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EXPRESSING ATROCITIES: THE IMPACT OF ANTIHUMANIST THOUGHT ON THEODOR W. ADORNO'S RADICAL CONSTELLATION

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Vahşeti Dışavurmak: Theodor W. Adorno'nun Radikal Felsefesinde Antihümanist Düşüncenin Etkisi

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Dedicated to Polen Ünlü

Your beautiful smile
defies the limits
of human life
and resistance

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation aims to clarify the significance of T. W. Adorno's duality of resignation and resistance, whose existence has given way to major interpretations of his works as 'melancholic' and 'reconciliatory'. Taking the recent political upheaval in Turkey, ignited by the suicide bomber attack in Suruç in July 2015, as starting point and motivation, the following question is asked: How is it possible to go on living given the current state of humanity? As a response, this dissertation draws an outline of the negative dialectic at work in Adorno's critique of the ontological, ethical, political and aesthetic spheres from an antihumanist perspective. Based on the problematization of the concept of alienation, this outline uncovers the collaboration at work between atrocities and humanist ideology, whose expression is voiced by Adorno's radically modest constellation.

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, T. W. Adorno felsefesinin 'melankoli' ve 'diyalektik uzlaşma' bakış açılarından geliştirilen eleştirilerinin çıkış noktası olan çekilme ve direnme ikilemini yorumlamaktır. Temmuz 2015'te Suruç'ta düzenlenen canlı bomba saldırısından beri Türkiye'nin içinde bulunduğu kanlı senaryodan yola çıkarak şu soru sorulmaktadır: İnsanlığın günümüzdeki durumu göz önünde bulundurulduğunda yaşamaya devam etmek nasıl mümkün olabilir? Bu çalışma Adorno'nun ontoloji, etik, pratik ve estetik alanlarında antihümanist bir bakış açısından geliştirdiği eleştirinin altında yatan negatif diyalektiğin genel hatlarını çizerek bu soruyu cevaplamayı hedeflemektedir. Yabancılaşma kavramının sorunsallaştırılmasına dayanarak, vahşetle hümanist ideoloji arasındaki işbirliğinin Adorno'nun radikallikle tevazu arasında kurduğu dinamik tarafından dışavurumuna yer verilecektir.

INTRODUCTION

In his short article dating back to March 2016, Özgür Mumcu of *Cumhuriyet* suggests that we grab Theodor W. Adorno's books, especially his *Authoritarian Personality*, back from the shelves where they no longer belonged.[1] The reason for doing this, according to Mumcu, is the recent rise of right-wing trends and ideologies all over the world, which is at the same time being resisted by the appeal of socialism accelerated through political parties and figures such as Syriza and Podemos. When these recent developments are taken into consideration, Adorno's thought is important not only for deconstructing authoritarian centres of attention but also for explicating the regression that the individual falls into upon facing attempts of subordination. Certainly one of the most noteworthy examples of these attempts is being inflicted on the dissenters of the current Turkish government. People from different kinds of cultural and political margins are being exposed to various forms of state hostility on the streets, at work and even at their homes. The starting point of this series of repression is marked by the suicide bomber attack that took place on 20 July 2015 in the Suruç district of Şanlıurfa, a southeastern city in Turkey, which is known to have housed the Turkish-Kurdish tension along with several other neighbouring cities. On that day, around 300 people belonging to a number of socialist organizations, such as ESP (Socialist Party of the Oppressed) and SGDF (Socialist Youth League Federation), were on their way to deliver life supplies, clothes and toys to the war-stricken children of the Kurdish town of Kobanî. The ISIS attack killed 33 of these people and injured at least 104. Less than three months later, on 10 October 2015, the elder brother of the person responsible for the Suruç massacre killed 107 civilians at the peace rally in central Ankara.

These atrocities were single-handedly directed at people who chose to stand by the oppressed civilians of southeastern Turkey where the army has been

[1] For the original Turkish version of the article, "Is There Hope?", see: http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/koseyazisi/491140/Umut_var_mi_.html

committing numerous war crimes. These people who advocated peace and fraternity instead of the Kurdish-Turkish dichotomy of violence were brutally murdered whereas the perpetrators have still not been revealed. Against the implementation of a single identity ideology by the government, the dissenting individual is forced to raise its voice actively while suffering from the emotional wreck created by these atrocities. It is especially within this tragic frame that Adorno's experience of Jewish identity following Auschwitz and his viewpoint on the theory-praxis duality matter to a great extent. When we do an overall reading of his philosophical works, it is easy to discern a dialectic of resignation and resistance: accepting, on the one hand, the defeat and removing oneself from the realm of praxis while on the other hand, giving the term critique a central position in his life in order to reach the truth content in the twisted portrayals of everyday life. This dissertation aims to clarify the significance of resignation and resistance, specifically within the context of experiencing atrocities such as the above and their aftermath. Taking the recent political upheaval in Turkey as its starting point and motivation, the following question is going to be looked into: how is it possible to go on living given the current state of humanity? Based on the two strongholds of Adorno's thought, resignation and resistance, this dissertation intends to form a constellation which acquires its theoretical motivation from the antihumanist discipline.

The element of resignation in Adorno's thought is clearly visible in his view of Kafka's works where we are confronted with "an endless procession of bent figures chained to each other, no longer able to raise their heads under the burden of what is" (Adorno, 2004, p. 345). The melancholic weight placed upon the individual here is directly relatable to our limited area of praxis when confronted with the loss caused by major acts of oppression. In Adorno's case, this experience had defining value for his entire life, interchanging the mood of his writings between that of a hopeful but critical voice of humanism and that of pessimism with a well-justified insistence on the primacy of the object. A prolific writer and art critic, Adorno committed himself to his work in order to escape the disappointment and depression that waited for him right outside his door. His

melancholic tendency is at its most vivid in his unusually strict dictum that it would be atrocious to write poetry after Auschwitz. However, Adorno's revision of this well-known maxim is usually overlooked. In *Negative Dialectics*, he writes that "perennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured man has to scream; hence it may have been wrong to say that after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems," however, it is all the more problematic "to raise the less cultural question whether after Auschwitz you can go on living" (p. 362). Experiencing or surviving atrocities is a vital detriment to the life of resistance but the individual who is only distantly involved with an atrocity also stands trial. The dysfunctionality caused by such massive traumatic events is further exacerbated due to the awareness of the individual that she is actually among the people targeted in these bloody events. This grim spectrum is sufficiently clear in Adorno's feeling that living after atrocities is especially painful for the ones "who escaped by accident," the ones "who by rights should have been killed" (p. 363).

Even though it is more than easy to sympathize with Adorno on the above sentiment, his philosophy's tendency toward melancholy resignation forms the basis for the majority of critique directed at his thought. The term praxis, for him, is oftentimes overshadowed by the term theory, as a result of which he limited his writings to philosophy and art criticism. His stance on the May '68 events is especially important in this sense. Many would be familiar with the *Busenattentat* in 1969 where three students protested against an Adorno who had decided that his classroom be painted grey for better concentration on the lectures during the events. His insistence on refraining from any collective act of resistance happening on the streets is certainly questionable. As a philosopher who never attempted to come up with alone-standing formulas for sociological issues and a full-time thinker who posed one of the harshest critiques to mass movements and authoritarian inclinations, his point of view, it seems, might at best be excused thanks to his melancholy-mind crafted by the aftermath of Auschwitz. He appears to support this excuse by writing in *Negative Dialectics* that "thinking men and artists have not infrequently described a sense of being not quite there, of not playing along, a feeling as if they were not themselves at all, but a kind of

spectator" (2004, p. 363). Adorno was indeed a spectator most of the time, probably confined to his study, writing on German idealism or Schönberg's dissonant music. All the same, there is enough reason in his "Resignation" that he was in fact concerned with more than that: "One who has not quit thinking has not resigned yet" (Adorno, 2005a, p. 203). As a philosopher who not only came up with one of the most efficient criticisms of human praxis in general but who also revealed the truth content of the significant political events, thoughts and works of art produced during the 20th century, Adorno's disposition toward resignation is in a dialectical relationship with its Other, resistance.

An outstanding critique of Adorno on the issue of praxis came from Gillian Rose's *Melancholy Science*. The importance of Rose's work for Adorno scholarship has been unquestionable for decades now, perhaps because it is based on a crucial statement in the very first pages of *Negative Dialectics*, which tells us that "the introverted thought architect dwells behind the moon that is taken over by extroverted technicians" (Adorno, 2004, p. 3). The acceptance Adorno gives to being an unseen thought arbiter instead of being on the upfront could not be summarized more efficiently because he never opted to become part of a collective movement or a scheme that claimed to explain away all the broken lines between theory and praxis in his day. Rose (2014) believes that he and Max Horkheimer "created an academy precisely to criticise traditions which the academic community abused or ignored"; however, she follows up on this by stating that "neither men, Adorno least of all, was a 'public' man"; that "they were not suited for responsibility in the sense of providing any platform" (p. 10). This recoil from the outside world led us only back to "the evils of the old academic community", which was, according to Rose, happy with "indulging in intense, idiosyncratic cultural criticism deeply imbedded in the scholarly and institutional constraints which they were committed to transcend" (p. 10). The above argument can be supported even further thanks to our knowledge that Adorno and Horkheimer drew a fine line between themselves and the textbook Marxist political stance that gave priority to and positioned hope within the proletariat. Adorno, especially, "gave up the proletariat as the subject-object of history, as

cogniser and carrier of history" (p. 136), for which he had considerable reasons given the state of Europe after World War II. It would be a lot safer to place our bets on the individual, with respect to Adorno's worldview, so that we can have at least the particular resist the evils of the overbearing absolute. Rose is not completely wrong in stating that "Adorno mourns the 'subject' which has lost its 'substance'"; that "his thought is haunted by this ghostly, missing agency" (p. 185) since this agency, for him, has not failed to realize that it is impossible to reconcile theory and praxis within the confines of practical life and politics.

It is very difficult to disagree with Rose's (2014) following comments on Adorno's overall view of theory-praxis duality:

> As long as philosophy or theory raises claims apart from any praxis, it is bound to be self-contradictory; while if philosophy or theory understands itself as a form of praxis or intervention, its aims are then partly indirect, and the presentation of them as philosophy or theory will give rise to contradictory features. (p. 68)

Adorno's major problem here is his total lack of trust in praxis since he insistently tries to make theory into either something apart from praxis or above praxis. However, what he does is to choose from two problematic areas, which are known to be – outside and beyond his theories – irreconcilable. With that being said, though, does not Rose's approach prove perfectly vulnerable as it gathers back on itself under the name of *melancholy science*? Is Adorno's thought mainly concerned with reconciliation or is there an unswerving element beyond reconciliation? At this point, the issue of emancipation is key since if there is a subject to be recovered according to Adorno's theoretical writings, how can it be possible with this melancholy resignation in the face of the world? His critics seem to be divided on the answer to this question, which depends heavily on the human condition. According to some, he endeavoured "to rehumanize the sciences by affronting them with the philosophy, and the feeling, they have repressed, and equally to restore the ambition of the (critical) truth-claim to art" (Helmling, 2006, p. 160) whereas for others, he attempted to manifest and negate

"the paradoxes of new philosophical and theoretical movements of the twentieth century which promise emancipation, 'the dialectic of humanism'" (Rose, 2014, p. 179). So, Adorno seems to have been in-between resurfacing the humanity of the individual against the inhumanity of universality and refusing to join in with his day's attempts to emancipate the individual by relating it back to its human essence.

As Rose (2014) summarizes it, Adorno and a number of other German writers of the interwar period, went against "the humanist legacy of historicism, philosophical anthropology, 'realism' in art, and epistemology" (p. 179), which no longer represented the human condition of their era. The experience of atrocities was invaluable to the development of this stance since it was no longer possible for the world, which staged the mass destruction of *humanities* of so many different varieties, to go back to a unitary essence that would be capable of defining praxis. This is why Adorno "refuses the humanist implication as in Hegel, or Feuerbach, or Lukács" (p. 185); for him, retrieving the human fundamentals that might have never existed in the first place was a lost cause. Nonetheless, in Rose's opinion, the disciplines forming themselves around this antihumanist sentiment were more "enslaving" than "liberating because they recreated the very evils which they sought to define and eschew" (p. 185). Even though she neither explains what her statement means, nor points at any instance where Adorno implies this idea, it can be speculated that she is against all -isms alongside with Adorno, believing that the antithesis of humanist ideology can only fall back into the tautologies it tries to overcome.

What Rose suggests Adorno did was to work on humanism in a dialectical manner, which supposedly protected him from becoming a supporter of an essentialist understanding of humanism and also prevented him from relapsing into the risk of decadence underlying antihumanism. This is why Adorno engaged himself primarily with style, as an attempt to cast a new look at the theory-praxis relationship because style does not let itself become part of a universal code while at the same time, it does not position itself above the outcome it produces (Rose,

2014, p. 180). Style is indeed capable of embodying Adorno's form-content dialectic as it is presented in his *Aesthetic Theory* singlehandedly. His focus on style, nonetheless, came with a hefty price and resulted in his obsession with the aesthetic discipline. Thus followed one of the most famous critiques of his occupation with style, that of Georg Lukács, which proposed that his interest in "the literary avant-garde" is nothing but "'anti-humanist' and 'decadent'" (p. 192). So it would not be illogical at all to suggest that perhaps, Adorno's dialectical humanism was not robust enough to change the dominant consensus in the academia that his philosophy avoids praxis and elevates artistic material above the matters of everyday life. Although Rose contends that Lukács simply misunderstood Adorno's concern with the issue of style (p. 192), Lukács's angle is worth further research. Given the fact that Adorno was a lot more occupied with the literary language of Beckett and the musical language of Schönberg than with the student protests happening right inside of his classroom proves that Lukács's point is not to go amiss.

Based on the strain between theory and praxis as it is discussed in Adorno's oeuvre, Rose (2014) writes that "Adorno's well taken revelation of a gap between Heidegger's moral and political philosophy is embarrassing" because "there is a similar gap in Adorno's own thought" (p. 98). Toward the end of her book, she further comments on this point by stating that

> He makes it impossible to reinsert the 'individual' into a socio-political context. He redefines Marx's theory of class in a way which renders domination within the class, as well as between classes, less amenable to analysis, cripples the concept of organisation, and adapts Freudian concepts in a way which promises to be radically sociological, but which stops short at the point where those concepts might be transformed into a theory of socio-political action. (p. 183)

Even though the radicalness of Rose's stance here should be admired – because any direct similarity between Adorno and Heidegger would be considered a cardinal sin – we cannot help but question the coherence between her claims

above that Adorno's views on morality and politics are irreconcilable and her reading of Adorno's focus on style as an attempt to bring together form and content on one dialectical plane. Her way out of this duality takes us merely back to resignation, the *melancholy science*, which, sadly, seems to take defeat as a prerequisite for the speculation on the theory-praxis relationship.

This dissertation aims to break the cycle of melancholia, as it is represented in Rose's words above, by making use of another fundamental force that fuels Adorno's thought: resistance. While taking resignation into consideration and under scrutiny at all times, this project tries to find the critical lines where resignation connects with resistance in Adorno's work. Taking its motivation from the sociological fact of atrocities but committing itself to a philosophical framework, this dissertation positions two essential problematic areas which work toward Adorno's principle of hope: his critique of ontology and ethics from an antihumanist perspective, and his reconstruction of the affinity between the political and the aesthetic based on the preceding context of antihumanist thought. At the kernel of this radical thought, the dynamics between resignation and resistance come to life and prevent Adorno's aim to keep theory non-instrumental from ending up as a melancholy science. Against this sort of defeatism, which closes up on itself even though Rose (2014) claims that the melancholy science is "'the morality of thinking'" (p. 192) and "not a recipe for social and political action" (p. 193), this dissertation aims to sketch out a resilient constellation wherein Adorno's thought can be reinterpreted as a form of praxis.

Even though many sympathize with Rose's reading of Adorno's theory-praxis duality and it should be admitted that her formulation of melancholy science is satisfactory for the most part, there are two fundamental questions that her work raises. The first one can be developed around her comments on Lukács's antihumanism critique. Adorno's occupation with style is indeed misunderstood by Lukács; however, style as the embodiment of Adorno's theory-praxis parallel is not sufficient to ward off the overall critique of Adorno as a philosopher who stayed away from everyday praxis. Although there is an aspect to his handling of

the issue of style that manages to get close to a synthesis of theory and praxis, the priority still belongs to theory according to Rose, which makes it clear that the problematic of praxis needs further speculation. Another problem with the way Rose reads Lukács's antihumanism critique is that she does away with Adorno's antihumanist inclinations a bit too hastily. The truth content in Lukács's criticism requires more research because, as Rose also seems to admit in her book, there is substantial agreement on the idea that Adorno maintained his proximity to the antihumanist dispositions of the 20th century. Whatever negative dialectic he might have envisaged between humanist ideologies and the radical supporters of an antihumanist worldview needs to be explicated in depth.

The second problematic area created by Rose's work revolves around her claims that there is a gap between Adorno's views on morality and political stance, which is not dissimilar to the one in Heidegger's philosophy. Such as the first problematic, this one is also deeply related to the question of praxis in Adorno's thought. His aversion from political ideologies and all forms of popular media is a justified concern among Adorno scholars today. Nonetheless, her formulation of melancholy science, as a practice that protects theory from becoming an instrument while admitting defeat within the realm of praxis in the first place, is not sufficient for us to thoroughly discern and discuss the negative dialectic that Adorno forms between theory and praxis. Experiencing, surviving and living with atrocities cannot be separated from his principle of hope which is organically linked with the element of resistance. Even though we cannot but admit that melancholia is a prevalent figure in Adorno's works through and through, this melancholia would instantly turn into a formulation or even an absolute unless it is interpreted alongside with its Other; resistance. Only if this negative dialectic is maintained, would it be possible to cast light on the supposed void between Adorno's moral and political views, and also to explicate what he might have meant by his remark that "there is something deluded about the separation of theory and practice"; that "separating these two elements is actually ideology" (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2010, p. 50).

In chapter 1, antihumanist thought is traced back to the interwar period and taken from there to recent influences and interpretations. As it would not be possible to include every single contribution to the discipline, three significant moments of antihumanist thought are brought forward in line with the critique of alienation theory. The first moment represents the origins; the set of primary elements which necessitated a perspective that negates anthropocentrism. From such perspective, Günther Anders's critique of the modern world and André Malraux's insightful literature are brought into a locus. The second moment represents theorization; a group of principles which establish antihumanist thought as a legitimate theory. To that end, some notorious ideas of Louis Althusser are discussed as a scientific development of thinking against humanism. The third moment embodies antihumanism's expansion into the ontological and ethical discourses, championed by Jean-Luc Nancy and Giorgio Agamben. Their efforts to posit ontology in opposition to discourses of totalization and to introduce a non-human form of ethics are presented alongside certain fundamental problems they are liable to generate.

Based on the above context of resistance to humanist ideology and alienation theory, the issues that emerge over the ethical and ontological perspectives are discussed from Adorno's critical point of view in chapters 2 and 3. In chapter 2, both Heidegger's contribution to the antihumanist discipline and the discipline's limitation to the ontological perspective are brought under scrutiny. Through Adorno's critique of the concepts of death and dignity, Heideggerian ontology is reread over its deep affinity with alienation theory. In Adorno's criticism of Heidegger's ambivalent antihumanism, chapter 2 draws an outline of the guiding principles behind Adorno's own antihumanist tendencies. Chapter 3 builds up on these principles from a moral/ethical perspective. The moral and the ethical are interpreted over a negative dialectic which comments on their possible humanist fallacies, questioning the overall legitimacy of morality for Adorno's view of praxis. What emerges out of his antihumanist deconstruction of the moral and the ethical is a significant emphasis placed on the role of politics,

problematizing Rose's claim that he shares with Heidegger a critical gap between the moral and the political.

Chapter 4 initiates a discussion of Adorno's famous 'wrong life cannot be lived rightly'. Through a close reading of it based on Adorno's lectures on moral philosophy, the negative dialectic between Kantian ethics of conviction and Hegelian ethics of responsibility is critically situated with the aim to underline that what is at hand is an anti-maxim. The constellation of ideas that this anti-maxim gives birth to is evaluated against the criticism of Adorno's reliance on resisting the bad or the bad infinity, which is posed as an element that prevents his view of praxis from being possible. Chapter 5 follows the outcome of the previous chapter and interprets the relationship between the previous discussion and Adorno's aesthetic theory. Based on his critique of ontologically and ethically situated antihumanism, his aesthetic theory is reviewed in its deep affinity with the practical realm. As a criticism of the reconciliatory approaches toward Adorno's aesthetic theory, the notions of negative reconciliation and materialism are discussed in depth. Through that vein, his extensive antihumanist perspective is posited as the main motivator behind his principle of hope which resists alienation by means of its radical reinterpretation of reification.

CHAPTER 1

AN INCOMPLETE HISTORY OF ANTIHUMANIST THOUGHT

Say to them:
"Man has survived hitherto because he was too ignorant
to know how to realize his wishes. Now that he can realize
them, he must either change them or perish."

William Carlos Williams, "The Orchestra"

1.1 The remains of humanism in post-war Europe

It is not commonplace to encounter a direct statement in Williams's poetry. He usually avoids them with care so that the visual truth content of his work loses nothing of its transparency. In the mundane world of objects he spotted intricate parallels of substance, colour and sound, which resist and beg recognition at the same time. Beyond the well-known principles and motivations that generated the trend of imagism, his poetry is insistently conscious of its radical contribution to the modern state of mind. An artwork would not amount to much if it evaded bringing a novelty into the world, in his opinion; the sonnet and the stanza were long dead. His poetry rebelled against the Western cultural heritage alongside the work of his contemporaries, Pound and Eliot most importantly, even though they shared a number of technical differences that were not quite resolved within their lifetime. What has survived of their work to this day, nonetheless, is their vision of the post-war way of the world which proved to all its inhabitants that the human being's enlightenment could not save millions from mutilation and death. Within that common vision, the human being was rendered the secondary element in an externality, be it rural or metropolitan, and the notion of time carried an urgency that worked against the humane contours of experience. Philosophy gave a hand to modernist poetry in that sense, whereby the dominant theories of the '20s expressed in clarity that man was no longer "*ideal*" or "*ground*" as a judging eye for "nature and causality" (Geroulanos, 2010, p. 51). The modern world was full of second thoughts about a purely human prospect of the world as "the

humanity of men" was "no longer able or willing to trust any humanity at all" (p. 315). The image of the enlightened man was severely shattered, but what did the antihumanist perspective have to contribute to that view?

One of the closest witnesses to the inhuman condition above, Anders manages to convey the ends of antihumanism brilliantly in his *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen* and other short work focusing on negative anthropology. One of the many Jewish thinkers who had to flee Germany during World War II, he wrote on negative anthropology through the 1940s. Taking an overall look at the mass effect of the war, he writes that *creatio ex nihilo* is transformed into *reductio ad nihil*; "the Promethean dream of omnipotence" realized once and for all thanks to the "apocalyptic power" of man, who now symbolizes "the infinite" (1956a, p. 146). The infinity of man's power is owed to nothing but his scientific prowess, which is demonstrated without hesitance throughout the war. Thanks to the most recent technology and especially the H-Bomb, Anders's moderns were able to kill off millions within a matter of seconds and so they did. This sudden increase of power, which expounded man's scope of praxis to limits not experienced before, introduced a new form of man. Depicting men as Titans, Anders (1956a) claims that they are the beyond of the future; their "emotional, imaginative and moral capacities […] outgrown" by their "capacity for action" (p. 152). In the age of the Titans, it is a lot easier to kill thousands than to kill one. The heavy speculation and precise planning that it takes to murder an enemy weigh heavier in comparison to the mass extermination of whole ethnic groups. With human deaths jotted down as cold statistics, the world houses the self-destructive downward trajectory of a species whose moral capacity is outrun by its freedom that seems to be without bounds.

Anders (1956a) makes use of the well-known Biblical saying, "'they know not what they do'" (p. 151) to underline the uncanny innocence of the destructive praxes facilitated by humanity. The first powerful manifestation of these praxes in the history of humanity is the concentration camps where "natural death was completely eliminated" (p. 148). In the camps, Anders believes that the statement,

"all men are mortal, had already become an understatement" (p. 148) because in place of the value one human life signified once upon a time was masses of human bodies which were too weak to survive in comparison to the Titans of their age. So, human-made history is divided into three parts: "all men are mortal, all men are exterminable and mankind as a whole is exterminable" (p. 148). The humble acceptance surrounding the first statement is transformed into another which lowers the human species down to the level of cockroaches as a way of manifesting in full what the great wars did. Another significant figure who caught the spirit of those times was the former Minister of Cultural Affairs in France, Malraux. His vision completes that of Anders since he wrote without hesitation in his iconic example of antihumanist thought, *The Walnut Trees of Altenburg*, that "man is an accident, and the world, essentially, is made of oblivion" (1968, p. 28). The extermination of human beings was made part of the arbitrariness of their existence in the first place; so much has been contributed to history by the death camps of Auschwitz. This violent coercion acted as the ultimate chapter for the anthropocentric enlightenment of an obsolete Europe. Given the fact of atrocities, whereby individuals shared the same fate with cockroaches, the human being no longer had legitimacy as species; it lost sight of what it is.

The above illustrated empowerment of man beyond his emotional capacity is one of the fundamental components of Anders's negative anthropology. What completes this critical frame is his view on popular culture, which is one of the earliest examples of its kind. The post-war generation is made into "eavesdroppers and Peeping Toms" (Anders, 1956b, p. 20) in a world which is merely perceivable and not to be acted on. Giving a central position to television and its effects on family life, the concept of alienation is found both amongst the members of the same home and within the relationship between the individual and the outside world. Where everything is already brought home by this new medium, all other mediation is rendered unnecessary. Trapped not only inside the domestic space but also inside its own mind, the human being is prevented from practicing its most important function: gaining experience. Experience, which Anders believes shapes the world, is thus a privilege for only a few. Such privilege does not justify

the way of the world or posit the future of the world as a hopeful promise though. Given the current state of things, "'a certain humanism is possible," according to Malraux, but it can only be characterized by being "tragic," (as cited in Geroulanos, 2010, p. 209) not emancipatory. Malraux (1968) does not falter in his pursuit of this new and tragic form of humanism. What succeeded the war could be embodied as a concrete event of human suffering in space and time, whereby the human body posed a threat to its owner. Its openness to degradation and deformation, its feeble existence amidst the objects that worked continually against it, was a timely marker of the death of individuality. In that painful spatio-temporal trajectory where individuality was being demolished, there was a humanitarian solace only in the moment of death; both in that final breath and the elevation of that final moment as *the dignity of our martyrs*. The world of those times was not the world itself but merely the "memory of a world […] in which hatred had had the hope of one day being appeased" (Malraux, 1968, p. 406). Whether that memory would be able to cast the tragedy off of humanism, however, Malraux did not choose to linger on.

At "the freezing point of human unfreedom" (Anders, 1956a, p. 153) though, Anders (1961) attributes a rather odd significance to nihilism by stating openly that it would be only right to call the facilitators of the H-Bomb "nihilists" (p. 301). In the "nihilistic person," he recognizes "the traits of the modern, restless, and insatiable conqueror, who wants to be everywhere at the same time" and also "to experience and to have everything, and who takes revenge on the world by inflating his or her contingent ego" (Dijk, 2000, p. 32). When we combine the above with this critique of nihilism, it becomes easy to discern that there are two types of human being from a negative anthropological perspective. The first is the nihilistic Übermensch-gone-wrong who took a bit too literally Nietzsche's advice that one should stay away from the marketplace. The second, on the other hand, is nothing but the marketplace people themselves. This new species is the post-apocalyptic embodiment of the pathetic state the human being is in; it is no longer able to act upon the world which has already made it a pawn in the hands of the Titans. Anders's insight into the new world order, which is

worth noting, unfortunately regresses into a pre-historical narrative, showing us the two ends of antihumanism brought about by the outbreak of modernity. With the Promethean model of humanity on the one hand and the pathetic model that is under full control of external powers on the other, Anders shrinks the possibilities of antihumanism by not leaving much room for further analysis. Nonetheless, his account embodies the major misconceptions that surround antihumanism during the '30s and '40s, which prevented the discipline from gaining full momentum until it began to be discussed again during the '60s. There are two reasons that stand out for this southbound direction: the final note on morality and positioning the antihumanist discipline alongside the concept of alienation.

For Anders (1961), the notion of alienation goes in accordance with the Marxist discipline; it means to treat people as if they were things and to treat things as if they were people (p. 298). This suffices not only to express the mass-murdering mentality behind the cold fact of war but also to explain how popular culture could so successfully take over the world. According to this view, both the human being and its surroundings, its world, have become alienated to themselves and to each other. In Anders (1956a), more than the human, it is the world that is unrecognizable as he openly states that "if all is not to be lost we must first and foremost develop our moral imagination: this is the crucial task facing us" (p. 153). Even though he does not give out many details regarding this task, the below thought on a romantic recourse to *old humanity* says a great deal about what *not* to do:

> The infinite longing some of us still experience is a nostalgia for finitude, the good old finitude of the past; in other words, some of us long to be rid of our Titanism, and to be men again, men like those of the golden age of yesterday. Needless to say, this longing is as romantic and utopian as was that of the Luddites; and like all longings of this kind, it weakens those who indulge in it, while it strengthens the self-assurance of those who are sufficiently unimaginative and unscrupulous to put to actual use the omnipotence they possess. (p. 147)

Despite keeping his two categories of the new man intact, every possibility of returning to a pre-historical conception of the human being or an essential set of qualities that define our species is cancelled out. Whatever is lying ahead of the question of humanism has reached a level of radicalism that does not allow any self-pity. However, Anders's coinage of Titanism as if it were a brand new species, which does not have much to do with the benign nature of the human being, is a romantic inclination in itself. On the other hand, a line must be drawn between the romantic and the utopian because the former includes heritage as an idealistic value whereas the latter necessarily carries implications for what it takes to build a better future. In this sense, Anders's negative anthropology is flawed but the major point where his formulation miscarries is his omission of the critique of alienation. The moral task that he foretells in his texts cannot be fulfilled without invalidating the dangers of the notion of alienation.

1.2 The concept of alienation and the pending question of Man

"To be radical is to grasp things by the root," according to Althusser (2003b) and "the root of the crisis is the crisis of Man" (p. 252). His theoretical antihumanism is grounded on the rupture that altered the philosophical problematic of Marxist theory in 1845. Whereas the earlier problematic was a projection of "idealist" and "'bourgeois'" philosophy, the new problematic could be characterized by its rejection to associate its inquiry into history, politics, aesthetics, ethics and so forth with mediated human nature (Althusser, 2005, p. 227). The Marxist rupture consists of three fundamental elements. The first is the theorization of a historical and political worldview dependent on concepts such as "social formation, productive forces, relations of production, superstructure and ideologies" (p. 227). The second and the third, on the other hand, presuppose humanism as an ideology. In this way, Althusser advocates that Marx rejected "a universal essence of man" and that such essence pertains to every individual (p. 228). In order to negate empiricism, Marx radically objectifies the processes of political economy, history, ethics and philosophy, bringing forward theoretical antihumanism. His theoretical

antihumanism, however, does not mean to overpower or delegitimize any existing humanism (p. 230). It aims to postulate humanism as an ideology required by the specific demands that define the time of its emergence and thus questions its contribution to the scientific theorizations of history and politics (p. 231).

Althusser (1970) believes that Marx's thoughts are made part of an ideology that preceded his philosophy, historicist humanism, at the expense of negating the moment of "theoretical rupture" (p. 140). The historicist humanism trend in Marxist theory arose with the 1917 Revolution, in defiance of the systematic manipulation that the Second International gave way to. It was not merely "the dogmatism of the Stalinist period," but also the earlier "disastrously opportunist interpretations of the Second International" which Lenin struggled against that an urgency for change appeared within Marxist theory (2005, p. 240). The backbone of this urgency gathered its strength and vitality from the "will of *men*," which cried out against inhumanity, wanted to end capitalism and achieve its goal of revolution (1970, p. 140). Based on the allusions to "'real men'" and "'concrete individuals'" in *The German Ideology* and the statement in the *Theses on Feuerbach* that "objectivity itself is the completely human result of the 'practico-sensuous' activity" of the concrete subject of history, Marx's ideas are falsely associated with a worldview constricted by historicist humanism (p. 140). Such worldview, according to Althusser, leads to a plastic incongruity between the concrete and the abstract by purporting that human nature does not constitute an essence but a dynamic set of characteristics, which can change in line with the demands of a particular historical period. Having Enlightenment thought at its kernel, this approach inadvertently renders human central to history, whereby the movement of history is meant to run parallel to "the transformation of a human nature" (p. 140). This means that all "relations of production," also including "political and ideological social relations" are diluted to "historicized '*human relations*'" (p. 140).

One remark by Malraux (1968), on visiting China in 1965, captures the failure of state communism in a concise yet powerful form: "Of the revolution,

there remains nothing but museums – and operas" (p. 349). It was the revolutionary enthusiasm which probably foresaw the reduction of human spirit to forged culture that wanted to see Marxist theory changed. It demanded a pure theory of humanness; it desired to make the transformation of *man* into *Man* because the threat of reification hang heavy on the horizon. This transformation, however, was not oriented toward theory but another form of ideology according to Alhusser (2005) and therefore, it led Marxist theory away from scientific concepts, as a result of which the notion of alienation was raised (p. 240). Waging a war against alienation with the attempt to pay its respect to "the 'cult of personality'," the urgency to change the dynamics of Marxist thought took "the need for a theory for the theory itself" and reduced the theoretical need to the ideological concept of historicist humanism (p. 241). Lukács and Korsch only contributed to this reduction when they came up with the perspective which turned "Marx's doctrine into a directly *expressive* relationship with the working class" (1970, p. 140). This new relationship formulated the proletariat as the locus of the human essence, which was attributed the revolutionary task to undo the alienation of Man (p. 141). Althusser expresses his opposition to such stance by recounting a conversation he had with Waldeck Rochet about the proletariat's approach toward humanism. When the fifteen-year-old Rochet was a worker in agriculture, he had the chance to observe that neither the workers nor the peasants cared at all about the concept of humanism. Rochet replies Althusser's astonishment upon hearing his observation with the remark that humanism is merely a tool to provide a common ground between the proletariat and the intelligentsia (1993, p. 198). When Rochet says, "'we have to do something for them or they'll leave us'," Althusser makes an ironical confession that he did not even know "who 'they' were"; the workers or the intellectuals (p. 198).

The ambiguous relationship between the intellectuals and the proletariat can only be explained by the fundamental structure of the concept of ideology. Althusser employs Freudian terminology in his interpretation of the concept. Ideology acts as a consciousness of the world – consciousness of "the 'lived' relation" between the subject and the world (2005, p. 233) – although this

conscious state is preceded in unconsciousness. The "ideological unconsciousness," consisting of a collection of representations, is the primary element that makes the subject's relationship with the world possible, but it also renders the conscious state necessitated by this relationship unconscious; it gives only the illusion of lived reality (p. 233). The State, on the other hand, which is a "machine of repression" (1984, p. 11) with its dominant subcategories of ideological apparatuses, advocates the individual's endeavour to acquaint itself with a specific identity. All of these apparatuses are led by the ultimate apparatus, humanist ideology, or "the Humanism of the Great Forefathers" (p. 28). Regardless of context or discipline, humanist ideology encompasses everything under one name and promises a set of values and ideals which the human being can feed on in order to survive in the world. What the humanist ideal misses out on, however, is that the authentic view of humanity that it advocates is based on nothing but the external, material structure.

"Ideas," Althusser writes, "are his [the subject's] material actions inserted into material practices governed by material rituals which are themselves defined by the material ideological apparatus from which derive the ideas of that subject" (1984, p. 43). The material nature of the subject's ideas reveals the subject itself to be a material, an end-product of whatever society it is positioned within. Thus follow the claims that "there is no practice except by and in an ideology" and that "there is no ideology except by the subject and for the subject" (p. 44). In this sense, ideology and the subject are naturally bound with each other on their path of directionless progress. So, the "overdetermination of the real by the imaginary and of the imaginary by the real" affirms "that ideology is *active* in principle, that it reinforces or modifies the relation between men and their conditions of existence," and it is due to this overdetermined structure that ideology is never merely an instrument under the subject's control (2005, p. 234). More than the danger, it is the illusion that makes ideology a problematic concept since its instrumentality in human hands is as prevalent as its authority over human conduct. It is no wonder, then, that the bourgeois injection of humanism into the socialist cause failed to create a mutual ground for the intelligentsia and the

proletariat. Humanist ideology came unrestrained in the hands of bourgeois autonomy which believed it had full control of it.

Althusser's theoretical antihumanism embodies a wholesale rejection of the "concept of man as an *originating subject*," whereby the discipline of economics is transformed into "*homo oeconomicus*," rationality into "*homo rationalis*," politics into "*homo politicus*," etc. (2003a, p. 205). Such approach follows the logic of bourgeois ideology, which elevates "the omnipotence of liberty or of creative labour" so that it can "impose, in the illusory shape of man's power of freedom, another power, much more real and much more powerful, than that of capitalism" (p. 205). What begins with an idealistic systematization of Man's attributes and praxes, according to Althusser, can only give way to the empowerment of a systematic abuse that exceeds its predecessor's. It was for this reason that Marx did not regard man as his starting point, but "the structural cause producing this effect of bourgeois ideology which maintains the illusion that you should start with man" (p. 205). According to *The Sixth Thesis on Feuerbach*, man is "the ensemble of the social relations" and we can inquire into the specifics of this ensemble only if "we do completely without the *theoretical services* of the concept of man" (2005, p. 243). To that end, Althusser's theoretical antihumanism sets out to eliminate the conceptual trio of "Alienation, Subject, Man," which he believes hinders the movement of Marxist philosophy, and replaces it with "'*the process without a subject*'" (2003b, p. 252). In order to formulate such process, though, the notion of alienation, before the notions of Subject and Man, needs to be negated.

Althusser finds philosophy's need to go back to alienation over and over again hard to understand (2005, p. 239). Why indeed, even Marx could not refrain from burdening alienation with the guilt of singlehandedly facilitating the wrong turn that the world took? Theoretical antihumanism, according to Althusser, automatically nullifies any discussion of alienation because the very concept is based on this or that given idea of how man should be, act or function in the world. If the difficult task of antihumanism is to reveal humanist ideology as the

ideology par excellence, the comfort of givenness and self-pity, both of which are accelerated by discourses of alienation, should be re-explored critically. Throughout the pieces he wrote on theoretical antihumanism, Althusser seems to criticize Marx only on the issue of alienation which he utilized to replace the concept or concepts he had not yet fully formulated (2003a, p. 206). Althusser claims that "alienation disappears from Marx's thought after the Commune, and never appears in Lenin's immense work" (p. 207). Indeed, the moment it is recognized that the world was never meant to be home to us, it becomes a lot easier to recast a look at it with the aim of solving the problems it poses as objectively as possible. The notion of alienation contributes to nothing but the problematic distinction between man, who is "unrecognizable in person" in the real world, and man as "an exterior object" in "another world, in religion" (p. 197). Thus, it draws its power from the positing of this hypothetical other Man, who came to equal the God which he himself created without knowing it. Extending its scope beyond the insufficiencies of religion, not only to the disciplines of "art" and "philosophy," but also to the domains of "politics, society, and even history," this new understanding of man crushes the particularities of each problematic area so that they can serve Man's "self-realization" (p. 197). By creating another, more ideal version of man, which represents human essence, the above approach inverts the logic of subject-object relationship and renders the subject victim to itself: *Man* is overpowered and objectified by *man*.

An important pointer toward Marx's theoretical antihumanism can be located in the 1858 version of his *Critique of Political Economy*, where he makes the remark that "'the anatomy of the ape does not explain that of man, rather human anatomy contains a key to the anatomy of the ape'" (1993, p. 208). This surprising statement does not only "preclude[s] in advance any teleological interpretation of an evolutionist conception of history," according to Althusser, but it also "anticipates […] Freud's theory of deferred action," which defends the view that "the significance of an earlier affect is recognised only in and via a subsequent one which simultaneously establishes its existence in retrospect and lends it meaning" (p. 208). It is upon this early encounter that Althusser

formulates theoretical antihumanism; the theoretical vigilance against ideological humanism which revelled in its postulation of man as Man. In *Future Lasts Forever*, he expresses how he "was isolated both politically and philosophically," upon suggesting theoretical antihumanism as a radical approach to negate the "self-satisfied socialist humanism" (p. 186) which sank deep into the tautologies of the ideological concept of alienation. Nonetheless, in reality, his intention was to negate bourgeois humanism, which is "counterpart to a 'shadowy inhumanity'" (2005, p. 237), and formulate a more humane way of living, which would exclude the illusory notion of alienation as a theoretical starting point and humanism as the accelerator of freedom. Theoretical antihumanism was the movement to highlight and bring back the radical moment of theory, which was demeaned and excluded by the '68 protests. These were fuelled by "demagoguery, based on emotion and experience," (1993, p. 186) and their aim to capture what was theirs posed a threat to critical thought although they spoke the language of emancipation. In Althusser's view, emancipation should not be realized at the price of theory which acts as the faculty of self-criticism in praxis.

1.3 Antihumanist ontology toward a sharing of the world

Fuelled by the failure of the socialist dream and the critique of our textbook understanding of communities, Nancy's project on Heideggerian ontology has produced a series of philosophical and political writings which made him famous across Europe and beyond. For Nancy, this failure and critique were naturally bound with each other since the obvious shortcomings of state communism effectuated an overall pessimism among left-wing thinkers and activists. If the post-WWII environment is akin to a shock effect, which rendered the human being not master but slave to the political structure he himself produced, what came along with the '60s and '70s structuralism in Europe can be likened to a desperate search for emergency exits and last resorts. In his attempt to think of alternatives to humanist ideology and pave the way for a new approach toward the political problems for which this ideology was mostly to blame, Nancy

sees a parallel between the myth of humanism and the basic structure of community. He believes that humanism is more than ideology, which means that it is "'a thinking that does not critique, nor even think its provenance from and proper relation to reality'," but in fact, "*the* machine par excellence through which a community produces meaning for itself" (as cited in Geroulanos, 2010, p. 21). For him, the fundamental problem behind such rationale is that it excludes everything else that is non-human and this exclusion was to blame, before anything else, for whatever went wrong with building an egalitarian way of living. The anthropocentric orientations of human communities each has its own definition of Man, whereby it is facilitated to name as outcast any sentient being that denounces the limits of that definition. Humanism is no longer one single humanist ideology, then, as Althusser saw it, but it is represented by multiple forms of humanism, all of which are "arbitrary, auto-productive, and […] tautological" (p. 21).

Nancy carries Althusser's postulation of humanist ideology forward by placing it within every single cultural and political orientation that helps create different communities. For Nancy, it makes more sense to criticize humanist ideology as an essential component for the making of a community than to regard it as a separate worldview to deconstruct. His perspective on humanism conveys that "each movement's thought […] was invariably its humanism, and humanism could be nothing but the exemplary expression of this thought and its care for man" (as cited in Geroulanos, 2010, p. 126). So, every cultural and political movement, especially in the 20th century, had its own distinct opinion on what the human being is or should be. More importantly, their humanist outlook became the very reason why their separate positions were formed in the first place and from then onward, governed the manner in which they tried to reshape the world. This is why Nancy's critique is immensely valuable for a comprehensive reading of all these different cultural and political worldviews – which were made into movements and these movements into conceptions of community – under the general category of humanist ideology which cannot help but mass produce meanings of *being together*. So, Nancy's work not only makes it possible to dig

under the ideological orientations within separate disciplines but it also explains why all our community models ended up being pipe-dreams for utopia at their best.

Against the detrimental effects of humanist ideology, Nancy is certainly unable to place a strong Western model that might, perhaps, have the upper hand over the Eastern versions. On the very contrary, for him, the West should be held responsible before any other camp. He writes that "the West compears and thus would the West be judged. But it would summon itself to appear: what has it done with community?" (1992, p. 374). The answer is "an absolute End" (p. 374); the West has rendered community an absolute End in itself and for this reason, it has to make its defence before law. Nancy's thought equals the common of community to the "banal" and "trivial" (p. 374). It is through these two essential characteristics that the humanist understanding of being together compears "before the exceptional absence of a 'condition' which one has always too quickly baptized 'human'" because what we call *common* is "not made from a single substance, but from the lack of a substance which essentially apportions the lack of essence" (p. 374). Nancy believes that humanism constitutes a set of values, which was appointed ultimate criteria only in order to hide the fact that there is, in reality, no humanism which can bring us all together as one homogeneous whole; so why do we still insist on the definability of the human condition?

The first answer which comes to mind regarding the question above is a search for meaning but this simple response carries a significance beyond its surface value. For Nancy (2000), all the political and religious attempts at being together, at forming a community, did not simply lose their sovereignty and fail but in fact, they "lost the possibility of making sense" (p. 42). The individual, on the other hand, who is abandoned to face this alienation of meaning "is merely the residue of the experience of the dissolution of community" (Nancy, 2002, p. 3). This claim, which is made on the first couple of pages of his famous *The Inoperative Community*, should not lead its reader astray to believing that we are confronted with a pessimistic frame here though. What Nancy lights the fuse of by

making this statement is the exact opposite of pessimism; this is where his exploration of the philosophy of singularity begins. For him, singularity is a political project that aligns itself with Heideggerian ontology as an endeavour to inquire into the failure of socialism and through that, the failure of all communities based on the idea or ideal of producing meaning within a frame domineered by the human condition. The philosophy of singulars takes a relational aspect toward the world for starters and admits that "we would not be 'humans' if there were not 'dogs' and 'stones'," plainly because "I would no longer be a 'human' if I did not have this exteriority 'in me'" (2000, pp. 17-18). So, Nancy's singularity burdens itself with the very difficult task of eradicating the position of the Other. Based on this concern and owning up to its roots in Heidegger's being-in-the-world, Nancy's singularity asks whether it is possible to re-think and re-practice politics without relying on these two presuppositions: that community should be a producer of meanings/values and that the human being should be at the core of every worldview.

Nancy's work on antihumanism relies on the central concept of death, which he aims to interpret beyond the confines of Heideggerian totalities. Death is employed as an agent of reinterpreting transcendence. What Nancy means by death, however, should not be confused with its religious connotations which deprive death of all its importance for the discussion of singularity by positing it as the entrance into the other side. Nancy's death is sovereign not in that it defies given physical conditions, but in that it can be designated as the only event which rejects being internalized by subjects and shared amongst them. Death is, in this sense, what makes all subjects singulars because it is the only common that cannot be shared. Agamben's (2007) statement that "humans are separated by what unites them" (p. 89) refers not only to language, but also to the phenomenon of death, which the *I* and the *other* have in common but cannot experience together. Both Nancy and Agamben utilize this common ground for redefining togetherness as modesty in the face of both transcendental and immanent tendencies. Death is both *my own* vulnerability, my infinitely and passionately open vulnerability to the finite negation of my personal capital and it is also the open-ended connection

that ties me to the *other* and helps me, through thinking death—before it finally comes about—understand that the *other* does not, in fact, exist. Therefore, an ontological reading of the phenomenon of death is a radical and creative way of coping with the fact that communities, as long as they are based on anthropological values, contribute to the repression of the non-human.

Agamben, whose understanding of antihumanism is strikingly similar to Nancy's, highlights another central term, ecstasy, or *ek-stasis*, which points toward a state of having lost its state. Following in Bataille's steps, his usage of the term ecstasy makes it possible for the individual to discern both herself and others as unique singulars in themselves. The realization that comes along with this kind of approach is not the recognition of the other – which is not even an other any longer – based on the details where it is akin to or different than me. As Maurice Blanchot (1988) writes in *The Unavowable Community*, the encounter between two such individuals is a contestation whereby both of them simply move out of and beyond their individualities, which constitute and confine them, so that they can meet where contestation is celebrated on an uncommon ground (p. 6). Agamben (2007) follows Blanchot's earlier text with his remark that "the threshold," where the contestation takes place, "is not, in this sense, another thing with respect to the limit," but "the experience of the limit itself, the experience of being-within an outside. This ek-stasis is the gift that singularity gathers from the empty hands of humanity" (p. 75). This model of being-together, which is developed as an attempt to resist the textbook model of community based on the human condition, relies on "no essence, no historical or spiritual vocation, no biological destiny that humans must enact or realize" (p. 50) and interestingly, the reason for this claim ties up with the question of ethics. Agamben believes that ethical experience would be practically impossible if a specific essence could be attributed to the human being. Rather, he believes that "there is in effect something that humans are and have to be, but this something is not an essence, nor properly a thing: It is the simple fact of one's own existence as possibility or potentiality" (p. 50). Instead of using these possibilities and potentialities as a book of instructions for the making of a community, Agamben places the question

of ethics – and an ethics which does not take for granted certain given individual characteristics – at the heart of our being-together.

The Gezi Park protests of 2013 pose one of the best examples of the community in question above: a community that comes together without a pre-decided agenda or ultimate purpose, a community that is formed and dissolved as naturally as the principle of hope which appears and disappears arbitrarily most of the time. The significance of such events is conveyed brilliantly by Nancy's (2000) sentiment that "humanity is the exposing of the world; it is neither the end nor the ground of the world" and similarly, that "the world is the exposure of humanity; it is neither the environment nor the representation of humanity" (p. 18). What characterizes events of this kind is not identification with a source, which admits only a designated and preconditioned group of individuals, but the creation of a common space which welcomes all that share the same goal; resisting the injustice inflicted on the underprivileged. This resistance does not necessarily make use of a model of humanity; only in its commonplace usage of humanism does it refer to a more *humane* way of living and nothing more. It is upon this ground that both Nancy and Agamben elevate an antihumanist perspective on ethics; one that does not define or centralize the human vision of the world, but aims to open up the world as a boundless space for the sharing of the human and the non-human alike. To that end, their reading of death as a common phenomenon critiques the subjective fallacies of humanist ideologies and their positing of the notion of ecstasy against recognition theories welcomes the non-human inhabitants of this world into the context of resistance.

Out of the above discussion of antihumanist thought within ontological and ethical disciplines, a new understanding of sharing emerges. The sharing of the world revolves around a lack and aims toward the kind of humility which makes the world an opening where all beings can co-exist without the need to identify themselves with a value or meaning. There, the singulars are in a relationship of a remote closeness where distance is not mourned and proximity is not interpreted as the cement that makes community what it is. It can be argued,

then, that Nancy's singularity poses its peculiar resistance to the concept of alienation by giving way to a new understanding of otherness and expressing that in its prospect of sharing the world. This sharing can be said to act against the apologetic alienation theories, which presuppose that the human being must identify itself with the world. Even though Nancy questions Heidegger's positing of ontology as first philosophy in his *Being Singular Plural* and chooses to emphasize *Dasein*'s affinity with *Mitsein*, both the accentuation of death and the reliance on ontology, not as the first but as the *necessary* philosophy, should be reviewed from their negative angle. The legacy attributed to Heidegger for incorporating antihumanist thought into 20th century philosophy cannot be taken at face value. His dependence on the concepts of anxiety, death and dignity especially constrict the theorization of antihumanism as a radical antidote for the notion of alienation. Moreover, both the ontological discipline and the emphasis on working within ethics create a discrepancy between Althusser's postulation of antihumanist thought, which excludes the ethical aspect completely, and the later development embodied by Nancy and Agamben. At the intersection of these two problems, Adorno's criticism of ontology and ethics can be employed as a mirror not only for further reflection on antihumanist thought but also to answer certain central questions regarding the function of antihumanism in Adorno's own philosophy.

CHAPTER 2

"A GROVE WHERE NO LIGHT PENETRATES"

The joke is, we all have the same punchline.

Chuck Palahniuk, *Survivor*

Anders's and Malraux's work provides us with a general view of the rise of an antihumanist worldview in a Europe traumatized by war. Their accounts, however, would constitute an insufficient frame without the contribution of Althusser, who not only negated humanist ideology but also posed the antihumanist perspective as a legitimate theory. His theorization, which weighs against alienation, meets its radical continuation in Nancy's studies on political ontology. Inspired by Heidegger, this ontology stands for the spatialization of being, within which the human no longer has privilege. Rethinking the notion of community or being together from a strictly non-human angle, Nancy and Agamben step toward the formulation of a new ethics based on the model of sharing. What, indeed, could be better than looking at the individual and the ones surrounding her from an ontological perspective which does not privilege whatever affirmative qualities they have, but regard them through the ground they share? In grasping their co-existence, what matters is the spatial relation they have to each other and the understanding that this spatial relation is a responsibility. Nancy's speculations on the concept of singularity designate the individual's contestation with death as the primary ground for a new ontological ethics that can radicalize politics as we know it. However, it is through this weight placed on the contestation with death and the weaknesses it generates in terms of alienation theory that Adorno uncovers Heidegger's antihumanism as humanist ideology par excellence. Moreover, Adorno's critique of the concept of dignity in line with the philosophy of Being raises significant concerns in terms of the parallel between antihumanism and ontology.

2.1 Problematization of death

Adorno's problematization of the alienation-driven ontology of Heidegger starts from the significance of the notion of anxiety and through that, death. Anxiety, or anxiousness, is one of the defining elements of Dasein's relationship with the outside world. Dasein feels responsibility as anxiousness which is not only "a basic kind of Being-in-the-world" but also what "individualizes Dasein and thus discloses it as '*solus ipse*'" (Heidegger, 2001, p. 233). This individualized being feels "uncanny" because its position is one of "'not-being-at-home' [das Nicht-zuhause-sein]" (p. 234). It is against this feeling of homelessness that Dasein comes into a relationship with death. It can in fact discover its authentic potentiality only through "the anticipation of death," whereby being becomes "free *for* death" and "pushes existence into its finitude" (p. 435). This ultimate factical possibility bears on Dasein but it does not merely objectify his existence; on the contrary, it gives him the chance to *become free for its finitude*. The successful taking up of such chance is designated as the most ideal manner in which Dasein respects its responsibility toward Being. However, in Heidegger's negation of the self through death Adorno pinpoints the construction of another self. The moment of "resignation," as a response to finitude, acts both as itself and its opposite at the same time since there is "an obstinacy which turns the dissolution of the self into an inflexibly stoic positing of the self" (Adorno, 1973, p. 159). So, in describing death as the ultimate condition, the self is made to define itself according to and through that vein, identify itself with it. Heidegger's conception of the self, which is based on "the absolute positing of the negative principle" (p. 159), reinterprets death both as the only sovereign that defines Dasein and as the fundamental factor that renders it pure subject, "pure will" (p. 160), since it is the only sentient being able to recognize its finite presence. It is no wonder then, that Heidegger regards Dasein's strong perseverance in the face of its delimited existence as *resoluteness*, a strictly human attribute that formulates self-assertion.

It can easily be admitted that Adorno's finest critique of identity thinking culminates in the facticity of death. This notion is interpreted by Nancy, after Bataille, as the only sovereignty that could make a radical form of community possible. This new community is imagined as one which is based on a model of individuality that negates its affirmative aspects thanks to the realization that each living being has a limited amount of time on earth. The shift of individuality toward singularity means that the human is no longer defined according to identitarian affirmations, including its species-being, but in line with the ultimate facticity which cancels out its existence. Although Nancy wants to utilize this radical frame of thought to call for a new ethics, Heideggerian ontology inspires less of a modest ethics of the antihuman than a recourse to the remedies of alienation, all of which would find their height in identity thinking. Adorno (1973) writes that "throughout history […] identity thinking has been something deathly, something that devours everything" because it is unconditionally and at all times "out for totality; the One as the indeterminate point, and the All-One" (pp. 139-140). Heidegger's antihumanism, which is so called only because it grounds the individual on an abstract notion of nothingness and gives it the pleasure to experience reconciliation in the face of its demise, is in fact only another means of positioning the individual within a strict frame of identification.

What makes Heidegger's being-toward-death into humanist ideology is first of all that the human being is the only sentient creature to experience such relation to death. Secondly, by means of easing into the ultimate facticity, the human being comes to use it as a new main point of reference in defining its species-being. Any such definition, however, is bound to end up claiming an origin for the humankind. "The root, the origin, is a category of dominion," Adorno (2004) writes in his *Negative Dialectics*, and adds that any philosophy of origins would maintain the coercive belief that "man ranks first because he was there first," just like "the autochthon against the newcomer" and "the settler against the migrant" (p. 155). Positing death as a defining condition, even if it is applied as a tool toward a more modest version of our anthropocentric world, carries the risk of giving birth to just another first philosophy. The appeal of such

essentialist takes on philosophy comes from the fact that they "will not be appeased by the derivative, by ideology" but such appeal turns into a farce the moment it is realized that those origins and roots are themselves ideological (p. 155). Any assertion which tries to set up an unchangeable reference point for the human condition or any argumentation which traces a variety of phenomena to their common origin gains its momentum out of denouncing everything else as ideology and Heidegger's death-bound ontology is no exception to that. So, emphasizing the finitude of existence is in fact a regression into fabulated origins, a long-sought-for homeland, which poses an absolute, be it the Aryan race, equality or god. Given that, positing ontology as the necessary discipline for rethinking togetherness relapses into the need to tackle alienation; thought finds comfort in thinking the ontological being-together.

Even though the claim in his "Letter on Humanism" that the word homeland is not meant "patriotically or nationalistically, but in terms of the history of being" (Heidegger, 1998, p. 257) has been disproven once and for all with the publication of his *Black Notebooks*, what is dangerous about Heideggerian ontology is in fact beyond his obvious anti-Semitism. What have come to persist beyond the suffering of hundreds of thousands are the various tenets of humanist ideology, which are driven by their experience of alienation to locate a source that explains away the existence of alienation. In the "Letter", Heidegger admits that homelessness, which is "the destiny of the world" (p. 258), is made into a central concept by Hegel and Marx as alienation and that "the Marxist view of history is superior to that of other historical accounts" thanks to this element of "estrangement" (p. 259). This warm instance of solidarity between Heidegger and his supposed adversaries dies away quickly, though, since alienation is nothing but a by-product of subjective reason whose only endeavour is to categorize everything outside of its empirical perspective. In bringing all others into its realm of knowledge, subjective reason tries to make the world homely to itself. This strict categorization requires an open-ended series of identifications, though, that which "tolerates nothing outside it" (Adorno, 2004, p.

172). And it was exactly this point where Adorno spotted the dangers of identity thinking which is driven by the notion of alienation.

> The theory of alienation, the ferment of dialectics, confuses the need to approach the heteronomous and thus irrational world—to be 'at home everywhere,' as Novalis put it—with the archaic barbarism that the longing subject cannot love what is alien and different, with the craving for incorporation and persecution. (p. 172)

So even though the unbearable despair of mere existence troubles the advanced mind of the human, leading it to seek solace in other troubled minds, such urge should be resisted because trying to make a home out of the world, in which humanity came to exist as an accident, is laden with ideological traps which have caused more harm than good to this day. The struggle against alienation only serves the further alienation of minorities which are considered unworthy of taking part. The image of a homeless humanity finds itself either in an absolute-seeking, affirmative scale of violence or in a fruitless attempt to bring together humanity upon a strictly conceptual plane that betrays any practical realization and no hypothetical collaboration on the issue between Heidegger and Marx is going to prove helpful either.

The unsustainable discourse of alienation, which was both elevated and criticized by Hegel and Marx, is today "the stock in trade of apologists who will suggest in paternal tones that man has apostatized," that he downgraded himself from being-in-itself to being-for-itself while in reality, "he never was that being-in-itself" (Adorno, 2004, p. 278). Mankind was never complete or pre-destined for completion and the discourse of alienation has so far only supported the patriarchy-driven voice that screams for unity. It is through his critique of alienation that Adorno revolts against a world which warrants its anthropocentrism with an apologetic nod to its homeless state of mind. "The tragic Hitlerian pose of lonely valour," Adorno argues, "makes them feel already in tune with the dawning order of the most powerful interests," whereby "their posturing as metaphysically homeless and nothingness-bound" can be translated

into the purely ideological "attempt to justify the very order that drives men to despair and threatens them with physical extinction" (p. 89). Where the human and the antihuman culminate in Heidegger's thought, we can find the reason why deconstructing humanity is necessary in dealing with the gap between the moral and the political life. Such gap can be said to have stemmed from his reliance on ontology. Being is immune to criticism because it is "neither a fact nor a concept" (p. 76). It is an absolute that hovers over all that there is, can be thought and criticized, instead of constituting a liberating aspect thanks to which we can reinterpret the human being's relationship with the other inhabitants of the world. Since any attempt at "analysis will bring to light what disappeared in the abyss of Being," Adorno argues that "the unity promised by the word 'Being' lasts only so long as it is not conceived" (p. 104). And how can we shun analysis if we are supposed to do philosophy? As "analysis becomes taboo, aporia turns into subreption" and what is left for us to do is "to conceive Being as the absolute, but it is to be the absolute only because we cannot conceive it" (p. 104).

2.2 The ends of dignity

Heidegger (1998) claims that "only the human being is admitted to the destiny of ek-sistence" (p. 247) and granted with the privilege to serve Being in the most ideal manner. While the human being moves toward the completion of a responsibility which is given to him by a conceptual power that he is not even able to conceive, he reproves it to the world that "the highest determinations of the essence of the human being in humanism still do not realize the proper dignity of the human being" (p. 251). So, in opting for Heidegger's ontology, the human being stands against every humanist ideology that deprecates his respectability. And only in the movement of this human being is *Being and Time* "against humanism," however, "this opposition does not mean that such thinking aligns itself against *the humane* and advocates *the inhuman* […] Humanism is opposed because it does not set the *humanitas* of the human being high enough" (p. 251, *italics mine*). So, the same logic that admits the subject into its ontological

worldview only as long as he believes that he cannot fully conceive Being manages to exalt itself in the humanness of that very subject. The crucial link that is expected to tie the essence of Being with the essence of the human subject, however, is never demonstrated. Despite his endeavour to dignify the human being so that he can evade criticism regarding his past, "in the end, human reason […] is itself disparaged" by Heidegger's ontology (Adorno, 2004, p. 105). Adorno juxtaposes Heidegger's stance here with the way a language functions. In a language, "everything is more than it is" (p. 106); a word is never attached to one immutable meaning. On the contrary, it is a shifting figure that takes alternative aspects as it moves itself amongst others of its kind. Here, Adorno uses the word *entwinement* and argues that Heideggerian ontology is not based on entwinement – as is claimed very often – but on "something transcendent" to it (p. 106).

Heidegger's insistence on transcendence instead of entwinement is exactly the point where the gap between his moral and political philosophy occurs because "he pursues dialectics to the point of saying that neither the subject nor the object are immediate and ultimate; but he deserts dialectics in reaching for something immediate and primary beyond subject and object" (Adorno, 2004, p. 106). So, for him, dialectics is merely a means to an end and a very perilous one since his exploitation of the term excuses the existence of an all-domineering absolute. Adorno finds a parallel between this and Plato's Gorgias dialogue where it is claimed that "the imperishable must be the good," yet the Platonic doctrine is still "answerable to the highest idea, to the idea of justice" whereas "existence is sanctified without the sanctifying factor" (p. 131): Being is answerable only to itself. "Of the eternal idea in which entity was to share, or by which it was to be conditioned," Adorno writes, "nothing remains but the naked affirmation of what is anyway—the affirmation of power" (p. 131). Both Being and humanist ideology partake in this power because "'humanism' now means […] that the essence of the human being is essential for the truth of being, specifically in such a way that what matters is not the human being simply as such" (Heidegger, 1998, p. 263) but the end-product of ideology that the human being is expected to serve

thanks to his species-related dignity and unmatched rational capability. On a very similar tone, Stefanos Geroulanos (2010) argues that Heidegger's humanism was "a humanism without man, a humanism that negates man to get to him—and in this sense, at once a protohumanism and a hyperhumanism" (p. 249). So, Nancy's reliance on Heideggerian ontology or any ontology in that case, betrays the antihumanist discipline's critique of alienation and its radical role in the theorization of an ethics of sharing which can resist any species-based privilege. "We are thinking a curious kind of 'humanism'," Heidegger (1998) claims in the "Letter", whereby the curiosity pertaining to this new humanism is likened to a "*lucus a non lucendo* [literally, a grove where no light penetrates]" (p. 263). In containing a farcical human essence behind an impenetrable shell which shouts the name of nothing but the absolute, Heidegger portrays both the evils of humanist ideology and his own inhumanity hidden behind a clever veil of *humanism for all*.

Claiming that the human being is based on "powerlessness and nothingness" (Adorno, 1973, p. 65) is a product of the fruitless effort to mark him as victim of alienation. What follows is the self-pity that urges us to save Man, the species, from nothingness while at the same time maintaining his dignity. In Heideggerian ontology, the supra-species of Man is "affirmed and eternalized at the same time" (p. 65), whereby he is both powerless in the face of Being and all-powerful because he is the only being that partakes in its essence. "All memory of natural law has been eradicated" (p. 65) through this new formulation of the human being; however, "as an invariable […] man himself becomes something like a supernatural nature-category" (p. 65). This supernatural nature-category, though, is still paralyzed when it is confronted by "suffering, evil, and death," all of which "are to be accepted, not to be changed" (p. 65). The presence of inhumanity is justified with the false claim that both the human being and the all-encompassing Being have death and nothingness as their core. Any attempt at coming up with a humanism that encircles every single one of us, however, is ideology par excellence because "it caricatures the equal rights of everything which bears a human face" and "hides from men the unalleviated discriminations

of societal power: the differences between hunger and overabundance, between spirit and docile idiocy" (p. 66). As long as we exalt in the name Man, the suffering of the underprivileged, which begs expression more than anything else, continues to be overlooked. The same ideological mechanism that supports the self-advancement of European man – who cannot help but eradicate everything outside itself for the sake of progress – raises its voice for the fundamental human rights of the oppressed on the other hand. Within this practical framework, though, "whoever refuses" to be categorized under the name Man, "gives himself over as non-human to the administrators of the jargon, and can be sacrificed by them, if such a sacrifice is needed" (p. 66). Accordingly, whoever admits to his share in the grand project of being and nothingness can give his "self-interested action […] the air of public interest, of service to Man" (p. 67) at full liberty: everything he does is representative of the whole humanity. "Self-righteous humanity, in the midst of a general inhumanity", however, "only intensifies the inhuman state of affairs" (p. 67). Humanist ideology justifies its existence for the sake of those who suffer from acts of inhumanity yet a great deal more than expressing their suffering; it secretly excuses the existence of its antithesis. Adorno's reflections on humanism not only reveal the hypocrisy surrounding the existentialist jargon of emancipation but also the humanist discourse of alienation which has managed to persist to this day.

Adorno also criticizes Schiller's reading of dignity, which compartmentalizes the term as the true dignity of character and the false dignity of appearance. For Schiller, true dignity equals to the containment of one's instincts and through that vein, acting in line with the intellectual and social capacity, which is attributed merely to the rational powers of the human being. Instead of describing the principles of true dignity, though, Adorno (1973) believes that Schiller should have focused on the dialectic that manifests the hollowness of the very concept: "dignity contains the form of its decadence within itself" (p. 165). This insight tells us that there are not two different kinds of dignity, one being proper and the other its opposite. In contrast with such distinction, there is only one show of dignity because every show of dignity implicitly reveals the truth

content of its antonym. Every one of them is based on the misconception that it has thoroughly been understood what the natural life and public life of the human being should look like. It is in this sense that dignity becomes an indispensable ally for humanist ideology. Moreover, the concept of dignity transcends its simple bourgeois orientation and becomes a great deal more perilous when it is in the hands of political movements. Whereas governments manipulate the meaning of dignity to replace human loss with martyrdom, the patriarchal worldview feels that it can freely debase a woman who does not dress in line with the dignity *her position as a woman* requires. Despite its connotations that revolve around equal rights – living one's life with dignity without becoming a slave to a higher authority's demands – the concept is in a grim collaboration with attitudes that keep affirming the existence of those superior powers. It must be for this reason that Adorno criticizes even "the Kantian dignity" which "finally disintegrates into the jargon of authenticity" (p. 165) by sacrificing the element of self-reflection. A great deal more than the concept of dignity, it is self-reflexivity that humanity needs so that any presupposed human quality is not transformed into a tool of mindless instrumentalization.

Heidegger's famous allegory of the lord and the shepherd portrays the coercive structure behind the presumption of dignity: "The human being is not the lord of beings" but "the shepherd of being" (Heidegger, 1998, p. 260). However, they "lose nothing in this *'less'*; rather, they gain in that they attain the truth of being. They gain the *essential poverty* of the shepherd, whose *dignity* consists in being called by being itself into the preservation of being's truth" (p. 260, *italics mine*). So, dignity is brought down to the level of the shepherd so that human humility can be related to the humility of Being. However, by skipping the analysis which looks into the reasons why the lord and the shepherd are in a hierarchical relationship in the first place and on top of that, by entrusting dignity to the socially inferior out of pity, Heidegger conspires with the biased reasoning that categorizes individuals arbitrarily. In minimizing the obviously powerful position of the lord and in elevating the powerlessness of the shepherd in the face of the lord, he gives his readers the message that everything is good as it is. Both

the lord and the shepherd preserve their positions in a much-celebrated prosperity as long as they maintain being's truth with dignity. Adorno (1973) writes that the shepherd's humility is portrayed "as human virtue-in-itself," but it "is unquestioned and without relation" (p. 64). Being highly idealistic in nature, dignity allows the human being to recognize itself as "a lawgiving authority, sovereign in the consciousness of its own freedom" (p. 160). Such preordained understanding of dignity, nonetheless, has ended up serving narratives of martyrdom, the principles of achieving the greater good and other phenomena which were invented to cover up what forces a human being to make another suffer. So, the above parable reveals the ideological underpinnings of dignity in that it affirms the continuation of class distinction. In dignity, Adorno argues, there is not much other content than "self-preservation aspiring to be more than" (p. 161) itself: the long-lost bourgeois ideal descends to meet now-all-the-more-lofty status of common man. He writes somewhere else, in his *Aesthetic Theory*, that "human beings are not equipped positively with dignity; rather, dignity would be exclusively what they have yet to achieve" (2002, p. 62). The ontological discipline, which attributes privilege to the human point of view even though it wants to make that view a humble part of Being, relapses into humanist ideology in appointing only the human being as its actor. In that sense, Adorno's critique of humanist ideology provides us with a much less biased and much more inspiring context.

CHAPTER 3

PROBLEMS OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY

There is a great deal of human nature in people.
Mark Twain, Letter to *Alta California*

As Adorno uncovers the humanist ideology that underlies Heidegger's individual model, which hauls itself from anxiousness-driven existence on to being the sole carrier of the truth of Existence, he also challenges the leaning toward ontology represented by recent theories of an antihumanist vision of the world. In this way, he portrays the possibility of negating the inhuman world without a reliance on ontology which, in Heidegger's case, poses an inconceivable version of Being, which both exalts and demeans the individual. Against Heidegger's misconceived antihumanism, Adorno digs under the coercive ways of living that notions of alienation and dignity generate. He shows that both these strictly anthropocentric terms have come to attribute to the human being originary aspects and responsibilities that exceed its capacity. The empowerment of man as Man, which has developed as a consequence of such attributions, was the primary condition that led not to a more humane version of the world, but to a totally dehumanized one. What makes Adorno's position against this bad infinity more of resistance than of resignation can be traced to his posthumously published series of lectures as *The Problems of Moral Philosophy*. Containing some of his least known and most radical opinions on the limits of morality, the lectures question the legitimacy of ethics as a discipline and reach a point which circumscribes the human being's bearing on moral action with a number of serious impossibilities. These lectures not only problematize antihumanist discipline's forced alliance with ethics but also portray how Adorno's determinate negation of morality goes hand in hand with his resistance to humanist ideology.

3.1 Problematization of ethics

Adorno's affinity with negative anthropology is widely accepted but this acceptance is still overshadowed by the dominant majority which regards his philosophy, in part, as working toward a more humane world through an expectation of reconciliation. The other half can be said to align his thought, after *Minima Moralia*, with a melancholic tendency which highlights the impossibilities of praxis and praises the revolutionary form of the artwork instead of bringing its concern down to the level of common man. In both cases, what comes to be emphasized in his thought is a dialectic of humanism which leans more toward resignation than resistance because of its inability to trust human praxis. Dialectic of humanism bounces back and forth between mourning the loss of the subject, which can no longer be emancipated, and elevating the humane against an inhuman world which, nonetheless, constrains the possibility of resistance due to the essential similarities between the structure of that world and that of the individual. Against the attempts to give coherence to Adorno's thought by reading it according to this paradoxically negative and melancholic dialectic of humanism, this project follows his criticism of alienation and dignity through to his negation of morality in order to restate the radically antihumanist motivation behind some of his central ideas.

Adorno's second lecture in the *Problems* starts with the issues surrounding the concept of morality and goes on to demonstrate how the notion of ethics emerged out of those problems. Running after objective moral norms has proven to be out of fashion and Adorno does not argue to the contrary. He believes that Hegel's idealization which purports "the substantial nature of the ethical," cannot be made to comply with the modern world because the external's claim on the particular is too great to house moral principles that can guide the particular's moral praxis (2001b, p. 12). The coercive hand of the moral structure especially in conservative communities does not care for the existence of a singular good act but one predestined good act forced on or at least expected from every singular in that community. So, whenever we discuss something under the discipline of

morality, we are met with an uneasiness since it is impossible to shake off certain disturbing connotations that circumscribe the notion, such as "moral rigour, conventional narrowness and conformity" (p. 13). Adorno sees an illustrative example of the limitations of morality in Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck* where the Captain is at a loss upon finding out that Woyzeck, a very good person in general, has an illegitimate child. Unable to recover from his confusion, the Captain eventually decides that Woyzeck is "'immoral because he lacks morality'" (p. 13). The concept of morality carries the risk of equalling itself and thus, swallowing critique whole in its tautologies. It was due to these complications that the discipline of ethics came to be employed as an alternative.

Adorno positions the emergence of ethics as a replacement to morality not alongside its first famous bearer, existentialism, but Kantian personality theory. One of the fundamental aspects of this theory was that it designated personality as an ensemble of the elements underlying a specific individual's praxis not under "merely empirical" or "natural" conditions," but on a "supra-empirical" level so that its action can pertain to the universal law (Adorno, 2001b, p. 14). So, behind the harmless-looking assumption that "people should live in accordance with their nature," (p. 13) Adorno catches sight of a regression into an all-encompassing model of human action. "The emergence of the personality as the strong human being, identical with himself, complete in himself" falsely posits "the concept of the ethical and puts itself in the place of ethical norms" (p. 14). Based on the critique of humanist ideology above, it would be wishful thinking to ignore the serious doubts as to whether *the cliché of Man* can equal to culture, compete against it or constitute a new set of rules that can replace it (p. 14). Despite the essential difficulties it poses for our modern world, Adorno admits that he favours the concept of morality over that of ethics since the latter discipline is elevated as "the bad conscience of morality" (p. 10). Ethics is forced to have a grasp on moral notions and judgments, yet it is also faced with the very straining task of behaving as if it were like morality but without the patriarchal tone that the latter professes in. In not daring to surrender fully to its subjective value judgments and faced with the responsibility to detach itself from the coercive aspects of the good old

morality, ethics is bound to maintain its ambivalent definition. This ambivalence is further problematized by the tendency of the ethical discipline to handle human praxis merely within its natural sphere, without making any references to the beyond of that nature (p. 15). Although ethics can be regarded as more advanced than morality due to its refusal to establish itself within a metaphysical sphere, wherein unchangeable objective maxims hide, its reduction to the concrete world, the second nature, proves to be equally problematic. Since the second nature is guided by the principles of self-preservation as strictly as its primary version, the discipline of ethics carries the critical responsibility of not relapsing into the selfish urge to protect oneself at the expense of another's suffering. It is in this sense that, according to Adorno, the ethical discipline's claim to be exempt from objective values is not true to itself.

The notion of *ethos* represents two major problems for the study of morality, the first of which is everyman's private *ethos* which acts against the coercive connotations of traditional morality, as explained above. The second problem can be attributed to the belief that in pursuing morality, the human being or a human community attempts to recover a lost *ethos*. Adorno (2001b) purports that the endeavour to define a certain state of being as valuable but degraded in time by the changes in society contains elements of Fascism in it, refuting Scheler's idea (p. 17). Once these ideals are faced up against "liberated, autonomous reflection," their idealness becomes questionable, so a study on morality should in the first place resist its urge to revive models of good life that were once in use but no longer accepted (p. 17). It goes in line with such view that the Hegelian notion, "'the owl of Minerva only spreads its wings with the falling of the dusk'" is adopted as a motivation in the lectures (p. 16). Given the inexistence of a particular human nature, a focus on morality is required not in order to systematize the individual's moral conduct within society, but to make sense of the world and the actions of that individual as a resistance to that world. So, every type of praxis that the individual might conduct is not only caused by the external world but also limited by that external world, with all the other individuals forcing their capacities equally. This view of the world actually makes

an excuse for the creation and application of different sets of moral norms and values. These norms and values, whose function is to give meaning to and regulate our interaction with each other, however, always run the risk of falling over to the side of decadence. “The horrors perpetrated by Fascism,” Adorno argues, “are in great measure nothing more than the extension of popular customs that have taken on these irrational and violent features precisely because they have become divorced from reason” (p. 18) and it is this distancing between general moral conduct and reason that obliges us to go from praxis to theory, as an attempt to redeem the rationality which is expected to be a natural component of morality in the first place. This obligation includes maintaining the negative dialectic between the particular and the universal against an establishment of ethics which identifies itself with strictly human ideals.

In Adorno’s constellation, there is no room for an understanding that simply polarizes the particular and the universal, whereby the latter represents evil and the former the humane. They are in collaboration with each other at all times and it is our responsibility to inquire into this dynamic in order to break through the layers of humanist ideology and to get to the heart of the matter. Adorno believes that there are two fundamental impossibilities encircling human’s moral praxis. The first concerns “the accidental nature of the psychologically isolated human being who is so conditioned by his inner life that he scarcely achieves anything like freedom” and the second one relates to the concept of universality which has taken on “such an objective reality vis-à-vis living human beings that they find themselves unable to appropriate it for themselves in a living way” (Adorno, 2001b, p. 19). So, we are confronted first with the human being whose coming into the world was no less arbitrary than that of an oak tree; however, unlike the oak, it has a capacity for immersion, which has developed through both biological and social processes. It is the clash between human’s ability of self-reflexivity and the randomness of its existence that constricts its relationship with freedom. On the other hand, the universal form has cast itself into such concreteness that the individual, whose existence takes part in it, is no longer able to come to terms with this universal’s too solid, yet fully conceptual realm. In

order to handle these two human impossibilities, Adorno employs an antihumanist worldview.

Every individual conduct is an act of resistance to the universal and in turn, enclosed within this resistance, there is resignation. Every movement we make is necessarily a move made backwards if there is not enough consciousness of our imminent possibility to make a mistake. It is in this sentiment that Adorno's argument against argumentation finds its origin. With an unusually modest gesture, he writes in *Negative Dialectics* that "the human mind is both true and a mirage […] because nothing is exempt from the dominance which it has brought into pure form" and "untrue because, interlocked with dominance, it is anything but the mind it believes and claims to be" (2004, p. 186). So, our capacity of subjective reason is never confined within our own minds but always reaching out for the external world to reconstruct it over and over again. However, this constant act of reconstruction limits our individual existences in return. The Enlightenment symbolizes this dynamic of resistance and resignation at its best because it brings forward the reality of "demythologization," which acts "no longer merely as a *reductio ad hominem*,[2] but the other way around, as a *reductio hominis*,[3]" whereby "the delusion of the subject that will style itself an absolute" is brought under the light (p. 186). Adorno does not mourn the death of the subject; on the contrary, he posits it as "the late form of the myth, and yet the equal of its oldest form" (p. 186). This is why he pursued the meanings and practices which revolve around the *reduction of man*, instead of the *reduction to man*.

Fred Dallmayr reads *reductio hominis* as indicative of the ontological openness that the human being points toward, given that he is not a meaningful whole. If it is not possible to define human nature per se, we should then look at the various possibilities that are enclosed within that lack of definition. "This boundary-condition can be called […] an 'apophatic humanism,'" Dallmayr (2015) writes, "a humanism always 'ek-static' or in excess of itself", (p. 84).

[2] Reduction to man.
[3] Reduction of man.

Although Dallmayr makes a point-on observation of Adorno's tendency toward antihumanism elsewhere, in his *Promise of Democracy*, the parallel he forms between Adorno and Heidegger over the concept of *reductio hominis* is misinformed (2010, p. 149). Heidegger's employment of *reductio hominis* in the Letter is a re-insertion of humanist ideology in order to disguise his previous affiliation with terms such as resoluteness, death and fate in *Being and Time*, which, as shown above, are the essential elements of his attempt to reconstruct a system of dominance where, let alone humaneness, no humanity is allowed to reside. Whereas he cracks open a box of ontological wonders, where everything is all too conceptual, including the absolutes that his philosophy cannot help but create, Adorno's employment of *reductio hominis* is his negative dialectic in embodiment: an embodiment foreshadowed in his *Dialectic of Enlightenment* with Horkheimer. There, the human being is forced to exist only as a concept because the modern era awaiting him is based on pure progress; a progress which leaves practically no room for his individual existence even though the continuation of this progress depends on nothing but his existence as species and its legitimized claim on the rest of the world. The assertion that everything comes down to Man at the end of the day reveals simultaneously that Man is a reduction of man: a sentient being which carries out the myth of its subject-position in a world where there is no more room left for myths.

The question of morality, especially when taken up in view of the reduction of man, looks into the truth content behind maxims such as "no man should be tortured" and "there should be no concentration camps" (Adorno, 2004, p. 285). At the heart of these moral rules lies nothing but the hypocrisy which stands in silence while all kinds of atrocities are being committed "in Asia and Africa" (p. 285) and turned into repression material for the West. "The humanity of civilization is inhumane toward the people it shamelessly brands as uncivilized" (p. 285), Adorno continues with his thought, rendering humanism a measly excuse for the West to commit its well-known crimes against the underprivileged. The invention of human rights was the final stage in the ruthless reification of the term human. With these so-called advances, the human being

was reduced to a phrase, some half-autonomous entity to be protected from the obvious powers that be. The declaration of human rights was an insinuation of the acceptance we give to the violence in the world and our vulnerability in facing it. But "the anthropocentric sense of life has been shaken" even though "the subject in its philosophical self-reflection has, so to speak, made the centuries-old critique of geocentrism its own" (p. 67). Far from being the centre of the universe though, "we cannot say what man is," because today he "is a function, unfree, regressing behind whatever is ascribed to him as invariant—except perhaps for the defencelessness and neediness in which some anthropologies wallow" (p. 124). It was due to the futile urgency to do away with such defencelessness and neediness that existentialist ontology chose to linger on the ideological concept of alienation, for fear of losing sight of something which was never really there. Nevertheless, modern human being "drags along with him as his social heritage the mutilations inflicted upon him over thousands of years," (p. 124) Adorno writes, implying that the human being cannot be taken separately from the atrocities that it became part of one way or another. And to define this creature within the contemporary perspective "would sabotage its possibility" (p. 124) because it is both a product of its social influences and it is more than them at the same time. "A so-called historical anthropology would scarcely serve any longer" (p. 124) since it would only posit certain human attributes as conditioned and contribute less to a rereading of our dehumanized world than invent *humane* excuses for that state. "That we cannot tell what man is," Adorno continues, "does not establish a peculiarly majestic anthropology; it vetoes any anthropology" (p. 124). It was out of this radical sentiment that the problems of moral philosophy were postulated.

3.2 Adorno's antihumanist morality and politics

Adorno (2001b) starts the final lecture of the *Problems* with a remark that a similar version of his famous statement, 'wrong life cannot be lived rightly', can be found in Nietzsche's work (p. 167). Whereas the whole series on moral philosophy is based on Kant and Hegel, with Kant being the more widely

discussed figure, Adorno chooses to finalize his lectures on a Nietzschean tone. If there will ever be a discipline called moral philosophy, it should not claim to be equal to its meaning but instead, aim for being its own criticism. The Adorno and Horkheimer of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* might have seemed to rely on the Platonic notion of objective rationality here and there; not granting themselves full access to a postmodern state of truthlessness. But when it comes to morality, Adorno does not leave much room for the creation of maxims. A right way of living, according to him, would only be resistance to the wrong one (p. 168). With a dexterous move back to his second lecture though, he reasserts that *the wrong* here does not directly mean the universal, with the good, solitary particular to resist it. On the very contrary, we should at all times take it into consideration that the way of the world "sets itself up in us" (p. 169) as equally as it does on the outside. So it is not only the world but also ourselves that we cannot trust. Given this, Adorno suggests that only the determinate negation of all things perceptible, can we acquire the possibility "to focus upon the power of resistance to all the things imposed on us, to everything the world has made of us, and intends to make of us to a vastly greater degree" (p. 168). The wording is interesting here because resistance starts from things that are forced on us and moves on to the manners in which we are delineated by the outside world; named, categorized and left to function within the instructions. It is clear so far that Adorno's understanding of morality is not akin to the law-making universal morality or to a personalized ethics whose ambivalent definition misses the crucial mark on the negation of humanist ideology. So, what does *the bad*, which we are supposed to resist unconditionally, indicate with respect to the antihumanist discipline?

Two key terms in Adorno's understanding of morality emerge within the context of resistance to *the bad*: conscience and responsibility. A contradictory formula when merged, conscience and responsibility can function together only with the addition of the knowledge that we are bound to make mistakes. In Adorno's (2001b) own words:

> There has to be an element of unswerving persistence, of holding fast to what we think we have learnt from experience, and on the other hand, we need an element not just of self-criticism, but of criticism of that unyielding, inexorable something that sets itself up in us. In other words, what is needed above all is *that consciousness of our own fallibility*, and in that respect I would say that the element of self-reflection has today become the true heir to what used to be called moral categories. (p. 169)

So, on the one hand, there is the individual with her experiences and what she believes she has learnt from them. On the other hand, there is the same individual with the capacity to criticize and even negate her own values and standpoint if necessary; but what exactly is this 'unyielding, inexorable something that sets itself up in us'? Whatever it is, it must be related to our admittance of the fact that we can always be at fault, which, however, does not expect us to refrain from doing anything at all but to *do without* the conviction that we are establishing a maxim for goodness. We should avoid "self-assertiveness," Adorno continues and gives the name *modesty* when asked to state the highest and in fact, only possible human virtue (p. 169). Self-assertive behaviour, which is always too conscious of the goodness that its conduct spreads, poses a threat to the moral discipline due to its urge to establish its own version of the world.

"True injustice is always to be found at the precise point where you put yourself in the right and other people in the wrong" (p. 169), Adorno writes and justifies his choice of modesty with the thought that "we must have a conscience, but may not insist on our own conscience" (pp. 169-170). Hereby we witness the postmodern Adorno at his best, with all his bets placed on anti-establishment – especially self-establishment. Max Blechman (2008) summarizes Adorno's understanding of conscience brilliantly in this sense, "as the consciousness of my own non-identity" (p. 191) even though he fails to take into consideration Adorno's radical approach to humanist ideology in general. In the *Problems*, he admits that he did not want to become part of the Humanist Union upon receiving an invitation from them and that he would certainly have gone for it if it had been

called The Inhuman Union instead (2001b, p. 169). This inhumanity could in fact be the antidote of the thing which takes its place within all of us; that thing which neither gives itself up nor complies when we want to plead with it. Through its claim on us, it feeds the illusion that ranks our species at the ultimate level and makes believe that the world is the ground for humanity and its subordinates.

Adorno admits in the final lecture that it is Nietzsche who influenced and informed his philosophy even more than Hegel (2001b, p. 172). In his opinion, Nietzsche on his own must have contributed a great deal more to the critique of society than the traditional Marxist discipline as a whole. In contrast with this praise, though, Adorno does not go without mentioning the problematic aspects that he thinks exist in Nietzsche's thought. Almost all of these aspects are related to his bourgeois tendencies which stem from his model of humanity. His romantic wish to reinstate man into the physical world, his Zarathustra who represents subjective reason and especially the inapplicability of most of his well-constructed moral values are points of critique for Adorno. "Nietzsche had sharp ears," he writes, "and they should have told him that the concept of nobility contains within itself the stigma of non-nobility since the nobleman is the person who is noble in his own eyes and wishes to appear as such to others" (p. 173). Reminiscent of the above discussed issue of dignity, Adorno finds the truth content of non-nobility in nobility and links this to Nietzsche's conception of the Superman who "would be the go-getter or captain of industry today" (p. 173). Either way, bourgeois ideology goes hand in hand with humanist ideology and blocks Nietzsche's moral philosophy in Adorno's opinion. So, we can easily discern here that all the reasons why Adorno criticizes Nietzsche go back to the dicta of humanist ideology; an ideology that suffers to come back to a world which constricts it but not knowing that all it can contribute to the world by coming back would be an addition to the *inhuman* state of things.

But there are two important Nietzschean elements that influence and radicalize Adorno's final lecture on moral philosophy. Both these elements not only problematize the existence of moral philosophy in the first place but they

also inform Adorno's own view on morality. The first is the rejection of the assumption that *the good* is transcendental. Many of us would already be aware of this famous stance; however, there is another dimension to the issue. Adorno, in a very Nietzschean manner, does not suggest the adoption and exertion of *the good* as an act of resistance to *the bad*. Instead, he writes that "we may not know what absolute good is or the absolute norm, we may not even know what man is or the human or humanity," however we are well familiar with the inhuman and "the place of moral philosophy today lies more in the concrete denunciation of the inhuman" (2001b, p. 175). So we are faced with one advantage and one disadvantage. The obvious disadvantage is the way of the world which has long got out of hand. Nonetheless, this is also an advantage because the way of the world has got so out of hand that it is more than easy to recognize and thus to denounce it wherever we go. Adorno's suggestion after Nietzsche is that we name, defy and resist at all times the inhuman that sets itself up in and around us. In taking on this task, he severs himself sharply from disciplines and ideologies which are "vague and abstract attempts to situate man in existence" (p. 175).

The second philosophical element that Adorno learns from Nietzsche is that we should perhaps employ an unrationalized violence in resisting *the bad*, instead of placing another set of moral values against it. "In a society that is based on force and exploitation, a violence that is unrationalized, frank and open and, if you like, an '*expiatory* violence'," Adorno (2001b) argues, "is more innocent than one that rationalizes itself as the good" (p. 174, *italics mine*). The form of this violence cannot obviously be related to the physical kind, as far as our knowledge of Adorno's life and thought allows us, but he never stops to explain the nature of the violence that he suggests here. The usage of the word 'expiatory', though, is instantly tied up with another term which is crucial for his philosophy: redemption. So, the violence discussed here carries a history of its own; a history that is marked by a good number of reasons why an honest violence which does not care to rationalize itself exists in the first place. Hereby, Adorno's conception of violence also resonates with a protest against administration. Instead of becoming part of the administered world by referring to itself as *the (rationalized)*

good, expiatory violence constitutes itself only in order to create a split through the administration momentarily and manifests itself in another form another time. Adorno's stress on the term expiatory violence reminds the reader of the question that wants to know why redemption is such a dominant figure in his philosophy. Discussed mainly as component of an overall melancholic disposition in Rose's work, Adorno's redemption might in fact be pointing toward a realm beyond itself; a realm where the resistance inherent to Nietzsche's expiatory violence comes into view. The form of this resistance, however, may not have much to do with an immanent stance sunk deep into its *Heimweh*, but imply a type of praxis which is not only motivated by the antihumanist negation of morality and personalized ethics but also problematize the difficulties that create a gap between politics and morality.

Adorno's critique of humanist ideology would not have been as strong if it had not been for the existentialist discipline. Accordingly, his concluding remarks in the final lecture focus on existentialist ethics. In its radical, protest manner against the administered world, existentialist ethics makes a subjective value out of spontaneity. This value is subjectivized to such an extent that the human being who acts spontaneously is transformed into a Platonic Demiurge as if to give meaning to chaos. All the same, because "this spontaneity lacks reflexivity and is separated from objective reality," Adorno (2001b) writes, "objectivity re-enters it, just as Sartre has ended up placing himself at the service of Communist ideology" (p. 176). The individual's existence as a subject is extended to such a great distance by existentialist ethics that the chances objectivity interferes with it increase immediately; we become more vulnerable. So, "either this spontaneity will be eliminated, if it is seriously intended, and buried beneath the great ideology, or it lapses into administration" (p. 176), replacing whatever popular model that came before itself. It must not be a wonder then, that Sartre's existentialism went after a form of humanism, which would be based on a version of personalized or private ethics. Under its veil of privacy though, his ethics housed a set of parallels that would bind moral act with being human. It was against the proposition of such an originary link between morality and the human

being that Adorno situated the very problems of moral philosophy. In doing that, he aimed to discard the notions of alienation and dignity, and revealed the coercive nature of the term ethics vis-à-vis the moral discipline. Any humanist tendency which carries the risk of self-assertion constitutes Adorno's postulation of the bad. It is through this antihumanist postulation that morality comes into an intimate relationship with politics. "Anything that we can call morality today merges into the question of the organization of the world," (p. 176) since both realms necessitate the human being to exist *among others* and out of the problems encircling that second nature, emerges the need to problematize the human being in its moral and political conduct. Adorno defied historical anthropology and the anthropocentric worldview so that he could replace them with the expression of the bad and an understanding of modesty which remains conscious of *our own fallibility*.

The problems of moral philosophy do not indicate impossibilities that constrain praxis; they work toward the theorization of a form of praxis beyond humanist ideology. "In the socialized society," Adorno (2004) remarks in *Negative Dialectics*, "no individual is capable of the morality that is a social demand but would be a reality only in a free society" (p. 299). Both the moral and the political realm act as problematic areas which contain the resistance that goes against the humanist tenets on which they are based. The very crucial reason why such dialectical play between resignation and resistance does not turn itself into a 'melancholy science' is Adorno's reliance on antihumanism as a consistent technique of determinate negation. His philosophy is resilient, evasive of identifications and ultimately radical in its assertion that assertiveness should mind its own fallibility at all times. The famous remark at the end of the *Problems*, which puts forward the affinity between "the quest for the good life" and "the quest for the right form of politics" (Adorno, 2001b, p. 176) does not care to traverse the gap between morality and politics with the fine movement of a short maxim. It would be faulty to draw the conclusion from the above remark that "Adorno wanted to defend the promise of morality in the face of its inevitable self-destruction" (Schweppenhäuser, 2004, p. 336) even though this seems to be

the favoured opinion. On the contrary, he aims to reintroduce political praxis in place of the claims of a moral or ethical life, which lapse into the ideologies of humanism too often. For a new praxis, he traces his negative dialectic back to its Nietzschean roots and designates two specific types of praxes: expressing acts of inhumanity and employing an expiatory form of violence. So there are two fundamental questions to ask. One aims to inquire into the relationship between the bad infinity and Adorno's principle of hope. The other question concerns itself with the problematic term, expiatory violence, which Adorno does not explicate in the *Problems*.

CHAPTER 4

NO RIGHT LIFE IN THE WRONG ONE?

It is as inhuman to be totally good as it is to be totally evil.
Anthony Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange*

The impossibilities that surround moral conduct are directly related to political action and thereby, to Adorno's principle of hope. His antihumanist reading of morality renders such conduct questionable whenever it takes itself too seriously. However, things change shape once they are taken onto the political realm where affirmative action is needed for bringing about radical alteration. This was the principal concern of Judith Butler's speech upon receiving the Adorno Prize in 2012. In her lecture, she aims to dig under Adorno's famous maxim that wrong life cannot be lived rightly, with the attempt to point out the importance of situating the good if anything is to be achieved on the political stage. Resistance to the bad, on its own, cannot be effective according to Butler (2012), who rightfully highlights the contours of a world that finds itself capable of deciding "whose lives are grievable, and whose are not" (p. 10). Demanding a prompt to action in a way not dissimilar to Rose in her *Melancholy Science*, Butler defines Adorno's position as one that "abstracts the moral from the political at the expense of solidarity," which, in the end, proposes the "morally pure critic as the model of resistance" (p. 18). This model, giving priority to theory over practice, is bound to stay behind on the public arena of resistance, where, she believes, action should be taken on a "*plural*" and "*embodied*" basis (p. 18). Adorno's resisting individual, according to such frame, would be one who is wary of losing herself fully in a collective movement and instead of becoming an organic part of a body of resistance, focuses her attention on the critical and artistic aspects of negating the bad infinity. Such behaviour, though, would "characterize the critical capacities of a few," (p. 17) and eventually get in the way of embodied resistance leading to concrete change.

In “Resignation”, Adorno does underline his aversion from praxis. The universal consensus which dictates that “one should take part” acts as a foundation for an environment in which the act of thinking is prohibited or limited, at its best (Adorno, 2005a, p. 199). Criticizing any potential pseudomorphosis between theory and praxis, Adorno purports that such forced unity would merely end up in a dominance dictated by praxis. Butler (2005) finds a similar assertion in *Problems of Moral Philosophy* where he suggests that the temptation to “join in,” which belongs to our species being, must be resisted at all costs, in addition to resisting the bad infinity that tries to constrict the individual’s action (p. 168). Butler (2012) reads the temptation to join in as “go[ing] along with [*mitzuspielen*] the status quo” and regards this caution on the individual’s side to be “an internal check against complicity” (p. 17). Against this position toward praxis, which advocates the view that thinking is resistance par excellence, Butler urges her reader to establish the good instead of merely resisting the bad if we want to stress the plurality of resistance contrary to the elect minds of a few. Another attempt at formulating the right way of living is taken on by Jean-François Lyotard in his famous article reading Adorno as the devil of criticism. Motivated by the same concern that Butler voices in her lecture, Lyotard (1974) asks “what can an affirmative politics be, which does not look for support in a representative [a party] of the negative” (p. 137) and it seems the question is directed at Adorno’s insistence on negating the bad. Despite reading Adorno’s negative dialectics as “criticism’s finale, its bouquet, its revelation as fireworks,” (p. 130) Lyotard argues that critique is vulnerable to withering away when it turns into thought which does nothing but criticize itself (p. 135). Adorno’s self-reflective thought, which functions the same way language itself does and destroys words as it creates them, carries the danger of distancing itself from “the object, the work and history” as long as it insists on regarding them as language (p. 135). So, at this point, the reader wants to know why “all discursive arguments must always result in the ‘bad infinity’ of ‘derivation and validity’ [ND, 285]” (Schweppenhäuser, 2004, p. 346) in Adorno’s major literature. This question represents the sombre side of the coin in Adorno’s thought since there seems to be

a widely spread doubt as to whether he manages to take on the Gnostic universe which inspires its subject into melancholia.

Even as he writes the above, though, Lyotard questions his own motives behind putting on paper "Adorno as the Devil": why would he insist on writing if language cannot take theory much further than a sad tautology? With this query, he announces that he also partakes in the crimes of the devil against a red god long dead. "The failure of dialectics *in* dialectics," whose "edge" is Adorno's resigning figure that resists solely through language, might be the one "who risks being right" (Lyotard, 1974, p. 137) after all. By this token, it is only necessary to go back to the question Butler (2012) poses in her lecture, "what part of the self is being refused, and what part is being empowered through resistance," (p. 17) and answer it within an antihumanist frame which follows up on Adorno's deconstruction of morality to reach his landmark views on aesthetics. Keeping in mind Rose's claim that there is a gap between his political and moral views alongside Lukács's critique of his emphasis on style as 'anti-humanist and decadent', the following chapter ties up the question of praxis and aesthetics through resistance. To this end, Adorno's 'wrong life cannot be lived rightly' will be reread over the negative dialectic between Kantian ethics of conviction and Hegelian ethics of responsibility. To build on the outcome of this dialectic, Adorno's aesthetic theory will be reintroduced as a radical form of praxis against the complications surrounding moral conduct. In the next chapter, this radical praxis will be shown to develop itself over the negative dialectic between metaphysics and materialism and his insistence on style as expiatory violence. Finally, based on his formulation of the term expression and the new materialism he advocates, the principle of hope will be posited as a driving force against the melancholic tendencies of his philosophical constellation.

There is an undeniable presence of what can be called the negative absolute in Adorno's thought. Adopted from what constituted Hegel's suspicions surrounding human conduct, the negative absolute is employed as a motif whose "horror […] verifies Hegel and stands him on his head" since there is "no

universal history lead[ing] from savagery to humanitarianism, but there is one leading from the slingshot to the megaton bomb" (Adorno, 2004, p. 320). The Hegelian resignation in the face of praxis depicts a world where "'the subject' has become the name of its own passing out and away" (Nancy, 2002, p. 29). The negative absolute transforms this world into its "potential to destroy itself," (p. 29) whereby not many questions are left regarding that piece of writing by Hegel, which is known to have coined, for the first time, the puzzling notion that "god is dead" (Houseman, 2013, p. 155). In a godless world, the individual, who tries his hand at establishing rational maxims or setting up an example of virtuous life, is the fundamental factor behind the creation of *the way of the world*. A chapter from Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*, "The actualization of self-consciousness through its own activity", is more telling of Adorno's postulation of the negative absolute than what most traditional conceptions would have us believe. Here, Hegel presents three categories that seem to be at work during the process that merges morality with rationality, whereby he reveals a universal incompatible with the praxis of subjective mind. The first category, the undisciplined pursuit of pleasure, designates subjective reason with its pragmatic and/or scientific human gaze that defines and categorizes the other as an endeavour to make sense of the world (Hegel, 1977, p. 219). This gaze, according to Hegel, hampers the relationship between a self and what is outside of it, blocking the affirmative potential of praxis.

The second category, which calls itself the undisciplined law of the heart, seems to be a step further than the first at the initial consideration. However, the subject's "heart-throb for the welfare of humanity," which describes his emphatic and spontaneous viewpoint on the outside world, "passes into the ravings of an insane self-conceit" as soon as it becomes concrete (Hegel, 1977, p. 226). Realization of the law of the heart goes against the very notion of realizing the law of the heart because once it is realized, it constitutes a counterforce to other laws of the heart, which are equally rightful in their individual claims on rationality/morality (p. 227). Adorno's critique of Sartre's emphasis on spontaneity can be said to stem from Hegel's postulation of this second category.

The more disciplined cult of virtue is the third and final category which designates the objective moral or political maxim that the human hand tries to insert into the material structure surrounding it (p. 229). But such experimentations with objective judgment are also in vain because these objectivities "are already always there" (p. 542). Handcrafted objectivity, once it is complete, becomes "a lifeless material lacking an independence of its own, which can be formed this way or that, or even to its own ruin" (p. 231). The gap between objective reason and subjective mind only expands when the latter is involved in the process of creating unchangeable maxims in the form of virtue or objective law of reason, giving way to plastic principles ready to manipulate and be manipulated. Adorno's (2001a) reference to Hegel's critique of the French Revolution could be employed as a key example of this third category, whereby "absolute self-assertion" gives way to "the absolute negation of all that lives" (p. 109).

Adorno finds the above position faulty at heart since it seems to limit individual capacity to the positing of a bad infinity yet he still describes Hegel's framework as indicative of modesty in rational and moral conduct. The subject's intention to act on its own initiative is inclusive of identitarian coercion (Adorno, 1993a, p. 47). At this point, Adorno's tendency toward an antihumanist take on morality is interestingly similar to the Hegelian belief that it is risky to attribute a legitimized autonomy to the human being as a subject. Althusser's (2003b) reading echoes such caution since the world's course of alienation, according to Hegel's vision, "does not have Man as its subject" (p. 238). On the contrary, the human being is but a fragment in the process that has necessitated the alienation of logic into nature and nature, into history (p. 239). Jean Hyppolite supports a similar perspective in claiming that "'humanity as such is not the supreme end for Hegel'" because "'when man is reduced to himself, he is lost'" (as cited in Geroulanos, 2010, p. 300). The Hegelian human being is "an empirical, finite project," whose self-involved praxis is bound to cause unhappiness to the world in which "man is an intersection" (p. 300). All the same, Adorno sees a problem with Hegel's leaning toward the universal rather than the particular, which came into being as a result of the above reasoning that questions human praxis. So, both

against the Hegelian emphasis on the absolute and his own tendency toward resignation, which problematizes praxis as a whole, Adorno formulated his own 'wrong life cannot be lived rightly'. This maxim, which is in fact neither maxim nor formulation, emerges on the edges of a negative dialectic he observes between Hegelian ethics of responsibility, which arose as a response to the subject's problematic relationship with rational and moral life, and Kantian ethics of conviction.

The theoretical framework that precedes his Nietzschean, open-ended final lecture on the problems of moral philosophy arises out of the strain between Kantian ethics of conviction and Hegelian ethics of responsibility. Through a revelation of the truth content in both approaches, Adorno reaches the paradox of praxis, but at the same time, a way out of it. The Kantian universe, where reason and happiness are incompatible, the universal principle of subjectivity is posited as the fundamental principle of hope. The individual's willingness to act on her own moral initiative is the only feasible strategy against a world which she cannot possibly change. Acceptance of the impotence inherent in individual moral conduct forced idealism toward a constellation of convictions (Adorno, 2001b, p. 155). The Hegelian cautiousness, on the other hand, which surrounds subjective conduct, prioritizes objectivity in the domain of rational/moral praxis, thereby rendering critical thought and resistance somewhat feeble. The rationality of the real makes the position and function of the individual questionable even though Hegel's approach to the negative absolute, when it is regarded as recognition of another's suffering, has the potential to open up a new discussion of resistance. So, there is an undeniable rift between the Kantian formal ethics, which wants to shape the world according to the subjective conviction, and the Hegelian wariness of human intervention, which embraces the otherness of the way of the world but does not advocate all in all the pessimistic view that nothing can be changed.

The most intriguing aspect of the negative dialectic Adorno identifies between the ethics of conviction and responsibility is that it is based on a critique of the bourgeois tendencies in both views. Even though the ethics of responsibility

seems more humanism-oriented – in that it aims to recognize the needs of the other and consider all consequences that might affect it – the formal ethics of conviction is in fact the more anthropologically oriented of the two. Kantian objective reason, which cannot be reconciled with happiness, includes direct extensions that reach out to human reason and praxis. Despite the distinction Kant designates between objective and subjective reason, the human being, in its conviction of the good, is capable of enacting the objective in practical life, regardless of the conclusions it might bring about. The categorical imperative, however, constitutes a significant problem in moral philosophy because something goes missing as the universal law reaches out to the subjective mind (Adorno, 2001b, p. 157). Kantian formal ethics, which translates subjective impotence into conviction, is in imminent danger of causing harm to its object or another subject (p. 158). Schopenhauer is referenced for the insight here, as he was the one to point out that Kantian total rationality carries implications that affirm the authority of humankind over nature, whose most telling example is the maltreatment and abuse of animals (p. 145). Thus, Adorno does not discuss suffering only in terms of the human being but also of the non-human and in this sense, his philosophy was a precursor for Jacques Derrida's much later ethical concern for animals (Babich, 2011, p. 136). The rational, and as follows, moral practice of the human being, then, cannot be separated from the impulse of self-preservation despite all Kant's attempts to underline the difference between subjective and objective reason. Thus, the dangers surrounding the ethics of conviction can be characterized by Adorno's (2004) insistence that "all governing reason, in installing itself above something else, necessarily constricts itself" (p. 318). All the same, a total exclusion of subjective conduct is equally impossible because, in that case, "this world would be transformed into heteronomy pure and simple," (Adorno, 2001b, p. 145) and the notion of praxis infinitely futile.

Against the oscillation between the possible and the impossible, which is embodied by Hegel's ambiguous position regarding human praxis, Kant stands as the more radical figure (Adorno, 2001b, p. 165). Despite the risky anthropological underpinnings of its dialectic of objective and subjective reason, Kantian ethics of

conviction is able to covet the difference between subjective and critical thought. The ethics of conviction is not merely based on a subtle link that ties up human conduct with an objective categorical imperative but it also represents the capacity of critical thinking, self-reflection and against all odds, changing the world. "A philosophy like Kant's," Adorno stresses, "hold[s] up to it [the existing society] an alternative image of the possible, or an imageless image of the possible" (p. 151). The Kantian subject's insistence on affecting the world is the negative weight that balances out Hegel's emphasis on the negative absolute. In resisting Kant, we can say that Adorno was resisting himself; he was resisting all his subjective convictions that made him the person we think we know today. In resisting Hegel, he was not trying to *emancipate* the individual from the coercive universal, but he was insisting on an understanding of individuality beyond the claims of a humanist subjectivity. What can be simply formulated on the Kantian end is the actor's loyalty to his own convictions in line with an objective facticity that forces the bad infinity to collapse on itself. On the Hegelian end, however, the actor doubts the legitimacy of his subjective position in the world, which can be seen both as a passive acknowledgement of the real and as an emerging ethical modesty that helps the actor cope with the real in a better way. Ulrich Plass (2015), whose reading of the famous maxim runs parallel to the interpretation here, suggests that "the aphorism's undeniable rhetorical appeal [largely lost in translation] cannot be isolated from its implied call for change through political praxis" and posits the sentence as "a silently enraged articulation of protest against the world as it is" (p. 385). So, it is not merely the impossibility of human praxis or the missing agency of critical thought in mass movements that constitutes Adorno's 'wrong life cannot be lived rightly', but the persistent tension between Hegel's and Kant's viewpoints on moral conduct (Adorno, 2001b, p. 166). What emerges through the dialectic behind Adorno's maxim, which is misinterpreted in general, does not serve as a maxim at all, but as an open-ended structure of critical thought and praxis underlying his entire constellation.

So, it is not at all that the Kantian ethics of conviction was more involved with acts of denouncing the bad than the Hegelian ethics of responsibility, as Butler (2005) seems to claim, nor is it that Adorno favours the latter over the former in his lectures (p. 108). It is unfortunately a very common mistake to take Adorno literally and to believe that he, at some point, supported Hegel against Kant or vice versa over philosophical concepts and categories. What he criticizes as Hegel's bourgeois resignation, for example, contains an understanding of otherness that goes beyond a mere acceptance of *what is*, whereby it is transformed into a means of coping with the bad infinity with a resilient modesty that defies anthropocentrism. While on the other hand, Kant's seemingly formal ethics comes out as the one that supports critical thought more avidly than Hegel's ethics of responsibility. Doing justice to both views enables Adorno not only to remain faithful to his fundamental philosophical principle but also to reach a paradox that cancels out the pursuit of morality and opens up a new possibility for praxis. The Kantian anthropomorphism of rational/moral practice endangers the well-being of nature, especially animals, whereas the Hegelian suspicions about the legitimacy of human praxis begs for the distinction Kant designated between subjective and critical thought. So, wrong life cannot be lived rightly not only because the critical mind of the subject is unable to construct the good unless it wants to risk partaking in the bad, but also because the subject's self-reflexivity resists the transformation of any judgment into a maxim. This constitutes the mystery of our existence in the world, according to Adorno, but neither contributing to the self-deceptive course of anthropocentrism nor abolishing our species being altogether serves the mystery right. This is to say that whereas singing in the choir of humanist ideology merely contributes to the bad infinity, writing a manifesto against such ideology runs the risk of being coerced into identitarian politics. "Rather," Adorno (2004) suggests, we should stop rebuffing the mystery which "belies our control of nature by reminding us of the impotence of our power" (p. 407). So, his thought represents much less a dialectic of humanism than a set of principles that owe their force of resistance to antihumanism.

"A radically negative anthropology is not a pessimistic anthropology," Toby Austin Locke (2017) remarks in his inspiring text advocating an end to traditional anthropology because, as Adorno's 'wrong life cannot be lived rightly' embodies brilliantly, reading the human being from the odd end of the spectacle can be utilized as a new form of resistance which does justice to the tension between expressing the bad and constructing the good. What Adorno refuses to join in with can be read as the dominant impulse in the subject, which insists that it is not impotent, that it can rewrite the passages produced by history, that it can defy the course of nature on its own. Nancy (2004) also comes very close to this sentiment and calls for "the end of humanity," which he describes as "the limit that man alone can reach, and in reaching it […] he can stop being simply human, all too human" (p. 77). But this view does not necessitate nothingness as the core of humanity – a trap Heidegger wilfully fell into once upon a time – it deconstructs humanity and there is no celebrated alienation or despair in it. Resisting the attempts of subjective mind to compartmentalize the theoretical and the practical or the singular and the plural is at the heart of denying alienation and despair any space. And as long as the individual aims to lose itself in the embodied resistance of a whole without giving theory its due place in that very resistance, there is no point in resisting the coercive material structure at all. The individual "who comes to be his own be-all and end-all," Adorno (2001b) remarks, "will in turn fall into the delusion of individualist society and misconceive himself" (p.118), so the refusal to join in, which was terribly misplaced by Butler, is in fact the knowledge of this misconception, of "why the horror goes on anyway, ad infinitum" (Adorno, 2004, 286). Such knowledge situates the horror not only beyond the individual – in the negative absolute which begs resistance – but also within every conduct of that individual who attributes a god-like power to its species-being, claiming the whole world for itself because of its immense rational and moral capacity. According to Adorno's vision of resistance, it is this immodest part of the self which is being refused whereas it is the critical comportment, and not the rational or the moral one, which is being empowered. This empowerment, once it is affected equally in the theoretical and

the practical sense, carries the potential to destroy the coerced principle that separates the two.

Echoing Nancy's humanless end, Lyotard (1984) writes, in a way very much influenced by Adorno, that "the system seems to be a vanguard machine dragging humanity after it, dehumanizing it in order to rehumanize it at a different level of normative capacity" (p. 63). But against the urgency to rebuild humanity out of its remains, perhaps philosophy should apply a different strategy. Lyotard (1991) argues that there are two kinds of 'inhuman' at work in the course of the world, as we regard it from our subjective points of view (p. 2). The first is the one that transforms our individual critical capacities into game shows, makes a pastime out of our labour and labour out of our pastimes; namely, the domination of mankind over mankind, a tautology become so sickening that it plans on taking its own life as soon as possible. The other inhuman chooses to utilize the concept of inhumanity to resist its evil half-brother, to negate it with the elements that gave way to its advancement in the first place. Defying the notions of "development" and "revolution," because they have been tried and failed enough times, Lyotard puts into the fore the other inhuman: the inhuman that resists thanks to and against the conditions which it was born into (p. 7). It was 1962 when Adorno (2005d) admitted that "the anthropocentrism inherent in all idealistic conceptions cannot be saved" and gave the reason for it sarcastically, as "the changes in cosmology during the last one hundred and fifty years" (p. 14). A couple of years later, with the publication of *Negative Dialectics*, we find out further that there is an alternative choice, beyond a life of resignation that hides behind aesthetics and one of resistance for the sake of resistance, which runs the risk of causing more ruin than good (Adorno, 2004, 364). Adorno half-formulates this beyond as an inhuman distance, based on two fundamental characteristics which he calls "*désinvolture* and sympathy" (p. 364). Sympathy because the bad infinity necessitates my perception of another's suffering in a way that it does not turn into self-celebratory conscience. And *désinvolture* because there should be something close to freedom, but not quite the illusion of freedom, which both situates my praxis within the world of objects and gives me the half-autonomy

that my praxis depends on. Adorno's vision of resistance is developed over these two concepts within the frame of his aesthetic theory, which is brought forward to confront the problems revolving around moral action.

CHAPTER 5

THE WORK OF ART AND INDIVIDUAL PRAXIS

I want to stand as close to the edge as I can without going over. Out on the edge you see all kinds of things you can't see from the centre.

Kurt Vonnegut, *Player Piano*

5.1 Negative reconciliation

As a consequence of Adorno's antihumanist rendering of morality above, which gives way to an understanding of praxis as resistance not only to the bad infinity but also to the human's species-being, a space is cleared up between reactionary politics and the self-absorbed course of ethics. To try to fill up this space, we should go back to Adorno's insistence on aesthetics and see how he constructs the inhuman distance within that discipline. Adorno develops a radical understanding of objectivity for the aesthetic realm and through that, for human praxis. Even though he never instrumentalizes the artwork as a guide for better praxis, he still sees in the image of the artwork an element which plays a risky game against the textbook duality of subject and object. This fundamental element balances the artwork's mere meaning and intention to reinsert it into the world of objects and releases it from "the compulsion of identity" (Adorno, 2002, p. 125). Adorno adopts this viewpoint from Kant; however, Kant represses the image of the work of art with the aim of seeing the laws of intersubjectivity beyond it whereas Adorno expands the image of the artwork as an object so that its dialectic of subjectivity and objectivity can show itself (Huhn, 1997, p. 238). This dialectic is interpreted in general as the reconciliation in the work of art; as the image of utopia or freedom manifested in its semblance.

Given the individual's share in the bad infinity and the circumscription of praxis as resistance to this infinity, imagining the good becomes constrained; a ban is placed on the image of utopia. At this difficult cross-section, aesthetics is utilized as a domain that can revive metaphysics through the semblance of objectivity. Jay Bernstein (1997) produced one of the most inspiring

interpretations of the artwork in its collaboration with ethical life, discerning in the subject's reciprocation with it a reconciliation of metaphysics and materialism, whereby he situated Adorno's principle of hope (p. 208). The self-reflective subject interrupts the vision of the artwork, penetrates its objectified subjecthood, not in a way that it disrupts the movement of this dialectic, but in a way that renders this dialectic a negative lens through which the real can be reconsidered. In such intimacy, "semblance" becomes "a promise of nonsemblance," (Adorno, 2004, p. 405), bringing transcendence down to the level of the world of objects. It is through this intimacy that the subject can at least catch a glimpse of what the outside of this world might look like, not to utilize it as a means to propagate such end though, but to cast a new look at its own subjecthood within that vision. From this perspective, it is possible to draw out a correlation between Adorno's insistence on resistance and aesthetic experience which provides the individual with a negation of the bad infinity. Bernstein (1997) writes that in the vision of utopia inherent to the artwork, "happiness and virtue would be reconciled" but this metaphysical aspect remains incomplete without the objective semblance of the artwork and only as long as the dialectic between metaphysics and materialism is secured, can ethics avoid falling into "cynicism, despair, or evil" (p. 208).

In a reified world, the subject's metaphysical capacity is indefinitely delayed. Within the violence affected by the cogs and wheels of everyday life, the particular is under the burden of either painfully trying to realize itself or keeping itself in one piece against the violence that means to shape it according to its will. When freedom is in trouble, more than our physical domains of praxis, our imaginations are infected. The fact of atrocities does not stop us from being out there on the streets but it prevents us from imagining an alternative that resists coercion. Paralyzed hope goes hand in hand with the disappearance of our metaphysical capacity, our capacity to keep thought speculative, because imagination no longer corresponds with experience (Adorno, 2004, p. 362). This is apparent from the accelerating devaluation of philosophical endeavour and critical thought as legitimate branches of labour, as a contrast to which certain other areas, which are deemed to be 'practical', are praised due to their

involvement with material world matters. Rescuing critical thought, then, is necessitated by the dominant ideology that removes theory from practical life. The metaphysical faculty, whose vanishing is one of the main concerns of Adorno's philosophy, should not be confused with its other, theological connotation though. Adorno's metaphysical faculty enables critical thought to nourish the principle of hope that resists the bad infinity. It is the force that goes against "thought's inherent claim to be total" (p. 175) and to that end, tries to covet the dialectic between subject and object.

The dialectical activity between metaphysics and materialism in the artwork aims to traverse the distance between these two opposite points through its image of reconciliation. In this sense, according to Bernstein, Adorno's principle of hope points toward an affirmation that keeps the negative interaction between the material and the metaphysical intact. Ethical and political conduct, then, can regard aesthetics as a point of corrective and spot within its prisms of hope what Adorno wanted to but did not formulate as new forms of praxis. Tom Huhn (1985), however, claims that "illusion," against what Bernstein suggests, is still "the defining characteristic of artworks," (p. 181) so despite the temptation to reinstate Adorno's idealistic tendencies through the image of reconciliation in the artwork, there are several important questions surrounding the legitimacy of this perspective. One such question concerns itself with the risk of overlooking the most fundamental aspect of Adorno's thought, its negativity. The view that formulates the artwork as "the *imagining* of freedom in a utopia of reconciliation" (Bernstein, 1997, p. 61), does not do justice to his thought. Within the critical impulse to posit the artwork as a site of utopian imagination, there is an imminent danger of stagnancy; of regression to an immanence embodied by the model of solitary thinker. Even though there is an undeniable dialectic between metaphysics and materialism, which we can observe at its most ideal form in the artwork, letting this dialectic become counterpart to dangerous concepts, such as reconciliation, hampers its radical negativity. Any attempt to instrumentalize the negativity of Adorno's thought to reach a reconciliatory moment would be participating in the evil that he so carefully avoided and resisted. It is very

difficult, after all, to overlook the affinity between the benign attempts to acquire mediation in Adorno's constellation and the hearty loyalty to the element of realism, which forced Lukács to picture Adorno in a cosy room at the Hotel Grand Abyss.

Instead of making Adorno's philosophy comply with the redemptive demands of the real world, we should escalate, even exaggerate, the radical aspects of his thought. To that end, what returns its spikes and edges to the *promesse du bonheur* of the artwork is summarized by Geoff Boucher (2012) as "the tension between [its] critical negativity and utopian anticipation" (p. 97). It is this tension, this effect of dissonance that we must keep in mind when we imagine the inconsistencies within the artwork. Far from the waters of idealism, we are in a very uncomfortable place indeed; a place that constantly defies the pleasing aspects of the work of art, which such idealism would like to sublimate. It is for this reason that despite keeping the dialectic between metaphysics and materialism in sight, we should be careful not to mistake this dialectic for a potentiality for the two to be reconciled. Otherwise, Adorno's aesthetic theory would be inconsistent with his negative dialectics in the first place, and his resistance to any reconfiguration of utopia. He writes in one of his articles that

> The doctrine of truth in itself was repaid with some of its own untruth by the arrogance of the subject that finally sets itself up as objectivity and truth and asserts an equality or reconciliation of subject and object that the contradictory nature of the world readily belies. (1997a, p. 233)

As a counter force to the subjective endeavour above, every single time the artwork is posed in front of the subject, it restates, without ever giving up, that its onlooker will never be reconciled with its other end, its object. Such negative reconciliation represents Adorno's antihumanist tendencies better than anything else because it reveals "the critical mistake of humanism, the mistaking of objectivity for subjectivity" (Huhn, 1997, p. 249). By confusing the dialectic of subjectivity and objectivity in the artwork with its inverted moment of transcendence or its principle of hope, which can help build a feasible ethical path,

the subject gives in to the illusion of the artwork. What Adorno meant when he pointed out the non-semblance in the semblance of the artwork does not coincide with "the achievement of subjective freedom but the continuation of its failure to ever fully arrive"; it coincides with the condition that defines the particularity of the subject at the moment of its emergence: unfreedom (p. 249).

In Adorno's vision of the artwork, where the reconciliatory moment is negated, it is possible to situate both his insistence on saving the damaged metaphysical faculty and drawing the resilience of his dialectics from negativity, the bad infinity. Given the fully reified conditions, under which the individual tries to let live its particularity, the ability to think and hope are limited to a great extent. Where there are barriers built against the imagining of a better way to live, the philosophy of the inexistent, metaphysics, must be brought to the fore. In disavowing the material as the finite, as the demarcation that defines the possibility of praxis, Adorno can be said to situate his principle of hope on an intangible plane. His insertion of the Kantian critical thought into the Hegelian three categories – those three materialistic impossibilities that describe human praxis – is motivated by such positing. Nevertheless, any promise that the metaphysical makes is also bound with the concrete predicament, so any metaphysical claim that asserts its transcendence of the material constitutes faulty judgment. In embracing the negative absolute, something he criticizes in Hegel but praises in Beckett, Adorno repels it at the same time. The below passage summarizes his viewpoint on semblance and reconciliation brilliantly:

> Aesthetic semblance seeks to salvage what the active spirit – which produced the artifactual bearers of semblance – eliminated from what it reduced to its material, to what is for-an-other. In the process, however, what is to be salvaged itself becomes something dominated, if not actually produced, by it; redemption through semblance is itself illusory, and the artwork accepts this powerlessness in the form of its own illusoriness. (Adorno, 2002, p. 107)

The artwork creates a semblance of the good life in the bad; the fulfilment it achieves is the way out of the moral paradox, which is at the same time the paradox of praxis in general. Existence of the artwork in a world of reified conditions forced on paralyzed metaphysical faculties is indicative of resistance complete in itself, with a beginning and an end, reconciled, at ease. But it was against this ease that Adorno situated the true momentum of resistance and highlighted the extremes of the modern artwork.

One such extreme that disturbs the reconciled image of the artwork is Adorno's employment of the ugly as a negative force against the beautiful. In his insightful account of *Aesthetic Theory,* Peter Uwe Hohendahl (2013) writes that the book "embraces the ugly in both the archaic and the modern work because they share, although in very different ways, the impact of mythic structures," whereby they both feed on and revoke "the power of myth" (p. 94). Regarding Adorno's concept of the beautiful as one that constitutes a crucial chapter in "a problematic human history," Hohendahl argues that reconciliation in the artwork symbolizes the dominance exerted by the beautiful on the ugly, trying to cancel out its existence (p. 94). The ugly here also symbolizes "human suffering," and the beautiful, by using it as an element of conflict within its structure, unintentionally sanctions the existence of it (p. 98). As a strategy of resistance to the artistic demand for closure, modern art finds a source of creative power in the presentation of the ugly. It follows from such perspective that the ugly, despite its archaic positioning, acts in opposition to the stagnancy that is induced through the illusion of freedom in the beautiful (p. 98). It was also out of this viewpoint that Adorno's approach to art disdained products that conformed to and served ideals beyond their objectivity for the sake of realism. The attempts to define the artwork as an agent in the concrete world and the idealistic tendencies that attribute to it a utopian character beyond the concrete world represent equally what Adorno's aesthetic theory protests against. Upon his level of critique, realism and idealism in art are morphed into one another in their anthropocentric means and ends.

There is a parallel between the subjective viewpoint which instrumentalizes the artwork and the circumscription of dignity to the realm of humanity. “Perhaps nowhere else is the desiccation of everything not totally ruled by the subject more apparent, nowhere else is the dark shadow of idealism more obvious, than in aesthetics,” Adorno (2002) remarks, and adds that “if the case of natural beauty were pending, dignity would be found culpable for having raised the human animal above the animal” (p. 62). Having distorted most of what can be called natural beauty and forced the ugly to conform to an idealistic vision of the world, the human obsession with higher forms of art represents nothing short of decadence. “Natural beauty,” which was degenerated into a disappearance from the aesthetic “as a result of the burgeoning domination of the concept of freedom and human dignity,” Adorno continues, “was inaugurated by Kant and then rigorously transplanted into aesthetics by Schiller and Hegel” (p. 62). The approach to artwork, which oppresses the ugly and distorts natural beauty, celebrates itself over the conception that “nothing in the world is worthy of attention except that for which the autonomous subject has itself to thank” (p. 62). Against this self-absorbed claim of autonomy on the artwork and the view that imprisons its dialectic of materialism and metaphysics to an image of reconciliation, Adorno stands up for the ugly and the dissonant. The metaphysical faculty of the artwork represents “what is sensually displeasing and repugnant,” and it is thus that “aesthetic spirituality has always been more compatible with the fauve, the savage, than with what has already been appropriated by culture” (p. 62). Adorno’s reliance on the ugly, then, does not signal a descent into decadence because it is employed to resist the reconciliatory demands of the subject on the work of art, which is itself the reason for decadence. It is through the ugly that our attention is drawn to the modern which, thanks to its dissonant and disturbing elements, represents the new in a world rotten to its aesthetic contours.

It is against the thesis which creates a mediation between form and content and against a conception of the beautiful established at the expense of the material that Adorno highlights style. His doing so is antihumanist in the sense that it denies humanity the reconciliation it tries to reinvent through the artistic form.

Artworks are singular recreations of the universal in the form of a monad and for that reason the individual desires to be exposed to them multiple times. In experiencing their illusion of perfectly balanced dialectic, the individual experiences what it feels like to be a whole; all of us, after all, are obsessed with absolutes one way or another. However, if this kind of sublimation summed up Adorno's aesthetic theory, there would be a definitive distinction between higher forms of art and popular culture. There is none, though, in that they represent the opposite ends of the one and the same spectrum where form takes control over content, making it conform within a unilateral structure. What brings together the products of high culture and popular culture, according to Adorno, is the desire to see form and content reconciled and in such vision their resistance to instrumentality is rendered pointless. There is nothing distinctively ugly about Schönberg's 12-tone technique, Beckett's impenetrable language or Rothko's multiforms; however, their handling of style expresses an undeniable desire to regress into the chaotic contours of the ugly.

This regression establishes the new, and not the decadent, because they defy the aesthetic principles of European culture, which collapsed on itself with the advent of the 20th century. Adorno (2004) writes toward the end of *Negative Dialectics* that "culture […] abhors stench because it stinks—because, as Brecht put it in a magnificent line, its mansion is built of dogshit" (p. 367). The culture which privileges itself over the one that encompasses the tastes of the masses, then, is perfectly comparable to its supposed adversary. Adorno (1993b) remarks in one of his articles that "any culture […] which posits itself autonomously and absolutizes itself, has thereby become pseudo-culture". So, the contribution that an established artistic style makes to the bad state of things is not excused if it is applauded by a well-educated, higher-income group. What Adorno protested against throughout his life was the kind of art that generated pseudo-individualities; the kind that became an instrument so that a group of people would be able to regard themselves in a superior position to the rest. And it was the ignorance of this non-distinction between high culture and the popular one that exaggerated, for example, Adorno's critique of jazz music as the rant of an old-

fashioned man whereas it overlooked a very similar critique directed at the regulars of the opera hall.

This long and still prevalent lineage of criticism gave way to a tradition that revels in its celebration of popular culture to defy the isolated and self-absorbed figure Adorno was forced into. Attributing a revolutionary character to early rock 'n' roll, as if any musical trend could singlehandedly express the misery of the world, remains ideological to this day. Despite its radical heights in the 70s, which gave way first to the much less popular hardcore and skate genres in the 80s and then to grunge during the late 80s and early 90s, punk rock resisted the commonplace with all its might. The Sex Pistols' "Holidays in the Sun" has been iconic to this day in the manner it unmasked the misery of middle-class England. On the contrary to the emergence of a new holiday culture, which took to the sunny shores of "other people's misery," Johnny Rotten shouted that he wanted to "go over the Berlin wall," whose existence was denied contemplation by the powers that be. It was against an ignorance of this sort that punk rock revolted with its employment of the ugly; its subverted shock technique that waved around Mohawks, chains and swastikas, not to mention the bloodbath of pogo dance.

Punk's unique employment of the ugly has survived to certain minorities in the Western world yet its moment has passed, just like any resistant music trend that aimed to shake the world to its bones. The last rebellious voice of this resistance died away in the figure of Kurt Cobain whose suicide was not merely the implosion of an artistic mind with serious psychological issues, but one that was also a statement which affirmed the coercion of art into the satisfaction of pseudo-individual pleasures. What died with Cobain was not the genre's principle of hope, embodied in its radical resistance to a disfigured world, but the illusion of making a substantial change in the world, which it inadvertently created. Adorno's take on the reconciliatory artwork, or artwork as an agent of change, partakes in Cobain's trouble with fandom and culture industry. All the same, superficial readings of Adorno's aesthetic theory have unfortunately produced

strikingly misinformed critique, one significant example belonging to Robert Miklitsch (2006), which claims that despite the profound flow of his thought, "Adorno would have been the first one kicked off the island" on *Survivor* (p. 44). So, the issue of decadence, which was not raised without a reason by Lukács, in a state of political turmoil during the past century, has come to reshape itself into an instrumental view of art. This view feels the need to be reconciled with a specific type of politics, be it the post-WWII communistic trends or today's liberalist views on popular culture, which congratulates Beyoncé's *Lemonade* on highlighting important real-life issues like sexism and racism.[4] All the same, in defiance of the rationalizing voice which wants to make a joke out of the affinity between Adorno's radicalism and the punk sentiment, today's world has still time left to partake in the urgency of modern art without morphing it into a formula of revolutionary praxis.

5.2 Expiatory violence and objectivity

Very early on, in the *Dialectic*, Adorno and Horkheimer (2002) seem to admit that "the great artists were never those whose works embodied style in its least fractured, most perfect form but those who adopted style as a rigor to set against the chaotic expression of suffering, as a negative truth" (p. 103). Modern artworks defy and disrupt the artistic rules of style not in order to make a statement about how things should be but to expose the world to the violence it causes itself. It is in this disruption that the artwork does justice to the suffering that needs expression. The modern artwork, then – or any work of art that defies normalized stylistic conceptions – does more justice to values such as modesty, compassion and sense of responsibility than the artwork which claims to stay within the conditions of the real. "In every work of art, style is a promise," and this promise works toward an alternative postulation of the concrete social conditions, whereby it accepts "the existing order as absolute," and it is through this acceptance that

[4] For the conference report highlighting Susan Buck-Morss's lecture on Adorno's popular culture theories and today's mass entertainment, see https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/conference-report/from-berg-to-beyonce

"the claims of art are always also ideology" (p. 103). But if it had not been for the risk it takes with playing around ideology, the artwork would not have held such an important position in the life of resistance. "The moment in the work of art by which it transcends reality," cannot be separated from style but it nonetheless does not equal to "the questionable unity of form and content, inner and outer, individual and society, but in those traits in which the discrepancy emerges, in the necessary failure of the passionate striving for identity" (p. 103). So, the matter here is less about what the artwork reflects as its immediate content than how it tackles the demands of the concrete world and to what extent it sacrifices its form against the universal form. It is in this open-ended tension which welcomes no closure and no identity that the artwork embodies the impossibility of exemplifying the good life. In making its content conform to its style and suffocating its moment of expression by giving fully into the stylistic demands of its age on the other hand, the culture industry self-congratulates by becoming style; it equals itself, in other words (pp. 103-104). And as long as such deference to the universal exists, the dissonant and disturbing stylistic techniques of the artwork are meant to resist reconciliation.

As an iconic example of the reconciliatory pursuit in aesthetic theory, Bernstein's employment of metaphysics turns into an element that overrides and dominates the negative dialectic which takes its resilience from the primacy of objectivity. Reducing the dialectic's theoretical vigilance to an open-ended but pessimistic structure, wherein impossibility is celebrated with a nod to the otherworldliness of the aesthetic, Bernstein both affirms Adorno's distance from praxis and in return, forces his aesthetic theory into a theory of ethics. Since philosophy "is minimally satisfied by negative dialectics," he contends that metaphysics should come to the rescue and be more than the negative dialectic (Bernstein, 2001, p. 372). He equals the insufficiency of ethics as a merely practical realm to the inadequacies of "negative dialectics in its narrow construction" (p. 385), whereby he reaches the conclusion that Adorno's employment of metaphysics acts as the beyond of morality. However, Adorno's deep affinity with the particular "has nothing to do with the particularization of

ethics, but is a denunciation of its impotence for being at the universal's mercy" (Tassone, 2005, p. 263). Bernstein constricts the dialectical moment by giving in to the claims of only one side, forcing the artwork's metaphysical content to compensate for the reliance on the object, as a result of which the artwork is made to answer the needs of "human transcendence" (p.437).

Bernstein creates the urgency for metaphysics out of concern for the expression of suffering but Adorno does not own up to such responsibility at all in his lectures on metaphysics. He believes that the reality of Auschwitz, Vietnam and every other atrocity following in their steps do not generate the necessity of the metaphysical, but delegitimize the status of the metaphysical; especially the "old-style metaphysics," whose primary concern is transcendence (Adorno, 2001a, p. 101). Although Bernstein situates his stress on metaphysics a distance from its predecessors through his employment of an ethical discourse, his attribution to the artwork the task of maintaining human transcendence runs a dangerously close parallel to the traditional models of metaphysical pursuit. On the contrary, Adorno (1996) insists that "the only possible way to save the 'spell' of art is the denial of this spell by itself". Even though the experience and the critical interpretation of this spell are highlighted by his aesthetic theory, when art is reduced to human needs, it is prone to turn into an instrument of subjective demands. Classical aesthetics depends fully on such positing of the artwork's *mission*. Instead of remaining within the limits of tradition, Adorno (2001a) suggests we move beyond them and remarks that given "the peculiarly fallible and unavoidably problematic nature of metaphysical experience […] the concept of reification may, in a complementary way, take on a meaning which is far from purely derogatory" (p. 142).

In his famous "Essay as Form", Adorno (1984) makes room for the echoes of the negative dialectic between metaphysical experience and the world of objects with his contention that "the intellectual process which canonizes a distinction between the temporal and the timeless is losing its authority" (p. 158). Such viewpoint, however, does not aim to reconcile the transitory and the

permanent on a common ground of human transcendence; it delegitimizes transcendence altogether by transforming the subject into an object of thought (Adorno, 2005c, p. 261). It is through such positing that Adorno produces a commentary on reification from the negative angle, which casts the pessimism off of the concept of reified world. The subject, in Kafka for example, "breaks[s] the spell of reification by reifying itself" and "prepares to complete the fate which befell it" (Adorno, 1997b, p. 269). It is very interesting that Adorno uses the word spell, in an antagonistic manner, both for the metaphysical experience in the artwork, as seen above, and for the reified world which forces the unreal condition of alienation on the subject. What Kafka does in his narratives is to work on "the similarity between man and animal" in place of giving a nod to "human dignity, the supreme bourgeois concept" (p. 269). It is through this respect for the animal, which doubts the supremacy of the human animal, that his prose "does not glorify the world through subordination" but "resists it through nonviolence" (p. 269). Beckett's characters pose a striking similarity to the ambivalent humans of Kafka here, since they represent the end of subjecthood which, in the modern world, pays the price of elevating itself to the position of a conqueror. "Beckett's key figures," according to Adorno (1993b), "are only shivering scarecrows, which are all that remains of the subject which once dominated the scene" and their "self-righteous personality […] perishes quite deservedly". So, the bourgeois coldness that Adorno (2005b) advocates in contemplation and praxis, instead of "preach[ing] love" (p. 202), can be interpreted as his almost scientific interest in deconstructing the subject, the most successful examples of which, however, are experienced in the literary discipline.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2001) remarks in his *Humanism and Terror* that "we do not have a choice between purity and violence but between different kinds of violence," and admits that "inasmuch as we are incarnate beings, violence is our lot" (p. 109). Similarly, Adorno's theory of art is based on a form of violence as style, which the artwork exerts on itself and its audience in order to resist reification in the concrete world. Such reification is also deeply related to violence, as can be seen in most of Adorno's major works. This latter, more

widely used understanding of violence translates the metaphysical directly into the material and vice versa, both in the semblance of the artwork and on the political stage where living beings are treated as objects and objects as living, autonomous beings. It was such understanding of violence that Adorno refers to in his above interpretation that Kafka 'resists the world though nonviolence'. As the negative other of this understanding, Adorno introduces another form of violence; one that takes its revenge on the universal by applying its strategies on it. There are two significant instances when Adorno suggests an employment of expiatory violence as a creative strategy. The first is his adoption of the Nietzschean expiatory violence at the end of *The Problems of Moral Philosophy*. The second instance occurs in his *Aesthetic Theory* where he places the feeling of resentment at the heart of modernist artworks, which aims to apply back to the masses what it was violently exposed to by them. "The resentment of the masses toward what is denied them by the education that is reserved for the privileged" is seconded and returned to them by figures such as "Strindberg and Schönberg" who represent the resentment of "the aesthetically progressive toward the masses" (Adorno, 2002, p. 254). In creating an effect of dissonance, which negates its own pleasant aspects, the artwork expresses the violence inherent to the universal but at the same time, renders the universal all the more vulnerable to resistance.

Instead of the reconciliation in the image of the aesthetic, it is the ugly enclosed within a creatively violent style that Adorno proposes as a model of resistance. "Dissonance," according to Adorno (2002), "bears all too closely on its contrary, reconciliation" yet "it rebuffs the semblance of the human as an ideology of the inhuman," which causes his rejection of all forms of reconciliatory art, be it popular or privileged, "and prefers to join forces with reified consciousness" (p. 15). It is, then, a transformed reification that the artwork poses as its negative reality. In art's objectification of itself, there is "ugliness and cruelty," however, "in aesthetic forms, cruelty becomes imagination" (p. 50). This imagination depends on the form of the artwork and the "appeals for more humane art, for conformity to those who are its virtual public, regularly dilute the quality and weaken the law of form" (p. 50). So, there is a contingency between the claims of

humanism for a better world, where the subject is emancipated, and the inner dynamic of form in the artwork, which works toward encapsulating its expression of suffering within a violently radical form. "What art in the broadest sense works with, it oppresses" and it is not only "the original sin of art," but also "its permanent protest against morality, which revenges cruelty with cruelty" (p. 50). Within this theory of art, the only reconciling element occurs when the successful artwork "rescue[s] over into form something of the amorphous to which they ineluctably do violence" (p. 50). The rescued material is the artwork's expression of suffering, which lives on only in its resistance to form. So, what makes the unsettling reciprocation between art's expiatory violence and its audience different than a simple give and take of revenge is that in the artwork's violence, there is method that can influence the recipient's praxis by reminding it of the violence of the overall system. Expression of the bad infinity as dissonance maintains the dynamics of the negative dialectic between metaphysics and materialism, giving way to Adorno's principle of hope which does not revolve around a revival of metaphysical faculty but captures a radical understanding of objectivity.

Tying up Adorno's aesthetic theory of style and his negation of moral praxis, the new objectivity aims to beat the coercive claims of the universal at its own game, by applying back on it the reifying techniques that it forces on the individual and the work of art. Within the aesthetic realm, style is the most capable tool in resisting in such way since it constitutes the objectivity of the artwork; making it comply with or scratch against the demands of concrete objective conditions. Lyotard's other inhuman, then, is a continuation of Adorno's violence in style, or expiatory violence, in supporting the view that there is no need to mourn the repressed and alienated state of subjecthood or to create ethical self-paths that claim to change the world. What Lyotard and Adorno have in common, surprisingly, is that they affirm the radical over the virtuous, the antihuman over the human and the object over the subject. Lyotard's theorization of *the unpresentable* in *The Postmodern Condition* corresponds with Adorno's aesthetic theory and as Lyotard (2003) himself admits, "one senses the element of

an anticipation of the postmodern" in Adorno's major works "even though it is still largely reticent, or refused" (p. 28). There are indeed striking similarities between, for example, Beckett's employment of style, which was one the very few things Adorno stood by, and the stylistic techniques of the postmodern; not to mention that his favourite composer invented dissonance in music. But it would still be ideological to insert artistic categorizations into Adorno's thought. So, a differentiation between the modern with its "nostalgic […] aesthetic of the sublime," (p. 81) and the postmodern, with its "search[es] for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unpresentable" (p. 81) should be resisted.

In the techniques of both artistic trends, we should try and spot what might be a new radical praxis. Both the radical examples of modern art and those of the postmodern employ an expiatory form of violence on the universal through their inhuman reconfiguration of style. In their shared attempt to express the inexpressible, style is transformed into praxis par excellence. Adorno's vision of resistance in the work of art, then, does not represent the solitary figure of critical mind, resisting the outside world from its comfortable seat of privilege. His resistance, to the contrary, raises a radically creative standpoint which resists not only the outside world of coercion, but also its inner desire to be reconciled with the world of objects. In art's presentation of the unpresentable, expression of suffering is not a nostalgic yearning or an endeavour to create its own self-identical admirers. Expression of the unpresentable is modest in its treatment of itself – of the reasons for its existence – and others; but radical in conduct. Toward the end of *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno (2004) rephrases an important criticism directed at Beckett by a survivor of Auschwitz, Hans Günther Adler, who claimed that if Beckett had experienced the same atrocities, he would write "differently, more positively, with the front-line creed of the escapee" (p. 367). Adorno thinks that Adler has a point not in that Beckett should have been on the side of humanistic solidarity but in that "Beckett, and whoever else remained in control of himself, would have been broken in Auschwitz," whereby they would, also, speak the language the escapee does, giving other people courage while

being completely unaware of the fact that it is not their place to give anyone courage (p. 368). Writing manifestos of solidarity would be one of the weakest models for expressing hope upon atrocities because it demeans its recipient's capacity of hope. It is in this sense that the artwork's expression is modest because it knows that by telling its audience what to hope for, it actually contributes to the reification of their metaphysical faculty. Telling the audience what to do would "rob them of what is their due even if they believe the contrary," (p. 368) so the inhuman distance the artwork professes is an act of modesty encircled within its radical movement. "With human means art wants to realize the language of what is not human," Adorno (2002) writes in *Aesthetic Theory*, and adds that the artwork aims to express what would not simply equal to "interpolated human intention" (2002, p. 78). So, against Kant who believed "art to be a servant," Adorno purported that "art becomes human in the instant in which it terminates this service" (p. 197). Art's "humanity is incompatible with any ideology of service to humankind," Adorno continues and adds that "it is loyal to humanity only through inhumanity toward it" (p. 197). It is no wonder, then, that Beckett's literature has moved beyond a restricted definition of absurdist theatre and created its own literary constellation; one that maintains to represent our inhuman condition.

As long as there is a ban on the image of utopia, Adorno says in an interview with Bloch in 1964, "we know exactly, to be sure, what the false thing is" (1996, p. 11). The false thing, however, is no longer an overthought concept that seconds the futility of pure resistance. On the contrary, it becomes indispensable for new models of resistance and also explains in itself why the artwork partakes so passionately in this resistance. Being neither a formula, nor a guidebook for the future of praxis, the artwork, as it tries to express the inexpressible through its radical grasp on objectivity, through its style, forces the traditional boundaries of praxis. The kind of art that aims to "'convey a message' of human solidarity," or "all-comprising universality," Adorno (1991) writes, "would be little better than modernistic mural paintings of saints or novels about dubious miracles" (p. 295). In reasserting a harmony between philosophical ideas

and artworks, the idealist tradition, with which Adorno is being associated even today, actually degrades both realms to a relationship of total instrumentality. The reconciliation embodied by certain "'cultural goods'" belonging to the higher tradition leaves the artwork "harmless and impotent" (p. 295). The new objectivity symbolizes a resilient, violent employment of style and resists the sublimating "spiritual identity" proposed and distributed by the culture industry (p. 295). If art wants to make a point toward a "humane destination," Adorno suggests that it should no longer "peep at the humane, nor proclaim humanistic phrases" (p. 296). His intention was not at all to "rehumanize the sciences by affronting them with the philosophy, and the feeling they have repressed" (Holmes, 2006, p. 160) as some critics insistently claim, but to make a return on them with a creative radicalness influenced by the artwork's capacity for praxis.

There is indeed a crucial element in the artwork's objectivity that the domain of praxis can learn from. As David Kaufmann (n. d.) also seems to suggest, "if politics has fled to art, it is because ontology," meaning metaphysics in Adorno's jargon, "has fled – beaten, beleaguered, and distorted – to aesthetics". The damage caused to Adorno's philosophy by the coercive structure of any possible mass movement was too great for him to go through with the painful passing from the nostalgic contours of modernism to the full-on radicalness of postmodernism. Adorno did not want to stand up for concepts or give in to the exalting moment of being one with the crowd, resisting the powers that be with sweat on his brow and a banner in his hand. But the caution he had in approaching the issue of praxis is not either based on or indicative of a melancholy posture that went so far as to define his whole constellation. To the contrary, there is resistance in his radical involvement with the world of reification. His closest to possible strategy is a negative dialectic for praxis with an emphasis on objectivity as the (post)modern artwork manages to employ it through its style. So, in place of morality, which Butler (2005) claims will play a fundamental role in "the determination of agency and the possibility of hope," (p. 21) Adorno reveals the undeniable problems with the moral approach in practical life and focuses on the aesthetic instead. This might have been why after all, Butler comes very close to

but fails to see the direction Adorno's antihumanist tendencies took in both her rereading of his views on moral philosophy in *Giving an Account of Oneself* and her Adorno Prize lecture. The inhuman distance, which Adorno formulates over *désinvolture* and sympathy in *Negative Dialectics*, is represented by the artwork, but the echoes of this distance reach out to Adorno's unformulated viewpoint on human praxis.

5.3 Expression and the principle of hope

What seems to merge Adorno's individual in the domain of praxis and the work of art is their shared potential for avoiding instrumentality. The inhuman distance that Adorno suggests but never really lingers on in *Negative Dialectics* is exemplified by the expression of the inexpressible in the artwork. Even though the artwork has sympathy and *désinvolture*, it does not let itself succumb to such illusion of freedom fully because it also feels sympathy for what came before; the atrocities that it feels the need to express. Only by keeping this dialectic alive, can it preserve the cold and inhuman distance that is needed for resistance and perhaps, through that, the fragment of a vision which nourishes the principle of hope. Out of the negative collaboration between what tends toward the subject and toward the object, out of their open-ended tension that does not allow either to become superior, Adorno's notion of expression emerges. His understanding of expression as dissonance moves against the aesthetic semblance that requires harmony and it is posited as "the antithesis of expressing something" (Adorno, 2002, p. 112). In this sense, the countenance of the artwork always suffers or senses the suffering of another and its gaze is turned only toward those who return it (p. 111). Despite its invaluable capacity of resistance, style should never forget what it is there for; the expression that defies the bad infinity in giving voice to the unheard. "Even in a legendary better future," Adorno claims at the end of his famous "Paralipomena", that "art could not disavow remembrance of accumulated horror; otherwise its form would be trivial" (p. 324). Expression as praxis, then, stands for "the share of subjectivity" in the objectivity of the work of art but it,

nevertheless, is not pure subjectivity; it partakes in and supports the objectivity of the artwork by reminding it of what it is resisting (pp. 41-42).

In *Negative Dialectics,* Adorno (2004) portrays the individual as a combination of experience and consistency (p. 344), whereby the former embodies her memories and traditional background while the latter stands for her self-discipline and her insistence on the principle of hope. He identifies the first moment with subjective material since memories and heritage go through a filter of particularity to form an individual's self-narrative. The second, accordingly, is defined by objectivity because both self-discipline and the principle of hope are outcomes of what the universal provides the individual with; both areas are circumscribed by concrete conditions that designate the outside world. It goes without saying, then, that Adorno marked a deep affinity between the contours of an artwork and the complex structure that the individual holds as a mystery. What is more is that this parallel does not simply close in on itself and trap praxis within the confines of an aesthetic mind that does not bother to go out on the streets. On the contrary, the link between the individual and the work of art is further deepened over Adorno's account of the universal and the particular. "The individual survives himself," he remarks with hope and in the remains of that survival "lies nothing but what will not sacrifice itself to false identity" (p. 343).

Directly relatable to the Kantian purposeless purposiveness of the work of art, "the function of the individual," Adorno (2004) admits, "is that of the functionless" because he neither complies with the universal nor is he able to embody the universal (p. 343). As the individual is unable to represent the universal, his praxis "leading to change" should also be reinterpreted beyond the limitations brought up by traditional praxis (p. 343). Adorno believes that Hegel foresaw this unique potential in the individual – the potential to cancel out the duality between universality and particularity through the act of thinking – but decided to side with the universal and put the individual on trial (pp. 343-344). As a critique of this perspective, Adorno emphasizes "experience and consistency," which "enable the individual to see in the universal a truth which the universal as

blindly prevailing power conceals from itself and from others" (p. 344). The only reason why the universal is positioned as the rightful one against the individual, on the other hand, is nothing but the "form of its universality" (p. 344). If the remains of the individual, then, happens to realize that the universal is "itself a concept," meaning that if the individual employs its critical capacity in dealing with the universal, "the first condition of resistance and a modest beginning of practice" can be put into action (p. 344).

Adorno's understanding does not merely render the universal as bad infinity but also posits it as a concept in the individual's enthusiastic and resistant grasp. Transcendence is deferred and only in that deferral can our existence situate itself. The principle of hope that lies at the kernel of this negative dialectic moves beyond the concept of practice once and for all and designates the individual as an object which pays its due respect to its subjectivity, or to put it in a better way, its critical capacity. And just like Adorno's (2002) view on the functionlessness of the work of art, that it would be "pure superstition to believe that art could intervene directly or lead to an intervention," (p. 320) it would also be downright ideological to put the individual in the fore as if she alone could change the course of the world. If "the instrumentalization of art sabotages its opposition to instrumentalization," (p. 320) attributing functions to the functionless state of individuality also degrades the individual's underlying potential. By creating a small Demiurge out of that merely human existence, the true potential of the individual is mocked and delayed. But if we can discern the praxis in art's resistance, in its "negation of practical life," we can also see that its praxis is not mere activity (p. 241). Thanks to the dynamic character of their content, which "does not remain self-identical," Adorno remarks that "the objectivated artworks […] become practical comportments and turn toward reality" as they maintain their existence in this world (p. 241). Therefore, his caution around the urge to 'join in' cannot be explained away with a short reference to underlying bourgeois drives or claims that he derives morals out of political activity. His supposed resignation is resistance in action in the body of the work of art and the individual, creatively objectified against the objectivity of the universal.

A combination of Adorno's view on praxis, which shares methods with the antihumanist discipline, and his negative dialectic embodied in its exemplary form by the work of art, represents a principle of hope. Within his radical vision, which he himself might have been too wary to fully formulate, the praxis of the individual is reinterpreted as the movement of an artwork, in defiance of the self-absorbed claims of a purely ethical life. "Art," he claims, "is not a matter of pointing up alternatives but rather of resisting, solely through artistic form, the course of the world, which continues to hold a pistol to the heads of human beings" (1991, p. 80) and the human being, as an individual, partakes in such resistance. In resisting his species-being, to begin with, and the cloud of functions that surrounds his praxis, he begins to express the inexpressible against the bad infinity. Regarding himself primarily as an object in a world of objects and thus, denying any self-conscious immersion in immanence or transcendence, he learns not to despair alienation or the loss of subjectivity. Though not affiliated with Adorno's theories directly, Alphonso Lingis (1994) summarizes individual praxis as work of art brilliantly in the below passage:

> The individual who sets out to make his disparate sensory and motor powers, reacting episodically to the lures of sensory apparitions that form and dissolve about him, into a nature, a totality regulated by laws; into a set of powers subordinated to his rational faculty as means to end; into a microsociety of powers regulated by relations of command and obedience—who sets out to do so in action, in practical life, through his purposive undertakings and through work—makes himself a work in something of the sense an artwork is a work. That is, a product that is finite, finished in itself, enclosed within boundaries which are its completion, self-containment, and perfection. (p. 22)

Adorno would never really suggest that such work is finite, content or complete, though. The radical dynamic that ties up individual praxis with the negative dialectic in the artwork is resistant, open-ended and mindful of the negative even in its principle of hope. Against the bad infinity, this dynamic brings to the fore

theory and the artwork, without whose existence individual praxis falls into self-denial, unhappiness or simply the bad life. Insistence on the act of thinking and theory, which Adorno's complex constellation fully depends on, cannot be brushed aside simply for being 'an internal check against complicity'. On the very contrary, caution is applied in case the human being loses sight of his "own fallibility" (Adorno, 2001b, p. 169) once again, mistaking the above positing of praxis for an accomplishment of overcoming the demands of the objective world. Neither should his emphasis on the act of thinking and theory be regarded as a tendency toward reconciliation, an establishment of utopia, which makes itself visible in the negative semblance of the artwork, being unable to admit to its exclusion of praxis from philosophy. His widely overlooked antihumanist tendencies, which fight against subjecthood, despair and alienation in moral conduct, traditional politics and the culture industry, create an urgency to rethink praxis through the new materialism represented by the work of art.

Belonging to the small number of artists Adorno (2002) applauded for their employment of style, Baudelaire, for example, "neither railed against nor portrayed reification" (p. 21). Thus having moved beyond the nostalgic pangs of an alienated romanticism, his poetry, according to Adorno, "syncopates the overwhelming objectivity of the commodity character – which wipes out any human trace – with the objectivity of the work in itself, anterior to the living subject," and it is through such devotion to technique, instead of purely realistic content or a search for the homeland, that "the absolute artwork converges with the absolute commodity" (p. 21). Given the image of the responsible work of art and its representation of the ugly, Adorno refuses to move toward the metaphysically pure because there really is "nothing to overcome," (p. 260) but this stance should not be mistaken for a resignation that denies itself any change. Instead, his positing of the artwork, by cancelling out the glorious moment of overcoming the coercive material world, resists the concept of alienation. "There is no denying that the antagonistic situation, what the young Marx called alienation and self-alienation, was not the weakest agency in the constitution of modern art," (p. 260) so one of the elements that necessitate the emergence of the

artwork is indeed a feeling of alienation. However, the responsible artwork is "certainly no copy, not the reproduction of that situation"; on the contrary, "in denouncing it, transposing it into the image, this situation became its other and as free as the situation denies the living to be" (p. 260). Adorno's radical new materialism posits the possibility of freedom in the negation of alienation.

"A world is always as many worlds as it takes to make a world" (p.15), Nancy (2000) remarks beautifully in his *Being Singular Plural* and Adorno is not far away from such vision actually. It is not at all that he "resists any determinate rendering [of utopia] on the grounds that there is no way to step outside these damaged forms of meaning and experience" (Feola, 2014, p. 52). His thought contrarily offers various different ways out of those damaged forms. His hesitations to join in might not be justified in terms of his personal praxis but that should not stop the reader from discovering the radical contours of resistance his complex theoretical constellation gave birth to. His principle of hope is not hampered by an elegy for the loss of metaphysics in a world reified to its guts. This is echoed when he admits that the artwork, in its "incomplete reification, like opacity, holds the promise of a vision of something more" (Adorno, 2004, p. 256). As seen above, this 'more' underlies the responsibility that befalls the individual to employ the artwork's incomplete reification in a radically creative manner. He writes some hundred pages later in *Negative Dialectics* that "the elements of independence and irreducibility in the mind may well accord with the supremacy of the object" (p. 390). If the mind, then, manages to realize what it shares with the object, namely its own objecthood, it will be able to "call[s] its chains by name, the chains it gets into by chaining others" and "grow[s] independent here and now" (p. 390). Only by learning not to despair over its objecthood can the mind "begin[s] to anticipate […] not entangled practice" but freedom itself (p. 390). Somewhere else, in his famous article "Why Still Philosophy?", he carries on with such emphasis on objectivity and makes the claim which must have seemed odd to many of his readers: "the realization of materialism would mean today the end of materialism" (2005d, p. 15). Only by reinterpreting our material practices with the help of a thinking that resists the boundaries of a degraded

materialism, can we express atrocities and perhaps also, create a movement that can resist the bad state of things more effectively. “Only a thinking that has no mental sanctuary,” Adorno continues, “no illusion of an inner realm and that acknowledges its lack of function and power can perhaps catch a glimpse of an order of the possible and the non-existent, where human beings and things each would be in their rightful place” (p. 15). It seems that the human being is responsible for fighting the coercive structure surrounding the definitions of her species-being before she can be ready to find her place in the world of objects. It is nowhere else but that world of objects, after all, where she is supposed to take radical action. Adorno’s aesthetic theory makes an immense contribution to this stance by bringing together the movement of the artwork and that of the individual on the same level, in defiance of the yearning for reconciliation.

CONCLUSION

Constellation is probably the most fitting term to describe Adorno's thought; it is no wonder that he refers to it very often in his texts. A constellation both goes against the grain of systematization, since it does not allow any definitive logical cluster, and privileges openings instead of closure, thus always making room for further development. Constellations are non-linear as their development does not mean pure progress. They can collapse at multiple points whereas they keep expanding from other angles. Their movement is not akin to that of a spiral either; it cannot be taken for granted that any latter movement will be more encompassing than a former one. Constellations create space for mistakes, misleading norms and phenomena, but their imagination and theoretical vigilance are themselves based on those shortcomings. This is what makes them radical and modest at the same time. Adorno's emphasis on modesty in his discussion of morality is coherent with the guiding principle behind his work on other disciplines. What makes his aesthetic theory a landmark in the history of thought is its ability to capture the modesty of the subject vis-à-vis the world of objects while reintroducing the radicalness of the object which keeps that modesty in sight. The manner in which an artwork maintains this dialectical movement runs parallel to the eschewal of self-assertion. And such *artistic* dynamic is within reach for the individual's praxis too; at least Adorno's constellation worked diligently toward making it possible.

This dissertation has two principal concerns, one of them being directly and the other indirectly related to the issues pointed out in the Introduction. The latter carries the urgency to answer certain questions regarding antihumanist thought; its origins, theorization and current legitimacy, all of which run parallel to the central dynamics of Adorno's constellation. Vulnerable to a myriad of criticism due to its anarchic name, antihumanism is in fact older than the timeline this dissertation could allow room for. It was also out of concern for catching the spirit of Adorno's milieu that antihumanism had to be limited to three specific

cornerstones between the aftermath of the Great War and the modern day. Mid-20th century carries critical importance thanks to Althusser's endeavour to revive theory during a significant time period when it faced extinction against mottoes of emancipation. Such dangerous rift between theory and praxis, though, was traversed in part later, by Nancy's, Agamben's and some of their contemporaries' attempt to situate the non-human at the main arteries of critical thought. They created a vast space wherein thinking against humanist ideology renders all existence more *humane*. Certain significant problems, however, arose from the clash amongst the post-war disillusionment narrated by figures such as Malraux and Anders, Althusser's blasphemous attack on human values and the later postulations of antihumanist thought in line with the ontological and ethical disciplines. Within such framework, an unfamiliar mind, that of Adorno, was blended in to provide a wider perspective on antihumanism, which constantly employs the vigilance of determinate negation on the concepts of self-assertion and more importantly, alienation. Through this vein, Adorno's critique of ontology and ethics is demonstrated in its resistance to the possible human fallacies of antihumanist thought conveyed in Chapter 1.

The dominant concern of this dissertation, on the other hand, employs the discussion above as footing for the further recasting of Adorno's constellation from an antihumanist perspective. This angle is not brand new; Adorno's affinity with antihumanism is familiar to all his faithful readers. However, the main goal of this project was to bring forward that affinity in order to problematize two very critical claims regarding his thought; namely, the irreconcilability of his moral and political views, and the interpretation of his support for modern art as 'antihumanist' and 'decadent'. The first critique is not answered based on the precondition that Adorno, in fact, wanted to reconcile morality and politics. On the contrary, the moral, and also the ethical, are presented in line with their constant dissonance with respect to the human subject. Adorno questions the legitimacy of these two disciplines as a whole, given the inconsistencies inherent to the anthropological point of view. So instead, he elevates politics against morality by remarking that the search for a right way of living has to make a stop

at the political before it moves on to the high ideals postulated by the moral and the ethical. In that sense, his negation of morality through a strictly antihumanist point of view can be said to lead the way toward a radical form of praxis. It was his often overlooked antihumanist tendencies that made it possible for morality to continuously reflect on itself. His insistence on *our own fallibility*, that imminent scenario where self-assertion crashes into the wall of its own preconceptions, not only acts as a fundamental principle behind antihumanist thought but it also restates that praxis is contribution to the way of the world as long as it embraces its false differentiation from theory.

Adorno's elevation of the political question against the fallacies of a moral life, however, brings to the fore the problem of bad infinity. His half-formulation at the end of the *Problems*, where he considers resisting the bad and the Nietzschean expiatory violence constitutive of the only remaining emergency exit, raises another set of questions regarding his relationship with the practical realm. He tells us to resist the wrong life, instead of going with the flow of pluralist movements in order to set an example of the right way of living, as a result of which he is widely accused of representing the 'introverted thought architect', who chooses to stay behind the curtains and theorize. Theory and aesthetics are in collaboration here, of course, providing the reader with an elitist and cowardly picture of Adorno; he could never interrupt the flow of his appreciation for negativity and the modern artwork to join in with the rest of us, who are less critically-capable than he was. If anything, his philosophy was marred by a melancholic vision of the world wherein things could be resisted theoretically and artistically, but not changed practically. A less harmful version of such critique is embodied by the interpretations of his aesthetic theory within a humanist and utopian context where reconciliation is aimed for. According to this angle, Adorno waited at the intersection of the metaphysical and the tangible, where he spotted the prism of a utopian perception of the future.

Against both lines of interpretation above, this dissertation chose to highlight the antihumanist and radical aspects of Adorno's aesthetic theory. The

first reason for this choice is that the critique of his philosophy as distanced from the practical world and melancholic in its attitude not only fails to do justice to the intricate negative dialectic he positions between theory and praxis, but it also completely neglects the deconstructive and dissonant elements of his thought, which refuse to give in to resignation. The second reason pertains to the attempts to emancipate his philosophy from the first line of criticism by attributing a concern for reconciliation to it. Such attempts do more harm to his thought than good since they try to equate it to humanist ideals so that the allegations of antihumanism and decadence can be cleared away. To that end, Adorno's thought is transformed into a perseverance toward reconciliation of the metaphysical and the concrete, whereby his emphasis on the objective is compensated for by the reinsertion of a utopian theology. His thought does not need such heroic gestures at all, though; it only asks for the fairness which it always keeps at hand when criticizing something. Constellations, after all, are not indebted to reconciliation for their development; on the contrary, they gain their specific momentum from a creative employment of negativity.

Adorno's aesthetic theory, as a radical form of praxis, is significant exactly for capturing the dynamic of such negativity. It does not give the artwork the revolutionary goal of changing the world or even of creating a dialectical fracture in which some affirmative version of the future can be seen. Beckett's work is nothing to do with theology; it makes fun of it. The least of all Schönberg's concerns must have been creating a humanitarian ideal wherein his music is presupposed to be enjoyed by everyone. Kafka insistently asserted the incompatibility of the theological and the human even though his recreation of the mundane is magical to the core. Baudelaire, Adorno believes, never demonized reification; he saw through it, negatively postulated it. It is probably in this final statement that Adorno's reading of the objective world comes to the fore. Likening the movement of the artwork to that of the individual, he saw both as *purposeless in their purposiveness*, going after Kant with loyalty for once. Both the artwork and the individual are equally powerless yet infinitely powerful in the face of the universal which does not and does convey the rigorous drive of their

particularity. Adorno's aesthetic theory is not antihumanist the way Lukács meant it; picky, detached, inhuman even. To the contrary, he regards humanity not as a given, but as a project, a minuscule reflection of which can be located in his opinion on dignity that it is yet to be achieved. The movement of the artwork, thanks to its dynamic of the material and the metaphysical, is the most important landmark in that achievement since the negative dialectic between its form and content is akin to the consistency and experience that an individual has in store.

In coming up with the above parallel, Adorno does not postulate the artwork as the optimum model for individual praxis but he reintroduces the individual's relationship with it as a means to understand the violent dichotomy between the universal and the particular. On the one hand, the artwork's obligation to answer to the needs of its timeframe and social background is mirrored in the individual's situation in society; she cannot be thought separately from her material conditions. On the other hand, the artwork has the resistant capacity of expression, which is its subjective moment, functioning both as responsibility toward another's suffering and as reminder to its objective contours that the artwork is not purely form; that it is alive. It is over the expression of such suffering that Adorno insists on resisting the bad instead of setting the good in stone. And it is for the sake of keeping this negative dialectic in movement that he warns against the self-assertive movement of the purely practical. There is undeniable truth content in the claim that his philosophy was not a recipe for social and political action. But this judgment is at the same time short of the fully critical capacity which can alone do justice to his insistence on negativity as an ultimate recipe in itself. Adorno's avoidance of argumentations and formulations does not, as Lyotard falsely claimed and corrected himself later on, give way to a vision of the world as pure negativity, as in pure pessimism, which is lost in its critical yet practically impossible preconception that the world cannot effectively be changed. To the contrary, the distance between his thought and self-assertion recreate negativity as the principle of hope; his philosophical rephrasing of Beckett's 'I can't go on, I'll go on'. Even though he attributes a questionable theological content to Adorno's thought at the end of his insightful article,

Raymond Geuss (1998) writes in the same vein that "Adorno's whole philosophical work is an attempt to think through that equivalence between aesthetic radicalism and political progressiveness" (p. 313). So, instead of drawing up a scheme based on which we can differentiate *good art* from *bad art*, Adorno emphasizes the variety of manners in which art inspires change in the practical world.

"Without an iota of uncertainty," Thomas Ligotti (2010) writes in his acclaimed treatise in defiance of humanism, man "is and will always be unsuited to take charge of its own deliverance" (p. 82). At first, it seems to take a great deal of pessimism on the author's side to make such a claim, but that is only the surface value of what he means. What he problematizes in his short sentence is the questionable concept of deliverance itself. It is not that the human being lacks an essential quality which would help him deliver himself from the untruth of the world; this viewpoint also belongs to humanist ideology. The above discussion of the dynamics between resignation and resistance in Adorno's thought creates an opening that ties up with the question of deliverance, or in his terms, redemption. Even though the previous chapter relies on the critique of its equivalent, reconciliation, within the aesthetic sphere, the concept of redemption should also be given further comment. This concept is the metaphysical equivalent of the aesthetic reconciliation in Adorno's thought, and a central one too, given the extensive variety of interpretation which adopts it as focus. One such example is produced by Kaufmann (2000), whose interpretation of Adorno's philosophy posits a "version of truth" in affinity with redemption, which "is based on the positive principle of happiness and the negative one of pain" (p. 72). Very similar to Bernstein's reading of aesthetic reconciliation, Kaufmann's redemption acts as the locus of theological dynamics in Adorno's thought and embodies a humanitarian principle of hope which is established over the responsibility toward another's suffering and the pursuit of happiness. Whereas it would be impossible to deny the role of both elements – as shown above, Adorno makes the expression and abolition of suffering central to his moral and political discussions – there is

something inherently problematic with situating redemption at the kernel of his thought.

In his brilliant article on the famous *Finale* to *Minima Moralia,* Gerhard Richter points out certain significant aspects that were previously overlooked, especially regarding the English translation. Even the title, according to him, is misleading in that the German version reads *Zum Ende,* which should be translated into English as "'*toward*'," "'*on the occasion of*'," or "'*with regard to*'" *the end*; not simply *the end* (Richter, 2009, p. 138, *italics mine*). Another important pointer toward the argument that Adorno uses the term redemption figuratively pertains to the contemplation of things, as a responsibility. Adorno does not remark that we should contemplate things directly from *the standpoint of redemption* but "the way *they would present themselves* from the standpoint of redemption" (as cited in Richter, 2009, p. 137, *italics mine*). Richter reads this '*sich darstellten*' as "one more deferral, one more erratic suspension, in non-identity, of the finality that would foreclose any future thought or inspired act of reading" (p. 138).

Even though redemption is figured by Adorno as the fundamental other of dialectical pursuit, without the contribution of which every philosophical endeavour is bound to be mere "reconstruction" and "technique" (as cited in Richter, 2009, p. 137), redemption is not posited as the main goal of contemplation. "Rather than affirming the truth of eschatology […] Adorno negatively appropriates it" (Houseman, 2013, p. 170) by making redemption into the ultimate non-identical. It is only from the perspective of this "completed negativity" (p. 137) that the contrary, incomplete and fragmented scenarios come into view. But the ultimate non-identical that redemption poses also constricts thought since it sets itself as the sovereign or as the outside of thinking, which the idea feels the need to attain. "The more passionately thought seals itself off from its conditionality for the sake of the unconditional," which is represented by redemption, "the more unconsciously and, therefore, the more disastrously, it falls toward the world" (p. 137). So, if thought neglects its situation in the world of

objects, as a part and extension of it, in order to reach out for the ultimate scenario in which it would not need itself, it will not be stepping into the transcendental with the dignity of a hero; on the contrary, it will have to make its return to the fully instrumental, to the unconditionally mundane of the world.

But it is this impossibility which keeps the act of thinking going and it is for this central positing of the impossible that Adorno stresses the praxis of negative dialectics. As the creative antidote of reconciliatory dialectic, negativity claims that there has to be something more, not in the way that there is a condition to transcend but in the way that the better of the world is hidden beneath the fallibility of thought. It is, in fact, only through an acceptance of this fallibility, this taking on of modesty, that the principle of hope can be established. In this sense, redemption should be read as "non- or extra-conceptual redemption," which moves "not toward reconciliation of the identical, but toward a provocation of the non-identical" (Douglas, 2010, p. 828). Such interpretation of the role of redemption not only answers the critique of his philosophy as dominantly melancholic, but it also shows that his stress on the primacy of the object dates back to the early *Minima Moralia*. Richter (2009) reads *Zum Ende* not as an ending but as "a beginning" (p. 146), which is organically bound to the idea of thinking. Based on this notion of *beginning*, Adorno's negative dialectic represents a form of *the right life* in itself even though he would not have admitted to it in his lifetime for fear of reducing his work to straightforward encouragement.

Adorno's constellation defies "the romanticism of wholeness and resolution" (Wilford, 2008, p. 411) thanks to the negative dialectic and posits the principle of hope in the thought that thinks against itself and its impossibility, one fundamental indicator of which lies in being human. His usage of Goethe's "'destined to see the illuminated, not the light'" (1984, p. 151) as the opening remark of "Essay as Form" is indicative of both redemption and the inhuman condition outlined in this dissertation. Goethe's light symbolizes redemption as redemption stands for the impossible in Adorno's thought. But this does not mean

that we cannot see or find our way. The violent course of rationality, instrumental thought and biased self-assertion insist on making the light a concept of their thought so that they can turn it into an object of their praxis. These three central concerns, shrouded in their humanity, force the way of the world into inhumanity for the sake of uncovering alienation, overcoming the adversary and reaching the unconditional. Even the most innocent thought is geared toward those aims and it is for this reason that a form of thinking which resists these end goals should be given voice. When viewed from this angle, it can be seen that Adorno's thought was not dominated by melancholia but a resilient principle of hope that can be characterized by the contradictory double of radicalness and modesty. Edward Said sees the potential of something close to the sentiment here in Adorno's personality. Even though he reads Adorno as "the out-of-his-time late-nineteenth-century disappointed or disillusioned romantic" type, "who exists almost ecstatically detached from" the outside world, he is also "in a kind of complicity with, new and monstrous modern forms—fascism, anti-Semitism, totalitarianism, and bureaucracy" (Said, 2007, p. 23). It was thanks to this paradoxical combination that he was able to "reflect[s] the predicament of ending without illusory hope or manufactured resignation" (pp. 23-24). He stood right in-between the two, not for fear of joining in or taking a side but out of concern both for the dangers of self-assertiveness and of the gesture of giving up, which is a common result of that self-assertiveness.

The antihumanist perspective rephrases Adorno's constellation as resistance. The current state of the world represents, more violently than ever, the impossibilities surrounding the need to keep our hope intact. The expression of atrocities within Adorno's constellation is closely related to expressing the dangers of alienation theory and the fallacies of self-assertiveness performed by a strictly anthropological worldview. His principle of hope, with its negative employment of redemption and insistence on the primacy of the object, revolves around the urge to cast a look at our inhuman condition from a strictly non-human perspective. The artwork's employment of the expression of suffering while remaining faithful to the objective demands of the external world is momentous at

this point and so is the negation of ethics constrained by its anthropological preconceptions. Living in times when the belief in the rationalized animal becomes more problematic by day, when the atrocities committed by that animal have long exceeded its capacity, Adorno's constellation points toward the world of objects, and not toward a set of human values, as potential recourse. Given the limited selection of choices humanity has at hand, perhaps it is best to push things to the extreme and think what resists being thought – the dynamics at work between radicalism and modesty, which carries the potential to inspire the world against the separation of theory and praxis.

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