he sees it, as intimately associated with the subject. In particular, in the Kantian sense, if it is the case that the transcendental subject underwrites the objective validity of judgements, which we will see in the following analysis is the case, and given this worry about how objects are rendered within judgements, then we see why Adorno is so deeply concerned with the epistemic and metaphysical status of the transcendental subject and its transcendental relation to judgements and their propositional contents. I will now turn to a discussion of Kant's account of determinative, objective judgements which is a principal concern of the first critique. We will see just how closely related and interdependent judgements and transcendental subjectivity are for Kant. And we will also see how Adorno's worries about identity-thinking underpin his critique of Kant's theory of judgement.

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3. Kant, Determinative Judgements and Semantics

Adorno is concerned that the conceptual determinations of the object is the basis for developing a sufficient, if limited, metaphysics of objects in Kant's philosophy. These conceptual determinations are framed by the 'constitutive', transcendental subject, and underwritten by the transcendental unity of apperception.[44] What is striking is that Adorno sees this as a concern. As this is no more than Kant intends, there is evidently a deep difference in philosophical commitments and intuitions between the two thinkers. In this section, Kant's theory of judgement will be examined more fully such that we can pinpoint precisely how and why it might be considered a problem for Adorno.

The primary contention is that Kant's theory of judgement has significant analytic aspects and is, according to Hanna, propositional. Again, this cannot be taken as a problem in itself without begging the question. However, analysing the structure of Kantian judgement will facilitate a more fine-grained understanding of Adorno's critique of identity-thinking. From there we will be able to develop his critique of judgement and why judgements are in some way limited when considering valid, conceptual determinations of the material world and ourselves as individuals. From there we will also be in a better position to consider why Adorno finds Hegel's dialectical conception of judgements attractive.

3.1 Psychologism or Semantics?

During the last twenty years, inspired by studies such as Coffa's *The Semantic Tradition from Kant to Carnap,* the relationship of Kant to analytic philosophy has been re-examined.[45] Coffa argues that the problem with Kant's philosophy,

[44] See CPR: B137.

[45] See also Friedman, 1999: 5 - 14. For discussion of the issues of psychology, justification and verification within Kantian terms, see Guyer 1987: 303 - 5 & 374. He argues that transcendental psychology does not account for time-determination. Rather, his theory of time determination is an 'epistemological theory' about the kinds of principles that would have to be appealed to in order to justify or confirm claims to knowledge about subjective time-determinations. Hence he does see intuitions qua time, as involved in the logical space of reason and inference. He does not link this with the issue of semantics, however. Of course Kant does emphasise the importance of empirical psychology in the development of transcendental enquiry through its basis in

and its inspiration for analytic philosophy, grew out of both 'bad semantics' (Coffa, 1991: 19) and where he did have a semantics, they were casual (Coffa, 1991: 16). This putative lack and failure is what led Kant to a view of analyticity constricted to understanding of concepts — and hence constricting semantics to nominal analyticity and excluding an ampliative understanding of analyticity, which would be reserved for the synthetic.[46] The constriction of analyticity to the nominal was already to misunderstand analyticity from the later, Analytic point of view: misunderstanding the semantic content of analytic and synthetic propositions and thereby missing the ampliative possibility of analytic enquiry.

The synthetic required other grounds than semantics and therefore relied on empirical intuitions for synthetic a posteriori judgements and pure intuitions for synthetic a priori judgements — in both cases a semantic grounding for either form of synthetic judgement was already precluded for Kant. In short, Coffa's analysis suggests that Kant's semantics, such as there were any, and its derived accounts of analyticity and apriority, were psychologistic. It was the job of Analytic philosophy to wrest meaning, analyticity and apriority from psychology and resituate it within its appropriate domain of structured meaning, reference and inference (Coffa, 1991: 20) enabling an account of objectivity and truth which does not resolve in some way to subjectivity.

Nevertheless some Analytic philosophers have begun to return to Kant and Hegel in order to deal with a number of epistemological and metaphysical problems which have arisen within the Analytic program.[47] A key aspect in this return has revolved around the fact that some form of return to Hegel, and in particular, to Kant, is possible whilst retaining a modern, Analytic conception of analyticity and semantics because these two categories are not as anathema to these philosophers as the early Analytic philosophers may have thought. Of course it has required, in some cases, extremely revisionary accounts of German Idealism to make this return possible, but Analytic philosophy and German Idealism are

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experience. Guyer, 2006: 26. See also Kitcher on the relationship between transcendental psychology and analytic philosophy, 1990: 7 - 8 & 200.

[46] See Coffa, 1991: 16 - 20 & CPR: §§B10 - 7.

[47] See, for example: Sellars (2002), McDowell, 1996: 3 - 24 & 2006: 33 - 45; Brandom, 1994: 91 - 3; Nuzzo (2006: 86 - 97) and analyses by Redding (2007) & Rockmore (2005) on the reconsideration of Hegel within analytic thought,

not entirely mutually exclusive. To some degree this implies that whatever semantic underdevelopment we find in Kant, it seems unlikely that he is as semantically naïve as was perhaps thought at the beginnings of Analytic philosophy.

For example, Sellars argued that Kant's theory of sensible presentations could be interpreted as 'broadly conceptual', linguistically representable and therefore having the sort of content already amenable to logic and inference.[48] His point is that whatever the original charges of Analytic philosophy against Kant were, and whatever their validity, many philosophers are coming to see Kant as having a strong semantic element even if it is not in the same form and structure as was developed within Analytic philosophy. Furthermore, the nesting of semantics within transcendental idealism, may be problematic for Analytic philosophy; however, the reasons why Kant wedded semantics to something of a metaphysical program was as a result of a critical response to a number of metaphysical and epistemological problems. As in the case of givenness, these problems have not gone away.[49] We cannot simply say, therefore, that we should just drop Kant's transcendental program simply because it is taking up the slack of bad semantics: it is an active part of a solution which Kant felt required both semantic elements and a metaphysics of subjectivity. This is not to say, of course, that Kant was right to do so or that his solution worked. It does suggest that we ought not to be too quick in dismissing Kant as a relic of pre-Analytic enquiry.

These preliminaries are relevant to the discussion of Adorno because there is an aspect of his critique of Kant which is sensitive to this proto-Analytic aspect of Kant's thought — and he is criticising Kant partly in virtue of it. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Adorno's programmatic concern that Kant's transcendental subject amounts to a reification of individual, empirical subjectivity to the extent that the subject is the condition of objectivity. The subject does not attenuate

[48] See Sellars, 1968: 3 - 5; commentary by McDowell (1998) and criticism by Woods (1984). Adorno seems to say something similar to Sellars (KCPR: 100 - 1) but equivocates about the issue (KCPR: 50).

[49] See Sellars in DeVries & Triplett, 2000: 205 - 13. See also O'Connor's discussion of Adorno and the problem of 'givenness' (2004). I agree with O'Connor that givenness is an issue for Adorno; however, I disagree with his rendering of non-conceptuality, see Chapter Eight.

objectivity; rather, according to Adorno, the transcendental subject determines the individual subject. The transcendental subject, undersigned by the transcendental unity of apperception, becomes the condition for *systematic* and *logical co-ordination* of the conceptual contents of synthetic a posteriori judgements. Our representations of the world are referenced and indexed to intuitions and logically co-ordinated to produce a unified and meaningful field of experience.

Adorno distinguishes the import of the psychological found in Hume from Kant. For Hume laws and regularity are psychological beliefs required to make sense of the behaviour and structure of the empirical world (KCPR: 96). The rules of thought based on our observations are therefore contingent. He points out that for Kant causality is in fact a condition of unified thought. He proceeds with his analysis by then pointing out that these transcendental 'laws', as he refers to them, underpin the 'complex' of 'transcendental idealism'/'empirical realism'. Transcendental idealism says that synthetic a priori judgements are grounded in the mind — i.e. ultimately delimited by their relation to pure intuitions. Adorno explains that empirical realism is the interaction of these pure intuitions with 'the data of reality' which 'leads to the constitution of the world which surrounds us as the world of our experience.' (KCPR: 96) The constitution here is the presentation of the world in phenomenal appearance.

So far this is quite standard and does not suggest any indication of what we may consider semantics. However, Adorno goes on to say:

> In order to understand the objectivity claims of subjectivity in Kant it is vital to treat this concept of law with extreme rigour. It must be seen as an indispensable precondition without which something like an organized consciousness, a consciousness that is logically consistent and coherent, and hence an organized, logically consistent world of objects, is not conceivable. (KCPR: 96)

In this quotation Adorno emphasises that what we find in Kant is an objective structure of law — which I think we can reasonably take, given what he has said elsewhere, to be reason and transcendental subjectivity. This 'law' provides for a logically organized consciousness which is indexed and referenced to a logically

organized presentation of the empirical world and its contents. This is not to suggest, falsely, that Kant has a modern semantics; however, it does suggest that he has elements which are recognizably semantic in the modern sense. Indeed, the conception being proposed by Adorno has strains of Tractarian picture theory.[50] Individual, contingent subjectivity is thoroughly suppressed and determined by the logico-semantic structure of unified, indexical experience in order to produce a logically, coherent and consistent representation of the empirical world which is thoroughly meaningful.

Adorno is quite clear that there is still a strong subjective element. He says that Kant "treats the categories of psychology as empirical categories" and that this puts him in the "position of modern psychology" (KCPR: 189) He also properly emphasises the fact that it is subjectivity as such which guarantees this logical connectivity (KCPR: 98). Nevertheless, subjectivity is such that we can "make connections between sense data, and that it is in this way that objectivity comes into being". (KCPR: 97). Adorno emphasises the fact that objectivity is an issue of the determination and co-ordination of sense data through the making of connections — i.e., through synthetic a posteriori judgements. This determination relies on a thoroughly objective set rules. Whilst no-one could deny that Kant has a different conception of analyticity to contemporary Analytic philosophers, and his use of intuitions and persistent epistemology and metaphysics is deeply troubling for them, the logical and inferential structure of judgements, grounded in a strong theory of reference, produces a unified system of meanings which may not have been explicitly semantic but which does have a strong semantic structure.

Interpreting Kant's semantics is controversial and technical. The discussion here is not to provide arguments in that debate. Rather it is to understand Adorno's interpretation such that we can continue to develop Adorno's own thinking. Hanna's interpretation of Kant substantiates the ideas Adorno has in mind when he talks about objectivity, legality, coherence, consistency and organization.

[50] See Wittgenstein, 2001: 2.1 - 2.141.

Hanna points out a number of features of Kant's theory of judgement, as essentially propositional, and its basis in transcendental subjectivity. Hanna points out that

> because (according to Kant's thesis of cognitive or representational idealism) all the proper objects of human cognition — the objects of experience — are token-identical with the contents of judgements of experience, it follows that, for Kant, just as for the Tractarian Wittgenstein and Carnap, 'logic fills the world.' (Hanna, 2001: 71)

This seems directly in line with what Adorno says about the structural relation between our cognition and their content as represented in judgement. In both cases, they are pointing towards the logical co-ordination of Kantian cognition, its contents, and their determination in judgement.

Of course Hanna is well aware that the Kant's contention that logic is the science of the rules of thinking (CPR Bviii-ix). Thus his conception of logic is deeply psychologistic. He is also well aware that Analytic philosophy wished to distance itself from such psychologism. However, like Adorno, when he urges us to take seriously the objective, non-subjective basis of transcendental 'subjectivity', Hanna points out that there is a strong sense that Kant is deeply anti-psychologistic.[51] He argues that Kant is the inventor of anti-psychologism and that whilst Kant's theory of logic is thoroughly mentalistic, this does not entail a reduction of logic to empirical or experimental psychology (Hanna, 2001: 73). The reason being that pure general logic both underpins all particular modes of thinking and is irreducible to any particular modes of thinking. Logic as such is, therefore, for Kant, beyond the caprices of psychology, is thoroughly normative and is the basis upon which any particular judgement ought to be determined semantically.[52] The very possibility of Kant's being able to talk about objectivity, which Adorno consistently emphasises, relies on this anti-

[51] See Reed (2007: 175 - 82), for an analysis of the development of Analytic philosophy in-line with Coffa and against Hanna.

[52] Hanna also argues that we can give a non-psychologistic account of Kantian analyticity (Hanna, 2001: 156). Also, he argues that the 'essential indexicality' of empirical intuitions and syntheciticity, found in Kant, is also found in Frege - albeit as a position at odds with the thorough-going conceptualism of Russell and Moore. Nevertheless, this indexicality is a semantic intuitionism. (Hanna, 2001: 232). Contrast Hanna's view with classic interpretations of Kant as psychologistic: Strawson, 1982: 29.

psychologism. Adorno could be no clearer about this than in the caustic observation: "The idealists made a heaven of the mind, but woe betide the man who had a mind." (ND: 390).

The point of the above analysis is to elucidate Adorno's theses concerning Kantian subjectivity, objectivity and how we ought to interpret those theses. I suggest that Adorno is in line with the point of view developed by Hanna, that there are strong semantic elements to Kant's thinking and he is, therefore, a proto-Analytic philosopher as opposed to just a point of departure for Analytic philosophy. Of course, Adorno's critical aims are radically different to Hanna's. Aside from the fact that Adorno does not articulate his criticism in the same way as Hanna — unsurprising given their different times of writing and philosophical background — but their understanding and value of the consequences of this semantics is radically different. For Hanna, he is trying to re-introduce Kant and certain Kantian answers to Analytic philosophy. Adorno, on the other hand, for issues pertaining to representation and identity-thinking, finds this proto-Analyticity problematic.

Adorno's criticism of Kant, insofar as he makes possible the transition into Analytic philosophy, is an attempt to cut off the reduction of philosophy to semantics, from the outset. Furthermore, he does not wish to resolve the competing elements of Kantian thought — objectivity and subjectivity/semantics vs. psychologism — he wants to suggest that these are irresolvable problems and that Kant ought to be applauded for trying to pursue these competing dynamics within a unified system. In other words, Adorno acknowledges the semantic, objective elements of Kant's philosophy, but he wants to set these elements back in motion against the competing elements of subjectivity, psychology and the historical subject. Whilst Kant may be being taken as proto-Analytic, Adorno's target is the transition of philosophy into something primarily semantical. That is not to say that Adorno is in some way anti-logical; rather, it is to emphasise his commitment to the complexity of particular experience which in some way outstrips the sorts of assumptions that any semantics can be sufficient to the valid determination of the empirical world. Ironically then for Adorno, the transition to a supposedly entirely logical, 'objective' semantics is to capitulate to some form of subjectivism.

3.2 Determinative Judgements and Propositions

Hanna argues that determinative empirical judgements just are the expression of propositions for Kant (Hanna, 2001: 16 & 18).[53] The thesis being developed here is controversial.[54] However, it is certainly tenable and it is a very useful way to motivate Adorno's critique of Kant. Obviously the notion of a proposition is a complex issue in itself and can mean many different things — the primary bearers of truth-value, shareable objects of belief and other "propositional attitudes" (i.e., what is believed, doubted, etc.), the referents of that-clauses, and the meanings of sentences (Iacona, 2003: 325 - 7). The metaphysics of propositions is also controversial. It is not necessary for this discussion to get involved with such debates. We can reasonably understand judgements propositionally and, given Kant's theory of modality, as truth-bearing and shareable objects of belief.

What is of interest here, is Adorno's view of Kantian subjectivity and his analysis of objectivity, logic and unity outlined above such that the subject is able to produce judgements which are objectively, valid determinations of objects judged. This entails that judgements are the site where issues of identity-thinking can be properly analysed. We will see that Hanna's analysis of synthetic a posteriori judgements, just as with his analysis of Kantian semantics, is helpful for understanding Adorno's critique of Kant. The propositional structure of Kantian judgement gives us an insight into Adorno's concern that objects, within the Kantian model of cognition, just are what we determine them to be in judgement and this is both a valid and sufficient model for the determination of

[53] Hanna points out that Kant distinguishes judgements from propositions only according to modal concerns: judgements are 'problematic'; propositions are assertoric. Yet Kant treats judgements as assertoric and propositional. He does not carry the distinction through into his discussion of modality in the CPR (A74 - 6/B100 - 1).

[54] For another analysis which focuses on the logical and semantic relations of judgements as propositions, see Longuenesse, 1998: 5 & 6 & chpts. 6 & 7. Contrast with Wolff's classic psychologistic account of Kant's Analytic, 1963: 35. Kitcher also points out, in line with the psychologistic account, that the representations which we bring together in judgement are 'related by a synthesis of intuitions'. The reliance of changing sensory data entails that 'logicians cannot tell us of what these relations [between] representations consist.' (1990: 88- 9) - this quite different to the semantic picture being developed by Hanna.

objects. Insofar as Adorno thinks that propositions are not sufficient or adequate for either the total determination or representation of objects, we have reason to be sceptical of this Kantian form of judgement.

Whilst any commentator would acknowledge the revolutionary importance of judgement in Kant's thinking, Hanna, places the issue of Kantian judgement and semantics at the forefront of his interpretation. He focuses on the construction and role of judgements as key in understanding Kant's epistemology and metaphysics.

Kant takes a "judgement" [*Urteil*l to be a kind of "cognition" [*Erkenntnis*] — which is itself an objective, conscious mental representation (A320/B376). What is well-known about such cognitions is that they are produced spontaneously as an activity of the faculty of judgement. This faculty brings together sensible intuitions to schematized versions of the pure concepts of the understanding. So, our sensible perception of the world provides us with the material for cognizing; yet there can be no such cognition without these intuitions being rendered in discursive form such that they can be thought by us. Sensible phenomena must be conceptually determined, therefore. This conceptual determination is a judgement.

The constituents of judgements are concepts and intuitions. Concepts have various features: (a) general and universal representations (*Gesammelte Schriften* 9: 91); (b) discursive representations expressing pure logical forms and falling under pure logical laws (A68-70/B92-94, A239/B298); (c) intensional entities which can be used in any comprehension of an object which falls under the scope of the concept (*Gesammelte Schriften* 9: 95-96); (d) they are indirect insofar as they represents an object via a 'characteristic' shared by a number of such objects (A320/B376-377); (e) in virtue of (b), the concept is a sufficient rule for the determination of perceptions of objects (A106); and (f) is a reflection of the unity of apperception and so is an indirect representation of this higher-order transcendental function of subjectivity itself. (B 133)

So, we can see that concepts have a number of key characteristics, all of which

will be of import for the forthcoming discussion: they are general, universal; they are essentially logical — and hence related to truth-functionality; they are sufficient; they are mediate representations of objects; they are rules and they are representative of the higher level functionality of apperception. We can already see then that concepts are a mediate point where representations of mind and world cohere and that due to their essentially logical nature, this cohesion is logical and rule-governed.

Intuitions on the other hand are always object-directed representations; even pure intuitions that are apprehended a priori, are, according to Kant, object oriented (CPR: A238 - 40/B297 - 99). Intuitions are (1) singular (A320/B377); (2) sense-related (A19/B33, A51/B75); (3) object-dependent (B72); (4) immediate, or directly referential (A90-91/B122-123, B132, B145).[55]

What is of most value here is the notion, which falls out of these four qualities, is that empirical intuitions are token-identifiable with the objects which they directly represent. And also that the presence to mind of objects as appearances — which just are our empirical intuitions — is as close to the object (in-itself) as the mind gets (CPR: B63 - 4). This is the fulcrum of transcendental thinking — that we do not have direct perception of objects but only perceive them through the direct but referential form of appearance. That intuitions are directly referential also suggests that they are semantic in structure and are also immediately implicated in the cognitive processes of the mind.

The judgement is the determination of an intuition, pure or empirical, according to concepts, pure or empirical. It will also, insofar as it determines intuitions and concepts, take account of and mediate the cognitive, logical and formal and transcendental functions of its constituents. Judgements will then mediate between the general universality of concepts and the singular particularity of its intuitions such that judgements are able to both range over a number of empirical

[55] It should be noted that Hanna adds the non-conceptual to this list (Hanna 2001, ch. 4) citing (A284/B340). This is a particularly controversial thesis. I include it here in fidelity to Hanna's account; however, I think it too controversial a thesis to include in a general account of intuitions. The notion of non-conceptualism will be re-introduced in our discussion of Adorno's aesthetics. However, it plays no role here.

representations whilst simultaneously (correctly and sufficiently) determining any one representation (CPR: A68/B93). We can see from the following, and it is a point that Kant makes explicitly, that judgements are a function of cognitive unity (CPR: A69/B94). That is, that one judgement can draw together a number of possible cognitions. Thirdly, as indicated, concepts are rules for the determination of intuitions and fall within the remit and scope of the understanding in general in accordance with the general laws of logic. Judgements too, as a cognitive function, are subject to the rules of the understanding and to the general laws of logic. This is an important idea as it affirms the role of judgements as entities with truth-functional and modal validity (CPR: A130 - 32/B170 - 172).

What should stand out about the characteristics of judgement, given the discussion thus far, is that the logical and rule-governed co-ordination and coherence of judgements is guaranteed by apperception. To reiterate, apperception is the transcendental condition of the unity of self which is posited analytically and a priori. Whilst it is not an object of knowledge itself — no predicates can be ascribed to it and it can't be the subject of any propositions — it is according to Kant a necessary, higher level unity of self which can be inferred from the synthetic unity of empirical subjectivity. That is, I can make the synthetic a priori judgement that 'I am a judging being' which can be inferred from the structure of experience as essentially causal, discursive and unified. However, the judgement is properly a reflection about judging and a synthetic reflection upon this immediate activity of the mind; it is not directly a claim made about the 'I' based on reflection concerning the 'I' itself. For Kant, as we have seen, we have no access to the 'I' as such. When we speak directly of the 'I', we make meaningful and intelligible utterances but they should not be confused with inferentially and existentially valid propositions. I have discussed apperception at some length in previous sections; what is relevant here is its role in judgement. The necessary higher-level unity of the 'I', which is a transcendental condition of empirical subjectivity, provides the *transcendental basis for the objective validity of judgements*.

Prior to the introduction of apperception, focussing only on the constituent

elements of judgements — concepts and intuitions — we would only have the possibility of 'well-formed' propositions determined according to the dual influence of sensible representations and discursive concepts — and, it should be noted, no real possibility of reflective consciousness. We would not have, according to Kant, the conditions for the objective validity of thought because, without a position from which multiple cognitions could be considered in logical relation to each other, there would be no guarantee of the coherence of thought. Yet, Kant's anti-realism at the transcendental level places the onus of objective validity on the logical co-ordination of the propositional contents of cognition by a single unified self. A transcendental condition of this coherence is a cognitive unity which supervenes on empirical subjectivity; which is irreducible to empirical subjectivity; and which behaves as no more than an enduring reference point about which the individual products of mental activity — essentially rational judgements — are co-ordinated.

Kant makes explicit the role of apperception in objective validity:

> A judgment is nothing other than the way to bring given cognitions to the objective unity of apperception. That is the aim of the copula is in them: to distinguish the objective unity of given representations from the subjective. (CPR: B141)

In addition to noting the relationship between apperception and judging in this quotation, the modal and existential commitments implicit in this relation are telling. Insofar as apperception guarantees the objective validity of a judgement, that judgement is not only logically well-formed, rationally coherent and sortally correct but the state of affairs it articulates is objectively the case. The copula in judgements, in virtue of the relation between the judgement (in its foundation in intuitions) and apperception, is not indicative of a private commitment that a particular person 'takes *x* to be thus and so'. Rather, it is indicative of an objective commitment 'that *x* is thus and so'.

As Hanna points out, because the range of validity of judgements is not particular to any one subject, but any subject which shares the same cognitive structure, the intersubjective, rational communicability and validity of judgements is such that

judgements are essentially propositions in the sense of being truth-bearers (Hanna, 1991: 22). So whilst Kant is anti-realist — that is, their formulation and validity is mind-dependent — about propositions as such, propositions are not only objective, they are universally valid.

Finally, to give a full account of the epistemic scope and status of judgements, we must give a brief account of truth. As has been suggested, the universal and necessary validity of judgements according to their determination within the necessary structure of rational cognition — which amounts to the objectively valid representation of empirical states of affairs — entails that judgements are propositional in essence. The question is then, what makes a judgement true?

Given Kant's transcendental account of propositions and modality, it would seem likely that Kant would hold some form of coherence theory of truth — that the truth values of propositions were determined solely by their meaningfulness within a system of meanings. However, this supposition seems to run directly against the grain of what he says. Firstly, Kant argues states that "truth is the agreement of cognition with its object." (CPR: A58/B83). Truth is therefore determined on a case-by-case basis insofar as a semantic representation of an object — a judgement — corresponds to how that object is. In this respect at least, Kant seems to hold a correspondence theory of truth: objects are truth makers that determine the truth or falsity of judgements in terms of the agreement of the proposition with the sort of mental representation which is an object.[56] Kant also rejects any essentially rationalist notion of truth, that there can be an abstract universal criterion of truth which accounts for truth or falsity irrespective of particular contingencies (CPR: A58/B84).

To what extent Kant's theory of truth-making could be considered realist depends greatly on Kant's metaphysics of objects. We do know that Kant argues against a material idealism in the *Refutation of Idealism*. He argues that enduring, external material reality is a necessary condition of the determination of our own enduring existence — as we discover in reflection on the unity amongst the synthetic

[56] See CPR: B82 - 86 & the Fourth Paralogism, of Ideality: A367 - 80; Hanna, 1991: 239.

products of judgements: "Hence the determination of my existence in time is possible only through the existence of actual things that I perceive outside me." (CPR: B275).[57] This does not entail, as we will see, that objects, as we know them, are real — rather they are conceptual entities. What we should note is that in our interest in judgements and propositions we are led to a consideration of the metaphysics of objects — this, as we will see, is central to Adorno's critical philosophy and is part of why Adorno critiques Kant.

3.3 Kant, Objects and the Recurrence of Identity-Thinking

The problem is that when considering objects, we are, as Allison has pointed out, already talking about objects in second-order talk, i.e., we cannot talk directly about objects as such but only through their conceptual determination and according to the conditions of this conceptual determination (Allison, 2004:173):

> 1. [An] *Object* [*Objekt*] is that in whose concept the manifold of a given intuition is *united*. (Kant, 1996: B137)
> 2. What lies in the successive apprehension is regarded as presentation; but the appearance that is given to me, despite being nothing more than a sum of these presentations, is regarded as their object, with which the concept that I obtain from the presentations of apprehension is to agree. We soon see that, since agreement of cognition with the object is truth, the question can only be inquiring after the formal conditions of empirical truth; and we see that appearance as contrasted with the presentations of apprehension, can be presented as an object distinct from them only if it is subject to a rule that distinguishes it from any other apprehension and that makes necessary one kind of combination of the manifold. That [element] in the appearance which contains the condition of this necessary rule of apprehension is the object. (Kant, 1996: A191/B236)

Hence "whatever is represented through such a synthetic unity counts as an object." (Allison, 2004: 173).[58] If we put these quotations together, Kant seems to be saying that objects are appearances under particular rules of the understanding such that they provide representations for conceptual determination of a particular kind.

[57] It is not my intention to adjudicate on Kant's controversial arguments in the 'Refutation'. It is only relevant how Kant understood his own theory. See Guyer (1983) and Allison (2004: 275) for critiques of the arguments in the refutation.
[58] See also, Stern, 1990: 17 - 21.

What Kant seems to have in mind is the idea that a determinate, sensible presentation, insofar as it appears as a structurally well-ordered unity, distinct from other empirical unities, entails that, given the rules of thinking, it has normative force for our cognitive faculties: it says, in virtue of the fact that I appear as thus and so means, that you ought to think of me as being thus and so given the structure of your cognitive capacities. Yet, regardless of this notion of an object as an objectively valid reference point for our conceptual determinations, metaphysically the object is still no more than a representation, i.e., a mental entity. The evolving tension between objects as mental entities and also being entities capable of objective involvement in shareable beliefs, is something Adorno finds very worrying in Kant's philosophy as we will see.

The attempt to maintain not just the objective validity of 'objects' but also their objective reality seems strained. In the following quotation, it is obvious that he wishes to maintain a commitment to the objective reality of objects as transcendental conditions for the possibility of truth-making and experiential coherence; however, his claims are always modified by the limitations of his idealist commitments with serious metaphysical and epistemological consequences:

> If a cognition is to have objective reality, i.e., if it is to refer to an object and have in that object its signification and meaning, then the object must be capable of being given in some way. For otherwise the concepts are empty; and though we have thought by means of them, we have in fact cognized nothing through this thinking, but have merely played with presentations. To be given an object — if this is not again to mean to be given it only indirectly, but is to mean, rather, to exhibit it directly in intuition — is nothing other than to refer the presentation of the object to experience (whether actual, or at least possible, experience). (CPR: A155-6/B194 - 5)

At the beginning of the quotation, he speaks confidently of objective reality; the qualification at the end — 'presentation of the object' — is practically mumbled. Kant begins the passage with a strong sense of externalism and objectivity in terms of objects — that they are given to us and that what is given is 'outside us.' Yet, by the end of the passage, 'givenness' is in fact the referring of our mental presentations of objects to ourselves. The robust distinction between objective and subjective seems strained.[59]

[59] This is a different issue, of course, to Kant's refutation of problematic idealism in which seeks

Elsewhere he cannot help but be more straightforward about the status of objects. Insofar as they are presentations only encountered in appearances, objects are mind-dependent:

> At this point we must make clear to ourselves what we mean by the expression 'an object of representation'. We have stated above that appearances are themselves nothing but sensible representations, which, as such and in themselves, must not be taken as objects capable of existing outside our power of representation. What, then, is to be understood when we speak of an object corresponding to, and consequently also distinct from, our knowledge? It is easily seen that this object must be thought only as something in general=X, since outside our knowledge we have nothing which we could set over against this knowledge as corresponding to it. (CPR: A104 - 5)

So, according to Kant it is certainly true that objects can provide a referent for the objective determination of appearances. Furthermore, insofar as conceptually determined appearances agree with this object which, barring some sort of performance error, they most certainly will do, propositions which represent this determination will correspond to objects.

Indeed the object, as a mental entity, mediated through the forms of sensibility, is a necessary referent for the valid determination of objective experience; hence objects are a constitutive feature of the entire validity of Kant's transcendental system. Taken in conjunction with the theory of transcendental subjectivity and apperception Kant seems to be able to argue for the thoroughly consistent, organized and unified account of empirical knowledge.

However, what Kant has not shown, and cannot show, is that that 'element' which is given in the appearance is itself a truthful presentation of the 'object-in-itself'. This is the most well-known aspect of Kant's transcendental metaphysics. All we can infer, transcendentally, is that inasmuch as 'objects' *appear* to us to be thus and so — where 'objects' are either elements of or determinations of phenomenal appearances — we must think of objects as being thus and so — and that we

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to prove that, it is transcendentally necessary that a condition of inner experience is that there are external objects which I perceive (CPR: B275 - 6). However, we do not have unmediated access to such entities as pointed out in the Transcendental Aesthetic so sceptical doubts may still surface. See Allison for an attempt to construct a Kantian rejoinder (2004: 297 - 298).

ought to form beliefs about objects as being thus and so. What we cannot say is that objects in terms of objects-in-themselves are thus and so: we can only *speculate* that the relation between appearances and the real — phenomenal and noumenal — is such that what is perceived in appearance is accurately what is the case noumenally.

A substantial aspect of Adorno's critique of Kant comes into view at this point. Adorno understands Kant as thoroughly committed to some sort of two-world ontology (KCPR: 109 - 10). He argues that objects are mental entities and are caused by the noumenal entities (KCPR: 108) — but about which we can say nothing. Adorno goes on to say that this ontology produces serious epistemological problems, papered over, as it were, by talk of objectivity and validity. He argues that on the one hand, we are led to an agnosticism: that whatever we know we cannot know it with any certainty (KCPR: 109) or that we do know a mirror of the real world but that we cannot say properly what the relation between the real world and the mirror world is (KCPR: 109).

These are quite standard worries. Indeed, Hanna argues that Kant's theory of judgements — that judgements are grounded in propositions, are logically coherent, consistent and co-ordinated, and persist as valid epistemic utterances in virtue of their high-order co-ordination according to a persisting, unified apperception — can only carry us to the conclusion that our propositions are maximally consistent, logical and well-formed. Inasmuch as judgements determine — objectively and validly — phenomenal appearances, then such appearances themselves are consistent, logical and well-formed.[60] Taking into consideration Kant's important account of causality offered in the *Analogies of Experience*, where cognition of objects transcendentally require that sensible appearances be determinately ordered in a causal succession (CPR: B233), then we have a relationship between mind and world which determines the world as necessarily being thought of as thus and so and that any human mind must necessarily think of the world as being thus and so. Yet, even if we grant Kant has achieved this not inconsiderable goal, as Hanna points out, he is unable to

[60] See also KCPR: 107 where Adorno makes just this point.

rule out the possibility that reality is a coherent dream (Hanna: 2009). That is, Kant is unable to meet a measure of scepticism which he explicitly aimed to answer with his transcendental epistemology and critical metaphysics.

Nevertheless, Adorno gives these critical concerns a very distinctive turn which is programmatic for his own thought. Taking Kant seriously, we know that he attempts to relinquish knowledge of one realm — the noumenal — to secure knowledge in another — the phenomenal. However, even granting this, Adorno turns the tables on Kant. He argues that the critical restructuring of valid metaphysics according to the demarcations required to facilitate a set of entities which can be thoroughly known to us, bifurcates the world. There is the world as we know it and then the very same world, differently considered, which we appear cut off from, unknown and unknowable:

> Putting out our nets and catching more and more things in them, there is a sense in which nature itself seems to keep receding from us; and the more we take possession of nature, the more its real essence becomes alien to us. (KCPR: 176)

In short, as Enlightenment thought sought to eradicate the ontological space for entities which outstripped our epistemic resources, Kant's philosophy inadvertently entrenches this space.

Furthermore, Adorno argues that the Enlightenment coping mechanism, which attempted to eradicate the realm of occult entities in the first place, which was immanent in pre-scientific times, results in a philosophy which only admits of entities which can be fully assimiliable within our cognition. That is, within a judgement which sufficiently represents the world and which counts as sufficient for the development of our knowledge. In other words, the world must become ours in knowledge if it is to be at all stripped of its threatening, occult aspect (KCPR: 111). [61]

There are two concerns: the increase in objectivity as mediated through

[61] This is a central theme and argument in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*: "Myth becomes enlightenment and nature mere objectivity. Human beings purchase the increase in their power with estrangement from that over which it is exerted." (DoE: 6).

subjectivity, entrenches uncertainty, it merely co-ordinates it as an export, as it were, of the system — it exports uncertainty out of epistemology into speculative metaphysics and then attempts to ditch the latter. Yet it is not even clear that Kant has succeeded in avoiding speculative metaphysics himself. Secondly, only that which can be taken as mine, objectively, is a proper object of knowledge. The epistemic determination of this latter point is crucial and is a point that Adorno makes explicitly:

> If we wish to speak of a salvage operation in Kant, as I have done, this must refer to the feeling of confidence that a human being, objectively forsaken and metaphysically homeless as he has become, can make himself at home provided he cuts his suit according to his cloth…That is to way, he must confine his activity to what he knows and what lies within his competence; he must seek the guarantee of an absolute, the warranty of authentic truth, not as an objectivity external and alien to himself, but within himself. (KCPR: 113)

Implicitly, what Adorno isolates is a degree of epistemic hubris:[62] that the world, such as it is, ought to be knowable and known by us objectively and validly. This aim drives our philosophy. However, this *epistemic ambition*, a suppressed premise of Kant's entire philosophy, is not argued for transcendentally — and is obviously not something that could or should be derived empirically. Rather, it is an extra-critical element, imported into Kant's philosophy more as a function of a socio-historical condition than as a piece of philosophy. That it is a socio-historical element does not, of course, invalidate it; however, its unsubstantiated involvement in a system of epistemology and metaphysics that revolves around aporias, maybe we should ask questions of this tacit principle. This is precisely what Adorno does.

3.4 Conclusion

The delineation of phenomena and noumena, of transcendental subjects and empirical subjects, in short any number of the uncomfortable dualistic elements which appear in Kant's system, are ultimately a function of an unfettered epistemic ambition faced with an insoluble problem — the world, that which we

[62] This issue has surfaced in Kantian scholarship and has drawn antithetical commentaries. Normally Kant's epistemology is treated as humble: Langton, 2007: 2; Ameriks, 2000: 24; Allison 2004: 18 - 9.

want to know about, is external to us.[63] This externality and difference is, in many respects, the perennial problem of philosophy. Furthermore, it is an externality and difference that philosophy has sought to dissolve. Kant's is one solution to this problem but because of its genius and its originality, its putative failure, Adorno takes as deeply instructive. However, his insight is that the drive to solve the problem of mind knowing world, the aporias that it generates, perhaps indicates something amiss in the original epistemological ambition.

We will see that this is the conclusion that Adorno makes. The immanent critique of both Kant and Hegel suggest that absolute objectivity and knowing requires suppressions of subjectivity. Yet subjectivity is irreducible and the attempt to circumvent it, or sublimate it within transcendental systems of knowledge, or even experience, will merely return the problem in some distorted form. What Kant gets right, he suppresses in favour of his reimagined notion of objectivity. So whilst it is implicit in Kant's theory of cognition that "[T]he unity of consciousness is conceived on the model of the unity of the thing" which Adorno thinks is correct, Kant equivocates. Kant also requires that the unity of consciousness is not predicated on the unity of objects because that will make the transcendental subject vulnerable to the flux and contingency of empirical experience. (KCPR: 107).

The dependence of the subject on the object must be reversed because if the unification of our own consciousness relied on the unity of the object, in an ontological sense, then Kant's objectivity would be lost — the problems of scepticism would loom again. Of this polar reversal Adorno says:

> The more subjectivization you have, the more reification there is. There is a reifying quality in the very attempt to relate all phenomena, everything we encounter, to a unified reference point and to subsume it under a self-identical, rigid unity, thus removing it from its dynamic context. (KCPR: 114)

With that Adorno brings together his critique of Kant. The epistemic ambition

[63] Here Adorno is directly echoing Strawson's analysis of the conflict between general principles detached from the world and the world as the immanent limit of transcendental generality (1982: 256).

drives Kant to situate objectivity in subjectivity. The value of this move is that when the subject and the subject's conceptual resources are made the index of a phenomena's being taken as thus and so, we are able to fix the phenomena according to our conceptual schemes. This is the process of reification which says that *x* is *y* and inasmuch as we take *x* to be *y*, *x* is always necessarily *y*. The phenomena becomes conceptually determined — identified — by how we take it to be and is then taken as *identical* with its conceptual determinations. Through the consideration of subjectivity, then judgements and then their relation to Kant's transcendental project, we return to issues of identity-thinking.

The problem with identity-thinking is not therefore a lack of conceptual resources, either qualitatively or quantitatively; it is the view that fails to appreciate the *dynamic* quality of phenomena. The dynamic quality of phenomena is such that we cannot foreclose on what entities are and how they are — by extension, insofar as our subjectivity is tied to our experience of objects, we must also be prepared to see ourselves as essentially dynamic.[64] This is requires epistemological humility insofar as we cannot provide a set of propositions which will give a full account of an entity at any one time — to settle for this requires that we give up some of our epistemic ambitions. What Kant gets right, for Adorno, is the fact that our experience, consciousness and subjectivity is reliant on the flux of intuitions and empirical phenomena. Furthermore, subjectivity finds its limits in its encounter with the objective world. The problem comes in Kant's attempt to then objectively and validly fix our conceptual determinations as necessarily and always as sufficient to the representation of an object.

In the next section we will see how Adorno reconceives the problem of judgement through Hegel. In Hegel he finds resources for critically developing a position away from Kant. However, we see that finally, Adorno returns to some of Kant's insights — namely the original difference between mind and world, which is strongly felt in Kant's philosophy, is an irreducible problem that neither Kant nor Hegel can magic away. Yet between the two of them, we are given critical resources for thinking about objects.

[64] See ND: 386.

Section Two

Adorno's Critique of Hegel's Dialectics

Introduction

In the previous section, Adorno's critique of Kant was examined. We began to see a number of themes develop which Adorno takes to be philosophically important. He worries about tensions and contradictions in Kant's philosophy, generated through reifications of subjects and objects. He argues that Kant's theory of determinative judgement, whilst intended to be sensitive to the way the world is, in fact truncates our experience of the world; it distorts the object in the sufficiency of discursive representation. Adorno is concerned with reifications of subjects and objects in our theoretical models; that our discursive representations of objects in judgements, when taken as sufficient representations of objects, actually reduce our sensitivity to the particularity of objective experience; and finally, he is concerned with the sorts of assumptions we bring to our philosophical enquiries. Adorno is not so naïve or idealistic as to think that these could be circumvented; however, critical reflection on them is essential.

In this section I will pursue a similar process. The intention is to further develop Adorno's thinking through his critical engagement with Hegel. That is, through the reconstruction and critique of Hegel's philosophy, Adorno's own philosophical concerns emerge. They emerge either in the form of dialectical criticism, i.e., that Hegel's philosophy contains a tension or contradiction and a transformation in dialectical theory is required to overcome that problem; or, Adorno's concerns reveal themselves in the way in which Adorno characterises Hegel. On occasion, Adorno projects his own ideas onto Hegel — or he at least vacillates between his own conception of dialectics and that of Hegel.

A secondary consideration, which falls out of the primary concern, is whether or not we should consider Adorno an 'Hegelian thinker'. This section can only go so far in considering this issue as it is not the primary concern and also, to argue conclusively, a thorough scholarly engagement with Hegel would be required.

As with the previous section on Kant, I remain very much within Adorno's own understanding of Hegel. Nevertheless, insofar as Adorno criticises certain aspects of Hegel's philosophy and insofar as those aspects could reasonably be considered valid representations of Hegel's thinking, we have an indication as to whether or not it is appropriate to consider Adorno 'Hegelian'. We have seen him critique Kant and we will see that some of those concerns have a distinctly Hegelian inflection. Given Adorno's commitment to dialectics, it would seem quite reasonable to consider him an Hegelian. Nevertheless, we will see Adorno level dialectical criticisms at Hegel. It becomes apparent that in many ways Adorno is deeply influenced by Hegel; yet his philosophical commitments diverge considerably from what may be considered an Hegelian orthodoxy.

The section is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter I will consider a number of key aspects of Hegelian philosophy. As mentioned, the presentation of Hegel is with a view to Adorno's own criticisms so is not intended as a definitive account. Nevertheless, it is important for us to have a good grasp on certain Hegelian ideas if we are to be able to pick through them to consider what Adorno agrees with and disagrees with. From this analysis a fine-grained account of Adorno's own philosophical commitments can be developed. To that end, Hegel's theory of judgements and propositions will be considered, paying particular attention to Hegel's theory of subject and object. This analysis will then be situated within Hegel's broader metaphysics, considering the dialectic itself and its relation to ontology, essences, modality and truth.

In the second chapter we will consider how the theory just developed, directly influences Adorno's own thinking — that is, we gain an immediate understanding of Adorno's commitments. We will see that Adorno is deeply impressed with Hegel's conception of objects and the difficulties they pose for their cognition and conceptualisation in judgement. We will see that what impresses Adorno the most in this regard is how he understands the importance of particularity in Hegel's theory of objects and the notion of nonidentity. Nonidentity marks an important, very Hegelian, commitment in Adorno's thinking. Adorno also adopts Hegel's attack on Kant's antinomies, arguing alongside Hegel that whilst Kant was brilliant to appreciate the importance of antinomy, his account was truncated and ultimately dogmatic.

We will then turn to Hegel's own theory of dialectics. Given the constitutive role dialectics plays in Hegel's critique of Kant and that Adorno adopts an Hegelian view on much of this critique, it is unsurprising that he should be impressed by Hegel's dialectical method. Like Hegel, Adorno sees dialectics as a method that adapts itself to its subject matter; insofar as it adapts, it is sensitive to the dynamic structural contradictions of its subject matter normally suppressed through the application of pre-established theories and methods. For Adorno, dialectics is a way to think about the world which is non-dogmatic and retains its explanatory power. I suggest that non-dogmatic theorising is a fundamental, motivating concern for the way in which Adorno conceives of philosophising.

As much as Adorno adopts a Hegelian position, however, he also conducts a dialectical critique of that position. In the third chapter, I develop Adorno's critique and thereby his own idiosyncratic inflection of dialectical philosophy. The transformation of Adorno's thinking, through this critique, out of Hegelian orthodoxy, places him in deep opposition to much of Hegel's key ideas. This is a fact duly noted by a number of commentators — Rosen, in particular will be discussed below. We will see that whilst Adorno accepts Hegel's critique of propositions and predication, he takes the cognitive operations of predication to be an ineliminable consequence of thinking. The duality of the discursive subject and the material object — which is primarily an epistemic issue considered by Adorno in the form of the limit or block — persists in his thinking. This is a profound difference which entails serious consequences throughout the rest of Adorno's assessment of Hegel and also points us towards a key commitment in Adorno's thinking: a commitment to the material world as non-conceptual as opposed to its conceptuality — *qua Begriff* — as we find in Hegel.

I will also argue that Adorno continues to hold an Hegelian conception of truth. However, given the difference we see between the conceptual realm and the non-conceptual realm, indicated above, there are also differences in Adorno's theory of truth which correspond to a different conception of essences and universals. Whilst essences and universals are socio-historically mediated for Hegel, through their constitutive role in *Geist*, their rational becoming drives socio-historical

development. For Adorno it is the other way around and as such the socio-historical has a constitutive role in the generation of *Geist*, essences and universals become, in a Marxian turn, socio-historical products themselves. Truth then, for Adorno, turns out to be socio-historically indexed in a different way to that found in Hegel.

In addition to the above differences, it will be shown that given the limits discursive subjects reach in conceptualising the objects of their cognition, we will see that particularity is irreducible for Adorno. Whereas for Hegel particularity can and is sublated within a deeper dialectical conception of objects, for Adorno, the particularity of the object cannot be sublated.[65] As a result, whilst Adorno accepts Hegel's arguments for the suffusion of antinomies in thought, he does not think that antinomies can be entirely sublated. They retain their dialectical, Hegelian character insofar as antinomies are still dynamic. I suggest that this indicates one of Adorno's deepest commitments and the requirement of the dialectic to account for this particularity is key to the transformation of dialectics into *negative* dialectics.

From the analysis of Adorno's critique of Hegel, I propose three key notions which will play a key role in Adorno's own philosophy, to be discussed in the final, third section of the thesis. These notions are conceptless [*begriffslos*], nonidentity [*Nichtidentität*] and mediation [*Vermittlung*].

[65] 'Sublation' is the common translation of *Aufhebung*. There is no English synonym for the German term. The German term has a number of contradictory connotations: cancelling out or annulment, preservation and raising up. The term sublate is derived from the Latin, *sublatus*, is the perfect passive participle of *tollere* meaning 'to take away' or 'lift up'. In its dialectical context, English use of the term sublate takes on the dynamic connotation of negation transitioning into a positive where the negative is preserved within the positive through the determination of the positive by the form of the negative.

4. Hegelian Dialectics, Judgements and Truth

In this section, key aspects of Hegel's philosophy will be examined — in particular his theory of judgements. This will then enable us to consider what Adorno agrees with in Hegel and what he disagrees with. Like Kant and other Enlightenment philosophers, Hegel was concerned to secure a foundation for the objective validity of empirical knowledge. Like Kant he believed that our cognitive resources were capable of providing such knowledge, integrated as they are in our autonomous, rational subjectivity. Given such aims, the problem of scepticism was pressing. Kant's response was to jettison certain modes of enquiry and associated knowledge, in order to secure a more conservative terrain of knowledge — about which we can make objectively valid judgements. Hegel's account of judgement attempted to integrate scepticism as a moment on the road to absolutely valid objective knowledge of reality as such — his dialectical method presents the possibility of proceeding beyond the strictures on thinking and judgement we find in Kant. We will see that Adorno disagrees strongly with Hegel over the scope and content of our judgements; however, he agrees with Hegel that the superficial structure of our judgements does not represent the ontological structure of the world, and that their objective validity must be settled, somehow, in accordance with the way the world is as opposed to how we are, i.e., some form of realism as opposed to transcendental idealism.

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel gives an account of our everyday judgements, and of their certainty and shows how scepticism unavoidably evolves from such judgements (PoS: §91 & §109). Through scepticism and our reflections on our judgement we come to develop a higher-level understanding of our judgements and their contents which helps to transform our very self-consciousness.[66] In the *Science of Logic*, he considers judgements somewhat more abstractly, in terms of their dialectical structure, and shows how we must

[66] See PoS: §§61 - 2, 344, 346, 495, 502, 520, 540 & 780 to follow Hegel's thoughts on the development of judgement and its relationship to self-consciousness, reality and eventually objective truth. This will be discussed through its abstract form, as Hegel presents it within the *Logic*. Also: PoM: §§398, 412, 423, 429, 447, 467.

consider the very structure of a judgement differently if we are to properly understand how the world really is.[67] Hegel's idea is that viewing judgement as a heterogeneous process to the world — which sorts according to its own structures and which are imposed onto the world externally — is a serious mistake. This notion will be important for how Adorno considers our discursive practices.

4.1 Determinative Judgements and Modality

It should be noted that Hegel makes an important, if slightly obscure, distinction between the proposition and the judgement. He states that

> if what is said of a singular subject is itself only something individual, as for instance, "Aristotle died at the age of 73 in the fourth year of the 115th Olympiad," then this is a mere proposition [*Satz*], not a judgment [*Urteil*]. There would be in it an element of judgment only if one of the circumstances, say, the date of death or the age of the philosopher, came into doubt even though the stated figures were asserted on the strength of some ground or other. (SoL: 626)

It appears that what Hegel has in mind, when he says that the proposition states something individual, is that a proposition is a mere representation of a singular state of affairs and represents this state of affairs in abstraction from other states of affairs with which it is intimately linked. A proposition, whilst syntactically predicative, does not, through its predicative structure, *assert* anything of the subject, it is reportage. A proposition enunciates a state of affairs, whereas for Hegel, a judgement asserts the connection it states as it attends to the notion or concept [*Begriff*] of the entity predicated.[68]

We must note at this juncture that the notion or concept of an entity is not a mental entity in the Kantian sense but is a constitutive feature of objective reality and is related directly to the notion of essence [*Wesen*] and being [*Sein*].[69]

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[67] PoL: pp. 550 - 587.
[68] See Pinkard, 1988: 76.
[69] The interpretation of essence and its role in Hegel's philosophy is particularly complex. Béatrice Longuenesse interprets Hegel's essences in a highly Kantian fashion arguing that essence is the dialectical reconsideration of appearances (Longuenesse, 2007: 6 & 112 - 14). For trenchantly post-Kantian, anti-metaphysical interpretations of Hegel's theory of essence see, Pippin, 2008: 40; 2011: 75 & 1997: 161 - 163). See also, Brandom's interpretation of essence as

Therefore, when Hegel uses the term *Begriff* he is working with two very strong, dialectically related, ideas. One is that the concept of an entity is like a guiding principle which is brought to fruition through the rational development of its internal contradictions and determinations. As well as concept having this connotation of 'Notion', it is an emphasis on the fact that objects have a conceptual structure and are necessarily amenable to conceptual determination and being *grasped* discursively. Judgements, insofar as they attempt to correctly identify the determinate essence of a particular, are intimately involved with our understanding of the *real* determinations of a particular.[70]

This conception of determinative judgements and their content is already radically different to Kant for whom determinative judgements just are propositional. We saw that for Kant, when determining a sensible intuition according to a concept which is then expressed in the form of a synthetic judgement that *x* is *y*, the modality of the judgement is then considered according to its relationship to the transcendental faculties.[71] Any well-formed judgement is a candidate for consideration as an item of true knowledge. Kant refers to the modality of such judgements as problematic [*Problematische*] judgements — here problematic is determined according to the categories of 'possibility and impossibility' [*Möglichkeit*/*Unmöglichkeit*]. Those judgements which are not merely well-formed but which are also asserted as true will actually have a truth-value and any judgement that is well-formed and has a truth value may be considered as *necessarily* true or false in virtue of the transcendental conditions

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the product of material exclusivity of the world being determinately one way and not another way providing the grounds for a conceptual holism itself characterised by the determination and exclusion implicit within the material determination (Brandom, 2002: 49 - 52).
In this thesis I work with a metaphysical conception of essence along the lines of the following commentators. Stone argues that Hegel's theory of essences has deeper metaphysical commitments as opposed to the broadly inferentio-semantic, pragmatic interpretation. She argues that Hegel is wedded to a deeper, rationalist conception of essences - without reverting to Aristotelianism (Stone, 2005: 45 - 50). Stern also argues for a metaphysical reading of essences as the nature or concept [*Begriff*] of an entity which can then be mediated with existence to generate the category of actuality (Stern, 2009: 66, 78 - 9 & 105 - 6). Houlgate argues that essence is the negation of immediate being as 'positing' - essence is not an essential ground for kinds but is an underdetermined moment, alongside being, of the concept. Reality is concept through and through for Houlgate, 2005: 20. He, therefore, rejects the type of 'essentialist' account that I am working with here. Regardless, this metaphysical account is a useful way to orientate ourselves to Adorno's thinking.

[70] See Inwood for a useful analysis of Hegel's terminology concerning Essence and Notion/Concept: 58 - 61 & 88 - 91.

[71] CPR: §§B99 - 101/ A 74 - 6.

of cognition. Obviously this is not suggest that the content of the judgement is necessary but that the judgement is true or false given a sensible representation and the transcendental conditions of cognition, it is necessary that we think it. The transcendental conditions of judgements entail that judgements have their modal status built into them without the need for modal terms such as 'probably' or 'necessarily'.

In the first section Adorno argues that Kant attempts to ground objectivity in subjectivity and that this leads to distortions in the conceptual determinations of objects in determinative judgements. That modal issues of possibility, actuality and necessity are settled according to the transcendental conditions of cognition as opposed to the object as such serves to underline, for Adorno how much Kant 'sides with the subject over the object'. That Hegel takes up this worry as well and is influential on Adorno's understanding of the problem of modality helps us to understand his commitments.

Hegel is impressed by the implicit progressive element of Kant's stages of judgement — that judgements are problematic, then assertoric, then necessary. Yet he does not accept that the judgement, at heart, is a proposition — a merely predicative entity *representing* a state of affairs.[72] This distinction is a function of Hegel's realism concerning essences, concepts and universals (SoL: 479 - 89). Essential to a judgement is not that it is a well-formed representation of a state of affairs, but that it is an objectively valid determination of the concept of an entity. In this sense, judgements begin, for Hegel, in the same category as for Kant — they are 'problematic'. However, for Kant, the problematic judgement is assertoric — it becomes a valid unit of objective knowledge just in case it represents a state of affairs and as such gains the property of truth or falsity. Here the assertoric judgement is still propositional because it is simply a problematic judgement which is *also* a determinate representation of a sensible appearance. The assertoric judgement's claim to truth is markedly different for Hegel because for him the assertoric judgement is not concerned with mere propositional form plus a truth value; rather, it is involved in the metaphysical

[72] "[H]ence these three functions of modality may also be called so many moments of thought as such." (CPR: B101/A76) & (SoL: 282).

concern saying something 'essential' about an entity and as we will see, this entails a different account of truth-making and the truth-values.

We will see that the rethinking of judgement in this way is important for Adorno as it breaks down the 'hegemony of the subject' as it were. Rather than settling our determinations of objects by the transcendental validity of cognition and judgement, valid judgements are beholden to the real essence or concept of an object for Hegel. If, as we saw in the first section, Adorno worries that our discursive representations of objects have an unwarranted sufficiency within the Kantian model, Hegel's deepening of the accountability of our judgements to an actual, objectively real state of affairs will be appealing to Adorno.

4.2 Valid Judgements and Essences

The condition of the validity of the judgement for Hegel is that what it asserts of the object is essential to the being of the object not merely that it is a valid conceptual representation of a sensible appearance:

> The name [*Name*] however stands over against the matter in hand or the Notion [*Begriff*]; this distinction presents itself in the judgement as such; now the subject [*Subjekt*] is in general the determinate, and is therefore more that which *immediately is*, whereas the predicate [*Prädikat*] expresses the universal [*Allgemeine*], the essential nature [*Wesen*] or the Notion [*Begriff*]; therefore the subject as such is, in the first instance, only a kind of name; for what it is first enunciated by the predicate which contains being [*Sein*] in the sense of the Notion. (SoL: 624)

Judgements use the name of an entity as a sortal and they predicate something universal of that entity. However, this is the sort of accidental relation that obtains between subjects and essences in the primary stages of judging: I choose to predicate the rose is red because that is how it appears to me. The relation between the subject and predicate has a distinctly subjective aspect to it: I make the relation between the subject term and the universal and there appears nothing necessary or essential to this relation; it is accidental.

Judging moves into the realms of actual objectivity when "The judgement is the self-diremption of the notion." (PoL: 625) That is, when the judgement

articulates the concept (of an entity) through a division, it allows us to consider, artificially, an identity which was already present within the concept. This is a very difficult idea. What Hegel appears to have in mind is a strongly metaphysical idea that there is an object and there is a way that that object really is. Furthermore, the way that the object is is an expression of its concept or notion — what we usually call essence. The essence of an entity, as conceptual, is rational and amenable to conceptual determination by ourselves as also rational, conceptualising agents. However, the concept of an entity is not an aggregate of further concepts, i.e., the concept (essence) of being a rose is not an aggregate of being red, being a flower, etc. Rather, being a rose is a unified and replete concept, the expression of which results in a particular entity about which we can say many things. Therefore, the different conceptual determinations we make about the rose accord with the manifold expression of a unified essence. The judgement is not merely something that we can validly say of the appearance of an object according to limited resources available to us, as Kant maintains; the judgement, inasmuch as it predicates a universal of an entity, it is an objectively valid judgement just in case that predicate determines the subject according to its 'essence'.

The basis of this conception of judgement is strongly realist in two senses: there is the epistemological sense that our knowledge-making practices are sufficient to understanding how objects really are, mind independently[73] and, in the sense that Hegel is a realist about universals and kinds.[74] Furthermore, when considering the existence of entities which are mind-independently real, the scope of entities about which we can be realist is significantly broader than Kant.

Given Kant's critique of traditional metaphysics there is an obvious worry that Hegel's attachment to 'essence' is an attachment to such metaphysics: the notion

[73] See Westphal on Hegel's epistemological realism. Whilst Hegel is an idealist in his view of the conceptual structure of the world and the relation of that conceptual structure to our own conceptual/linguistic structures, he is committed, according to Westphal, to realism insofar as the way the world is and comes to be is not dependent on mind or our conception of it - but that the way the world is such that it becomes knowable by us. Hence Westphal argues that Hegel's idealism is consistent with epistemological realism (1989: chpt. 10).

[74] Although, of course, the derivation of natural kinds is very different to that found in Aristotle as they are determined through a rational process of dialectical development (See Stone: 69, 73 - 4).

of essences and universals just seems to ignore Kant's critical turn; Hegel simply repeats old mistakes.[75] This is a source of on-going controversy in Kant and Hegel scholarship and cannot be adjudicated on here. For now we will consider how Hegel's dialectics, in its attempt to negotiate the constitutive role that experience plays in our knowledge-making practices, provides the grounds for talk of essences and universals. That is, how we can either respect or, more likely, circumvent, the critical turn and still talk about essences and universals without regressing methodologically.[76] Adorno agrees with Hegel, to some extent, that this is possible through dialectical thinking.

The reason why this is possible reaches immediately to the heart of dialectics. In the preface of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel outlines the developmental, transformative structure of sensible experience under dialectical thought which enables us to know how and what an object is essentially rather than just according to how it appears immediately (PoS: §§61 - 3) — this involves understanding judgements correctly and revising the way we judge appropriately.

> [R]atiocinative thinking is itself the self into which the content returns, in its positive cognition, on the other hand, the self as a Subject to which the content is related as Accident and Predicate. This Subject constitutes the basis to which the content is attached, and upon which the movement runs back and forth. Speculative thinking behaves in a different way. Since the Notion is the object's own self, which presents itself as the coming-to-be-of the object, it is not a passive Subject inertly supporting the Accidents; it is, on the contrary, the self-moving Notion which takes its determinations back into itself. (PoS: §60)[77]

Hegel's claim is that speculative thinking, which tries to grasp, literally, that which is beyond the *immediate* in sensible experience, is able to deal with the essence of the object because it is sensitive — it shapes itself in method — to the manner in which the essence of the object is realised in its determinations. In so doing we are then in a position to adjust our understanding of judgements, their form and content in a way where our rational conception of the contents of

[75] Hegel states: "The truth of being is essence." [*Die Wahrheit des Seins ist das Wesen*] (SoL: 390). Talk of being and essence seems straightforwardly in the realms of pre-critical, speculative metaphysics of the a prioristic, rationalist variety Kant argued against.
[76] See Pippin's anti-realist account of Hegel (Pippin, 2001: 99) and Stern's counter: 2009: 52 - 54.
[77] Of course the *Logic* is aprioristic. See Stern, 2009: Chapter 7, sections II - VII For an excellent discussion of the rationalism of Hegel's Logic and its relationship to pragmatism and experience.

judgement are understood correctly. When this is the case, our understanding will match or converge with how the world is.

Hegel argues that objects have an essence which is actualized through their own inner logic. Dialectical consciousness and judgement, operating and developing according to the same logic is able to follow this development to actualization, whilst demonstrating that alternative modes of reflection and conceptualisation of objects fall into internal contradictions. The point being that the essence of the object, as fully realised, need not be *posited* a priori nor jettisoned in favour of immediate appearances. Absolute knowing consists in a speculative understanding of appearance where that appearance is thoroughly understood as real *qua* essence (PoS: 110, 365 & 789). When this is the case, the way in which we will understand our judgements and their content will have been transformed to meet the concept [*Begriff*] of the object as it really is.

Implicitly Hegel is criticising Kant here. Above this quotation he calls the Accidental and Predicating Subject as producing picture-thoughts [*Vorstellungen*] of states of affairs which represent objects discursively as being thus and so. In this quotation, Hegel is arguing that the Notion of an object — which we can consider as its determinate essence — develops through its own inner rationality. That is a rationality which determines its identity as being a 'this' rather than a 'that'. Dialectically judging the object is to understand the real determination of the object as it moves through this process of self-realisation. The idea is that if we can understand how our judgements can rationally change and adapt themselves to the object and the expression of its essence, then there is no reason to think that we cannot grasp the essence of an object even if we begin with sensible, empirical experience rather than conducting a priori metaphysics.

The *Phenomenology of Spirit* is, at least in part, concerned with how we come to a conscious understanding of an object's essence. Part of the *Logic* is dedicated to giving an abstract account of the dialectics of judgement through which we can understand its dynamic structure and, more importantly, its grounds in the metaphysics of objects. It is in this section where he argues that the concept as

expressed in the predicate returns to itself by matching the concept *qua* essence of the object being judged. These details are important because they will help us to assess precisely what Adorno agrees with and what he does not agree with. He will agree with Hegel that dialectics suggests that our conceptual determinations of objects according to appearance is far from sufficient to deep conceptual engagement with objects. However, he will not go so far as Hegel as to think that our conceptual determinations of objects in judgement can come to match the conceptual or essential rational being of an object. This is predominantly because he does not see material objects as conceptual in the way that Hegel does.

Hegel argues that objects have an essence. For example, a rose, has an essence. In this sense, we can think in Aristotelian terms that the rose is a natural kind and in virtue of being that sort of entity, the ways that this entity is are essential to it as a rose-sort entity. However, this already inflects the essence in a non-Hegelian way: the kind needs to develop rationally according to its own inner logic. Let us say that we come across an entity, we name it a 'rose', and we consider ourselves to have identified it and its properties and that this identification is taken as sufficient to the determination of the object as such. Hegel shares Kant's worry, however, that if we then move to philosophising about essences and natural kinds from these immediate impressions of roses and what they are, we will run into sceptical problems: properties will appear contingently related to their bearers and our foundations for knowing the real world as it is becomes unstable.[78] Of course Kant's answer is the conservative move: if we want secure knowledge, essences in this classical sense cannot form part of our knowledge. Hegel on the other hand wants to maintain some theory of essences and thinks we are able to do so; what is required is a different approach to judgement to both classical forms of judgement and the Kantian form. Adorno agrees.

Working with an understanding of Hegel which is committed to some form of essentialism, he thinks that natural entities, roses for example, have an essence. Setting aside Hegel's account of the rational development of nature which is far

[78] Hegel critiques such analyses in the Perception section of the *Phenomenology*: §130.

beyond the scope of this thesis, we are concerned with our judging of an object whose essence is already internally articulated.[79] The epistemic goal of our judging activities is to move our conception of an entity in line, as it were, with the essence of the entity in question. This 'moving in line' does not consist in altering judgement so that it accommodates what appears to be the case about an object. Rather it is the rational reconsideration of judgement according to the way in which judgement has failed to conceptualise an object — i.e. where the universal predicate and particular entity do not match. The rational development of the object coupled with the rational development of the judgement according to their internal contradictions will result in a judgement where the universal predicate and the particular entity judged will match — contradiction will be sublated. If the object is a cultural artefact, then our judging practices will be actively involved in the realisation of the notion of that entity. However, in both cases, the aim of judgement is to determine an object according to its essential character such that our determination of an object is as the object *really* is.

That essential character is underpinned by Hegel's theory that the being of an object as a particular kind of thing, when fully articulated, will be determined as being essentially this thing and not any other thing. That is, its essence is a function of dialectical determination which is not only related to itself but is related to all other beings. Whether or not this is a form of metaphysical holism is controversial.[80] Hegel's dialectical metaphysics is related to holism because the individual identity of an object requires, in its dialectical development, contradistinction to other beings which it is not.[81] Yet, the concept of the entity is grounded not in contradistinction to other entities but according to its own essence. The apotheosis of natural entities which have a fully determined idea and distinct particularity from other entities is the human being. The human is able to reflect upon its own identity as a particular kind, and the essence of other kinds and understand the distinction of itself to those other kinds. Nevertheless, the individuality of particulars and their determination as distinct things is paramount in Hegel's metaphysics.

[79] See Taylor for a classic account of Hegel's metaphysics of *Geist* as it underpins the natural world (1977: 68 - 72). See Stone for a counter to Taylor's position (Stone, 2005: 23).
[80] See Westphal, 1989: 143 & Stern, 2009: 59 - 66.
[81] See Stern, 2009: 64 - 66.

Another way to understand this rather difficult idea — of the relation of essences of objects — is through Hegel's criticism of Spinoza.[82] In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, he praised Spinoza greatly. However, where Spinoza erred according to Hegel is that Spinoza thought that axiomatically and definitionally, if one has substance, and we must, then *immediately* we must have modes — individuals.[83] That is, substance is real and therefore its modes — such as roses — are real. Modes are a function of substance and are immediate givens — but only as determinations of substance.

> [In Spinoza's philosophy] there is absolute Substance, and it is what is true. But it is not yet the whole truth, for substance must also be thought of as inwardly active and alive, and in that way must determine itself as Spirit. Spinoza's substance is the universal, and consequently the abstract determination…If thinking stops with this substance, there is then no development, no life, no spirituality or activity. (LoHP: 155, §105)[84]

Hegel argues that it is not enough that substance is modally determined: individuals must develop their essential distinctions according to their essence. Without the realisation of the essential individuation of substance *qua* entities, determination of entities falters and the system collapses back into undifferentiated, abstract, substance monism.[85] Such considerations are of import for the determination of Hegel's ontology; it also underlines the importance of real individuality and finitude as conditions for the real possibility of universality and infinity for Hegel.

We can see from the above that, at least in one interpretation, Hegel has serious metaphysical commitments which underpin his dialectics. This interpretation is appropriate for our purposes here because, as we will see, Adorno does not accept much of the metaphysical commitments outlined in this part. We will see that although he is certainly impressed by aspects of Hegel's realism — that there is a way that objects are and that this determined objectively by their own essence

[82] The strongly Spinozistic influence in Hegel is discussed in Houlgate, 2006: 143 and critiqued in Stern, 2009: Chpt. 8.
[83] Spinoza, 1992: pt 1, propositions 1 - 16.
[84] He reiterates the point here: SoL: 283.
[85] See Hegel LoHP: 160 - 1, §109 - 10 & PoM: §415.

(as opposed to our subjective determinations of them) — he thinks that Hegel's realism is too rationalist. Dialectics can help us to unravel the problems of how objects appear to us but it is not a royal road to absolute reality either. Before we enter into this analysis, it is necessary to consider these metaphysical concerns in terms of Hegel's theory of judgement.

4.3 The Propositional Model of Judgement

Given Hegel's metaphysical commitments the question is: how does dialectical judgement work and how is it a medium through which the essence of an entity may be articulated? This is an issue which is elucidated in Hegel's discussion of the dialectics of judgement. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel argues that our *immediate*, unreflective judgements about entities turn out to be unstable. As these stand, they have no claim to essential knowledge or objectively valid sortal determination. For example, on Monday, I make judgements about an object and, in virtue of those judgements, I identify this object as a rose. I say of it: This plant has a beautiful red flower, it is elegant, tall; it has thorns, deep green leaves, etc. This is a rose. Here, the rose has appeared to me in a particular way and in virtue of this appearance, I have sorted it as a particular entity. The crucial point is that the sortal determination of the object is made according to its appearance; the conceptual determination of the 'rose' is merely as a representation of those appearances in propositional form; this results in some an ad hoc aggregation, or mixture, of properties, which we take to be an entity of a particular kind. However, there is nothing within the appearance or even our judgement that entitles us to think that we are right in our determination of the 'rose'.

The problem that Hegel highlights is that on Friday after heavy frost, after pruning and after the attention of some malicious children, none of the properties ascribed to the rose on Monday are now true of it. If our sole reason for sorting it as a rose where that it appears to us in such a way then our ability to call the entity a rose on Friday is severely undermined. Our concept of rose is underdetermined and our theory of judgement which seeks merely to add properties to entities seems to produce either false or unstable judgements.

Let us suppose that we kept a good eye on the rose so we are in no doubt that it is the same entity. How do we deal with these developments? An obvious solution is just to point out that these propositions need to be time indexed and that an identity claim is made across the apparently different objects at the two different times. There is no epistemic worry therefore and there is no need invoke metaphysical categories to solve a non-existent problem.

In this propositional model, indexed propositions are aggregated and it is then stipulated that these propositions are sufficient for the identification of a particular object. As new facts become apparent about the entity, our set of indexed propositions grows. But as long as the conditions for the identification of 'different objects' as the same entity obtains, as we find in Kant with his transcendental unity of apperception, then we have claim to objectively valid knowledge — even if it is not knowledge, *qua* essence, of that which *really* exists mind-independently: the thing-in-itself. The merit to Kant's distinction of the noumenal and the phenomenal is that on the basis of this transcendentally derived distinction, he is able to provide a secure foundation for empirical knowledge. Wandering into the territory of essences and universals may be unnecessary.

Hegel's concern persists, however. As we have seen in section one, the limiting of empirical knowledge to appearances does not guarantee the objective validity of knowledge even when limited to phenomenal knowledge. As we saw, Kant does not and cannot have an argument against the possibility that our phenomenal experience is a highly organized, logically co-ordinated, rational dream. Furthermore, this problem is a symptom of his transcendental philosophy and its move against metaphysics. As Adorno argued, what Kant did by making the noumenal phenomenal distinction is create a situation where the unknown looms in all knowledge, constantly threatening to destabilize what we take to be known (KCPR: 109 - 11). Without this epistemic gain, the value of the distinction of the noumenal and the phenomenal, and the turn towards transcendental thought, becomes suspect.

Furthermore, there is something distinctly arbitrary about this propositional model as sketched. Even granting the fact that the co-ordination of propositions

is logical and rational and can be indexed to a single cognizer, as we find in Kant, the relation between the name and its referent is determined only according to an imported set of standards and which cannot be objectively known to be appropriate to the subject matter being considered.[86] What we have in this model is an approach to knowledge-making about the empirical world which may have utility for us as cognizers, given a set of standards which we intend our knowledge to be sufficient to, but we cannot say that this process has any objective validity, *qua* objects.

4.4 Transition to a Dialectical Model of Judgement

Hegel's dialectical solution to the problems posed by this propositional model of judgement is to take the proposition (a representation of a state of affairs) as a *judgement* (the conceptual determination of an entity *qua* notion). This is a shift to a more reflective approach to considering the world and our epistemic practices. The dialectical conception of judgement introduces a *metaphysical commitment* to saying that the *concept or notion* of this entity is this way, and inasmuch as it is this way, it is a rose: the *being* of an entity as a rose, according to its concept, entails the particularity of this entity.[87] Therefore, when the rose, as it appears on Monday, is destroyed and we find in its place the ravaged rose of Friday, we should not simply add a new set of time-indexed propositions and an identity claim to account for the rose on Monday being the same rose on Friday. Furthermore, our sortal concept, 'rose', should simply be replaced by our new expanded version — with a claim identifying our two sortals 'rose' on Monday and 'rose' on Friday.

The Hegelian judgement involves the sorts of deep metaphysical commitments to essences and conceptual realism as seen in parts 1.1 and 1.2 of this section. That this entity is a rose consists in rational self-actualization according to ontological difference, determination and eventual self-identity (PoS: §§55 & 56). This

[86] See F. Cirulli, 2006: 48 - 52. He argues that Pippin's understanding of Hegel's essence resolves to this pragmatic "Logic of Reflection" - (See Pippin, 1999: 208 - 11) - constrained by the logic and limits of difference and determination (Ibid: 222).

[87] See Stern for analysis of the problems of consciousness explored in the *Phenomenology* as primarily an issue of the tensions between the categories of universal and individual (1990: 53 - 54).

means that what we must do is revise our concept of the rose from the *inside out*. That is, we have to reconsider what it is for an entity to be a rose. In so doing we must also reconsider what it is to judge an object by its properties because Hegel sees such a position as too subjective.

For Hegel, on Friday, we are presented with an epistemological, and implicitly metaphysical problem: our concepts, expressed in the universal predicates and sortals, do not match the object. As suggested, there is a deeper problem, *qua* judgement, that this potential lack of matching seems endemic to the structure and understanding of judgement. There is nothing within this mode of judging which will safeguard against the next entity always coming to negate, or fail to match, our conception of the object. What Hegel is aiming towards is the reconsideration of judgement whereby we cease to see properties as accidents of objects but as expressions of essence.[88] If Adorno is to be impressed by Hegel's critique of the judgement consisting in representations of appearances but is apprehensive about the idealist claim to have complete, systematic, knowledge of an object's essence, then the following analysis will be of particular importance for coming to understand Adorno's own philosophical commitments.

When we consider the essence of an entity, we must consider it rationally. The failure of different modes of judging requires us to reconsider essence, universals and particulars. We are brought, through experience, to realise that the way that we ought to understand particular entities requires that we resolve the fundamental problem of the relationship of particulars and universals. This is a rational problem and requires a solution which is both ontological and logical. This is the problem to which he turns in the *Logic*. What needs to be understood here, in conceiving the general metaphysical issue is that universals are not Platonically separated from individuals nor are they qualities in the Aristotelian sense. Rather they are immanent expressions of the essence of an individual *qua* its kind and are not, ontologically, separable from its kind or from their instantiations in particulars. That is, after Hegel has given his ontological

[88] The contingency of natural particulars cannot be entirely overcome due to their being in substance. (Stone, 2006: 79 - 80). However, our conceptual distinctions will not be at odds with the contingency we find in nature and will still be sufficient to the essential determination of natural objects. With cultural products, this contingency ceases to pose the same problem.

account of being, essence and notion, individuals just are individuals insofar as they instantiate a particular kind of universal.[89] And a universal is only a universal insofar as there are individuals which instantiate it.[90]

This rational reconsideration of universals, essences and notion requires us to revise our theory of judgement. Before considering this transformed conception of judgement and its contents, we must briefly consider the positive motion of both thought and dialectics which underpins both the metaphysical commitments Hegel has and also by which he will develop his theory of judgement. In order for Hegel to argue for his speculative conception of essence, universals and particulars, and of judgement we expect some argument or at least demonstration that the rationality by which Hegel reaches his conclusions about metaphysics is legitimate. That is, we need to see how dialectics actually operates and what it is about dialectics which licenses Hegel to use the concepts he does. Here we are concerned with the idea of 'determinate negation' as a fulcrum for the production of stable speculative knowledge which is necessary, logical, rational and, essentially, positive. The issue of determinate negation turns out to be a key issue in Adorno's reception of Hegel. If, as already suggested, Adorno will be sceptical of the legitimacy and scope of Hegel's metaphysical commitments, and if those commitments are inextricably linked to a particular view of dialectics then we have good reason to think that Adorno will be sceptical of aspects of Hegel's dialectics. This turns out to be the case. To make this case, however, we must understand important aspects of Hegel's dialectics.

4.5 Determinate Negation, Positivity and the Dialectics of Being

The problem is that Hegel cannot provide an argument for determinate negation outside of his system: the rational transitions that we find in the *Logic*, are a demonstration of their own validity. Nevertheless, he argues that the positive result is a logical entailment of the negative moment in the dialectic.[91] This is a

[89] See Stern, 1990: 60. See SoL: 36; 437 - 8; 546 - 9.
[90] For an illuminating and thorough discussion of Hegel's theory of essence and its relation to the Aristotelian theory, see Ferrarin, 2004: §6.
[91] See: "The dialectic, on the contrary, is the immanent transcending, in which the one-sidedness and restrictedness of the determinations of the understanding displays itself as what it is, i.e., as their negation. That is what the finite is: its own sublation. Hence, the dialectical constitutes the

peculiar aspect of Hegel's thinking and beggars our scientific models of thinking.[92] We are used to providing theories, demonstrating that these theories have some degree of epistemic validity, are appropriate in their application to their subject matter, and produce quantitatively valuable results. Stephen Houlgate provides the most provocative explication of the Hegelian 'position' by arguing that it is not even a position nor a system. Rather, the *Logic* merely follows the rational determination of the subject matter as it determines itself. Not only does it determine itself as this way and not any other way — which speaks in favour of its validity — but in following its developmental moments, those moments prove themselves to follow an entirely consistent mode of logical progression. Whilst Houlgate's position is controversial, it indicates the problems that we face when trying to explain and assess determinate negation, the rational necessity of idealist dialectics and from this, Hegel's conception of dialectical judgement.[93]

Houlgate argues that the validity of Hegel's logic lies in the fact that what is rationally deduced is only what is determined as being the case by the subject matter itself — be that subject matter abstract concepts through to material reality. Determinate negation is not introduced to the material as some unprovable rational method but is rather a description, as it were, of the transition into new forms that takes place within the subject matter itself. Other than evaluating the dialectic according to how much sense it makes as we follow its transitions, we can consider it also for its explanatory power: does it produce both a coherent and compelling metaphysics and epistemology?

Of course, Hegel has not fared well on this point historically. Even aside from Popper's concern, the view in Anglophone philosophy has been that Hegel's philosophy is baroque, arguably relies on rational intuitionism of dialectics, and

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moving soul of scientific progression, and it is the principle through which alone immanent coherence and necessity enter into the content of science…" (EL: §81; PoS: §79 & SoL: 83 - 90).

[92] Of course, Adorno and Horkheimer make the claim that scientific rationality is actively damaging in at least some of its applications. See DoE: 40, 84, 116, 181, 188, 230, 242 & HTT: 73. The dangers of scientism are made no clearer than in their claim: "Juliette's *credo* is science" (DoE: 96).

[93] See also Houlgate's claim of Cartesian pre-suppositionlessness (Houlgate, 2006: 33).

is precisely the sort of extravagance we ought to be avoiding.[94] Nevertheless, if we can make sense of the logic which Hegel argues is at work within reality and its categories, we go some way to justifying Hegel's thinking as at least coherent and the potential basis for a theory of judgement. Key to this examination will be finding a logical structure — determinate negation — and that this structure entitles us to consider its products logically necessary and determinate. From here we will then be able to assess Rosen's claim that Adorno's dialectics are not Hegelian insofar as he rejects determinate negation (Rosen, 1984: 162).

4.5.i Negation and Being

At the beginning of the *Logic*, Hegel argues that the 'traditional way', presumably Aristotelian, to conceive of logic is that it is a set of principles of thought applied to subject matter to yield truths: logic and its subject matter is separate (SoL: 44). Hegel's worry is two-fold: developing a method for thinking about the world will involve theoretical presuppositions; and also, that the presuppositions, and hence the method, in their separation from their content, may result in determinations of objects according to subjective presupposition rather than according to objective reality. I will take, as an example, his dialectical analysis of the abstract category of pure being to demonstrate how his dialectics operate, what determinate negation is, and why we might consider it positive.

He begins the *Logic* by considering the category of 'being' (SoL: 59). It is both the most fundamental and most abstract ontological category. Nevertheless, despite its abstract, general simplicity, it is in fact the sufficient grounds for its own *determination* — the initial move away from abstraction.

The claim that being is both simple and self-determining is already quite gnomic but the idea is not as strange as it may appear. Remembering that Hegel wants a mode of thinking which is presuppositionless and which adapts itself to its subject matter, he begins with what he takes to be a concept which is necessarily

[94] See Russell for a relevant and influential rejection of Hegel: "Hegel thought that, if enough was known about a thing to distinguish it from all other things, then all its properties could be inferred by logic. This was a mistake, and from this mistake arose the whole imposing edifice of his system. This illustrates an important truth, namely, that the worse your logic, the more interesting the consequences to which it gives rise (1945: 746).

beyond any particular supposition: being. Being as such, that is, considered separately to any particular determination, is completely abstract. However, insofar as it is entirely general — unsubstantiated and uninstantiated — pure being is in fact nothing. That is, it is nothing in the sense that its total indeterminacy entails that 'pure being' is the situation where there is no thing. Hegel then observes something paradoxical about the fact that being, which is the category through which we construct our positive existential commitments, insofar as it is a pure and indeterminate, gives us its equal opposite concept: nothing — where nothing is the situation where there is no being.

Here we have the negative dialectical moment. From 'being', which, in its immediacy, appears as a positive existential notion, we find that it is equivalent with the negative moment of no existence. From within the concept of being, the concept sufficient for its own negation — nothing — is produced (SoL: 83). We can see the logical inference as produced by a rational a priori enquiry into the concept of being — hence Hegel's claim of presuppositionlessness.[95] Nothing, the negation of being, is given by the concept of being when we properly reflect on being as such.

From here Hegel observes that there is a movement in and between these concepts. We begin with the entirely abstract notion of being; consideration of its indeterminacy entails that our thought of pure being entails a thought of pure nothingness. He argues from here that our thought of nothingness — which is the idea that there is no thing which *is*, or that has determinate existence — gives us the idea of pure being. In other words, the thought of nothingness returns us to the thought of pure being.

In a sense then, we have moved in a circle. However, our return to the concept with which we started, 'being', is now modified: we have two new concepts — nothingness and being; and our understanding of being has been expanded upon. We no longer take the concept of pure being as a simple concept which merely refers us to an abstract idea. Rather we understand things about the concept of

[95] See Houlgate who argues that the only suppositions required are a philosophical disposition and rigour as opposed to methodological presuppositions (2006: 66 - 9). See also, Burbidge, 2006: 26 - 27) & LoHP: 138.

being, *qua* notion, and its idea — we have reached a higher level of understanding.

Furthermore, the division of our immediate conception of being into being and nothing gives us the idea of *becoming* (SoL: 105 - 6). Out of abstract being we developed a further idea — nothingness — and this helps us to determine the abstract concept, being. Hegel's idea is that even the purest abstraction gives way to some sort of determination even if that determination is only a quality of indeterminateness (SoL: 99).

This is the transition of the negative into the positive in the dialectic — or the movement from the dialectical to the speculative moment where more is gained from an immediate situation. Even pure being, it turns out, is not immediate in that it is a simple concept with a specific meaning: it is mediated by its counter category — nothingness. Hegel's idea is complex here. Pure being, insofar as it yields nothingness as a product of its own inner-mediation [*Vermittlung*], actually moves from being into nothing. This is the ceasing to be of being. Conversely, nothing, as pure abstract nothingness, contains within itself the idea of there being something that is not nothing. That is, being as such is a condition of there being nothing. Hence nothing yields the movement back to being as a consequence of its own mediation. Both being and nothing yield movement and the dynamic transition from one state into another state, Hegel refers to as becoming.

Hegel is then able to complete the final moment in this speculative ontology. Becoming is the sublation of being and nothing and a unity of them both (SoL: 105 - 8). It is reducible to neither one of its categories — which are in effect categorical under-determinations of the unitary concept becoming — but each category will produce its contrary other and hence will produce becoming. Whether or not one is convinced by this as a rigorous piece of a prioristic logic — as Houlgate is — or if one sees it as dubious thinking — as Russell did — we can at least consider the claims made on behalf of determinate negation.

We begin with something that is given — an ontological category or a concept —

and in reflection upon the subject matter, its negation becomes apparent as mediated within it. There is a sufficient relationship between the two aspects of the dialectic in that one category produces another. There is no aspect of the original category which is not negated by the new category and there is no part of the new category which refers to anything other than the original category. Rather than producing a sceptical stalemate between these two categories, Hegel's guiding idea is that reflection on the relation between the positive and negative poles of the dialectic provides the conditions for a positive solution. Again, the positive solution is parsimonious insofar as it is the immediate incremental step to resolve the tension generated between the two opposing categories.

Of course this is extremely controversial and we will see that Adorno fundamentally disagrees with Hegel on aspects of his theory of determinate negation: the negative moment, the nonidentity of terms or entities cannot be entirely sublated. Why this is the case will be considered in depth below and in the final section. Nevertheless, aspects of this dialectic will prove to be hugely influential on Adorno: in particular the idea that that which appears immediately given is mediated by some other element; that given, immediate entities are not self-identical in the way that they may immediately appear.

4.5.ii Determinate Negation, Process and History

Not only is determinate negation an integral facet of the ontological structure of reality itself, as developed within the *Logic*, it is an integral process within the development of the very way in which go about judging. Particular failures in one mode of judging, in its ability to provide a stable basis through which we can express how reality actually is, results in a transition into a new mode of judging which is then able to match our developed understanding of reality. Therefore, dialectics and the process of determinate negation works at a number of levels: at the level of reality as such; at the development of objective reality and its particular parts; at the level of judgement as such and in the development of our particular judgements. In the cases of the development of particular objects and in the development of particular judgements, this development is actually

temporal — it happens within a socio-historical framework. The charting of the rational development of objective reality and of our judgements just is the dialectical and philosophical study of history. The point for now is that dialectics and determinate negation makes a strong link between reality as such, judgement and history. The link between ontology, judgements and history, we will see, is an important concern for Adorno. Just as we will see that he is critical of Hegel's metaphysical commitments, his theory of dialectics, he is critical of the relation of dialectics to history.

We have already seen how Hegel has argued that propositional modes of judgement result in unstable modes of determining a subject by a predicate. This instability arises out of the tension between particulars and universals where the particular negates the sufficiency of the universal attached to it in the judgement. However, Hegel argues that there is not merely a negation of this judgement but the mode of judgement upon which this problem is based. That is, we must rethink judging itself and the forms of knowing associated with those modes — not merely rethinking individual judgements.

The rest of the *Phenomenology* is devoted to giving an account of this rethinking. Eventually, Hegel develops the argument that out of the failures of individuals and their individual judgements is the realisation that part of this failure, lies in the partitioning off of knowledge and judging to the practices of isolated individuals. Moreover, this individuality cannot be recuperated by an objective set of principles which can 'work' for any individual. Rather, the failure of individual judgements requires the resituation of judgement within a broader socio-historical and cultural context. The validity and status of any individual's particular judgement results in their assimilation within the grand human project of knowing. We realise that our individual failures and revisions are a reflection of the larger processes and history of human enquiries into the world. Sublating the difference between the inquiries of the finite individual into the history of human inquiry and development generally is what brings us towards the situation of 'Absolute Knowing'. Absolute knowing is not 'knowing everything about the world': it is a situation of knowing that what we know is objectively true. This objectivity, for Hegel, was realised through the sublation of religious

representation which in turn is the ultimate expression of *Geist*.[96]

As we judge objects, therefore, we enter into a process of realising the essence of a kind of object in the world which turns out to be intimately related to history of human knowing as such. When our understanding of knowledge has transitioned beyond the finitude of particular judgements of particular individuals into an appreciation of their integration within infinite spirit itself, we will understand that the content of our judgements will be radically different to what we thought they were in the situation of immediate sensory experience. Our judgements will then match the essence of an object; our concepts will be sufficient for the identification of objects. We will know that what we take roses to be is how roses *really* are.

The condition of this truth is the achieved understanding that the particular determination of a particular rose, is not partitioned off from other particular roses or other particular judgements about them. Rather, every rose, indeed every entity, is in some sense systematically inter-related with all other beings and all individuals are instances of the universal kinds. Our individual judgements are likewise, an integrated aspect of the human project of knowing the world and are bolstered by the irreducibly progressive nature of human knowing. Knowing as such and the articulation of reality are isomorphically related. All of these processes, which are fundamentally and irreducibly progressive revolve around the objective, productive and positive qualities of determinate negation.

The historical development of judgement, in accordance with the dialectical actualisation of reality, propelled by the progressive transformations of determinate negation, entitles us to think that reality and judgement are both rationally progressive. We will see that whilst Adorno certainly thinks that history is vital to our knowledge making practices he thinks that history is not simply a medium through which reality unfolds into absolute realisation. Rather,

[96] Exploring and justifying these moves lie beyond the scope of this thesis. Whilst the path the absolute knowing constitutes the *Phenomenology*, and so drawing out sections is somewhat artificial, we can follow some of Hegel's key movements in the following, PoS: §§344 - 6; 357 - 359; 406 - 18 & 784 - 7 culminating the section on Absolute Knowing.

metaphysical and epistemological systems, and the view of reality and the world which they underpin are in fact products of particular socio-historical moments. This is an important departure from Hegelian thought and will be discussed in depth in the next two chapters.

4.6 The Dialectical Logic of Judgement

The socio-cultural experience of the transitions of finite, unstable judgements, into absolute knowing is a key subject of the *Phenomenology*. As suggested, the reconsideration of knowledge that Hegel wishes to achieve is primarily a reconsideration of knowing as such — as opposed to the evaluation of any specific judgements. Having explored the dialectical progressions of judgement through socio-historically situated experience, and suggesting that these transitions are an inflection of the dialectics of being as such, it is natural that Hegel should consider the logic of being as such; this will inevitably bring him to consider the logic of judging as such.[97] In considering determinate negation, we have already considered the logic of being. We can, therefore, turn to the dialectical logic of judgement. Following Hegel's thought in this way, not only helps us to be clear on key aspects of Hegel's thinking for when we return to Adorno, but in reaching an analysis of judgement as such, we are at the heart of Adorno's own concern with Hegel.

The ontological and speculative logic of immediacy, determinate negativity and the transition into necessary positivity — as we saw in the dialectics of the category of being — bears an isomorphic relation to Hegel's unusual analysis of names and predicates and their role in judgements.[98] Hegel's concern with the proposition is not merely epistemological but also metaphysical. In the analysis of the first section, we considered the propositional structure of Kantian judgements. This representation is both the condition of discursive knowledge and the smallest unit of knowledge. However, for Kant the proposition is seen as a sufficient representation of states of affairs and a valid bearer of truth; it is also a valid object of beliefs about the world.

[97] Lau and Nuzzo make the similar move that Hegel's critique of the structure of judgement is intimately related to his speculative metaphysics. (Lau, 2006: 55; Nuzzo, 2006: 79).
[98] See also PoS: §60.

Hegel disputes this metaphysical and epistemological picture of judgements. The predicative determinations of entities as accidents is unstable for Hegel He replaces this metaphysical picture with his dialectical conception of reality whereby predicating a property of an entity is a true conceptual attendance to one aspect of the entity's real, unified essence. Particular entities and universals are real but are mutually mediated through each other. The metaphysical reconfiguration of entities, essences and universals requires a reconfiguration of our understanding of semantics and syntax to cope with this metaphysical state of affairs.

Hegel thinks that the predicative proposition represents the semantic and syntactical limits of finite human thinking. It is also an irreducible feature of human cognition: two functions of conceptual articulation as such are partiality and, therefore, finitude. That is, it is an unavoidable feature of articulation that conceptual attendance to something is implicitly the non-attendance to another. For example, when we are saying 'the rose is red', we are, by extension, not saying, or at least attending in that moment to 'The rose is beautiful'. One may think that this is an absurd worry because we have only said that the rose is this way but we are not neglecting nor precluding any other determination of the rose. Yet this would be to miss the point of Hegel's worry. In our common understanding, the judgement — and its content — is thoroughly underdetermined and hence unstable — what does the judgement, taken by itself, mean and what exactly is its content? Taken by itself we have nothing in contradistinction to which, we can determine the subject such that we gain a determinate understanding of what it is.

Furthermore, the predicate is also underdetermined. The rose is red but what is it to be determined simply by being 'red'? We need to know what it is to not be red in order to know what it is, determinately, to be red. Again, the accretion of propositions will leave our conceptual resources underdetermined. Nor is there simply a fact of the matter to which the universal correctly corresponds. Being red is a general term and as such ranges over many instances. It is this issue of the scope and determinacy of terms and their relative position within the

proposition that particularly interests Hegel.

This partiality of the proposition is not merely between propositions but is also present within the proposition: sententially, 'The rose is red', determines the subject, the rose, as equivalent with the property of redness. Hegel thinks that, at least in its immediate form, there is a serious ontological discrepancy being masked here between particulars and universals. Of course, the relation of particular and universal is an old metaphysical problem. Kant sought to settle the problem by limiting the metaphysics and offering his own account of judgement and understanding which, as I have suggested above, is, in certain respects, proto-typically Analytic. As we have seen, for a variety of reasons, Hegel does not think we need to take Kant's route in order to understand the potential and limits of reason — indeed, in the judgement, the limits of reason become the conditions for genuine speculative knowledge.

Hegel elaborates on the problem of the range of the terms and the subsequent scope of the proposition. Taking the copula as indicating existential commitment, we say that *x* is in the way of being y in the assertoric proposition this rose is red. Hegel points out that it is not the case that the rose is the way of being red as such: 'red' is the way that many other things are that are not the same way, colour-wise as this particular rose. Also, if we invert the proposition that *y* is in the way of being *x*, this also cannot be correct because it is not the case that red is only a the way it is in this particular rose. Hegel argues then that the previously positive assertoric propositions yield negative judgements (SoL: 631 - 6).

One might think that Hegel is confused over the status of the copula and has failed to understand the analytics of meaning and reference which were in no small part due to the limitations of the logic he was critiquing.[99] Hence he sees the proposition as being false when a proper semantics would reveal nothing of the sort.

[99] See Pinkard 1988: 75.

Yet we should not be too quick to dismiss Hegel's argument as simply confused. For a period at least, the linguistic turn eventually led to the jettisoning of metaphysics. Historically, this is precisely the sort of philosophical compromise Hegel is attempting to avoid. Hegel's understanding of the proposition is trenchantly metaphysical. When we make property ascriptions we need to be able to think metaphysically: beyond the formal limits of linguistic ascription to the point where we understand property *qua* essence. Reality is the means by which we co-ordinate our propositions and their meanings not according to linguistic form — about which we already have many metaphysical assumptions.

The representational proposition, as discussed here, is attached to a particular metaphysics; one which treats objects as primary substances and properties as universal *attachments* of these substances. The relations of the objects and their properties run the risk of contingency and arbitrariness in this metaphysical picture. This contingency is revealed through the awkward and unresolved scope differences between the particular terms and the kind and amount of entities they reference. Rather than dealing with this discrepancy, the assertoric proposition suppresses it and attempts to glue the two terms together with a copula.[100] Hegel's linguistic analysis suggests that all this does is entrench the negative proposition into the positive one (SoL: 636).

Hegel offers an extremely complicated and difficult analysis of the proposition as he tries to show how the tensions within the initial proposition, which is abstract and unstable, led towards its own determination. A compressed dialectics of assertoric propositions runs as follows:

- The rose is red (immediate positive judgement);
- The rose is not red (negative — due to discrepancy between particular and universal terms);
- The rose is not-red (positive articulation of the negative leading to a new meaning i.e. it is some colour);

[100] Hegel accuses Kant of this error. See SoL: 639.

- Further negation: the rose is not not-red (because it is not any colour other than red, it is the colour that it is, i.e. red!)
- The rose is red. (Speculative/infinite judgement.)

What Hegel is aiming at is a new *metaphysical understanding* of the final proposition which he thoroughly admits is linguistically the same as the first proposition. Indeed, if we do not think metaphysically then it would be difficult to even motivate a worry here. The problem with the first judgement is, according to Hegel, the particular subject term and the predicate term are mutually underdetermined as a result of a category error of sorts. Until we reconfigure our categories properly, the proposition only carries the semblance of sense and is not a suitable bearer of truth-values.

Underlying the linguistic analysis is the real metaphysical claim: particulars are always mediated by universals and universals are always mediated by particulars (SoL: 642).[101] In short it is an argument concerning the metaphysics of how predicates refer to properties, what ontological entities we can be realist about and how we ought to be realist about those entities.[102] The claim, in its shortest form, is that formal structure of propositions does not map onto the ontological structure of the world — whilst they may well be valid.[103] The associated ontology, which takes there to be particulars and universals as separate, discrete self-subsistent kinds of entity, is also false. For propositions to become metaphysically sound units of knowledge we must understand how and why, even within their own structure, they map onto the world. In so doing, we learn about how the world really is; we come to reconsider our knowledge of the world as knowledge of how the world really is.

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[101] See Pinkard, 1988: 78.

[102] Hegel's realism here is emphasised by the apodeictic status of the infinite judgement where the content of the judgement can now be understood as modally necessary. It also forms the appropriate basis for further ontological commitment via syllogism. The relationship between particular and universal has been appropriately settled and our existential commitments are appropriate for further application in argument (SoL: 663).

[103] For contemporary attacks on picture-thinking and the formal structure of language and its relationship to world see C.B.Martin, 2007: 67 - 8 and J. Heil, 2003: 111 - 5. I am inclined to think there may be fruitful similarities between these thinkers and Hegel. In particular Martin's 'surprising identity' thesis which argues that a property is qualitative and is dispositional and Heil's theory of objects may be fruitful areas of concern. This is a controversial connection but would be a compelling avenue for further research.

4.7 Material, Correspondence and Coherence Theories of Truth in Hegel's Philosophy

We now have some conception of how the world is for Hegel and the judgements that we make about it; why judgements are not evaluated merely according to correctness but as capturing deeper metaphysical states of affairs. From this position we have the basis for formulating some theory of truth. The problem is, given Hegel's dialectics, his dynamic ontology and his processual theory of reality and knowledge, this a vexed issue with some commentators arguing that he does not have a theory of truth, others arguing that he does.[104] Rather than trying to provide a definitive interpretation, certain relevant notions will be briefly developed such that we can consider Adorno's own position in relation to Hegel — accepting the fact that the view of Hegelian truth presented is itself controversial.

Stern makes an important point when arguing that Hegel does not hold a 'propositional theory of truth' but rather a 'material' theory of truth. He says that:

> Truth is propositional when it is attributed to statements, judgements, or propositions on the basis of their accordance with the way things are. Truth is material when it is attributed to something on the basis of the accordance of the thing with its essence. Thus, whereas propositional truth applies to our judgements or statements, material truth applies to things and their natures. (Stern, 2009: 77 - 8)

To some extent this is certainly correct and accords with the essentialist metaphysics developed above. There are two points being made here. Firstly, because reality develops according to an objective and necessary dynamic force and that these forces include some form of essence, entities move from a state of internal antagonism into internal unity and self-integration. This is an entirely objective process for Hegel. The relationship between the essence of an entity and its current instantiation determines the 'Truth-value' of the *entity*. Here, truth-value is not a mere bivalent property of a representational truth-bearer such

[104] See Solomon, R.C. 1975 & Inwood M.J. 1977 for a classic debate over Hegelian theory of truth. See McCumber (1993, 33 - 41) for further discussion.

as a proposition, a belief or a sentence, for example, but is a nuanced and fine-grained evaluative notion based on metaphysical commitments.

Secondly, correctness and truth are not synonyms for Hegel. When considering our linguistic utterances, their being correct, is not the principal concern of his theory of *truth*. It is whether the state of affairs is truly articulated that is at issue. This seems affirmed by the account of judgement given above. A rose may well be red and our linguistic articulation that the rose is red would therefore be 'correct'. But as we have seen, the deep relationship between metaphysics and epistemology for Hegel means that being correct is not tantamount to knowledge of truth. Rather, we must reconsider our judgements dialectically so that they are sublated in order to accord with the deeper metaphysical truth.

Nevertheless, it would appear wrong of Stern to argue that Hegel has no account of truth besides material truth. Furthermore, just because metaphysical states of affairs are the principal truth makers and bearers, this does not mean that Hegel's theory of truth cannot be understood as having some elements associated with correspondence. Taking Russell's classic formulation:

(b)[b is true⇔(∃B)(∃*x*)(∃y)(∃R)(b = <B, *x*, R, *y*> & *x*R*y*)]

This says: there is a true belief iff there is a believer (B), an *x* and a *y* and a relation (R), and that the belief consists in the believer believing that *x* and *y* have a particular relation to each other and that this relation of entities really exists.[105]

It is clear that Hegel conceives of the structure of linguistic truth differently. Crucially, if the judgement is a property ascription, it is metaphysically flawed to see *x* and *y* as separate entities, i.e., Hegel contests the extensionality, or the referents of the proposition. Of course, this effects the relations which obtain such that the structure of the 'fact', is false according to Hegel.

Hegel also highlights a deeper problem concerning the relation in his theory of

[105] See Russell, 1951: 127 - 9; and Kirkham, 2001: 121 - 2.

judgement. Built into Russell's correspondence theory is a directionality of both the structure of the proposition and the structure of the fact to which it corresponds: Russell sees capturing this direction as crucial to the validity of the correspondence (Russell, 1951: 128). However, we have seen that Hegel sees the proposition as unstable precisely because it mistakes the linguistic direction, a function of language, with ontological structure. The rose is red takes the subject as the 'starting point' and says that the being of rose determines what predicates are valid. The predicate is somewhat of a passive end point. We have seen Hegel argue that this gluing together of subject and predicate, beginning with the subject leads to epistemic instability which equates to unstable metaphysical assumptions. In short, although Russell is trying to capture a correspondence of a complex unity in a belief, Hegel would regard his metaphysics as wrong and his understanding of the complexity of a state of affairs as not complex enough.

So Russell's intensional analysis, according to the Hegelian conception, is also wrong. What the judgement, 'the rose is red' *means* is not that there is a rose entity and a red(-ness) entity which are attached according to the being of the rose. Rather there is an entity, a rose, and the way that this entity is is such that it licences the ascription of being red. And the judgement means — taking the propositional content to run in the opposite direction as well — that there is a way of being, i.e. red, such that that way licences the ascription of being rose-like to red.

Hegel's point is not esoteric, however. One cannot glue particulars and universals together without concerning oneself with the metaphysics. The second direction is an attempt by Hegel to capture the mediation of the universal in the particular. Hegel's point is that they are never not instantiated in objects and this must be reflected in our metaphysics and in our judgements. Yet, in so doing, it also transforms the Aristotelian understanding of universals as ascribed properties. Mediation entails that extensional entities of the proposition this rose is red — 'rose' and 'red' — are in fact the same, singular and unified, truth maker: the fully articulated and true essence of the entity, 'Rose'.

It seems reasonable then to say Hegel does have a correspondence theory of truth,

qua judgements and that Stern is a too quick to dismiss Baldwin's claim to that effect (Stern, 2009: 77 - 9). Yet this is not the whole story. Truth, even of judgements, cannot be reached just through articulation of a state of affairs. The meaning of the judgement, as the idea it expresses, is essential to epistemic — as opposed to material — truth. We must have a dialectical understanding of what is expressed and referred to in the judgement, in order for it to be true. Therefore, *justification* is a necessary condition of epistemic truth for Hegel. Hence some form of coherence plays a role in Hegel's theory of truth.

The justification is that we understand the dialectics of being such that we both understand the structure of the being of entities, *qua* essence, and that we are cognizant of the objective validity of that understanding.[106] The justification of a judgement, in terms of truth, is therefore not an issue of coherence within a system of linguistic use for example. Rather it is coherence according to a metaphysical system and structure of reality and our understanding of that structure.[107]

Truth is not dealt with by first-order talk about judgements and semantic content, even though we have suggested a role for correspondence. The justification for truth is the a priori knowledge of essential being which enables us to truly determine the meaning and reference of the propositional content of judgements *qua* true reality. When reality is materially true, and our conception of reality is true, our judgements will truly correspond, in 'infinite judgement', to reality.

The above analysis suggests that Stern is correct to regard material truth as central to Hegel's conception of truth. However, correspondence and coherence also play a role in his theory of knowledge and epistemic truth. It is an Hegelian thought, however, that a 'true human', a material truth, will have a true conception and articulation of material truth.

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[106] See also Hofstadter, 1975: 682 - 4.

[107] Adorno acknowledges this directly and repeatedly: "Speculative idealism does not recklessly disregard the limits of the possibility of knowledge; rather, it searches for words to express the idea that a reference to truth as such is in fact inherent in all knowledge that is knowledge; that if it is to be knowledge at all and not a mere duplication of the subject, knowledge is more than merely subjective; it is objectivity like the objective reason in Plato" (HTT: 6) & HTT: 11 - 2; 36; 40.

We have seen how metaphysics and epistemology are intimately related in Hegel's philosophy. This relationship is underpinned by dialectics. I have indicated throughout the discussion that there are ways in which Adorno will be indebted to Hegel and ways in which he diverges from Hegelian orthodoxy; a full analysis of Adorno's critique will be the focus of the next two chapters. Hegel's theory of truth will prove to be both influential on Adorno and a point of disagreement. The agreements and disagreements will be divided according to the particular metaphysical and epistemological commitments which supporting a particular aspect of Hegel's notion of truth. We will see that Adorno agrees with Hegel that the truthfulness of a judgement is determined according to how objects are. However, the way that objects are to be determined historically rather than according to a dialectical rationality working through history. Furthermore, our understanding of those objects is not a matter of coming to a view of an object as it is integrated within absolute knowing; rather, it is known through analysis of mediation within history. Elaborating on how Adorno understands these ideas will be discussed throughout the rest of the thesis. However, we can see that the way in which Adorno deviates from Hegel's position will entail changes in his theory of truth. Truth is historically indexed.

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5. Adorno as an Hegelian Thinker

The previous section focussed on certain areas in Hegel's philosophy: primarily dialectics, judgement and truth. I presented Hegel's critique of the notion of judgement as merely propositional. This brought the discussion into consideration of metaphysical issues and a consideration of essences. Having considered Hegel's ability to talk about essences in a non-regressive, post-critical way, we considered the structure of Hegel's metaphysics and dialectics, determinate negation as the motor of its positive transitions, and the fact that such considerations underpinned his understanding of universals. I was then able to analyse the very structure of the judgement so as to take proper note of Hegel's metaphysical commitments. Finally, a sketch of Hegel's theory of truth was proposed.

Inasmuch as these concerns are critical in Hegel's thinking, we will use these analyses to consider to what extent Adorno is an Hegelian thinker. The resulting analysis then splits between Adorno's assimilation of Hegel and in the third chapter of this section, the deep differences in philosophical commitments between the two thinkers are explored. It is in light of these differences that Adorno was led to conduct an immanent critique on Hegel's own system and dialectics. Furthermore, we again find that analysis of Adorno's critique of Hegel is revealing for an understanding of his own commitments. For now, we will see that Adorno's criticisms of Kant, developed out of his immanent critique, are in line with the profound influence that Hegel exerted over Adorno's thinking.

5.1 The Influence of Hegel's Criticism of Kant on Adorno

Adorno agrees with much of Hegel's conception of judgement and truth. Section One showed that he is highly critical of the propositional structure of Kantian determinative judgements, their truth values, the subjective basis for their objective validity and that their modal status is settled according to the structure of the cognizing subject not the object. Where Hegel holds similar criticisms of

Kant, Adorno is in line with Hegelian thinking on judgements. The transition to a dialectical theory, whereby the judgement is not taken to be a mere representation of a sensible state of affairs but is concerned with the essence of an object, is a direct influence on Adorno. He makes this explicit in his book on Hegel:

> Kant's delimitation of consciousness as a scientific consciousness that makes straightforward judgments returns in Hegel as the negativity of consciousness, as something that needs to be criticized. (HTT: 72)

Kant's propositional, representational form of determinative judgement takes predication as something imposed and guaranteed by the subject; Hegel's dialectics is a direct criticism of this structure. Whatever Kant's epistemological advances, it is obvious that Adorno takes Kant's transcendental move as a form of nominalism and naturalism. That is, a theory of knowledge-making concerned with providing a theoretical basis for the objective validity of what is given in empirical experience from given data.

Hegel's dialectical judgement reconsiders Kant's propositional model which directly influences Adorno.

> The first formula to express this [indifference to knowledge] was Kant's famous line that the "transcendental idealist" is an "empirical realist." Admirers of the Critic of Pure Reason, and of his attempt to find reasons for experience, were deaf to this admission of bankruptcy: that the immeasurable strain of that critique was *adiaphorou* [indifferent] with respect to the content of experience. (ND: 72)

The propositional form of judging, which underpins Kant's transcendental idealism and secures empirical realism, is 'bankrupt' for Adorno because, for reasons developed above, it is indifferent to the content of experience.[108] This may be a staggering claim for the Kantian. However, considered within the structure of Hegelian judgement, it makes sense. Kant was concerned with the content of experience but only in content which could be parsed within his conception of judgements. He was concerned to secure a terrain of valid epistemic enquiry and was prepared to jettison anything about experience or objects which would jeopardise this epistemic security. According to Hegel and

[108] See CPR: B50 - B53.

Adorno, what Kant jettisoned is a deeper conception of objects and what they really are. As we have seen, within Kantian judgements, what is secured is the validity of judgement *qua* subject not the objective validity of the content *qua* object.

Maintaining his concern about propositions, Adorno argues that dialectics is a move against the sufficient determination of entities according to generalised concepts which range over many modally different entities:

> For what we mean in the judgment is always the entity due to be judged beyond the particular that is included in the judgment—otherwise, according to its own intention, the judgment would be superfluous. And this intention is precisely what it does not satisfy. The negative motive of identitarian philosophy has remained in force: nothing particular is true; no particular is itself, as its particularity requires. Dialectical contradiction is neither the mere projection on the thing of a concept formation that miscarried nor a metaphysics running amuck. (ND: 152)

This complaint was at the heart of Adorno's critique of Kant. Our discursive identifications of objects come to be sufficient representational determinations of the particular. The particular object is then co-ordinated within a ratio-logical framework according to its conceptual determination. The unique self-identity of the particular is metaphysically and pragmatically inefficient and must be leveled within the fluid exchange of concepts. Dialectics is the awareness that the judgements we make of objects, at least immediately, require the repression of key metaphysical concerns: primarily the ontological difference between ontological structure and distinctions of the mind and the unique particularity of the thing judged — effectively the difference between the conceptual realm and the non-conceptual realm.[109]

For Adorno, the problem is that the identity judgement — or proposition — is concerned only with identifying the particular with the general. Of course the identity judgement tries to say something true. However, as early as the Transcendental Aesthetic we are given the clear basis of some correspondence

[109] Here ontological difference indicates a different concern to the phrase as Heidegger uses it - "The difference between beings and being": Heidegger, 1988: 17. Adorno's understanding will be discussed in depth in Section Three.

theory that the conceptual determination of the object within the judgement is true just in case it *corresponds* with the object — where the object in this sense is its immediate sensible presentation.[110] The sensible presentation is a mental entity, albeit one which is objective according to Kant; the modality of the judgement is determined by the relation of the judgement to the transcendental structure of the mind. So what in the judgement is genuinely beholden to the *self-identical particularity* of the object? Arguably: nothing. Because that self-identical particularity, unmediated by conceptualisation, sounds very much like the noumenal. Whilst Kant may give the necessary conditions of what appears to us to be the case and then partitions off any aspect of reality which may prove problematic — the noumenal — we are given pause to consider what exactly his epistemology can salvage.

Adorno holds that, in dialectics, the copula states the mediation of the particular by the general — and vice versa; the difference between the particular and the general is maintained. That is, the conceptual distinction identified by the universal predicate, insofar as the predicate can be stated as a particular way to consider the particular, is different to how the object is in its individual self-identity. Obviously, if the subject and predicate were synonyms, which would be the strongest identity and truth, then the judgement would be a redundant tautology. Difference between the subject and predicate is necessary for the epistemic and metaphysical import of the judgement. The question is: how do we understand this difference? Adorno, and Hegel's point, is that the identity judgement simply ignores this difference in favour of epistemic co-ordination of the given in appearance.

Importantly, for Hegel, the way the particular is and the way the universal is become identical through their sublation in judgement. However, Adorno argues that the difference between the subject and the predicate is the condition by which the particularity of the subject in question can be maintained. It is also the condition by which our epistemic activities are properly beholden to how the world, *qua* particular material entities, really is.

[110] CPR: Bxxvi, Bxli, A93 and in particular A104.

> Intentionally or not, every judgment—even an analytical one, as shown by Hegel—carries with it the claim to predicate something that is not simply identical with the mere concept of the subject. If it ignores this requirement, the judgment breaks the contract it has previously signed by its form. (ND: 71)

Hegel notes the difference between subject and predicate; Adorno is directly influenced by Hegel's thoughts on this matter. However, we will see that what Adorno understands by this difference is somewhat at odds with Hegel's view. It is sufficient to note at this juncture, that Adorno's critique of identity-thinking involves a siding with Hegelian judgement over Kantian judgements in certain respects.

5.2 The Separation of Form and Content

Another way that Adorno sides with Hegel against Kant, in line with the previous criticisms, is that Kant separated form and content: the world supplies content; the mind supplies form. Due to this strict separation, the mind can know that about the content which can be formalized. Speaking dialectically, separating form and content in the way that Kant does enables him to collapse the difference — or at least its import — by taking one side or other as sufficient to knowledge: he sides with cognitive formality. Like Hegel, Adorno takes the propositional function of predication to be an external, heterogeneous process. However, that difference should not be used to isolate form from content — this leads to a reification of knowledge as facts and of the subject as a processor of facts.

> [S]ynthesis by the copula would happen as a mere external occurrence; this was precisely what the concept of Being was thought up against. Once again, as in an obsolete logic, subject, copula, and predicate would be conclusive, completed details after the model of things. (ND: 101)

In the dialectical conception of judgement, the difference between form and content is maintained as a dynamic, interactive relationship. Essential to this dynamism is the transformation of thought away from the determination of what appears immediately. This enables us to reconsider the immediate form of the judgement as insufficient to its subject matter. Predicative judgements are

unavoidable. Yet the rejection of the essence of judgement as propositional and as a true, *formal* representation of the object is a move against reifying judgements.

Acknowledging the formal distortion of the subject and its properties in judgement is a way to maintain an awareness of the particular way an object and its properties are. It is also essential for deciding matters of truth: the rose and redness are ontologically mediated; a judgement which *means* this is true. The fastidious discrimination of the extensional and intensional aspects of the proposition is the dialectical attempt to maintain a clear sense of the judgement as only valid insofar as it is sensitive to and determined by the particular object.

Any aspect of the judgement which is not sensitive in this way must itself be negated. It turns out that the very *form* of predication is to be negated. Through the negation of predication as the appropriate structure for representing the form of real entities, we attain a higher level of understanding of what objects are and how they are. We also ensure that our epistemic practices operate from within their subject matter rather than determining it according to an externally imposed form which in fact, unavoidably, distorts the entity in question.

5.3 Dialectical as Opposed to Transcendental Modality

As an extension of his propositional account of judgement as a representation of a state of affairs, Kant argued that the judgement relied on the transcendental conditions of cognition to determine its modal status. This is unsurprising within Kant's system because the judgement is not the determination of things-in-themselves and so the objectively real cannot be the basis upon which we settle our modal claims. Kant has no choice but to refer the modal status of the judgement back to the subject. We saw that Adorno's critique of the *constituens* and *constitutum* amounts to an attack on the idea that the structure of our cognition can be taken as sufficient to both the form and content of the world. Likewise, Hegel baulked at this and directly criticizes Kant for it saying that his dialectics will put modality in its 'proper place' (SoL: 80)

Hegel argues that individuals are the determinate, particular ways that universals are instantiated. To reflect his idea that the individual has a dialectical essence and is not immediately and 'abstractly' given as it is in Spinoza's ontology, Hegel calls the mode the *measure*. Measure is the '*concrete truth of being'* and is antithetical to the modality we find in Kant (SoL: 329). If we follow Hegel's ontological logic, the modal character of judgements is determined according to the very distinction of an individual as such, not according to the relation to the faculties. Measure, or modality, is therefore the basis of essence (SoL: 330).

Adorno notes this point when he discusses the copula in Hegel's dialectics. Not only does he say that the copula is not the copula of identity, he argues that the copula is the determination of the way the subject is *qua* its essence. Therefore, unlike Kant, Adorno explicitly argues that the judgement is existentially committed:

> mediation of the copula as per Hegel and which leads onto dynamism "Is"establishes a context of existential judgment between the grammatical subject and the predicate, thus suggesting something ontical. Taken purely by itself, however, as a copula, it means at the same time the general, categorical fact of a synthesis, without representing anything ontical. (ND: 100)

Adorno's concern that our judgements are determined according to how objects are suggests that he follows Hegel by resituating our modal commitments in terms of objects not subjects.

Consequently, in judgement, the qualification of the subject by the predicate is insufficient for the essential modal concern outlined above. In an effort distinguish the sort of existential judgement, with its ontical import, from the more familiar, existential proposition, Adorno refers us to the epistemic activities of a child trying to reflect on the relationship between language and the world.

> [The child] wants to find out what the words mean, and the occupation with them — as well as an impish, nagging, psychoanalytically explicable stubbornness, perhaps — leads him to the relation of words and things. He may get on his mother's nerves with the awkward problem why a bench is called a bench. His naïveté is un-naïve. (ND: 111)

The idea is that when a child is told the meanings and referents of words and develops the logical foundation through which to co-ordinate her utterances, these utterances are in principle sufficient for her ability to successfully reference the world and talk meaningfully.[111] The child can use language. The thought Adorno is addressing with this example of the child is that the attempt to co-ordinate one's discursive utterances successfully and use the correct names and predicates in the correct way fails to properly capture the problem of judgement.

Indeed, that there is already 'a correct way' indicates that the sort of existential concern Adorno is trying to grapple with is moot. He is concerned with the idea lying beneath the childish question: "why is a bench, a 'bench'". The child has an intuitive grasp of a complex issue concerning how we reference and what it means to reference. Children are naively considering a deep metaphysical issue: what is a 'bench' *really* and how does this word I use, 'bench', capture the being of this entity. Children learn the word and they know they can pick out benches. However, the seeming inadequacy, the strange difference between this sound and this concrete object, makes the reference seem improbable to the child. Bernstein takes up this idea when he suggests that Adorno is asking us, as adults, to be like the child: a 'conceptual neophyte' actively trying to build the reference relations between names and predicates and the world they putatively reference (Bernstein, 2001: 266 - 275).

However, if we follow Hegel as Adorno does, the material particular is an irreducible, requisite for the possibility of judging.[112] The judgement, and the judging subject, must therefore, always return to the object in question in order to determine the truth of the judgement:

> Literally, the preponderance of the object might be traced back to the point where a thought believes it has won its own absolute objectivity

[111] Adorno's thoughts here complement Wittgenstein's detailed analysis of how children learn and use concepts and language in *On Certainty* (1969). However, whilst Wittgenstein takes certain judgements to form both a framework and as rules for judging itself, Adorno's point is the child sees that there is something arbitrary about this process.

[112] We will see that the detachability of the particular from judgement will actually be a divisive issue between Adorno and Hegel. See Chapter Six.

> by rejecting any objectivity that is not thought—in other words, to formal logic. The "something" to which all logical propositions refer even when they are free to ignore it entirely is a copy of that which a thought means, and without which it could not be. The noncognitative is a logically immanent condition of the cogitative. In fact, the copula "is" always conveys some objectivity already, after the model of existential judgments. This disposes of all the hopes kindled by our craving for security: that in formal logic we might possess something downright unconditional as the sure foundation of philosophy. (ND: 184n.)

Objects — the material (as opposed to mental) entities named by the subject particle of judgements — are particulars upon which the possibility of judging is based. The modal determination of judgements relies on our ability to engage with objects of judgements as they themselves are. Furthermore, given that objects are not merely what they are given in appearance for Adorno and that judgements are not merely representations of those appearances which gain truth values according to the validity of their representational function, the validity of any judgement must constantly return to the particular it determines, paying attention to the object in its particularity.

5.4 Dialectics and the Dynamism of Judgement

Adorno agrees with Hegel that under the dialectical conditions described above, judgements have a dynamic, transformative role in both knowledge-making and in determining the reality of objects in the way discussed above. The structure of dialectical judgement and the attendant conception of predication entitle the Hegelian to consider judgement as inherently dynamic:

> Hegel attacks the Kantian doctrine of the limits of knowledge and yet respects it. From it he develops the theory of a difference between subject and object that manifests itself in every particular. This difference, which acts as its own corrective, moves out beyond itself to become more adequate knowledge. Accordingly, the justification of the primacy of negation in Hegel's philosophy is that the limits of knowledge to which its critical self-reflection leads are not something external to knowledge, not something to which it is merely condemned from the outside; rather, they are inherent in all moments of knowledge. All knowledge, and not merely knowledge that ventures out into the infinite, aims, through the mere form of the copula, at the whole truth, and none achieves it. Hence in Hegel the Kantian limits of knowledge become the principle of epistemological advance. (HTT: 76 - 7)

Taking together Hegel's understanding of the relationship between form and content, of how we settle the modality of judgements and the importance of the particular in the judgement lead to Adorno praising the dynamism of dialectical judgements. Whereas Kant reified the difference and limitations of judgement in order to produce a critical, yet positive knowledge, the difference that Hegel maintains enables the judgement to maintain motion. In short, the dialectical judgement is a medium through which conceptual determinations and the instances they determine can interact and maintain their transformative relationship.

So, for Adorno, Hegel respects the Kantian limits of epistemology and provides a dynamic self-correcting account of knowledge. We could argue the former claim through the fact that Hegel does not need to make conceptual assumptions in order to generate his dialectical transitions. Hence his speculative metaphysics does not operate according to a dialectical use of the concepts of reason as Kant understands it. We could argue for the second claim because dialectical thought does provide the conditions for its own development out of various limits it finds both within and without.

However, Adorno's claim at the end is strange. He applauds Hegel's dialectics because it provides an account of knowledge which demonstrates how it reaches out to infinity but fails. This is precisely false: it wilfully suppresses Hegel's claims for the Absolute Idea at the end of the *Logic* and Absolute Knowing at the end of the *Phenomenology*. In other places, Adorno acknowledges that Hegel's dialectics over-reaches, as he considers its limitations and, indeed, his critique of Hegel is based on this idea. What we have in this passage is Adorno's own thought breaking through into his account of Hegel. The negative moment, the failure of the judgement is, for reasons which we will consider shortly, ineliminable. We cannot, for Adorno, overcome the difference between the subject and the predicate because we cannot overcome the ontological difference between mind and world. The transition into the infinite judgement is already compromised by its conceptual formulation. Nevertheless, the dynamism of judgement, discussed above, is a major positive influence on Adorno's thought and is a commitment which he is keen to maintain in his own thinking.

5.5 Dialectics Against Dogmatism

Although not a part of the structure of dialectical thinking, it is arguable that what Adorno finds most attractive about dialectics is that it is as a move against philosophical dogmatism. Hegel talks of dogmatism repeatedly and argues that dialectics is a move against such thinking. He is unusually candid about what he considers dogmatism and he links it directly to propositional views of judgement:

> Dogmatism as a way of thinking, whether in ordinary knowing or in the study of philosophy, is nothing else but the opinion that the True consists in a proposition which is a fixed result, or which is immediately known. To such questions as, When was Caesar born?, or How many feet were there in a stadium?, etc. a clear-cut answer ought to be given, just as it is definitely true that the square on the hypoteneuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides of a right-angled triangle. But the nature of a so-called truth of that kind is different from the nature of philosophical truths. (PoS: §40)[113]

The preceding discussion shows what Hegel has in mind. Dogmatism is thinking where the truth of the assertion is either determined by considerations heteronomous to the subject in question, or where the claim to truth is premature. The former case is dogmatic because it imposes on its subject matter what the subject is rather than the material subject dictating the character of its own individual existence. The latter is dogmatic because, due to some imported epistemic element, inquiry has been brought to a halt before the truth of the subject has been realised in the manner discussed.

In Section One, Adorno repeatedly echoes Hegel's criticism of Kant that he lapses into dogmatism. In particular, he argues that Kant's thought is dogmatic in the resolution of the antinomies (this is an explicitly Hegelian claim, SoL: 190 - 9) and that he is dogmatic in his determination of the transcendental conditions of objects in terms of their sensible conditions in the transcendental aesthetic (KCPR: 232). By contrast, he praises dialectics for not succumbing to dogmatism:

[113] See also, PoL: §§45, 163, 476 & 521; PoS: §§33, 54.

> Dialectics can break the spell of identification without dogmatically, from without, contrasting it with an allegedly realistic thesis. The circle of identification—which in the end always identifies itself alone—was drawn by a thinking that tolerates nothing outside it; its imprisonment is its own handiwork. (ND: 172)

The above, constitutes Adorno's deepest philosophical commitment — avoiding the putative dogmatism of identity-thinking. It is also that in Hegel's thinking which guards against dogmatism of uncritical identifications which is most influential on him. Hegel is committed to claim that the propositional form of the predicative judgement must be understood as a false representation of the relation of an object to its properties or essence. It is vital to Adorno's thinking that predicative judgements cannot simply be taken as identical, through representation, to objects; nor are predicative judgements sufficient to the identification of objects. Indeed, it is a total commitment to non-dogmatic judgement which eventually leads Adorno away from Hegel. He argues that the irreducible mediation of dialectics in concepts and language means that dialectics as the road to absolute, objective truth is compromised.[114]

5.6 Conclusion

In this section I have considered Hegel's theory of dialectics and judgement. Dialectical judgements, according to Hegel, are valid ways for us to engage with the world. Furthermore, their predicative form is an unavoidable structure for the conceptual determination of entities. However, despite the necessity and validity of predicative judgements, Hegel's particular understanding of predication, the semantic particles of a judgement and the relationship between the judgement and the material particulars they determine, is radically different to the conception found within a propositional model. The deep metaphysical commitments implied within the dialectical account entails a different conception of truth, judgement and modality. Nevertheless, in the next section, I will examine Adorno's disagreements with Hegel. Numerically they are few; however, the consequences of these disagreements are, in fact, substantial.

[114] In this respect, Adorno is in some agreement with Gadamer, 1976: 112 - 4. See also, Houlgate's defence of Hegel on this point, 2006: 73 - 9.

6. *Adorno's Immanent Critique of Hegelian Dialectics*

Adorno practices a form of immanent dialectical critique on Hegel — the method of revealing internal tensions within the system which leads to a new, improved position (in Hegelian form) or transformation (in Adornian form). Adorno's immanent critique of Hegel results in the negation of Hegel's totalizing epistemology and metaphysics (HTT: 14). In this sense, Adorno sees himself as continuing the dialectic of Hegel's program: when the Hegelian system reaches unitary totality, this totality becomes a one-sided posit ready for negation (HTT: 13). Adorno accepts Hegel's critique of predication on the following points: that it critically reconsiders the metaphysical status of the universal and particular; that the subjective moment, predication, is considered in its heterogeneity to the referent of the subject; and, that the positivity of the immediate proposition is negated as a result of these unreconciled nonidentities (between particular and universal and between subjective conceptual determination and objective material reality).

Nevertheless, he argues that the transition of the positive judgement, through its negations into the infinite judgement, whilst dialectically consistent, misses its own dialectical moment: that objective transformation of the judgement is mediated by the subject who makes the judgement — the process cannot be entirely objective for dialectical reasons. The transition of the subjective judgement into an infinite judgement is a *labour*; something worked by the subject and therefore, for Adorno, mediated by the subject.[115] As a result, the positive, infinite judgements of dialectics are indexed to the particular labours of particular subjects at particular historical moments. The immanent critique of the claim to objective universality reveals within itself an element of its opposite: these objective claims have a nonidentical, irreducibly subjective element that is particular to a socio-historical moment. The infinite judgement, rather than a part of truth, *qua* Absolute Idea, returns in Adorno's thinking as a negated moment of socio-historical truth.

[115] This is a Marxian inflection of Hegel's dialectics. See Marx, 1970: §308 & (1998): 63. See McLellan, 1977: 198 - 203. However, this inflection is not akin to dialectical rationalism even in its materialist forms. See Lukács, 1971: 13, 122, 128 & 188 & ND: 51, 190, 376 & 396.

Valid predication, which amounts to the subjective moment in the determination of the objective, always reproduces the difference between subject and predicate (HTT: 24) as a result of the irreducible ontological difference between mind and world. The mind cannot sublate this difference without conceptualising it as something amenable to sublation, i.e. as a *conceptual* difference. Hegel is able to argue for the assimilation of ontological difference as a result of his idealist commitment to the conceptual structure of the world *qua Begriff*. Adorno's materialist inflection of ontological difference, emphasised by the *conceptlessness* of the world, entails that the difference is irreducible.

The sublation of the subjective and objective moments in Hegelian dialectical judgements is not, therefore, possible for Adorno — experience, as subjective, particular and partial, inevitably mediates its claim to objectivity with its irreducibly subjective moment. To put it metaphorically, the objective is always filtered through the subjective such that the latter cannot help but inflect the former — there is no 'pure' route to objectivity. The consequence is that Adorno's negative dialectics do not revolve around determinate negation which produces a determinate positive out of the negation of a negative. Rather, negation of the immediate proposition determines socio-historical truths, not grounds for further negation into a sublative positive. As Michael Rosen has pointed out, this is a radical departure from Hegelian dialectics and it is appropriate to ask to what extent 'negative dialectics' is Hegelian (Rosen, 1984: 159 - 60). More importantly for our purposes, are the commitments of Adorno's dialectics such that they are underdetermined to the extent that they do not 'work'?

We will consider various stages in which Adorno attacks the sublation of the negative into a moment of the positive. Considering Hegel's dialectics and its basis in a priori rationalism and associated commitment to speculative ontology, Adorno's commitment to the irreducibility of the subjective is at odds with such an idea — so much so that we will see Adorno almost misrepresent Hegel in order to maintain his praise for Hegel's dialectics. In light of Adorno's inevitable critique of apriority and ontology in Hegel's dialectics, what survives of Hegel's dialectics is the moment of negativity. The irreducibility of the negative — a

function of the ontological difference between subject and material object — marks Adorno's decisive break from Hegel's dialectics. Unavoidably, Adorno is committed to a very different view of the subject than Hegel — in this light we will reconsider the categories of the *constituens* and *constitutum*, analysed in the first section, as a constellation for critically engaging with Hegel's thinking. Having set out Adorno's general concerns we return to the specifics of judgement itself. We see how the recovery of negativity in the dialectics results in a definitive transition in Adorno's understanding of judgement. In short, we will be in a better position to develop and understand Adorno's own philosophical commitments.

6.1 Hegel's Dialectics, A Priorism and Rationalism

Rosen argues that Adorno misunderstands Hegel in at least one crucial way: that Adorno understands Hegel's philosophy to be a philosophy of experience like Goethe's.[116] If Adorno argues this it would seem to be a mistake: Rosen says that contrary to Adorno's interpretation: "against Goethe, Hegel explicitly describes his own philosophy as not being a doctrine of experience." (Rosen, 1984: 160). By experience, Rosen is here referring to our experience of social and material phenomena. This seems absolutely correct. As Rosen also says, despite being a dubious claim about Hegel, it indicates something interesting about Adorno's thinking: he is projecting onto Hegel something of his own view of dialectics. That is, Adorno's dialectics is inextricably wedded to socio-historical experience. Where Hegel's dialectics proceeds aprioristically and rationally, Adorno is in deep disagreement with him. In fairness to Adorno, I wish to show that he is at least conflicted and equivocates about the importance of experience in Hegel's philosophy. This conflict probably grows out of the great respect that Adorno has for Hegel. However, in charting this conflict, we are able to gain a much clearer understanding of Adorno's departure from Hegelian orthodoxy and what Adorno's own commitments consist in.

In the Three Theses, there is support for Rosen's interpretation. At the end of the essay on the experiential content of Hegel's philosophy Adorno makes the

[116] See Rosen, 1984: 160 & HTT: 66.

following remarks: "[Hegel] did an injustice to the experience on which he drew" (HTT: 86), explicitly attaching this use of experience to 'concrete and grounded' social experience, as opposed to rational experience. He says that "Even where Hegel flies in the face of experience, including the experience that motivates his philosophy, experience speaks from him." (HTT: 87). This is the conclusion of a complex argument: Adorno takes Hegel to be saying that reality is rational, systematic, unified and good in virtue of these achievements. On the one hand he argues that Hegel seems wrong as history testifies otherwise: social life did become systematic and rationalised, although in the form of coercion and violence. Nevertheless, the fact that Hegel understood history's progression towards this systematic and violent rationalisation of social reality, this is the deeper truth of Hegel's philosophy.

It is obvious that Adorno talking about experience of social phenomena in this quotation; he is suggesting that Hegel's philosophy is motivated by this experience. It does seem as though Adorno is situating dialectics within the flux of socio-historical experience which gets the priority of Hegel's thought incorrectly. Socio-historical phenomena are the product of the rational, dialectical force which structures reality. Such phenomena can be studied and understood through appropriate dialectical analysis, but they are not the condition of dialectics nor is dialectics ontologically dependent on such phenomena.

These worries about Adorno's interpretation persist when he says that: "[Dialectics] arises from the experience of an antagonistic society; it does not originate in some mere conceptual schema." (HTT: 82). This is still ambiguous. Certainly Adorno is right to not reduce dialectics to a conceptual schema and, as suggested, motivation could come from social experience without that experience determining the ontological dialectic. Yet the emphasis seems incorrect. In the *Logic*, the process of dialectics shows that the determinations of concepts such as being, nothing and becoming are all derived a priori — Hegel says as much (SoL: 96). Without doubt Hegel took socio-historical and natural phenomena seriously but it was with a view to show how the dynamics of dialectics determined the concrete and conceptual manifestations of material reality.

Most worrying is Adorno's claim that "contradictions, which are its true and only ontology, are at the same time the formal law of a history that advances only through contradiction and with unspeakable suffering." (HTT: 82) He is referring here to the "history of an unreconciled epoch" and making the claim that what is real are contradictions; in this instance the contradiction between the imposed claim of harmony which suppresses the violence and antagonism upon which that harmony is predicated. However, the structure of Adorno's point reveals a sliding of reference. He says that Hegel is motivated by the experience of social history and that this is its positive import for dialectics. He then says that the only ontological reality of this socio-historical import is contradiction.

This does not seem to capture what Hegel thinks. First of all, the *Logic* makes clear that dialectical determination of underdetermined ontological categories results in the final determination and fulfilment of the concept in the Absolute Idea (SoL: 843 - 4). This is real for Hegel, not contradictions as such. Hegel's thought then, in terms of history, is that history is the real and genuine resolution of contradiction. As Adorno says, Hegel acknowledges history as a 'slaughterbench' (HTT: 82). Nevertheless, for Hegel, these are passages in the determination of the Absolute Idea mediated within socio-historical reality. It is not the case that the true and only ontology is contradiction. This is Adorno's thought not Hegel's.

I think we do have reason to suspect Adorno's interpretation at times. However, it would be wrong to suggest that he was unaware of these points. He acknowledges these disagreements and also undoubtedly understands Hegel. He begins the book by acknowledging Hegel's rationalist ontology: "Hegelian reason tried to set the burden of existence in motion through the reason that obtains even in what exists." (HTT: 1). He argues that speculative thought enabled Hegel to say something, not merely about the instruments of knowledge but also about its 'essential objects'. In light of this, Adorno acknowledges Hegel's realism (HTT: 5); dialectics is not trapped within problems of subjectivity and is able to thereby engage in genuine metaphysics.

He also argues that for Hegel, nothing can be known 'that is not in experience' —

quoting the *Phenomenology*. If we look at the context, however, Adorno is referring to Hegel's claim that experience can also be expressed as: "*inwardly revealed eternal verity*." (PoS: 487) Neither Hegel nor Adorno are referring to socio-historical experience — but a rational experience of the intelligibility of reality. It seems too quick for Rosen to suggest that Adorno misunderstands Hegel.

The situation is more complicated though. These conflicting moments emerge from a dual respect and criticism of Hegel which in turn relates to what Adorno wishes to develop in his own thinking and the elements of idealist dialectics he wishes to critique. On the one hand, Adorno thinks that Hegel errs by imposing historical resolutions and harmony where it is not a reality: "in the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel broke off such thoughts by abruptly absolutizing one category — the state […] He could not resolve the contradiction between his dialectic and his experience: it was this alone that forced Hegel the critic to maintain the affirmative." (HTT: 80). Yet even as Hegel does so, succumbing to an 'untruth', there is truth here, as I have suggested: the rational coercion of the contradiction and antagonism into state-administered harmony is the grim truth of reality. What Adorno probably has in mind here is the rise of fascism. Adorno's respect then is that even as Hegel errs, he is, in some respect, correct (HTT: 81). In this sense, experience does speak through Hegel, even if Hegel is not a philosopher of experience.

That Adorno is prepared to make such a move is telling. If truth is indexed to particular socio-historical moments, it is possible that a claim is false — for example, Hegel's claim that history culminates in Absolute Knowing — but making that claim at a particular moment might tell us something true about that socio-historical moment. In other words, that Hegel said *p* indicates something true about the world even if the claim itself is not true. Hence, Adorno's complex critique of Hegel in these matters is deeply instructive of how we ought to understand his own thinking.

Furthermore, Adorno sees Hegel as a philosopher who was prepared to think beyond the given — either in its most parochial immediate form, sense

perception, through to the greater, social structures such as the nation state. He was a thinker able to see the limits of both philosophy and reality and turn them into the conditions of change. For a thinker as restless as Adorno with the status quo, Hegel is a great thinker (HTT: 80 - 1). We are about to consider the consequence of this differing view of experience which will result in a radical departure from Hegel.

Yet, in fidelity to Adorno's complex admiration for Hegel we should remember that what he sees in Hegel is the closest philosophy could ever come to fulfilling its promise — i.e., the promise which Adorno declares is over at the beginning of *Negative Dialectics* (ND: 1). If philosophy is the discipline of inquiring into the very structure of reality and in our ability to know that reality, then Hegel's absolute idealism — which, as Westphal points out, is simultaneously an attempt at epistemological realism — was our best attempt. For Adorno the disintegration of the possibility of Hegel's dialectics just is the disintegration of the possibility of a total, unified, systematic philosophy.

Just as with Beethoven, whose middle period was the apotheosis of the musical dream of the rational integration of musical material into a thoroughly satisfying musical whole, so is Hegel's philosophy an attempt to rationally integrate all its content with a structured, formal whole. Even as the musical utopia of Beethoven's music disintegrated according to the contradiction of its own totality, Hegel's philosophy did the same. This does not change the fact that if music and philosophy were still possible as rationally integrated totalities, Beethoven and Hegel are, for Adorno, the greatest there could ever be.[117] That such possibilities have disintegrated is deeply telling about Adorno's philosophy: totalizing, systematic philosophy is no longer a tenable activity. Whatever Adorno's philosophical commitments are, they will not amount to a system as he believes the time for systems is over.

[117] For analysis of Beethoven that relates form, content and truth content see AT: 56, 141, 144, 186, 271, 278; HTT: 136 & Subotnik, 1976: 250.

6.2 The Transition to Negativity

We have seen Adorno's ambiguous reception of the import of experience in Hegel's philosophy. It appears that this ambiguity is in part due to Adorno's own conception of dialectics: it is not a process which determines reality; nor is it a mode of a priori, rational inquiry. Submerging and mediating dialectics in socio-historical reality entails that the positive moment cannot be guaranteed rationally. Rather, dialectical tensions are diffused through contradictory elements which cannot be brought together into determinate, unified wholes. Unavoidably and intentionally, Adorno reverses the positive polarity and trajectory of Hegel's dialectics towards the 'negative moment'.

Adorno refers to Hegel's claim "What is rational is real; And what is real is rational" (PoR: xix) as "one of Hegel's most dubious theses" (HTT: 82). He knows that Hegel's philosophy does not amount to sets of theses, detachable from others and that this idea is, arguably, a summation of Hegel's deepest philosophical commitment. However one interprets this well-known and controversial thesis, it seems hard to reject and remain an Hegelian.[118]

Nevertheless, Adorno rejects this idea. He says:

> More than any other of his teachings, that of the rationality of the real seems to contradict the experience of reality, including that of its so-called overall tendency. But that idea is identical with Hegelian idealism. A philosophy for which all that exists dissolves into spirit [*Geist*] as a result of its movement and as the totality of that movement, and which therefore proclaims the identity of subject and object in the whole when it is their nonidentity in the particular that inspires it — such a philosophy will apologetically take the side of what exists, which is supposed to be identical with spirit. (HTT: 85)[119]

Adorno is clear in this passage that the rationality of the real is central to Hegelian idealism and results in the false and implicitly coercive identification of the subject and object within the dialectics of *Geist*. This passage is as clear an

[118] See Stern, 2006: chapter 3. See also F.R. Cristi's *Hegel's Conservative Liberalism*; P. Franco's *Hegel and Liberalism;* A. Kaufmann's *Hegel and the Ontological Critique of Liberalism*; B. Bosanquet's *Hegel's Theory of the Political Organism*, for discussions of the conservative and liberal strains of Hegel's thinking.

[119] See also: "Reason becomes incapable of comprehending reality not merely because of its own impotence but because reality is not reason." (HTT: 85) & (HTT: 81).

indication of Adorno's turn away from Hegel and towards his own conception of dialectics which has little to do with the Hegelian commitments.

I do not think that Adorno does misinterpret Hegel; he deeply disagrees with him. Yet despite that disagreement he can see the importance, the brilliance and even the truth in the place where he disagrees with him the most.[120] Due to the complete systematic nature of Hegel's philosophy and the fact that it is not co-ordinated by a set of first principles that one can choose from, one cannot readily pick and choose what one likes from Hegel: arguably one is Hegelian or not. Hegel's thought in both content and form is one idea differently considered. Adorno notes this in the fact that his deviation from Hegel is articulated in its total inversion: "The whole is the false" (MM: 50), reiterated in the *Three Studies* as the "whole is the untrue" (HTT: 87). It is for such reasons that Joel Whitebook claims that "Adorno was vehemently anti-Hegelian. He was also one of the most thoroughly Hegelian thinkers of the century." (Whitebook, 2004: 51).

Adorno's divergence from the totalizing, systemic unity of philosophy is due to a disagreement with Hegel over two related issues: firstly that the dialectic is able to overcome the nonidentity of the subject and object and secondly that the dialectic culminates in an objectively valid, rational and moral, social arrangement. Adorno responds to these claims in the negative: the nonidentity of subject and object persists; reality, at least in its present state, is not valid, rational or moral. Furthermore, the negativity of these claims is present within the dialectic itself: the immediate is realized as false (the moment of negativity); the positive and the negative are sublated as moments in both reality and in our understanding of reality. If the mind cannot sublate the positive and negative moments — indeed if the negative moment is true — then the dialectics is negatively inflected. The critical import of negativity is that the negative moment is indicative of a second-order truth. We do not find the truth in the positive sublated moment: we find truth in the negative moment.

The question for now is how does he use his own philosophical resources to

[120] Contrast with K. Popper, 1966: 32. Whilst there are superficial agreements, the methods and conclusions are thoroughly different.

argue against Hegel? This is an important question when considering my over-arching aim – to understand Adorno's philosophical commitments: what about dialectics is left such that it can criticise Hegelian dialectics even after so doing it has rid itself of essential resources (determinate negation) from Hegel's dialectics? This is especially pertinent considering he claims that due to the 'closed' nature of Hegel's dialectical system it is able to sublate and turn to its own advantage, any criticism (HTT: 2). The answer is that just when all negativity is eradicated in Hegelian dialectics, as it sublates all contradictions, Adorno thinks, dialectically, that it becomes another position, an immediacy within which its negation is already present.

Adorno's uses Hegel's thought against himself. Adorno acknowledges that Hegel's philosophy uses the limits of subjectivity as the fulcrum by which he is able to speculate beyond the subject in order to achieve an objective epistemology (HTT: 10). Whenever a position is attained, its situation as a position is used against it. The negation of the position is demonstrated to be implicit within the position and the consideration of the position and its negation is used to provide the means to develop a fuller, higher-level understanding of the position. Adorno argues that it is unavoidable that at every stage of dialectics, the subject posits both sides of the dialectic. Through this positing, the subject attempts to use the structure of the negation to overcome its own finite subjectivity, evident in the fact that it posits both sides of the dialectic, and propels itself past its own limitation into a position of total objectivity (HTT: 13).

Adorno argues:

> When the contemplating spirit [*betrachtende Geist*] presumes to show that everything that exists is commensurable with spirit itself, with Logos, and the determinations of thought, spirit sets itself up as an ontological ultimate, even if at the same time it grasps the untruth in this, that of the abstract a priori, and attempts to do away with its own fundamental thesis. In the objectivity of the Hegelian dialectic, which quashes all mere subjectivism, there is something like a will on the part of the subject to jump over its own shadow. The Hegelian subject-object is subject. (HTT: 13)

'Contemplating spirit' is not an explicit category of *Geist* in Hegel's

Phenomenology making the reference point of Adorno's claim obscure. Given the context, it seems that what he has in mind is the situation where subjective consciousness has fully realised itself. At this moment the rational self-movement of the Idea has developed into its own complete and unified fruition in reality (PoS: §§805 - 8). Adorno's point is that because the thought determinations of the subject become objective — through their development according to the sublation of deficiencies in finite determination — the subject becomes an ontological ur-principle. The subject, through a priori dialectical thought, becomes fully objective and unsusceptible to the vicissitudes of the finite reality. Indeed, those vicissitudes are reconsidered as dialectically necessary.

Adorno acknowledges that this seemingly abstract position is mediated within itself as also a position of concrete reality and hence denying its one-sidedness as pure abstraction. However, Adorno refuses Hegel his final move: that the individual, empirical subject is able to dissolve its own finitude within the unconditioned, self-movement of the dialectic. Dialectics are always a product of the subject. The subject as distinct from the object — as dialectics itself — is irreducible for Adorno:

> An "I" that was no longer "I" in any sense at all, an "I," that is, without any relation to individuated consciousness and thereby to the spatiotemporal person, would be nonsense. It would not only be as free-floating and indeterminable as Hegel accused being, its counterconcept, of being; in addition, it could no longer be grasped as an "I," as something mediated by consciousness. Analysis of the absolute subject has to acknowledge the indissoluability of an empirical, nonidentical moment in it, a moment that doctrines of the absolute subject, idealist systems of identity, are not permitted to acknowledge as indissoluable. In this sense Hegel's philosophy is untrue when measured against its own concept. (HTT: 17)

In other words, the subject is finite and cannot think its way out of its finitude and is always nonidentical to spirit. For Adorno the transition into an absolute subject — a subject which has overstepped the limitations of particularity as such, is just another position. Its negation is found immanently within it. Just when reality has become truly integrated and rational — the age of Enlightenment — is in fact the moment when the transition into the rise of

modern fascism begins. The sublation of the absolute spirit according to its negation in reality is certainly a moment of truth; however, it is not a supra-historical truth. Rather it is an historically mediated truth: the untruth of the truth of Enlightenment as enlightenment. The dialectical claim to the positive disintegrates back into the negative; reality's claim to a positive moral goodness disintegrates back into the antithesis.

This verdict is undoubtedly controversial. Houlgate would argue that despite Adorno's evident sympathy with Hegel and sensitivity to Hegel's thought, he fundamentally mistakes the dialectic. The point is that dialectics is never subjective. Its subjectivisation in consciousness is really only a moment in consciousness' coming to realise its own movement towards objectivity.[121] I cannot adjudicate between interpretations of Hegel as the intention is to delineate Adorno's thought. Insofar as Adorno thinks there is a subjective element to the dialectic and insofar as the dialectic has aims towards an ontology not limited to transcendental claims[122], Adorno seems to be arguing that Hegel is making pre-critical mistakes. The *Logic*, insofar as it is a speculative rather than transcendental ontology, repeats the mistakes of the ontological argument and the epistemology of the *Phenomenology* becomes accordingly compromised. This is precisely what Adorno does argue:

> The linguistic expression "existence," which is necessarily conceptual, is confused with what it designates, which is nonconceptual, something that cannot be melted down into identity. (HTT: 19)

Just as Kant argues in the *Transcendental Dialectic* that the logical use of concepts, divested from their material roots, leads to reason spinning without friction on the world, Adorno is repeating these charges against Hegel. For Adorno, as for Kant, concepts do not have any reality other than in their material designation. Furthermore, the categories of the linguistic designator as conceptual and the material designated as nonconceptual, or as I prefer, conceptless, are not identical. Their difference cannot be overcome nor sublated — the negative moment persists.

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[121] Houlgate's arguments against Gadamer are instructive here. Houlgate argues that the dialectic is not specific to any language or culture but is the rational following, by mind, of the objective development of reality. There is no subjective moment. See Houlgate, 2006: §4.
[122] For an alternative view: De Boer, 2004: Section VI, pp. 803 - 5.

The persistence of negativity is a deeply anti-Hegelian thought. For Hegel, a priori enquiry tells us that the conceptual under-determination of being in nothingness, demonstrates a structure of determination that entails determinate plurality. Adorno seems to be taking Hegel's *Logic* as a deep ontological argument concerning why there is something rather than nothing — as opposed to, say, a transcendental argument demonstrating the necessary conditions, *qua* categories and relations of categories, for the possibility of conceptual determination. He then argues that you cannot pull that which is not conceptual out of that which is conceptual.

If we pursue this ontological programme, it seems unlikely that Hegel could have made such an obvious category mistake. Although it does beg the question how we can analyse *concepts* and develop ontological arguments about *nonconceptual* reality. Hegel's answer shows, again, deep disagreements with Adorno: reality is conceptual. Adorno, the materialist, thinks the opposite. With this view of reality, Hegel's rationalist dialectics can proceed ontologically. We could say that the dialectical transitions of being, for example, are developed not only according to the intensional content of the concept 'being' but according to the very possibility of delineation and determination. The intention is not to produce an argument for the possibility of conceptual determination; rather it is an ontological argument concerning the dialectical nature of determination as such. This is valid because the nature of *real* determination is conceptual and can be explored conceptually.

So, it is not merely according to the *meaning* of the *concept* of being (and nothingness) that we move towards the absolute idea. Rather, if we dialectically consider the formal structure of 'no-thingness', immanent within its ontological under-determination, is the proto-notion of a singularity (the notion of there being a being). Yet the underdetermination of singularity as such reveals the immanent posit of another posit by which we are able to determine the first posit as a posit at all; this is essence. The underdetermination of essence is such that immanently within its notion is the determination of separate identities where we move from

two identical posits to two posits with different identities (concept).[123] A condition of separable identities between two identical posits is a third position from which one posit can be determined as a 'this' and not 'that'. This abstract determination marks the beginnings of the dialectic. However, it is deeply ontological, deeply realist and does not appear to resolve to an analysis of socio-historical concepts in terms of their meaning. Reality is necessarily self-actualizing.

Adorno argues that this pure a priori argument still needs to be 'worked'. Like Gadamer, the tools for its workings are concepts and concepts are socio-cultural and historical artefacts. Not only can such entities not produce entities but the idea of them ever being presuppositionless is simply false for Adorno.[124] Even if Houlgate is right and Hegel's ontology is not linked to the German language and therefore to a particular conception of language, it is still a cultural phenomenon that concepts as such can be *worked* to *produce* ontological results. That said, if Hegel is providing an ontological argument concerning why there is something rather than nothing, and if this entitles Hegel to proceed rationally developing the structure of reality, it is not clear to me that Adorno's concern does enough to question Hegel on this point. Whilst such a priori arguments are undoubtedly arm-chair philosophy, they are of course work. However, just because the argument is subjectively made, it does not entail that the content of the argument is subjective fabrication. Whether Adorno's criticism works or not, it nevertheless gives us a deep insight into his own thinking: the categorical difference between concepts and nonconceptual entities is paramount and irreducible.

That is not to say that Adorno wishes to turn Hegel into a non-metaphysical thinker as Pippin does. Rather, in Hegel, just as we find in his critique of Kant, Adorno treats him as an articulation of a real problem: a *skandalon* as he puts it.

[123] Whether or not Hegel was influenced by Cabbalism is a scholarly issue. Nevertheless, the ontology bears unmistakable similarities to the onto-theosophical theses which structure the relations of the *sefirot* in Kabbalah. See Magee, 2001. See also Scholem, 1962: 26 - 7. Tellingly, Adorno argues that the Kabbalah, meaning tradition, cannot divest itself of its historical and cultural mediation, even as it reaches for a pure, gnostic metaphysics (ND: 372).

[124] A form of this criticism was presented by R. Palm in his PhD thesis, *Hegel's Concept of Sublation: A Critical Interpretation*. See §5.3.

Interestingly, despite the fact that Adorno appears to roundly criticise Kant and move to Hegel, he recapitulates a novel form of Kant's critical-turn against Hegel.

> The debate between Kant and Hegel, in which Hegel's devastating argument had the last word, is not over; perhaps because what was decisive, the superior power of logical stringency, is untrue in the face of the Kantian discontinuities. Through his critique of Kant, Hegel achieved a magnificent extension of the practice of critical philosophy beyond the formal sphere; at the same time, in doing so he evaded the supreme critical moment, the critique of totality, of something infinite and conclusively given. Then he highhandedly did away with the barrier after all, with the experience of something that cannot be dissolved in consciousness, which was the innermost experience of Kant's transcendental philosophy, and he stipulated a unanimity of knowledge that becomes seamless through its discontinuities and that has something of a mythical illusory quality to it. Hegel thought away the difference between the conditioned and the absolute and endowed the conditioned with the semblance of the unconditioned. (HTT: 86)

In this passage, Adorno lauds Kant and decisively criticises Hegel on Kantian grounds. If we take the critical turn to be canonical in Kantianism, and an absolute dialectics of metaphysics and knowing to be canonical Hegelianism, then Adorno sides with the former over the latter. In the above passage Adorno agrees with Hegel insofar as he furthers and radicalizes Kant's critical turn but departs from Hegel as soon as he considers Hegel to have departed from the critical turn.

In this important quotation, Adorno makes explicit his critique of Hegel and situates it next to Kant in the form of a mutual critique of the two thinkers. Whilst Adorno agrees that Hegel's attack on Kantian formalism devastates the latter's philosophy, Kant's critical turn persists against Hegel insofar as the limits of epistemology return in Adorno, albeit reformulated through dialectics. Negative dialectics is the critical turn reconsidered through dialectical thinking in order to disturb any transcendental philosophy. Yet it also uses the limits of reason and subjectivity, implicit within the critical turn, to disturb any claims to absolute knowledge or purely a priori metaphysics. Its positive contribution to knowledge consists solely in the negative moments of critical and dialectical philosophy. Elucidating and exploring what this means is the subject of the final section of the thesis.

6.3 *Constituens* and *Constitutum* Revisited

Implicit within Adorno's critique of Hegel are his categories of *constituens* and *constitutum*. These critical categories were used to critique problems in Kant's theory of the subjective and objective aspects of both individuals (the transcendental vs. empirical subject) and in the relations of our epistemic practices (knowing subjects and known objects). Adorno only draws on these categories once in the *Three Theses* and to little effect (HTT: 19). Nevertheless, for the sake of understanding the consistency of Adorno's thought we can see how they are applicable to Hegel.

Adorno's worry in Kant was that the *constituens* became detached from the *constitutum* and that in this move the former was in a position to dominate the latter. Hegel wishes to sublate these categories, albeit in his own terms through material reality broadly construed (*constitutum*) and concept (*Begriff*/*constituens*). This sublation marks a transition from duality of subject and object to the rational actualisation of the *constituens* as what there is objectively: the *constitutum is conceptual* and ultimately as we conceptualise it as being. The Hegelian point is not that this is a process of conceptual domination by subjects but an objective, rational process, within the world.

As shown in the previous section, for Adorno, this *constituens* is not objective in the way that Hegel intends it. Rather it is the reification of the socio-historical labour of the *individual subjects* — that is, as subjectively, economically and politically mediated — as an absolute *constituens*. It is in this sense that he sees Hegel's philosophy siding with 'the big guns' as he puts it (HTT: 83):

> The metaphysics of labor and the appropriation of the labor of others are complementary. This social relationship dictates the untruth in Hegel, the masking of the subject as subject-object, the denial of the nonidentical in the totality, no matter how much the nonidentical receives its due in the reflection of any particular judgement. (HTT: 24)

Again, Adorno's departure from Hegelian thought is apparent. He takes Hegel's metaphysics as a product of labour which is denied in its own presentation as an

objective, unified and rational, absolute dialectics. Adorno's point is that the subjective labour cannot be made objective in this way and that the nonidentity of the subjective and objective moments, either in production, cognition or conceptual determination, cannot be worked, thought or judged away.

Furthermore, in this quotation, Adorno picks up on the issue of judgement and how the nonidentical maintains 'its due'. In the previous chapter, Adorno lauds Hegel for understanding the categorical difference between objects and conceptualisation and the nonidentity between distinctions of reason and ontological structure. However, we also saw that Hegel thought he could overcome nonidentity in his dialectics of judgement. If Adorno is committed to the persistence of nonidentity between subject and object as such, he is committed to it down to its structure in judgement. If he upholds the nonidentity of subject term and predicate and between propositions and their extensive referents and between the intensional content of propositions and their referents, and if Hegel tries to show how dialectics can overcome these problems, to what degree is Adorno even Hegelian about judgements?

6.4 Negativity in Dialectical Judgements

We have seen Adorno highlight what he takes to be the moment of untruth in Hegelian thought. The Adornian and Hegelian conceptions of dialectics and the possibility of philosophy are diverging significantly as a result – a picture of Adorno's thinking is also emerging. Adorno is clear about these distinctions himself and that he is not inheriting Hegel's dialectical method as Hegel intended. Adorno argues that Hegel requires rescuing not reviving (HTT: 83). What then does Adorno wish to revive? It appears as though it is the moment of nonidentity — that is, the negative difference between subject and object which cannot be sublated.

We can infer this just from the fact that the essence of Adorno's criticism of Hegel is that he falsely sublates the difference between subjective conceptual determinations and the objective referents of those determinations – material reality – to generate a theoretical unity between the conceptual determinations of

mind and the manifestations of world: eventually reality is how we conceive it to be. What is rescued is a dialectics of negativity. The persistence of negativity is such that even as Hegel's dialectics reaches a point of unity, for Adorno, it becomes another moment of false positivity to be negated. These abstract notions will be considered in the final section where we gain a more concrete understanding of what nonidentity is and what Adorno is referring to with this notion.

In the previous sections, Adorno argues for this persistence of the negative as it impacts on the a priori rationalism of the *Logic* and the transitions of the *Phenomenology* into absolute knowing.[125] As argued above, Hegel's theory of judgement is isomorphically engaged with his ontological commitments. Inasmuch as his conception of judgements is shaped by ontological commitments which Adorno rejects, he will also differ in his conception of judgement.[126] This is the case.

6.4.i Negativity, Judgements and Metaphysics

We have seen that Hegel argues that the dialectical transitions of judgement move towards an 'infinite conception' of the object — that is, one which moves beyond the contingency and inherent instability of the immediate proposition — towards a stable, true and real conception of the essence of the object at hand. On this interpretation of Hegel, held by Adorno, the judgement is deeply metaphysically committed. The immanent critique of the propositional form of judgement enables us to conceive of the subject and predicate as unified and mediated. The nonidentity of subject and predicate, a function of the categorical difference between their respective domains is seen, not as an expression of a metaphysical difference, but as an epistemic problem with the structure of our immediate claims to knowledge. This epistemic problem needs to be overcome — the correct metaphysics and dialectical critique of the proposition itself will achieve that.

[125] See HTT: 8 & 25.
[126] Shapiro and Nicholsen note this in the introduction and that what Adorno highlights and criticises in Hegel is largely a function of his own conception of dialectics (HTT: xxvii).

The truth of the judgement, as a product of the immanent critique of propositions, invokes metaphysics for Hegel. Getting our metaphysics right is essential for proper epistemology and our eventually coming to know reality as it actually is. If, however, the metaphysics is rejected, as we have seen Adorno do, there is a proportional effect on judgement — in terms of both the structure and content of meaning and the referents of that meaning.

If, for Hegel:

1. infinite judgements are truthful determinations of the essence of a particular according to its essence &,
2. the dialectical realisation of essences is a result of the dynamic, rational, forward motion of dialectics &,
3. ontologically, the particular is mediated by the universal and the universal by the particular,
4. such that a true judgement articulates such states of affairs,

then, Adorno cannot hold the same view of judgements because in some way or other he rejects all three of these ideas. His analysis of dialectics and its metaphysical commitments, suggest that he would be sceptical of essences developing through history rather than being developed out of socio-historical moments.[127] Furthermore, the irreducibility of the particular entity being judged is such that it cannot be mediated, without remainder, by the universal in the judgement and vice versa. Subject term and predicate are irreducibly nonidentical.

That there are no real 'essences', for Adorno, which lie entirely outside of our socio-historical labour, means that insofar as we are talking about real, material entities, we cannot think that the distinctions of reason, articulated in judgement through the predicate, represent real ontological structures. There is a difference between the referent of the subject term and how that object is and how it is conceived in the judgement according to a conceptual entity, a predicate.

[127] Adorno makes the same inversion of *Geist* and society placing the latter, prior to the former. See: HaF: 20; esp. ND: 323 - 331. Adorno seems to think that this holds true, even of our 'natural essences' HaF; 120 - 1 on the relation of first and second nature; 122 - 3 on history and labour and its relation to nature; ND: 359 & INH: 124.

This does not commit us to radical subjectivism.[128] Nor does it suggest that we cannot validly or truly talk about the world. Rather it suggests that conceptual attendance and determination — necessary qualities of a judgement — require distinctions and discriminations which may have objectively valid reference but the distinctions themselves may not accord with a fundamental ontological structure of an object.[129] Insofar as epistemology relies on judgements, our epistemic projects find their limits in the ontological difference between conceptual entities and material entities which they reference. It is to say no more than we cannot read off our ontology from our language nor should we confuse the two. It does not follow from this that we are hermetically sealed in language or that our judgements do not validly refer to the world. Nor does this make Adorno's dialectics an anodyne recognition of epistemic limits. Here he is concerned with objects, social artefacts like artworks, which are such a way as to put tremendous pressure on our epistemic resources. I suggest that this is the metaphysical commitment that underpins Adorno's theory of nonidentity, *qua* judgement, and motivates it. This is far from the hysterical attack on reason that it is often considered to be.

Given Adorno's commitment to the nonidentity of subject and predicate in judgement because the difference of the two cannot be overcome in metaphysics — and certainly not within epistemology — we can infer Adorno's negative dialectics as breaking away from Hegel's exactly at the point of the negation of the positive judgement. That is, after the very first moment of the dialectical critique of the proposition. Recall that Hegel critiques the immediate, 'positive' proposition: this rose is red. He argues that due to categorical differences between the domains of the two entities as presented, this proposition, in its immediacy, is false: a particular, as such, is not a universal, as such, and *vice versa*. We saw that Hegel's solution was to argue that particulars are able to be particulars insofar as they instantiate a universal and universals are such only insofar as they are particularly instantiated.

[128] See Adorno on relativism, ND: 35 - 7.
[129] To this extent, there seems to be some shared ground between Adorno and Nagel, 1986: 99 - 105.

Adorno agrees with Hegel that it is a mistake to conceive of the immediate proposition as a true representation of a state of affairs. He also thinks, as would Hegel, that the issues of articulating true representations of the world are also issues of metaphysics rather than semantics alone. However, he disagrees with Hegel, that the untruth of the proposition is only a moment to be sublated. Hegel's initial diagnosis of the problem of the nonidentity of our conceptual determination of entities and the entity itself, is the truth of dialectics. Despite his initial agreement with Hegel, and the fact that he believes Hegel was brilliant to critically identify the dialectical problems of propositions, Hegel's metaphysical solution was false precisely because it is a solution. There is nothing to solve, the distinctions of mind and the way the world is, are different.

6.4.ii Immanent Critique of Judgement

The sublation of nonidentity presents another moment in the untruth of Hegel's dialectics for Adorno. As he seeks to overcome immediacy of static, contingent judgements, the ultimate movement towards the identity of form, content and terms in Hegel's theory of judgement cannot help but reproduce the immediacy which it was the intention to overcome. That is, whilst dialectics was intended to be a presuppositionless actualization of both truth and reality, its very possibility as such, relies on the very immediacy and presuppositions it set out to overcome.

> But like every aspect of the whole in Hegel, [the standstill of the system achieved in its actualization in Idea] is simultaneously an aspect of every individual part, and its ubiquity may have prevented Hegel from acknowledging it. He was too close to it; it concealed itself from him, a piece of unreflected immediacy. (HTT: 134)

Adorno argues that the complex micro-movements of Hegel's thought obscures from him the persistence of immediacy which remains in the overall arc of his dialectics.

This would be a puzzling criticism to Hegel and again reveals the difference between Adorno and Hegel. Hegel's point was never that we are wrong in our immediate judgements, rather they are open to scepticism. Adorno quotes the

Phenomenology where Hegel makes this point: immediate appearances are the richest experience of the truth that we have; however, the problem is epistemic, we do not understand the truth of appearances and so appearance does not appear as truth.[130] A better understanding of the truth of appearance will correspond to social progression. However, the immediate was never false as such. Therefore, why would Hegel worry that the immediacy of experience is preserved? Arguably, preserving immediacy through its sublation as metaphysical insight was precisely what he was trying to do: preserve and justify realism against sceptical doubts.

Adorno knows this. The problem is he cannot accept this dialectical insight for his own commitments. Again, what we have is Adorno's own thinking breaking through into his critique of Hegel. Empirical experience as conceptually mediated, presents its content with the partiality that comes from conceptual distinctions and attendances. All of those attendances and distinctions may be valid and, for some objects, even sufficient to the identification of that object; however, the difference between conceptual distinctions and ontological distinctions will mean that there will always be a nonidentity between the two modes of determination. Furthermore, in the case of many objects, the ontology of objects will be such that valid conceptual distinctions and determinations will indicate both a history of the object and ontological issues which do negate the sufficiency of appearance.

In short, Adorno does not misunderstand Hegel as much as thoroughly disagree with him over metaphysical issues. If we accept Adorno's critique of Hegel's metaphysics then we can see how and why he criticizes Hegel's theory of judgement.

> In the dialectic of identity, then, not only is the identity of the nonidentical, as its higher form, the A = B, the synthetic judgment, attained; in addition, the content of the synthetic judgment is recognized as already a necessary moment of the analytic judgment A = A. Conversely, the simple formal identity of A = A is retained in the equivalence of the nonidentical. Often, accordingly, the presentation makes a backward leap. What would be new according to the simple

[130] C.f. PoS: §47.

> schema of triplicity reveals itself to be the concept that formed the starting point for the particular dialectical movement under discussion, modified and under different illumination. (HTS: 135)

In the above quotation, Adorno presents the dialectics of immediacy in identity statements. We know that according to Hegel the judgement is a determination of one particular entity according to some general term. Insofar as the predicate can be asserted as something about a subject, it is necessary that the predicate is not identical with the subject. This says no more than a predicative judgement, that has any claim to knowledge, is not mere tautology. Nonidentity in this instance is no more than the idea that the subject and predicate terms are not the same linguistic particle and are not extensional synonyms. As discussed, the subject and predicate are taken as different in order that one can be meaningfully asserted of the other. This is what Adorno means when he says that the nonidentical is presented at its higher form A = B. This is the form of the synthetic predicative judgement.

The key issue is what linguistic particles — subject terms and predicates — reference. One move would be to say that any predicate about which we have realist convictions will pick out a real property of an object. As such there will be some correspondence or identity relation between proposition and object. Importantly, it also commits us to the idea that predicates represent real ontological divisions and reference properties which are in some way distinct from their property-bearers as discussed above. Hegel wishes to negate this understanding of predication where the predicate references a distinct property, without any idea of the mutual mediation of particular and universal *qua* essence. Interestingly then, Hegel seems to hold that the proposition, as characterized, does not properly respect the metaphysics of identity. Objects and their properties are mutually mediated according to the object's essence which is self-identical (but which, of course, needs to realise itself through its determination in the particular).

The negation of difference in unitary mediation according to essential identity is key in Adorno's analysis of Hegel. In the quotation Adorno makes the point that the truth of $A = B$ relies, materially, on the self-identity of A: ($A = A$). For

Hegel, the nonidentical predicate, *B*, is a way of considering *A* which is true iff what *B* says of *A* is essentially true of *A*. *B*, then, is a way to attend to *A* conceptually, but is true iff, modally, *A is* '*B* way' and *B is* '*A* way′ where *A* being *B* way is tantamount to *A* being *A*, *qua* essence. Therefore, the predicative judgement is only true if *A* (particular *A*) = *A* (concept *A*). The difference between *A* and *B* needs to be sublated to reach a fuller understanding of what is meant by *A* = *B* and its truth value. Adorno's point then is that *A* = *A* persists throughout Hegelian dialectics. It is the basis upon which something nonidentical can be asserted, it is the basis upon which the predicative judgement can be considered true, and it is the basis upon which the predicative judgement, as mere proposition, can then be sublated. It is also, therefore, the end result of cognition. In other words, the *identity of non-identical* elements is the formula of Hegel's idenititarian dialectics.

This is not yet an argument against Hegel: this merely elucidates his position. Furthermore, the point of Hegel's dialectics is to assert that the claim *A* = *A* as it presents itself immediately, returns as (*A* = *A*)′ at a deeper level of understanding. The concretion and realisation of (*A* = *A*) means that there is at least an epistemological difference between these semantically identical claims. Nevertheless, Adorno notes that the epistemological difference inevitably leads to a reconsideration of the first position — the dialectic has retroactive force, as he puts it (HTT: 134). It shows that what turned out to be (A = A)′ as an epistemological insight, was actually expressed in (*A* = *A*) — we simply did not realise it at that moment. So the difference between (*A* = *A*) & (*A* = *A*)′ is also sublated and maintains the unity of the moments of the system.

To generate the critical moment Adorno uses the dialectical notion of negation against Hegel. As all entities are assimilated to the concept — either in their historical development or as a metaphysical insight with retroactive force — Adorno questions the possibility of the absolute concept: as something unmediated by its negative other.

> In Hegel’s case, despite the extreme enhancement of his claim to derive the nonidentical from identity, the thought structure of the great *Logic*

> implies the solutions in the way the problems are put, instead of presenting results after striking a balance. While Hegel's critique of analytical judgments is exacerbated to the thesis of their "falseness," everything is to him an analytical judgment, a turning to and fro of the thought without citation of anything extraneous to it. It is a moment of dialectics that the new is the old, and otherness is familiarity. (ND: 64)[131]

As mediation is one of Hegel's key insights, Adorno tries to be more Hegelian than Hegel. Absolute Idea finds its negation in material reality which is not itself conceptual – it is material. That is, in what is extraneous to it. In Adorno's understanding of dialectics, as soon as a position is reached it begins the dialectical process again. For Adorno this is the first-order truth of dialectics. That Hegel worked within the abstract medium of pure thought — never properly grounding his dialectics — is a function of his own epistemological commitments. Just like Kant, then, Adorno criticises Hegel for importing a pre-critical element into his philosophy, the commitment to absolute objectively valid knowledge, and arranging dialectics around this commitment. It is implied in Adorno's thought that such a commitment is itself an appropriate object of dialectical critique. The result being that such objectively valid knowledge, cleaved off from the vicissitudes of the socio-historical world becomes false precisely because it is removed from its historical context. Conversely the very idea of a complete and objectively valid system of knowledge tells us something true about the epoch within which such an idea was generated.

Hegel's philosophy revolves around the recognition of the difference between concepts and the objects to which they refer — in terms of the particular and the universal. However, determinate negation requires that this difference be rendered in a manner that can be conceptually sublated. We have seen that for Hegel the concept is rational and its inner rationality is the self-condition for its own transformation. This insight can be achieved through a priori metaphysics. As we have seen, Adorno will not grant Hegel the belief that such inquiry escapes the ambit of the socio-historical for what he considers are dialectical reasons. Furthermore, and in the same fashion, he will not grant Hegel a conception of the concept as such, or any individual concept, ontological reality

[131] See also Adorno quoting Benjamin: 'dialectics at a standstill' (HaF: 171).

or priority over and above the socio-historical realm. The judgement then, is not a moment in the objective narrative of our individual conceptions coming to match the objective conception of reality — in virtue of which the difference between the subject and predicate can be sublated — the judgement is always a socio-historical moment where heterogeneous elements are brought together. As we will see, this does not preclude truth, but it does require that truth is indexed to particular socio-historical moments. This is precisely what Adorno does say.[132]

If one grants Adorno his criticism of a priori metaphysics then we can see why Hegel's realism is transformed back into an absolute idealism ready for negation. Rather than representing reality as such, it represents one conception of it, indexed to a particular socio-historical moment, and that socio-historical moment can be brought to bear on the claims of the system for the concept. Adorno judges history to have spoken against Hegel insofar as Hegel thought that it was the nature of reality to be rationally unified. Adorno is arguing that it was the nature of the Enlightenment that reality is unified in the way that we conceive it. Furthermore, Adorno argues, particularly in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, that the increase in the rationalization of society has led to its fragmentation and increasing irrationality.

The irreducible heterogeneity of the elements of a judgement emerges, therefore as a key idea in Adorno's thought. Once the concept and its articulation in predicates is ontologically separated from its subject matter, and given that material objects are socio-historically mediated, then it is necessary for the concept to change accordingly. The dialectical transitions of the concept cease to maintain ontological priority over the contingencies of the socio-historical world but become part of the flux of that world. Appropriately he makes this commitment explicit in his critique of Hegel:

> Hence the concept that remains true to its own meaning must change; if it is to follow its own conception, a philosophy that holds the concept to be something more than a mere instrument of the intellect must abandon definition, which might hinder it in doing so. The movement

[132] See ND: 144, 371.

> of the concept is not a sophistical manipulation that would insert changing meanings into it from the outside but rather the ever-present consciousness of both the identity of and the inevitable difference between the concept and what it is supposed to express, a consciousness that animates all genuine knowledge. Because philosophy will not relinquish that identity, it must accept this difference. (HTT: 71)

Adorno's point is that our conceptions of objects are our means of identifying objects and also, in their ontological difference to objects, are heterogeneous to objects. As a result, inasmuch as a concept is to be referred, via the predicate, to the object, via the subject term, the concept cannot be reified in the form of a definition. It must change as objects change socio-historically. Understanding what this dialectics consists in and what about objects facilitates such a dialectic will be the subject of the final section.

6.5 Conclusion

Adorno's immanent critique of Hegel is undoubtedly controversial. Considering the many interpretative possibilities open to us, and given that Adorno's immanent critique rests on just one, his own, his critique is not a 'knock-down' of Hegel's dialectics. That said, Adorno's critique is at least tenable, and given a specific interpretation of the dialectic, not without serious force.

Aside from scholarly issues, much of the force of Adorno's argument will rest on meta-philosophical considerations concerning the possibility and scope of metaphysical thinking. I have argued that Adorno evidently takes Hegel seriously as a metaphysical thinker and even where he believes that this leads Hegel into 'untruths', there is a second-order truth to be gained from the untruth: even as Hegel's thought carries over into dogmatism, for Adorno, that dogmatism is indicative of a real social dogmatism. He does not, therefore, wish to revive Hegel's dialectic, nor rescue it through defusing it as a non-metaphysical program.

Nevertheless, philosophically, Adorno does not accept a purely a priori, metaphysical mode of thinking. Inasmuch as Hegel is committed to such thinking and inasmuch as such thinking plays a constitutive role in his dialectics,

Adorno seeks to use a particular mode of dialectics in order to destabilize the metaphysical results. What in Hegel impresses Adorno the most is that it provides the resources for thinking historically, and for thinking in terms of mediation: that however an object is presented, either discursively within the medium of a judgement, or even empirically in perception, it is Adorno's philosophical experience that the positivity of the judgement or the givenness of the appearance turns out to belie a complexity which requires dialectical thinking to negotiate.

Even if Adorno is right about Hegel, which is controversial, Rosen points out a serious problem for Adorno. If Adorno wishes to be a dialectical thinker, but he refuses to acknowledge the possibility of the subject and predicate sublating each other according to their heterogeneity — indicating a genuine heterogeneity between the determinations of mind and the ontological determinations of reality — how does he suggest that the dialectic advances itself? This is particularly critical, if, as I have just suggested, Adorno still considers dialectics as an appropriate critical orientation to the philosophical problems we face. The final section is concerned with making sense of Adorno's dialectics, how it works and, as a result, providing a tenable response to Rosen.

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7. *Negative Dialectics and Concepts*

The previous two sections have reconstructed key aspects of Adorno's immanent critiques of Kant's and Hegel's philosophies. We have seen how, given Adorno's understanding of these philosophies, he thinks that they generate internal contradictions and inconsistencies — for example, the requirement of dependence and independence of transcendental and empirical subjectivity in Kant; the aporia of absolutes in Hegel's dialectics. The question is then, how are these critiques helping us to understand Adorno's philosophy as opposed to simply being localised critiques of two other thinkers?

The answer to this is to highlight a function of immanent critique and dialectical thought. Whilst Adorno does not think that the generation of negativity within any position can be sublated into an outright positive, as we have seen, he does still think that the understanding of the relation of the negative and positive itself leads us to a higher level of critical understanding. That is, if we can at least see what the contradictions are and how they are generated then we gain conceptual, critical resources for reflecting on thinking itself and upon the complex character of phenomena which we think about.

Throughout these two sections a constellation of three ideas has emerged. They each capture some idea which Adorno believes seems important to be aware of when we think philosophically, criticise other philosophies and also, as much as possible, in our daily interactions with our environment broadly construed. They are: the conceptless [*Begriffslose*], nonidentity [*nichtidentität*], and mediation [*Vermittlung*]. Each of these ideas has emerged as a critical concern from Adorno's interaction with Kant and Hegel and it will be the concern of the final section of this thesis to make sense of these notions and show how they operate within Adorno's thinking.

7.1 The Conceptless

The central concern in Adorno's critique of determinate negation is the way that

objects are identified in judgements. Adorno's criticism, as we have seen, is that Hegel's rendering of the particular fails to maintain the difference between the conceptual and the irreducible, unique particularity of that which is not-conceptual – the material object. The particularity is conceptually determined in such a way that its particularity can be conceptually negated without remainder. This rather odd notion — 'without remainder' — will be considered fully in the next section; however, the idea is that there is no way that the particular is, which cannot be rendered conceptually through universals according to essence such that the particular is thoroughly conceptually transparent in judgement. Indeed, as we saw, Hegel thinks it is mistake to think of particularity as such — the way that the particular is, is universal.

In regards to Kant, despite the importance of epistemic and metaphysical restraint, Adorno diagnoses an epistemic immodesty: the aim is still to give an account of the systematic sufficiency of our conceptual determinations of objective phenomena. Again the ontological difference between concepts and their nonconceptual referents — literally objects in their materiality, their conceptlessness — is circumvented.

In Adorno's critiques of both Kant and Hegel, he thinks that the attempts to overcome the conceptlessness of the world, in their different ways, fall into contradictions. Whilst very few doubt that there is some ontological or categorical difference between mind and world, Adorno is observing a philosophical compulsion based on an epistemic ambition that we should be able to overcome this difference. Furthermore, the attempt to overcome this difference results in a loss of contact with and interest in the world. Not only does Adorno worry about this epistemic goal, he argues that philosophy, in order to lay claim to substantial insight, it must engage with that which is conceptless whilst respecting its categorical difference. In the following section, this notion will be explored through the interpretations of other commentators on Adorno, and my own position will be developed.

7.2 Nonidentity

Nonidentity is already implicit in the philosophical issues highlighted in the notion of conceptless. It is in this sense that these concepts are a part of a constellation – they overlap and aid in the mutual understanding of each other. Insofar as Adorno is emphasising that which is conceptless as the appropriate object of philosophy, he is emphasising a category of objects which is different, not identical, with the mind. Attention on that which is different, as long as this difference is maintained and respected, offers us an objective aim of enquiry and an immanent limit on our enquiries. It is in this way that Adorno thinks that we can maintain the notion of objectively valid knowledge, a basis for critical self-reflection, and a sense of epistemic humility.

In Adorno's interpretation of Kant, the latter could be considered a thinker of nonidentity. Although we have seen this interpretation as largely critical, insofar as Kant's philosophy has an element of nonidentity, it has much to recommend it. Adorno praises Kant for what he notes is a 'highly developed sense of ontological difference': that mind and world are different and belong to different ontological categories. As such, there is a limit or block in Kant's account of cognition and knowledge which results from this nonidentity. Where Kant erred is in reifying the non-identical elements in transcendental idealism such that knowledge consists in a sufficient account of discursively mediated reality. Furthermore, the reification of the conceptless, which is effectively the noumena in Kant, does not lead to greater control over the world – an Enlightenment aim which Adorno's isolates. Rather, it solidifies reality as an alien otherness entirely beyond our control – hence Adorno and Horkheimer's argument in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* that the Enlightenment used conceptual control over the world to lift itself out of myth and uncertainty and in so doing entrenched the conditions for a new mythological relationship to the world, albeit suppressed under the narrative of science and rationality. Adorno's overarching criticism is that the non-identical elements need to be set back in motion such that mind and world may be genuinely responsive to each other.

For Hegel, nonidentity is an explicit notion and undoubtedly grounds Adorno's

use of it. Like Kant, Hegel considered experience and showed in the *Phenomenology* that the difference between mind and world, if not properly reflected upon, produces unstable epistemology and metaphysics. Hence Hegel also notes the nonidentity of mind and world is a key issue which has to be negotiated.

One important way that this issue of nonidentity is considered is through judgement. We saw that in Hegel's theory, subject and predicate particles are considered as non-identical elements. Obviously the predicate, as a linguistic particle, is not going to be materially identical to that about the object which it refers. The more interesting point is that due to the extensional difference between the particular and the general, Hegel believed that the identity stated in an immediate proposition does not obtain. Nonidentity becomes a constitutive issue in our thinking about the world.

We also saw how Adorno argues that, in virtue of the conceptlessness of material particulars, Hegel is wrong to think that nonidentity can be sublated. This is a radical departure from Hegelian metaphysics and entails a serious undermining of Hegel's epistemology. A direct consequence of Adorno's critique on identity in Hegel's judgements is that nonidentity persists rather than being sublated. However, due to the conceptlessness of particulars and the limits it presents to conceptual determination, nonidentity cannot simply obtain between linguistic particles as they refer to objects. Nonidentity persists within judgements and between judgements and the material world they are intended to represent.

Nonidentity is, therefore, subtlely different from its form in Hegelian dialectics. There it denotes the problems of difference pertaining to the abstract and the concrete in Hegel's thinking. Adorno argues that nonidentity persists in judgement for two reasons: firstly, because in order for the particularity of objects to be thoroughly sublated in dialectical judgement, the particular must be considered conceptually. The problem is that this eradicates that about the particular which is non-identical. As a result, the sublation is properly speaking, only an idealist, identity-thinking operation — it does not properly orientate itself towards the objective particularity of the thing judged. Secondly, and this will be

explored fully in the final section, the object is such that there are ways that it is non-identical with itself. In virtue of the irreducible nonidentity of the object to itself, this nonidentity must be preserved in the way we judge and determine objects

7.3 Mediation

Mediation is the third concept in the constellation, which informs Adorno's thinking. Furthermore, it is concept developed directly out of Hegelian dialectics. Mediation is best understood in dialectical philosophy as a modal notion. The idea is that the very instantiation of an object, or even a category or concept, entails that the entity in question is transformed – it is mediated as a result of its instantiation. We have already seen this idea at work in Hegel's theory of judgements. Universals are mediated by their instantiation in particulars; particulars are mediated through their instantiating universals. Mediation points us to the idea that the way things are is neither pure, discrete nor simple: dialectical ontology suggests that entities interpenetrate each other as a consequence of their very instantiation.

I argued that Adorno's deepest critique of Hegel and his development of the categories in the *Logic*, is that the complex microstructure of the *Logic* and its dynamic movement belies a fundamental stasis. That is, Hegel believes that he can begin from a position which is pure and presuppositionless; in other words, Hegel believes that he can begin from a point that is not mediated. This very first move then results in a structure which is at once deeply dynamic, dialectical, and also, in the final reckoning analytic for Adorno. It is a philosophy that suppresses its socio-historical mediation.

Adorno is deeply impressed by Hegel's dialectics as found in the *Logic* and the *Phenomenlogy*. However, he applies Hegel's own logic of mediation to the starting point as such. He agrees with Hegel that being is always mediated through the particular. However, he also uses the notion to criticise Hegel arguing that even starting points are mediated. Being as such, even prior to its dialectical negation by nothingness is already a mediated conceptual notion.

Undermining the 'start' of Hegel's Logic is indicative of Adorno's rejection of an Enlightenment dialectics. He can accept dialectical change but the structure of progressive *Geist* as Hegel understood it, is at least beyond our knowing.

7.4 Negative Dialectics

The dialectical and critical transformation of Kant and Hegel's categories into the forms elucidated above play a constitutive role in the Adorno's negative dialectics. Indeed, they form a constellation of critical ideas which do not aggregate to form a new position or method but rather help to orientate our philosophical activity. Giving a proper account then of these categories and understanding their critical import for epistemology and metaphysics amounts to understanding Adorno's dialectics and what negativity consists in for him and how he understands judgement. Giving such an account will be the subject of the next section.

The aim of Adorno's philosophy is not philosophy as such. This may sound strange but it is to emphasise that what is important is not philosophy itself, it is not to be a good philosopher, or to have the 'right' system. Rather, our philosophy is as good as it helps us to be the sort of people who would never commit the atrocities of Auschwitz again. Philosophy is valuable and valid insofar as it helps us to understand the world and our relationship to it better; such that when we engage with it, discursively, we can do so in an ethical manner.

To reflect this critical priority, my account of Adorno's philosophy is not orientated towards giving a philosophical system or position. To do so would require distorting Adorno's thinking and would require us to deviate from the motivation for philosophy. My account is to elucidate what his commitments are. The difference between these two enterprises can be understood through a consideration of Brian O'Connor's thesis that Adorno was a transcendental philosopher. That is, that Adorno's philosophy gives us a philosophy by which we can gain the necessary conditions for genuine experience and demonstrates other models of experience to result in incoherency (O'Connor, 15). As

O'Connor puts it:

> Adorno sees it as his task to establish a form of philosophy that through a metacritique of epistemology will be capable of rescuing the idea of experience from a range of basic philosophical assumptions to be found throughout a range of positions within modern philosophy. (O'Connor, 2004: 3)

In so doing, Adorno will form "a synthetic philosophical position": "a negative dialectic" (O'Connor, 2004: 43).

There is much in O'Connor's account of Adorno that is persuasive and we are in agreement over the basics of nonidentity and identity-thinking, for example. Furthermore, his theory that Adorno is a transcendental philosopher, whilst surprising, is not implausible. Nevertheless, it should be noted, that this contention is at odds with Adorno's own view of his philosophy and seems incompatible with aspects of his thinking.

Adorno argues, explicitly, that this is not what negative dialectics is:

> Once dialectics has become inescapable, however, it cannot stick to its principle like ontology and transcendental philosophy. It cannot be maintained as a structure that will stay basic no matter how it is modified. In criticizing ontology we do not aim at another ontology, not even at one of being nonontological. (ND: 136)

This is a point of mediation: negative dialectics is also mediated. We cannot separate off negative dialectics from its subject matter. Adorno's claim for the mediation of dialectics seems hard to align with O'Connor's claim for two reasons: firstly, O'Connor commits Adorno, via negative dialectic (singular), to a determinate philosophical position; Adorno argues that negative dialectics is not reducible to a philosophical position and explicitly argues against any form of '*prima philosophia*'.[133] Secondly, Adorno explicitly takes transcendental philosophy to be involved in producing such a determinate position. By contrast Adorno's negative dialectics (plural) is a critical activity which is reformed

[133] "The metacritical turn against the *prima philosophia* is at the same time a turn against the finiteness of a philosophy that prates about infinity without respecting it." (ND: 14) It seems hard to think that a philosopher has no theoretical principles and if this is O'Connor's claim it is minimal, possibly to the point of triviality.

according to its material. Whatever dialectical findings we make at one time may not be valid for another; therefore the shape or structure of dialectics may also change.[134] Dialectics does not adopt a standpoint (ND: 6) even towards itself.[135]

Despite Adorno's own claims for dialectics, we may interpret claims such as "Dialectics is the consistent sense of nonidentity" (ND: 5) transcendentally. However, treating this claim in that way runs against the grain of what has been developing in Adorno's analyses: that we begin with the objects and critically examine them in an almost experimental fashion. We assume as little as possible. We proceed with an awareness of nonidentity but no ready-made theory of nonidentity. It may be that this is all O'Connor has in mind; then it seems more appropriate, given Adorno's own concerns about epistemic humility and theoretical openness, to consider his analysis in their commitments rather than as a position. In that way we are less likely to reify Adorno's dynamic, materialist mode of enquiry into an abstract, ahistorical set of principles or conditions.

In the next section, I develop this constellation. Through the discussion of textual evidence and also through the provision of an extended example, I intend to highlight many of the complex metaphysical commitments which underpin Adorno's thinking. Again, this does not commit him to a system of thought or to a system of a priori ontology. It does, however, suggest that he is engaged with the fundamentals of traditional philosophy and has interesting, compelling and relevant insights to offer.

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[134] See Menke, 1998: 209.
[135] See Jarvis' excellent analysis of Adorno's materialism as a move against transcendental argument and method, chpt. 6.

Section Three

The Recovery of Negativity

Introduction

The culmination of Adorno's critique of Kant and Hegel resulted in the production of a constellation of concepts. These concepts evolved out of the immanent critique of Kant and Hegel's epistemological and metaphysical positions. They indicate key ideas and commitments which inform Adorno's own negative dialectics. This final section will explore these concepts.

The first chapter will consider the notion of the conceptless. This notion is particularly important because Adorno highlights it repeatedly throughout his writings as the proper object of philosophy. Furthermore, the interpretation of this concept offered here is different to the understanding of much of Adorno scholarship. I argue that Adorno is concerned with an ontological or categorical difference between that which are concepts and that which are not concepts, i.e., the world. This concept is usually rendered in Adorno scholarship as nonconceptual where it designates some form of nonconceptual content in experience. Whilst the nonconceptual interpretation is certainly tenable, I will argue that my interpretation has textual support and is able to offer a greater fidelity to Adorno's deepest philosophical commitments.

Adorno's theory of nonidentity will then be considered and will be shown to be intimately linked to the issue of conceptlessness. The conceptless indicates the central philosophical issue — put in other familiar terms it is a difference between mind and world — and indicates a priority for Adorno. Whilst mind is undeniably the medium of our experience and cannot help but have subjective priority, this should not suppress the fact that the mind is dependent on the world and we should be mindful of that priority. That is, we become aware of the particular discrepancies between the determinations mind makes of the world and the way the world actually is — these particular discrepancies are the concerns of nonidentity. Nonidentity emphasises the awareness of the conceptless in its

categorical difference to mind; but specifically, it is a critical awareness of the particular ways in which conceptual determinations of the conceptless contain aporias and tensions. Analysis of these tensions helps us to orientate our thinking back towards objects rather than being merely satisfied by their nonidentical determinations in mind.

Nonidentity is best analysed through a particular example as the specifics of any nonidentity are determined by the different objects in question. I will consider an aesthetic case of nonidentity. This is especially appropriate as aesthetic nonidentity is an issue which motivated Adorno's thinking and because issues of nonidentity are endemic to artworks. That is, Adorno argues that issues of nonidentity have a constitutive role in the ontology of artworks.

Through the analysis of artworks, I will develop Adorno's theory of mediation. It becomes apparent when we consider artworks that nonidentity obtains not merely between the world and our determinations of it but that nonidentity actually occurs within objects themselves. That is, there are ways that objects are such that they are not-identical with themselves. Adorno's understanding is that identity is fluid, dynamic and involves heterogeneous elements. Mediation is a modal notion which, in the case of artworks, says that the way these objects are, their identity as artworks, is mediated through heterogeneous socio-historical phenomena. Critical analysis of nonidentity leads us to understand the modality of artworks through their mediations. We find that this analysis provides us with the material for the persistence of dialectics without determinate negation. Hence, we answer Rosen's worry that Adorno's dialectics lacks 'motor force' without reaching towards a notion of the nonconceptual in experience.

Finally, I will draw these notions together to show how they constitute a negative dialectics. In the first two sections, I have analysed Adorno's critique of Kant and Hegel. However, to equate critique with rejection would be to mistake Adorno's intention. Adorno does reject both thinkers — in one sense — and yet in another sense his thought is a sublation of their philosophies: the critiques he performs on Kant and Hegel are dialectical and result in the familiar mode of both cancelling their thought whilst preserving them. I will argue that this

cancelling and preserving is actually achieved through the mutual critique of both thinkers. Adorno uses resources in each thinker — as he thinks that both thinkers have achieved genuine insight into our thinking about the world — to counter-critique the other and through that mutual critique Adorno is able to generate his negative dialectics. In so doing, Adorno recovers 'the negative' from each thinker. Consequently, Adorno's critique of the judgements is a critique of the imposition of positive determinations onto the world; for him, dialectical judging involves a deep epistemic commitment to open-ended, fluid, sensitive and receptive thinking.

8. Conceptlessness and Non-conceptual

Adorno argues that the conceptless is the proper focus of philosophical analysis. According to him, Kant and Hegel acknowledge the concern of conceptlessness but, for different reasons, fail to do justice to these concerns. Rather, they attempt to overcome the problem. Here the concept of the conceptless will be analysed. Two possible interpretations — both derived from Foster — will then be considered which highlight the importance of this notion. These two interpretations will be called 'the unsayability thesis' and the 'ineffability' thesis. However, neither provides a satisfactory account of conceptlessness. Instead a theory of conceptlessness will be proposed which emphasises the metaphysical commitments of the notion. Conceptlessness is primarily a way of emphasising the ontological difference between language and the objects language represents. Through this emphasis we are brought to consider the metaphysics of objects — referents of language — on the one hand, and the status of our linguistic determinations, as they represent the world, on the other.

8.1 Conceptlessness and its problems

There appears to be two facets to this notion: 'conceptless' [*Begriffslose*] refers to what might appear to be a trivial difference between concepts as such and their material referents which are conceptless, i.e., not conceptual.[136] As we will see, Adorno's point is that this difference is neither trivial nor can it be overcome. In the second instance, and more controversially, the conceptlessness of the world indicates that the world is, in its difference to linguistic entities, in some way, beyond semantic representation. As we will see, in its specifics this will become an issue of nonidentity.

Unless one is committed to strong idealism or a reductive physicalism on the other pole, the first claim seems trivially true. The problem is the second claim

[136] I use the term material here to emphasise Adorno's materialism. In this context, materialism is not a reductive metaphysical position but simply serves to indicate the difference between the world and concepts. See ND: 196 - 7, 365.

which raises issues. On first glance there is no reason to think that because of an ontological difference between language and the world it represents, concepts cannot sufficiently represent the world: if the idea is that the second claim is entailed by the first, this is already a weak sounding thesis. Second, making any claim about the conceptless, if the conceptless is that which is 'unsayable', talking about it seems to involve a performative contradiction.

Nevertheless, Adorno states that philosophy should be orientated towards the conceptless:

> The distinction I would make is to say that the interest of philosophy can be found to lie at the precise point where [Hegel] and the entire philosophical tradition have no interest, namely, in the *non-conceptual* [italics in original]. (LoND: 68)

Given initial concerns about the notion of conceptlessness, Adorno must give an account of the conceptless which allays the concerns of triviality, *non sequitur* or unintelligibility. The most obvious way is to understand the conceptless as involving some sort of commitment to non-conceptual content.[137] That is, there is some form or 'part' of experience which is either not rendered conceptually or is prior to conceptual rendering. However, neither of these claims regarding non-conceptual content is available to Adorno because he is a conceptualist in his theory of perception: "Because entity is not immediate, because it is only through the concept, we should begin with the concept, not with the mere datum." (ND: 153).[138] In line with his understanding of Hegel, Adorno therefore

[137] See O'Connor, 2004a: 37. O'Connor argues in favour of non-conceptual content in experience rather than a metaphysical claim about non-conceptual entities as such. He takes the latter thesis to equate to a commitment to a thing-in-itself. As we will see, ontological difference does not commit us to a Kantian position of the thing-in-itself which he rightly points out Adorno criticises.

[138] O'Connor (2004b: 61 & 172) equates conceptualism with idealism and says that if you are committed to the former then this precludes the nonidentity of the material entity. I do not think that this follows. Concepts may be the medium of experience but this does not mean that conceptual experience is incapable of critically engaging with the non-conceptual, material objects of experience to show that our conceptual determinations of those objects fall short in some way. This can all be achieved conceptually and this is what Adorno argues. This is a point made by Nagel also, 1986: 103. See also Hammer, 2008: 69.
As Adorno himself states, the problem of concepts is not that they are concepts and that material world is conceptless, it is that the concept denies change in what it determines. This will be developed in the next chapter on nonidentity. However, it is important to note it here. Awareness of the former helps orientate us towards a critical sensitivity to the latter. As the conceptless changes it produces the critical difference with its concept to be analysed as a moment of

seems opposed to either notion of non-conceptual content. Yet a commentator such as O'Connor would worry that this precludes the possibility of a 'conceptlessness' — or at least one which is knowable or intelligible.

The problem is further exacerbated because, despite the importance of the 'conceptless', he gives very little analysis of the concept. Indeed, he explicitly argues that reifying the conceptless into the 'non-conceptual' misses what is essential to the notion: "The ontological difference is removed by virtue of the conceptualization of what is non-conceptual into non-conceptuality." (ND: 123)[139] Hence, I suggest a more literal translation of *begriffslos* than non-conceptual — with its analytic connotations of non-conceptual content in experience — and use the term 'conceptless'.[140] Furthermore, instead of conceptual analysis, and in keeping with his constellatory technique, he explores the concept through its relations with other concepts — in particular, nonidentity and mediation.

I now turn to Roger Foster's interpretation of Adorno. What is interesting is that he deals with conceptlessness indirectly: he examines the notion of unsayability [*unsagbare*], which amounts to a possible interpretation of conceptlessness. However, we will see that Foster's interpretation does not properly allay initial concerns and in fact introduces new problems.

8.2 Conceptlessness, Unsayability and Identity

One interpretation of Adorno's theory of conceptlessness can be derived through analysis of another notion, the unsayable [*das Unsagbare*].[141] Whilst Foster focuses on this concept, I suggest that this concept does the same philosophical work as conceptlessness.[142] In this section, I will develop two related

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nonidentity. "The concept's immanent claim is its order-creating invariance as against the change in what it covers. The form of the concept - "false" in this respect also - would deny that change." (ND: 153) Nonconceptual experience, as such, is not required for this critical engagement nor does it block the slide from materialism into idealism as there is no such slide.

[139] See also, AE: 111 & 140.

[140] I alter translated quotations accordingly from 'non-conceptual' to 'conceptlessness'.

[141] Here I use Foster's translation; others have used 'unutterable' and 'unnamable'.

[142] It is worth noting that *begriffslos* is employed with far greater frequency than the relatively

interpretations from Foster's work — the 'unsayability thesis' and the 'ineffability thesis' — which I take to be consistent with other interpretative work conducted on Adorno. I argue that Foster's analysis is valuable but that he makes a critical mistake: he argues, erroneously, that Adorno is committed to the idea that talking about the conceptless or the unsayable leads to a failure of language and ultimately to some form of linguistic scepticism: that our linguistic articulations about the world fail not only to accurately represent the world but fail to refer to the world.

Foster criticises the view, propagated even by thinkers within the Frankfurt School such as Habermas and Wellmer that Adorno's negative dialectics amounts to a collapsing of a particular conception of rationality which it itself utilizes — that Adorno holds antiquated views of language and logic which led him to an hysterical, self-defeating philosophy.[143] Foster, along with other writers such as Coles, Cook and Bernstein, point out that Habermas misunderstands Adorno's critique of rationality and the limits of language.[144] Far from being naïve, Adorno's critique of rationality is so constructed because he perceived problems within the Analytic programme — not because he didn't understand it.

What Adorno is concerned with, Foster rightly argues, is critical reflection on the articulation of experience in language and the implications of this reflection for our understanding of the world and our relationship to it (Foster, 2007: 33). Adorno's target is the role of identity-thinking in experience and our thinking about it — this was discussed at length in the critique of Kant, see Chapter Two and Three. He is concerned with the role of identification in language as it obtains between our propositions and our concepts and the material entities in the world which such judgements putatively identify. As we have already seen:

> Identity is the primal form of ideology. We relish it as adequacy to the thing it suppresses … After the unspeakable effort it must have cost our species to produce the primacy of identity even against itself, man rejoices and basks in his conquest by turning it into the definition of the

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scarce term, *Unsagbare*.

[143] See Habermas, 1984: 144 - 5, 384 - 7 & 2003: 283. Wellmer, 1991: 71 - 4.

[144] See Coles, 1995: 28 - 31 - with whom I agree in his interpretation of conceptlessness and nonidentity; Cook, 2004: §3 & Bernstein, 2001: §2.

> conquered thing: what has happened to it must be presented, by the thing, as its "in-itself." (ND: 148)

Adorno's position revolves around the following key ideas: identity not only constitutes a relation between utterances and referents, it comes to constitute the referent. This constitution is represented in the form of the definition where definition seems to be propositional such that the definition *becomes* the 'thing in-itself'. We have seen this worry, in different forms in Adorno's critique of Kant and Hegel.

Foster's gloss on Adorno's move away from identity-thinking is useful:

> [W]orking against [the] abstraction [involved in general cognition which ignores the uniqueness of particulars, theory] must take the form of re-creating, reweaving the webs of significance that link elements to one another as they figure in subjectively saturated experience. Adorno describes this interpretive practice in terms of a "force field." Rather than constituting the experiential item as a discrete and repeatable exemplar, the subject makes interpretive connections between the experiential item and all the elements surrounding it in its historical context, "attracting" those elements toward it by demonstrating how the positioning of those elements illuminates the intrinsic features of this experiential item. (Foster, 2007: 17 - 8)

So, what Adorno objects to is the truncation of experience within identity-thinking. Negative dialectics, rather than legislating against reason or logic — or even identity — simply allows us to reflect on the world and our relationship to it in a more fruitful manner. This seems in line with my contention Chapter Two that the quantitative and qualitative interpretations of identity-thinking are not our only options.

Adorno's idea is that the subject term, a name of an object, and whatever predications are true of it, may well be valid ways to talk about an object. Our predicates may articulate valid conceptual distinctions about an object. However, we should not, from there, think that our predicates articulate the way an object is from an ontological point of view. We will see that Adorno's immanent critiques of objects, whilst not ontology as such, suggest that the ontology of objects are complex in a way which is often overlooked in identity-thinking modes of reference. It is on this basis that I suggest that Adorno has important

metaphysical commitments. For the identity thinker, the object just *is* how we validly talk about it and it is on this basis that our talk about and identifications of objects are adequate to them. It is in this sense that, for Adorno, our articulations about objects are inadequate to objects. Moreover, if we take it that all our definite descriptions, articulated in predicates, are adequate to picking out the object in its particularity, we misunderstand objects and we falsely equate the particular object with our linguistic representations of it.

Yet Adorno's position simply appears false: we successfully identify, using indexical, demonstrative judgements — which employ naming or identifying concepts — specific empirical objects such as tables, chairs and the like all the time. Furthermore, Adorno's position seems to suggest that objects have properties which lie beyond the possibility of linguistic articulation. Even if this is the case, how is this a knowable fact about objects?

We may also wonder whether Adorno is guilty of an error which Frege was attempting to eradicate. Is Adorno running together the idea of an object (which is the subjective representation of the object) with its objective determination in a proposition? Propositions are not intended to capture our subjective ideas of objects, as we represent them to ourselves; propositions are intended to render objective states of affairs which are linguistically transparent.[145] This worry is not as strong as it might appear. Whilst Adorno does not have as clear a distinction between the proposition and the idea of an object as Frege does, Adorno's argument does not rest on this distinction. What he is bringing into question is our ability to articulate supposedly objective states of affairs in judgements. In effect he is therefore drawing into question the notion that propositions can make objectively valid claims in the way that Frege thought they could.

As much as Foster correctly builds a case for the importance of identity-thinking, his analysis of conceptlessness exacerbates the preliminary concerns one may have about how we fail to identify objects. Foster interprets Adorno's critique of

[145] Frege, 1948: 212 - 4.

identity-thinking as leading to a radical and substantial 'unsayability thesis'. I suggest we understand this unsayability thesis as amounting to Foster's understanding of conceptlessness in Adorno's philosophy. In turn the unsayability thesis opens up a second possible interpretation, the 'ineffability thesis'. Here I simply state my own interpretation so that we can contrast it with Foster's — I shall not discuss it in detail until later on:

> (1) *The Unsayability Thesis* — the metaphysical doctrine that there are parts of the world — properties or, more generally, entities — that lie beyond linguistic articulation.
>
> (2) *The Ineffability Thesis* — Foster does not propose this thesis but I propose it as the strong claim, which may have to be faced if one follows Foster as far as Unsayability. The world 'appears to us' as unrepresentable in language. Experience of the world is founded in pre-conceptual experience; we approximate (unsuccessfully) this experience in language.
>
> (3) *The Ontological Difference Thesis* — My thesis, which opposes the direction of (1) and (2), takes conceptlessness to consist only in the awareness of ontological, or categorical, difference between our concepts and that which is conceptless — i.e., literally that which is not itself conceptual, the material world. I shall avoid the initial concern of triviality by showing, through nonidentity, that appreciation of the ontological difference between the world and its linguistic representations leads us to a non-trivial rethinking of our theory of objects.

The first two theses will be considered and, through their rejection, my own interpretation will be offered alongside a development of Adorno's theory of nonidentity and mediation. Textual evidence for Unsayability will be considered which will demonstrate problems with Foster's interpretation. I will then show how my interpretation better explains such evidence and other textual evidence brought to bear.

The 'unsayability' thesis is captured in the following quotation:

> The "more" that Adorno refers to … is the excess of what calls for expression over what is sayable. To become aware of that "more" in using a concept, Adorno wants to say, is to be aware of the distance that separates *our* experience from the experience prefigured in the longing that animates thinking. By experiencing the failure of our concepts in this way, we can measure the distance between current experience and a nonreduced experience. And the process of measuring that distance would be equivalent to raising suffering into the concept. (Foster 2007: 30)

Foster is arguing that experience of the physical world, as it is constructed through our propositional judgements, truncates the richness of experience: there is both 'more' to the objects of our experience and to our experience than is presented in our propositional articulations.

The problem is that Foster does not give an explicit account of how concepts and the world fail to match up. Rather, he moves straight to the idea that Adorno is committed to some sort unsayability and tries to give an account of that. Unfortunately his account of unsayability appears to undercut the resources required to give an account of the 'more' which instigated the problem. He argues that whilst the unsayable cannot be grasped conceptually, the failure of our conceptual articulation of the world will act as a guide for what is missing in this conceptual articulation. So we can somehow 'measure' the distance between inarticulable experience and articulated experience through that which can be said but which fails to say what it attempts to say. I am not sure that this makes any sense.

This worry appears in other commentators such as O'Connor's borrowing of Strawson's phrase that objects are 'weighty' (O'Connor, 2004: 57) and that

> to recognize the nonconceptual dimension of objects as we experience them is to recognize their influence on our epistemic activities. The relational quality of experience is the attempt of conceptuality to map out the nonconceptual, an attempt that involves the assumption that our conceptuality is limited by the experience of the nonconceptual. (O'Connor, 2004: 56)

O'Connor does not develop his account of the nonconceptual here. Objects are 'weighty' and have *a non-conceptual dimension* in experience which limits the

conceptual within experience; we can recognize and 'map' their nonconceptual influence on our epistemic activities. Again, the claim seems improbable, is difficult to grasp and seems to undermine our critical purchase on the world, not enhance it.

In addition to worries about the sense and utility of the Unsayability thesis and its associates, there is the worry of the derivative, ineffability thesis. Neither Foster nor O'Connor proposes this. Yet it is worth including here as there is logical space for such a notion. The thesis of nonconceptual experience may lead to such a possibility. This slide would be problematic insofar as Adorno explicitly argues against such ineffability.[146]

Foster's unsayability thesis proposes that there is a 'more' to the material world which is experienced but inarticulable. 'More' suggests a part or aspect of the world. The problem is, *how much* does this 'more' account for? Conversely, what part or portion of the world do we properly render in our judgements — and how 'much' of the world does this account for? Foster does not seem to offer a thorough analysis of this 'more' and seems, without further argument, in danger of succumbing to the response to the quantitative and qualitative interpretations of identity-thinking — that there are always more propositions which could be true of objects and/or there are always more fine-grained distinctions to be made about objects. In Chapter Two neither of these positions appeared particularly promising.

Furthermore, it appears that if we follow Foster as far as an Unsayability Thesis, he loses the resources to argue against the notion that the world is *entirely* ineffable — completely beyond linguistic representation and articulation. What we are left with is a world given to us in pre-linguistic experience, thoroughly non-conceptual, leaving language to spin without friction or purchase on the world. A model of experience and cognition which takes experience to be

[146] ND: 79 - 80. This is not itself an argument against theories of ineffability but an interpretation of Adorno's thinking. See Cooper's view of ineffability and mystery, 2002: §11. Indeed, even before we reach a position of ineffability Foster sees that his thesis edges him towards a spiritualization of experience (2007: 6). Adorno wishes to re-enchant experience but not with transcendental, spiritualized metaphysics (ND: 405). Rather, the spiritualization of experience consists in open, yet critical attention on the mundane (ND: 408 & MM: 155-7).

immediate and cognition as thoroughly inadequate to that experience is consistently rejected by Adorno. As I have mentioned, Adorno is a conceptualist and rejects 'immediate', non-conceptual experience (ND: 153) and flatly criticizes any view which divorces our cognitive capabilities from their subject matter as lapsing into another form of abstraction — 'that which cannot be cognized' (ND: 110).

That Foster does not give a satisfactory account of conceptlessness may be considered reasonable because conceptlessness cannot be given a conceptual account. Yet, given Adorno's philosophical commitment to *critical* praxis, there is a worry here that dogmatism creeps back into our epistemic practices, albeit in a negative form: there is a way the world is but we cannot talk, or even think — discursively — about it; however, we must in some way adjust our philosophical commitments according to how it is.

Before accepting a thesis of unsayability, which admittedly is not an unreasonable way to interpret Adorno, we should first of all ask what Adorno means by an insufficiency of our conceptual resources to the world. I think that his claim is tenable but not in such a way that it leads to the notion that there is something about the world which is *beyond* linguistic articulation. Rather, we can make the ontological difference claim much more interesting by arguing that critical reflection on the ontological difference between objects and concepts provides the conditions for a limit on the scope of modes of articulation.[147] We do not need the further claim that there are esoteric *qualities* of objects occupying an occult *region* of experience. The question to which I now turn, is how do we understand objects such that the emphasis on the sheer conceptlessness of objects indicates something theoretically substantial? I will argue in the next section that the import of conceptlessness and our critical ability to navigate this problem is grounded in two of Adorno's most important concepts: nonidentity and mediation.

[147] See MCP: 7, 141 & LoND: 57.

9. *Nonidentity, Mediation and Dialectical Aesthetics*

How ought we to interpret Adorno's concern with the relationship between our conceptual determinations of objects in language, and the referents of those determinations — the objects themselves — which are conceptless? We have already seen Adorno critique identity-thinking in both its Kantian and its Hegelian forms. The attempt to do justice to the conceptless is immediately an issue of identity-thinking. Adorno admits that identity-thinking is in some way unavoidable, yet he thinks that we can still think about objects in such a way as to do justice to their conceptlessness. Critically reflecting on our determinations of objects is sufficient, as we will see, for highlighting differences between objects and our conceptual determinations of them. Critical reflection on particular instances reveals particular moments of 'nonidentity'. Nonidentity is therefore intimately linked to a concern with the conceptless.

Nonidentity was introduced and developed through Adorno's critique of Hegel in Section Two. We saw that whilst Adorno praised Hegel for noting the moment of the non-identical which instigates the dialectical motion, he criticised him for sublating nonidentity into a revised conception of identity.

In this section, Adorno's theory of nonidentity will be analyzed. We will see how nonidentity is a key notion in Adorno's constellation of dialectical concepts alongside conceptlessness and the notion of mediation. I argue that nonidentity obtains in two forms: one, between objects and their discursive representations in language; secondly, within objects themselves. Both will be discussed in this section. We will also see that in Adorno's theory of nonidentity he has metaphysical commitments: that the *way* that objects are, in that they have 'non-identical elements', is such that they present distinct problems for our epistemological activities and ambitions. According to Adorno's dialectical aesthetics, an aspect of an artwork's nonidentity is its *mediation* through the socio-historical. That is, that both the way that society is and the history of both society and the object itself have constitutive roles in the determination of the object as an artwork. Therefore, mediation is important in our consideration of

issues of nonidentity: it is a key metaphysical concern in understanding what an object is and how it comes to be that sort of object. It also points to an extremely challenging and complex theoretical situation for understanding and identifying certain kinds of objects whilst paying attention to their nonidentity. Attention to nonidentity, and the fact that objects are mediated by heterogeneous influences, is what enables us to do justice to the conceptless particular and, contra Rosen, provide the resources for dialectical thought, without requiring a theory of non-conceptual content or unsayability.

9.1 Identity, Nonidentity and Artworks

The thesis of 'ontological difference', appeals to some problem of identity. Is the medium through which we identify objects amenable to identification of those objects or is the difference between the object and the medium of representation unavoidably going to lead to distortion of the former? Adorno argues that language is certainly able to identify and represent objects; however, he also argues that language can come to distort the objects of experience if we take language to be sufficient to the representation of that object as it really is. I have suggested that the problem can be dissolved, in some sense, by developing a critical awareness of the way that language masks the nuanced and complex ways that objects are. This enigmatic notion concerning the nuances and complex ways objects are and the way that we must approach such objects in language will be developed through an extended example in the second part of this chapter. However, to develop our understanding of conceptlessness, it is necessary to develop our theoretical resources in regards to nonidentity[148] and mediation.

As we saw, Adorno critiques Hegel's eventual sublation of nonidentity back into identity. For Adorno, nonidentity is irreducible and this is because objects themselves are complex locations of nonidentity. To reiterate, Adorno rejects Hegel's dialectical sublation of nonidentity as a moment in identity.

> The fundament and result of Hegel's substantive philosophizing was the primacy of the subject, or — in the famous phrase from the introduction to his Logic — the "identity of identity and nonidentity."

[148] Hegel uses *Nichtidentität* which is taken up directly by Adorno: see SoL: 411 - 6.

> He held the definite particular to be definable by the mind because its immanent definition was to be nothing but the mind. Without this supposition, according to Hegel, philosophy would be incapable of knowing anything substantial or essential. (ND: 7)

He praises Hegel just before this quotation for reorientating philosophy towards substantive concerns — i.e., concerns of nonidentity. However, in this quotation he reiterates his concern that idealist dialectics results in a primacy of the subject which is predicated on the identity of identity and nonidentity. It is on this basis which philosophy could know the substantive in its essence. Yet in the next section, Adorno goes on to argue that this move draws Hegel's attention away from his original insight, away from the conceptless, in its individuality and particularity (ND: 8). His eventual lack of interest in the particular, according to Adorno, coupled with the elimination of the non-identical as such, are indices of the reification of Hegelian dialectics.

I have analyzed Adorno's critique of Hegel on this point. But we see the rejection, again, in the use of the term 'supposition'. Adorno does not think that the difference between our linguistic identifications of objects, through abstract, general universals and sortals, can be brought together with our perception of the particular, contingent object, into a totalized, essential understanding of the entity. The reason for this we will discuss below. The guiding idea, however, is that objects are not amenable, because of the character of their own nonidentity, with the sort of sublated identity Hegel is arguing for.[149] To understand Adorno, it is most helpful to consider identity within the aesthetic context of artworks because it is artworks and analysis of them which motivates Adorno and because nonidentity reveals itself clearly in artworks.

The philosophical import of Adorno's aesthetics is found in an analysis of the failure of identity-thinking: it fails to account for the particular way in which artworks exist. The complexity of Adorno's aesthetics is in part due to the dual awareness that there is some sort of truth, albeit historically indexed, about whether an object is an artwork but that that 'truth' is based on a thoroughly complex social state of affairs and a thoroughly complex internal state of affairs

[149] This point is noted by Stone, 2008: 60.

within the artwork: "The task of aesthetics is not to comprehend artworks as hermeneutical objects; in the contemporary situation, it is their incomprehensibility [*Unbegreiflichkeit*] that needs to be comprehended." (AT: 157) In this section and the next I will consider this complexity. In terms of the argument, this complexity will mean that objects are not amenable to conceptual identification as understood within the identity-thinking paradigm. This entails that the very fact of an object's conceptlessness is significant in our understanding of them. In other words, ontological difference between language and its referents is nontrivial.

Artworks are 'enigmatic' or 'riddles' [*Rätsel*] and make for highly 'unruly' objects.

> The progressive spiritualization of art in the name of maturity only accentuates the ridiculous all the more glaringly; the more the artwork's own organization assimilates itself to a logical order by virtue of its own inner exactitude, the more obviously the difference between the artwork's logicity and the logicity that governs empirically becomes the parody of the latter; the more reasonable the work becomes in terms of its formal constitution [*Formkonstitution*], the more ridiculous it becomes according to the standard of empirical reason. (AT: 158)

The self-identity of certain objects, mediated through the integration of its form and content, is such that the rules and logic of identity-thinking are unable to adapt themselves to the representation of the object. Art-works result in the parodying of identity-thinking. The organization of an artwork is such that that about it which validates its sorting as an artwork disrupts the sufficiency of our representations of the object as an 'artwork'.

This is obviously a metaphysical issue and superficially makes for an unusual theory of identity:

> Artworks synthesize ununifiable [*unvereinbar*], nonidentical elements that grind away at each other; they truly seek the identity of the identical and the nonidentical processually because even their unity is only a moment, and not the magical formula of the whole. (AT: 233, trans. modified)

Adorno's argument, which I will analyse below, is that artworks are in some sense not the unified wholes that identity-thinking — sortal determination of the

entity by the concept 'artwork' — takes them to be. The self-identity of an artwork is complex and the identifications of artworks in aesthetic propositions are proportionally complex. This complexity is captured by nonidentity.

9.2 Artworks, Nonidentity and Enigma

Adorno's aesthetics is concerned with the ontology of 'the enigma'. The mode, or way art-objects are, is enigmatic or riddle-like. Adorno's aesthetics is concerned with what an artwork is; and if the way an artwork is 'is enigmatic' then explaining the metaphysics of the enigma would be to explain the core of Adorno's aesthetics. The enigmatic nature of artworks is in some sense a problem of self-identity: their elements do not 'fit together' to form a static, integrated whole. Adorno highlights this strange metaphysical quality in the following fragments:

> Artworks are self-likeness freed from the compulsion of identity. (AT: 166)

> Artworks share with enigmas the duality of being determinate and indeterminate. (AT: 165)

> The objectivation of art through its immanent execution requires the historical subject. (AT: 222)

> In the artwork the subject is neither the observer nor the creator nor absolute spirit, but rather spirit bound up with, preformed and mediated by the object. (AT: 218)

According to Adorno, metaphysically, artworks have the following characteristics: they are in some way determinate, in some way indeterminate, in some way self-identical and in some way not self-identical. Furthermore, their reality, as objects, requires their mediation through the subject where that subject is not an individual, collection of individuals nor Hegel's absolute spirit, but rather historically mediated 'spirit'.

What Adorno has in mind is the following: the determinacy of an artwork is both its material manifestation (which depending on the medium of the artwork may or may not persist unchanged through time) and also what can be determinately

said of it, *qua* art, at a particular moment in time. Insofar as its material substance constitutes an artwork, it is self-identical. This is no more than the application of the 'indiscernibility of identicals' to the material manifestation of an artwork.[150] That is, whatever propositions are true of the material, are true of the artwork. Insofar as both the matter and the artwork share the same properties they are the same object.

However, as much as Adorno acknowledges the self-identity of the artwork in one respect, he thinks that it also has moments of nonidentity because it is historically *mediated* — hence the intimate relationship between mediation and nonidentity in Adorno's constellation of concepts in negative dialectics. Artworks are special objects insofar as their material manifestation bears a modal relationship to that which is external to it — *contingent social arrangements* impact on the material art-object which means that there is a way that the art-object is, *qua* art, which is *indeterminate* and *dynamic*.

This modal relationship introduces dynamic indeterminacy in two ways: firstly, the socio-historical conditions for the sortal determination of the artwork change, opening up the possibility of contradictory sortal determinations indexed to different times; secondly, at certain socio-historical moments, the Modernist epoch of art-making, for example, there may be socio-historical conditions whereby the art-object instantiates contradictory propositions under different respects.[151] For example, an object considered from one perspective will be an artwork and considered from another perspective it will not be considered an artwork. This specific form of nonidentity will be examined through a case study in the following section. For now, I will consider them theoretically. The different socio-historical mediations of the ways the art-object is, amounts to its nonidentity.

[150] The indiscernibility of identicals is a metaphysical notion of identity that if entities are the self-same object then necessarily every property of one is a property of the other and vice versa. If this is not the case then these two entities must be distinct objects.

[151] It is important to note, and I will return to this point, that considering the temporal and scope of an aesthetic proposition is necessary for producing a non-contradictory aesthetic theory. Adorno's argument, properly rendered, eradicates contradiction as such, through a thorough sensitivity to the scope of propositions. He realises that the price of this sensitivity is to jettison certain models of identity.

9.3 Material Constitution

To help make sense of Adorno's argument, I wish to show that there is an analytic precedent for the sorts of concerns Adorno is wrestling with. The metaphysics of material constitution, as argued by David Wiggins and John Heil, is a recognition of this problem: one object, differently considered, seems to make true claims about further objects which do not appear to be the same. Appropriately the form of the debate they consider is the relationship between a statue and a lump. Are we confused that single objects can generate ontologically distinct objects or are we confused that there is really any difference between statues and lumps?

The solution of Wiggins and Heil, as opposed to that of Gibbard and Lewis, is amenable to the Adornian position. Rehearsing Heil's analysis of the metaphysical problems of the material constitution of artworks will help us to understand the sorts of metaphysical commitments which underpin Adorno's theory of nonidentity and how socio-historical properties can provide the metaphysical basis for the claims being made by Adorno. I am not suggesting that we can or should supplant Heil's thesis for Adorno's or that the material constitution debate, is equivalent to Adorno's debate. Adorno approaches the problem from within the problematic of aesthetics not metaphysics. As a result, where Wiggins and Heil end their metaphysical analysis, Adorno begins his analysis. Nevertheless, I will argue that Heil's analysis complements Adorno's in at least this instance.

The material constitution debate concerning artworks is a version of an ancient metaphysical debate. As formulated by Allan Gibbard, the issue concerns the identity relationship between the material, *qua* matter, of a statue and the statue, *qua* artwork.[152] The problem concerns the following: in some ways the statue is dependent on the matter from which it is constructed, hence there seems to be some identity. However, the statue does not appear reducible in identity to the lump of matter — hence the statue and the matter are not identical. The problem

[152] See Gibbard, 1997: 93 - 126.

is two-fold then: if the statue is putatively 'more' than the matter but there is nothing 'more' present materially, what 'more' is the statue? Furthermore, if there is only one thing present, the lump of matter, how do we make sense of the notion that the statue is not identical to the material? Here we can see a classical philosophical paradox which seems to revolve around there being a 'more' about an entity as we saw with Foster's unsayability thesis. If we can find a solution to this problem then maybe we can make sense of Foster's use of the term 'more' without pursuing his theory into that of 'unsayability'. Furthermore, if it turns out that this 'more' concerns socio-historical modal properties of lumps *qua* artwork, which Heil argues it does, then we have a way to motivate the metaphysical validity of nonidentity as concerned with socio-historical mediation.

Rea formulates the puzzle of the statue and the lump in the following propositions:

> (1) The parts of a statue compose a statue.
> (2) Every statue is necessarily such that its parts are arranged statuewise.
> (3) The parts of a statue compose a lump.
> (4) Every lump is such that its parts might fail to be arranged statuewise. (Rea, 1997: xxv)

He then argues that (1) and (2) provide us with an 'essentialist assumption' where the parts of the statue compose something that necessarily bears a particular relation to its parts; whereas (3) and (4) provide us with what he calls a 'Principle of Alternative Compositional Possibilities' assumption where the statue does not bear that particular relation to its parts.

Both Wiggins[153] and Heil, in their slightly different ways, solve this paradox by arguing in favour of *coincident entities*. Coincident entities enable us to consider the metaphysics of 'artworks' as a complex of entities with different persistence conditions which enter dynamic relations with each other. Furthermore, it provides the metaphysical basis for a theory of nonidentity which properly

[153] See Wiggins, 1998: 3 - 10.

locates the mediatedness of an object's socio-historical properties. Whilst this is very much a live metaphysical debate, I suggest that Heil's solution gives us a way to understand *metaphysical* foundations for the complex dynamics which underpin Adorno's aesthetics of nonidentity.

Heil contends that objects are simply bearers of properties (2003: 172). Whatever bears properties is an object; objects, insofar as they are objects, bear properties. He then approaches the problem of the statue and the lump from the point of view of the persistence conditions for each. He notes that they have different persistence conditions: that about the statue which enables it to persist through time is not the same as that about the lump which enables it to persist through time. That about these entities which engenders the difference in persistence conditions turn out to be modal properties; statues and lumps have different modal properties which are integral to their constitution. This analysis allows Heil, given his theory of objects, to draw three conclusions: statues and lumps are distinguishable objects with differing sets of properties; modal properties play a constitutive role in the constitution of certain types of objects at least; certain types of objects can 'overlap' or 'co-locate':

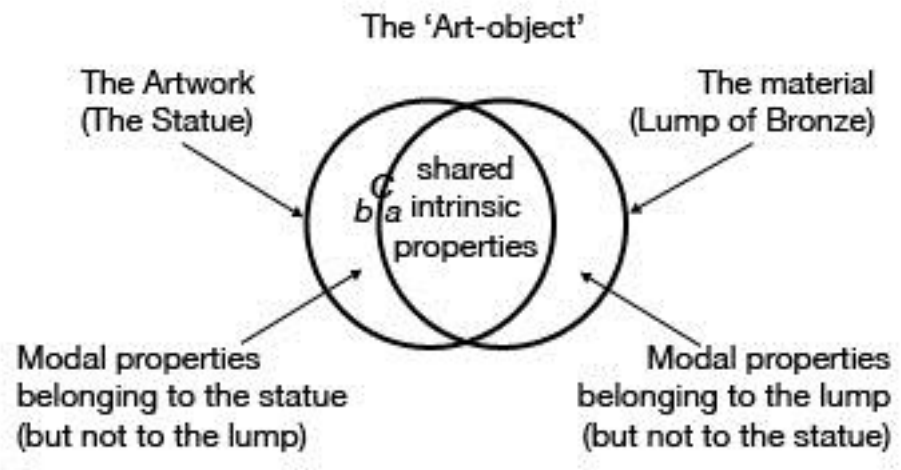
> We have seen already that, owing to differences in persistence conditions, [a] statue and [a] lump of bronze differ in their modal properties. A statue could undergo certain changes that a lump of bronze could not undergo; and a lump of bronze could undergo changes that would result in the statue's ceasing to exist. (Heil, 2003: 183)

So, for example, a lump of bronze could undergo a change in shape which would be destructive of the statue — the property of the shape of the statue is a necessary persistence condition for it but not to the lump of bronze. Conversely, we could scoop out the inside of the statue, *qua* lump, leaving the skin of the lump to instantiate the statue. In this case, there is a 'pre-scoop' lump which is destroyed and a 'post-scoop' lump′ which is created.

Heil takes such modal considerations as important identity conditions across objects:

> Suppose, however, modal properties of the statue and the lump of bronze are included in the mix; suppose we extend the idea that *a* and *b* are the selfsame object only if every property of *a* is a property of *b* and vice versa to include modal properties. Then, if *a* and *b* differ in their modal properties, *a* and *b* must be distinct (see diagram). (Heil, 2003: 182)

Fig. 1



Heil's conclusion is:

> Applying the principle of the indiscernibility of identicals, and including modal and historical properties in the inventory of objects' properties, we can see that the statue and the lump of bronze must be distinct individuals. If the statue and the lump of bronze differ in which of their properties are essential, which accidental, all the more reason to distinguish them. These individuals coincide spatially for a period of time—the period of time during which, as we might put it, the statue is made up of the lump of bronze. (Heil, 2003: 183)

Heil's argument is that the principle of identity itself actually forces us to recognise a multiplicity of objects (we may have more objects than the material object and the art-object: we may have a functional object, a sentimental object, etc.), co-locating but not co-varying.

Heil does not use the term nonidentity and does not need to: he is interested in the numerical identity here. However, his theory provides a metaphysical background against which we can understand the sort of complexity Adorno

works with in his theory of nonidentity. Adorno uses the term nonidentity because his analysis of this complexity, from an aesthetic as opposed to an ontological point of view, is to note tensions which exist across co-locating objects. Furthermore, when Heil notes the metaphysical complexity of what appears as a unified simple object, he underlines Adorno's contention that the metaphysical simplicity assumed in identity-thinking is false. Pursuing Heil's theory that we incorporate historical and modal properties in the inventory of properties which distinguishes a statue, we have the metaphysical resources to argue for the mediation of statues. The constitutive role of the socio-historical in instantiating objects which are in some ways identical to and distinct from their material objects speaks in favour of a theory of mediation — the mediation of the statue by the socio-historical.

If we use the term 'statue' as a sortal for identifying similar entities, and if Heil is correct that a statue is a *distinct object* with *different properties and persistence conditions from that entity which determines its material basis,* we make a serious metaphysical and logical mistake if we believe there is some equivalence relation which obtains between the statue and the lump, i.e., that about the lump which can be considered statue-like and then determined as a particular statue, is that about the particular statue which can be considered lump-like and determined as a particular lump. Adorno worries that just such equivalence is made. Furthermore, it is captured by the fact that we have a singular term 'artwork' which treats extensionally distinct objects as a unity. Insofar as Heil is right, we have a case for nonidentity, as Adorno understands the problem, in its most simple form: that which we take to be a self-identical unity — an 'art-object' — is in fact not self-identical in the manner assumed.[154] Aesthetically,

[154] Of course I have not justified Heil's position and there are counter-positions such as Gibbard's. Nevertheless, if Adorno is right about the aesthetics, and if it is aesthetics is in line with the co-locating objects thesis, then he adds force to this position over Gibbard's. Gibbard accepts that statues and lumps can coincide and exist at different times. However he does not accept the thesis that this commits us to overlapping objects. Furthermore, he believes that we should be able to provide a 'physical', systematic account of statues and lumps to 'track' the relationship between any one particular statue and its material which we can achieve by naming (Gibbard, 1997: 97). He argues, modally, that in any world, a particular statue is always equivalent to its particular material - changes in either the lump or the statue designate different worlds without transworld identity of the entities in question. Gibbard's argument is exceptionally complex and well beyond the scope of this thesis. However, Adorno would certain question Gibbard's lack of analysis concerning the conditions by which a lump of clay is statue-like. Gibbard takes statues

nonidentity is far more complex than this but metaphysically I suggest that it is no more controversial than Heil's thesis.

The 'Art-object' then is not a simple object with uniform modal properties. It is already a tremendously complex 'object': this is the metaphysical basis for how we ought to understand nonidentity insofar as it characterises the issue of the self-identity of artworks: objects, as we normally identify them, are chimera of (many) dynamic objects with different persistence conditions, responsive to different types of changes in different kinds of states of affairs.

Adorno is unequivocal that ignoring the complexity of identity, reducing it to a 'self-same' unified simplicity, seals us off from substantial knowledge of the object:

> (1) By the formula of "self-sameness," of pure identity, the knowledge of the object is shown up as hocus-pocus, because this knowledge is no longer one of the object at all: it is the tautology of an absolutized *νοησιζ νοησεωζ* [thinking of thinking]. (ND: 160)

and

> (2) What is, is more than it is. This "more" is not imposed upon it but remains immanent to it, as that which has been pushed out of it. In that sense, the nonidentical would be the thing's own identity against its identifications. The innermost core of the object proves to be simultaneously extraneous to it, the phenomenon of its seclusion, the reflex of an identifying, stabilizing procedure. (ND: 161)

The context of (1) is Adorno's critique of Hegel and his 'negation of negation' leading to another delusion of identity which is a 'projection of consequential logic' (ND: 160). It is relevant for our purposes because the truth in Hegel's initial move is to say that identity of the object with our determinations of it is false. The particularity of the object is such that it defies this sort of identity with our conceptual determinations. Adorno contends that if we conceive of art-

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as a rigid kind which enables a co-variant relationship between changes in particular statues and changes in particular lumps. Adorno would argue that statues are constituted such that you can have changes in the existence of a statue without any change in the lump. This conclusion is anathema to the aesthetic assumptions of Gibbard's argument qua statues. Arguably Gibbard's position relies on the epistemic assumption that we ought to be able to track all real entities systematically.

objects as simple, self-same entities, then in an important way we have misunderstood what an artwork is. Of course, materially it is a single entity but the art-object, *qua* art, is more complex than this material self-identity suggests. Our knowledge of the object becomes distorted according to the conceptual requirements of identity. In short, Adorno is urging us not read our ontological commitments off the way in which we are inclined to think about the world conceptually. In (2), Adorno articulates, in his own idiom, the 'material constitution' argument presented above. The "more" that we find in an object, which is truncated by identity-thinking, is not some set of supra-linguistic qualities set in an occult region of space, but the complexities of objects as discussed.

Returning then to Heil's statue, there are properties of the object *qua* artwork, e.g. that the statue is a particular shape, that is not essential properties of the lump of bronze from which the statue is made, e.g. that it is a particular mass. If it is the case, however, that the statue and the lump of bronze spatio-temporally coincide then the 'art-object' — both statue and lump of bronze — is the location of distinct yet overlapping objects (Heil, 2003: 183). In some ways the art-object is self-identical, in some ways non-identical; however, the artwork is not non-identical in a way in which it violates the law of non-contradiction or even the law of numerical identity.

Crucially then, what are the historical and modal properties which account for the immanent difference located within artworks? Heil suggests that a modal property is simply a property in virtue of which, were the object to lose that property, it could no longer license or warrant a particular judgement:

> A statue cannot change shape in the sense that, where the bronze that makes up the statue to undergo a sufficiently dramatic change of shape, it would no longer count as a statue. (Heil, 2003: 185)

Aesthetically this is a thin account; I consider this in greater detail in the next section. However, metaphysically, it does the job. A modal property is that way that an object is such that it warrants particular judgements; an historical property is a time indexed property an object possesses. I will argue that Adorno makes

extensive use of modal and historical properties in his account of artworks.

We could be easily deceived — by the immediacy of identity-thinking — as to Heil's position. Even granting historical and modal properties, it may appear that their salience is salience according to our conceptual schemes. This is the position being argued against. It is not the case that the sortal, 'statue', applies just in case that object has *x*, *y* and *z* properties where those properties are equivalent to the properties of the lump and that given our conception of statues, the lump has been moulded to invoke this statue concept. A statue bears modal and historical properties in virtue of the qualities of the material object with which it co-locates *and in virtue of many states of affairs beyond the two co-locating objects, and their sortal concepts; therefore, the salience of modal and historical properties is not reducible to facts about lumps, nor conceptual stipulations for the applicability of sortals*.[155]

Indeed, that an object has these modal properties at all is in virtue of the fact the world is such and such a way, not simply that the lump is such and such a way and that that way corresponds to our conceptual stipulations regarding statues. Historical and modal properties are not only part of the inventory of artworks' properties, their salience for sortal determination takes account of many states of affairs about the world. This is the deepest point of rejection of identity-thinking. We should not look to our concepts to find out about how the world is — the world is already the way it is and the proper analysis of the world and objects will engage with it appropriately. Immanent critique is to engage with an object such that its illusory unity opens up to reveal complex, irreducible, co-locating objects, at least one of which, the art-object *qua* art, only exists because of the formal qualities of the material object and because the socio-historical world is precisely the way it is. This latter point concerning the social world does not detract from the point that the way the world is for Adorno is an historical issue of how it is has become; we should consider how the world is, as an issue of how it has become, i.e., its history, in our aesthetic analysis.

[155] This is not quite holism either - where the being of a statue involves a totality of social states of affairs at a given time. The reason being that Adorno thinks that social reality is equally fractured. As we will see, an artwork may exist as direct result of a fracture in society as opposed to its unity (AT: 167 - 9).

To push the division between the sufficiency of language to world in identity-thinking to its maximum, *it is metaphysically possible that there are artworks in virtue of a world being the way it is but that in this world there are no correct identifications of artworks.* It is highly unlikely: a world where there are artworks is likely a world where there are agents with correct judgements of them. What is likely impossible is that there is a world with artworks but agents with no concepts of them: for there to be artworks, there must be agents with that sort of concept. But, to reiterate, it will not be the case, necessarily, that there are artworks in virtue of the fact that there are agents that identify, or even designate, certain objects as artworks. Identifying artworks correctly obtains only when our judgements are warranted by the way the world is. This captures the objectivity of Adorno's position.

However, this claim is too static to capture Adorno's thought because how the world is, is also dynamic and a result of historical becoming — hence true judgements are also in dynamic flux. This is the culmination of the Adornian move against the 'saturation of the subject' in the world — nonidentity reasserts objective reality. The point is, if you want to know what an object is, you examine the object not the term and if you do so with certain objects you will find something far more complex than is often assumed by the sufficiency of sortal determination.

To put these points another way, an artwork is so in virtue of a highly complex state of affairs regarding the object itself and according to how the socio-historical world is. By extension, if the world changes in significant ways, lumps of bronze may persist but statues may not, despite the material entity not changing at all. Heil provides for the metaphysical viability of this idea once we have made the realisation that modal and historical properties play a constitutive role in the metaphysics of art-objects.

> What is the truth here? What do we require in order to say that statues (or lumps) exist? What is it to be a realist about such things? Suppose we ask what is required for God to create a universe like ours incorporating statues. God will need to create the atoms and the void

> (the elementary particles, or the fields, or what have you), and arrange them appropriately. If we are to have statues, and statues require distinctively intelligent intervention, then, in creating a universe featuring statues, God will need to create dynamic, possibly widely dispersed systems of particles. Once this is accomplished, God will have created a world containing statues: it will be true there are statues. The truth makers for our statue talk will be staggeringly complex and, from the point of view of physics, hideously unruly. Nevertheless, it will be true, literally true, that there are statues (and, for that matter, that there are lumps of bronze). (Heil, 2003: 189)

With this, I think Heil does give the deep ontological story about statues and artworks as such. If you want to make a statue, you cannot just make the 'statue'. A 'statue' is made possible by a complex state of affairs which Heil suggests in materialist terms of systems and particles. However, he explicates this in non-eliminativist terms that statues as modal objects rely upon concepts, agents and societies and are *irreducible* to lumps of matter (Heil, 2003: 186).

A key point that fig. 1 cannot catch, which I have indicated above, is the relation of those modal properties to those socio-historical states of affairs which determine the properties of the lump as modal properties of the artwork. What is it about the world which effects change in the modal properties of objects is far from scientifically analysable: they are changes in the society in all its strangeness, its extreme complexity, the unconscious endeavours of individuals and its bursts of irrationality. Furthermore, a broadly scientific mode of investigation into the existence of artworks, operating by predictive hypothesis within some sort of nomological framework, based on examples is structurally inappropriate for analysis of the types of entities artworks appear to be. This is why Heil is right to say that the artwork may exist but its existence is wildly *complex* and hideously *unruly* in terms of physics. Constellation is an appropriate term to describe the interaction of these overlapping objects. The seemingly singular entity, the 'art-object', *Mona Lisa*, is a complex constellation of overlapping objects which interact with each other, which are in some ways identical and in some ways not identical, in some ways hermetically sealed from the influence of the world by their singular material manifestation, in some ways completely subject to the vicissitudes of history and human social life.

Obviously as this analysis stands, there is one rather important omission: is

Adorno right over his analysis of artworks? To justify Adorno's aesthetics is beyond the scope of this thesis. In the next section I will offer an example through which we can understand some of these metaphysical commitments in a more developed aesthetic context and situate the discussion in Adorno's own aesthetic theory. I hope that the example gives reasons to take Adorno's theory seriously and gives us reasons to favour it. What I am urging is that if Adorno can provide an analysis of an artwork, this is the metaphysical basis for how the art-object displays issues of nonidentity.

9.4 Nonidentity and Conceptlessness

The above analysis helps us to understand the importance of conceptlessness according to my 'ontological difference' thesis. I rejected Foster's 'unsayability thesis'. His thesis revolves around the notion that there is some part or entity in the world which we cannot identify in language; there are enough of these parts or entities to suggest that our ability to linguistically represent the world inevitably involves more or less failure — depending on how much more there is in the world that we cannot identify. This is a radical thesis but I have suggested that it misconstrues Adorno's intention and runs into problems of intelligibility itself. My thesis is that conceptlessness merely indicates awareness that there is a categorical difference between concepts and many of the entities, such as material objects, to which our concepts refer. In emphasising this categorical difference, Adorno is trying to re-orientate our epistemic and metaphysical enquiries.

The worry is that this difference is little more than an analytic truism and that if this is all that Adorno is saying then he is stating something blatantly obvious. Furthermore, it would appear to make a mockery of Adorno's contention that philosophy has taken no interest in the conceptless: a significant part of philosophical investigation is, and always has been, the consideration of the material world about us which is conceptless in the way I have been suggesting. The point of this section is to show that, whilst it may be true that conceptlessness is hardly the exotic term it at first appears, its import for philosophy is not trivial.

Adorno makes this quite clear when he points out that the first mistake of dealing with the conceptless is to dissolve this important metaphysical point, conceptually, as no more than analytic truism. Philosophy has often attempted to overcome the problem of the conceptlessness of much of its subject matter by assimilating it within a conceptual framework. It may attempt to do so through a priori inquiry — this is not promising for Adorno. It may attempt to negotiate the difference between mind and world by beginning with experience of the subject matter in question as both Kant and Hegel, in their different ways, did. This is promising for Adorno. However, Adorno's contention is that in all cases, almost because of the nature of philosophy insofar as philosophy just is the attempt to overcome the fact of conceptlessness through conceptual enquiry, philosophy dissolves this important metaphysical fact, that the material world is categorically different to the concepts we employ to represent it. This difference is to be maintained, however, as an irreducible limit to our epistemic ambitions. Furthermore, in attending to this difference, we find that our conceptual representations do not sufficiently represent the world.

In this section, I have begun to show what is at stake in this difference. The way in which we attempt to represent the world, the ontological commitments which seem integral to language use — that the world is the sort of thing which is amenable to representation according the reference structure of linguistic determination — is mistaken. Whilst we cannot avoid identifying entities — sorting and predicating them — we must be aware that certain entities, artworks for example, are not amenable to the representation according to the assumptions made of them within identity-thinking. The nonidentity between certain complex, multiple objects, masked by language within identity-thinking, is one such way for thinking about the import of conceptlessness. Furthermore, the ontological structures of conceptless objects are such that those structures do not correspond to the structures implied by identity-thinking. Attention to the conceptless is, critically, an attention to the problems of identity-thinking and issues of nonidentity. I will explore a concrete example of an artwork, employing the ideas of conceptlessness and nonidentity, in the next section where

we see the complexity of these issues within an aesthetic, rather than a metaphysical, context.

A Dialectical Analysis of *Fountain*

9.5.i A Constellation of Concepts: conceptlessness, nonidentity and mediation

In this chapter, a study of Duchamp's *Fountain* will be used to elucidate and develop my account of conceptlessness and nonidentity and develop Adorno's notion of mediation. As has been said, these three concepts form a constellation of critical tools which work together to produce the mode of critical orientation called 'negative dialectics'.[156] This mode of critique is not a position nor a system and these concepts are not amenable to discrete definitions; what is required is to see their role in critique of particular phenomena. Negative dialectics, I contend, is a critical activity developed through our enquiries into particular phenomena. Therefore, the form of negative dialectics will be shaped according to the phenomena in question. The determination of the constellations will be similarly particular.

Through analysis of particular objects we can see how Adorno's theories of conceptlessness, nonidentity and mediation give us resources to re-engage with the problems of gaining knowledge about the material world and what it consists in. His approach to this problem, as explored here through the question of an artwork, enables us to see why aesthetics has constitutive importance for philosophy in Adorno's thinking. The subject matter of aesthetics, insofar as it deals with artworks, reveals concrete examples as to why identity-thinking is problematic.

In the previous section the deeper metaphysical issue was developed: that the nonidentity which we find between our judgements (and their conceptual terms) and, on the other hand, their referents, had a deeper foundation in objects themselves. The problems of 'material constitution' were considered in an attempt to make sense of the basic metaphysical problems and commitments of

[156] See KCPR: 80 for analysis of a constellation as a force-field.

identity and nonidentity as it relates to objects themselves. It was argued that analytic identity statements across statues and lumps of matter are false. This has been taken as a starting point for understanding the dynamics of nonidentity in terms of objects.

We will see in the following analysis the sort of complexity involved in Adorno's conception of nonidentity. This far exceeds the scope of the material constitution debate and introduces the *dialectics* of nonidentity — where the identity conditions across objects enter into relations with each other and with elements outside of the objects through which the identity of objects is transformed. It is in this extremely complex dialectical account of nonidentity that we consider Adorno's theory of mediation. The being and modality of certain objects is determined by the existence of other objects and other socio-historical phenomena. The determination of the mode of one object by another is captured by Adorno's use of the term mediation. Furthermore, considering historical and modal properties of certain objects gives us the resources to understand the basics of Adorno's theory of truth.

9.5.ii Aesthetics and Negative Dialectics

Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917) presents well-known metaphysical and epistemological issues within the aesthetic context. I will argue that Adorno's dialectical aesthetics handles these problems extremely well. Furthermore, in considering the propositional descriptions and predications we make of *Fountain* in an historical and dialectical analysis, we see that if we do not pay attention to historical and modal properties, if we do not consider the dynamic relations of identity and nonidentity of certain types of objects, then we fail to make sense of artworks on an aesthetic level. Inasmuch as identity-thinking fails to take such issues into consideration, we may think that identity-thinking tends to misunderstand artworks.

Of more general philosophical importance: if identity-thinking carries the same assumptions at work in the aesthetics analysis of other phenomena, then we have reason to believe that identity-thinking may similarly misunderstand other social

phenomena. By extension we may hold that insofar as Adorno's dialectical analysis has successfully engaged with artworks, that Adorno's critical analysis may be more successful with other kinds of phenomena. In short, aesthetics presents problems for identity-thinking which deepens the questions raised about identity-thinking as such.

There are three important caveats required at this juncture. The following aesthetic analysis is developed for the purposes of elucidation. It is not intended as a complete or sufficient aesthetic analysis of *Fountain* which is in fact an extremely complex piece.[157] Instead the analysis intends to demonstrate the operation of the aforementioned constellation of concepts, how they work and how they are adept at orientating analysis to the complexity of artworks such as *Fountain*. It should also be noted that *Fountain* is not chosen as an example to be used as justification for a general theory which then ranges over many, or even all, artworks. For Adorno, aesthetic analysis is particular to the demands of any particular artwork — as has been said, the intention is to demonstrate the use of Adorno's critical concepts in relation to a particular example.

Finally, Adorno did not write critically on Duchamp or on *Fountain*: not only was the readymade outside of Adorno's interest, inasmuch as it instantiates somewhat anti-artistic impulses, it was an attack on the high-modernism which Adorno championed. In response, my intention is to show that Adorno's critical thinking has general philosophical import. Whilst this sort of analysis may not deal with the sort of artworks Adorno was directly concerned with, if Adorno's critical analysis is only relevant to certain sorts of artworks and those artworks are consigned to history then so might Adorno's theorising. I do not think it is and in order to show that, Adorno's critical thinking must be separated from his aesthetic tastes. Relatedly, Adorno himself realised that he let his tastes impede his critical awareness. This is most apparent in his reconsideration of Stravinsky. Having thoroughly criticised Stravinsky's apparently regressive neo-classicism, as opposed to Schönberg's progressive, critical atonalism,[158] Adorno came to

[157] There are many analyses of ready-mades and of *Fountain* in particular. Roberts' in depth post-Marxian analysis was helpful in developing the analysis presented here (2007).
[158] Compare, PoMM: 37 - 41 & 135 - 8 with AT: 45.

realise that there was validity to Stravinsky's work. Arguably the same is true of *Fountain* — it is an anti-artwork as art, made possible by a world in which the socio-historical conditions for 'Art' were disintegrating. We will see that, in this sense, *Fountain* may have 'truth content' even by Adorno's own standards. Furthermore, his dialectical thought allowed him to see that art could not be separated from that which parodied it, kitsch. Whereas a critic such as Greenberg held art and kitsch as thoroughly separate and opposed categories,[159] Adorno understood their dialectical relation, their mediation.[160]

Fountain is chosen, other than supporting the general relevance of Adorno's critical thinking, because it appears immanently engaged in problems of semantics. Given Adorno's concern with semantics in judgement and the problem of nonidentity therein, an artwork which instantiates problems of semantics of nonidentity is simply a good way to develop an understanding of these constellations.

Hopefully the following is a not unreasonable aesthetic analysis of *Fountain*, in Adorno's terms, but the intention is not to attribute this analysis to Adorno or to suggest that it is a sufficient aesthetic analysis of *Fountain*. Rather, the intention is to show how issues of nonidentity become particularly complex and *dynamic* with concrete aesthetic particulars — individual artworks. Therefore, the interpretation of Adorno's philosophy being developed here does not rest on the validity of the following aesthetic analysis. What is of issue is whether or not we continue to make sense of Adorno's epistemological and metaphysical critiques within aesthetics and how aesthetics supports these critiques. If we are to be convinced that Adorno is right, not just that his theory is tenable, successful aesthetic analyses are required.[161] However, it is a function of Adorno's aesthetics that such analyses require genuine critical expertise in their own right.

9.6 Lumps of Porcelain and Urinals

Fountain was one of the first 'artworks' to bring into question its relationship with

[159] Greenberg, 1971: 9 - 10.
[160] See AT: 196, 310, 312, 397 & CI: 168.
[161] For thorough, technical Adornian analyses of artworks see Paddison, 1997: 279 - 84.

its sortal, artwork. It is relevant for my purposes because equivocation over its identity has a role in its being as an artwork. For the purposes of this analysis, certain details are relevant and worth emphasising. The Society of Independent Artists in New York made an open invitation to artists to supply work and that *all artworks submitted would be exhibited* (Balken, 2003: 61). Duchamp supplied a factory edition, Bedfordshire model urinal. He turned the urinal 90^{o} so that the part normally attached to the wall became the base of the artwork. Despite the criterion of exhibition stating that all works would be exhibited, *Fountain* was not. The implication is clear that, for the society, *Fountain* was not an artwork; not everyone shared their opinion.

Duchamp complained. In a letter to the art magazine, *The Blind Man*, 1917, he suggested that the two grounds given for the rejection of *Fountain* — that it was immoral and that it is a plagiarised work — were specious. The process of art production in this instance revolved around Mutt's (the pseudonym under which he produced *Fountain*) 'choosing' the object to be considered from another point of view, such that its functional import disappeared and some sort of artistic appreciation was now possible. Fellow artist, Alfred Stieglitz, photographed *Fountain* in 1917. The photograph treated *Fountain* as an artwork and was arguably an artwork in its own right.

The question in this chapter is two-fold: what propositions are true of *Fountain* and what, if anything, makes these propositions true? And, what is *Fountain*? Following the structure of the material constitution debate and working with the notion of 'co-locating objects', the suggestion is that we have multiple objects which are not analytically identical. The following entities are proposed in virtue of potentially different persistence conditions: there is a material object, the porcelain entity; there is an artwork, *Fountain.* A third object could also be identified: a 'urinal' — which is a functional object identified by its own persistence conditions.[162]

[162] By committing to a urinal object, one is not committed to a metaphysical functionalism whereby objects can be identified by the same sortal in virtue of a shared dispositional property instantiated through objects with different qualities. In this discussion, the sortal, urinal, is applicable in virtue of the intrinsic, empirical properties of the material object and various social facts about the world, including the concept, urinal.

Even once we have established these three entities, their identity conditions still present live metaphysical problems and therefore the truth makers for propositions concerning these objects are also under debate. As the primary interest here is the ontology of *Fountain*, the metaphysical and epistemic problems associated with the porcelain and the urinal will be largely set aside for the purposes of discussion. The thought is that whatever the porcelain entity and the urinal turn out to be, what their relationship to each other is and what properties they 'really' instantiate, analysis of *Fountain* reveals a set of identity problems often ignored in debates of material constitution and which point towards the dialectical analysis adopted by Adorno.

Of the many propositions which seem true of the porcelain, we will consider the following insofar as they seem candidates for its possible identity conditions: the lump of porcelain has some mass and volume; it is white and hard; it has a flat base; it is a 'urinal shape'; and is made of porcelain. Many other propositions would be true of the porcelain lump — these are a selection.

It seems that propositions identifying the mass and volume of the lump of porcelain refer to candidates for identity conditions. A lump of porcelain, insofar as it is a *particular* lump which has a determinate spatio-temporal extension, will instantiate a particular mass and weight, and must continue to instantiate that particular mass and weight if it is to persist as that particular lump of porcelain. Propositions concerning whiteness and hardness refer to notoriously controversial properties. Such properties can be bracketed for now as they concern our metaphysical commitments concerning empirical properties which are not currently at issue. As for the porcelain, it could undergo changes in shape and still be the particular lump of porcelain - the shape does not appear to isolate persistence conditions of the lump. Conversely, the proposition that the lump of porcelain is made up of porcelain obviously isolates a persistence condition. What the truth makers are for these propositions depends on one's opinion over the metaphysical status of these properties and the epistemic conditions of knowing these properties. These propositions have been chosen to show the sorts of considerations involved in identifying an entity and will also play an important

role in discussing other objects which co-locate with the porcelain.

All of these propositions are true of the urinal entity which shares the same *material* constitution. Deciding which are the persistence conditions of the urinal is more fraught. Whilst such analysis is relevant and would be required for a sufficient analysis of *Fountain*, it is not necessary to consider these issues here as they take us well-beyond the metaphysical scope of this thesis and also because it is not necessary for developing the theoretical import of Adorno's dialectics. For the purposes of this discussion, however, some form of functionalism will be assumed — that the urinal can be identified as a distinct object according to its function as a urinal. One could assert a higher level dispositional property which, regardless of qualitative change, acts as the truth maker for taking the lump as a urinal. Or one could argue that there is no such dispositional property (no 'higher level' or supervenient properties) opting instead for a bare nominalism about dispositional properties. Regardless, as long as in both cases the object is a urinal, insofar as it is an entity *taken as* a urinal according to function, a co-locating entities argument stands[163] — there is a difference in persistence conditions between the lump of porcelain and the urinal. The differences between these two functionalist positions are metaphysically important due to differing commitments; however, it is not relevant to the aesthetic considerations to be analysed here.

Therefore, assuming some functionalism about the urinal, mass and volume are not persistence conditions for the urinal, as in order for it to be a urinal it must instantiate properties which make possible its being *used* as a urinal — the particular mass and volume of this urinal are not essential to being a urinal. It is not necessary that a urinal is white or even hard (to an extent). It is necessary, let us say, that it has a urinal shape. The key idea is that we have different persistence conditions for two types of entity which allows for the argument that we have two objects even though, materially, there is only one entity — the lump of porcelain.

[163] In the strong functionalist case, a change in *p* will not necessarily bring about any change in *u* as long as certain conditions obtain. In the second case, due to extreme nominalism about particulars and properties, any change in *p* will entail a new urinal entity, *u'*. In both cases the persistence conditions are same qua the *sortal*, urinal even if there is a nominal change in entities in the second case.

If Wiggins and Heil are right — it seems we can speak of (at least) two distinct objects — then it appears that the lump of porcelain is not a urinal and vice versa. They share the same material but that does not seem to make them exactly the same thing as they have different historical and modal properties. Furthermore, as it stands, neither of them seem to be, as either a lump of porcelain or as a urinal, an artwork — this still needs to be argued for, however.

9.7 *Fountain*

Turning now to the identity of *Fountain*, its persistence conditions and what 'makes true' the judgements we make about it, we move towards the aesthetic issues at hand. The claim is that when we consider the persistence conditions and the truths concerning *Fountain*, a dialectical account argues in favour of including many facts about the world. One also finds, that if the socio-historical dialectics of Adorno's thought are correct then we are committed to an extremely complex account of nonidentity which in turn helps to explain the 'riddle character' of artworks. Not only can we make sense of this riddle character as a notion, if it is right aesthetically, insofar as this character is not entirely specific to aesthetic objects, it suggests that we may have to make serious revisions to our metaphysics and epistemology concerning objects and our theory of identity.

As with the lump of porcelain and the urinal, all the propositions made of them appear true of *Fountain* — that it is white; it is a particular shape, etc. *Fountain* co-locates with the lump and the urinal and shares the same material constitution. Furthermore, if *Fountain* has different persistence conditions to these other two objects then, following Wiggins and Heil, it seems reasonable to say that *Fountain* is not a lump of porcelain nor is it a urinal in the sense that it just is those things. *Fountain* is a particular entity, intimately related to other entities. But they are not identical and should not be metaphysically 'run together'. The reason for this becomes most apparent when we re-consider this analytic nonidentity in more complex and dynamic dialectical terms. Co-locating objects is an heuristic device to orientate the complexities of dialectical nonidentity. The question for now is: what about *Fountain* must persist in order for it, inasmuch as

it is an artwork, to count as both an independent entity from the lump and the urinal and also as an artwork?

9.7.i Competing Explanations of the Ontology of *Fountain*

There are many aesthetic theories which we could employ for the consideration of a material object to be taken as an artwork. For example, a broadly Kantian, formalist argument, would consider the material properties of the porcelain, in concert with their effects on our cognitive faculties. In light of such considerations we may consider the form of the porcelain to be of aesthetic value. They may argue then that the porcelain is beautiful, or at least is aesthetically compelling, and, depending on their view of production, take it as an artwork. Taking the porcelain as an artwork is captured through it being given the name, *Fountain*.

Let us assume that this sketched formalist judgement made reference to material propositions such as those already considered — it is (a lustrous) white, it is urinal shaped (and elegant in virtue of that shape), etc. They may argue that the formal properties identified in such propositions are essential to the aesthetic value of the porcelain such that any change in the material properties of the porcelain entails the eradication of *Fountain*. The point is that in this instance, the empirical properties of the lump, insofar as they instigate a particular cognitive response in us, are sufficient for the ascription, or not, of formal beauty. In turn, this validates us in judging the porcelain as an artwork — or not. The viewer, under the transcendental conditions of cognition, is a constant in this relationship and whilst the viewer is a necessary condition of there being an artwork, the artwork as such co-varies with the properties of the lump of porcelain and its properties. Therefore, whilst the persistence conditions of *Fountain* are different to those of the porcelain and the urinal, due to the requirement of the subject, changes in the porcelain will entail changes in *Fountain*. Of course it may be argued for aesthetic reasons that *porcelain* is not beautiful but this is beside the point for the purposes of this discussion.

An alternative way to determine the persistence conditions of *Fountain* would be

according to a broadly institutional account.[164] Indeed, this has been the most common way to negotiate the metaphysical problems presented by *Fountain*. In this instance, the material properties of this particular porcelain and urinal, and to an extent, their particular persistence conditions are incidental to the taking of them as an artwork. What is relevant — and it is something that Duchamp himself said — was that the very act of taking the object as an artwork, resituating it in a context in order for it to be considered differently — aesthetically rather than functionally — was the sufficient condition of the lump of porcelain/urinal being taken as *Fountain*. In such a case the proposition that '*Fountain* is an artwork' is true. Pushing this theory further, it is often said that the re-situation of the urinal in the gallery was making an anti-aesthetic statement. No quality of the urinal/porcelain is relevant to its being taken as an artwork.[165]

In this instance, in theory at least, any material object could be taken as an artwork. As long as the person saying that the object is an artwork is a person 'qualified' to say so, and the claim 'warranted', then the judgement is true. To some extent it is due to the metaphysical problems *Fountain* poses, *qua* art, that people have adopted some form of the institutional view which is based on this sort of move. The thought being that if we do not make this move then we may be forced to a potentially unattractive position. For example, we may have to say that *Fountain* is not an artwork and its placing in a gallery involves some sort of category mistake; or that if *Fountain* is a valid object of 'aesthetic' concern, that the conditions which we previously valued artworks are either no longer applicable to 'art' or that we were wrong about art or that there is no such thing as art (any more).[166]

Whilst it is true that the material object is incidental to its being taken as an artwork, once the designation of the material object as an artwork has occurred, assuming we accept this account of art-making and naming, the material object

[164] Davies, in his division of functional and procedural positions, has explored fundamental structural differences between attitudes to denoting an object as an artwork (1990).
[165] See, for example, Zangwill's second-order appropriation theory (2007: 69 – 73).
[166] For analysis of institutional theory see Danto, "*The Artworld*" (1964) and Dickie, "Art and the Aesthetic: an Institutional Analysis" (1974).

now just is the particular artwork as named.

Kraut argues that this stipulative view is not as impoverished as it first might appear as it still admits of aesthetic criticism and the giving and taking of reasons for whatever objects we wish to take as artworks. It also allows for the separation of metaphysical questions — what is an artwork — from evaluative questions — is this a good artwork. Having a thin notion of what validates an object's being taken as an artwork does not entail a thin evaluative account. Regardless, institutional arguments will rely on the citing features of the objects in question even when those features are neither necessary nor sufficient to taking the object as an artwork. Together these conditions determine the warrant of the claim. Nevertheless, in a point which will be returned to, this still entails that the 'taking as' in this instance resolves to social fiat and still does not take any facts about putative artworks or any other states of affairs as necessary or sufficient for sorting an object as an artwork (Kraut, 2007: 41- 3).

Both of these examples are greatly simplified in order to reveal the import of different aesthetic positions for the metaphysical question of material constitution. When considering the persistence conditions of *Fountain,* we can see how they could both argue, but for different reasons, that the relationship between *Fountain* and the porcelain, at least, is rigid. Gibbard's argument for the identity of the statue and the lump is potentially compatible with both the formalist and the institutional view because in both those views, for different aesthetic reasons, there is a possible argument for a rigid relation between the material entity and its being taken as an artwork: in the formalist view the rigidity is determined by the fact that in all worlds where there is an entity with such and such properties and a cognizer with such and such faculties then the rigidity of entity to name is set by the putative universality and necessity of the sortal judgement.[167] Institutionally, the relationship between the material object and the sortal is potentially rigid because in every world where there is the appropriate designation, then the statue and the lump co-vary accordingly.[168]

[167] Of course this position revolves around the quantitative and modal qualities of aesthetic judgements of beauty for Kant.

[168] This argument is not affected by the aesthetic consideration that the artwork as such may be an

9.8 Material Constitution Revisited

In both cases we are able to determine the relationship between the lump and the particular artwork as co-variant even if in one case this determination depends on properties of the object and in the other it may not. The nominalism of both positions is captured by Gibbard's metaphysical analysis of the statue/lump debate, in the following:

> What is special about proper names like 'Goliath' and 'Lumpl' [sic] is not that they are rigid designators. It is rather that each is rigid with respect to the sortal it invokes. 'Goliath' refers to its bearer as a statue and is statue-rigid; 'Lumpl' refers to its bearer as a lump and is lump-rigid' (Gibbard, 1997: 100)

Given Gibbard's identity claim that the statue is the lump, and that statues are the sorts of thing that can be rigid, both entities have a rigid co-varying relationship with their material properties; I have suggested that we can couch this rigidity in aesthetic terms either in virtue of those properties or by some form of fiat which determines those properties as salient for designation. Gibbard's position is consistent with two different aesthetic accounts of art making.

Gibbard himself does not give an account of statues or of the aesthetic considerations involved in statue making. Making a statue consists in fashioning an entity which evokes the sortal, 'statue' (Gibbard, 2007: 100). That is, making a statue involves making a statue. Even if it is thought that this is unfair on Gibbard, that he is talking about a statue and not necessarily an artwork — he gives the example of fashioning a sculpture of an elephant — it is not clear that he can cut out all aesthetic considerations as the relationship between ornaments, statues and statues/sculptures *qua* artworks, is a complex aesthetic issue. Implicit within the thesis being developed here is that if metaphysicians discuss problems of material constitution and invoke aesthetic entities, they cannot do the metaphysics without doing any aesthetics.

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idea or concept within the institutional view.

9.9 Adorno's Dialectical Aesthetics

The reason why this is the case brings us back to the discussion of *Fountain* and a dialectical analysis of the object *qua* artwork, functional entity and material entity. I will argue that Adorno's account of *Fountain* is incompatible with Gibbard's analysis and requires the sort of complexity we find in the co-location thesis at the very least. Indeed, we will see that the identity and nonidentity of artworks is dynamic in a way which cannot be captured by, what is in effect, and identity-thinking account of identity. The reason for this is that Adorno's analysis of artworks, based on his dialectics of nonidentity, suggests that you can have *no change in the porcelain but a constitutive change in Fountain* — where that change is not stipulated by fiat, nor resolves solely to concerns about the artworld.

Indeed, as we will see, Adorno's analysis suggests the possibility that the proper name 'Fountain', which names a particular entity, could continue to be used — ie. people continue to use the proper name as a referring subject term — but that *Fountain* no longer exists. For those who claim that *Fountain* just is the urinal/lump of porcelain such a possibility is ruled out. This situation arises when the socio-historical conditions, which have a constitutive role in there being an artwork, change such that there is no longer an artwork even though the material entity is unchanged. The rest of this chapter is concerned with making sense of this claim — showing how it is a function of Adorno's theory of an artwork. This analysis will in turn broaden our conception of nonidentity, mediation and negative dialectics upon which this analysis rests.

It has been suggested that Gibbard's conception of objects, inasmuch as his thesis invokes aesthetic entities, has potential problems. If Adorno is correct in his understanding of artworks, this position provides serious issues for our aesthetics but also for our epistemology and metaphysics. To understand why, we must consider Adorno's theory of an artwork. I quote a long passage from *Aesthetic Theory* because it argues, in Adorno's words, the points I have sketched above and which allows us to develop Adorno’s own, dialectical conception of nonidentity:

> If the artwork is nothing fixed and definitive in itself, but something in motion, then its immanent temporality [*Zeitlichkeit*] is communicated to its parts and whole in such a fashion that their relation unfolds [*enfaltet*] in time and that they are capable of canceling [*kündigen*] this relation. If artworks are alive in history by virtue of their own processual character [*Prozeßcharakters*], they are also able to perish [*vergehen*] in it. The indefeasibility of what is sketched on paper, painted on canvas, or carved in stone is no guarantee of the indefeasibility of what is essential [*wesenlich*] to the artwork, its spirit [*Geist*], which is dynamic in itself. Artworks are on no account transformed [*wandeln sich*] exclusively by what reified consciousness takes to be the changing attitude of individuals toward works, which shifts according to the historical situation. Such change is external with regard to what transpires in the works themselves: the dissolution of their layers, one after the other, which was unforeseeable in the moment of the work's appearance; the determination of this transformation by their emerging and increasingly distinct law of form; the petrification of works that have become transparent, their decrepitude, and their falling silent. Ultimately their development is the same as their process of collapse [*Zerfall*].
>
> The concept of an artifact [*Artefakt*], from which "artwork" is etymologically derived, does not quite match [*nicht ganz heran*] what an artwork is. Knowing that an artwork is something made does not amount to knowing that it is an artwork. The exaggerated accent on its fabrication, whether to besmirch art as human deception or to denounce its artificiality or preciousness in opposition to the delusion of art as unmediated nature [*unmittelbare Natur*], stands in sympathetic accord with philistinism. The idea of providing a simple definition of art was dared only by those all-disposing philosophical systems that reserved a niche for every phenomenon. (AT: 235 - 6 - Trans. modified)

In the above passage, Adorno makes metaphysical distinctions between the artwork *qua* material and artworks *qua* essence [*Wesen*]. These metaphysical distinctions correspond to the distinctions made above in terms of determinate objects with different persistence conditions. In terms of *Fountain,* the porcelain and the artwork are different entities and the latter is not reducible to the former and the former is not the sufficient — and perhaps even necessary — condition of the latter. Adorno makes precisely this point.

Furthermore, the material entity, considered in terms of its properties, or its selection by fiat, is not sufficient for its determination as an artwork. Adorno explicitly states that 'making as' or 'taking as' art does not guarantee that the material entity is an artwork — that 'making as' or taking as' instantiates another object with its own persistence conditions. In light of this position, Adorno

emphasises change as something 'essential' to the nature of artworks. Given the difference between the artwork and its material instantiation and that according to Adorno changes in artworks *qua* art can occur separately to changes in material entities, it is valid to emphasize the difference in persistence conditions across different, co-locating entities.

Furthermore, given this complexity, it is not surprising that there is enormous pressure on our sortal concepts and their reference relations when attempting to determine an object as an artwork. Adorno affirms my interpretation by emphasizing another aspect of nonidentity: just because the term 'artwork' cannot help but pick out the material entity, the porcelain, we should not be confused into thinking that the concept which refers to the artwork refers to the porcelain such that *Fountain* just is the porcelain. Furthermore, as implied above, because the persistence conditions for *Fountain* vary separately from the porcelain and simple social fiat, we cannot assume that our conceptual identification of *Fountain* is rigid in virtue of its matter or by what we take to be the case about porcelain *qua* art.

9.9.i History, Judgements and Dialectics

Adorno emphasises that the essence of the object as art, in his terms, is different from the object as a material entity: what makes one what it is, is not the same as what makes another what it is. In light of this claim, we should consider why this is the case and what it is about these different objects which makes them what they are for Adorno. He says at the beginning of quotation ("If the artwork…") that the relation between the parts of the artwork and the 'whole' *unfolds* and is, therefore, temporal in character. That the being of an artwork takes place over time, this unfolding is historical in character. I will argue that this historical element has three aspects all of which are constitutive concerns for an entity being an artwork:

a) the history of the object itself;
b) the historical relationship of the 'artwork' and its material to other entities of a similar kind and their material;

c) the historical relationship between the artwork and the socio-historical conditions.[169]

The temporal aspect of the artwork, (a), through which we can track its dynamic qualities, affords it precisely the opposite status to that assumed by Gibbard — that putative entities are rigid, self-identical and can be tracked in time accordingly. Historical change, for Gibbard, inasmuch as it occurs, is partitioned off through possible-world semantics. Conversely, for Adorno, it is this dynamic quality which he argues is essential to artworks, and which needs to be critically engaged with if we are to identify artworks.

Understanding the nature of the dynamism of artworks, their processual character [*Prozeßcharakters*], is key to Adorno's aesthetics and important for understanding the particular pressure that artworks present to our epistemic activities. The first claim is that the artwork unfolds over time and entails that it has a history. Adorno explains this unfolding as a process which results from the 'grinding away' of the parts of an artwork (AT: 233). In order to understand this, it is useful to return to the claims made about *Fountain* above (9.5 & 6). If it is the case that propositions assert what is true of the world then it seems reasonable that we can identify what these parts are and develop further propositions which track the relations of those parts.

We should first note that the character of the unfolding will be different across different types of artworks. The structure of unfolding for temporal artworks such as music and literature will be different than that of an artwork like *Fountain* which is in some sense, materially static. These differences are to be expected and respected as aesthetics, done properly, requires bespoke analysis on an individual, particular basis. Nevertheless we can consider the temporal import of *Fountain* and this will help us to understand the core commitments in the notion – even if these commitments will themselves take on a particular mode, depending on the object in question.

[169] I include within this condition the concerns of aesthetic attitude and the history of our consumption of art. For Adorno these are important aspects of the socio-historical mediation of artworks.

There is a time when the urinal, which came to be selected by Duchamp, made true the propositions mentioned above. It would also be true of both the porcelain and the urinal that they are lumps of porcelain, made to be a urinal and not made to be an artwork — in this case, being lumps of porcelain is necessary only for a porcelain lump; being made to be a urinal is only necessary for being a urinal; given what both the urinal and the porcelain are, not being an artwork is necessary for both entities. Inasmuch as the urinal and porcelain entity are what they are respectively — and not artworks — they are mass-produced, tokens of types and they are made for *use* in public spaces. Art works, within the prevalent tradition of autonomous art during which *Fountain* was 'made', are art, at least in part, because they do not have these utilitarian properties.

As is well-known and quite obvious, Duchamp chose this porcelain/urinal complex precisely because what it is is everything that an artwork at the time was not. Here we start to see the processual, antagonistic 'parts' of an artwork and a deep structural issue of nonidentity *qua* art. The claims that a urinal is an artwork and that a mass-produced lump porcelain is an artwork are false. This falsity is vital because it is in virtue of it, amongst other reasons, that Duchamp chose the urinal to be considered as an artwork. Therefore, you have the somewhat aporetic metaphysical situation that *Fountain*, which is materially identical to the porcelain and the urinal, is an artwork because what it itself is, materially and functionally, is not an artwork.

The question is, then, why is Duchamp not simply wrong to take *the porcelain/urinal* as an artwork? At another later time, having been chosen as an artwork — or at least chosen for aesthetic appreciation, as Duchamp put it — if we take *Fountain* to be only one sort of entity, we have the strange situation that it is an artwork because it is not an artwork. This is flatly contradictory and not a move that Adorno makes. Precisely because of a more complex conception of identity and its aporetic, transformative character, characterized by nonidentity, at least in certain objects, he is able to assign scope and temporal index to otherwise contradictory propositions, such that co-locating objects enter into antagonistic relations with each other. Indeed, it seems part of the dialectics of

Fountain's identity that its being identified as an artwork — by Duchamp's associates, for example — is in part due to the fact that at the moment of choosing it, it is not an artwork. As will be discussed, this strange sorting is predicated on a meta-aesthetic consideration of the relationship between the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic. However, its becoming an artwork, inasmuch as that consists in some substantial sense of it not being an artwork, eradicates the very conditions for its persistence as art — its not being an artwork.

The buffeting of truth-values between contradictory propositions, characterizes dialectical analysis. One sees what is true of the identity of an object at one moment – considering its relationship to other entities with which it co-locates and 'shares propositions' as it were, and the fact of the truth-values of those propositions entails a metaphysical shift in the constitution of the entities present entailing corresponding contrary shifts in truth-values.

Adorno speaks in dramatic terms of the 'life of art'. This is not mere figure of speech: it is an attempt to capture the dynamic quality of artworks which we have glimpsed above. *Fountain* is perhaps the aesthetic apotheosis of the difference between an entity *qua* artwork and an entity *qua* material constitution.

> Artworks are something made that has become more [*Mehr*] than something simply made. This was not contested until art began to experience itself as transient [*seitdem Kunst sich als vergänglich erfährt*]. Confusing artworks with their genesis, as if genesis provided the universal code for what has become [*gewerden*], is the source of the alienness of art scholarship to art: for artworks follow their law of form by consuming their genesis [*denn kunstwerke folgen ihrem Formgesetz, indem sie ihre Genesis verzehren*]. (AT: 236 trans. modified)

Regardless of the persistence of the manufactured material of *Fountain*, arguably its 'life' as an artwork was over in a flash: in the very moment it became art it eradicated the conditions for its own consideration as an artwork.[170] This is reflected in the seismic shift that *Fountain* precipitated in the artworld, aesthetics and the application of the concept, 'art', in the moment it was chosen as an

[170] It should be noted that *Fountain* was not the first readymade, see Bicyle Wheel (1913). However, *Fountain* was the 'game-changer' and this is arguably due to the particular way the conceptual tensions are articulated in Fountain, i.e., semiotically, the use of a urinal as opposed to a bike wheel, sets the aporias of art-making in sharpest relief.

artwork. Inasmuch as *Fountain* could be taken as art, no future readymade, even an iteration of *Fountain*, could be taken as an artwork *of the same type* as *Fountain*. Speaking dramatically, *Fountain* died in birth; what persisted is the memory of *Fountain* in the urinal and porcelain (which were also changed by the encounter with *Fountain* as they are no longer just any urinal).

I take it that this, rather difficult notion, is what Adorno is referring to when he says:

> It is conceivable, and perhaps nowadays it is requisite of works, that they immolate [*verbrennen*] themselves through their temporal nucleus [*Zeitkern*], [that they] give their own life to the moment of the appearance of truth, and tracelessly vanish without thereby diminishing themselves in the slightest. (AT: 234 - trans. modified)

Adorno is emphasizing the temporal contingency of artworks here and that their being an artwork cannot be confused with the material permanence of the entity with which the artwork co-locates. In the case of certain artworks, *Fountain* for example, this temporal contingency translates into a very short existence *qua* art. This does not preclude future ready-mades from being artworks but they can never be an artwork in the same way as *Fountain* was.

The above analysis also indicates a further way in which we can consider the 'more' that Foster speaks of. Recall that Foster wanted to couch this 'more' as some supra-linguistic, non-conceptual fact about objects. Adorno seems to indicate a conceptual 'more' in line with my interpretation. The more prosaic, yet more accurate connotation of *mehr*, is 'more' in terms of ‘remainder’. The above analysis enables us to gather a particular type of propositional and *historically mediated* complexity which I think Adorno is aiming at. It suggests that if we fail to index and set the domain of propositions to the correct entity(/ies) we will get contradictory propositions. For example, if we take there to be an identity between *Fountain*, its matter and functional entity, and we don't historically index these claims, we get propositions such as *Fountain* is something that is and is not an artwork with no further qualifications. Awareness of the socio-historical mediations of *Fountain* and its internal nonidentity in terms of the

porcelain, urinal and artwork enables us to negotiate this complex metaphysical situation.

Attendance to *Fountain* as *an artwork* requires attendance to more than what is asserted about *Fountain* in any one proposition. As we saw above, to get a dialectical account of the identity of artworks, we had to consider multiple propositions and consider how they impacted on each other's truth-values at different times. This 'more' is just that there *remains* more to be considered. However, it suggests another possibility for the quantitative insufficiency of propositions in terms of *sets* of propositions. If it is the case that what is true of the artwork, the urinal and the porcelain can change over time then the historical indexing of propositions entails that we cannot foreclose, at any particular time, on a determinate, sufficient set of propositions that are true of these objects for any time.

This is a substantial thesis. The claim is not that there are more propositions required to account for Cambridge properties — *Fountain* was made 10 years ago and then a year later, *Fountain* was made 11 years ago. Rather, the position says something about what exists and what that existence consists in. Maybe, *Fountain* could cease to be an artwork, and then for some future situation it could become an artwork again. There will always be 'more' to say as regards the propositions licensed by the historical and modal properties of the objects inasmuch as they persist historically. This 'more', however, is not a mystical region, entity or property, it is part of Adorno's critique of the sufficiency of identity-thinking considered temporally.

He even argues that we can revise our aesthetic notions with serious metaphysical consequences. What was previously taken to be an artwork, or not, or what was previously taken to be a quality artwork, or not, can be revised. He contests it is possible that such and such is an artwork at a particular time and that such and such is not an artwork at *the same time*.

> The superiority of the great impressionists over Gauguin became evident only after his innovations had paled in the face of later

> developments. For quality to unfold historically, however, depends not just on it but on what came afterward, and it sets in relief what preceded it; perhaps there is a relation between quality and the process of perishing. (AT: 256, trans. modified)

This is a possibility if we properly index the propositions temporally because the scopes of the two propositions are different. The first proposition is qualified according to its consideration at the time in question and the second is qualified by the clause when considered from another, later time. Of course it is epistemically impossible to know the two propositions will be true at the first moment but Adorno is not suggesting this. Following Hegel, the owl of Minerva flies at dusk for Adorno – substantial knowledge is gained after the fact through dialectical, historical analysis. And for Adorno it is vital that our knowledge of the past is revisable at any given future moment. Furthermore, given the dynamism of artworks, we should not assume that because we have identified an entity at one moment, it will therefore be instantiated at another, later moment.

However, at this juncture, the account still has a strong institutional theory element even if the persistence conditions of certain artworks escape the ambit of social fiat and despite having established a more substantial account of nonidentity which suggests against institutional theory. It may appear that the sufficient condition of being an artwork, no matter how briefly, is that it is taken as such. Also, as yet, we do not have a good reason why a urinal could be taken as an artwork, to some degree, in virtue of it not being, materially, an artwork. From previous quotations we know that Adorno argues against ‘taking as’ an artwork as sufficient to being an artwork; he also argues that the existence of artworks is an objective state of affairs in the socio-historical world. Therefore, some good reason must be provided for the objective validity of a urinal being an artwork which is not reducible to an act of 'taking as'. Having expanded on issues of nonidentity as they relate to the co-locating objects, this account needs to be expanded to show the constitutive role of the socio-historical on the identity of an artwork and also how the socio-historical is important for the identification of artworks.

9.10 Nonidentity, History and Truth Content

Adorno says that it is in virtue of the temporal nucleus of the artwork, discussed above, that artworks partake in truth: the moment that the work is an artwork, inasmuch as it is an artwork it has 'truth content'.[171] Explaining what truth consists in here identifies the crucial difference between Adorno's dialectics and institutional accounts: it entails that an artwork's being an artwork is an objective state of affairs.[172] It will also help us to understand, given a thesis of different co-locating objects, how we can name an object, 'Fountain' for example, which has certain antithetical properties to another entity with which it co-locates. We will see that this objective state of affairs is not reducible to facts about properties of objects, properties of subjects nor is it reducible to social facts. Rather it invokes all of these elements and their relations as they stand at the particular moment of analysis. From here we will be in a position to understand the import of the socio-historical on the existence and identity of artworks and upon what basis we can identify artworks as artworks.

9.10.i The Socio-Historical Dimension

A number of propositions were considered above, through which one could show the sorts of tensions between propositions as they are true of artworks. The tensions, as they were considered, concerned issues of identity. This account does not tell us why these identity shifts take place; it just states it according to some assumed fact about artworks. To understand why our judgement that *a lump of porcelain/urinal* can be taken as an artwork is valid beyond social fiat, we need to understand what it is about the object, our concepts and the world which entails this complex, shifting situation.

It was suggested above that there are three ways to consider the history of the object. Artificially, the history of the object, (a), was considered discretely,

[171] See AT: 45, 51, 116 & esp, 168. See Zuidervaart, 1991: 116.

[172] See Zuidervaart's excellent analysis of objectivity in Adorno's thinking, 1991: 109 - 18, esp. "The notion of reflective expression points to a crucial connection between art and social history. It points to the artist's socio-historical experiences, unconscious and unintentional, that enter artworks and become objective. Adorno's version of aesthetic realism calls for unswerving faithfulness to such experiences." (1991: 114). See AT: 217, for a bold commitment to aesthetic realism. What I am adding to Zuidevaart's theory is the associated importance of the socio-historical conditions which provide the historical index for this realism.

separately from other 'histories', (b) and (c). To grasp Adorno's theory of truth we need to understand how the history of the object is involved in other historical issues. Analysis of the historical relationship of an artwork to other artworks and the relationship of the artwork to its general socio-historical conditions is required.

The material involved in choosing a urinal to be taken as *Fountain*, this particular mass-produced lump of porcelain, is itself part of a social history. That is, its individual, particular being is mediated by a wealth of socio-historical factors — facts about the social world and therefore also about us as social beings. It is a token product of a particular form of industry; it is made possible according to certain technological processes; it indicates a particular form and structure of labour; its design tells us about functional aesthetics, etc. On behalf of the subject, Duchamp, who chooses the artwork, his material — his ideas and concepts — themselves have a history: what has he previously considered artworks? What has he made as art previously?[173] His previous artworks involved particular techniques, technologies through which they partook in a particular conception of art-production. Society, of which Duchamp is also a part, takes a view of the difference between what Duchamp as an artist does and what a manufacturer is doing when they make a urinal.

The basis for such normative considerations, following this Hegelian, historical perspective, is then related to a general history of society, its economic, its political and its cultural structures. When we track these large-scale socio-cultural phenomena, we track *Geist*, the history of world as it instantiates in a movement through these phenomena.[174] Whilst Adorno did not agree with Hegel's metaphysics of *Geist* (see Chapter Six), as we considered, Hegel's theory was enormously influential on Adorno. *Geist* is an indispensable concept for him as it provides an important notion for following the dynamics of dialectical critique.

[173] It is not that *he* made art of such a type which is important: it is the relation that *Fountain* takes *to other works of art* which have a common source.
[174] Adorno speaks in just this way in *Negative Dialectics* when he refers to capitalism (ND: 199).

What needs to be understood is how these various elements — the socio-historical, the material and the conceptual — interact to guarantee the substantial metaphysical commitments being posed above: that we can be committed to the existence of artworks as real, in the sense of being objective, and that the objectivity of artworks' existence, as such, provides the grounds for substantial truths about the world. From here we will then be able to determine what is being identified and on what basis our identifications are valid. The problem is that the dialectical analysis involved becomes so complex and the number of dynamic and transformative relations, so vast, that it is very difficult to distil the philosophical commitments. The following is an attempt to understand the sorts of dialectical inferences I believe are involved in engaging with an artwork such as *Fountain*; I cannot justify the soundness of this argument. An analysis worthy of a thesis would be required to argue for the soundness.

Fountain, it was suggested, points, as it were, to facts about the world which lie beyond itself: forms of production, norms of aesthetic utility, etc. Insofar as certain propositions are true of the urinal and the porcelain, this is due to other facts about the social world. For example, the token-type identity of the urinal is possible only within a certain mode of production. Using Adorno's understanding of the constitutive role of social history on artworks we can note the importance of the mode of production upon which the urinal is predicated. This mode of production is itself a function of particular social arrangements: a dialectical analysis of modes of production reveals states of affairs about the development and state of class, about capital, about labour form, etc. Certain propositions, true of the urinal, reference, indirectly, through its identity, existence and form, many other phenomena and the particular way in which they are.

An Adornian analysis would also consider *Fountain*: what do the identity, form and existence of *Fountain* indicate about the world? Bearing in mind the particular socio-economic arrangement upon which the urinal is predicated, the conception of *art-making*, producing, consuming and identifying as a commensurable function of the socio-economic structures within which the urinal was made. So, for Adorno, a particular mode of functional production is wedded to a particular mode of non-functional (artistic) production. The economic mode

of manufacture which produces urinal is dialectically involved with a mode of art-making as autonomous. Therefore, for Adorno artistic autonomy is not detachable from its socio-economic environment.

Just as a particular socio-economic structure makes autonomy possible, it inflects, or mediates, autonomy in a particular mode – the nature and possibility of autonomy becomes implicated in the socio-economic structure upon which it is predicated.[175] This is highly speculative as presented here. However, the issue here is not whether Adorno is right but how his thinking works. Thus far, the socio-economic, cultural and political state of affairs upon which the urinal is predicated is the same state of affairs upon which a notion of art-making is predicated. Furthermore, this socio-historical state of affairs, within which *Fountain* was developed, i.e., the Modernist period, says precisely that those objects which are to be identified as artworks are autonomous of the interests and utility of the states of affairs within which the artwork is produced.

Adorno's analysis of this autonomy, as it is determined, or mediated, according to this economic structure, argues that the artwork is also a commodity fetish. This somewhat aporetic idea says that an artwork's complete lack of utility, its autonomous separation from the material and the practical concerns of society, means that in economic terms its value is determined entirely by the surplus value it can generate as a medium for the flow of capital. So, differently considered, the socio-economic conditions within which autonomous artworks are produced means that simultaneously the artwork is totally separate from the interests of society from one point of view and yet considered from the perspective of the economic, it is *only* valued according to the monetary interest we take in it. The economic development towards the conditions whereby the artwork can be a pure commodity makes it possible for an artist to state this commodification within the realm of the aesthetic: by presenting a functional commodity as an artwork. One way of interpreting the 'arthood' of *Fountain*, which could show the constitutive import of a particular moment in the socio-

[175] There is a great deal of work analysing these ideas both in Adorno and in many commentators. See for example, Zuidervaart, 1991: 91; Jarvis, 1998: 114 - 7; Hammer, 2006; 80 - 1; Paddison, 1997: 98. Hohendahl, 2010: §13.

historical milieu in which it is made, is that it makes explicit the aporia of autonomous artworks that they are pure commodities.[176] Inasmuch as the sortal, artworks, only picks out autonomous artworks, it is 'out of phase', as it were, with the art-making possibilities generated by the very conditions which make autonomous artworks possible.

The point is that *Fountain* is a product of this complex situation where that situation, from different perspectives, seems to make very different claims: *x* is potentially an artwork (from an economic point view) and *x* is not an artwork from an aesthetic point of view. One can take a commodity as an art-object because, from the perspective of economics and production, what is substantially true of an artwork is that it is a commodity. It therefore follows, that any commodity, inasmuch as it is a commodity, can be taken as an artwork as long as there is nothing about that commodity which stops it from entering into relations of pure commodity fetishism. *Fountain* is the making explicit of the meta-aesthetic state of affairs such that a urinal, *qua* commodity, can be fetishised as a pure commodity and as such fulfills a valid condition of autonomous art. What is interesting about this move is that as it makes explicit the relationship between the bourgeois autonomous artwork and its status as commodity, *Fountain* helped to explode the myth of *autonomous* art. Hence, in other terms, it destroyed the conditions for its own possibility.

The above analysis is a sketch of the aesthetic issues. However, it is enough to see how the socio-historical could have a constitutive role in the objective existence of art entities. Whether or not Adorno would even make this argument is moot. Nevertheless, the kind of dialectical, aesthetic arguments Adorno makes include such socio-historical notions and that they have substantial metaphysical consequences for the entities to which we are committed. Furthermore, Adorno's dialectics seems to be able to make sense of a particularly intractable problem for identity-thinking in the form of *Fountain*, whilst retaining objectivity, sensitivity

[176] Again there is a great deal of other aesthetic issues which have not been mentioned for the purposes of this argument. In particular, one could argue that *Fountain* also points towards the breakdown of in the idea that there are 'natural' forms of art-making such as melodies, pictorial representation, etc. It is a complex and well-known aspect of producing autonomous artworks that they came to reflect upon their own formal processes. Although one would certainly need to consider such notions for a proper aesthetic analysis, they are not essential to the task at hand.

to the particularity of artworks, a fine-grained account of sortal identification and a complex metaphysics of objects at least in line with the accounts of some contemporary metaphysicians. Arguably formalism has floundered somewhat before an account of *Fountain*; institutional theories flounder in maintaining a substantial and objective sense of 'art'. In light of such problems, Adorno's theory has much to recommend it.

9.10.ii History and Truth Content

The idea at work is that analysis of history vis-à-vis culture, economics, and politics reveals 'facts' indexed to the moment in time at which that analysis was conducted. Let us say that one such fact is that the socio-economic mode of production is such that it licenses a particular form of art: art as commodity. Yet, given the equally valid conception of art within the very same socio-economic period, urinals cannot and do not fall within the ambit of artworks. This is the reason why Duchamp could validly take a urinal as an artwork, even when it is not licensed by our conceptual scheme at that juncture and why this taking to be is not reducible to an issue of intention as such or social fiat. Rather, it is the objective validity of *Fountain*, as an artwork, according to its modal and historical properties given a particular socio-historical moment.

> The historical moment [*geschichtliche Moment*] is constitutive [*konstitutiv*] of artworks; authentic works are those that surrender themselves to the historical substance of their age without reservation and without the presumption of being superior to it. They are the self-unconscious historiography of their epoch; not least of which, this provides for knowledge. Precisely this makes them incommensurable with historicism, which, instead of following their own historical content [*Gehalt*], reduces them to their external history. Artworks may be all the more truly [*wahrhaftiger*] experienced [*erfahren*] the more their historical substance [*Substanz*] is that of the one who experiences it. (AT: 240)[177]

The world is developing in such a way that Duchamp could take a urinal, which is not an artwork, and assert it as an artwork. It is not an artwork, however, because he chooses it to be an artwork or because he, as an artist, 'made' it or

[177] This is against the sort of historicism we find in Levinson: "an artwork is a thing (item, object, entity) that has been seriously intended for regard-as-a-work-of-art - i.e., regard in any way pre-existing artworks are or were correctly regarded." (2011: 38 - 9). Levinson's view was already anticipated and attacked by Adorno, AT: 240.

even because it was inserted, in some way, into the 'artworld'. Rather, inasmuch as it is an artwork, this is an objective state of affairs which obtains according to how the world is, how we are and how the object, *qua* form, etc, is. The genius of the artist for Adorno is that they perceive in their materials a set of problems and their expressive solution to them is artistic as determined by the objective conditions of a particular socio-historical situation.

Truth then, in this instance, is a question of objectivity as indexed to a socio-historical moment: In artworks, objectivity [*Sachlichkeit*] and truth [*Wahrheit*] are inseparable (AT: 171). As Adorno says above, it is the constitutive role that history plays in the being of an artwork that brings it into the arena of 'knowledge' — insofar as we know the object as an artwork, and due to the historical constitution of the artwork, in terms of its materials and context, we can know something about the socio-historical world through the knowing of an object as an artwork. That is, in terms of an object being an artwork it tells us something true about the world. Adorno's conception of truth lies in the notion that the particular form of an artwork expresses within its own particular aporias, form, material and content, a state of affairs which obtain external to its being (AT: 172). The sense of truth being picked out here relies on the idea that the artwork 'represents', although indirectly and nondiscursively through its form and material, a non-aesthetic state of affairs which obtains external to the object.

Given this relation, one could say that the artwork, insofar as it is an artwork, is 'true of the world'. In establishing the relationship of art, not only to a standard of objectivity, what it is for an object to be an artwork at a particular moment, but also to telling us, albeit indirectly, something about the world, Adorno argues that aesthetic questions resolve to a fundamental question about the object in terms of its socio-historical moment — is the artwork 'true'?

> The ceaselessly recurring question that every work dismisses in whoever traverses it—the "What is it all about?"— goes over into "Is it true [*Wahr*]?"—the question of the absolute, to which every artwork responds by wresting itself free from the discursive form of answer. (AT: 168, trans. modified)

If an object is an artwork, it will be, in the sense being developed here, true of the world in virtue of being an artwork. The point is that the artwork is a non-

propositional, non-discursive 'representation' of the world which needs to be decoded through the sort of analysis I suggested above with *Fountain*.[178]

Furthermore, because this representation is riddle-like, aesthetic analysis and any associated knowledge does not merely consist in reading off truths about the world from the material presentation of the artwork. Rather, it is through understanding the dynamic relations between the elements of an artwork that we are able to develop notions about the true artwork and thereby learning something about the world. One needs to work out what is true of it at different historical moments and consider the relations of those truths. Adorno is explicit that the key aesthetic question is, therefore, is it an artwork? — which is to say, is it true (and by extension, true of the world)? Here then, we see Hegel's complex theory of truth resurfacing in Adorno's thinking. Truth is something about objects themselves, ourselves, and also about the relations to the world.

Through the analysis of *Fountain*, we can come to know something about the world through the form of the artwork. Yet it is the complex, dynamic, shifting character of artworks, which constitutes the relevant subject matter for analysis. The point is not to *compare* the artwork with the world; rather it is to analyse the validity of the integration — and fracture — of the form and content of an artwork. That is, we consider the artwork on its own terms, according to its own form and content. Through the analysis of the form and content, those objects which are objectively artworks, insofar as they are artworks, we can learn something true about the world:

> That by which truth content is more than what is posited by artworks is their methexis in history and the determinate critique that they exercise through their form. History in artworks is not something made [*gemacht*], and history alone frees the work from being merely something posited or manufactured: Truth content [*Wahrheitsgehalt*] is not external to history but rather its crystallization in the works. Their unposited truth content is their name. (AT: 175)

[178] Another way in which Adorno discusses truth in this way is through the concept of authenticity: "That art enunciates the disaster by identifying with it anticipates its enervation; this, not any photograph of the disaster or false happiness, defines the attitude of authentic contemporary art to a radically darkened objectivity…" (AT: 25). The truth content of an artwork, which is its index of authenticity, and which determines its objectivity, is distinguished from the falseness of a 'jargonistic' authenticity (JoA: 100 - 2).

One can think about this idea of truth, objectivity and analysis of form, in terms of *Fountain*. In the same way as one could say, although it would be a rather uninteresting claim, that the urinal, inasmuch as it is a urinal, has certain formal, modal and historical properties which tell us something true about how and why we take objects to be urinals, genuine artworks tell us something true about our society which they do by simply being the way that they are. What is interesting about artworks is that unlike urinals which are merely determined by fiat, as we have seen, artworks can contain within themselves, as it were, aporias and problems that are true of society through the objective formal features of the object as an artwork. Identifying an artwork is not a case of 'taking as', but learning about what an object is and by extension, learning about the world. Artworks bring together, in one location, a vast amount of complex information which, through its socio-historical mediation, generates transformative interactions. Analysis of the aesthetic validity of the integration of form and content tells us something true about the world which makes possible the aesthetic validity of the object *qua* art.

Another way that Adorno considers the exceptional difficulties of this theory of truth is through the notion of questions and answers. What makes an artwork an artwork, *represents*, albeit in the form of a riddle, a modal state of affairs about the socio-historical world which licenses the fact that the object may be validly taken as an artwork. As we have seen in the case of *Fountain*, this is a dynamic and complex relationship. The socio-historical moment, by being a particular way, poses a particular form of the fundamental aesthetic question: how to create a valid work of art at this moment? Each work of art, if successful, where that success is settled by the aesthetic consideration of the form and content of the object in question, is therefore a particular answer to the aesthetic problem of art-hood, posed through the context of a socio-historical moment.

> Artworks participate in enlightenment because they do not lie: They do not feign the literalness of what speaks out of them. They are real as answers to the puzzle [*Fragegestalt*] externally posed to them. Their own tension is binding in relation to the tension external to them. (AT: 6)

That the object successfully answers the implicit problem of being an artwork at a particular socio-historical moment allows us to infer what the specific nature of the aesthetic problem is for that socio-historical moment – artworks help us to work out the puzzle or question of identity at a particular moment. In discovering the question, we learn something about the questioner, the socio-historical moment itself.

During Modernism in particular, analysing a work's truthcontent is extremely challenging because they are true of a world which is fractured — aporetic propositions seem true of it depending on the point of view that the phenomena are considered. In other words, an aspect of *Fountain's* truth content was to assert, through its disjunction of utilitarian, functional form and its idea as an artwork, a schism that was developing in the world about how it understood the production and consumption of artworks and how it separated this production and consumption from the functional object.

Fountain, as a work of art, correctly 'asserted' that this distinction was no longer socio-historically tenable; *Fountain* is an answer to the problem of the identity of artworks within advanced western capitalism which it achieved simply through the meta-aesthetic move of articulating the question itself. Note, that *Fountain* achieves this articulation apart from the social world it indicates.[179] The relations between the two are developed through analysis, it is not *stated* within the artwork and it does not contain any content which is explicitly about the world. The content is mediated through the form. The role of aesthetics is to unravel the content as it is mediated in the form. As we have seen, in the case of the metaphysics of *Fountain*, this leads to radical transformations in entities and their properties at different moments. It gives us a situation where the truth content of an artwork consists in a dynamic state of affairs.

[179] See Adorno on the monadological conception of artworks. Whilst they relate to the world, they are nevertheless separate from it (AT: 237).

9.11 Conclusion

The above analysis has emphasised nonidentity as a key issue when considering artworks. Developing a metaphysics of co-locating objects, I have analyzed the complex and dynamic ways in which our propositions represent the world and how this representation, in the case of artworks at least, does not lend itself to the sort of identity we find in identity-thinking. In order to show this, a basic analysis of certain aspects of an artwork, *Fountain*, was considered in a dialectical way. This emphasized the shifting and aporetic quality of artworks. From there we were led to consider the relation of artworks to history.

Through these movements we were brought to a consideration of key metaphysical and epistemological notions such as truth, validity and objectivity. We saw that in the case of artworks, Adorno understands the socio-historical index of propositions about objects to constitute the conditions for objectivity and truth-making. This required us to consider, briefly, Adorno's notion of truth. That the internal form and integration of an artwork's content, modally, that is the way this integration occurred, would indicate something true of the world. Yet in neither case is this truth merely something that can be read off the world, artworks or our concepts of them. Determining the truth of an artwork requires analysis of the object in question.

Yet in considering the relationship of nonidentity to truth, it was revealed that there was a form of identity at work here. The artwork, insofar as it makes true a set of propositions at a particular moment and over a particular domain of discourse, is identical with a set of propositions, differently expressed, which are also true of society at the same moment and in that domain of discourse. However, the dialectical moment, as we have already seen, transpires because the relations between (co-locating) objects and phenomena are such that what is true of them is always changing and can come to make true contrary propositions. Therefore, an identity which obtains between an object and a social state of affairs at one time may, even in the next instant, not obtain precisely because of the dynamics involved in that identity relation. I have argued that this is the case in terms of *Fountain*.

The expressive element, or 'content' of the artwork, which is true of the world, is not propositional; it is substantial, literally. It expresses itself by being materially and formally instantiated in such a way that certain propositions are then true of it. Inasmuch as we are interested in objectively identifying artworks and engaging with their truth content, critical analysis of the object is required. However, the complex, shifting, transformative ways that objects are, require that this analysis is understood not merely as the aggregation of true propositions as sufficient sets of descriptions for the identification of an entity.

> Analysis is therefore adequate to the work only if it grasps the relation of its moments [*Momente*] to each other processually rather than reducing them analytically to purported fundamental elements. (AT: 232 - trans. modified)

Rather, in the complex sets of propositions which are true of the object, which it brings together in the semblance of its own unity as a particular object, it provides a terrain through which far more complex dynamic relations can take place. I have argued that the basis of this dialectics lies in at first realizing that the seeming identity that obtains between sortal terms and their referent and even across objects with different modal properties, is no such thing. Rather, this identity is complex; objects can enter into antagonistic, transformative relations with each other.

Furthermore, from this analysis we have resources to counter Rosen's worry that without determinate negation Adorno's dialectics is left without motor force. Certainly it is true that the dialectical transformations of objects in relation to the world are not positive in some determinately progressive sense. Nevertheless, given the metaphysics of objects and their socio-historical mediation, the tensions and fractures — a minimal requirement for the interplay of dialectics — are immanent to their constitution. When Adorno speaks of the grinding away of the elements of an artwork, this grinding away is the forced interaction of aporetic qualities of artworks. This grinding away cannot help but produce determinate change even if it is not the total sublation of tension.

We saw this in the example of *Fountain*. I argued that the complexity of the 'art-object' — which actually consists in a number of co-locating objects — generates a site of competing and contradictory dynamics. The interaction of these dynamics then produces the sort of transitions where an artwork may be generated from material precisely because that material does not consist in being an artwork. As we saw this dialectical transition required the socio-historical mediation of the object, i.e., that there were these contradictory dynamics was a result of the socio-historical situation within which the urinal was taken to be an artwork.

It should be obvious, given the transformative character of dialectical aesthetics that what ought to count as identity, what relations, properties, propositions are aesthetically relevant, cannot be settled in advance by theory; they can only be captured by detailed and individual analysis. To know what an object is requires following the transformations in the truth-values of propositions as they interact through their mediation in objects. The problems of nonidentity are substantial and they require us to consider objects in their conceptlessness, i.e. not solely as they are rendered in concepts or according to a system or conceptual scheme, but as particular objects which pose particular problems for analysis. In other words, the import of conceptlessness is that it directs our attention to the substantial, methodological demands the dialectics of nonidentity present to our epistemology.

We have to follow what happens to *Fountain* — its history — tracking its existence as a lump of porcelain, as a urinal and finally as *Fountain*, considering what was true of these entities at what times and in what way. And then consider why, particularly the modal and historical properties of the *Fountain*, were true *qua* art. For that we would have to consider the socio-historical conditions for the production of *Fountain.* What we find, according to Adorno, is that contained in *Fountain* were the very same problems and issues that we find in society but encoded in non-propositional, substantial form. The idea that we have a theory, such as a scientific theory for example, which can generalise about artworks based on analysis of other artworks, radically misjudges the particularity of artworks. Similarly, if we assume a rigid, representative relation

between language and the world such that analysis of language allows us to track general theoretical notions about any artwork, we assume far too much about the metaphysics of artworks.

Adorno argues that artworks and their nonidentity confound these sorts of theoretical assumptions. As Heil even points out without aesthetic, dialectical analysis, not only would a 'total' explanation of an artwork's being be beyond our ken, their metaphysical constitution is fundamentally *unruly* from the point of view of physics, for example. The metaphysics of artworks is such that their 'identity' confounds generalisations, rules and predictions and requires us to engage with the object if we wish to understand it. Again, as Heil says of statues: "We are in no position to move analytically from concepts to truth makers for applications of those concepts." (2003: 190). That is not to suggest that artworks are beyond comprehension but it does suggest that an entirely different approach to their constitution is required. I have argued that Adorno provides a compelling case for such an alternative approach, one which revolves around the complexities of nonidentity, mediation and conceptlessness as presented.

10. Negative Dialectics: Adorno's Immanent Critiques of Kant and Hegel Reconsidered

We are now in a position to understand the core commitments of negative dialectics. Negative dialectics is a theoretical orientation as opposed to a system, a set of principles or conditions or a process. Adorno's immanent critiques of Kant and Hegel, which we will reconsider shortly, provided us with three critical notions: conceptlessness, nonidentity and mediation. These have been discussed above. Negative dialectics consists in a particular understanding of these notions and their mutual import for each other — they are a negative dialectical constellation.

The theoretical orientation of 'negative dialectics' is negative in the sense that this constellation of concepts, or notions, entails limits to our epistemic and metaphysical ambitions and critically inflects our philosophical enquiries. That is, it is critical in contrast to providing 'positive' systematic claims about the world. The world cannot be known nor conceptually represented in its entirety; this is not merely a pragmatic issue but an immanent limit to the possibilities of knowledge. Metaphysical enquiry also finds its limits in material particulars and cannot detach itself from those particulars. We have seen, in the examination of the first three chapters, that Adorno understands critical enquiry to be motivated by the irreducible conceptlessness of the material world and its subsequent difference to the medium of our thinking and subjectivity, which, for Adorno, is irreducibly conceptual.

I have arrived at this notion of negative dialectics through a close reading and reconstruction of Adorno's immanent critiques of Kant and Hegel. In this final chapter, I develop an important nuance which is suppressed in the linear presentation of the thesis. The first section developed criticisms of Kant through particular tensions in his philosophy. In light of these tensions we moved to a critique of Hegel. These criticisms may lead to the impression that even though Hegel was also critiqued by Adorno, Hegel is a progression from Kant. That is,

Kant was useful insofar as he led Adorno to Hegel's thinking. This interpretation, however, would be a mistake. If we consider the content of Adorno's critique of Hegel, it has a distinctly Kantian inflection. In this final section, I will re-present the material of the first two sections and show that rather than a linear progression from Kant to Hegel to Adorno, the latter's philosophy is the result of a mutual critique of the two thinkers, that Adorno has used Kant to counter critique Hegel.[180] From a methodological point of view, it would appear that Adorno's negative dialectics can be fruitfully understood as a dialectical interplay between the two thinkers through which a new position is attained.

10.1 Negative Dialectics: Commitments

From the previous three chapters in this section, it becomes apparent that Adorno's negative dialectics entails a set of metaphysical commitments. As Espen Hammer points out, whilst Adorno certainly had an antipathy towards a priori metaphysics and rationalism, it does not follow that he is insensitive to or unconcerned with metaphysics.[181] Indeed, Adorno's metaphysical interests and commitments are often overlooked and this leads to problems of interpretation. In particular, the analyses above demonstrate that understanding his metaphysics enables us to negotiate the problems of *begriffslose* and *Nichtidentität* without needing to resort to some notion of non-conceptual content in experience or some element, portion or region of experience which is beyond conceptual experience.

What, then, are the metaphysical commitments underpinning the above analyses?

- Objects, *qua* material, are a particular way and that that way is self-identical.

- Objects, for us, as thinking, discursive agents, are many different ways. Objects and thinking agents are such that for the particular way an object is, there are many different ways in which we can attend to that object: we may say that it is an object; it is made of glass; it is hard; it is fragile.

[180] This idea occurred to Jarvis but he does not elaborate it in detail (1998: 152).
[181] See Adorno's analysis of Aristotle in particular. (MCP: 28 - 9). See Hammer, 2008: 65 - 72.

That does not commit us to the notion, that the way that we represent the object, whilst valid, is ontologically correct. The difference between objects and their determining concepts is such that there is a nonidentity between the world and our articulations of it.

- Inasmuch as we abstract and divide objects in our valid conceptual articulations and given that we are arguing that those divisions do not map onto real divisions in the world, the ways that we sort, determine and articulate the world conceptually do not represent how the world is — these demarcations are an unavoidable function of the way in which we can and do think about the world.

- Contra Foster, this third notion does not entail that our linguistic articulations about the world are failures or that there seems to be some part or portion — perhaps even the whole depending on how strongly we take Foster's thesis — of the world which is 'beyond' conceptual articulation. Any entity within the material world is amenable to conceptual articulation. Despite being amenable to articulation, this does not preclude the complexity and perhaps contradictory character of phenomena. As a result, valid articulations about the world will not simply aggregate as sets of facts.

- Just because there are valid ways in which we can speak about the world we are not, therefore, committed to the idea that there is always a set of propositions which we could propose at a specific moment in history which would be sufficient to determination of an entity regardless of the historical moment. Artworks, broadly speaking, appear to be a complex of non-identical objects which bear equally complex relations to the world and to each other. Nonidentity does not simply obtain between mind and world, it obtains in the world.[182]

[182] See Stone, 2008: 60.

- Issues of nonidentity are underpinned by the modal notion of mediation: the way that objects are is at least in part as a result of their 'mediation' by heterogeneous dynamics, influences, material and history. Mediation also refers to our cognition of objects by concepts and also, therefore, of the mediation of particular objects by general concepts and universals. In short, for Adorno, everything is mediated: objects, our thoughts, our concepts and our social reality. This does not mean that it is an 'ur-concept' which is either the key to all theorizing or trivial in its super-abundance. Rather it is a notion with direct metaphysical and epistemological import that when we consider any phenomena, sensitivity to its mediations will help us to understand the phenomena. Conversely, if we ignore the mediations we are likely to be led to systematically misunderstand the phenomena at hand.

- In these cases the quantitative complexity of conditions involved in its consideration as an artwork at least push the limits of our comprehension; our methods for analysing such objects cannot be settled in advance of analysis, as a set of rules or as a system of analysis. At the least, our methodological approach can be no more determinate than the following: when we consider an object, we must attend to the complex way that it is (see Chapter Nine) and, depending on this analysis, consider a potential host of heterogeneous socio-historical considerations.

Negative dialectics is the philosophical attempt to maintain theoretical purchase on the world whilst being sensitive these metaphysical difficulties. That Adorno sees these problems as constitutive of philosophical problems, results, on the one hand from his critical analysis of artworks found in his aesthetics, and on the other hand, from his immanent critique of Kant and Hegel. The point now is to show how these areas, namely his aesthetics and his critique of German Idealism, being grounded in his metaphysical and epistemological commitments given above, come together to provide the basis for understanding and 'performing' negative dialectical enquiry.

10.2 Critique of Kant Revisited

I have sought to show how we can understand the philosophical foundations of negative dialectics as developing from an immanent critique of Kant and Hegel — the mutual mediation of Kant and Hegel results in negative dialectics. Aspects of Kant's thinking represent core commitments in Adorno's dialectics; but also his rejection of Kant is due to commitments that he has taken from Hegel. Conversely, aspects of Hegel's thinking persist as core commitments in Adorno's dialectics but his rejection of Hegel is due to commitments that he has taken from Kant. The account of negative dialectics presented above makes explicit the commitments which underpin this mediated critique and which help us to ground our philosophical understanding of negative dialectics.

I have argued in Section One, that Adorno finds a number of problems with Kant's philosophy. He breaks his own critical stipulation against speculative thinking in his rendering of transcendental subjectivity. Crucially, the fixing of subjectivity and its abstraction in transcendental subjectivity is concomitant with a particular view of both judgements and objects. Adorno argues that Kant's thinking is at least divided in its commitments: on the one hand there is a critical sensitivity to the world — this suggests that we cannot simply propose a priori how the world is, we must develop our theories in response to the world itself and, specifically, how it appears to us. It could be argued that Kant rationally fixes what objects, subjects and judgements are according to such appearances.

These transcendental determinations of objects, subjects, etc., are not themselves validated by sensible experience. For Adorno, they are the product of pre-critical commitments and a view of both the world and of experience which is wedded to a pre-critical belief in a particular world view: one that is essentially proto-scientistic and empiricist. Not only does Adorno worry about the consistency of this pre-critical element with the critical component of Kant's thought, he thinks that such a view of experience is false in its view of our epistemic activities and the view of the world it engenders.

These problems, according to Adorno, result from Enlightenment commitments

that we can and should know the world, rationally in its entirety — in other words it results from pre-critical epistemic commitments which escaped Kant's own critical eye.[183] Kant's solution was to pare down the objects of critical knowledge to that for which we could provide sufficient conditions of knowing. In other words, the reason why Kant makes this move is because he is epistemically committed to the idea that the world is the sort of thing, even if only in appearance, that is *objectively knowable by us, in its entirety*.

Adorno argues that Kant's scientistic bent is much deeper than a commitment to geometrical and mathematical propositions as synthetic a priori. Objects are entities amenable to empirical analysis and they are the *only* valid objects of knowledge.[184]

> To Kant we can add no theorems of knowledge that were not developed by him, because their exclusion is central to his epistemology; the systematic claim of the doctrine of pure reason makes this exclusion unmistakable enough. The Kantian system is a system of stop signals. The subjectively directed constitutional analysis does not alter the world as it is given to a naïve bourgeois consciousness; rather, it takes pride in its "empirical realism." But it sees the height of the validity it claims as one with the level of abstraction. Obsessed with the apriority of its synthetic judgments, it tends to expurgate any part of cognition that does not bow to their rules. The social division of labor is respected without reflection, along with the flaw that has become strikingly clear in the two hundred years since: that the sciences organized by a division of labor have usurped an illegitimate monopoly on truth. Put in bourgeois and very Kantian terms, the paralogisms of Kant's epistemology are the bad checks that went to protest with the unfoldment of science into a mechanical activity. The authority of the Kantian concept of truth turned terroristic with the ban on thinking the absolute. Irresistibly, it drifts toward a ban on all thinking. What the Kantian block projects on truth is the self-maiming of reason, the mutilation reason inflicted upon itself as a rite of initiation into its own scientific character. Hence the scantiness of what happens in Kant as cognition, compared with the experience of the living, by which the idealistic systems wished to do right, even though in the wrong fashion. (ND: 388)

We can see that Kant would have blocked my analysis of *Fountain*. The limiting of valid objects of knowledge, pointed to by Adorno in this quotation, to that which appears to us spatio-temporally and the consideration of objects only in the

[183] See esp. ND: 137.
[184] See esp. KCPR: 40. See Strawson for a subtle discussion of the relation of Kant to 'the scientifically minded philosopher' (1982: 253 - 5).

way that they appear spatio-temporally, is not only invalid for Adorno, it is indicative of a particular world-view. Of course, Adorno's analysis may be incorrect. However, the Kantian assumption that it is reasonable to develop all objectively valid knowledge from immediate spatio-temporal experience seems to have thoroughly ignored even the possibility and necessity of thinking in other ways.

Kant's commitment to the transcendental limits of epistemology and the determination of modality according to those limits sets the scope of entities about which we can gain objectively valid knowledge. Kant was then prepared to jettison thinking beyond appearances as such thinking jeopardizes the project of objectively and sufficiently valid knowledge of the world. As Adorno argues, the result is eventually a truncation of thinking and knowing. Conversely, Adorno's negative move is to give up our ambitions of an epistemology and metaphysics, tailor-made to objective knowing, and enter into open-ended critical relations with the world. The truncation of experience and judgement in transcendental idealism could be seen as the crux of Adorno's rejection of Kant.

Yet it is wrong to think that these criticisms amount to a complete rejection. Just as Adorno makes the point that there is truth in the untruth of Hegel's philosophy, there is similar truth in the untruth of Kant's thinking. According to Adorno, Kant's philosophy is a 'force-field' which attempts to draw together and co-ordinate key commitments of the Enlightenment psyche. Even if Kant is wrong, he reveals deep truths, in philosophical form, about the environment within which he was working.[185] It is also worth noting, that suggesting a philosopher, or their system of thought, is right or wrong and that this value is sufficient to the worth of the philosophy is deeply misguided for Adorno.[186] If we imagine a philosophical system to be like an object, then just as objects have certain modal properties in virtue of how their socio-historical milieu is, so does a philosophical system. Philosophy is not, for Adorno, a discrete body of thought that can or should be evaluated in abstraction from its socio-historical moment. Nor does its value lie solely on the grounds of whether or not it is 'right'. Adorno's criticisms of Kant are not simply a negative value judgement for Adorno.

[185] KCPR: 4, 27, 30 & 58.
[186] KCPR: 32.

Furthermore, Adorno considered Kant to be right about many issues. Inasmuch as certain aspects of Kant's thinking can be used to help Adorno navigate the problems of dialectical philosophy highlighted in Chapter Six, some of Adorno's core philosophical commitments are genetically Kantian. No doubt these Kantian commitments are transformed within their mediation in Adorno's negative dialectics and as such are no longer straightforwardly Kantian. This transformation is effected through their mediation with Hegelian notions. Nevertheless, it is highly instructive to maintain a view of the Kantian moments of Adorno's thinking.

The key notion that Adorno retains from Kant is that the appropriate way to determine what our metaphysics and epistemology consists in is through a critical reflection on our experience of objects.[187] Reason errs when it speculates beyond the limits of experience. Nevertheless, Adorno does not make the Kantian move that transcendental reason can provide the sufficient grounds for the co-ordination of this limitation (when this happens pre-critical commitments creep back in). As has been said, he does not make the move that experience of objects only consists in empirical experience — a notion that will be returned to at the end of this section. However, he does hold that a turn towards objects, those things which are conceptless, will help us come to realise particular limits of our conceptual and rational resources. This move is unmistakably Kantian.

In some sense, therefore, Adorno is attempting to be more Kantian than Kant. Kant wished to limn the limits of metaphysics and epistemology according to the transcendental conditions required for sensible cognition. As Kant argues in his introduction to the first Critique, this is required because speculation has led metaphysics into confusion (CPR: Avii - viii). The point of the limitation is, therefore, to eradicate the propositions of pure speculative reason where they masquerade as objective, valid knowledge, arrived at solely through a priori metaphysical enquiry.

[187] See Hammer, 2008: 65.

Adorno is entirely in agreement with this project. Indeed, as this stands, this move is constitutive of Adorno's thinking. The problem, Adorno argues, is that whilst Kant made this move, he made far-reaching assumptions about what it was that we were investigating when we were analysing phenomenal experience and associated cognition. Because Kant thought that experience consisted only in phenomena which can be spatio-temporally determined, he made pre-critical moves: he believed that experience consists only in entities which can be spatio-temporally determined; and that if we are able to give conditions for that determination then those conditions can be considered the fixed conditions of all cognitive determination. If we have good reason to reject the first assumption then we have good reason to reject the second assumption. If we reject these two assumptions, what you have is a *persistent* turn towards the object as opposed to the 'one-shot' consideration that we find in Kant. The persistent turn to the objects of experience is isomorphic with the persistence of the critical turn in Adorno's thought; Adorno's negativity consists in the persistence of this critical turn.

In considering nonidentity and modal properties in Chapter Nine, we saw that objects can change their properties, even come into existence and cease to exist, according to change in socio-historical conditions. If our grounds for the consideration of that change lie in critical consideration of the material object and the critical consideration of those socio-historical conditions, then we have good reason to doubt that the conditions of knowledge and what it is that we know about, can be settled at any one particular time. Therefore, Kant's proposal that we consider what we are and what we can know according to our objective experience is irreducible in Adorno's philosophy. For Adorno, propositions — transcendental or synthetic — cannot persist beyond their index to a particular state of affairs. The consequence of this is an epistemic humility: whilst we can certainly know things about objects, what we know cannot be assumed to be sufficient and eternal; knowledge cannot be reified into an enduring, timeless, positive set of facts.

As with artworks, which are objects about which our judgements change according to different socio-historical moments, attention to these objects present

immediate critiques of sets of propositions which we may take to be eternally true. For example, let us say that some painting is an artwork. Let us even say that we have made this judgement on the basis of an Adornian analysis — by considering not just the form and material of the object but also its socio-historical milieu. In light of these analyses, we assert that the proposition 'this painting is an artwork' is true. Adorno's point would be that if we reify this proposition as a 'positive fact of the matter' we ignore the fact that the socio-historical conditions upon which it is reliant for its status as an artwork, will change. In turn, the status of the painting as an artwork may also change. To know one way or another we must repeat our analysis.

In terms of the judgement, we also ignore the nonidentity of the subject and predicate. In reifying the proposition as a fact we reify the relationship between the subject and predicate in their equation in the judgement; we suppress the nonidentity of the two terms and their referents and their dynamic, changeable relation. In particular instances, negativity is more literal in its meaning: socio-historical states of affairs, more often than not, negate those propositions about the world which we have taken to be indicative of some truth; methodologically the negativity of Adorno's position is that even if socio-historical events do not negate such propositions, we cannot reify the method as a formula or rule of analysis prior to the examination of the object as the method would then contain systematic assumptions about what the object is. Negativity is an orientation towards the persistence of change.

The metaphysical commitments proposed above are in accord with this position. Not only is the material constitution of objects not faithfully *represented* in our conceptualisations of it, no matter how valid those conceptualisations, but also the material constitution of some objects is such that their being taken as a particular sort of entity relies on heterogeneous factors to the object (see Chapter Nine). If those heterogeneous factors, such as socio-historical circumstances change, which they most certainly do, then objects are such that they instantiate different modal properties at different times. Insofar as they do this then it is more than possible, and is the case according to Adorno, that they will attest to the truth of very different, perhaps even contradictory, propositions at different

times. Furthermore, some very complex objects will make true contradictory claims at the same time but in different respects; the analysis of co-locating objects helps us to make sense of the metaphysics of this notion. Certain objects, artworks for example, are such that we cannot foreclose on a set of true propositions just because they may be true of that object at a particular time. Ignoring the indexing of propositions to a socio-historical moment actually creates the conditions whereby you can have inconsistency and contradictions — or where our metaphysics is gerrymandered to avoid such a possibility.

This analysis does suggest why Adorno would be convinced by aspects of Kant's thinking — Kant's turn towards the particular as both the basis for metaphysics and epistemology, is a persistent, constitutive and irreducible feature of Adorno's philosophy. He argues that character of cognition is responsive to the particularity of the object, which can only be taken as the invariant idealist, representation of the phenomena at the expense of that particularity. If we jettison the pre-critical criterion that our knowledge of the world be objective, valid and complete (that epistemically the world is totally transparent and knowable for us) then we can reinstate the object as a substantial feature of cognition.

The object, in its rich particularity, entails that it is more than what is captured by any one linguistic representation at any one time. We can consider our encounter with objects as such rather than just phenomena because without our epistemic ambitions we are no longer as worried by the fact that what we experience cannot be sufficiently represented in sets of propositions. This worry is allayed by the fact that we can still validly and objectively talk about the world — losing the former does not lead us into scepticism, it leads us into epistemic humility.

> The materialist longing to grasp the thing aims at the opposite: it is only in the absence of images that the full object could be conceived. Such absence concurs with the theological ban on images. Materialism brought that ban into secular form by not permitting Utopia to be positively pictured; this is the substance of its negativity. (ND: 207)

Here Adorno is quite explicit that negativity just is the orientation towards the

fact that our representations of the world are not sufficient to it. Materialism, which he argues replaces idealism through the immanent critique of the latter, is the turn towards analysis of the object as we saw in Chapter Nine.

Our epistemic humility, as I put it, entails that we give up our claim and goal of total knowledge and a positive utopia associated with it — objects will always defy our articulations as *representations*. Our valid conceptual engagements with the world will enter us into a dynamic, critical engagement with the world. Utopia, as Hammer rightly points out, is a philosopher's dream not an immanent reality (Hammer, 2008: 69). In some circumstances this may be no real worry as we can still talk validly about the world, we can still pick out its features and attend to it in a logical, rational and consistent fashion. In other circumstances, such as in the consideration of artworks, what this humility does is re-orientate us to the complexity of the world which is circumvented by our will to knowledge. Furthermore, it sets our epistemic practices back in motion. The picture theory, identity-thinking, the will to transform the world into a conceptual picture of itself, is covertly the will to hold the world in place by making a static representation of it, sufficient to it. If we let go, so to speak, of our epistemic ambitions, our intellectual experience of the world will become dynamic and responsive to the world again.

10.3 Critique of Hegel Revisited: developing dialectics through the mutual Critique of Kant and Hegel

Adorno's critique of Kant is primarily an immanent critique and is therefore conducted from within Kant's thinking. Nevertheless, Adorno uses Hegel's critique of Kant to rethink these problems or tensions such that they can be replaced by a more workable theory or so that what is right about Kant's theory can be developed. If we consider certain key points in Hegel's critique of Kant, and considering these criticisms in light of the discussion in Section Two, we can see how Adorno is influenced by Hegel.

However, as much as the first section proceeded from a critique of Kant, through to Hegel's thinking, we saw that Adorno was also critical of Hegel. I now wish to

show that even in areas where Adorno appears to move in line with Hegelian thinking against Kant, there are Kantian elements which persist in Adorno's philosophy. That is, Adorno does not accept Hegel's dialectics in its entirety because there are elements of Kant's thinking which Adorno is still committed to — or which he has used to mediate some of Hegel's thinking. Therefore, I think it is better to understand Adorno as neither a Kantian nor an Hegelian, nor as amalgam of both theorists' work: rather, Adorno uses Hegel to develop and critique Kant, but he also uses Kant to counter-critique and develop Hegel. Negative dialectics, from which the constellation of philosophical commitments results, is most fruitfully understood as the dialectical interpenetration of Kantian and Hegelian philosophy.

10.3i Key Hegelian Criticisms of Kant

Through the discussion in section two, we have considered some of Hegel's key criticisms of Kant. Adorno agrees, at least in part, with each of them:

- Hegel argues that Kant was wrong to isolate only four antinomies (SoL: 190). As we have seen, an antinomy is some form of contradiction in thought, owing to the logical and rational viability of exclusive positions.[188] Hegel argued that that there are antinomies in all our thoughts as a matter of dialectics (SoL: 191). According to Hegel what Kant has done is isolate the two moments as a thesis and antithesis and, due to dogmatic commitments, opted for one side of the dialectic over another (SoL: 191 - 3). What he ought to have done is considered how the limits of reason and understanding, which are the basis of antinomy provide the conditions for their own transformation. In order to achieve this, Kant needed to think about limits itself, finitude and infinity, differently.[189]

- For Kant, issues of modality are settled through the status of a judgement as it relates to the transcendental conditions of cognition. Hegel warns

[188] See CPR: B433 - 5.
[189] See above, ND: 388.

that this is irreducibly subjective and fails to properly account for the objective conditions within which particular individuals, and what can be said of them, obtain (SoL: 80). Hegel resituates modality as an ontological category concerned with the determination of extant entities. In short, how and what objects are and the validity of the judgements we make about objects is not settled according to something about the subject but by an objectively real state of affairs. At the pure ontological level, 'measure' is arrived at through a priori argument into the dialectics of being; the modality of social phenomena is a similarly objective state of affairs.[190]

- Objects are determined by the general conditions of cognition and rendered conceptually in the immediate subsumption of the appearance under a general conceptual representation. Hegel rejects the immediacy of the subsumption of objects in appearance to concepts. Objects are different in kind to the concepts which we use to represent them, which are general and abstract. If we ignore this difference, as we see in the *Phenomenology*, we find that our thought becomes suffused with confusions and susceptible to scepticism. (PoS: 204) Obviously a central theme of the *Phenomenology* is the eradication of that difference through its sublation. Nevertheless, the initial difference cannot be ignored or dogmatically suppressed; it must itself be sublimated through dialectical enquiry.

- Hegel argues that Kant's placing of the real — *qua* self and world — beyond the rational is a deep mistake and is a consequence of ungrounded dogmatism concerning sensible appearances as the basis of valid, objective knowledge. (SoL: 779 - 80)

- As implied in the last two points, Hegel argues against appearances as the basis of knowledge. Whilst I think Stern has successfully argued that Hegel is sensitive to the critical turn against abstract, a priori

[190] PoH: 63 - 4.

metaphysical speculation in Kant's philosophy, Hegel is quite explicit that rationalist metaphysics, insofar as it is concerned with the essence of objects and the world, is deeper, and more truthful, than the picture we find in Kant. Hegel argues that, for genuine knowledge, we cannot base our epistemic enquiries on appearances; instead we ought to aim at knowledge of essence — a project entirely within the scope of our rational capabilities, even taking into consideration the Kantian turn. (SoL: 783 - 6)

- Hegel argues that metaphysics and epistemology is dynamic in a way which cannot be accounted for by Kant. Both the *Logic* and the *Phenomenology*, insofar as they are dialectical, follow the transformations of thought and of our categories. They pursue a method and content of rational reflection which thoroughly rejects the transcendental move of the First Critique which fixes our cognitive framework according to the immediate content of perception. According to Hegel, this Kantian move not only produces certain confusions in thought — concerning the immediate contents of our experience — it is also unable to account for the changes in our thinking and in our social structures which history attests to. Kant's thinking is, rather, itself an expression in the historical movement of rationality.

- Hegel objects to the Kantian critique of speculative metaphysics as it amounts to an attack on reason itself and entails limits on subjectivity itself. Obviously Hegel appreciates why Kant made this move and sees Kant as progressive in certain respects; however, he balks at the limit placed on reason and therefore, on the autonomous, rational subject. He argues that Kant's move against reason is dogmatic and imposes an heterogeneous limit, the source of which lies outside of reason itself — in the appearance of phenomena. Conversely, for Hegel, it is the function of dialectical reason that it can develop itself, through its encounter with heterogeneous elements, to higher levels of clarity and insight. Importantly, these insights develop through the assimilation of what reason previously encountered as its limit. The Kantian belief that the

limits of reason are fixed fails to understand reason and the dialectical character of limitation itself.

These ideas have been discussed at length in Section Two. What I will now explore is the extent to which Adorno accepts these criticisms, the way that he uses Kantian considerations to limit his acceptance and how his own particular position emerges as a result. The idea is that Adorno's position is a dialectical transformation of Kant and Hegel through their mutual mediation.

10.3ii Critical Mediations

Hegel's first criticism of Kant, concerning the antinomies, is taken up by Adorno: there are antinomies in all of our thoughts and, following Hegel, he rejects the idea that the resolution to the antinomies is to be found in transcendental idealism. Kant helps Adorno to think negatively through the awareness of the problem of limitations of reason. Where fixity and hypostasis persist in Kant's thinking, it persists to provide the transcendental conditions for an objective, valid, positive epistemology. We have seen Adorno argue for antinomies as a real matter of nonidentity: the way in which we think as heterogeneous and contradictory to reality which produces judgements and modes of thinking ripe with tension.

Yet dialectically, Adorno's counter criticism of dogmatic thinking in Hegel is implicitly a result of Kantian commitments concerning the limits of thought. Whilst he accepts that there are antinomies, he does not think that those antinomies can be sublated by thought alone. Furthermore, he does not see antinomy as simply a moment of rationality. Rather, antinomy becomes a broad category of intellectual experience resulting from the heterogeneity of thought to its content. If we take Kant's critical move seriously, which Adorno takes exceptionally seriously, that critical enquiry *always* begins with consideration of the particular, we cannot, therefore, build systems and bodies of knowledge upon the reification of the dialectic.

We must, like Kant did *at first*, begin with the object and what is before us and

constantly return to it. Again the persistence of the critical turn speaks against O'Connor's interpretation of Adorno as a transcendental philosopher: we cannot fix the transcendental conditions of the critical turn prior to critical analysis. Rather, criticism is developed anew through each particular analysis. Adorno holds this Kantian insight alongside Hegel's where antinomy is the dialectical tensions found between different terms in judgements and in our rational contemplation of the relation of judgements to the objects they determine — and then ultimately to our rational consideration of how particulars actually are. We cannot reify the conditions of knowing to legislate against antinomy — we must think with the antinomy, as it were, through dialectics; but we must not sublate the irreducible particularity of the particular object in order to overstep the antinomy. Adorno's dialectics is transformative rather than sublative. We can see how Adorno's thinking is a *dialogue* between Kant and Hegel to produce a position which neither thinker holds: a transformative mode of thinking which aims to reduce the dogmatic, 'positive' elements, of both thinkers if taken by themselves.

The question then of Adorno's conception of antinomy is captured by those metaphysical commitments I have expounded above. If it is the case that all our thoughts have aporetic moments — that there are antinomies in thought — and that these moments consist in a number of related tensions — the relationship between general and particular, abstract and concrete, representation and articulation — and that these antinomies cannot be sublated (Hegel) nor dissolved (Kant), we can make sense of this move if we understand key aspects of language and world and their relationship as expounded in the analysis of nonidentity and conceptlessness above. I have argued that we are committed to attending to the world in its irreducible particularity — this captures the Kantian commitment to experience.

However, taking up the Hegelian position, there is a dogmatic element in Kant's position over the antinomy. Kant sees in the antinomies a justification of transcendental idealism because it is only idealism — as opposed to transcendental rationalism — which is able to explain the existence of the antinomy and dissolve it as an epistemological and metaphysical worry.

However, for Hegel, this is no solution: the antinomy still exists and its 'solution' is really only dissolved through a related truncation of experience and rationality. That Hegel thinks the antinomy can be overcome by considering it a fulcrum for the reconsideration of the notion of infinity shows that Kant's 'necessary' transcendental solution was premature and dogmatic.[191]

Adorno sides with Hegel in holding that there are antinomies in all of our thoughts; he thinks that dialectics is required to negotiate these antinomies. However, he then dialectically shifts again to take Kant's side over Hegel when Hegel thinks that, through thought alone, the contradictory moments can be sublated by the dialectical understanding of the particular as universal and the universal as particular. This is achieved by Hegel through the a priori reconsideration of limitation, finitude and infinity — the determinate movement of his dialectic from the negative to the speculative moment. As we saw in Chapter Six, Hegel's idealist move that antinomies can be assimilated within systematic thinking mistakes our ability to identify the dialectic with the rationalist commitment that thought is sufficient to turn difference within the dialectic into identity. The account of the conceptlessness grounds this limit to the Hegelian dialectic:

> To give a stark description we might say that the [*Critique of Pure Reason*] contains an identity philosophy — that is, a philosophy that attempts to ground being in the subject — and also a nonidentity philosophy — one that attempts to restrict that claim to identity by insisting on the obstacles, the block, encountered by the subject in its search for knowledge. (KCPR: 66)[192]

Adorno makes it quite clear that in many ways Kant has a deeper sensitivity to the limits of reason and the difference of material reality to pure subjectivity than Hegel. As this limitation persists in Kant, there is a deeper and more Modern truth in Kant than in Hegel. Insofar as Adorno is a thinker of nonidentity, and inasmuch as Kant has a constitutive role for the non-identical in his philosophy, Hegel's dialectics is strongly mediated by Kantian thinking for Adorno. That is not to suggest that Adorno is a transcendental rather than a dialectical thinker.

[191] See Priest (1995) for an excellent discussion of the antinomies and their solutions: 81 - 114.
[192] See also, HTT: 11.

Rather, it is to underline the fact that there are methodological limits — negativity — to dialectical thinking.

Given that antinomy is eventually sublated within Hegelian thinking we can see that Hegel is the apotheosis of identity-thinking. He takes the moment of difference, which makes itself apparent through antinomy, and argues that the conceptual identification of the dialectical character of difference can form a truly positive moment in thought — its negative moment (the difference itself) can be rationally negated and is preserved only insofar as it is the determinate moment for the transformation into a positive moment of the dialectic — identity. Adorno makes precisely this point: 'The isolated moments [of the dialectic] go beyond themselves, in fact, only because the identity of subject and object is preconceived' (HTT: 93).[193] As we saw in Chapter Six, it suppresses the initial moment which motivates the dialectic, that the object in its genuine difference to conceptual thought, produces antinomies in thought when we take account of that difference (HTT: 19).

That we can recognize this difference does not entail that we can assimilate it within the dialectic. Adorno's solution is precisely the opposite to that of Hegel: it is to say that our conceptual thoughts about the world, even as articulated within our recognition of nonidentity, whilst valid, do not represent how the world is ontologically:

> The linguistic expression "existence," which is necessarily conceptual, is confused with what it designates, which is conceptless, something that cannot be melted down into identity. (HTT: 19)

Therefore, if we wish to know how the world is we cannot look to the conceptual rendering of difference as a moment in dialectical thinking; rather, we must look back to the world. Hegel's critique of Kant and then the critique of Hegel via Kant help to deepen what is meant by negativity in Adorno's thinking. It also, of course helps us to ground what is meant by dialectics in Adorno's thinking.

[193] See also, HTT: 10, 19 - 20, 31, 85.

Given this dialectical dialogue between Kant and Hegel and the metaphysical analysis of conceptlessness provided above, we gain a deep insight into negative dialectics. Antinomies arise for both Kant and Hegel as a result of tensions between the generalising and abstracting capacities of thought and the particular and immediate determinations of the content of our thought. Adorno's solution to the problem of antinomies arises largely as a result of the different ways in which identity-thinking manifests in both Kant and Hegel. Using the one to critique the mode of identity-thinking in the other, we get a fuller grounding for the general problems of identity-thinking.

This rejection of identity-thinking allowed us to present a metaphysical picture which revolves around the validity of conceptual articulations, *qua* world, but which points against the further, invalid move, that we should take these articulations as representations of the world. Inasmuch as this metaphysical basis captures the sort of commitments that Adorno has in his mutual transformation of Kant and Hegel, we are beginning to validate his claim that negative dialectics is the 'consistent sense of nonidentity' (ND: 5). I have shown that through Hegel and Kant we are consistently thrown back to consideration of the object in its particularity. Our judgements and our understanding of judgements are consequently not able to be reified. Given the way that certain objects are, artworks for example, their historical properties are such that they can never be thoroughly identified by a complete set of propositions. Together these considerations unavoidably point us towards a deep, open-minded, theoretical consideration of the particular. This is negative dialectics.

Let us consider the second, third and fourth criticisms Hegel has of Kant together; we will see a similar pattern of analysis open up. Kant's realism is attenuated by the epistemic problem that the noumenal is beyond the bounds of knowledge as we have seen. Hegel's critique of Kant is that this is not genuine realism as the validity for the objective determination of an entity is, in the final analysis, irretrievably subjective and is concomitant with a lapse into dogmatism. Hegel, indebted far more to Aristotle here, wants a robust sense of the real as grounded in essences and universals. Adorno agrees with this move to an extent. He complains that Kant makes the subject the grounds of objectivity through its

reification. Given Kant's epistemic ambitions, Adorno argues that the result of Kant's position is a rationalistic and bureaucratic determination of a universal subject that could be capable of providing such objective grounds.

Like Hegel, Adorno is deeply uncomfortable with this position in Kant. Rather than proceeding transcendentally to shore-up the validity of what appears to be the case, we should consider what is the case. One of Hegel's innovations is to think in a priori terms without grounding a priori thought on empirical experience. Arguably then, he is able to avoid the position of transcendental realism without resorting to transcendental idealism. Reflection on the determination of the particular in thought provides the conditions through which we can progress in our thinking to a higher level of comprehension: an understanding which understands the competing moments of thought under a unity.

But yet again, as we saw in Chapter Six, Adorno rejects Hegel's *idealist* dialectics which takes the sublation of difference for providing a new conceptual unity — one which overcomes or sublates the difference between mind and world. Through the dialectical sublation of the antinomies in our thought, our thinking and conceptual rendering of the world advances to the point where it becomes sufficient to the thorough and total understanding of the world — we know the world *as it really is*. Against this, Adorno still takes seriously Kant's insight that the mind and world are irreducibly different and we cannot cancel that difference, conceptually, through the recognition of this fact.

The result is a form of materialist realism under enormous epistemological pressure. Like Hegel, Adorno thinks that we should not resort to methodological antirealism so easily; like Kant, Adorno does not think that we can magic away the irreducible epistemic difficulties that the ontological difference of mind and world poses. Interestingly, both the Kantian and the Hegelian positions result from Enlightenment epistemological ambitions: that whatever it is that we think we can know, we should be able to know it in its entirety.

Negative dialectics is the rejection of both strategies as a route to a stable and

complete epistemology. Metaphysically, it says that we can be realists about the world but that when we consider how certain objects are, and how they are different at the ontological level to how they are represented in our conceptual articulations, we find that some objects at least, modernist artworks for example, are vastly complex entities. The combination of historical properties and their persistence conditions are such that our ability to know these objects is immediately put under extreme pressure. Negative dialectics from this point of view, is the methodological acceptance of the fact that the entities which we enquire into are at least vastly more complicated than our conceptual schemas would suggest.[194] If epistemology is the science of knowledge, then it is in this sense that Adorno is 'Against Epistemology'; it does not follow from this that Adorno was therefore against knowledge or an irrationalist.

The fifth criticism that Hegel has of Kant is that he develops the foundations of metaphysics and epistemology on the determination of immediate appearances in experience. As we have seen, Hegel argues at length against immediacy. The influence of Hegel on Adorno over this issue is obviously profound and Adorno admits it on numerous occasions. Appearances and what we even take to be an appearance is as a result of the conceptual mediation of our experience.

Kant is aware of mediation, in one sense: the appearance mediates the mind and noumena. Hegel's point was that the appearance is still taken as immediate in Kant and that this is a mistaken move — we see in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the problems that any form of immediacy leads to for Hegel. Appearance is, when we properly reflect on it, already engaged in the dialectic of general and particular, concrete and abstract — it contains antinomies. Simple appearances require conceptual, dialectical reflection to realise that they are already a product of complex conceptual mediation. Hegel's point is that the dialectical reflection on the 'immediacy' of appearance which yields a deeper understanding of how our experience is thoroughly mediated, even when it seems pure and simple, allows us, as we have seen repeatedly, to reach a higher level of unified

[194] Obviously Hegel realised this as a dialectician - it was one of his key insights. However, his idealist, systematic thought was that we could assimilate this problem through dialectical thinking; Adorno disagrees.

comprehension. This is represented in the *Phenomenology* by the circle that consciousness travels through when considering the appearance. That is, we can overcome the problem of immediacy on its own terms rather than circumventing it as we find in Kant.

However, just as Adorno follows Hegel into a dialectical consideration of appearances, he maintains, against Hegel, the Kantian insight that cognition begins with, and must return to, particular experience. And that experience of the particular is the condition of any intellectual activity and the condition for the form of intellectual activity. In this instance, Adorno takes it that Hegel did not have enough sensitivity to the truth content of Kant's critical turn: that the difference between mind and world, or language and world, is irreducible and brings with it limits over what the mind and intellect can perform and know.

Adorno argues this point within a dialectical critique of Hegel's dialectics. Analysis of objects, artworks for example, defy the unifying movement of idealist dialectics which argues for the rational certainty of total conceptual representation of objects — even in their difference to concepts. As I have argued, Adorno's aesthetics of nonidentity demonstrates the disintegration of unity which immanently resists conceptual representation; in my discussion of conceptlessness, I showed how Adorno understands the problem of how to negotiate appearances. The lack of unity in particular objects is a function of the lack of unity in society for Adorno. That Hegel sees unity at the social level, grounded in the unifying logic of being, is the negative moment in Hegel's philosophy which sets the entire edifice back in motion for Adorno. So, again, through the mutual critique of Kant and Hegel, Adorno is brought to a new position which is concerned with the dialectical reflection on appearances but where thought is never able to leave consideration of the object and move into pure dialectical analysis.

The sixth of Hegel's criticisms of Kant follows from the previous considerations. That Kant's transcendental move prematurely checks rational reflection on the content of experience in favour of a fixed system of cognition. That is, there is a stasis in Kant's thinking that Adorno critiques at length in his lectures on Kant.

As this criticism falls out of previous criticisms, I will not spend any time explaining it from the Hegelian perspective. Nevertheless, as with the other criticisms, Adorno does not accept the Hegelian criticism in its totality and, again, uses Kantian insight to mediate the Hegelian criticism.

Whilst Adorno agrees that the stasis we find in transcendental thinking is premature and blocks off the continued return to the object, he agrees with Kant that the object does impose, in its conceptlessness, a limit to the possibility of dialectical enquiry. As such, Adorno's counter-critique of Hegel via Kant, is to ward off another type of stasis which results from idealist dialectics: the total understanding of the world within the system of dialectical reasoning. The mutual mediation of Kant and Hegel opens up an irreducible dynamism where thought oscillates between dialectical conceptualisation back towards the conceptlessness, where dialectics meets its limit, and then back into dialectical thinking. This oscillation cannot be foreclosed by either transcendental or dialectical thinking: as we saw in the analysis of nonidentity and conceptlessness, insofar as we are able to determine objects and make correct property predications of objects, some objects at least, modernist artworks for example, require us to continually return to them, to reanalyze them in accordance with the transformation of the socio-historical conditions which constitute the persistence conditions for their modal properties *qua* art.

The final criticism concerned the status of reason. One of the motivating forces of the first critique is to demonstrate that if we reason only in accordance with the possibilities afforded to us by pure thought, we will arrive at the sort of confusion that has mired philosophy, through metaphysics, until Kant's time. The *Critique of Pure Reason* is an analysis of the limits of reason, the bounds of epistemology and a refiguring of metaphysics. Equally well-known is the fact that Hegel rejected Kant's critique of dialectical thought — exemplified in the antinomies — as misunderstanding his own insight. I have discussed the problems of the antinomies throughout the thesis and there is no need to revisit it here.

Adorno agrees with Hegel that Kant's critique of pure reason is not only methodologically problematic insofar as reason is called upon to conduct a

critique upon itself but the stasis and limitation on the scope reason which Kant promotes is a dangerous attack on our ability to reason. Adorno argues that the block, the limiting of epistemic and metaphysical enquiry to appearance, that Kant imposes on our powers of reason are a mutilation of reason by itself in order to guarantee a particular form of scientific cognition (ND: 388). This is an exceptionally potent idea in Adorno and, as I have suggested, represents one of the deepest reasons for his rejection of Kant. By extension, he does not want to reject or limit reason in this way.

Like Hegel, Adorno argues that we must think through appearances as mediated; we must think through our predications and our conceptual determinations of objects; we must think through the socio-historical conditions which provide the persistence and truth conditions for many of the objects for which we are attempting to determine. However, as with all of these criticisms, Adorno holds onto an aspect of Kant's insight which perpetually acts a limiting function on the totalising movements of Hegelian dialectics. Rather than thinking that reason can think, dialectically, through to the total and sufficient representation of the objects of cognition, even sublating the difference of those objects within our rational reflection, Adorno agrees with Kant that there is a way the world is which cannot be totally captured in our conceptual articulations of it.

The point of Adorno's negative dialectics is to say that in the face of this irreducible difference, we must not give up thinking in spite of this difference. Certain commentators take Adorno to opt for a hopelessly quixotic task where we must reason even though all reasoning is inherently a failure before the otherness of the object. I argue that we need not take this position. Rather, reasoning is only a quixotic failure if we take stable, ahistorical knowledge of the world — which is total, systematic and unified — to be the goal. Adorno's metaphysical insight, which underpins negative dialectics, is that we must let go of this goal and, even though this goal was the Enlightenment condition of us being able to proceed, only through the disintegration of this goal can we, as Beckett said, "go on".

The price of negative dialectics is not knowledge as such: the price is our self-

image of human reason as sufficient to the world we are attempting to understand. But it does not follow from the fact that our conceptual engagements with the world are pointless or thorough failures, or necessarily invalid distortions; they can be valid and Adorno's immanent critiques of artworks testify to that fact. What we must accept is that no matter how good our immanent critique of an artwork is at some time, at another time it requires another, fresh critique — *sufficient knowledge* of certain objects, artworks for example, will always run away from us. Progress is still possible for Adorno but only as the daily struggle of the intellect: only in the sense that one foot is placed ahead of the other.

4.4 Conclusion

In this section, I have considered how various analyses developed throughout this thesis come together in Adorno's negative dialectical method. We have seen how Adorno both criticises Kant but also uses Kant's thought as a point of departure for the development of his own thought. I have then outlined some of Hegel's criticisms of Kant, how Adorno is influenced by them, and also how Kant's thought persists in Adorno's dialectics. In short, I have argued that Adorno mobilizes Kant and Hegel's thinking against each other and then uses that mutual critique to develop his own commitments.

I have also indicated how this mutual critique, insofar as it helps us to understand Adorno's negative dialectics, points us towards the metaphysical commitments I have developed throughout this chapter. As already quoted: "The idealists made a heaven of the mind, but woe betide the man who had a mind." (ND: 390). This clever aphorism sums up Adorno's criticisms of Kant and Hegel. Both in their different ways, they legislate against 'open-mindedness'. Through the systematic determinations of their total systems of knowledge, their aim was to guarantee knowledge — not simply that we can have knowledge, but that the system can guarantee that our knowledge is valid, objective and complete.

If we attend to Adorno's exact phrasing of particulars and general items in this phrase, it is telling. Firstly the idealists make '*a* heaven' which implies it is one

amongst many. This is an implicit rejection of the necessity of the theory of the subject that each proposes. Furthermore, the heaven consists in a general mind as such. He then inverts the first clause in the second clause to suggest that this structure stipulates against any particular man who has a particular mind. As we have seen, Adorno believes that if we settle our metaphysics by our epistemic ambitions, the net result is an embargo on free thought — any thought which does not already fit the pattern of *validated* thought, is stipulated against.

Despite his criticisms of Kant and Hegel, he holds both thinkers in great esteem. He develops his thinking through theirs and also links them, in their different ways, to the possibility of philosophy itself. It is obvious in Adorno's discussion of Hegel that despite his rejection of Hegel, he perceives in Hegel the final (possible) attempt of philosophy to fulfill its promise — to provide a system of thinking which could guarantee, in virtue of reason itself, the validity and sufficiency of the knowledge it produces. Indeed, so complete was Hegel's system that, in some sense at least, epistemology and metaphysics become one and the same thing in the *Science of Logic*.

As with Beethoven in musical composition, inasmuch as content and form can be brought together in a thoroughly integrated unity, Hegel's idealism is the highest achievement of philosophy.[195] However, just as musical form disintegrated, something which Adorno argues Beethoven anticipated in his Ninth Symphony, so did philosophy — its material, the conceptlessness, is an irreducible moment of resistance to a particular conception of identity (see Chapter Eight). It is this resistance and disintegration that marks the modernism of Kantian thought. Whilst Hegel thought that he could recuperate the limits of experience through a dialectical metaphysics of experience, Kant's philosophy, in its material tensions, is already the realisation of this impossibility. In the face of this impossibility, yet with the continuing belief in epistemology, Kantian thinking marks the retreat of philosophy from its grand visions. In a deep sense, Adorno is committed to the idea that the dialectical sublation of Kant and Hegel accounts for the very possibility of the continuation of philosophy. This does not entail that

[195] See AT: 273 & 289; HTS: 136.

philosophy must be carried out within the idealist idiom — quite the opposite as Adorno himself notes — but the sublation does proscribe the parameters and limits of epistemology and metaphysics.

Conclusions

In this thesis I have attempted to provide an interpretation of particular philosophical commitments which underpin Adorno's negative dialectics as a critical mode of inquiry. Given particular concerns Adorno has about systematic thinking, I have attempted to show that he has commitments which do constitute a substantial set of concerns for critical enquiry without having to render his thinking as a system.

My strategy for developing these commitments was to follow the movements of Adorno's own critical analyses and show how his commitments emerge, as it were, out of these analyses. As a dialectician, his concern is to show how contradictions, tensions and aprorias within thinking provide the resources for developing critical understanding. It is this development of critical understanding which constitutes the advancement in thought and the transformation of consciousness.

I began with his critique of Kant and isolated a key tension: that of the *constituens* and *constitutum*. I offered an analysis of these concepts and showed that they were applicable to various aspects of Kant's philosophy, all related by the theme of constitution. His argument is that due to Kant's epistemological ambitions there is a tendency to reify two related elements — such as mind and world — and prioritise one side of the dualism. That fixity can be then be used as a secure basis from which its other may be determined. The concern Adorno has is that this reification loses both the dynamic relationship of the two sides of the dialectic and also distorts them through the process of reification.

I then showed how this concern was intimately related to identity-thinking. Kant's transcendental philosophy, amongst other aims, intends to produce a theory of judgement whereby the conceptual determinations we make of material

objects are objectively valid. For Adorno this entails making the mind the fixed entity from which the objective validity of the world can be posited. Adorno worried that this leads to the aporetic distinction between noumena and phenomena. It also marks a slide, despite Kant's own beliefs about his system, into subjectivism: objective validity entitles us to consider the material object just as it is represented in our determinative, yet subjective, judgements. Again, this fixing of the object in a determinative judgement simultaneously distorts the object and produces a distorted judgement. To some extent Adorno accepts that this is unavoidable due to the ineliminable mediation of objects in perception by the subject. However, it systematically suppresses what is both particular and historical about material objects. Critical reflection on these distortions is what Adorno is commending.

In short, Adorno sees in Kant's transcendental philosophy and his theory of determinative judgement a model of 'identity-thinking'. I offered an analysis of identity-thinking which enabled us to understand the nature of the tension in Kant's account of judgement. It also indicates why Adorno believes a transition towards dialectical philosophy is the appropriate way to revitalise the reified conceptual determinations of material objects and the relations of those determinations to the entities themselves.

From here I moved to Hegel's philosophy as the clearest resource for developing a notion of dialectics for Adorno. I analyzed a number of aspects of Hegel's philosophy which would be of direct importance to Adorno. I considered Hegel's theory of propositions and judgements, also the relation of propositions and judgements to issues of essences and metaphysics. From here we were able to develop an account of the intimate relationship between dialectics as a real, rational force which unfolds through the world and the way in which we judge the world. The key idea being that our judgements, if they are to have claim to truth must be sensitive to the dialectics of reality itself.

Having presented key facets of Hegel's philosophy, I considered the ways in which Adorno could be considered an Hegelian thinker. It was not the primary intention to settle whether or not Adorno is an orthodox Hegelian; rather, it was

to continue to pursue his critical analyses as they reveal commitments in his own thought. So, the evaluation of Adorno's relationship to Hegel is an important way in which we can come to understand Adorno himself — just as his critique of Kant was an important way to understand his philosophy.

I argued that Hegel's dialectical critique of judgement and the emergence of the idea of nonidentity is of primary importance for Adorno. Countering Kant's identity-thinking, Adorno finds in Hegel a way to think about objects which takes account of the distortions and reifications we make of particulars in judgement. Implicitly for Adorno, the ontological difference between material objects and our conceptual determinations of those objects is not a trivial fact. Rather the conceptlessness of the material world is an immanent limitation on our ability to identify material objects with their concepts and something we must be sensitive to in our judgements about the world. The analysis I provided of Hegel's theory of judgement indicates that awareness of nonidentity and conceptlessness is an important commitment in Adorno's thinking.

Adorno is also deeply impressed by Hegel's theory of mediation as it presents a way to circumvent the dualistic, reifying impulses of Kant's thinking. The way objects exist, for Hegel, involves other objects and phenomena which are heterogeneous to it. Hegel's theory of mediation gives Adorno the resources to overcome the bifurcations of transcendental idealism.

Nevertheless, as much as Adorno takes on Hegelian ideas, they are greatly transformed in his thought. This is because he rejects key systematic conclusions in Hegel's thinking. I reconstructed Adorno's immanent critique of Hegel's idealist dialectics and showed that Adorno sees these dialectics as a social construction. It is society which creates the material conditions for a particular understanding of dialectics not the other way around — hence Adorno inverts Hegel's thought in a significant way. Furthermore, he argues that the total, unified positions of 'absolute knowing' and 'absolute idea' are in fact, for dialectical reasons, only themselves historical moments. Analysis of these moments reveal further contradictions and the dialectic is set back in motion.

The fact that dialectics is never able to reach an end point — it is always only a moment in the transition to another moment — is a key aspect of Adorno's negativity. His negative dialectics is a mode of thinking which is unable to *conclude* with *positive, ahistorical* claims. Such claims will always be subject to further dialectical analysis. Negativity is itself a commitment to change and the persistence of critique. Furthermore, negativity is Adorno's attempt to fracture the dogmatic impulse, even within dialectics. Arguably, it is the ethical potential of dialectics as a non-dogmatic mode of thinking which attracts him to Hegel's thought. However, it is the concern with dogmatism which causes him to criticise and rethink Hegel when he thinks that Hegel's philosophy also reifies itself and becomes dogmatic. The limits to dialectical thinking are not entrenched in dogmatic metaphysics; rather, they are a function of history and of the limits of epistemology.

Having developed the notions of conceptlessness, nonidentity and mediation as they emerge out of Adorno's critiques of Kant and Hegel, I considered them in their own right. I analyzed the concept of conceptlessness in an effort to disambiguate it from potential confusion with notions of non-conceptuality, i.e., that Adorno is referring to non-conceptual content in experience. Whilst I acknowledge that this is a possible interpretation, through the work of Foster, I show that this interpretation strains intelligibility. Taking Adorno to be referring strictly to the ontological difference between material objects and the concepts which determine them cognitively and discursively, is a fruitful way to understand his commitment and which concords with his other theoretical commitments.

I then developed the concern with conceptlessness through the theoretical concern of nonidentity. Nonidentity is a particularly challenging notion in Adorno's thinking which situated within the metaphysical debate of material constitution and the role of our conceptual determinations in this debate. I argued that Adorno's theory of nonidentity is at least compatible with certain positions in contemporary metaphysics. My intention is not to suggest, however, that Adorno is involved in ontological system building. Adorno's commitments to nonidentity are developed through his analysis of material objects. Following

Adorno, I demonstrated how an analysis of an artwork leads us to an appreciation of the complexities of nonidentity, founded upon the metaphysical distinctions made earlier. Furthermore, when we see negative dialectics 'at work', we are able to allay Rosen's concern that without the systematic form of Hegel's dialectics, those of Adorno are fundamentally compromised.

Whilst the primary purpose of the thesis was to offer an account of Adorno's philosophical commitments, the issue of whether or not he is a Kantian or an Hegelian inevitably arises. I have shown that we can understand Adorno's philosophical commitments as they arise out of his engagement with Kant and Hegel. However, I showed in this final section that rather than seeing Adorno's thought as the product of a linear progression from Kant to Hegel to himself, we should take the idea of emergence seriously. Adorno's commitments emerge out of his critique of Kant and Hegel insofar as he in fact uses Hegelian ideas to critique Kant but he also uses Kantian notions to critique Hegel. I suggest that negative dialectics is therefore the dialectical result of the interpenetration of Kantian and Hegelian thinking.

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