"Subjectivity and Critique : A Study of the Paradigm

Shift in Critical Theory."

by

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Abstract of thesis.

The German social-philosophical tradition of Critical Theory has recently undergone what its current practitioners have themselves described as a "paradigm shift". Writers like Jürgen Habermas and Karl-Otto Apel are today attempting to reformulate the socially-critical insights of Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno in new terms. Where Horkheimer and Adorno had tried to articulate their critique of existing social relations in a language of "subjectivity" and "objectivity" drawn largely from the classical German philosophical tradition, Habermas and Apel are trying to formulate an - ostensibly - similar critique in a language of "*a priori* intersubjectivity" drawn from the "ordinary language" and "speech-act" theory which has emerged since the Second World War in the Anglo-American philosophical sphere. This thesis examines the key structural features of the "paradigm shift" carried out by Habermas and his generation and weighs up what has been philosophically and politically gained and lost for Critical Theory with this development.

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INTRODUCTION.

(i)

The following study concerns itself with the past, the present and the future of the tradition in social philosophy known as Critical Theory. Specifically, it critically examines the claim made by the most prominent member of Critical Theory's present generation - Jürgen Habermas - that the first generation of Critical Theorists - Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno and their associates - were labouring under aporetic and now obsolete philosophical presuppositions and that, if Critical Theory is to survive and develop, these presuppositions must be abandoned and an entirely new philosophical framework for the doctrine developed and adopted. In his recent work, Habermas calls for - to use the terminology which he himself has chosen - a "paradigm shift in Critical Theory". We read, for example, in the fourth chapter of the 1981 "Theory of Communicative Action" that it is Habermas's contention that "the programme of early Critical Theory foundered not on this or that contingent circumstance, but on the exhaustion of the paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness" and that "a change of paradigm to the theory of communication makes it possible...to take up once again the since neglected tasks of a critical theory of society." [1]

Taken thus out of context, statements like these beg innumerable questions. In what sense, the reader might first enquire, does Habermas believe himself justified in holding the programme of early Critical Theory to have "foundered" at all? After all, the first generation of the Frankfurt School continued to write, and to call what they were writing "Critical Theory", right up until their deaths. And what precisely, the reader might also enquire, does Habermas mean by such terms as "the paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness" and "the paradigm of the theory of communication" ? It will be part of the task of this study to place statements like these back into context and thereby to clarify their meaning. This is not to say that these statements' air of "begging the question" will thereby be completely dispelled. We shall see below that to the object of the first enquiry, for example - Habermas's idea that the programme of first-generation Critical Theory must be said to have at a certain point simply "foundered", as opposed to having been continued by radically different means - there still attaches, even where all Habermas's reasons for holding to this idea are mustered and displayed, something of the *petitio principii*. This is also in a more complex sense the case as regards the object of

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[1] Jürgen Habermas, "Theory of Communicative Action" (Polity Press, 1991) Volume One, p. 386.

the second enquiry : Habermas's conceptions of the "paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness" and the "paradigm of the theory of communication". Throughout the course of the study, we shall come gradually to recognize how much unclarity resides here "on the side of the object", and not on the side of the inevitable distortions of a decontextualizing exposition.

The argument of the study proceeds basically as follows:

Chapter One does not initially treat of the Critical-Theoretical tradition at all. It is rather in the first place a consideration of the philosophical-historical presuppositions underlying the very idea of a "paradigm shift" from the "philosophy of consciousness" to the "theory of communication" - although the specific question of the relation between first- and second-generation Critical-Theoretical thought does emerge explicitly midway through this opening discussion. The chapter begins (section one) with an account of Habermas's argument that the "consciousness-philosophical" attempt to develop a philosophy of society by permutating the categories "subjectivity" and "objectivity" - indeed, even the attempt to develop a philosophy of subjectivity itself in these terms - is, for basic structural reasons, subversive of its own intentions and therefore doomed to failure. It also briefly reviews Habermas's proposal that the "theory of communication" shows the way out of these aporia. It then goes on (section two) to raise, with some contemporary critics of Habermas, an objection to this argument, or at least to Habermas's remarkably broad application of it. The objection, namely, that, although the argument which Habermas develops may be telling against, for example, the ideas of Descartes or Husserl, it does not really have any application to the ideas of certain thinkers whom Habermas nevertheless places at the very centre of his category of the "philosophy of consciousness", such as Kant, Hegel and Marx. These philosophies of subjectivity developed in or after the German "Goethezeit", it is suggested, are too radically differently structured from the philosophies of subjectivity formulated by Descartes or Husserl for the category "philosophy of consciousness" to be claimed, as is explicitly claimed in Habermas, to comprehend all of these.

Considered next (section three) are the respects in which Habermas's recent thought contains a response to this objection. The account of German "Goethezeit" thought central to texts such as the "Theory of Communicative Action" and "The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity" is examined in some detail. In these texts, Habermas argues - plainly taking his cue here from positions developed by Adorno himself - that although a "Goethezeit" philosophy

of the subject such as Hegel's appears *prima facie* to draw into its problematic a philosophical factor not commensurable either with the moment of subjectivity or with that of objectivity - namely, the factor of the Absolute - the Hegelian Absolute is in fact ultimately no more than the projection or "inflation" of an empirical subjectivity subject to the same dialectic of self-subversion as the empirical subjectivity of Descartes.

In order to pass beyond this point, where the first and second generations of Critical Theory appear to be in complete accord with one another, the study takes a step back and considers, in section four of Chapter One, the structure of the philosophical culture of the "Goethezeit" from a point of view initially distinct from both Habermas's and Adorno's. The philosophy of the "Goethezeit" is discussed in terms of the reception, into a culture dominated by the "philosophy of the subject", of elements of a more archaic "philosophy of Being". It is stressed, however, that this "philosophy of Being" had in its day taken *two* primary forms - Platonic and Aristotelian - and that the "Goethezeit" synthesis of the "philosophy of Being" with the "philosophy of the subject" in turn took two primary forms : Hegel's synthesis of the theory of the subject with the immanentistic, Aristotelian form of the "philosophy of Being", and Kant's synthesis of the theory of the subject with the transcendentistic, Platonic form of this philosophy. Section five of Chapter One briefly reviews both the "Aristotelian" elements of "Goethezeit" culture - with reference not just to their philosophical expression in Hegel's work but also to their even more influential expression in the work of Goethe himself - and the "Platonic" elements of this culture, with primary reference to the work of Kant.

Returning, then, in section six, to the question of the attitude adopted toward "Goethezeit" thought by Critical Theory, the study's argument finally reaches the point where Adorno's stance needs to begin to be sharply distinguished from Habermas's. Although, it is argued in this section, Habermas ultimately rejects Hegel on the grounds that this latter remains a "philosopher of consciousness", he nonetheless unequivocally accepts all the points made by the "Aristotelian" Hegel against the "Platonist" Kant. Habermas plainly believes as firmly as did any "Young Hegelian" that the step from transcendence into immanence, from antinomics into dialectics, taken between Kant and Hegel constituted not just a progression in time but very emphatically a progression in reason. His conception of the problematic of modernity is decidedly an Hegelian one. In fact, as section seven of Chapter One goes on to argue, the "paradigm of the theory of communication" with which Habermas proposes to replace the "paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness" has philosophically

surprisingly much in common with the particular "Aristotelian" or Hegelian form of the "paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness". Thanks to its insistence on the immanence of moral and ontological truth in inner-worldly human practice and to its basic indifference to the pressure of the problem of naturalism, the "communication-theoretical" "Weltanschauuung" of the later Wittgenstein in fact bears a much closer resemblance to the "consciousness-philosophical" "Weltanschauung" of Hegel or Goethe than either of these latter does to the supposedly similarly "consciousness-philosophical" "Weltanschauung" of Kant.

It is by the recognition of this fact that we are led, in the eighth and final section of Chapter One, into the specific argument of the study, with its focus on the relation between the work of the first and that of the second generation of Critical Theory. The argument of Chapter One as a whole will have suggested that, *pace* Habermas, the "paradigm of the theory of communication" is not in a position to sublate the "paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness" as a whole. Rather, it can sublate at best (i) the simple Cartesian or empiricist form of this philosophy, and (ii) that particular "Aristotelian" compound form of it exemplified in the work of Hegel. What decidedly *evades* or *refuses* sublation into the "paradigm of the theory of communication", however, is that synthesis of the theory of subjectivity with the *Platonic* form of the "philosophy of Being" which we find in *Kant's* writings and in those of his philosophical descendants. This is centrally relevant to our topic because I want to argue here that first-generation Critical Theory belonged in key respects to this descendancy : that it was in key respects a *Kantian* - and not primarily an Hegelian, let alone a Cartesian - philosophy of subjectivity and of society. The rejection of key Hegelian positions which is to be found, for example, in Adorno's work is, I want to argue, often a far more radical one than the apparently parallel rejection of these positions to be found in the recent writings of Habermas. Whereas Habermas himself does indeed remain a "contemporary of the young Hegelians" [2] - inasmuch as he considers, as did writers like Bauer, Feuerbach and Marx, Hegel's immanentistic philosophical stance to be a position which, if it must be gone *beyond* , can nevertheless never again be retreated *behind* - the same cannot, I will argue, be claimed to be entirely true of his predecessors in the Critical-Theoretical tradition. Horkheimer, Benjamin and Adorno, I will claim, are to be situated at least as regards key stages and aspects of their work in that tradition of post-"Goethezeit" thought which denied that the historical supercession of the

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[2] See Habermas, "The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity" (Polity Press, 1987), p. 53.

Kantian system by the Hegelian was necessarily also a "rational" supercession and continued to take its moral, political and ontological bearings largely from Kant's dualistic and transcendentistic insights.

Clearly, such a claim will require - given the now well-established classification of first-generation Frankfurt School thought as a form of "Hegelian Marxism" - considerable argument to back it up. The first half of Chapter Two, therefore, is devoted to pointing up the respects in which the development of first-generation Critical Theory in the period 1930-1950 might be read as a development "from Hegel to Kant". Plainly, it cannot be denied that the early, programmatic texts published by Horkheimer in the period 1931- 37 were indeed basically "Hegelian Marxist" in their presuppositions and argumentational structure. Section one of Chapter Two, however, in reviewing the important philosophical features of these texts, tries to point up the "endogenous" tendency in Horkheimer's thought of this period toward the abandonment of the radically diachronic paradigm of Hegelian thought, with its stress on the "constituted-ness" of the objects of human experience, in favour of the more synchronic paradigm of Kantian thought, with its stress on the "sedimented-ness" of the "constituted" human world. The argument that the history of early Critical Theory represents a development "from Hegel to Kant", however, rests, more than on the analysis in section one of Chapter Two of the "endogenous" dynamic of Horkheimer's thought, on the account, in section two of this chapter, of the main "exogenous" influence on the positions taken by the director of the Frankfurt Institute in the period 1931-40 : the thought of Walter Benjamin, which remained a profoundly "Kantian" thought from beginning to end. Benjamin's theory of myth, reviewed in section two, constitutes a paradigm of what might be called a "Kantian" rather than an "Hegelian" Marxism, a "theological" rather than "historical" materialism. The analysis of Benjamin's 1924 essay on the "Wahlverwandtschaften" in this section illustrates the mobilization of this theory of myth as a Kantian critique of the most important expression of the "Goethezeit" Aristotelianism examined in Chapter One : Goethe's own "Hegelian" teaching that "God is present in Nature".

It is as an only partially successful synthesis of Horkheimer's 1930's conception of critical social theory as a Hegel-inspired theory of historical immanence and Adorno's conception of this theory as a Benjamin-, and thus Kant-inspired theory of quasi-ahistorical transcendence that I approach "The Dialectic of Enlightenment" in section three of Chapter Two. This text, I argue, on the one hand sets up an eminently *dialectical*, that is Hegelian,

problematic : the problematic of the dialectic of counter-natural subjectivity and counter-subjective Nature. And *qua* Hegelian, dialectical problematic, the problematic of "The Dialectic of Enlightenment" seems to be entirely corroborative of Habermas's account of the "self-subversion" of the "paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness" ; the concerns of the first generation of Critical Theory seem to be more or less accommodable in the new paradigm propounded by Habermas and other members of Critical Theory's second and third generations. One key component of the *resolution* of the problem of counter-natural subjectivity and counter-subjective Nature suggested by "The Dialectic of Enlightenment", however, is not Hegelian, not dialectical, at all, but rather Kantian, antinomical. This is the openly theological resolution suggested by the "Elements of Antisemitism" chapter of this book. Where *this* component of the discourse of a text like "The Dialectic of Enlightenment" is recognized to be an essential and determinative component of it, first-generation Critical Theory again emerges as a theory largely unaddressed by Habermas's argument for a "paradigm shift to communication", a theory expressive of insights not accommodable in the "paradigm of the philosophy of language" as Habermas understands it.

In section four of Chapter Two, I try to corroborate this Kantian, this radically anti-immanentistic, reading of "The Dialectic of Enlightenment" by an analysis of some lesser-known writings of Adorno's from the same period which suggest a definite commitment on Adorno's part to that dualistic Kantian framework for moral and political philosophy which remains, I will have argued, incommensurable with Habermas's philosophical vision to a far greater degree than are either of the monistic - that is, Cartesian or Hegelian - models of the theory of subject and society. In section five, the opposition between Hegelianism and Kantianism is examined further as it manifested itself in first-generation Critical Theory in the post-1945 period. The post-war work of Adorno and Horkheimer is portrayed as work conducted largely within a Kantian framework, in contrast to the work of Herbert Marcuse, which remained in its basic structure true to the Critical-Theoretical Hegelianism of the 1930's and, I argue, paid the price of lagging further and further behind Adorno's and Horkheimer's work in terms of philosophical and political seriousness.

Where the first half of Chapter Two traces the development of first-generation Critical Theory from an Hegelian into a more or less definitively Kantian theory of the social, the second half of this chapter traces second-generation Critical Theory's following of the same intellectual trajectory in reverse. Habermas's work, it is argued, has in the course of thirty years

developed from a theory still retentive of certain elements of that "Platonic" theory of the social developed by Benjamin, Adorno and Horkheimer, with its capacity for a radical social-philosophical negativism, into an Hegelian theory of "Sittlichkeit", which has completely forfeited this capacity. Section six of Chapter Two briefly reviews the philosophical and social-critical resources of the Habermasian conception of an "ethics of discourse" in its original, more strictly Kantian formulation - although even at this point our main point of reference will necessarily be not Habermas himself but his close colleague Karl-Otto Apel, who gave "discourse ethics" its original, strongly transcendentalistic formulation and largely holds to this formulation to the present day. In section seven, we trace how Habermas has from the first pushed for an "Hegelianization" of the foundations of the originally Kantian "discourse-ethical" idea, to the point where his present moral- and political-philosophical position can count for all intents and purposes as a "communitarian" one.

The eighth and final section of this chapter draws up the balance of its argument and prepares a transition from the very broadly-focussed discussion of Chapters One and Two of the study to a discussion, in Chapters Three and Four, of certain specific issues separating first- and second-generation Critical Theory. Habermas's increasing Hegelianism renders him, it is argued, neglective primarily of two eminently Kantian issues which stood at the very centre of the social-theoretical problematic of earlier Critical Theory : the issues, already raised on the broadest philosophical level in Chapter One, of (i) the problem of the pressure of naturalism and (ii) the problem of the ontological status of "the whole", that is, the problem of the (transcendent) *Absolute* . If the new Critical-Theoretical "paradigm of the theory of communication" has not sublated into itself the content of earlier Critical Theory's insights into these two problems, then it has failed really to address the specifically *classical Critical-Theoretical* - that is, Benjaminian, Adornian and late Horkheimerian - "paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness" at all. The second half of the study argues that Habermasian Critical Theory has in fact largely failed to do this.

Chapter Three deals with second-generation, Habermasian Critical Theory's reprehensible, Wittgensteinian or "Goethean" indifference to "the problem of the pressure of naturalism". I take as my first point of orientation here what is perhaps the most telling critique of Habermas's whole philosophical orientation mounted in recent years : the critique developed by the Munich philosopher Dieter Henrich in the mid- to late 1980's. Section one of Chapter Three reviews Henrich's recent article "What Is Metaphysics ? What Is Modernity ?",

a response to Habermas's declaration of "post-metaphysical thinking" to be the only viable mode of philosophizing for the present age. The main thrust of Henrich's retort to this Habermasian thesis is the profoundly Kantian argument that some kind of metaphysical stance continues today to be the only adequate philosophical response to naturalistically and behaviouristically reductionist analyses of human action and experience. Henrich focusses on the Habermasian concept of the "lifeworld" as the real weak point, from the point of view of the "problem of the pressure of naturalism" in Habermas's recent social philosophy. In the light of Henrich's critique, I examine throughout the rest of this chapter Habermas's "theory of communicative action"'s failure really to present this "idée clef" of the "lifeworld" in such a way as to genuinely place it beyond the conceptual reach of naturalistic and behaviouristic criticisms. Sections two and three, first, consider the concept as that "quasi-transcendental" concept which it is implied to be by certain of Habermas's arguments. After a brief excursus in section four into the problem of the actual stance adopted by classical Critical Theory toward the "problem of the pressure of naturalism" - a stance which I argue to have been indeed a Kantian one fully recognizant of the immanent irrecusability of a thoroughgoingly naturalistic world-view - I turn again in section five to the critique of Habermas's concept of the "lifeworld", although this time as a purely empirical, a "political" concept. Here too, I argue, it fails to stand up against a naturalistic critique - in the form of the Marxist suspicion of the "ideological" nature of the presupposition of "pluralism". Section six takes up again the thread of Dieter Henrich's argument, which had introduced the topic of the "pressure of the problem of naturalism" in section one. Briefly examining Habermas's response to the critique mounted by Henrich in "What Is Metaphysics ? What Is Modernity ?", I acknowledge that the idea of a purely naturalistically comprehensible immanence suggested by Henrich - and also, as the chapter as a whole will have argued, suggested by the first-generation form of Critical Theory - is incoherent unless it presupposes a certain access enjoyed by the rational subject to transcendence, to an Absolute in the specifically Kantian sense examined in Chapter One.

Chapter Four takes up the question of this essential counterpart, in the Kantian philosophy of the subject, to the recognition of the irrecusability of the "problem of the pressure of naturalism". It examines the presence in first-generation Critical Theory of this second element recalcitrant to sublation into the Habermasian "paradigm of the theory of communication" : the idea of a transcendent Absolute situating and as it were "condemning" the *whole* of that network of communicative practices which constitutes the focus of

investigation for the theory of communicative action. Section one of this chapter critiques Habermas's own characterization, in the crucial fourth chapter of the "Theory of Communicative Action", of early Frankfurt School social philosophy as a decidedly "post-transcendentist", specifically a "para-Weberian", doctrine. I argue that such a characterization is plainly unfaithful to the letter as well as to the spirit of the texts which Habermas cites in support of it.

The remaining sections of the chapter go on to support this argument by reference to various classical Frankfurt School texts of the 1940-70 period. Section two of this chapter develops, on the basis of some of Adorno's writings, the idea of the transcendent Absolute as a "counter-myth" to the "myth" with which we will have become familiar in Chapters Two and Three as the classical Critical-Theoretical designation for the "pressure of the problem of naturalism". Sections three and four concern themselves with the complex but for our purposes crucial question of how this adherence to the "counter-myth" of the transcendent Absolute situates Adorno's thought with respect to the thought of Kant and Hegel. These discussions in turn raise the problem of Adorno's relation to his great philosophical rival among his contemporaries: Martin Heidegger, the philosopher of "Fundamentalontologie". The - necessarily schematic and provisional - clarification of the nature of the philosophical differences between Adorno and Heidegger in section five of Chapter Four will help us to make clear the essential point about the non-sublatibility, into Habermasian Critical Theory's "paradigm of the theory of communication", of classical Critical Theory's adherence to the Kantian idea of absolute transcendence : that, as we have said above, this idea of absolute transcendence provides the cognitive resources to situate the human practice of social communication along a "vertical" axis itself radically alien to this practice, or, in other words, to situate this practice as a *whole*.

References are throughout to the standard Anglo-American editions of Critical-Theoretical texts. Due to the abysmal quality of the English translations of the publications of the Frankfurt School's first generation, however, I have in almost every case given here a different rendering into English of the passage cited than the one which is actually offered by the American or English edition referred to.

CHAPTER ONE : THEORIES OF SUBJECTIVITY.

In this first chapter of the study, I want to try to clarify the basic presuppositions about the nature and the history of the European philosophical tradition which underlie Habermas's promulgation, in passages like the one quoted at the beginning of the introduction, of the need for a "paradigm shift" in Critical Theory. I want also to suggest a perspective from which these presuppositions appear both historically and philosophically questionable. Obviously, the philosophical-historical ideas most in need of clarification here are the key ideas "philosophy of consciousness" and "philosophy of communication". Before attempting to clarify these, however, I want to make some remarks on the term conjoined with both in the passage quoted : the term "paradigm".

Habermas's German term "Paradigmenwechsel" is not an entirely "faux ami" to the English reader, but should still be approached with a degree of caution. The meanings of "paradigm" and "paradigm shift" as these terms occur in Habermas's work are *basically* continuous with their meanings in the writings of their originator Thomas Kuhn. Kuhn, with these ideas, had further developed the thesis - first formulated by Kant in the Preface to the "Critique of Pure Reason" and radicalized by Wittgenstein in the "Philosophical Investigations" - that Man approaches Nature "not as a mere pupil, who accepts whatever answers his teacher dictates to him, but rather as an appointed judge, who obliges the witnesses to respond to the questions which he puts to them." [1] In Kuhn's extreme post-Wittgensteinian formulation of this idea, the "data" which natural science had traditionally understood to exist prior to and independently of its investigations were argued to be largely a function of these investigations themselves. Different projects of scientific enquiry should not, Kuhn argued in his "Structure of Scientific Revolutions", be said merely to have "approached" the same natural order from different "angles" or with different "attitudes". Different "approaches" and "attitudes", different sets of questions, were in fact better described as having "constituted" different natural orders. The problems which Newton believed the science of physics needed most urgently to investigate were not merely problems which Aristotle had left unsolved, lacunae in the Aristotelian picture of the physical universe waiting to be filled in by the researches of Aristotle's successors. These Newtonian problems had in fact ramified also into the most apparently fully analysed and adequately

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[1] See Kant, "Critique of Pure Reason" B xiii (Kemp Smith translation, MacMillan and Co. 1929, p. 20).

explained areas of the Aristotelian universe, altering the nature of the whole field under investigation. Rather, then, than being understood in terms of the succeeding generations of natural scientists' gradually but steadily constructing a complete picture of the physical universe as if they were putting together a single vast jigsaw puzzle, the progress of natural science was better understood in terms of "shifts of paradigm", changes in forms of questioning which also brought about radical changes in the objects "questioned" so that the work of one generation of scientists often linked up to that of the previous generation only in a far more complex and problematical way than was suggested by the traditional "jigsaw puzzle" narrative.

Habermas's idea of a "paradigm shift in Critical Theory" constitutes to some extent merely a transposition of these ideas out of the field of the natural into the field of the social sciences and of philosophy. His critiques, in his recent work, of the positions of earlier social theorists and philosophers often strongly recall, with their talk of certain insights' being "inaccessible" to "those reared in the tradition of the philosophy of consciousness", [2] Kuhn's almost structuralistic approach to intellectual history - recall, indeed, even the frankly structuralist positions of writers like Althusser and Foucault, with their rigorous "grids" of complementary "vues" and "bévues". One powerful rhetorical resource of Habermas's critique of earlier Critical Theory, at least, has been the implication that his own social philosophy is not just divergent from that of his predecessors, but somehow also "paradigmatically" incommensurable with it - that Habermas's posing of social-philosophical questions always in terms of communication and intersubjective interaction allows him to stand in the same position with regard to the "consciousness-philosophers" Adorno and Horkheimer as Newton stood with respect to Aristotle, or as Kant stood, after his "Copernican revolution", with respect to seventeenth-century rationalists and empiricists.

Two features of Habermas's usage of the terms "paradigm" and "paradigm shift" seem, however, to distinguish it from the Kuhnian usage most familiar to English readers. In the first place, the context of the Habermasian usage of the terms seems to preclude the relativistic consequences which have often followed from this Kuhnian line of thought in Anglo-Saxon philosophy of science. Central to Habermas's narrative of a "paradigm shift in Critical Theory" is the claim that the "paradigm of the theory of communication" is definitely

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[2] See, for example, his remark on Weber in "Theory of Communicative Action", Volume One, p. 339 : "'Meaning' as a primitive term of communication theory had to remain inaccessible to a neo-Kantian reared in the tradition of the philosophy of consciousness".

superior to "the paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness" as a framework for social philosophy. This committed partisanship which is a prominent feature of almost all recent German writing on "the paradigm shift from consciousness to language" is clearly not compatible with too great a stress on the Kuhnian point of different paradigms' mutual incommensurability - and indeed there surely obtains a degree of tension between Habermas's claiming on the one hand that his own "communication-theoretical" positions were "inaccessible" to his predecessors and on the other that these positions "solve the problems" which these predecessors were unable to solve. 3

The second respect in which Habermas's usage of the term "paradigm" diverges from Kuhn's perhaps constitutes a concession on Habermas's part that his "progressivist" intentions are in fact incompatible with a strict Kuhnian "discontinuism". We often find Habermas using the term "paradigm" in a manner that is not Kuhnian at all, but closer to the simple colloquial usage in which the word signifies "exemplary". Again in the "Theory of Communicative Action", we read that Critical Theory requires, if it is to theorize with any clarity the idea of "reconciliation" only ambiguously evoked by the work of the first generation, "a change of paradigm within action theory : from goal-directed to communicative action...The focus of investigation thereby shifts from cognitive-instrumental rationality to communicative rationality. And what is paradigmatic for the latter is not the relation of a solitary subject to something in the objective world that can be represented and manipulated, but the intersubjective relation that speaking and acting subjects take up when they come to an understanding with one another about something." 4

Habermas's clarification here that what he means by a "change of paradigm" is a shift in attention from a kind of rationality *for* which cognitive and instrumental action is "paradigmatic" to a kind of rationality *for* which communicative action is "paradigmatic" plainly distances his usage quite considerably from Thomas Kuhn's. An epistemological field in which particular phenomena or particular sets of phenomena - such as "communicative relations between human beings" - can become "paradigmatic *for*" the "rationality" which this epistemological field instantiates is not a "paradigm" in Kuhn's sense. For Kuhn, the moment

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3 Habermas distances himself from the relativistic school of "paradigm" theory, for example, in a 1979 interview translated into English as "Political Experience and the Renewal of Marxist Theory" and to be found in Peter Dews's "Habermas : Autonomy and Solidarity" : "I don't agree at all that there is such a wide variety of paradigms. That's more likely the artificial product of a scientific rhetoric that was unintentionally inspired by Kuhn." (Dews, "Habermas : Autonomy and Solidarity", Verso Books 1986, p. 88.)

4 "Theory of Communicative Action", Volume One, p. 392.

of the "paradigmatic" inheres in an epistemological field *as a whole* - in those "horizons" of a manner of thinking and questioning which limit and determine all that can appear within the field but which themselves can never be made manifest within it. It is not possible for anything *within* such a Kuhnian epistemological field to become "paradigmatic *for*" this field's particular "rationality", since no such *manifest* model for a particular mode of reasoning would any longer be relevant to "rationality" in Kuhn's particular "paradigmatic" sense of the locally transcendental conditions of all scientific thought.

Habermas, then, in suggesting that different elements of experience could be "paradigmatic *for*" different "paradigms", seems to be proceeding on a conception of what a "paradigm" is which is far more empiricistic and "common-sensical" than Kuhn's. The term "paradigm" appears here to designate a mode of cognition which is only very weakly "transcendentally" determined, which enjoys the epistemological latitutude to stand back from itself and identify, as inner-worldly phenomena, the determinants of its own "rationality". Habermas's concern to argue for the clear superiority of his "paradigm" of Critical Theory over the "paradigm" of Critical Theory favoured by his predecessors seems to lead him, in passages like these, to depart completely from the original transcendentalistic Kuhnian usage and to speak of "paradigms" and "paradigm shifts" when it would have been better to speak merely of consciously and deliberately chosen, and consciously and deliberately revocable, conceptual strategies and theoretical prioritizations. We shall have occasion to discuss this problem further when we turn to look in detail at Habermas's "quasi-transcendental" arguments for "interpretive" sociological methodology in Chapter Three.

The status of Habermas's discourse on "paradigms" and "paradigm shifts", however, can only be fully clarified by clarifying also his conception of the two particular "paradigms" between which he understands Critical Theory to have moved or to be moving : the "paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness" and the "paradigm of the theory of communication". Just as Kuhn understands a particular natural-scientific "paradigm" to be defined by the questions it poses rather than by the answers it arrives at, Habermas defines the "paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness" in terms of its questions, in terms of its conception of how the problems of philosophy have necessarily to be formulated. "The philosophy of consciousness" or "the philosophy of the subject" - Habermas and his second-generation Critical Theory colleagues have sometimes drawn distinctions between these two ideas, but at this provisional and generalizing point in our exposition they can be treated as synonymous

- constructs, Habermas claims, all the scenarios which compose its repertoire of philosophically-interesting situations by permutating two ideas : (i) the idea of a conscious subject and (ii) the idea of this conscious subject's representation (the classical German "vorstellen") and manipulation of a field of objects : "Under 'object' the philosophy of the subject understands everything that can be represented as existing ; under 'subject' it understands first of all the capacities to relate oneself to such entities in the world in an objectivating attitude and to gain control of objects, be it theoretically or practically." [5]

As the passage quoted in our introduction indicates, Habermas considers this particular pattern of philosophical questioning, this particular "paradigm", to have "exhausted itself". Indeed, he holds, along with numerous other contemporary philosophers, that the attempt to understand even subjectivity, let alone the intersubjectivity of human co-existence, in such "subject-philosophical" terms was from the start structurally flawed and necessarily productive only of irresoluble contradictions and issueless aporia. Habermas's account of the "aporetic" nature of the "subject-philosophical" project draws on a philosophical theme familiar at least since Fichte and developed in the twentieth century by philosophers as diverse as the Adorno of the "Dialectic of Enlightenment" and the Wittgenstein of the "private language argument". The "philosophy of the subject" as Habermas presents it is necessarily self-subversive inasmuch as the idea of "self-consciousness" which forms this philosophy's most essential point of reference cannot be coherently derived from that permutating of representing subjectivity and represented objectivity which constitutes the "philosophy of the subject"'s primary, indeed exclusive, conceptual resource.

Habermas portrays "subject-philosophy"'s failure here in the following terms : "According to (the model of the philosophy of consciousness), the subject, both in representing and in acting, relates in an objectivating attitude to objects or states of affairs [6]. Epistemic *self*-consciousness is supposed to be decisive for the subjectivity of a subject that

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[5] Habermas, "Theory of Communicative Action", Volume One, p. 387.

[6] Translated into English, Habermas's "das Subjekt bezieht sich in objektivierender Einstellung auf Gegenstände oder Sachverhalte" sounds almost nonsensical : after all, how could one possibly relate to "objects" except "in an objectivating attitude" ? The point, of course - brought out more clearly by the original German, which avoids such an apparently pleonastic turn of phrase as "objectivated objects" by using discrete terms ("objektivieren" and "Gegenstand") where the English uses cognate ones - is simply the linguistic-philosophical one that consciousness does not relate to "objects" at all in the sense of entities in the world rising directly to confront ("gegen-stehend") an isolated human mind, but rather relates to these "objects" only *mediatedly* , through the medium of an intersubjectively shared language, and hence in this sense in an other than "objectivating attitude".

relates in this way to objects. As a subject it is essentially characterized by the fact that it has knowledge not only of objects but also and equiprimordially of itself. This knowledge the subject has of itself, in which knowing and what is known coincide, has to be thought on the model of the knowledge of objects. The self-knowledge constitutive for self-consciousness has to be explicated in such a way that the subject relates to itself as to any object and gives a description of its experiences as of any state of affairs - but with the intuitively penetrating certainty of being identical with this object or these states..." [7] This conceptual strategy, however, in Habermas's view "leads us in a circle" [8] . He cedes to Ernst Tugendhat the honour of giving explicit account of this circularity, quoting a passage from the latter's 1979 book "Self-Consciousness and Self-Determination" : "Self-consciousness is supposed to be consciousness of an 'I'. But, we are told, something is an 'I' only when it has the structure of the identity of knowing and what is known. Now if, according to the theory of reflection, self-consciousness is achieved in a turning-back upon itself, then the identity of knowing with what is known is first established in this turning-back. On the other hand, the subject upon which the act turns back is already supposed to be an 'I' ; thus, on the one hand, in turning back the act is supposed to represent the 'I' ; on the other hand, according to the concept of the 'I', it is first constituted in this act...In starting with a subject that is already available, the theory of reflection presupposes something that is supposed to be actually constituted only in relation to itself." [9]

Habermas believes that this essential circularity of the "subject-philosophical" attempt to theorize subjectivity has played a role in the "paradigm" of the "philosophy of consciousness" comparable to the role played in natural-scientific "paradigms" by what Kuhn calls recurrent intra-paradigmatic "anomalies". The tensions and aporia arising out of this fundamental structural incoherence, claims Habermas, gradually accumulated in modern "subject-philosophy" until they provoked, in the twentieth century, a "scientific revolution", a "paradigm shift". This "paradigm shift" was so long delayed, the "anomaly" of the inability of subjectivity to seize itself as subjectivity was so long tolerated and accommodated, because for centuries the "philosophy of subjectivity" enjoyed the illusory "safety net" of metaphysics. For a thinker like Fichte, who certainly perceived the contradiction involved in the "subject-

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[7] Habermas, "Theory of Communicative Action", Volume One, p. 394.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.

philosophical" consciousness of self's not in fact being a consciousness of "self" in the sense of a consciousness of an "I" at all, it still seemed a viable option to retreat from this contradiction into an infinite regress of empirical, transcendental and meta-transcendental "egos". In the post-metaphysical era of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, the "anomaly" of subjectivity's tending to objectify itself even in attempting to seize itself as subjectivity has been tractable no longer at the level of transcendentality or transcendence, but only at the level of immanence. At this level, however, this problem is, on "subject-philosophical" terms, simply *intractable*. All nineteenth and twentieth century philosophies which have failed to make a "paradigm shift" away from the framework of the "philosophy of consciousness" have found themselves confronted at the end of every line of their investigations with the aporetic conclusion that there *is* no "consciousness", no "subject", that the "subject" is no more and can be no more than an "object".

This is, of course, the position which Habermas considers his Critical-Theoretical predecessors to have arrived at by 1940 and the sufficient foundation, in Habermas's view, for a description of first-generation Critical Theory as a doctrine which, at this point in its history, simply "foundered". *Prima facie*, classical Critical Theory might seem to have arrived at this conclusion - a conclusion indeed plainly stated in texts like the "Dedication" of Adorno's 1951 "Minima Moralia", where modern subjects are described as "no more than component parts of the machinery", individual existences "determined even in their most hidden recesses by objective powers" [10] - by a process of political and historical description and analysis rather than by one of abstract philosophical investigation. Habermas, however, claims to identify this self-destructive dialectic of "subject-philosophy" - which Adorno and Horkheimer were to in his view *falsely* generalize into a "dialectic of enlightenment" - as already a determinant element of Hegel's thought, and a determinant at the level of methodology and basic conceptual strategy.

In his 1985 book "The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity", Habermas traces back to Hegel and, out of Hegel, forward through the whole of later modernity the philosophical figure of subjectivity's constituting itself an object, "reifying" itself - rendering itself heteronomous - in that very act of "self-relation" by which it had aspired to constitute itself a subject - to render itself autonomous. Out of Hegel's early "Spirit of Christianity" essay, Habermas reads the idea that "(the) repressive character of reason is universally grounded in

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[10] See Adorno, "Minima Moralia" (New Left Books, 1974), p. 15.

the structure of self-relationship, that is, in the relationship of a subject that makes itself an object." [11] Of modern philosophy as a whole he writes that "agreement...exists about the fact that the authoritarian traits of a narrow-minded enlightenment are imbedded in the principle of self-consciousness or of subjectivity. That is to say, the self-relating subjectivity purchases self-consciousness only at the price of objectivating internal and external nature. Because the subject has to relate itself constantly to objects both internally and externally in its knowing and acting, it renders itself at once opaque and dependent in the very acts that are supposed to secure self-knowledge and autonomy." [12] And with regard to the "philosophy of praxis" initiated by Marx, Habermas writes that "the necessity for self-objectification is immanent in the structure of (this latter philosophy's favoured model of the subject as collective) self-externalization just as it was in the structure of the relation-to-self." [13]

In texts like "The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity", in fact, Habermas accords such an enormous historical and cultural ambit to this figure of subjectivity's self-objectification that one might be forgiven for believing that the state of affairs so described is one which he holds to have to be situated "on the side of the object". But, as we have seen, this is not the case. The whole thrust of Habermas's argument in texts like the "Theory of Communicative Action" and "The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity" is one *against* the interpretation of the dialectic of subjectivity and objectivity as a dialectic lying "on the side of the real" - both in the sense of that ontological reality suggested by philosophical discourses like Hegel's and in the sense of that historical and political reality which it was at least the subjective intention of Adorno and Horkheimer to record. For Habermas, the dialectic of subjectivity's inevitable self-objectification is, *pace* Hegel and *pace* Adorno and Horkheimer, a phenomenon situated "on the side of thought". It is, as we have seen, in Habermas's view a function not of any ontological or historical reality, but a function only of a particular methodological approach to this reality : the approach characteristic of the "philosophy of subjectivity" or "philosophy of consciousness", which does not offer conceptual resources for any other comprehension of subjectivity than a "dialectical", a self-subverting and self-cancelling one.

Hence the need for a "shift" to the second of the "paradigms" mentioned in the first passage quoted from Habermas, the "paradigm of the theory of communication". Habermas

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[11] Habermas, "Philosophical Discourse of Modernity" (Polity Press, 1987), p. 27.

[12] Ibid. p. 55.

[13] Ibid. p. 67.

believes that the vicious circle of subjectivity's self-objectification can be broken where we conceive of the subject no longer as a completely autonomous first principle but rather as a "relatively autonomous" principle derived from the higher principle of communicative intersubjectivity. Where the fact of intersubjective inter-relation is accepted to be an as it were "transcendental condition" of the emergence of any subjectivity, the insoluble problem of how the subject grasps itself as a subject without thereby grasping itself as in fact no more than an object is not solved, but rather dissolved. "*Ego* then stands within an interpersonal relationship that allows him to relate to himself as a participant in an interaction from the perspective of *alter*. And indeed this reflection undertaken from the perspective of the participant escapes the kind of objectification inevitable from the reflexively applied perspective of the observer. Everything gets frozen into an object under the gaze of the third person, whether directed inwardly or outwardly. The first person, who turns back upon himself in a performative attitude from the angle of vision of the second person, can recapitulate the acts this second person has just carried out. In place of reflectively objectified knowledge - the knowledge proper to self-consciousness - we have a recapitulating reconstruction of knowledge already employed."[14]

The exact philosophical status of the "paradigm shift to communication" which Habermas here suggests is, as we have already noted in connection with Habermas's often ambiguous usage of the term "paradigm", admittedly somewhat unclear. In these remarks from the concluding sections of "The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity" too, the "shift of attention" recommended appears conspicuously less transcendentalist, and more voluntaristic, than anything envisaged by Kuhn. "The objectifying attitude in which the knowing subject regards itself as it would entities in the external world" does not here, as it would on a more strictly Kuhnian schema, become *incomprehensible* ; it merely forfeits its "privileged" status, its quality of being "paradigmatic *for*" the theorization of human experience. [15] There now becomes "fundamental" to philosophical thought "the performative attitude of participants in interaction, who coordinate their plans for action by coming to an understanding about something in the world." [16]

We will be investigating in later chapters of this study the complex question of how

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[14] Ibid. p. 297.
[15] Ibid. p. 296.
[16] Ibid.

Habermas combines his ideas on the "privileging" and the "fundamentality" of particular phenomena *in* the world with the narrative of world-*encompassing* forms or modes of rationality, that is, with the "paradigm shift" narrative in the strict sense. For the moment, however, we have established the basis for at least a rough and provisional clarification of the meaning of the initially rather hermetic claim which we declared it, in our introduction, to be our aim to investigate and critique : Habermas's claim that first-generation Critical Theory "foundered on the exhaustion of the paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness" and that the realization of Critical Theory's original intentions is only possible where this "consciousness-philosophical paradigm" is exchanged for the "paradigm of the theory of communication". The "foundering" to which Habermas refers is the theoretical shipwreck which, in Habermas's view, is the only correct description of the fate already by definition suffered by any theory which has arrived at the conclusion that social subjects are no more than "component parts of the machinery". As we have seen, Habermas considers this fate to have been one common to *all* the "philosophies of the subject" dominating high modern European thought. This conclusion was an inevitable one given the premises of the "philosophy of subjectivity" itself. If Adorno's and Horkheimer's post-1940 work made this idea its increasingly dominant "leitmotif", this was only a sign of the extraordinary intellectual consistency of the social theory developed within the "subject-philosophical" paradigm by members of the early Frankfurt School. As Habermas remarked in an interview given at the time of the publication of the "Theory of Communicative Action" : "What I consider Adorno's greatness, what gives him his position in the history of philosophy, is the fact that he was the only one to develop remorselessly and spell out the paradoxes of this form of theory construction, of the dialectic of enlightenment that unfolds the whole as the untrue. In this sense of critical insistence, he was one of the most systematic and effective thinkers I know. Of course, one can draw various conclusions from the results. Either one presses on in the illuminating exercise of negative philosophy...or, on the other hand, one takes a step back and says to oneself : Adorno has shown that one must go back to a stage before the dialectic of enlightenment because, as a scientist, one cannot live with the paradoxes of a self-negating philosophy." [17]

Without, then, having to go at this point into the question of what precisely "Critical Theory's original intentions" can be said to have been, we can recognize that, from

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[17] See Peter Dews ed. "Habermas : Autonomy and Solidarity", p. 98.

Habermas's point of view, no such intentions could, within the increasingly obviously aporetic apparatus of the "philosophy of subjectivity", ever have had any chance of being realized. No theory, indeed, with a practical or critical intent could have hoped to realize this intent where the only "bearer" of practice and critique which this theory had proven capable of nominating was tending, for the most basic structural reasons, to subvert and negate itself. It is for this reason that Habermas has repeatedly stated that first-generation Critical Theory remained throughout its career without visible "normative foundations". The "paradigm shift to the theory of communication" is intended by Habermas to provide these lacking "normative foundations". Obviously, we are not yet in a position to review these foundations in detail. Even at this point, however, it appears *prima facie* plausible that a shift of theoretical attention to intersubjective practices of communication and interaction might imbue once again with life and motion the theoretical constructions which, on Habermas's account of the development of modern philosophy, had inevitably, by proceeding from the premisses of the "philosophy of the subject", ossified into an "objectivism" which could no longer even account for its own existence as a theory of subjectivity and society. At the very least, the "paradigm shift to the theory of communication" would seem to open up a prospect for Critical Theory of discovering a "bearer" for its necessarily practical task more reliable than the vanishing, self-objectifying subject.

(ii)

What objections can be raised to this Habermasian narrative ? Obviously, one respect in which Habermas exposes himself to criticism is in his extension of the category of the "philosophy of consciousness" to include, as we have noted, modern philosophy *as a whole*, at least until the advent of ordinary language philosophy and symbolic interactionism in the twentieth century. Although Habermas has often identified episodes in and aspects of the work of high modern philosophers as more or less vague intimations of the verity of *a priori* intersubjectivism, almost every major figure in European thought between 1600 and 1900 is categorized in Habermas's recent work as on balance and in the last analysis a "thinker working within the paradigm of the philosophy of the subject". Habermas not only naturally and quite rightly applies this description to Descartes and to the psychological analyses of the British empiricists. He also, as we have already partially observed, extends it to Hegel - the

Hegelian Absolute is "conceived on the model of the relation-to-self of a knowing subject" [18]

and Hegel therefore "conceives the overcoming of subjectivity within the boundaries of a

philosophy of the subject" [19] - to Marx - Marx's work only "shifted the accent within the model

of modern philosophy" from the cognitive to the manipulative relations entertained by

subjectivity with a world of mere objects [20] - and even to apparently radically "post-

subjectivist" contemporary philosophers like Foucault and Derrida - these latter thinkers being

claimed to merely "abstractly negate" the principle of the self-referential subject, to not

oppose to it any other coherently-developed "paradigmatic" principle and hence to remain

nolens volens caught within the conceptual "gravitational field" of the "philosophy of

consciousness". [21]

This *grand récit* of an all-encompassing "paradigm of the philosophy of the subject"

has, of course, on the one hand prompted a line of objection to the direction that Habermas's

recent work has taken which might be described - to use a phrase already somewhat over-

used in contemporary German philosophy - as a "thinking with Habermas against Habermas".

Some writers very close to the present Frankfurt theoretical milieu, such as Seyla Benhabib,

have chosen as their line of attack on Habermas's present position the thesis that Habermas

himself may not have fully transcended the "philosophy of the subject" - that is, that the class

of those "thinking within the paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness" should perhaps

be given an even greater extension than the already vast extension given to it by Habermas

himself. [22] On the other hand, however, there have been expressed by various thinkers less

close to Habermas's own milieu serious doubts about whether there can be defended for the

idea of "the paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness" even the extension which this

category enjoys in Habermas's own work. This latter line of objection seems to me to be by far

the more viable, or at least in the present theoretical conjuncture by far the more requisite, of

the two. It is this line which I want to pursue in this study.

The North American scholar Robert B. Pippin has provided one example of this line of

argument. His particular concern is Habermas's misrepresentation of Hegel's philosophical

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[18] Habermas, "The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity" p. 40.

[19] Ibid. p. 22.

[20] Ibid. p. 63.

[21] Ibid. p. 296.

[22] See, for example, Seyla Benhabib, "Critique, Norm and Utopia" (Columbia University Press, 1986), Chapter Eight.

position in his attempt to cram this latter into the category of "philosopher of consciousness". "To understand," writes Pippin in his recent article "Hegel, Modernity and Habermas", "what Hegel might mean by such claims (as that "the world is the product of the freedom of intelligence" - A.R.) we have to understand first that he accepts a Kantian rather than a Cartesian version of the 'self-grounding of modernity', and that these are *very* different programmes. The Cartesian ideal of self-sufficiency, a radical self-grounding, was understood to begin with the self's apprehension of the indubitable, the incorrigibly given contents of its own consciousness, and to proceed 'outwards' by methodologically rigorous means. It cannot mean anything like that for Kant since, for him, simply being in a mental state does not even count as an experience, much less a foundational one. The prior question concerns the rules under which a subject could determine 'for itself' what such contents are taken to be. The key, difficult point is : the mind is a 'spontaneity', not a 'mirror of Nature', *not even a mirror of itself* . Ultimately, once such a point is appreciated, it will mean that there is no such thing as '*the* philosophy of consciousness', or at least that the differences between the programme common to Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Husserl on the one hand, and Kant's philosophy and its descendants on the other, are far more important than their similarities." [23]

Pippin's argument here, I believe, is important not so much for the point which it makes about the philosophy of Hegel in particular - the argument of this study will in fact tend in this regard in a direction diametrically opposed to Pippin's - as for the point which it makes about the philosophical culture of the German "Goethezeit" in general. What Pippin claims here almost in passing regarding Kant constitutes in fact a much blunter and more decisive contradiction of Habermas's general philosophical-historical position than does the central claim which he raises regarding Hegel. Habermas is in fact not entirely recalcitrant to the recognition of a certain "break" in philosophical history - a break, of course, falling *within* the era of "the philosophy of the subject" - separating Hegel from Descartes. The idea that Kant, however, might belong anywhere else than in the direct descendancy of the Cartesian "philosophy of individual consciousness" seems to be one that has never entered Habermas's head.

In a key passage of the "Theory of Communicative Action", for example, Habermas demonstrates his adherence to the established practice of assigning a basically "common-sensical", or Cartesian, meaning to the concept of "subjectivity" at the heart of the Kantian

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[23] See Robert B. Pippin, "Hegel, Modernity and Habermas", "Monist" 1991, pps. 329-357.

philosophy while assigning a decidedly non-"common-sensical", a more than Cartesian, meaning to this concept as it functions in Hegel's system. Discussing first-generation Critical Theory's attempts to develop a non-metaphysical conception of "reconciliation" between human beings, he remarks that "the fear of a fall back into metaphysics is appropriate only so long as one moves within the horizon of the modern philosophy of the subject. The idea of reconciliation cannot plausibly be accommodated in the basic concepts of the philosophy of consciousness from Descartes to Kant ; and in the concepts of objective idealism from Spinoza and Leibniz to Schelling and Hegel, it can only be given an extravagant (überschwengliche) formulation." [24]

Here, in fact, the idea of "the modern philosophy of the subject" appears as slightly less of a "monolith" than in most of Habermas's recent writing. It is recognized that, within the broad homogeneity of a type of philosophical discourse centred on "the category of the subject and its relation to its objects", there can and must be recognized the existence of significantly heterogeneous conceptions of precisely *how* the subject relates to its objective world, including the world constituted by those other subjects which emerge among the subject's objects. Where - it seems to be being argued by Habermas here - "the philosophy of consciousness", in the narrow sense of a Cartesianism centred on the subject as an hermetic and atomistic locus of individual experience, is simply *deficient* to theorize certain phenomena of social and even individual experience, the "objective idealist" form of the "philosophy of the subject" on the contrary *overshoots* the goal of theorizing these phenomena, positing communication and reconciliation as metaphysical "givens" - transcendental "always already"s merely "obscured" by philosophically unenlightened misperception. The particular "philosophy of the subject" which found its paradigm expressions in German "Goethezeit" systems like Schelling's and Hegel's, then, is identifiable with Descartes' "philosophy of the subject" insofar as both ultimately fail to theorize such phenomena as intersubjectivity ; in the *manner* of their failure, however, the two kinds of thought are barely comparable, let alone identifiable.

This conception certainly appears more historically defensible, and more philosophically interesting, than the crude vision of all modern philosophy as an homogeneous "philosophy of consciousness" which seems to be implied by many of Habermas's texts. It does at least some justice to the *prima facie* fact that the "subject-

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[24] Habermas, "Theory of Communicative Action", Volume One, p. 387.

philosophy" of the "Goethezeit" represents a system of thought having little more than certain features of terminology - "subject", "representation" - in common with Cartesianism or British empiricism. But even the idea of the structure of modern philosophy expressed in the passage from the "Theory of Communicative Action" quoted remains in key respects a crude one. It reacts, after all, only to what is really quite unignorable in modern philosophical history : the fact that Hegel is clearly no longer talking about the same kind of "subject" as was Descartes. Moreover, by placing Kant firmly on the Cartesian side of the divide between the "deficient" philosophy of individuality and the "exaggerated" philosophy of collective subjectivity, it denies to the thought of the "Goethezeit" that continuity and unity which was in fact one of its most important features. Pippin's proposal is much more satisfying : the break with Descartes comes not with Hegel but already with Kant ; the *whole* of "Goethezeit" philosophy represents an investigation of the problematic of subjectivity which is in key respects incommensurable with earlier rationalist and empiricist attempts to understand individual consciousness.

Pippin's drawing, into the problematic of the theory of subjectivity, of a *non-Cartesian Kant* will shortly become of central importance to this study. For the moment, however, I want to turn to examine Habermas's implicit response to Pippin's more general charge that his idea of "the paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness" cannot in fact accommodate the non-Cartesian philosophy of the "Goethezeit" in general. For Habermas - given his philosophical-historical situation, just examined, of Kant as a "Cartesian" - this charge must of course be interpreted primarily as a charge that the "paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness" cannot accommodate objective idealist systems like Hegel's. The discussion of Habermas's arguments for the inclusion of Hegel's thought in the category of a self-subversive "subject-philosophy", however, will necessarily lead us back to the question of Kant.

(iii)

If there is any reason for considering Hegel's "subject" to be a radically different entity from the "subject" of Descartes' philosophy the reason is, of course, that Hegel's "subject" is claimed to be in the last philosophical analysis a "subject-object", an aspect of an Absolute embracing both cognition and the whole of the cognized universe. Habermas's and his generation's rejection of this idea can doubtless be in part situated within a process of enlightenment more general, more "vulgar", than that emanating from the "*a priori*

intersubjectivist" arguments of ordinary language and symbolic interactionist philosophy. Largely aside from their different positions on the question of whether the concept "subject" is a viable philosophical *primum mobile* in its immediately phenomenologically appealing, Cartesian form or not, the mass of German philosophers have come since circa 1945 commonly to share the view of the "non-philosophical" "Verstandesdenker" of Hegel's day : that this concept is on the grounds of mere common sense decidedly not viable in its radically counter-intuitive Hegelian sense. The Hegelian idea of "Geist" as a "trans-subject" (the term is Seyla Benhabib's) standing in the same relation to individual subjects as the individual organism does to its various organs has retreated from recent German thought by reason partly of its sheer "Überschwenglichkeit", its "extravagance".

This definitive retreat of the idea of collective "Geist" from the German philosophical scene was delayed, of course by the significant rearguard actions of mid-twentieth century Marxist theory. For a period, it appeared that the idea of "Geist" could be preserved from the loss of all credible experiential reference by being interpreted as a cipher for the collective *economic* activity of Mankind. Hegelian Marxism shifted, as we have seen Habermas point out, the accent in the interpretation of the Hegelian concept of the overarching collective Absolute from the moment of contemplation to the moment of collective labour. First-generation Critical Theory contains some paradigmatic statements of this position, such as the following passage from the second of Adorno's "Three Studies On Hegel" : "Hegel was sensitive to the repressive and brutal moment in Kant's humility ; he rebelled against the famous statement with which this latter's version of Enlightenment won the approval of the obscurantists : 'I had thus to limit knowledge to make room for faith.'...Hegel's answer to this is: 'The hidden essence of the universe has no force in itself which might resist the boldness of knowledge ; it must open itself to knowledge and lay its treasures and its depths before knowledge's eyes'. In such formulations, the Baconian pathos of the rising bourgeoisie is expanded to become the pathos of a Mankind freed from tutelage, the pathos of the idea that things can still after all be brought to some good...The extreme of philosophical idealism, by the measure of which in the early Hegel as in Hölderlin the unfaithful spirit which has sold itself to mere use is condemned, has its materialist implications...Hegel draws all the nearer to social materialism the further he pushes his epistemological idealism, the more he insists, against Kant, on understanding objectivity 'from the inside out'. The faith of 'Geist' that the world 'in itself' is nothing other than this very 'Geist' is not only the narrow illusion of mind's

omnipotence. It nourishes itself from the experience that there exists nothing that is not in some sense mediated by human production, nothing that is not somehow dependent on human labour." [25]

It should be noted even at this point that the opposition here of a "materialist because idealist" Hegel to an "idealist because obscurantist" Kant is by no means the be all and end all of first-generation Critical Theory's own philosophical-historical position. This opposition is a "thesis" , "antitheses" to which can be discovered even within the very essay of Adorno's from which this passage is taken. For the moment, however, the Hegelian Marxist position expressed here by Adorno has served to illustrate for us how the concept of "Geist" might be salvaged for post-metaphysical social-philosophical discourse. And in fact Habermas's own amendments to his predecessors' Critical-Theoretical positions do not necessarily tend toward a total rejection of the idea of an Absolute manifest in the form of individual human beings' cooperative interaction. Habermas has not in his own work explicitly retreated from the position that the level at which individual human beings' actions interlock with one another and form systems autonomous from these individual human beings' wills and decisions is a more fruitful level on which to initiate social-philosophical research than is the level of these individual wills and decisions themselves. He has insisted only, against positions like the one expressed by Adorno in the passage quoted, that the power to structure and determine the broader context of individual decision and action is not one exclusive to "labour" or cooperative economic activity. Rather, cooperative *communicative* action also possesses qualities like those ascribed by Hegel to "Geist". Communicative activity connects up the individual subject to a reality - a reality of truth-claims and moral obligations - in key respects transcendent and comprehensive of his personal subjectivity.

In Habermas's view, however, the recognition that the idea of "Geist" must be interpreted primarily in communicative rather than primarily in contemplative or primarily in economically productivist terms imposes on the Hegelian idea the crucial restriction that "Geist" can no longer be conceived of as the property of a *subject* in *any* sense of this term. If the all-permeating medium of every individual human action is in fact the medium of linguistic communication *between* subjects, then it is misleading to portray this medium in terms of that metaphor of subjectivity in "dialogue" and "interaction" ultimately only *with itself* which is central to Hegel's own philosophy. Indeed, in Habermas's view, this conceptual strategy is

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25 See Adorno, "Hegel : Three Studies" (MIT Press, 1993), pps 67-8.

more than merely misleading. This is in fact the point at which the concession of a distinction between Cartesian and Hegelian "subject-philosophy" can and must be withdrawn. Where the essence of what is specifically "human" in our experience is conceived of as an "absolute subject", the self-destructive dialectic of Cartesian "consciousness-philosophy" - the subject's transformation of itself, in the attempt to grasp its own subjectivity, into an object - is merely repeated at another level. Conceived of as a subject, the Absolute, argues Habermas, tends to gain a certain diremptive independence over against its supposedly component individual consciousnesses. These component individual consciousnesses become objects to the Absolute and the Absolute an object to them.

From this there result phenomena correspondent, on a higher plane, to the Cartesian phenomenon of the subject's structurally inevitable self-objectification. One example which Habermas chooses to focus on in his "Philosophical Discourse of Modernity" is the "emphatic institutionalism" arising from Hegel's conception of the universal subject as the "State" : "A subject that is related to itself in knowing itself encounters itself both as a *universal* subject, which stands over against the world as the totality of possible objects, and at the same time as an *individual* 'I', which appears in this world as a particular entity. If the Absolute is then thought of as infinite subjectivity that is eternally giving birth to objectivity in order to raise itself out of its ashes into the glory of absolute knowledge, then the moments of the universal and the individual can be thought of as unified only in the framework of monological self-knowledge : In the concrete universal, the subject as universal maintains a primacy over the subject as individual. For the sphere of the ethical, the outcome of this logic is the primacy of the *higher-level subjectivity of the State* over the subjective freedom of the individual. Dieter Henrich has called this the 'emphatic institutionalism' of the Hegelian philosophy of right. 'The individual will, which Hegel calls subjective, is totally bound to the institutional order and only justified at all to the extent that the institutions are one with it." [26]

A system like Hegel's is then, argues Habermas, even in its fully developed form, where all its characteristic ontological resources have been summoned to the cause of transcending that tendency to self-consciousness's structural self-objectification which had plagued Cartesianism, still trapped in a process whereby "the subject...renders itself at once opaque and dependent in the very acts that are supposed to secure self-knowledge and

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[26] Habermas, "Philosophical Discourse of Modernity", p. 40

autonomy." [27] The choice of the idea of "subjectivity" as the central organizing category of philosophical investigation gives rise to aporia even where this idea is inflated into a metaphysical Absolute which has *prima facie* little or nothing in common with empiricist and individualist conceptions of the *res cogitans*.

It is impossible to overlook the convergence of Habermas's thought here with Adorno's. Adorno's work was, of course, as much a critique of Hegel's basic conceptual apparatus as an appropriation of this apparatus for Marxism - he states the intention behind his "Three Studies On Hegel" to be the "preparation of a transformed concept of dialectics" [28] - and his critical points appear *prima facie* to be often no more than vague prefigurations of Habermas's. Just as Habermas denies that Hegel ever really transcended the "paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness", Adorno denies that Hegel's philosophy, despite those "materialist implications" of the system which we have seen him point out, ever really "left idealism behind" [29]. Apparently even more decisively, Adorno like Habermas identifies as Hegel's conception's most fundamental failure the fact that "the Hegelian 'subject-object' is a subject". [30]

Admittedly, where Habermas's concern is plainly with the inaccomodability of the experience of non-objectifying intersubjectivity in a subject-centred schema like that of Hegel's system of objective idealism, Adorno's concern is rather with the failure of this system really to accommodate what he calls the "objective" : "The absolute stringency and closedness," Adorno writes, "of the process of reasoning which (Hegel) institutes, with Fichte, against Kant, sets up as such the priority of mind, even if at every stage the subject determines itself as much as object as does the object as subject...In the objectivity of the Hegelian dialectic, which strikes down all mere subjectivism, there inheres something of the subject's will to jump over its own shadow." [31] But even this distinction between Adorno's "anti-Hegelianism" and Habermas's appears susceptible of being minimised from a "communications-philosophical" point of view. Habermas suggests, in the "Theory of Communicative Action", that Adorno's discourse on "mimesis" - which Adorno himself decidedly understood as a discourse on the possibility of subjectivity's breaking out of the

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[27] Ibid. p. 55.

[28] Adorno, "Hegel : Three Studies", p. xxxvi.

[29] Ibid. p. 13

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

sphere of its own dialectic into the sphere of an "undialectisable" objectivity, or "Nature" - can be construed as a groping toward the idea of a transcendence of the "paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness" in the direction of a philosophy of *a priori* intersubjectivism and a "theory of communication". [32]

Where the undeniable similarities between Adorno's and Habermas's rejections of the Hegelian "philosophy of the subject" are construed and elaborated upon in this direction, the idea which we are concerned to criticize in this study - that the philosophical and political project of first-generation Critical Theory finds its real meaning and maintains its viability only within the framework of Habermas's generation's "philosophy of communication" - appears on the contrary placed further beyond criticism, confirmed as a sound account of what has been and is at stake in Frankfurt School thought. We need, then, in view of our purposes, to question whether this construal of the relation between Adorno's and Habermas's rejection of Hegelian "subject-philosophy" is itself a sound one. In order to do this, however, we must take a step back from Critical Theory itself and consider in its broader historical context the particular object of our present discussion, the objective idealism of Hegel, with its conception of the subject as a metaphysical Absolute.

(iv)

In Hegelianism, we have seen, the principle of subjectivity was claimed to stand in an essential relation to the principle of the Absolute. Specifically, the relation of identity. But this identitarian "subject / Absolute" construction was in fact only one of a whole range of "subject / Absolute" constructions developed by German "Goethezeit" thought. One leading scholar of the period has even summed up the whole culture of the "Goethezeit" in these terms : "The leading figures of this epoch experience the human being as a human being ever more individual, situated in a period of dissolution of the great comprehending ties to the religiosity of the old church and to the hierarchy of the old society. But in the moment in which, in the course of this dissolution, the idea of the Absolute - formerly preserved in and preserving through these very ties - threatens to evaporate, this idea is once again summoned to life for modernity, captured and expressed in word and tone and form. The eternal is made experienceable anew as a creative Nature / God (Goethe), as an 'Idea' (Schiller), as a freely fulfillable law (Kant), as a force in the soul working toward exaltation (Jean Paul), as myth

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[32] See Habermas, "Theory of Communicative Action", Volume One, pps. 389-90.

(Hölderlin) or as universal 'Geist' (the Romantics). The world is in the art of this epoch interpreted and represented from the point of view of Man, of the experiencing individual, just as for Kant the world only exists as a world in relation to the questioning, cognizing human being with his innate forms of intuition. But what rich transformations this subjectivistic world-interpretation undergoes! Everywhere, it remains in a relation to the Absolute. The world is still piously experienced as a divine creation...and the poetic capacity maintains itself as the desire and the ability to see and make visible the individual, the actual and the fugacious as a metaphor of the eternal." 33

The author of this passage initially concedes to Habermas that the Cartesian discovery of individual subjectivity as the cornerstone of experience was determinant for modern culture as a whole. He immediately adds, however, that this new principle of individual subjectivity can by no means be said to have been left to stand alone as the foundation for modern Man's understanding of his own condition, but must be seen to have been compounded, in the "Goethezeit" period of German culture at least, with older, religious and metaphysical principles of explanation and legitimation. Our review of Habermas's - and apparently also Adorno's - reduction of the Hegelian compound of subject and Absolute to a mere metaphysical inflation of its "subjective" component cannot be said to have already entirely deprived this latter stipulation of any significance. Besides to the particular "Romantic" conception of the relation between subjectivity and Absolute as one between ultimately identical aspects of a unitary "Geist", reference is made here to numerous other modes of synthesization of these two principles. Can the same reductionistic logic which Habermas applies to Hegel be legitimately applied also to what the author of this passage calls Jean Paul's conception of "a force in the soul working toward exaltation" or Kant's idea of the Absolute as "a freely fulfillable law" ? In order to answer these questions, some kind of broad conception of the place of the "Goethezeit" in European philosophical history as a whole must be developed.

One of Habermas's close philosophical collaborators provides the rudiments of an apparatus with which to construct such a conception. Habermas has often acknowledged that it was Ernst Tugendhat, not himself, who first proposed conceiving of the history of

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33 Wolfdietrich Rasch, "Die Zeit der Klassik und der Frühen Romantik" in H. O. Burger (ed.) "Annalen der deutschen Literatur" (Stuttgart 1971) pps. 465-66.

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philosophy in terms of discontinuous "paradigms" of investigation. [34] Habermas's reference here is to Tugendhat's 1970 "Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Analytische Philosophie", which have appeared in English under the title "Traditional and Analytical Philosophy". What Tugendhat outlines in these influential lectures is the idea that "the important philosophical positions of the past always took as their starting-point certain fundamental substantive questions around which the whole field of possible philosophical questions was organized."[35] These "organizing questions" Tugendhat reduces to the number of three : the question as to Being, which "organized" philosophical investigation in antiquity and in the middle ages ; the question as to the nature of subjective consciousness and its relation to its objects, which "organized" philosophical investigation in early and high modernity, that is, from Descartes at least up until Husserlian phenomenology ; and - to bring Tugendhat's talk of "the philosophical positions of the past" into line with the full actual range of his conception as it is evoked by Habermas - the question as to the meaning of intersubjectively communicated sentences, which has "organized" philosophical investigation since the later Wittgenstein. Plainly, the final two "organizing questions" treated of here correspond exactly to the "paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness" and the "paradigm of the theory of communication" as these ideas function in Habermas's philosophical discourse.

Tugendhat's original conception in fact prefigured Habermas's even in its reintroduction into the Kuhnian "paradigmatic" narrative of an element of teleologism. Although Tugendhat's schema argues of philosophical investigation, as Kuhn's does of natural-scientific research, that such investigation cannot be a matter of the registration of mere "positivities" but is always transcendentally governed by some "organizing question" which alone *constitutes* whatever is to count as the investigation in question's basic "data", Tugendhat nevertheless implicitly presupposes enough of a continuity and commensurability between philosophical "epochs" to be able to state as the very aim and purpose of his lectures the demonstration that "analytical (that is, "communication-theoretical" - A.R.) philosophy contains a fundamental question which can not only compare with the traditional

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[34] "It has become customary to transfer to the history of philosophy," writes Habermas in the course of a recent debate with the Munich philosopher Dieter Henrich which will occupy us at some length in Chapter Three of this study, "the concept of a paradigm stemming from the history of science and to undertake a rough division of epochs in terms of 'being', 'consciousness' and 'language'. It is possible, following Schnädelbach and Tugendhat, to distinguish the corresponding modes of thought as ontology, the philosophy of consciousness and linguistic analysis." (Habermas, "Post-Metaphysical Thinking", Polity Press, 1992, p. 12).

[35] Ernst Tugendhat, "Traditional and Analytical Philosophy", Cambridge University Press, 1982, p. 4.

(that is, "Being-philosophical" and "consciousness-philosophical" - A.R.) approaches but actually proves to be superior to them." [36]

It is to this typically German need to reintroduce elements of the teleologistic *grand récit* even into a narrative originally inspired by the late-Wittgensteinian and profoundly English idea that "things that look the same are really different" that there must be traced the most dubious feature of Tugendhat's "epochal" schema in "Traditional and Analytical Philosophy". The philosophically informed reader cannot help but be troubled by Tugendhat's option to define his first "epoch", that of "the philosophy of Being" or "ontology", exclusively in terms of the thought of Aristotle - to explicitly exclude, that is, from this his first "paradigm" of philosophical investigation, not only the ideas of the pre-Socratics but even the thought of Plato. "Ontology", as Tugendhat defines this first "paradigm" of philosophical investigation in "Traditional and Analytical Philosophy", emerged at the point, and only at the point, where Aristotle purged the concept of Being which he had inherited from Plato of all *substantive* elements and reconceived that "highest principle" which his teacher had envisaged to be the "condition of the universe" *genitivus subjectivus* as a "condition of the universe" merely *genitivus objectivus.* [37]

The basic facts about this Aristotle's critique and revision of Plato are familiar to all students of philosophy. Plato had proceeded in his philosophical work by a process of pure deduction. This process had led him to the thought that behind or above the governing principles of all forms of human knowledge there lay a highest governing principle : that singular idea of Being in opposition to Becoming which he had expressed also in the plural terms of an "order of Ideas" lying at the foundation of all phenomena. Plato, of course, had remained equivocal on the question of the singular or plural nature of the atemporal principle underlying the world of temporal experience. Such dialogues as the "Republic" [38] , the "Philebus"[39] and the "Sophist" [40] suggest that the same sort of relation of deductive subordination might apply between one Idea and the others as applies between the order of Ideas as a whole and the world of appearances, so that the one Idea of Being, of Knowing or

[36] Ibid. p. x.

[37] See ibid. pps. 19-20.

[38] 511b. See "The Complete Dialogues of Plato", Hamilton and Cairns (eds.), Princeton University Press, 1961, p. 746.

[39] 16f. Ibid. p. 1092.

[40] 251f. Ibid. p. 997.

of the Good would stand as the single, absolute Unconditioned determining the whole order of the Conditioned. Such an Absolute or Unconditioned, since it had substantively to determine the whole order of the Conditioned, had also to stand radically outside of this latter order - to stand, that is, in a relation of "chorismos", or radical transcendence, to the order of experience.

Aristotle undertook to challenge and revise all the key aspects of this Platonic doctrine of the Absolute. The inclination of his mind in the opposite logical direction to that of his teacher - his overriding interest in the inductive elements of human knowledge - led him to develop a science of Being of quite a different conceptual structure to Plato's. Where "Being" in Plato had designated a principle *substantively* determinant of the empirical universe, in Aristotle it became the designation merely of the highest *formal* condition of "empiricity" or - to speak rather loosely and anachronistically - of "objectivity" of any sort. As Tugendhat puts it, "(in Aristotle's philosophy) the relation of the highest science to the particular sciences is determined in a new way *vis à vis* the Platonic conception : philosophy no longer embraces the particular sciences as regards their content, but formally ; as ontology, it thematizes that which all sciences formally presuppose rather than the principles from which their propositions could be derived." [41] This shift from substantiality to formality necessarily also involved a shift from transcendence to immanence. Aristotelian "Being", since it was now no more than that which all "beings" had in common *qua* "beings", did not, as had the Platonic, stand in a "chorismatic" relation to the world of immediate experience but inhered and was fully cognizable within this world.

This is the narrative underlying the discussion of antique "Being-philosophy" in Tugendhat's "Traditional and Analytical Philosophy" and, although debate still continues among scholars of classical philosophy today on the issue of whether Aristotle did in fact ever fully abandon the substantialistic conception of the Absolute favoured by Plato, it is not a narrative which we need here seriously to question. What does seem to beg questioning, as we have said, is Tugendhat's decision to classify as "ontology", as "philosophy of Being" proper, *only* the formalized Aristotelian doctrine of the highest condition of "beings *qua* beings" and to exclude the substantialistic Platonic version of this doctrine from the "paradigm" of antique "Being-philosophy" altogether. In fact, in the passage just quoted, Tugendhat twice *contrasts* what he calls "ontology" with the Platonic idea of the substantial

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[41] Tugendhat, "Traditional and Analytical Philosophy", p. 24.

derivation of the principles of empirical science from a transcendent highest principle - the first sentence actually reads : "with the conception of philosophy as ontology the relation of the highest science to the particular sciences is determined in a new way *vis à vis* the Platonic conception" - and the whole discussion of the "philosophy of Being" in "Traditional and Analytical Philosophy" is a discussion of Aristotle's views alone.

One quite respectable reason for such an option on Tugendhat's part does, admittedly, immediately suggest itself. It was, of course, the practice of perhaps the greatest German Aristotle scholar of modern times, Werner Jäger, to draw a distinction between the mature Aristotle as a practitioner of "ontology" and the young Aristotle and his teacher Plato as practitioners of ontological "theology". Jäger, moreover, distinguished "ontology" from "theology" by roughly the same criteria as Tugendhat distinguishes the "philosophy of Being" proper from the Platonic ideas on Being which preceded it. "At first," wrote Jäger in his classic study "Aristotle : Fundamentals of the History of his Development", "(Aristotle) proceeded strictly in the direction indicated by Plato, that is, he retained the supersensible world as the object of first philosophy...and merely replaced the transcendental Ideas with the Prime Mover, which, being unmoved, eternal and transcendent, possessed the properties that Being must have according to Plato. This, his earliest metaphysics, was exclusively a science of the Being that is unmoved and transcendent, i. e. theology. It was not the science of Being as such." [42] For Jäger, as later for Tugendhat, what was to be counted as the "science of Being as such" was rather that stage or aspect of Aristotelian doctrine which eliminated the Platonic idea of Being as a transcendent, God-like substance and "treated Being not as a sort of object separate and distinct from others, but as the common point of reference for all states, properties and relations that are connected with the problem of reality." [43]

If Tugendhat, in treating of "ontology" as the first great "paradigm" of European philosophical investigation, draws under the ambit of this term just the doctrine which Jäger had drawn under it, this is hardly surprising in a scholar raised in the German tradition of classical philology. It must be recognized, however, that the argument of having merely concurred in a well-established philological practice cannot render Tugendhat's procedure in "Traditional and Analytical Philosophy" any less objectionable. The meaning of a practice, here as everywhere, depends closely on the practice in question's context, and the context

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[42] Werner Jäger, "Aristotle : Fundamentals of the History of his Development", Oxford University Press, 1948, p. 219.
[43] Ibid. p. 215.

of Tugendhat's 1970 lectures on analytical philosophy is a radically different one from that of Jäger's 1920 lectures on Aristotle's philosophical development.

The context of Jäger's 1920 lectures and 1923 book was such that, in drawing a distinction between the "ontological" thought of Aristotle and the strictly speaking not "ontological" but rather "theological" thought of Plato, there could be no doubt but that he was drawing a distinction *within* the history of philosophy. Indeed, in the first chapter of his great Aristotle study, Jäger repudiates in advance any attempt that might be made to exploit his characterization of Plato as a "theologian" in order to draw the boundary separating philosophy and non-philosophy between Aristotle and his teacher : "It is not surprising that, in view of the gulf between him and all other science, both ancient and modern, (Plato) has been called a mystic and expelled from the history of thought. If this simple solution were right, however, it would be very hard to understand why he has had such a great influence on the destinies of human knowledge ; and the fact that he was the sun around which revolved persons like Theaetetus, Eudoxus and Aristotle...is sufficient to condemn the cheap wisdom whose notion of the complexity of intellectual currents is so inadequate that it would strike the most revolutionary of all philosophers out of the history of knowledge because he discovered not merely new facts but also new dimensions." [44]

Jäger would have had little choice, had he been familiar with them, but to note a certain complicity of Tugendhat's lectures on "Traditional and Analytical Philosophy" in that "cheap wisdom" which he here refers to. Tugendhat's account plainly achieves what amounts precisely to a "striking of Plato out of the history of knowledge". He stipulates, as we have seen, that all philosophical discourse has been organized either as "ontology", as "consciousness-philosophy" or as "philosophy of language". He then, as we have also seen, denies Plato's thought's legitimate appurtenance to the "paradigm" of "ontology". But Platonic philosophy is plainly even less likely to be legitimately accommodated in the "paradigms" of the "philosophy of consciousness" or the "theory of communication". Consequently, Platonism falls for Tugendhat beyond the pale of philosophical thought altogether.

For Tugendhat's willingness to run the intellectual risks of transposing Jäger's philosophical-historical usages into a context which radically alters their discursive *valeur*, we can identify a motive more reprehensible than the motive of the classical philologist's natural

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[44] Ibid. p. 22.

filial piety. It is in fact only by the complete elimination of the substantive and transcendent, the Platonic, version of the "paradigm" of the "philosophy of Being" from its field of discussion that the architectonic of Tugendhat's argument in "Traditional and Analytical Philosophy" can be preserved. Unlikely as it may seem of a text which devotes itself almost entirely to the exposition and recommendation of the methods of that "ordinary language" philosophy developed in the period 1940-70 in the English-speaking world, "Traditional and Analytical Philosophy" is in its essence a development of an idea central to the thought of Tugendhat's teacher, Martin Heidegger. As Tugendhat has put it in the introduction to a recent popular edition of his philosophical essays, "my dedication of my 'Vorlesungen' to Heidegger has been considered with some amusement as a mere perfunctory bow in the direction of my former teacher. Quite wrongly, in my opinion. The 'Vorlesungen' are an attempt to take up in a new way Heidegger's question as to the unifying element in all human understanding." [45]

This Heideggerian idea of a single principle by virtue of which "everything is the thing that it is" is indeed the forming and linking idea behind the whole argument of "Traditional and Analytical Philosophy". Tugendhat's conception here differs from Heidegger's only insofar as, where Heidegger had envisaged Being as playing perennially, either in resplendent or in occulted form, the central philosophical role of "that by virtue of which everything is the thing that it is", Tugendhat sees Being as having played this role only for the philosophy of antiquity. Let us expand a little on the brief summary given above of the argument of Tugendhat's lectures. Tugendhat's argument runs, fully delineated, as follows : In antiquity - that is, in Tugendhat's exclusively Aristotelian antiquity - all the objects of philosophical research appeared as entities defined relatively to Being, to that "common point of reference for all states, properties and relations that are connected with the problem of reality" which Jäger identifies as the characteristic topic of Aristotle's "ontology". In early modern thought, these objects came all to be redefined relatively to subjective consciousness ; the all-encompassing field which had once appeared as the field of beings relative to Being now appeared as the field of cognized objects relative to the subject of cognition, as "cogitata" relative to an "ego cogitans". Finally, in later modern thought, culminating in the "meaning-as-use", "ordinary language" form of twentieth century linguistic philosophy, this same constitutively universal field came again to be redefined - definitively, Tugendhat seems to hold - as a field of "communicata" relative to an intersubjective community of communicators :

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[45] Ernst Tugendhat, "Philosophische Aufsätze", Suhrkamp, 1992, pps. 12-13.

the highest characteristic of the entities of our experience, the characteristic which binds them together at that most abstract and general level which is philosophy's specific level of operation, is seen to be neither these entities' common participation in Being nor their common emergence as objects for subjective consciousness, but rather their common quality of being things *spoken* about by a consequently necessarily plural body of subjects engaged in linguistic interaction. Tugendhat's disagreement with Heidegger amounts - at least in 1970 - to nothing more than a disagreement as to *which* question best expresses and addresses that problem of "that by virtue of which everything is the thing that it is" which stood at the centre of Heidegger's thought. For Tugendhat, the *question as to the nature of human communicative actions* is the question which Heidegger had all along been groping toward with his "question as to Being" ("Seinsfrage"). It is this "organizing question" of philosophical investigation which is today proving "superior" to, proving indeed to be the as it were secret telos of, all the others.

Now it is plain that in order for Tugendhat's argument to be able to arrive safely at this conclusion - the conclusion that linguistic philosophy or the "theory of communication" stands as it were as the sole inheritor of the entire European philosophical tradition - there must obtain an exact conceptual congruence between each of his three "epochs" : the philosophy of Being, the philosophy of consciousness and the philosophy of language. Tugendhat's philosophical-historical narrative must be and is one in which each "paradigm" of philosophical investigation, each "organizing question", fills out neither one jot less nor one jot more of conceptual space than that which had been filled out by its predecessor or which was to be filled out by its successor. Being, consciousness and language succeed one another in this narrative as commonly *formal, immanent* conditions of all entity. Consequently, with the advent of the principle of subjective consciousness, there immediately remains no further function in philosophical discourse for the principle of Being ; and with the advent of the principle of intersubjective communication, there remains no further autonomous role for the principle of subjectivity. Another theme which Tugendhat implicitly shares with his teacher Heidegger is that of our culture's having reached what is in key respects the "end of philosophy" - but again, for Tugendhat it is the theory of language, not the thought of Being, which relieves or sublates the philosophical tradition as a whole.

Plainly, however, this whole Tugendhatian narrative of the smooth relief of one "organizing question" by another imperatively requires the step which we have noted

Tugendhat to take immediately on its "ground floor" : the exclusion, from the whole problematic, of the substantialistic and transcendent Platonic conception of the Unconditioned or Absolute. The "paradigm" of antique "Being-philosophy" would not, had it comprehended both Aristotelian and Platonic approaches to the question of Being, have been susceptible of being "relieved", without a certain troublesome "remainder", by the early modern "paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness". If the Cartesian idea "'cogitata' relative to the 'ego cogitans'" can substitute with absolute conceptual congruence for the Aristotelian idea "'beings' relative to the immanent point of common reference 'Being'", it cannot fully substitute for that idea of *immanent experience as a whole's* being *limited and substantively determined* by Being which is to be found in Plato.

For these reasons, a narrative like Tugendhat's cannot do full philosophical or historical justice to the culture of a period like the German "Goethezeit". Those linkages, referred to in the passage quoted at the beginning of this section, of the principle of subjectivity to the principle of the "eternal" or the Absolute constitute in fact receptions of the philosophical heritage of the "epoch of the philosophy of Being" into the "epoch of the philosophy of the subject". Tugendhat is in error, then, if he holds that his "universal *a priori* " of Being was cleanly and entirely displaced at the threshold of modernity by a new "universal *a priori* " of conscious subjectivity. But this is only the least of his errors, and its exposure counts for little against his basic argument. That purely *Aristotelian* conception of an ontological "universal *a priori* " which stands in Tugendhat's narrative for "ontology" *tout court* was, as we have seen, more or less consciously designed to be displaced by the "universal *a priori* " of subjectivity. If it survives into the "epoch of the philosophy of the subject" it survives as something which cannot in the end but be recognized to be conceptually superfluous. It survives, that is, as precisely that *Hegelian* conception of the Absolute which, since it is avowedly formally *identical* with subjectivity, analysts like Habermas have no difficulty in critically *reducing to* subjectivity. Tugendhat's *real* error - the error the exposure of which *does* count significantly against his whole philosophical-historical narrative - lies in his denial even of the *availability* within the European philosophical tradition of a *non-Aristotelian* conception of ontology with which early modernity might have synthesized its developing theory of the subject. This is a denial of the existence of certain elements of "Goethezeit" thought which disrupt the progress of his - and, as we shall see, of Habermas's - philosophical-historical narrative in a far more serious way than does Hegel's theory of an identity between

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subject and Absolute. Let us consider the cultural landscape of the "Goethezeit" again in this light.

(v)

The culture of the German "Goethezeit" might be characterized in terms of a simultaneous weaving into the developing structures of modernity both of the heritage of that Aristotelian theory of Being which Tugendhat accords a place to in his narrative and of the heritage of that Platonic theory of Being to which he accords no place at all. If there is an element of radical discontinuity in the culture of this period, it is not the diachronic discontinuity between the "individualist" Kant and the "collectivist" Romantics suggested by one of the passages quoted from Habermas above, but rather a more synchronic discontinuity between a dualistic Platonic and a monistic Aristotelian approach to ontological and moral truth.

Kant is, of course, the source and the continuing foundation of the former. Admittedly, Kant's alignment of his philosophy with Plato's is, in the first "Critique", hedged around with so many qualifications as to seem at first to exclude any meaningful situation of the critical philosophy in a "Platonic tradition". Although Kant explicitly models his own doctrine of "Ideas" on Plato's [46], the place he accords to this doctrine in the broader structure of the first "Critique" is the place of a "logic of illusion" ("Logik des Scheins") [47] . The absolutely transcendent, intelligible but not experienceable, "Ideas of Reason" are portrayed in the first "Critique" as playing only a "regulative", never a "constitutive", role in human affairs. What this appears to mean in the context of the "Critique of Pure Reason" - we can speak only of an "appearance" of meaning because this text is of all Kant's writings the most inconsistent and self-contradictory - is that the objects and concepts classified by Kant as "Ideas of Reason" and ascribed an ontological status roughly identical to that of Plato's "Ideas" have no legitimate place in the account of reality offered by the philosopher. Given, then, that Kant had assigned to this order of mere "Ideas of Reason" such topics of philosophical and practical interest as human freedom, the concept of divinity and the idea of a persisting subjectivity itself, it is no wonder that a section of his "Goethezeit" public felt moved to reject him as an "Alleszermalmer", to construe his philosophy as amounting to a blunt denial of the

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[46] See Kant "Critique of Pure Reason" B368- B376 : "Of Ideas in General". (MacMillan, pps. 309-314).
[47] Ibid. B349. (p. 297).

very possibility of such a thing as non-empirical truth.

The reason that this latter characterization was and is so superficial, however, is that in the process of Kant's clarification of his own thought - in the revised 1787 edition of the "Critique of Pure Reason", for example, and in the moral-philosophical texts of 1785 and 1788 - those Platonic elements of his discourse to which he had originally affixed the puzzling "Vorzeichen" of "mere regulativity" plainly came more and more to function as for all *practical* intents and purposes fully "constitutive". Here, we are interested in the practically "constitutive" function of only certain of the para-Platonic "Ideas or Reason" in Kant's system of philosophy. Specifically, in the function of the complex formed by the "Idea" of subjectivity and the "Idea" of the Unconditioned or of the Absolute.

In contrast to the Cartesian "ego", which indeed appears as the self-evident substance and nexus of all the various elements of the philosopher's cognition and action in the world, Kant's "Ich" is constitutively a composite and radically stratified entity. It can be said to have basically three components or modes of existence - each, however, radically disarticulated from both of the others. Within the order of phenomenal reality, the "I" is constitutive - indeed all-constitutive. It appears here as "the 'I think' which must be capable of accompanying all my representations" , as the "transcendental unity of apperception" itself. From the fact of this "transcendental unity of apperception", however, no conclusion may be drawn as to the existence of a *substance* called the "I", the "self" or the "soul". "I am conscious of myself in the transcendental synthesis of the manifold of my representations..." writes Kant in the "Transcendental Deduction", "neither as I appear to myself, nor as I am in myself ; all that I am conscious of is *that* I am." [48] The "I" here, that is to say, has no place anywhere in Creation ; it is neither phenomenon - "as I appear to myself" - nor noumenon - "as I am in myself" - but the absolutely latent transcendental condition of all Creation.

It is important to understand why the Kantian "I" can be no more than a *latent* transcendental condition of all Creation. The critical philosophy indeed envisages the experienceable universe as something which is constituted by the subject. It envisages, however, this universe as something which is constituted by the subject in such a *way* that it comes to confront its constitutor as something "not his own". The Kantian phenomenal order, one might say, is constituted as an "unconstituted". Or. put in less abstract terms, the world which the Kantian transcendental subject "makes" is a world of pure objectivity, of

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[48] Ibid. B156-57 (p. 168).

thoroughgoing "natural causality". There is no place in it for a "subject" in the sense of a nexus of conation and decision discontinuous with the concatenation of physical cause and effect, no place in it for a *free* personality.

For this reason, the critical philosophy can really treat of the "I" only as an entity outside of the phenomenal order. Here, the constitution of the "I" appears in the reversed form to its constitution within this order. As a transcendent "Idea of Reason", the "I" or the "soul" is *substantial* but *non-constitutive*. The self can be conceived of as unitary and persistent, as the *sub-stans* of all our cognitions and actions, *provided* it is realized that such a conception, such an "Idea", can never be either confirmed or disconfirmed by experience : "(Such Ideas) should not be posited in themselves," writes Kant, this time in the "Transcendental Dialectic". "All that can be accepted as real is their function as a schema for the regulative principle of the systematic unity of all natural cognition. That is to say, they cannot be assumed to exist as real things, but must count as mere analogues to such. We remove from the objects of such Ideas those conditions which set limits to the categories of the Understanding - but which of course also alone make it possible that we can enjoy any determinate concept of anything. We now think a 'something' - a 'something' of the being in itself of which we can form no concept, but which we *can* think of in terms of its having a relation to the essence of all phenomena analogous to those relations which these phenomena have to one another."[49]

Both of these first two Kantian conceptions of the "I" appear in the context of the "Critique of Pure Reason", clearly assigned respectively to the "Transcendental Logic"'s "logic of reality" and to the "Transcendental Dialectic"'s "logic of illusion". In the "Critique of Practical Reason", however, as we have said, Kant undertakes to problematize the sharp division between these two "logics" characteristic of the first "Critique". He develops his account of the practical moment in human subjectivity in terms of a becoming-"constitutive" of the merely "regulative" Idea of substantial personhood developed in the "Transcendental Dialectic". Where the vision outlined in the first "Critique" - or at least in its first, 1781 edition - is strictly held to, no practical moment in human subjectivity seems conceivable as real at all. "Practice" necessary implies for Kant at least the capacity for freedom, and freedom, as we have seen, is in the critical philosophy in its original formulation conceivable only in terms of the absolutely latent freedom of the world-constituting transcendental subject, of the

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[49] Ibid. B701-2 (pps. 551-52).

instance we have come to know here as "the 'I think' that must be capable of accompanying all my representations". The only way that Kant can actually introduce into his system philosophical *theses* about Man's capacity for "practice" in his pregnant sense of this term, then, is to circumvent his own stipulations in the first "Critique" as to the limits of knowledge and become a philosopher not just of *transcendentality* but of *transcendence* - a philosopher of "subjectivity" as a *constitutive* "Idea of Reason" somehow securing a penetration of an extra-worldly "causality of freedom" into the world's exclusive "causality of Nature".

We must recognize, then, that this means that Kant, *pace* Habermas, certainly cannot be classified neatly as a thinker whose work is structured by the question as to subjectivity and its contemplation and manipulation of its objects. Where Kant writes as a philosopher of consciousness - in the first "Critique"'s "Transcendental Deduction" and in the corresponding passages of its "Dialectic" - he neither provides nor makes any attempt to provide a theory of subjectivity. On the contrary, he is the philosopher of anti-subjectivity *par excellence*, showing subjectivity to be either constitutively unreal or really non-constitutive. But where he writes as a philosopher of subjectivity, giving account of that essential practical moment which alone distinguishes subjects as subjects from the concatenation of natural phenomena, he is no longer a philosopher of consciousness. He can construct a theory of practical reason only by plain recourse to that idea characteristic of the supposedly defunct philosophy of Being - and characteristic of it in its Platonic rather than its Aristotelian form - that the whole of experience is rendered a "limited whole" by something which is not itself experienceable - rather merely intelligible - but which nevertheless stands in a necessary relation of mutual implication with the field of experience as a whole.

Kant gives to this "something" the name of the Absolute or the "Unconditioned" ("das Unbedingte"). The idea of the Absolute belongs in Kant's system to the realm of "Vernunft" in the narrow sense, never to the realm of "Verstand". It is the purest example of an "Idea of Reason" - transcendental in that it is necessarily presupposed by all cognition of empirical reality, transcendent in that it remains inconceivable and indeterminable in terms not just of the forms of intuition but even of the concepts of the understanding. But the idea of the Absolute in Kant is for all that nevertheless eminently *efficacious*. The great Kant commentator Norman Kemp Smith puts it in the following terms : "As this Idea (of the Absolute or "Unconditioned") conditions all subordinate concepts, it cannot be defined in terms of

them. That does not, however, deprive it of all meaning : its significance is of a unique kind ; it finds expression in those Ideals which, while guiding the mind in the construction of experience, also serve as the criteria through which experience is condemned as only phenomenal."[50]

Kemp Smith's linkage here of the Kantian "Unconditioned" with the idea of a "condemnation" of the existing points up the key function in modernity of the specifically Platonic idea of the Absolute, a function with which we will become more and more familiar throughout the course of this study. Were it not for the Absolute, Kemp Smith's remarks make clear, "phenomenal" experience could not possibly be situated and relativized as "only phenomenal". Were it not for the Absolute, the term "phenomenal experience" would be pleonastic : "the world" would be synonymous in every respect with "the phenomenal world". And this, on Kant's schema, would be tantamount to expunging all practice, all morality, all "Sollen" from the world, leaving it a field of pure "natural causality", pure "Sein". The category of the "human" would have no place in such a world, or would at best be an arbitrary designation of a region of Nature, a designation always susceptible of being shifted or dissolved entirely. It is only by relating itself, or by recognizing its *a priori* relation, to the idea of the Absolute, then, that the Kantian subject can become or maintain itself as a subject in any real sense - since it is only the idea of the Absolute which renders the closed, asubjective concatenation of "natural causality" *less* than the whole, *less* than the definitive last word. As a subject capable of moral and political action, the Kantian subject is decidedly not a solitary and exclusive "first principle". It is rather one terminus of a wide arc, an arc which bypasses the phenomenal world and finds its other terminus in the idea of the Absolute.

This Platonic vision, revitalized for modernity in Kant's vocabulary of "phenomenal" and "noumenal" realms, "constitutive" and "regulative" ideas, remained the true "paradigm" for key currents in the philosophical, aesthetic and moral-political thought of the whole of the "Goethezeit". The established idea of a general displacement, circa 1800, of Kantian dualism by Romantic monism - which Habermas appears to ascribe to with his situation of Kant on one side and Schelling and Hegel on the other of the individualist / collectivist divide within the "philosophy of the subject" - in fact greatly over-simplifies the intellectual structure of this epoch. Key Romantic thinkers like Friedrich Schlegel in fact thought consistently in Kantian terms - although often "with Kant against Kant" - throughout their careers. That radically dualist

50 Norman Kemp Smith, "A Commentary To Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'", Second Edition, MacMillan and Co., London, 1923, p. 559.

Platonic vision which Werner Jäger classified as a specifically "theological" form of ontology survived compounded with the philosophy of the subject right through the Romantic period and passed, still so compounded, into late modernity in the form of the philosophies of Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard and later of the philosophy - inspired by both Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard - of the young Wittgenstein.

The "break" in "Goethezeit" thought is in fact, as we have said, rather synchronic than diachronic. Simultaneously with Kant's reception into the "philosophy of the subject" of the heritage of Platonic "philosophy of Being" and with all the cultural developments derivative from or parallel to this reception, we observe an equally broad reception into the new culture of subjectivity of the heritage of Aristotelian ontology, a synthesis of the emergent principle of subjectivity with Aristotle's idea of a world-immanent, non-discrete Absolute. It is as an element of this reception, we have already suggested, that there emerges the Hegelian doctrine that the relation between subjectivity and the Absolute is not, as Kant would have it, one of *linkage* in some manner that *bypasses* the world of immediate experience, but rather one of *identity* secured *through* the medium of this world of experience. For Hegel, as we have seen, the phenomenal world did not, as it did for Kant, obscure or hide the Absolute, but rather expressed it. The principle of subjectivity Hegel likewise believed to reveal itself, in the light of philosophical "Vernunft", as an expression, on a higher level than that of phenomenal objectivity, of this Absolute. The principles of Absolute, Nature and subjectivity were thus linked in Hegel's system as, on the most exalted philosophical level, conceptual synonyms for a single truth.

Perhaps the most important philosophical consequence of this Hegelian option to look to Aristotle rather than Plato for ontological inspiration is the dissolution, on the terms of Hegel's philosophy, of the central Kantian problem of "natural causality"'s effects on subjectivity. The practical *non-identity* which Kant had envisaged to obtain between constituting subject and constituted Nature had been, as we have seen, the motor of Kant's whole philosophical construction. Only a subject imprisoned in a "natural world" which this subject has constituted as a world *un*constituted, as a continuum of pure objectivity, *needs* to have recourse to a *transcendent* Absolute in order to survive as a subject. Where, as in Hegel's system, the moment of non-identity between subject and Nature is revealed to be mere appearance, to be a "Schein" arising from a philosophical approach governed by "Verstand" and not by "Vernunft", the moment of non-identity between subject and Absolute

- Kant's insistence on conceiving the relation between these principles as a *link* and not as an *identity* - becomes mere "Schein" also. The whole structure of both systems turns on their stance toward what we will have occasion below to call the "problem of the pressure of naturalism". Hegel, because he believes that sufficiently profound reflection on the process of human cognition can reveal this problem as a "Scheinproblem", finds himself free to construct a system of thoroughgoing immanence. Kant, because he sees no way of eliminating the moment of non-identity between subject and Nature, is driven to include in his system also a moment of ineliminable transcendence.

As we have said, however, the clash of these two, respectively Aristotelian and Platonic, philosophical visions of the "Goethezeit" cannot be narrated in the merely diachronic terms of a supercession of Kantian dualism by Hegelian monism. The critical philosophy's Platonic vision had its Aristotelian predecessors as well as its Aristotelian successors. Hegel, although certainly providing the archetypal *philosophical* statement of this Aristotelian position for this period, was not in terms either of chronology or of cultural eminence its primary proponent during the "Goethezeit". It was rather without question Goethe himself who, in his thought and in his person, represented the decisive counterweight to Kantian Platonism and dualism thrown into the scales of German, indeed European, culture in these founding decades of high modernity.

Goethe's constitutional anti-Platonism, the thoroughgoing immanentism of his personal world-view, is on the one hand positively evidenced by the otherwise quite anomalous circumstance of his close friendship with Hegel himself. The trans-personal "weltanschauliche" sympathy between Goethe and Hegel must indeed have been enormous for it to have come, between a personality whom all contemporaries concur in describing as still young even in his old age and a personality who is equally unanimously described as old already in his earliest youth, to a long correspondence in which the former took to addressing the latter as "Herr Absolute" and the latter the former as "das Urphänomen". Even more decisive, however, is the negative evidence for Goethe's "Hegelianism" - his lifelong visceral antipathy for the view of the universe to which Kant's system, structurally and tendentially if not always willingly and explicitly, gave expression. Although even Goethe was loth to take an explicit and unequivocal stand against such an epochal cultural phenomenon as the critical philosophy, and went out of his way whenever possible to acknowledge and praise those writings of Kant's - such as the "Critique of Judgement" - in which the irreconcilable dualism of

the Königsberg philosopher's conception of the universe pressed least to the fore, Goethe's autobiographical writings record numerous episodes in which there opened up between himself and certain key contemporaries the perennial division separating Platonist and Aristotelian experiences of the world. He does not fail to recognize that the particular idiom of this division in the period 1785 - 1830 was invariably that of Kantianism on the one hand and the rejection of Kant on the other.

Goethe's account of his relations with Schiller in the period 1788-89, for example, describes how the latter's reception, at this time, of the Kantian philosophy had "made him ungrateful against Nature, the great mother...and led him to consider her, instead of as something independent, bringing forth everything from the highest to the lowest at once with spontaneous vitality and according to laws, rather from the point of view of certain of her mere empirical and humanly instantiated aspects." "A meeting of minds here," he adds, "was unthinkable." [51] It was this Kantian principle that "Geist" is present only latently, only completely inaccessibly, in the order of Nature - an echo of the still more radical Platonic idea that existence as a physical being among physical beings is a condition absolutely inimical to the attainment of truth [52] - which remained anathema to Goethe throughout his career. As well as from Schiller, it separated him from his equally close companion F. H. Jacobi, whose 1811 "Von den Göttlichen Dingen" evoked in him, another autobiographical text informs us, the following sentiments : "How could the book of even so warmly beloved a friend be welcome to me when I found propounded in this book the thesis : 'Nature occults God' ? How, given that there ruled in me purely and profoundly, innately but also as something tempered by a long training, a way of seeing that taught me to find God in Nature, Nature in God, so that this manner of thinking formed the foundation of my whole existence - how, given these things, could such a strange, one-sided and limited statement not alienate me for ever as regards the things of the mind from that noblest of men, whose heart I still loved and esteemed ?" [53]

This ontological position expressed itself in Goethe's work as a whole as an implicit philosophy of "subject as Absolute, Absolute as subject" closely comparable to Hegel's. For Goethe too, Nature itself was the Absolute, and Man's identity with Nature was proven by the

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[51] Goethe , "Glückliches Ereignis", Hamburger Goethe Ausgabe, 1959, Volume Ten, p. 539.

[52] See, for example, the "Phaedo", particularly 64-68 ("Collected Dialogues of Plato", pps. 46-51)

[53] "Jahresheft" for 1811, Hamburger Goetheausgabe Volume 10. p. 511.

very fact of his ability to link up with it in the act of perception : "Wär' nicht das Auge sonnenhaft, Die Sonne könnt' es nie erblicken." Apparent counter-examples to this, such as Faust's failure to "resemble" the "Erdgeist" can often be seen to be results only of Man's not yet having "understood" Nature : "Du gleichst dem Geist, den du begreifst, nicht mir." Just as in Hegel, where Goethean Man attained to Nature's "Begriff", he would attain also to a recognition of his harmonious identity with Nature. Nature would no longer, as in Kant's vision it would perennially, stand over against him as an "alien power".

This vision, it should perhaps be added even at this point, does not exhaust all that is to be found in Goethe. His famous "cult of Nature" underwent, it has often been noted, considerable modification in the last period of his activity. Just when the monistic world-view for which he had provided the paradigm was coming into its own in certain schools of Romantic thought, Goethe began to produce works like the "Elective Affinities", which suggested a very different view of Nature and its relation to subjectivity. This we will have occasion to discuss below. For the moment, however, Goethe can stand as the figure he was in his youth and, on the brilliant surface of his creative activity, all his life : a paradigmatic representative of the reception into the modern culture of subjectivity of the heritage of the Aristotelian philosophy of Being. With Hegel and Goethe thus established as the Aristotelian counterparts to the Platonist Kant, our brief sketch of the philosophical structure of the "Goethezeit" - a sketch of course functional only for our purposes in this study and raising no claim to completeness - is completed.

(vi)

We can now return at last to Habermas, and to a question which we left in suspension at the end of section three : the question of the true nature of the difference between Habermas's and Adorno's rejections of Hegel's "subjectivism". The difference, I want to maintain, consists in this : Habermas's critique of Hegel is one which draws, in all its arguments, on perspectives opened up by Hegel's own philosophy and itself adopts an Hegelian standpoint on the crucial issue of what can and cannot be authentically believed by the modern philosopher ; Adorno's critique, on the other hand, was a critique mounted by a thinker who felt able to accord to himself permission to step outside of the Hegelian perspective altogether, specifically to step historically "behind" this perspective and to think in terms which Hegel's own philosophical-historical narrative had condemned as illegitimate

because no longer in accordance with the modern "condition of 'Geist'".

To state this idea more concretely : whereas when Habermas critiques Hegel's "subjectivism" from an "*a priori* intersubjectivist" point of view he is speaking as himself a kind of "Young Hegelian", Adorno, in his critique of this "subjectivism" from the point of view of its failure really to accommodate the "objective", had spoken as a *Kantian* . This is the main theme of my analysis in this study of the relations between first-generation Adornian and second-generation Habermasian Critical Theory : Habermas's arguments for a "paradigm shift" in Critical Theory do not, I claim, really fully address the work of his predecessors in the Frankfurt School tradition because this latter body of work's "paradigm" was in fact in key respects a Kantian one and Habermas's whole style of philosophical and political thinking remains through and through Hegelian.

The readers who have followed my discussion in section five will already be aware in what sense I must be using the terms "Kantian" and "Hegelian" here. It is perhaps best, however, to examine for a moment explicitly the different implications of these terms in different philosophical-historical discourses. Kant has been interpreted, of course, not only as we have interpreted him above - that is, as the most effective defender of metaphysics in modern times - but also as metaphysics' most rigorous critic. The roots of this radical divergence in the interpretation of the significance of Kant's philosophy doubtless go back to this philosophy's earliest public reception. Large sections of the "Goethezeit" intelligentsia tended, as we have remarked, to interpret the critical philosophy as amounting to an unequivocal rejection of all transcendence, to a manifesto for a thoroughgoing empiricism. Those among such contemporary writers who wished to hold to the ideas of a trans-mundane God and personal immortality were, we have noted, already in the 1790's describing Kant as "der Alleszermalmer", "the destroyer of everything".

It is ultimately in the descendancy of this interpretation of Kant's thought that we must situate our current description of writers like John Rawls as "Kantian" philosophers of morality. Contemporary "Kantian" moral and political philosophy is not, of course, out to "destroy everything" in its field of intellectual operation - to promote, for example, the interpretation of moral and political action in terms of a concatenation of behavioural cause and effect continuous with the physical cause and effect of the field of the natural sciences. On the contrary, liberal moral and political philosophy has been in almost all its forms concerned to discover some principle of moral and political action situable "above" the level of the merely

causal or behavioural. Where this philosophy is "Kantian" in a sense which would have been acknowledged as their own by those who identified Kant as a "destroyer of everything" at the end of the eighteenth century, however, is in its refusal to situate this autonomous principle of moral and political action *too* high "above" the level of the causal and the behavioural, to situate this principle, that is, in some explicitly extra-mundane, metaphysical realm. The current Anglo-American usage of the terms "Kantian" and "Kantianism" coincides with the usage of such terms by the "Goethezeit" critics of "der Alleszermalmer" inasmuch as both usages designate with these terms a doctrine of thoroughgoing secularism, an unequivocally "post-metaphysical" world-view.

The thesis enunciated above - that Habermas's philosophical perspective is an Hegelian one which marginalizes the viewpoint of Kant - may appear strange because Habermas's usage of the term "Kantian", and the usage of this term by other writers when making reference to Habermas's work, is coming to be dominated by this "Anglo-American" interpretation of the meaning of Kant's philosophy. Particularly in his work of the past fifteen years, Habermas speaks of Kant, when he does speak of him, primarily as of the first great post-metaphysical European philosopher. And certainly, where this transcendence of metaphysics is taken to be the sole or primary import of Kant's philosophy, the claim that Habermas's recent work "marginalizes the doctrine of Kant" is indeed quite untenable. Habermas inarguably places Kant *so* understood much closer to the centre of his current philosophical project than he places Hegel.

Habermas's account of Kant in his recent work is an account of a thinker who was the first in European history to register the cultural fact that the idea of "reason" ("Vernunft") had become in modernity definitively secularized and that, as a consequence of this secularization, "reason" had forfeited that immediate *unity* which had been a characteristic feature of it in the antique and mediaeval worlds. He reads Kant's division of the exposition of his philosophical doctrine into three "Critiques" as a codification of "reason"'s definitive sacrifice, towards the end of the eighteenth century, of the capacity even to aspire to grasp that "unum, verum, bonum" which classical and mediaeval philosophy had believed themselves to have grasped with their concepts of Being and of the transcendent Godhead.

This is evidenced, for example, by the following passage from his "Post-Metaphysical Thinking" : "Only up to the threshold of modernity are a culture's accomplishments of reaching self-understanding joined together in interpretive systems that preserve a structure

homologous to the life-world's entire structure of horizons. Until that point, the unity, unavoidably supposed, of a lifeworld constructed concentrically around 'me' and 'us', here and now, had been reflected in the totalizing unity of mythological narratives, religious doctrines and metaphysical explanations. With modernity, however, a devaluating shift befell those forms of explanation that had allowed these very theories to retain a remnant of the unifying force possessed by myths of origin. The basic concepts of religion and metaphysics had relied on a syndrome of validity that dissolved with the emergence of expert cultures in science, morality and law on the one hand, and with the autonomization of art on the other. Already, Kant's three "Critiques' were a reaction to the emerging independence of distinct complexes of rationality." [54]

We find the same understanding of Kant expressed in this passage from his replies to the criticisms raised by the essays published in the 1985 volume "Habermas and Modernity" : "(In modernity), without the possibility of recourse to God and the cosmic order as an origin, theological and metaphysical forms of grounding lost their credibility. On the other hand, alongside a subjectivized 'faith', there arose profane forms of knowledge which were relatively independent of one another. Philosophy, forced into the position of mediator, became dependent on them. As documented in the division of Kant's three 'Critiques', questions of truth are differentiated from questions of justice and these in turn from questions of taste." [55]

From this perspective, then, it is a nonsense to say that Habermas takes sides with Hegel against Kant. Hegel's philosophy appears in this light as a forlorn attempt to weld together again the moments of "reason" which the "Alleszermalmer" Kant had soberly recorded as having come definitively apart with the entry of Man into a "modern condition". Habermas has rejected, for example, in recent years all arguments that the normative reality of moral evaluation might be on occasion criticizable from the point of view of the constative reality of objective social fact - the reasoning underlying such cognitive procedures as Marxian "critique of ideology" - as doomed attempts to reverse, with Hegel, the irreversible fact of modernity which Kant's thought faithfully reflects : the division of "reason", in a secularized world, into three separate and autonomous "validity spheres". [56]

[54] Habermas, "Post-Metaphysical Thinking" (Polity Press, 1992), p. 17 .

[55] Habermas, "Questions and Counterquestions" in Richard J. Bernstein (ed.) "Habermas and Modernity". Basil Blackwell, 1985, p. 199.

[56] See, for example, Habermas's remarks in reply to Thomas McCarthy's "Reflections on Rationalization in the 'Theory of Communicative Action'", in Bernstein,"Habermas and Modernity" pps. 203-211.

But the idea that Habermas favours the viewpoint of Hegel and ignores that of Kant only remains a false idea - and the idea that he favours the viewpoint of Kant and rejects that of Hegel a true one - so long as the term "Kant" is read only as it tends to be read in the Anglo-American world and in the most "Westernized" circles of the German philosophical community. We, however, have in this study opted for a radically different, indeed almost diametrically opposed, reading of this term, for a radically different interpretation of the historical significance of the critical philosophy. The reading of Kant which we have given in section five above interprets Kant not as a thinker coming to terms with the impossibility, in modernity, of theological thought, but rather as a thinker preserving, for modernity, the possibilty of that Platonic mode of thought which Jäger designated precisely as "theology".

Again, this reading is one which has been a feature of Kant's "Wirkungsgeschichte" since the first wave of reception of his mature work in the mid- to late 1780's. We find, as we have said, elements of it in certain of the younger Romantics and its most exemplary early expression, perhaps, in Schopenhauer. With the Neo-Kantianism of the mid-nineteenth century it gives way largely to the opposed interpretation which we have just examined, but in progressive German Jewish culture of the beginning of our own century it experiences a renaissance. For this last reason we can be sure that the terms used in the opening paragraphs of this section will not, with reference to their application to Adorno's position, require the kind of clarification which they require with reference to Habermas's. It was in fact in that progressive German Jewish cultural milieu which was formative of Adorno and Benjamin - as well as, to a lesser degree, of Horkheimer - that this second interpretation of Kant received some of its paradigmatic expressions.

It is no accident, for example, that Rolf Wiggershaus's standard history of the Frankfurt School includes in one of its early chapters a summary of the anything but "post-metaphysical" reading of the critical philosophy's cultural significance which we have favoured. Wiggershaus has occasion to mention this particular interpretation of Kant's philosophy at the point in his book where he recounts Adorno's "unofficial" education at the knee of the Frankfurt *homme de lettres* Siegfried Kracauer. For Kracauer as for Walter Benjamin, writes Wiggershaus, Kant's philosophy constituted "a prolegomenon to metaphysics rather than...a sceptical rejection of metaphysics...The restriction of speculative reason to the sphere of experience had, in Kant's eyes, the positive virtue that it prevented the categories of the world of experience from expanding into every other conceivable

sphere in such a way that there would be no more room for the practical use of pure reason. (Similarly, in the thought of writers like Siegfried Kracauer) categories which were only valid in immanent spheres would not be absolutized in such a way that other categories were suppressed - categories indispensable to the understanding of that aspect of the world of socialized human beings which consisted in a sphere of transcendence."[57]

Adorno, throughout his work, thought of Kant primarily in these terms - in terms of Kant's having been a "theological" thinker who was to be paired with Plato, as two philosophers who kept faith with the idea of absolute transcendence, against Hegel and Aristotle, as two philosophers who allowed this idea to be compromized by a commitment to the immanent. [58] It is in this sense of the terms "Kantian" and "Hegelian" - the senses in which they are philosophically almost synonymous with the terms "Platonist" and "Aristotelian" - that I claim, above and throughout the whole course of this study, that Habermas is an "Hegelian" who neglects the "Kantian" viewpoint on subjectivity and society and that Adorno and other members of his generation were, at least in key respects, "Kantians" hostile to "Hegelianism".

"Hegelianism" - in this sense of a philosophical stance defined by its rejection of the Absolute as a "transcendent" and its reconception of this Absolute as something "either immanent, or not at all" - has in fact been argued by other writers to be a constituent part of the "paradigm shift" idea as Habermas understands it. The move to methodological immanence has, that is, been argued to be the Hegelian pre-condition of Habermas's critique of Hegel as a "consciousness-philosopher". Dieter Henrich, for example, has written that "according to

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[57] Rolf Wiggershaus, "The Frankfurt School" (Polity Press, 1994), p. 69. The translation has been slightly altered, and it is worth noting exactly what kind of alteration was found to be necessary. Wiggershaus's phrase "jene Kategorien...die der zur Welt der vergesellschafteten Menschen gehörenden Sphäre der Transzendenz allein angemessen waren (Wiggershaus, "Die Frankfurter Schule", Carl Hanser Verlag, 1986, p. 85) remains ambiguous as to the ontological relation between "die Welt der vergesellschafteten Menschen" and "die Sphäre der Transzendenz" - as is only right, given that this phrase is a summary of Siegfried Kracauer's constitutively ambiguous negative theological position in social theory. The German leaves it appropriately unclear whether the "sphere of transcendence"'s appurtenance to "the world of socialized human beings" is an appurtenance like the appurtenance of Kant's "kingdom of ends" to the "kingdom of phenomena" - that is, an appurtenance which leaves to the appurtenant transcendent order its autonomy *as* a "transcendent" - or whether this appurtenance implies that the immanence of socialization is in fact always the ground and source of all "transcendence", that "transcendence" is really only ever a "property" of immanence and hence no transcendence at all. The original English version almost entirely extinguishes this ambiguity in favour of the latter alternative. "Socialized humanity's sphere of transcendence" is clearly a "genitivus subjectivus". It is surely not entirely coincidence that such translations tend to cut all Critical-Theoretical discourse on transcendence down to the level of the one idea of transcendence which is acceptable to Habermas and his associates : a "Transzendenz von Innen" inhering in the "pragmatic implications of communicative speech."

[58] See Chapter Two, Section Four below.

Habermas, the 'paradigm shift' took place in two stages. The first involved two different moves, already made by the Left Hegelians : they rigorously worked through a this-sided ("diesseitig", that is, secular or immanentistic - A. R.) philosophical theory and, just as rigorously, made the socio-political nature of humanity the focus of their concern with the conditions of human life." [59] In Henrich's view, this first, "intra-Hegelian" stage of the "paradigm shift" remains the essential one, to such a point that the "turn to communication" itself can be seen as merely a "theoretical securing" of the step already taken within this particular "Aristotelian" form of the "philosophy of consciousness" : "Only through a second stage...was this paradigm shift theoretically secured : the fundamental inquiry formerly cast in transcendental-philosophical terms was redefined in terms of a theory of language-use and the employment of signs. From this new theoretical perspective one could also develop the concepts of meaning and knowledge on an intersubjective basis secured by empirical science." [60]

This Habermas's essential Hegelianism can be recognized in many of the key argumentational steps of his recent writing. It manifests itself primarily as a refusal to take seriously as an autonomous factor in the "philosophical discourse of modernity" any mode of philosophizing which Hegel himself had assigned to a position less "advanced" than his own in the supposedly steadily progressing "history of Reason". It is the dualistic mode of thought inspired by the thought of Kant which suffers most injustice in this respect in Habermas's work. Numerous passages from Habermas's recent writing indicate that a philosophical account of subjectivity structured in such a radically unarticulated, ontologically fractured manner as Kant's account is in his view *per definitionem* aporetic. Philosophical thought, Habermas seems implicitly to believe, *could not possibly* have legitimately stabilized itself at this point. Such a stance necessarily constituted only a preparatory, transitional "shape of spirit" fulfilling the ephemeral role of paving the way for the more philosophically serious stance of Hegel's identity-philosophical immanentism.

So much we glean, for example, from Habermas's complete concurral, in the "Philosophical Discourse of Modernity", with Michel Foucault's rejection, as simply self-contradictory, of the "transcendental / empirical doubling" of subjectivity in modern

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[59] Dieter Henrich, "The Origins of the Theory of the Subject", in "Philosophical Interventions in the Unfinished Project of the Enlightenment", edited by Honneth, McCarthy, Offe and Wellmer (MIT Press 1992), pps. 31-2.
[60] Ibid.

philosophical discourse. [61] Foucault - for all his mantic Parisian philosophical habitus at bottom a profoundly Aristotelian spirit - had argued in his "Les Mots et les Choses" of 1967 that the tendency within the Kantian descendancy of post-Enlightenment philosophy to describe the subject simultaneously in naturalistic and in non-naturalistic terms could not but indicate the untenability of the very idea of a human "subjectivity". The fact that Kant and those inspired by him had, in fact, specified that these mutually contradictory descriptions applied to the subject only on distinct ontological levels altered, for Foucault, nothing in the case. Habermas finds this position entirely convincing, despite its plainly amounting to a mere *ab initio* rejection, rather than to a critique or a refutation, of the Kantian stance. In the ninth lecture of "The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity", he adopts it as more or less his own, supplementing it with some specifically German historical examples and qualifying his concurral only by the usual proviso that the phenomena which Foucault identifies as aporia of "the subject" *per se* are in fact aporia only of the "*philosophy* of the subject".

In what is both a resumé of Foucault's views and an expression of his own, Habermas writes : "Since Kant, the 'I' assumes simultaneously the status of an empirical subject in the world, where it is available as one object among others, and the status of a transcendental subject over against the world as a whole, which it constitutes as the totality of the objects of possible experience. By reason of this double status, the knowing subject sees itself provoked to analyze the same performances once reflectively as performances of transcendental synthesis, and again empirically as a process governed by natural laws - no matter whether our cognitive apparatus is explained in terms of psychology or cultural anthropology, biology or history." [62] For Habermas, as for Foucault, this is "naturally" simply unacceptable as an account of the nature of subjectivity. The *actual* next development in the history of European philosophy - the rise of Hegelian identity-philosophy - is consequently taken by Habermas to have been also necessarily the sole *rational* next development in this history : "Naturally, thought cannot rest satisfied with these irreconcilable alternatives. The attempts at overcoming this dilemma in a discipline uniting both aspects and conceiving the concrete history of the *a priori* forms as a process of the self-creation of the spirit or of the species reaches from Hegel to Merleau-Ponty." [63] It is only, that is to say, with the Hegelian

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[61] See Habermas, "Philosophical Discourse of Modernity", pps 260-65.

[62] Ibid. p. 262. (Translation slightly altered).

[63] Ibid.

revision of Kant that philosophical thought enters, although still "paradigmatically" in error, into something like its "native kingdom of truth".

Habermas's colleague Herbert Schnädelbach in fact makes in his contribution to the 1989 "Festschrift" for Habermas both of the above points about Foucault's thesis of "empirical / transcendental doubling". He points out firstly that Foucault's "critique" of Kant actually quite *ignores* what is most philosophically essential in the critical philosophy : its dualistic, Platonic ontology. "A dialectic between the empirical and the transcendental in Kant," he writes, "could obtain only if both were located at the same ontological level. But Kant wrote the paralogism chapter in the 'Critique of Pure Reason' in order to exclude such an ontologization of the transcendental ; it was Descartes' error, not Kant's, to mistake the 'I think' for 'I' or the *res cogitans.*" [64] Secondly he points out that objections like Foucault's plainly stem from a dogmatic adoption, as axiomatically correct, of the Hegelian perspective on Kant and on the philosophical discourse of modernity : "This view of things is only plausible if one considers the dialectical anthropology founded by Feuerbach and sociologized by the young Marx to be the rational kernel of Hegelianism and then goes on to refer this back to Kant. In the process, the Hegelian critique of Kant, simply presumed to be finished and legitimate, functions as a bridge. If Hegel is to Kant as Feuerbach is to Hegel, then transcendental philosophy must appear in the light of an Hegelian and left Hegelian double projection as an 'analytic of finitude', and Kant's Copernican revolution as an 'anthropological turn'." [65] Unfortunately, however, Schnädelbach does not in this paper choose to trace out the consequences of the fact that Habermas has plainly entirely *concurred* in Foucault's dogmatically Hegelian reasoning here, but prefers to discuss the relation between these two thinkers in the established terms of their ideological opposition to one another.

Also indicative of the *a priori* nature of Habermas's rejection of any theory of the subject which ascribes to subjectivity, in Kantian fashion, contradictory ontological characteristics, even if these contradictory characteristics are claimed to apply to the same subject only on different ontological levels, are his remarks in the "Theory of Communicative Action" on the analysis of subjectivity propounded by Dieter Henrich. Henrich's conception is criticized here for being "inconsistent" because it suggests just what was suggested by Kant's analysis of subjectivity, and after it by the analyses of subjectivity expounded by such

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[64] Schnädelbach, "The Face in the Sand : Foucault and the Anthropological Slumber", in "Philosophical Interventions in the Unfinished Project of Enlightenment" p. 321.
[65] Ibid. pps. 319-20.

philosophers as Schopenhauer and the young Wittgenstein : that the phenomenon of subjectivity might only be comprehensible in terms of a radically dualist schema of absolutely discrete "natural" and "mystical" causalities. "The ambiguity of reducing self-consciousness to a depersonalized, anonymous consciousness" writes Habermas with reference to Henrich "can already be seen in the way that Henrich ties the concept of an ego-less consciousness to two contrary theoretical lines. On the one side, the idea that the self is secondary to the basic structure of an impersonal consciousness builds a bridge to the acosmism of Oriental mysticism : 'Self-overcoming is the royal road to self-knowledge.' On the other side, the idea that self-awareness, in the sense of reflexivity, cannot be constitutive for consciousness builds a bridge to those body-mind theories that conceive of consciousness as an objective process : 'Perhaps an explanation within the framework of...neurology could show the indissoluble connection between two processes that correspond to consciousness and awareness of consciousness.' Both of these ways out, mysticism and objectivism, reflect the paradoxical structure of the concept of an ego-less consciousness that produces such alternatives." [66] The very fact that Henrich's conception of the subject demands that subjectivity be looked at from the point of view of "two contrary theoretical lines" at once marks, it seems, for Habermas this conception *ab initio* as a "paradox". Only a conception concordant with Hegel's at least in its *monism* , it appears, is worthy, in Habermas's view, of being taken seriously into consideration as a component of the "philosophical discourse of modernity".

It must be noted here that Adorno's views on this question are almost the diametrical opposite of Habermas's. It is precisely on such issues, where Habermas lets his stance be dictated directly to him by Hegel's lectures on the history of philosophy, that Adorno chooses to take his distance from Hegel and insists that the course of real cultural history has not necessarily been the phenomenal expression of the divine progress of Reason. It is in fact by Hegel himself in the lectures on the history of philosophy that the basic item of dogma determining and structuring Habermas's stance toward Foucault and toward Henrich is given its first and paradigmatic expression. For Hegel as now for Habermas, *consistency*, avoidance of the "paradox" of the posited validity of two countervailing ontological logics, is the touchstone of all philosophical truth. It is for this reason that Hegel classifies Fichte as not only Kant's contingent historical successor but also his necessary rational "consummator" : "Fichte

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[66] Habermas, "Theory of Communicative Action", Volume One, p. 395.

was the one who abolished this fault, this thoughtless inconsistency, of the Kantian system which had resulted in its lacking all speculative unity. Fichte's philosophy was the development of the form in itself (reason synthesizes itself in itself, becomes a synthesis of concept and reality) and above all a more consistent development than Kant's own of the Kantian philosophy."[67]

Where Habermas simply takes up this sort of reasoning into his own philosophical discourse, Adorno provides the most telling critical commentary upon it. Quoting the passage in the first of his "Three Studies On Hegel", he remarks : "In the face of the abyss-like caesurae of the Kantian system, Hegel praised the greater consistency of Kant's successors and himself intensified this consistency. What he failed to recognize, however, was that the Kantian caesurae functioned as registrations of that moment of non-identity which inalienably belongs also to Hegel's own conception of the philosophy of identity." [68] Here, we are already confronted with one of the most complex problems among the many problems raised by the topic of our study : the set of questions surrounding Adorno's thesis that the moment of "non-identity" registered by the Kantian system's characteristic "caesurae" was a moment *implicitly* registered by Hegel's "philosophy of identity" too, even if the explicit logic of the latter necessarily tended to occult this moment. To tackle this problem is to tackle the problem of what Adorno meant by "a transformed concept of dialectics" and when we come finally to tackle it, in Chapter Four below, we will perhaps have reason to reconsider the stark opposition between Adorno as a Kantian and Habermas as an Hegelian thinker which we are busy setting up here in Chapter One. For the moment, however, these remarks of Adorno's must serve rather to establish this opposition even more firmly. Where Habermas plainly concurs in this Hegelian logic and implicitly relies on it in his dismissal as "paradoxical" of all philosophical positions still reminiscent of Kant's, Adorno equally plainly has recourse to a Kantian figure *against* it.

Habermas's and Adorno's rejections of Hegelian "subjectivism" in respectively "intersubjectivist" and "objectivist" directions, then, cannot, it seems, *pace* Habermas's intimations in texts like the "Theory of Communicative Action", be brought eventually around to some kind of convergence and solidarity. They remain expressions of radically different philosophical and political visions. It is the task of this study as a whole to establish the basic

[67] Hegel, "Lectures on the History of Philosophy" (The Humanities Press, New York, 1955), III, p. 481.
[68] Adorno, "Hegel : Three Studies", p. 11.

outlines of these different visions. As one of the last of the preliminary, synoptic steps to fulfilling this task, I want now to look briefly in more detail at Habermas's move away from Hegel in an "intersubjectivist" direction. This will draw explicitly into our problematic that "paradigm of the theory of communication" which stands in fact at the very conceptual centre of the Habermasian philosophical-historical narrative, but which we have rather neglected up until now in favour of the "paradigms" of the "philosophy of Being" and of the "philosophy of the subject".

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Tugendhat's and Habermas's idea of a contemporary "paradigm of the philosophy of language" finds its concrete historical referents primarily in the texts of that "ordinary language" movement which emerged with Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations" and Gilbert Ryle's "Concept of Mind" in England after the Second World War and made a limited entry, thanks to Stanley Cavell's and John Searle's reception of the ideas of J. L. Austin, into the American academy in the nineteen fifties and sixties. Dieter Henrich has pointed out that it is very questionable to construct in this way the idea of an epochal "paradigm shift to communication" on the basis of the consensus prevailing within a particular school of the analytical philosophy of language for a particular period of time : "The German reception of language-analytical methods has been until very recently marked by a basic fault : an indifference toward the pressure of the problem of naturalism. This indifference can be recognized in the way that basic 'semantic' terms such as the 'meaning', the 'truth' and the 'object-relativity' of linguistic expressions have come into use in German theory as if these ideas were completely unproblematical and self-explanatory. This naive self-certainty is particularly characteristic of Habermas's theory of communicative action...It allows him to perceive nothing dubious in his own extensive reliance on Austin's theory of speech acts. But this theory was developed in a conservative philosophical milieu which enjoyed a kind of immunity against naturalist arguments. Even the American Searle, who systematized this theory into a form more wieldy for Habermas's theoretical purposes, has found himself obliged to give more precise account, before the forum of those philosophers who have been drawn into taking up a naturalistic perspective and who are convinced of this perspective's correctness, of what it means for there to adhere an 'intentionality' in linguistic acts ." [69]

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[69] Dieter Henrich, "Was Ist Metaphysik ? Was Moderne : Zwölf Thesen Gegen Jürgen Habermas" in Henrich, "Konzepte" (Suhrkamp, 1987) pps. 23-24.

The point made here by Henrich, which we shall be expanding upon in Chapter Three of this study, is in fact the key to the essential continuity and solidarity of the "paradigm of the philosophy of communication" with the "paradigm of the philosophy of the subject" in the Aristotelian form which this latter assumed in the "Goethezeit". It is the key also to the "paradigm of the philosophy of communication"'s failure really to sublate into itself the other, Platonic "Goethezeit" form of the "philosophy of the subject" - the philosophical position, that is, of Kant and of Kant's inheritors. Let us clarify this point.

Both the "philosophy of communication" and the Aristotelian version of the "philosophy of subject as Absolute" require, in order for their commonly immanentistic - their as it were exclusively "horizontal" - arguments to get off the ground at all, the elimination, as simply beyond or beneath discussion, of the "pressure of the problem of naturalism". That "ordinary language" philosophy, for instance, which, as we have just noted, is the implicit primary model for the "paradigm of the philosophy of communication" eliminates this pressure in an almost unbelievably off-handed - and, it is generally recognized today, completely unsatisfactory - manner. Before we describe this elimination, or rather attempt at elimination, however, and describe also what is analogous in it to the stance adopted by thinkers like Hegel and Goethe during the "epoch of the philosophy of the subject", we must remind ourselves briefly of the main thrust of the analysis which "ordinary language" philosophy devotes to the idea which we have all along linked to that of Nature : "Geist" or subjectivity itself.

The work of such thinkers as Ryle and the late Wittgenstein is famous for its radical denial of "subjectivity" in the traditional philosophical sense of this idea. For these thinkers, the belief in the existence of a discrete and private subjectivity was the result of a mistake about the way that verbs in the first person singular are actually used in everyday speech. The famous "beetle in a box" passage from the "Philosophical Investigations" sums up the thrust of the argument : "Suppose everyone had a box, in which there was something we call a 'beetle'. No one can look into the boxes of the others, and everyone says that he knows only from looking at his own beetle what a beetle is. Here, it could well be that everyone had a different thing in his box. Indeed, one could well imagine that such a thing might be in constant transformation. But if the word 'beetle' had a use for these people ? Then this use would not be that of designating an object. The thing in the box simply does not belong to the language game ; not even as a 'something', because the box could be empty. No, we can

simply 'divide through' this thing in the box ; it abolishes itself, whatever it is." [70]

Wittgenstein here is making the point that it is wrong to equate our descriptions of inner experience with those of outer experience, to equate experiential predicates with observational predicates. Philosophers - Tugendhat's and Habermas's "philosophers of subjectivity" - have traditionally assumed that, because statements about the external world often correspond to external observations, statements about our internal, subjective world must correspond to some sort of "internal observation", the observation of events occurring in some private world accessible only to ourselves. But the enunciation of phrases like "I am in pain", argues Wittgenstein, does not involve two separate moments : the "internal" observation of a pain and its "external" designation by the sentence "I am in pain". Rather, the sentence "I am in pain" is itself the expression of pain, like a cry. Since then, statements of private experience are always in this sense "expressions", the "private" cannot, as "subject-philosophers" have always assumed, precede and ground the "public", the "subjective" precede and ground the "intersubjective". Rather, it is only in the " expression" of pain and of similar subjective experiences, in the submission of these experiences to the perception and judgement of other members of the community of speakers, that these experiences can begin to make sense. "Privacy" and "subjectivity" are ultimately functions of "publicity" and "community".

This radically "communication-theoretical" approach to philosophical problems is one with which we will become more familiar throughout the course of this study, as we examine the elaborations performed by Habermas and his colleagues on this basic idea. To the very idea of such an analysis of "ordinary" language-use, however, many who make its acquaintance feel immediately inclined to raise a very "ordinary" objection. It is Henrich's objection couched in less abstract and academy-historical terms : the objection that such an approach to subjectivity ignores the urgent existential danger which this subjectivity is alerted to by its "ordinary" experience of Nature, and of the "second Nature" of the real historical social order.

It is plain from the writings of "ordinary language" philosophers that their rejection of subjectivity as a *primum mobile* is not intended to amount to a Foucauldean declaration of the "death of the subject", to a dismissal of subjectivity as a mere ideological illusion or archaic myth. The philosophy expounded in texts like the "Philosophical Investigations" is rather one

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[70] Wittgenstein, "Philosophical Investigations" 293, p. 100 (Basil Blackwell edition, 1953.)

in which subjectivity is removed from its traditional, "consciousness-philosophical" position of *absolute* autonomy only to be immediately reinstated in a position of *relative* autonomy in almost all respects functionally equivalent. The foundations of human personhood are shifted from the "inside" to the "outside", from ontological individuality to linguistic community - but in the view of "ordinary language" philosophy these foundations have hereby been given over into safe hands. The community of language-users will not, as Nature had tended to do on the old "consciousness-philosophical" scheme, reduce "subjectivity" to a completely arbitrary demarcation of a portion of an in fact homogeneous field of cause and effect. Rather, it is inherent in the nature of our communal use of language to establish persisting, non-arbitrary bases for the kind of demarcations within the field of experienced causality which are needed to preserve subjectivity as an autonomous concept.

What, though, if the logic of "community" and "communication" themselves cannot be clearly and definitively distinguished from the logic of what the old, "consciousness-philosophical" discourse had called "Nature" ? The "ordinary language" of modern social subjects in fact displays countless instances of the description of human linguistic practices in terms of these practices' subjection to a mere "natural causality", these practices' susceptibility to the same kind of prediction and objective calculation as is applied to processes in the natural world. Mandy Rice-Davies's "he would say that, wouldn't he ?" is, after all, as representative of "the way we talk" as any example given by Gilbert Ryle of the implicit recognition in ordinary speech of the interlocutor's essential discursive *un*predictability, the communicative partner's "freedom of will". Where credence is given to such reservations, it becomes doubtful whether the instance of the subjective really is being given over into safe hands in being given over into the hands of the "community". As has often been remarked, it is not really clear how Wittgenstein's and Ryle's positions are to be distinguished from behaviourism, and the logic of behaviourism, as the work of writers like B. F. Skinner has shown, is not one such as to preserve "subjectivity" as a category endowed with a "relative" philosophical autonomy, but rather one such as to sweep it completely away and to replace it with precisely a vision of an homogeneous field of Nature.

Probably the main defence against this in Wittgensteinianism is the following sort of anti-naturalistic argument : "When I inwardly recite to myself the ABC, what is the criterion for whether I am doing the same thing as someone else who recites the ABC inwardly to himself? It might be discovered that in my larynx and his the same process is, as we do this, taking place

(and likewise when we think the same, wish the same etc.) But did we learn the use of the words 'recite this and that inwardly to oneself' by reference to an event in the larynx or brain ? Is it not possible that there correspond different physiological events to my and to his representations of the sound 'a' ? The question is : how does one compare representations?"[71]

Here, Wittgenstein is an ontological agnostic. He shows no interest in investigating what the fact of the matter might be as regards the physiological events that correspond in different skulls to the sound 'a', no interest even in determining whether the idea of a "fact of the matter" might be inappropriate here. What concerns him is the *a posteriori* fact of how we "learnt the use of the words 'recite this and that inwardly to oneself'". The argument against the very possibility of the reduction of *res cogitans* to *res extensa* here, then, might be stated in the following terms. Activities characteristic of human subjects such as thinking or wishing *appear* often to be re-describable in terms which place these actions on a continuum with non-human, merely natural, events, such as the electrical charges constituting specific brain-states - which, in short, reveal the former to "really be" only the latter. But in fact, it makes no sense to say that a thought or a wish "is" an electrical charge in the brain. A thought or a wish *is* whatever we "learnt the use of the words" "thought" and "wish" by reference to, and in intersubjective human communities these words are generally learnt as terms distinct in key respects from the terms "brain-state" and "electrical charge". Human freedom, then - the distinction in practice of a kind of *res cogitans* in every individual resistant to reduction to *res extensa* - is secured by precisely the abolition of the whole problematic of *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. Insofar as the speech-community in which the private Cartesian individual is for Wittgenstein dissolved continues to cultivate the *practice* of speaking of "thoughts", of "wishes", of "being able to do something" in the sense of having the choice whether to do it or not, its members will be thinking, wishing, *free* beings. Indeed, they will even be *private* individuals, insofar as the speech-community will continue to speak of "privacy" and "personality" - although this privacy will no longer be a foundational instance, but essentially a derivation from community.

The argument appears today, outside its indigenous milieu of post-war Oxbridge philosophy, absurdly facile. Such reasoning simply ignores the possibility that "*facta*" may not only be "*facta*" in the pregnant sense pointed to by Giambattista Vico's famous dictum "*verum*

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[71] Wittgenstein, "Philosophical Investigations" 376 (p. 116).

est factum" - the sense that draws attention to their "made-ness" by culture - but " *facta"* also in the usual, colloquial (ironically, precisely "ordinary language") sense : a sense that represents not just an anti-philosophical forgetfulness of Vico's etymologically-supported point that "data" are not given but made, but also a quite philosophical mindfulness of the circumstance that "data" are most often made, where they are made, *as "data".* For the late Wittgenstein, the natural-scientific *data* about whether different or the same neuro-physical events might correspond to "my" and "his" mental representation of the sound "a" appear to be completely without relevance to the problem he is examining. Philosophical attention is fixed solely on the question of how "we" - a "we" presumably not inclusive of any neuro-physicist who has given the slightest thought to the philosophical, sociological or personal existential implications of his discipline - have learnt the use of the words "represent", "think" and "wish".

The ontological "situation" of natural-scientific data as *"facta"* in the Vicoan sense, however, does not suffice to legitimate these data's total exclusion in this way from the philosophical description of human experience. A conception of ordinary language which envisages this language as totally discrete from and impermeable to the objectifying, reifying language of the natural sciences is merely the mirror image of that "Protokollsprache" of logical positivism which envisaged this reifying, objectifying mode of speaking about the world as discrete from and impermeable to the more flexible structures of ordinary language. There is no reason in principle deriveable from this Wittgensteinian scheme why "we" might not indeed all come gradually to learn to use words like "represent", "think" and "wish" as a sociologically- or existentially-minded neuro-physicist would use them, to speak in our ordinary language precisely as if these terms *were* mere synonyms for certain physical events in the brain. Indeed, the question might well be put to Wittgensteinianism whether we can even accurately describe our own *de facto* linguistic practices here and now without taking into account the innumerably frequent penetrations and "slippages" into ordinary language of the scientistic discourse which Wittgenstein in the passage cited seems to portray as ordinary language's essentially incompatible "other". "Ordinary language" is in fact, where it is described without political or cultural preconceptions, no less self-limiting and self-subverting than is the order of the free transcendental constituting as described by Kant. Just as the latter limits and subverts itself by recognizing that, even if there is in principle no Cartesian *res extensa* besieging constituting 'Geist' from "outside", 'Geist' is nonetheless constantly self-besieged by its propensity to constitute a practically unconstituted phenomenal Nature,

ordinary language has to recognize that it exists in symbiosis with forms of "non-ordinary" language - such as the discourse of thoughts as brain-states or will-formations as "ideologies" - which arise out of the "ordinary" and eventually feed back into it, constituting new standards for the "normal".

It is in this sense that Wittgenstein's philosophical discourse displays certain affinities with that "Goethezeit" Idealist philosophical discourse antagonistic to Kant's which we have characterized by reference to the writings of Hegel and of Goethe himself. Hegel too, in his era, opened the door to a certain philosophical neglect of the problem of naturalism, even though his own system involved a degree of recognition of the autonomy of the objective. For all that the discourse of texts like the "Philosophy of Right" can be portrayed as subordinating human praxis to the dictates of an objectivistic "second Nature" represented by the State, the problematic of Nature's determination of the human occupies, as we have seen, characteristically no important place in the Aristotelianally inspired philosophy of "subjectivity as Absolute". Man and Nature here stand already in a relation reminiscent of the relation of communication ; the "problem of naturalism" was already for Hegel, on a certain ontological level, a mere "Scheinproblem".

In the case of Goethe, it might even be able to be proven that his thought exerted a direct and decisive influence on the philosophy of the later Wittgenstein. The "Philosophical Investigations" contains more than one explicit reference to Goethe - the mention of "Wilhelm Meister" in the "private language" argument and the strange remark in Part Two, section six on the portrayal of "Goethe writing the Ninth Symphony" - and Goethe's works in turn contain numerous passages which seem to stand as epigrams *avant la lettre* for this text . The famous lines "Nichts ist drinnen, nichts ist draussen, Denn was innen, das ist aussen" appear today as a paraphrase for Wittgenstein's "nothing is hidden" and for the doctrine of *a priori* publicity which this laconic phrase epitomizes. Most tellingly perhaps, Goethe's particular "style of life" - or at least certain aspects or phases of this "style of life" - seems to prefigure that reinstatement of the "everyday" as the site of moral and ontological truth which is the common denominator in the present day of all the various schools of Wittgensteinian culture, from Richard Rorty's ostentatiously consistent Pragmatism to Charles Taylor's serene communitarianism.

If philosophy for Plato began in a "*thaumazein*", this was a "*thaumazein*" not at any detail of the universe but at the supremely abstract and comprehensive idea that the universe

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is , that "there is something and not rather nothing at all". For Wittgensteinianism, as a conversation with anyone trained in this philosophical tradition soon makes clear, this "sense of wonder" has retreated from the limiting edges of the universe as a whole down into the pores and the particular details of experience. Wittgensteinian philosophy begins and ends in a boundless "*thaumazein*" over "how we do things", over those pragmatic "knacks" and "wrinkles" of our everyday practices which - the Wittgensteinian will never tire of pointing out - "philosophy" has traditionally considered to be beneath its notice. The famous Goethe commentator Gervinius describes, in his essay on Goethe's correspondence with Schiller, how Goethe settled in his later years into just this Wittgensteinian mode of "*thaumazein*". From the point onwards at which he recognized that non-poetic objects could awaken in him a "poetic mood", Goethe, Gervinius tells us, became more and more obsessed with the "wonder of the everyday". He began "to assemble travelling cases full of public documents, newspapers, excerpts from sermons, legal announcements, stock market quotations etc., to append to these his comments, to compare to these comments opinions expressed in other sectors of society, to amend the former in the light of the latter and to commit the final result again to paper, in this way hoping to have stored up material for future use. These habits already constitute prefigurations of Goethe's later practice, developed eventually to a point of real absurdity, of ascribing significance to all the tiniest details of his everday life, of placing an extreme value on all entries made in his diaries and all notes scribbled down in passing, of contemplating every however miserable and insignificant an affair with an air of sentimental wisdom...There is nothing more expressive of this Goethe's later manner of seeing things, which became more and more marked with advancing age, than the fact that he made it his principle to passionately oppose the old maxim '*nil admirari*' , and on the contrary to admire everything, to find everything 'significant, wonderful, incalculable'" [72]

The increasing sway gained over Goethe by this "micrological" perspective undoubtedly converged with that "cult of Nature" already determinative of his formation to blind him, in much of his work, to the fact of the antagonism between the order of human practice and the order of the natural. Like the contemporary Wittgensteinian, Goethe forfeited, with his poetic concentration on the *diversity* of "how we do what we do", the insight into the *unity* and *totality* of the single causal network enfolding and determining our

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[72] See G. G. Gervinius, "Über den Goethe'schen Briefwechsel", Leipzig, 1836, p. 136, cited in Benjamin, "Goethe's Wahlverwandtschaften", "Gesammelte Schriften" (eds. Tiedemann and Schweppenhäuser), 1 : 1, pps. 153-54.

"doings" as a whole. His doubtless quite valid appreciation of the "wonder" and the "significance" of the practices of everyday life led him to the invalid conclusion that these practices are also "incalculable" - that they are "of" Nature and yet somehow "immanently transcendent" of Nature. The same trivialization of the "problem of the pressure of naturalism" which Hegel achieved by an inflation of the philosophical perspective beyond the level of the macrological, Goethe achieves by its retraction into an extreme micrology. In this regard, both of these latter thinkers prefigure the facile anti-naturalism of Wittgenstein.

For all the cultural differences, then, between the "ordinary language" philosophy of communication and the Aristotelian version of "Goethezeit" subject-philosophy, the conceptual congruence in certain key respects is clear. The Hegelian version of classical subject-philosophy, far from being in every regard the antipodes of the philosophy of communication, prefigures it at least as regards the attitude adopted toward the crucial problem of naturalism, so long as a Kantian perspective on this problem of naturalism is borne in mind as a viable alternative.

(viii)

The feature of Habermas's work which I want here to critically examine, then, is his undue reliance on Hegel, or at least on the resources of that Aristotelian tradition in European philosophy which Hegel's work paradigmatically instantiates, both in his account of the "subject-philosophical" nature of high modern culture and in his elaboration of the idea of a "communication-theoretical" sublation of this "subject-philosophical" culture. Habermas's portrait of "subjectivity" as the exclusively dominant philosophical and cultural principle of the high modern era is - as any examination of Habermas's recent writings makes clear and our exposition in Chapter One has already suggested - drawn directly and almost exclusively from Hegel himself.

The account of high modern consciousness given, for example, in such a key text as "The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity" relies almost exclusively on Hegel's writings, which are cited in the early, argumentationally foundational chapters of this book by no means as mere documents or as ideological "exhibits" but rather as reliable, indeed definitive stock-takings of modernity's cultural resources. In stating in this text's opening chapter, for example, that "in modernity, religious life, state and society as well as science, morality and art are

transformed into just so many embodiments of the principle of subjectivity" [73] Habermas plainly considers himself not just to be summarizing a particular position expounded in Hegel's "Philosophy of Right" but rather setting down an idea which had been a philosophical and cultural premiss *for high modernity as a whole*, from Descartes through to the early Wittgenstein. Habermas's elaboration of a "post-subjectivist" philosophy proceeds moreover, as we have seen, very decidedly upon Hegelian premisses. The philosophical discourse of "communicative action" as the organizing principle of the modern "lifeworld" is premissed upon a specifically Hegelian characterization of the necessary structure of the modern "shape of spirit" and - as we shall argue in detail below - on certain Hegelian assumptions about the status of the problem of naturalism.

Habermas plainly conceives of himself here as successfully sublating into his new "communications-theoretical" model of philosophy all that was essential in the "philosophical discourse of modernity". The atomistic, individualistic subjectivism of Cartesian and empiricist philosophical discourse is claimed to be rid of its structural aporia only in being resituated within a "communication-theoretical" framework, as a discourse on the relatively autonomous moment of individuality *through* sociality. And the metaphysically "exaggerated" subjectivism of Hegelian discourse is claimed to be reducible ultimately to a repetition, on an exalted ontological plane, of Cartesianism, and of Cartesianism's aporia - so that this Hegelian philosophical discourse too invites sublation into the "paradigm of the theory of communication", where its insights can alone be non-aporetically developed. These arguments I believe we can concede to Habermas. The first, against Cartesianism, seems fairly well established. And the second, reductive of Hegelianism to a repetition in inflated terms of the Cartesian problematic, is, although doubtless challengeable on numerous points, not one I intend to try to challenge in this study.

What I have, however, already here suggested is that Habermas generally overlooks, or refuses to take philosophically seriously, what is clearly a third, structurally quite distinct variation on the "paradigm of the philosophy of the subject" - a variation on this paradigm which has had an extensive "Wirkungsgeschichte" throughout high and late modernity and has found perhaps its most challenging instantiation within Habermas's own theoretical tradition, in the work of some of his Frankfurt School predecessors. Inasmuch as he situates Kant, in terms of the history of "subject-philosophy", unequivocally within the direct

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[73] Habermas, "Philosophical Discourse of Modernity", p. 18.

descendancy of Descartes, Habermas fails to register the existence of a "Goethezeit" school of the philosophy of subjectivity which represented, side by side with that synthesis of the theory of subjectivity with *Aristotelian* "philosophy of Being" represented by Hegel's "exaggerated" "philosophy of identity", a synthesis of the theory of subjectivity with the *Platonic* "ontological" - or, more strictly speaking, "ontological- theological" - heritage. This, I believe, is a fundamental philosophical error determinative of much else that is erroneous in Habermas's recent work.

What is most fundamentally at issue between Kant and Hegel - as between Plato and Aristotle - is, as we have said, whether the idea of transcendence can be conceived of in Platonic or Kantian fashion as standing in a *purely negative* relation to immanence or whether, to favour the Hegelian rather than Aristotelian formulation of the opposed position, the relation of transcendence to immanence must be considered to be a "dialectical" one. What I want to argue in this study is that the problem of the relations between the "philosophy of consciousness" and the "theory of communication" cannot be dealt with adequately unless the problem of the relations between the Platonic and the Aristotelian, or the Kantian and the Hegelian, ideas of transcendence is also drawn into the heart of the discussion. The positions adopted by various "philosophers of subjectivity" must not just be differentiated in terms of such criteria as whether these positions stress the "contemplative" or the "instrumental", or even whether they stress the "individual" or the "collective", moments of subjectivity. More important than any of these criteria is the criterion of whether the subject in question has, like the Kantian subject, *access to a radical transcendence* , or whether, like the Hegelian subject, he can have no access to such a transcendence.

The most fundamental fault of Habermas's "paradigm shift" narrative is that it is largely blind to this dimension of the problem. This is a fault which arises, as we have said, from the circumstance of Habermas's having found all his essential points of orientation in a thinker, Hegel, who stands as one of the paradigmatic representatives of just one side of the question here at issue. For Habermas, as we have suggested and will argue in detail below, modernity is axiomatically "Hegelian", or rather "post-Hegelian", and if he makes it his primary philosophical business to rid our present late modernity of the "subject-philosophical" habits of cognition which constitute one salient aspect of the Hegelian system, there is a great deal besides these habits in Hegel's thinking which Habermas has accepted without cavil as irreversible and inassailable cultural fact. Indeed, Habermas here might almost be said to be

belatedly joining the company of all those philosophers who, in the period immediately after Hegel's demise, emerged from the wings of the objective idealist theatre and, by one or two economical conceptual interventions, succeeded in drawing out of the Hegelian system philosophical positions which had seemed *prima facie* quite antithetical to this system but which, with the hindsight of "Young Hegelianism", the system could be seen to have itself developed and prepared to a point just short of intellectual parturition. There might almost be said, that is, to obtain a certain analogy between, on the one hand, Feuerbach's and David Strauss's generation's demonstration that Hegel's philosophical codification of Protestant religiosity required no more than a change in terminology in order to emerge as a doctrine of secular humanism and Marx's and Engels's generation's demonstration that Hegel's construction of an absolute but immanent universal Mind required no more than a reversal of perspective in order to emerge as a theory of historical materialism and, on the other hand, Habermas's generation's demonstration that Hegel's discourse on that dialectic of modern *reality* which immanently transformed subject into object and object into subject requires no more than a philosophical "reversal of sign" in order to emerge as a discourse on the aporia of the modern *ideology* of the "philosophy of the subject". Habermas's famous remark in "The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity" that "we remain contemporaries of the Young Hegelians" [74] certainly has its truth.

It is a truth, however, only *for Habermas* and those accepting his basic philosophical-historical premisses. The "paradigm shift" narrative goes wrong in assuming that the "we" here naturally legitimately designates the theorists of first- as well as of second- and third-generation Critical Theory. Habermas, as we shall observe, approaches the classical form of Critical Theory very decidedly as another variety of that "Young Hegelianism" which he acknowledges his own philosophy to constitute a variety of - and necessarily so, since Habermas claims, as we have seen, that the problematic of "Young Hegelianism" still today defines the "situation of consciousness" which *all* serious contemporary philosophical discourse must recognize as its own "situation". [75] To hold that the problematic of "Young Hegelianism" defines the "situation of consciousness" of all philosophical discourse today is to hold that, if it is impossible to regain that faith in reason's immanent unity in the form of the self-consciousness of an absolute subject which had been the foundation of Hegel's

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[74] Habermas, "The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity", p. 53.
[75] Ibid.

thought, it is *doubly* impossible to regain that position of faith in a *transcendent* rational Absolute which had been the cornerstone of a pre-Hegelian philosophy like Kant's. On Habermas's account, first-generation Critical Theory may have tried to move, in "Young Hegelian" fashion, "beyond" Hegel, but what it could never have done was try to move back "behind" him.

In this study, however, I want to argue that the Critical Theory of the period 1930-1970 *did* in fact move away from an originally Hegelian position back "behind" Hegel - developed, that is, from an Hegelian into a Kantian doctrine. This said, it must be added that it is part of my intention to point up the many respects in which a move from Hegel to Kant is not a move "backward" at all, the respects in which the chronological succession of philosophical positions in modernity is precisely not, in Hegelian fashion, to be identified with a progress of reason. Most importantly for our purposes, however, the thesis that the "paradigm" of first-generation Critical Theory was - at least for long periods and for important currents within the Theory as a whole - not that of Hegelian or Marxist "subject-philosophy" at all but rather that of Kantian "subject-philosophy" radically alters the whole terrain of argumentational engagement between Habermas and his predecessors. As I shall try to show, the additional ontological and moral resource which accrues to the subject of classical Critical Theory where it is understood to be a Kantian rather than an Hegelian subject - the resource, that is, of an access to absolute *transcendence* , however negativistically this idea of transcendence needs to be understood - not only empowers this subject to evade the critiques levelled by Habermas against the "philosophy of consciousness" with its inevitable dialectic of self-objectification but also to mount a telling counter-critique of the structures of that "theory of communication" which Habermas now wants to make the philosophical foundation of critical social theory.

CHAPTER TWO : THEORIES OF CRITIQUE.

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The claim made in Chapter One that first-generation Critical Theory was a "Kantian" theory will have struck most of my readers as extremely eccentric. The work of the early Frankfurt School is, of course, almost universally classified as a form of Hegelianism, or of Hegelian Marxism. I want in Chapter Two, therefore, to look in detail at some of the key texts of Horkheimer, Benjamin and Adorno and to show on the basis of these texts how the "classical" or first-generation form of Frankfurt School social philosophy can be argued to have developed from a decidedly immanentistic and dialectical theory of social experience into a basically transcendentistic and antinomical philosophy of subjectivity and society. I also want in this chapter to go on to show how the "post-classical" or second-generation form of Critical Theory has, in the period 1960-90, basically retraced this path of development in the opposite direction, how Habermas's work has evolved from a social philosophy still in certain respects (in our sense) Kantian into a pure (again in our sense) Hegelianism. This will complete the synoptic characterizations of both "paradigms" actually involved in the Frankfurt School "paradigm shift", and in Chapters Three and Four I will go on to discuss two concrete points of contention between Kantian classical and Hegelian post-classical Critical Theory : the issues of naturalism and of transcendence.

We must begin, however, at what is inarguably the Hegelian point of departure of the classical form of Critical Theory. The natural first point of orientation for the construction of an idea of Critical Theory is the series of papers and essays published by Horkheimer between 1931 and 1940. Although the designation "Critical Theory" emerges only in 1937, in the essay "Traditional and Critical Theory", this whole body of work has a strong claim to be considered definitive of the intentions of the Frankfurt Institute in its early years, authored as it was by its director in a period when the Institute remained in constant need of self-clarification. In these texts, one relatively clear-cut conception, at least, of the "essence" of Critical Theory is developed. As we shall see, it is by no means the only possible one, but we shall briefly review, as a first step in our exposition of this chapter, its salient characteristics.

Thanks to the current high profile of Habermas's particular reconstructive intentions, the best-known feature of Horkheimer's original conception of Critical Theory is today perhaps its commitment to interdisciplinarity, to the pursuit of social-philosophical truth by means of a co-operation, on an equal footing, between philosophy and empirical social science. The

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declaration of this commitment is the main substance of the earliest of Horkheimer's

programmatic texts of the 1930's, his inaugural address as Director of the Frankfurt Institute

and Professor of Philosophy at Frankfurt University on the subject of "The Present Situation

of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute for Social Research". In this text,

Horkheimer announced his ambition to fashion the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research into

a collective of scientists capable of taking up the heritage of classical German philosophy

under the radically altered conditions of the twentieth century, of posing and attempting to

answer, "on the basis of the new problem constellation, consistent with the methods at our

disposal and with the level of our knowledge", "the old question concerning the connection

of particular existence and universal Reason, of reality and Idea, of life and Spirit (Geist)." [1]

Within the context of this "new problem constellation", however, such a project could only be

realized through the abolition of the traditional division of labour between the philosopher and

the empirical scientist, whereby "philosophy deals with the really decisive problems...while

empirical research carries out its long, boring individual studies" and the replacement of this

division by "continuous, dialectical penetration and development of philosophical theory and

specialized scientific practice." [2] This theme is reiterated in one of the last of the texts of this

period of Horkheimer's development, the 1937 essay "Traditional and Critical Theory". In this

text, the latter mode of thought is differentiated from the former on the basis, among other

characteristics, of its practice, in distinction from "traditional theory" which simply "defines

universal concepts under which all facts in the field in question are to be subsumed", of

"moving further, using all knowledge available and taking suitable material from the research of

others as well as from specialized research." [3]

This first apparently essential characteristic of Horkheimerian Critical Theory was, as

we shall see, later to come at least to be treated in practice as inessential - or as needing under

present conditions long to be left in suspension as a component of critical social theory. And

indeed, already in the course of the 1930's Horkheimer's personal intellectual energies were

devoted almost entirely to the elaboration of the philosophical element in the Critical-

Theoretical project. The name Horkheimer gave before 1937 to the philosophical conception

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[1] See Horkheimer "Between Philosophy and Social Science : Selected Early Writings" (MIT Press, 1993) pps. 11-12.

[2] Ibid. p. 9.

[3] See "Traditional and Critical Theory" in Horkheimer, "Critical Theory : Selected Essays" (Herder and Herder, 1972) pps. 224-226.

which was to "penetrate and be penetrated by specialized scientific practice" in the work of the Frankfurt School was simply "materialism". Horkheimer made repeatedly clear that he was not referring with this term to a particular "metaphysics", a particular stance on the classical philosophical problem of the reducibility of mind to matter or matter to mind : "Contemporary materialism" he wrote in 1936, "is not principally characterized by the formal traits which oppose it to idealist metaphysics." [4] Rather, "materialist theory is an aspect of efforts to improve the human situation." [5] The materialist philosophy which Horkheimer expounds in these programmatic texts of the 1930's thus recalls Hegel far more often than D"Holbach.

This inasmuch as the key elements of his "materialist" prescriptions for social philosophy consist in a relentless insistence on the historical nature of all social philosophy's themes and problems and an only marginally more mediated and moderated insistence on the constitutive role played with regard to all social philosophy's objects by collective subjective activity. The first of these two doctrinal elements is present in almost every paragraph of Horkheimer's texts of the 1930's. Already in the 1931 inaugural address, he contrasts "metaphysical" reflection on general ahistorical theses about subjectivity and society unfavourably with investigation into the relations between subject and society in "a specific social group in a specific era in specific countries". [6] The main argumentational thrust of essays of the mid-thirties like "Materialism and Morality" and "Remarks On Philosophical Anthropology" is one against a- or trans-historical conceptions of the human personality : "Autonomously attempting to decide whether one's actions are good or evil is plainly a late historical phenomenon" [7] ; "Human characteristics are inextricably linked to the course of history, and history itself is in no way marked by a uniform will." [8] And even at the end of the decade, in a report prepared in English on the work of the Institute for Social Research, Horkheimer still devotes much of his text to expounding the principle of the "historical emergence of concepts". [9]

The Hegelian idea of the mediation of all objectivity by collective-subjective practice is

[4] Horkheimer, "Materialism and Metaphysics" in "Critical Theory : Selected Essays" (Herder and Herder, New York, 1972), p. 45.

[5] Ibid. p. 26.

[6] Horkheimer, "Between Philosophy and Social Science", p. 12.

[7] "Materialism and Morality", ibid. p. 15.

[8] "Remarks On Philosophical Anthropology", ibid. p. 174.

[9] See "Studies in Philosophy and Social Science" (New York, 1941), p. 121.

likewise constantly reiterated throughout this period of Horkheimer's work. In the 1933 "Materialism and Metaphysics", he mobilizes the researches of Gestalt psychology and of his own teacher Hans Cornelius to support in "state of the art" terms the Hegelian thesis that apparent natural "data" are in fact in essential respects cultural "derivata", in the construction of which the human observer and his social environment have played a determining role. [10] In the 1937 "Traditional and Critical Theory", he links this theme to the theme of radical historicity and argues that "the facts which our senses present to us are socially preformed in two ways : through the historical character of the object perceived and through the historical character of the perceiving organ. Both are not simply natural ; they are shaped by human activity..."[11]

It should be noted, of course, that Horkheimer also adheres to the Marxist limitations placed on this Hegelian schema. The dialectical interpenetration of subjectivity and objectivity which Horkheimer envisages is one driven largely into mere latency by present historical conditions. As he writes in "Traditional and Critical Theory", "in recognizing the present form of economy and the whole culture which it generates to be the product of human work...(Critical Theorists) identify themselves with this totality and conceive it as will and reason. It is their own world. At the same time, however, they experience the fact that society is comparable to non-human natural processes, to pure mechanisms, because cultural forms which are supported by war and oppression are not the creatures of a unified, self-conscious will. That world is not their own but the world of capital." [12] This "proviso" built into the Hegelianism of early Critical Theory will be of relevance to our discussion throughout this study, since its qualification of Hegelian "identity-philosophy" is plainly a qualification which draws the Theory not only closer to the Marxist, but simultaneously closer to the Kantian, recognition of the "non-identical".

Despite their heavily philosophical nature, however, it must be said that these founding documents of Horkheimerian Critical Theory today strike the reader as remarkably intellectually shallow. It is quite shocking, given the central position usually accorded them in the canon of so-called "Western Marxism", how slightly they differ, from a contemporary perspective, from the "vulgar Marxist" texts of the Second and Third Internationals. In order to account for this impression we must pause a moment to consider what exactly we mean by

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[10] See Horkheimer, "Critical Theory", pps. 42-43.
[11] Ibid. p. 200.
[12] Ibid. p. 207-208.

"vulgar" and by "Western" Marxism and in what the difference between the two might be said to consist.

The development of Marxism can be narrated better than in most terms, perhaps, in terms of the maturation which has consisted in a greater and greater distantiation from the idea of humanity's social condition as one of oppression by and confrontation with a discrete and deictically isolable "enemy". It cannot, of course, be fairly said even of Marx himself that he propounded the view that the parlous condition of Man in the modern world was one consciously instituted and maintained by a specific group of self-interested individuals. Rather, Marx tended in general to work toward replacing this first, crude, high Enlightenment model of social critique with a more sophisticated and problematical model which dispensed with the apparatus of wickedness and virtue and conceived of both oppressor and oppressed in terms of their constitution as such by objective processes independent of their wills. Indeed, the very distinguishing feature of "scientific" socialism as against the "utopian" socialisms which had preceded it was, it might be argued, the former's insistence on conceiving of the social problem as a problem of the *whole*. Where pre-Marxist socialist movements had tended to think in terms of righting specifiable and isolable social wrongs - extending to the poor the happiness enjoyed by the rich - Marx tended rather to conceive of the human historical condition as "wrong" in a more encompassing, permeating sense. The idea that the solution to the social problem lay merely in extending the happiness of the rich to include the poor became on Marx's scheme problematical since, in a world "wrong" in the total, structural sense which his work suggested, this happiness of a part of Mankind was already itself marked and made hollow by the misery characteristic of the whole. Where high Enlightenment thinkers and the utopian socialists inspired by them had been able to set off "l'infâme" in society from the "bons gens" with the same clarity and certainty with which the Jews had set off from themselves the Egyptians, Marx's work opened an era in which it began to be generally recognized that the lords of creation were linked even in the hour of their omnipotence to the wretched of the earth in a kind of negative solidarity.

Within the culture of Marxism, however, with its predominant metaphor of "class struggle", the Zoroastrian image of the "pure" elements of the social world gathering in righteous arms against the "impure" has again and again asserted itself. It has been the merit of certain trends in what is called Western Marxism - of Gramsci, for instance, or of Althusser or of the Critical Theory produced between 1940 and 1970 - to have challenged this tendency.

In these latter Marxisms, the attempt has been made to cease conceiving of the principle to be critiqued - the "negative" principle - in the existing social world in terms of a force which could be held at arms' length from the criticizing subject. Crucial also to the project of Western Marxism, of course, has been the *preservation*, even in doing this, of the idea itself of the "negativity of the existing", the refusal to renounce, along with the idea that we are engaged in a "war of manoeuvre", the perception that the human historical condition *does* partake somehow of the horror and gravity of war. It might well be argued that the development of the Althusserian and Gramscian currents in Western Marxism has seen the stifling of the second of these moments by an over-development of the first, so that these least "vulgar" of Marxisms often appear today in forms barely distinguishable from liberalism. In this light, the merit of the late work of Horkheimer and Adorno appears all the greater. Much more decidedly and consistently than Marx himself, Horkheimer and Adorno in their post-1940 work conceived, without compromising in the least their perception of the "negativity of the existing", this negativity as a problem of the social whole.

What disappoints the contemporary reader in Horkheimer's texts of the 1930's is how relatively short a distance Critical Theory had in fact at this point travelled along this road. Measured against the mass of Marxist writing published at the time, of course, Horkheimer's texts must be assessed as precisely in this regard exemplary. Even a very early piece like the paper "History and Psychology" - a paper which Horkheimer delivered, significantly enough, to the Frankfurt "Kant Society" in 1931 - contains points which contribute to the expansion of the Marxist social analysis prevalent at the time in the direction of a greater holism, a greater appreciation of the interpenetration of "friend" and "foe" in contemporary "class struggle". "That human beings" he writes here, "sustain economic relationships which their powers and needs have made obsolete, instead of replacing them with a higher and more rational form of organization, is only possible because the action of numerically significant social strata is determined not by knowledge but by a drive structure that leads to false consciousness. Mere ideological machinations are hardly the only roots of this historically crucial moment ; this is the type of interpretation one might associate with the rationalistic anthropology of the Enlightenment and its historical situation. Rather, the overall psychic structure of these groups - that is, the character of their members - is continuously renewed in connection with their role in the economic process. Psychology must therefore penetrate to these deeper psychic factors by means of which the economy conditions human beings ; it must become

largely the psychology of the unconscious."[13]

This recognition, if not inspired then at least given concretion by the work of Erich Fromm, that the modern subject does not remain a passive - and thus in certain key respects an impassible, an intact - victim of capitalism, but is rather formed *as* a subject by the negative social formation in which he exists and thus fulfills the function of (self-)oppressor even where a discrete external oppressor is not to hand - this recognition is plainly a step beyond Marx, or at least beyond the Marxist culture of the Second and Third Internationals, in the direction of a theory of a negative social whole. The Frankfurt School reception of *psychology* - in the sense of the Freudian "depth-psychology" practiced by Fromm - can thus be seen to have set it firmly upon the path which we have suggested is the essential path of Western Marxism. What *retards* its progress on this path, however - what lies at the root of our dissatisfaction with Horkheimer's texts of the 1930's - is its treatment of the second component of the topic of the paper from which we have just quoted : the moment of *history.*

We have noted above how the necessity for historical consciousness was a key theme of Horkheimer's work throughout the '30's. The concept of historical consciousness, however, is a complex and problematical one. For the Horkheimer of the '30's, historical consciousness stands in simple opposition to its "lack" - in opposition, that is, both to ahistorical positions which simply unthinkingly assume that what holds of, say, the human subject here and now has always held of him and will always hold, *and* to *trans*-historical positions which explicitly propose that certain things have held of the human subject for almost inconceivably vast spans of time, for all practical purposes "forever". Indeed, for the Marxist Horkheimer, we can assume, the latter position was always implicitly dismissed as a mere rationalization of the former. But the naivety of a stance like Horkheimer's is today transparent. It is at the very least arguable nowadays whether Nietzsche, who insisted that human nature changed extremely slowly and that the decisive events in the history of the human species had all occurred before recorded history, or Marx, who stressed the alterations brought about in human character by verifiable historical changes in modes of production, had the greater "historical consciousness". Certainly, we can no longer accept the Marxist charge that Nietzsche "ignored history".

"Historical sense", too, we have come to realize, has its dialectic. As the work of, for example, the "Annales" school has demonstrated, the most consistently Marxist

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13 "History and Psychology", in Horkheimer ,"Between Philosophy and Social Science", p. 120.

historiography tends in this its very consistency toward the reinstatement of what - at the very least - *looks like* a moment of anti-historical "stasis". To recognize, as was already implicitly and exemplarily recognized by Marx, that real history is the history not of "kings and battles" but of agricultural technology, of the organization of the working day, of the perception and the disciplining of the body, of the discursive construction of love and anger - this is also necessarily to begin to renounce the claims characteristic of that *rhetoric* of history which has always been associated with Marxist theory and practice. Consistently materialist, consistently Marxist history is the history of developments "à longue dureé". It is thereby *not* just that story of "all that is solid melting into air" which is evoked when orthodox Marxists speak of the need to proceed in a "concrete", an "historical and materialist", as opposed to an "abstract", an "ahistorical and idealist", manner. The process of history, the most materialist historiography reveals, is a process not just of constant "evaporations" but of long "sedimentations" ; it involves extended moments of self-negation, extended moments in which historical phenomena succeed in insulating themselves against their own nature, succeed in becoming practically ahistorical. In this way, the project of writing a history of European or any other civilization becomes, precisely where it is carried out in the scientific Marxist spirit of turning attention away from "seven-gated Thebes" toward those who built it, a project which is as well described as one of *ontology* as as one of history. The "questions of a reading worker" who will not rest content with mere narratives of kings and battles in fact require answers which problematize the apparently corollary Brechtian observation that "the great does not remain great, nor the small remain small."

A historicism like Horkheimer's thus, we must recognize, has its "other" as much within itself as without. Pursued consistently, it stands in danger of forfeiting its certainty that "everything changes", or at least of having to amend this certainty to a recognition that things change sometimes "à courte" and sometimes "à longue dureé". The contemporary reader is disturbed by Horkheimer's naivety in this respect, perhaps also by the emerging tension in Horkheimer's work of this period between this naivety and a growing consciousness of the points we have just made. On the one hand, Horkheimer makes constant play in the texts of the 1930's of the idea of "real history", the Hegelian and Marxist trope of time as a river sweeping away everything fixed and constituted almost before it has had time to constitute itself. In the first of a long and hardly glorious series of Critical-Theoretical polemics against Heidegger, for instance, Horkheimer, in his 1931 "History and Psychology", opposes to

Heideggerian "Geschichtlichkeit" the quite unclarified idea of "reale Geschichte" : "According to the notion that history is first to be grasped out of the inner historicity of 'Dasein'," he writes, "the interweaving of 'Dasein' in the real process of history would have to seem merely external and illusory."[14]

In order to develop a genuinely telling critique of Heidegger's apparently ahistorical concept of "Dasein", however - in order, that is, to successfully repudiate the idea of a fixed human essence not just *qua* abstraction from history but also *qua* sedimented product of history "à longue dureé" - this instance of "the real process of history" would have not to be cited, as it is here, as a mere "given" but described and explained in detail. The dynamism and transforming kineticism which "real history"'s mobilization in this passage vaguely conjure up would have to be given concrete support in the analysis of human historical experience. This is not done in Horkheimer's texts of the 1930's. Indeed, on the contrary, their limited achievements in the way of an expansion of Marxist theory toward a vision of a negative social whole in fact drive the Critical-Theoretical conception of history in an opposite direction. The valuable recognition attained in "History and Psychology" that the dominion of capital over its subject / objects was maintained largely by subject-internalized rather than external, coercive or openly ideological, mechanisms - this recognition brought with it, in subsequent texts, a growing acknowledgement of that instance of history "à longue dureé" which tends to subvert the sharp division Horkheimer favoured between the "real-historical" and the "ontological-metaphysical".

In the 1936 essay "Egoism and Freedom Movements" - in many respects a particularly "vulgar" text, devoting dozens of pages to analyses of the "class interests" represented by historical figures such as Cola di Rienzo, Savonarola and Robespierre and achieving no more with these analyses than is achieved in Brecht's "Caesar and His Legionnaire" - we can nevertheless find the first anticipation in Horkheimer's work of the more "longue dureé" theory of history expounded first in the "Philosophical Fragments" of 1944: "In the modern age...(domination) is internalized by subduing and mortifying all claims to pleasure. This process of civilization admittedly began long before the bourgeois era ; nevertheless, this is when the process first gave rise to the formation and consolidation of representative character types and gave social life its stamp."[15] What appears in this passage

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[14] Horkheimer, "Between Philosophy and Social Science", pps. 112-113.
[15] Horkheimer, "Between Philosophy and Social Science", p. 58.

as a mere qualification is the seed of a later revision in Critical Theory of the very meaning of the terms "bourgeois" and "modern age". The idea that the roots of the "bourgeois character structure" might stretch back long before the "bourgeois era" opens a middle road between the "materialist" position that all character is class character, liable at any moment to be dissolved and transformed by social revolution, and the "metaphysical" position that there exists an essential human nature. "Real history" here no longer appears as the rushing river of orthodox Marxist rhetoric, but as an immensely slow sequence of events "à longue dureé" no longer entirely incompatible with a conception of the human being which sees this being as needing at least to be *treated* as an in certain fundamental respects (practically) trans-historical constant.

This growing consciousness of the problematical nature of the idea of "real history" in the traditional Marxist sense was in fact to contribute to undermining almost all of the apparently constitutive tenets of the Critical Theory of the 1930's in Horkheimer's later work. Not only the ideal of interdisciplinarity but also the apparently even more fundamental anti-"positivist" principle of the constitutivity of collective subjectivity with regard to objectivity were significantly re-assessed in post-1940 Critical Theory. We might add, indeed, to this list a principle even more axiomatic - almost to the point of "going without saying" - for Horkheimer's work of this period : the principle of fidelity to *immanence*, of the rejection of any transcendent, extra-worldly foundation for either truth or moral rightness. With the gradual abandonment of these positions, classical Critical Theory began to move out of the conceptual channels of Hegelian philosophy - for which historicism, a conviction of the ultimate complete identity of object and collective subject and thoroughgoing methodological immanence were, as we have seen, all constitutive - into the conceptual channels of what we have called in Chapter One the specifically Kantian philosophy of the subject.

For the Horkheimer of the early 1930's, no equivocation had been permissible on the Hegelian premiss of complete methodological immanentism. "Today," he had written in the 1936 "Materialism and Metaphysics", "the struggle for a better order of things has been cut loose from its old supernatural justification. The theory appropriate to the struggle today is materialism." [16] By the end of the 1930's, however, a certain silence had unfolded around this issue - a silence anticipative of the explicitly negative-theological position of Horkheimer's last

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[16] "Materialism and Metaphysics", in Horkheimer, "Critical Theory", p. 22.

years. Horkheimer's 1939 article "The Jews and Europe" [17] was the first to actually include talk of "the Infinite" in an apparently approbatory sense, but recent scholarship concurs in seeing a degree of "de-immanentization" of Critical Theory already in the 1937 "Traditional and Critical Theory". Indeed, precisely on the issue of the solution to the social problem's immanence in or transcendence of existing human society, this watershed text is driven to plain self-contradiction. On the one hand, the "materialist" themes of the earlier essays are reiterated. Both the subject and the object of any possible theory, it is again stressed, are historically-developing moments of a social whole. What follows from this is that critical social theory cannot be "the function...of the isolated individual" [18] On the other hand, however, Horkheimer's growing recognition of the negativity of the *whole* of the existing social field - of the penetration even into the proletariat of the "wrongness", the essential distortion of consciousness and practice, characteristic of capitalism - is also strongly restated. And what follows from this is that the subject of critical social theory *is* an "isolated" subject, a subject "thrown back upon himself" [19] Although Horkheimer's critical subject continues still in this period to raise the claim to be speaking out of the order of immanence - "immanence" that must now surely be understood very much in terms of pure "latency" and "potentiality" - the social ideal of Critical Theory has nevertheless been at this point, as Helmut Dubiel has put it, begun to be "made philosophical, transcendentalized." [20] In our terms, it has begun to be "Kantianized".

Dubiel, in line with the basic methodological principles of his work in "Theory and Politics", situates this "transcendentalization" of the Critical-Theoretical ideal in Horkheimer's work toward the end of the 1930's in terms of a response to developments on the world political scene in this period. [21] An important role was certainly also played here, however, by factors internal to the School itself. That Horkheimer had by 1937 placed at the centre of the Theory the individual "thrown back upon himself" and that by 1939 he could propose as a

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[17] See "Zeitschrift fur Sozialforschung", Jahrgang 8.

[18] "Traditional and Critical Theory" in ibid., p. 210-11.

[19] Ibid. p. 214.

[20] See Helmut Dubiel, "Theory and Politics : Studies in the Development of Critical Theory" (MIT Press,1985), p. 67.

[21] Dubiel's stated intention in "Theory and Politics" is to "grasp (the) entire development (of Critical Theory between 1930 and 1945) as the reflective expression of an historical experience." (p. 3).

political strategy the "refusal to make what is finite into the Infinite" [22] were results, as well as of the diminishing prospects for the survival, let alone the success, of progressive social forces in Europe, of Horkheimer's *rapprochement* as a theorist with his colleague Theodor Adorno and, through Adorno, with Walter Benjamin.

(ii)

Benjamin was the only one of the classical Critical Theorists the framework of whose thought was consistently dualistic, transcendentistic - in short, Kantian - throughout his career. He was not well read in the texts of that dialectical tradition in modern philosophy stemming from Hegel and handled its conceptual apparatus with little skill. Even in his "Brechtian" period of the mid- to late nineteen thirties he remained in a sense a Kantian thinker. That vision of the social world which was expressed in writings like his 1938 essay on Baudelaire, and censured by Adorno for its vulgarly Marxist reductionism and lack of feeling for the complex "mediations" linking artistic consciousness and social being, was not, as it appeared to be, the vision of a constitutionally profoundly immanentistic, an ultra-Hegelian, spirit. Nor was it even, as Adorno suggested it might be, the result of Benjamin's trying to force out of himself the kind of writing which he mistakenly believed the Marxist cause required of him. The - in Adorno's view - "behaviouristic" portrait of social and subjective reality which Benjamin offered in the late nineteen-thirties is better situated as a moment of a still-Kantian vision : a portrait of a "phenomenal" immanence conceived in momentary abstraction from that dimension of transcendence which, for Kant, had alone redeemed the phenomenal world from total domination by the logic of behaviourism. Benjamin had offered in his work of the 1930's a series of experiments in a certain style of "Kantian Marxism".

The Brechtian "plumpe Denken" of the nineteen-thirties, however, represents only one style or mode of "Kantian Marxism". Benjamin's thought had in an earlier stage taken the form of a discourse to which this description might also have been legitimately applied, but which Adorno felt able to approve of in a way he could not approve of Benjamin's later "behaviourism". Adorno's constant points of reference during the period of the development of his own social philosophy were the texts published by Benjamin in the nineteen-twenties, such as the 1924 "Goethe's 'Elective Affinities'" and the 1928 "Origin of German Tragic Drama". The arguments of these texts were developed within a conceptual framework

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[22] See Horkheimer, "Die Juden und Europa", in "Zeitschrift fur Sozialforschung", Jahrgang 8 (1939), p. 136.

explicitly Kantian and Platonic. Hegelian themes occured only rarely and ambiguously in them and Marxist themes did not occur - *qua* Marxist themes - at all. Benjamin indeed was confessedly almost entirely ignorant of Marx and of Marxism at the time of the formulation of the ideas which went into these essays. Yet Adorno chose in his critique of Benjamin's later writings to distinguish just these texts as paragons of a Marxist, a Critical-Theoretical, approach to social philosophy. "The 'Elective Affinities'," wrote Adorno in a 1938 letter to Benjamin, "and the 'Baroque' book ('Origin of German Tragic Drama' - A.R.) are better Marxism than the wine-tax and the deduction of phantasmagoria from the 'behaviour' of the writers of Sunday supplements (the latter terms of this comparison refer to features of Benjamin's 1938 'Baudelaire' essay - A.R.) [23]

Remarks like these are crucial to the understanding of the nature of the social-philosophical doctrine which Critical Theory was to develop into in the nineteen-forties and 'fifties, to the understanding of the nature of the "Marxism" which Adorno - who was the leading, in fact the sole real, theoretical force in the Frankfurt School between Benjamin's death in 1940 and the emergence of Habermas in the nineteen-sixties - was concerned to propound and defend. It was the decidedly Kantian Marxism of Benjamin's early work which remained the paradigm of Adorno's thought in texts like the "Minima Moralia" of 1951 and even, if more distantly and less visibly, the "Negative Dialectics" of 1966. Let us try to establish, then, in what sense the Kantianism which Benjamin displays in his essays of the 'twenties is "better Marxism" than the more orthodox style of social critique represented by his work of the mid-'thirties - to establish in what sense, indeed, this Kantianism can be said to be a "Marxism" at all.

Just as the conceptual key to Kant's critical philosophy is Kant's theory of "natural causality" as the exhaustive logic of immanence, the conceptual key to Benjamin's texts of the nineteen-twenties is Benjamin's theory of immanence as a continuum of "myth". The latter theory is in fact plainly modelled on the former. Those key characteristics of Benjamin's conception of the "mythical" isolated by Winfried Menninghaus in his recent paper "Walter Benjamin's Theory of Myth" correspond in the most essential respects to the characteristics of Kant's conception of an autonomous order of "Naturkausalität". Benjamin, points out Menninghaus, understands *unfreedom* and *repetition* , in short *non-difference* , to be the essence of the mythical. The mythical world is a continuum of the "always-the-same" in which

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[23] See Rolf Wiggershaus, "The Frankfurt School", p. 215.

the "different" and the "new" can find no point of purchase. [24] Likewise, Kant could say of the phenomenal world in abstraction from that transcendent order of "Ideas" which he understood to overarch it and alone determine it *as* a phenomenal world : "in mundo non datur hiatus". Kant's phenomenal order, like Benjamin's "mythical", is, where it is left to rely on its own resources alone, an order marked by "the eternal recurrence of the same".

It will surely, however, be objected that the meanings of Benjamin's "myth" and of Kant's "Naturkausalität" cannot coincide entirely. Such a coincidence seems excluded by two factors. Firstly, subjection to "natural causality" is, as Kant conceived of it, a perennial, a timeless condition of phenomenal existence ; the idea of subjection to "myth", on the other hand, seems by definition to designate an *historical* state, and one moreover today largely already transcended. Secondly, "natural causality" is in the last analysis, for all the latently identity-philosophical nature of Kant's philosophical position, conceived by him as a factor obtaining decidedly "on the side of the object" ; "myth", on the other hand, suggests just as decidedly a factor "on the side of thought", an experience *of* the world and not a "world" itself. But Benjamin's conception of myth is in fact one which proves elusive of classification in terms of either of these two oppositions : "historical or ahistorical?" and "objective or subjective ?" We can clarify this by contrasting it with a conception of myth which is less recalcitrant to such classifications : Habermas's.

Myth, of course, is also an important component of the philosophical discourse of the "Theory of Communicative Action". The characteristics of the "mythical" highlighted in this latter text in fact converge sufficiently closely with those highlighted in Benjamin's account for us to be able to assume a degree of direct influence to have been exerted by Benjamin on Habermas in this respect. In the "rough characterization of the mythical understanding of the world" to which Habermas devotes a part of the introduction to this cornerstone of his "communication-theoretical" social philosophy, we read that "what we find most astonishing" in the mythical world-experience "is the peculiar levelling of the different domains of reality, nature and culture being projected onto the same plane", and that "what irritates us...is that in a mythically-interpreted world we cannot make certain differentiations which are fundamental to our understanding of the world." [25] For Habermas as for Benjamin, mythical world-

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[24] See Menninghaus "Walter Benjamin's Theory of Myth", in Gary Smith (ed.) "On Walter Benjamin" (MIT Press, 1988), pps 292-325, particularly pps. 316-320 : "Mythical 'Nature' versus Freedom" and "Time In Myth : Eternal Recurrence".

[25] Habermas, "Theory of Communicative Action", Volume One, p. 45.

experience is an experience of non-differentiation, of an "eternal return of the same".

Habermas's concept of myth, however, differs from Benjamin's in the way we have announced : by virtue of its acknowledging its immediate answerability to those two questions, as to "historicality or ahistoricality" and as to "objectivity or subjectivity", raised above - acknowledging its answerability to these questions, that is, in the precise terms in which they are raised. As regards the first question, Habermas gives to his concept of mythical experience an unequivocal - indeed, so unequivocal as to be merely implicit - historical situation. The very language of the passages quoted is a clear indication that, even though Habermas's "rough characterization of the mythical understanding of the world" occurs in the "Theory of Communicative Action" in the context of the rehearsal of a debate on the relative cognitive *value* of archaic and of modern conceptions of reality, the *fact* that "we" no longer at this point in history live in a continuum of mythical repetition, that "we" differentiate regularly and distinctly between, for example, the realm of Nature and the realm of culture, does not for Habermas stand for one moment in any doubt. For Habermas, it goes almost without saying that "the mythical understanding of the world" is a thing of the past, a world-view which can re-emerge today only as a conscious and easily identifiable archaistic affectation. This presupposition in fact enters into the very definition of the "mythical" in this text. It is because "we" are "members of a modern lifeworld" [26] in which the differentiation of culture from Nature is given as an irreversible *fait accompli* that "we" find mythical non-differentiation and repetition so "astonishing" and "irritating".

As regards the second question, that Habermas is able answer directly and unequivocally when challenged as to the "objectivity" or "subjectivity" of his conception of mythical experience is doubtless just a function of his being able to respond directly and unequivocally to the question as to this conception's historical or ahistorical status. Since for Habermas it goes without saying that an "enlightened", a modern, society is no longer a society which experiences the world mythically, it goes also without saying that the "mythical experience of the world" is a phenomenon to be understood merely as an "experience" and not as a real indication of the nature of a "world". Myth and mythicality, that is to say, are for Habermas errors "on the side of thought". In myth - claims Habermas - Nature and culture are merely *projected* onto the same plane of experience. In reality, these two orders exist by definition on different planes, from that moment onwards when Man institutes an order of

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[26] Ibid. p. 49.

culture by beginning to use language with practical and communicative intent.

Benjamin's conception of myth shares neither of these two implicit certainties. In the first place, his construction of an historical dimension for his concept of myth is a complex one, even to the point of equivocality. As Menninghaus points out, in developing his concept of myth throughout the twenties and thirties Benjamin was concerned to distinguish his own position on the one hand from an "aesthetic", non-historical understanding of this problem - which he identified, quite wrongly in the light of our remarks above, with Nietzsche's understanding of it - and on the other from a naively historical understanding like that expounded by Ernst Cassirer, who envisaged myth as the first diachronic epoch in a process of human cognitive evolution through religion to theoretical knowledge. [27] What Benjamin, it seems then, was aiming at was the construction of a historical dimension for the idea of a mythical, ever repeated and never authentically internally differentiated, human experience which would be "historical" in the sense only of what we have called above a "histoire à longue durée". The accuracy of this mythical idea as a description of the human condition was to be recognized to have an element of historical contingency to it - that is, it was not to aspire to count as a description of "the human condition" in the perennialistic liberal sense of this term. So as not, however, to slide into the other kind of liberalism represented by Cassirer's evolutionism, the idea was also to be recognized to be contingently *nigh-universally* applicable to human experience as it has historically developed, or rather failed to develop.

This historical-philosophical position is summed up in an aphorism of Kafka's which Benjamin cited on more than one occasion in his writings from the nineteen-twenties right on into his "historical materialist" period : "To believe in progress does not mean to believe that progress has already taken place" [28] The grasping of this idea of "history", of "modernity", as a pure latency, a pure potentiality not yet in any way historically actualized is crucial to the understanding of the political philosophy of the first generation of Critical Theory, at least in its Benjaminian form. As late as 1934, when he had already long since begun to describe his work as "Marxist" in orientation, Benjamin held to the idea that human experience had not passed even in the twentieth century beyond the archaic, mythical stage of repetition and non-differentiation. Of Kafka, he wrote in this year that "the age in which he lived signified for

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[27] See Menninghaus, in Smith "Walter Benjamin", pps. 294-5. Menninghaus questions whether Benjamin's understanding here of Cassirer's position was accurate, just as we must question whether Benjamin had an accurate understanding of Nietzsche.

[28] See, for example, Benjamin's 1934 "Franz Kafka" in Benjamin,"Illuminations" Schocken Books, New York, 1969, p. 130.

him no progress over the most primordial of beginnings (Uranfänge)". [29] This centrality of the idea of a static, anti-historical "myth" to Benjamin's "historical materialism" was maintained throughout this last decade of his life. As Menninghaus points out, the account of the structures of mythical experience which Benjamin developed in texts of the nineteen-twenties like "Goethe's 'Elective Affinities'" was to some extent merely repeated in his texts of the nineteen-thirties as an account of the structures of the experience of the subjects of capitalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries : "To a certain degree...the concept of a captivating and unitary mythical time in the 'Passagenwerk' remains valid as a moment of Benjamin's reception of Marx's theory of capitalism as a kind of 'second Nature'." [30]

These elements of Benjamin's concept of the mythical also render it elusive of classification as either "subjective" or "objective", a phenomenon "on the side of thought" or "on the side of the object". Although he was quite willing to ascribe to this experience that quality of falsity which is inevitably suggested by the term "mythical", this falsity was for Benjamin as it were a "falsity on the side of the object". As Menninghaus explains, Benjamin consistently distanced himself from any critique of mythical experience which attempted to present this latter as simply non-correspondent with the truth - from, that is, what Menninghaus calls the "Enlightenment" critique of myth. [31] For Benjamin, myth, the experience of the world as a closed continuum of repetition and non-differentiation, was neither true nor untrue, or both true and untrue. The relationship between this experience and truth was "one of mutual exclusion" [32]. In the situations which Benjamin designates as "mythical", a falsity has *become* truth - become the *sole* intra-mundane truth - and to call this falsity either by its name or by the name of truth is in both cases to speak only falsely of it.

The differences between Benjamin's and Habermas's concepts of myth and the mythical, then, might be summed up as Menninghaus sums up the differences between Benjamin's and the "Enlightenment"'s critique of the truth-claims of mythical world-views : "While the Enlightenment, by confronting myth with an abstract concept of theoretical truth, failed to realize any genuine *form and function* of myth, Benjamin refuses to reduce myth to either a form of truth or of falsehood, and thus rescues the *autonomous dimension* of myth

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[29] Ibid.

[30] See Menninghaus. pps 322-3 : "Variance and Invariance in Benjamin's Concept of Myth".

[31] Ibid. p. 298.

[32] Ibid.

(my emphases)." [33] Although it is hardly correct to speak of Habermas's opposing to myth, to pure repetitive naturality, "an abstract concept of theoretical truth" - he opposes to it rather, as we shall see later in this chapter and in Chapter Three, something between a formal description of the transcendental logic supposedly inherent in language and a substantial description of a set of ingrained cultural practices - it is certainly the case that he denies, as did myth's "Enlightenment" critics, any "genuine form and function", any "autonomous dimension", to mythical experience. He denies such an "autonomous dimension" to it, in any case, as regards the present, the world of modernity. Where Benjamin's work on myth had been in one sustained moment of its whole logical process a "mimesis" of mythical repetition and non-differentiation, a deference to myth's continuing enormous force - as Adorno wrote of Benjamin's programme, "philosophy itself takes to itself the fetishism of the commodity ; over everything philosophy must itself cast the spell of reification, in order that the spell of reification might at last be broken" [34] - Habermas has confidently shifted the whole problematic of Critical Theory a rung up what is normally understood to be the diachronic ladder of human cognitive evolution.

This in the following sense : Classical and post-classical Critical Theory might be said, in the light of the arguments which we have just reviewed, to share a basic set of historical-conceptual "building-blocks" : (i) the idea of a mythical, non-differentiated experiential field as Man's primeval condition ; (ii) the idea of a step out of this condition into Enlightenment and modernity ; (iii) the idea of certain "pathologies" of Enlightenment and modernity, taking the form of significant re-emergences of non-differentiation. The two forms of the theory have, however, *arranged* these "building-blocks" as the components of their theoretical constructions in very different configurations. Classical, Benjaminian and Adornian [35] Critical Theory in key respects *identified* (iii) with (i), leaving (ii) the status of mere illusion only : Man had never really transcended mythical experience because he had never yet instituted a non-mythical reality ; the "pathologies of modernity" were the "pathologies" of the primeval world under a different guise ; Critical Theory thus needed primarily to confront myth if it was to confront, to realize, modernity. Habermas, however, denies all identity between (i) and (iii).

[33] Menninghaus, in Smith, "Walter Benjamin", p. 299.

[34] Adorno, "Charakteristik Walter Benjamins", "Gesammelte Schriften" (Tiedemann, ed., Frankfurt 1970-86) Vol. 10 : 1, p. 243.

[35] We shall see below that Horkheimer's analyses often do not accord with Benjamin's and Adorno's in this respect, that they do in fact provide an objective basis for second-generation Critical Theory's identification of the project of the first generation with ther own.

Indeed (iii) is to be accounted for, in Habermas's view, not by reference to the merely illusory nature of (ii) but by reference to (ii)'s "over-reality", or at least to the "over-reality" of Enlightenment and modernity in the form of their actual historical realization. Habermas's own account of the pathologies of modernity in terms of "the colonization of the lifeworld by the system" (see below) is an account whereby modernity's "deformations" can be seen as the "destructive turning-back" of a modernized, rationalized "lifeworld" upon itself. [36] Where for Benjaminian Critical Theory the whole course of human history remains in a sense under the mythical ban of (i), (iii) being (i)'s repetition and (ii) a merely illusory interruption of the (i)-(iii) continuum, for the Habermasian version of this Theory (i), (ii) and (iii) follow one upon the other in discrete diachronic stages, so that the Habermasian Critical Theorist can leave the pre-modern question of myth and mythical experience entirely to one side as a matter already "in hand" thanks to the given fact of modernity and concentrate his analytical energies on the as it were "post"-modern problem of the pathologies which modernity has produced, autonomously, out of itself.

This difference between Habermas's and Benjamin's positions will become closely relevant to our arguments below. Let us for the moment, however, try to clarify Benjamin's particular position by reference to one concrete application of his ideas. We have noted how Adorno picked out, in the mid-nineteen-thirties, Benjamin's "'Goethe's 'Wahlverwandtschaften'" as a text exemplary of Marxist, of "critical", theory. This essay was in fact politically and morally "critical" in the sense in which we are trying to develop the idea of "critique" in this study. That is, it constituted a theoretical assault on those "non-critical", because immanentistic, positions in philosophy and culture which we characterized in Chapter One by reference to the work of Hegel and Goethe. It was an attempt to point up the "Doppelsinn" of the specifically Goethean form of immanentism. In particular, it was an attempt to show how this late text of Goethe's, the "Elective Affinities", represented a kind of implicit recantation of the great writer's influential "Aristotelian" stance, and a recognition of the ultimate verity of the "Platonic" insights communicated to the "Goethezeit" through the medium of the critical philosophy of Kant.

The account of Goethe's implicit recantation of his "Aristotelianism" turns on an analysis of the "Elective Affinities"' plainly antagonistic conception of the relation between human moral practice and the order of Nature. Benjamin was basically here only expanding

36 See Habermas, "Theory of Communicative Action", Volume Two, p. 186 and Maeve Cooke, "Language and Reason : A Study of Habermas's Pragmatics" (MIT Press, 1994) p. 134.

upon Goethe's own exegesis of his novel in that "Vorankündigung" for the "Wahlverwandtschaften" which had appeared in the "Morgenblatt für Gebildete Stände" in September 1809. Here, Goethe himself had written of the novel's describing "how there extend even through the realm of the serene freedom of reason the traces of opaque and passionate necessity, traces which can be wiped out only through the intervention of a higher hand, and perhaps indeed will never be wiped out in this life." [37] Here, Goethe seems to have explicitly retreated from the harmonistic conception of the relation between the "passionate", natural and the "geistige", rational elements in human experience which had previously dominated his work. He seems to go, indeed, in the direction of dualism almost beyond Kant, in envisaging even "the realm of the serene freedom of reason" ("das Reich der heiteren Vernunftfreiheit") as shot through with "opaque" natural necessity and positing a "higher hand" more transcendent even than Kant's noumenal "Kausalität der Freiheit" as the sole certain egress from this necessity into a genuinely moral existence.

Benjamin's essay, however, develops such anomalous fragments of testimony as the 1809 "Vorankündiging" and the "Wahlverwandtschaften" itself into a systematic Kantian world-view expounded both through and against Goethe. He interprets Goethe's early "cult of Nature" as an "idolatry", and this "idolatry" in turn as "a mythical form of life". Goethe's immanentistic refusal to stand back, in the manner of the Kantian philosophy, from the continuum of Nature and to "situate" this continuum as a whole condemns the artist to remain trapped in an "eternal recurrence" no clear account of which he can possibly render to himself: "The refusal of all critique and the idolatry of Nature are the mythical forms of life in the existence of the artist." [38] Benjamin reads the "Elective Affinities" as a nigh-involuntary recognition of the "mythical", the profoundly antagonistic, quality of the Nature which Goethe had seen in his youth - and indeed, as we have seen, continued even after the "Elective Affinities" to see in his old age - as harmonistically compatible with human freedom.

Goethe's four protagonists in this text - the two couples drawn to each other as if by a pattern of precisely calculable chemical "elective affinities" - Benjamin interprets as modern social subjects trapped in the order of natural immanence as a continuum of dehumanizing necessity and "eternal repetition" : "These human beings themselves testify to the force of

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[37] See Kluge and Radler (eds.), "Hauptwerke der Deutschen Literatur" (Kindler, Munich, 1974), p. 212.
[38] Benjamin, "Goethe's Wahlverwandtschaften" in "Gesammelte Schriften", 1 : 1, p. 149.

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Nature, because they have nowhere been able to grow beyond Nature." [39] Contrary to the conception which dominates and structures at least the surface of that "Aristotelian" account of human experience apparently shared by Goethe with Hegel, however, there is for the social subjects portrayed in the "Elective Affinities" no possibility of immanent egress from this continuum of Nature into genuine moral freedom, no possibility of a dialectical or compatibilistic solution to the "problem of the pressure of naturalism". On Benjamin's reading of the text, at least, the only egress for these subjects from im- or amoral naturality lies on a certain "vertical" axis - that "vertical" axis which "situates" immanence as a whole with respect to "another world", with respect to a "chorismatic" and absolute transcendence.

It is against the background of such a - plainly Platonic or Kantian - ontology, for example, that Benjamin draws a distinction in "Goethe's 'Wahlverwandtschaften'" between these subjects' capacity for "choice" ("Wahl") and their capacity - or rather, as the subjects that they immanently are, their incapacity - for "decision" ("Entscheidung") : "Only decision, not choice, is recorded in the book of life. Because choice is natural and can be characteristic even of the elements (Benjamin is making reference here, of course, to the term 'Wahlverwandtschaften' itself - A. R.), but decision is transcendent." [40] Even more explicitly Platonic / Kantian is the following passage exegetic of the "guilt" which eventually destroys all four of the novel's protagonists : "It is not a matter here of ethical (sittlicher) guilt...but rather of a natural guilt, which human beings incur not by resolution and action but by neglect and inaction. When human beings, forgetful of the essentially human, let themselves fall victim to the force of Nature, then natural life, which in Man preserves its innocence only so long as it remains linked to a higher life, draws this 'essentially human' downward. With the disappearance of that in Man which belongs to a super-natural life, his natural life becomes a concatenation of guilt..." [41]

How could Adorno possibly have described this plainly Kantian / Platonic philosophical discourse as exemplary of Marxism, of "critical" thought ? Would not its radical dualism tend rather to encourage a political quietism, to act as an "opiate" dissuading from any effort to challenge the "bad existing" ? Does it not constitute a paradigm example of the sort of discourse which the proto-Marxist poet Heine had called "das Eiapopeia vom Himmel" and

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[39] Ibid. p. 133.
[40] Ibid. p. 189.
[41] Ibid. p. 139.

which he had advocated that all sincerely progressive spirits abandon in favour of the programme of "building the kingdom of heaven here on earth" ? We might begin to try to answer these pertinent questions by noting that Benjamin himself claims that what his critique of Goethe's "Elective Affinities" achieves is the revelation of the essential structures of this novel to be those of a *protest* . In Benjamin's view, it is where Goethe still holds to his immanentism, to his own decision to try to "build the kingdom of heaven here on earth", that he remains essentially and exemplarily a "servant of those in power". Benjamin interprets the struggles of Goethe's maturity as struggles to accept and to conscientiously live out that principle that truth is necessarily and essentially earthly and "impure" which Michael Theunissen has described as the key to the philosophy of Hegel. Moreover, he interprets the writing of the "Elective Affinities", which marks the beginning of Goethe's old age, as the sign of a momentary, if not a definitive, loss of faith in this principle, an illumination as to the truth of the Kantian principle that "there can be no reconciliation with the powers of the mythical, except by a ceaseless sacrifice" : "If it had been the constantly renewed project of Goethe's years of maturity - a project carried through in secret despondency, but always with an iron will - to submit to the powers of the mythical there where they still ruled, and indeed to do his part in reinforcing their dominion as a servant of those in power always does, this project he could no longer, after that most arduous and grievous of submissions - his capitulation in his more than thirty-year struggle against marriage, an institution which seemed to him the very threatening symbol of mythical captivity - sustain, and a year after his betrothal...he began the 'Elective Affinities', with which he initiated a protest, becoming ever more vigorous in the work of his old age, against that world with which his maturity had made a pact." [42]

It is important to take note of what precisely it is that Benjamin here calls a "protest", and implicitly sets up as the very paradigm of protest, of critique. "Protest" here is not conceived of in terms that a vulgar Marxist might recognize - in terms of an "optimism of the will" or a virile "fidelity to the earth". On Benjamin's account of things, these things are rather characteristic of the subject who, like the earlier Goethe, has made a "pact" with the "bad existing", with "those in power" - since such "optimism", such "fidelity" cannot but involve a degree of blindness to the mythical, the miserably natural, condition of the "earth" with which faith is here being kept. "Protest", on Benjamin's account, consists in an opening of one's eyes to this mythicality, this miserable naturality, of the existing, and thereby in a certain

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[42] Ibid. pps. 164-65.

infidelity to the immanent. The rightful degree, the rightful duration of this infidelity we are not yet in a position to try to establish. Should it extend merely to a postponement of the hope of reconciliation in immanence ? Or is immanence as such "situated" here in a manner transcendent, or practically transcendent, of the order of history ?

Benjamin in the "Elective Affinities" essay, it must be admitted, seems to incline toward the latter idea. He explicitly conceives of the idea of reconciliation in the strictly Kantian terms of a "vertical" reconciliation of the individual subject with God and makes this "vertical" reconciliation a condition of any "horizontal" reconciliation between immanent social subjects : "True reconciliation can only be reconciliation with God. While in this true reconciliation the individual is reconciled with the divine and only as a consequence of this achieves harmony with his fellow men, it is characteristic of merely apparent reconciliation to aspire to be reconciled with God only through living in harmony with one's fellow men." [43] This conception seems itself irreconcilable not only, let it be noted in passing, with the concept of reconciliation which Habermas, as we have seen, claims to stand as the focus of the theoretical efforts of both generations of Critical Theory - Benjamin would certainly have classified the concept of reconciliation referred to in passages like that quoted above on p. 26 as "merely apparent reconciliation" - but also with any concept of reconciliation to be found in the mainstream of the Marxist tradition.

Nevertheless, this "vertical", Platonic / Kantian problematic is at least a valuable - to use a Habermasian phrase - "semantic resource" for the generally "horizontal" critical discourse of Marxism. Its radical Kantianism has much to say to Marxism. That conception of history as steady progress which Marxism took over with only minor modifications from the bourgeois philosophers of the high Enlightenment has led Marxist historians of philosophy to portray Kant, Hegel and Marx as standing in the same relation to one another intellectually as they do chronologically : there is nothing better said in Marx than in Kant that was not already better said - if less better said - in Hegel than in Kant. We have already noted, however, a feature of Marxist doctrine which contradicts this. We saw above how Horkheimer's Hegelian adherence to the position that the world of objectivity was also essentially the world of the collective subject found its limit in the recognition, a function of Horkheimer's adherence also to Marxism, that, here and now, this interpenetration of objectivity and subjectivity had been driven into pure latency : "That world is not their own but the world of capital."

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[43] Ibid. p. 184.

This "pure latency" of subjectivity's constitutive relation to objectivity in a reified, self-alienated human society is, as we have noted in Chapter One, given far better expression in the critical philosophy than in objective idealism. The circumstance that the Kantian transcendental subject, being the image of an individual, seems marginally more inadequate to the reality of world-making social practice than is the explicitly collective Hegelian "Geist" is more than counterbalanced by the circumstance that Kant's very *pre*-Romantic conservativism in making this subject only limitedly constitutive of the world it faces - in portraying the "forms of intuition" as fixed and given outside of the ambit of subjective reason or understanding - does better justice to the *post*-Romantic, the Marxist, perception of the inefficacy of this world-making capacity under real historical conditions. The Kantian transcendental subjectivity is that image of "the soul of Man under capitalism" which is nowhere unambiguously to be found in Hegel. The structural differences between the Kantian and the Hegelian subjects are in fact very slight. The forms and categories of the phenomenal world - those forms and categories which institute and embody that "Naturkausalität" which both Kant and Benjamin held to as the exclusive law of the "real" - are for Kant, as for Hegel, in an essential sense "of" the subject. In distinction from the Hegelian subject, however, the Kantian subject does not use the absolute freedom which the inherence in it of the apparatus of world-constitution affords it to constitute a world in which it can contemplate and enjoy its own self. Rather, as we have said, it constitutes the world which it constitutes *as* a world in key respects unconstituted. It creates a world from which it itself - the creative subjectivity - is alienated and exiled, in which "non datur hiatus" for any empirically-manifested reflection of its transcendental self and in which its absolute freedom retreats into pure latency.

Benjamin's Kantian vision, then, of a field of experience entirely dominated by a logic of "myth" or "Nature", far from needing to be dismissed by Marxists as a result of mere ignorance of that dialectical current in modern philosophy beginning with Hegel and constituting this latter thinker as a kind of Marxist *avant la lettre*, could in fact clearly function as an analogue and an enriching supplement to that Marxist "Aufhebung" of Hegel represented by Western Marxist theories of reification. What Benjamin's vision in texts like "Goethe's 'Elective Affinities'" represents is a portrait of a social world reified to a degree beyond anything conceived of by Marx himself. Admittedly, the as it were implicit "hypertrophism" of the reification thematic in a discourse like Benjamin's does seem to force this discourse on other levels into realms, such as the theological realm, where orthodox Marxism cannot

possibly follow. Here, however, that very ambiguity of the idea of "myth" which we have discussed above may provide at least the appearance of a compatibility of the two discourses. The equation in Benjamin's work, of "Nature" and "fate" with "myth" - that is, of exogenous, objective restrictions on the human subject with an endogenous, self-imposed bondage - already indicates a certain inherent compatibility of Benjamin's Kantian vision with the Hegelo-Marxist discourse of reification and "*second* Nature".

This, then, is the sense in which Benjamin's definitely subjectively non-Marxist texts of the nineteen-twenties can nevertheless be claimed to be objectively, as we have seen Adorno put it , "better Marxism" than anything being produced at the period in the orthodox Communist Party tradition. It is also in this sense that Benjamin's meditations begin in the late nineteen-thirties to link up with Horkheimer's developing line of thought.

(iii)

Horkheimer's thought became explicitly "Benjaminian" in the course of the nineteen-forties. This, as we have said, was at first due more directly to the influence of his erstwhile colleague at Frankfurt University, Theodor Adorno, than to that of Benjamin. Adorno had managed a successful "Habilitation" at Frankfurt in 1931, with a text on Kierkegaard in which Benjamin's concepts of myth and transcendence were given a more explicitly Marxist application than they had been in Benjamin's own writings.[44] In 1931, Adorno's Benjaminian ideas had understandably been personally unacceptable to Horkheimer, who had acted as second examiner, after Paul Tillich, of the "Habilitationsthese". "Neither the direction of the philosophical interests," wrote Horkheimer in his examiner's report "nor the methods of thought and the linguistic form of the 'Habilitation' thesis which has been submitted to us are related to my own philosophical aspirations. If (Adorno) considers that he has recovered hope and reconciliation, of all things, from Kierkegaard's thought, he has thereby expressed a basic theological conviction which points to philosophical intentions radically different from my own..."[45]

Horkheimer spoke here as the philosopher whom we have encountered in our examination of the very earliest texts of Critical Theory above : a philosopher content to try to consolidate those first - from our perspective modest - foundations for a theory of a negative

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[44] Adorno, "Kierkegaard : Konstruktion des Ästhetischen" (Suhrkamp, 1974).
[45] See Wiggershaus, "The Frankfurt School", p. 93

social totality which had been recently laid by the Marxist Lukács. Within the space of the next ten years - whether due to historical developments in Dubiel's sense or to the logic of his own philosophical meditations or to both - Horkheimer was to radically revise this assessment. After 1940, Horkheimer became more and more convinced that Marxist theory had, in order to maintain its claim to being the key to the understanding both of the present human condition and of human history, to be developed considerably beyond the stage that either Marx himself or subsequent thinkers like Lukács had succeeded in developing it. Intensive philosophical work was required - even at the cost of the suspension of Critical Theory's once-constitutive mediation of the philosophical with the empirical. And the only suitable intellectual collaborator in such work, Horkheimer had by the 1940's decided, was Adorno.[46]

In the early years of this decade, Horkheimer and Adorno collaborated closely on a project which developed gradually from a book on "dialectical logic" into "philosophical fragments" and finally into "The Dialectic of Enlightenment", published in Amsterdam in 1947. This text is generally recognized as the inception of a different sort of Critical Theory altogether from that outlined, apparently definitively, in Horkheimer's texts of the thirties. Indeed, the historiography of Critical Theory carried out in the present "Habermasian" climate at Frankfurt and other interested centres tends even to classify this text and all that followed from it as a kind of "post-Critical Theory". Dubiel's "Theory and Politics", for instance, pursues its topic - the relation between Frankfurt School theory and real political experience - to 1945 and no further, stating baldly that , in the "Dialectic of Enlightenment" and subsequent texts, "the connection between utopian imagination and the political orientation of action has been severed."[47]

We shall have occasion below to question this attitude. It must be admitted, however, that, where Critical Theory is defined by orientation to Horkheimer's programmatic texts of 1931-37, "The Dialectic of Enlightenment" does in key respects represent an entirely different genre of social theory. This is indeed not a result of a complete transformation of Horkheimer's style of thinking under Adorno's and Benjamin's influence. Adorno makes the difference here not by proxy but by his own overpowering theoretical presence. The text takes the form of five long essays preceded by a foreword and no one already familiar with Adorno's and Horkheimer's work will have any difficulty in assigning at least the chief

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[46] See Wiggershaus, "The Frankfurt School", Chapter Four passim.
[47] Dubiel, "Theory and Politics", p. 107.

authorship of each of these essays to one or the other of the two philosophers. In the section, for instance, on "Juliette, or Enlightenment and Morality" we encounter a typically Horkheimerian exercise in the ideology-critical history of ideas which has in many respects barely progressed beyond the level of the 1936 "Egoism and Freedom Movements." And in the section "Odysseus, or Myth and Enlightenment" the hand of Adorno, more practiced than Horkheimer's in the use of Benjaminian concepts like "myth" and "irreconciled Nature" remains unmistakably the guiding one throughout.[48] In the context, however, of a brief overview, like ours, of the development of Critical Theory, we must concentrate on the ideas that gave their specifically new character to the texts of Critical Theory written after 1940 and in this regard Adorno's contributions are those deserving of our attention.

It is plain from the very subject-matter of the opening chapter of "The Dialectic of Enlightenment" - the essay "The Concept of Enlightenment" which is the most genuinely jointly-authored of the book's texts - that the shift in Critical-Theoretical attention in the late 1930's to the subject "thrown back upon himself" has set a new direction. In this chapter, Horkheimer and Adorno are concerned primarily not to provide an account of either the present or the historical forms of human collective life - of society - but rather an account of the emergence of human subjectivity which implicitly raises both phylogenetic and ontogenetic claims. The picture of the genesis and structure of the human subject which they paint here however is painfully clear in its consequences for the order of the sociological. If society, even for a Marxist like the Horkheimer of "Traditional and Critical Theory" remained in important senses ultimately "made up of individuals"[49] , the individuals, the subjects "ratés", analysed in "The Dialectic of Enlightenment" can form no society in an authentic sense.

Adorno and Horkheimer describe a primordial situation resembling a negativized Hegelianism: the helpless animal Man is totally subsumed in the brutal, objective cycles of his environment, in the undifferentiated flow of Nature or "Mana". At this point, Man is not a subject. That, however, which in Man drives toward the attainment of subjectivity commits at this primordial point what seems to be an inevitable world-historical error. The boundless, unmediated vulnerability of the human proto-subject calls forth in it the will to a boundless,

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[48] The "Publisher's Afterword" in Volume Five of Horkheimer's "Gesammelte Schriften" (eds. Schmidt and Schmid Noerr, Frankfurt 1985) contains a probably definitive discussion of the authorship of the various sections of "The Dialectic of Enlightenment". It is here argued, on the evidence of the various typescripts found among the papers of the two philosophers and of the oral testimony of some of their students and intimates, that the statement in the1969 foreword to the effect that all the texts that form the book were genuinely jointly conceived and composed by both Horkheimer and Adorno is false.

[49] See Horkheimer, "Critical Theory", p. 200.

unmediated separation and protection. Emerging human consciousness is that "infinitely gentle, infinitely suffering thing" whose notion was still evoked for the poet Eliot by the detritus of late capitalist society - but this gentle consciousness develops in answer to the infinity of its suffering protective ego-structures as hard and inflexible as the forces of "Mana", of primitive daemonic Nature, by which this suffering is inflicted.

The "error" inherent in this diremptive path of hominisation, the "one-sidedness" which constitutes this diremption from Nature a mere antithesis to the agonizing unity with it and tips that "enlightenment" which consists in Man's "coming of age" as a subject from the very start into a self-consuming "dialectic" - this "error" and this "one-sidedness" plainly must lie in the forgetfulness of the fact that, even if the potential inheres in Man to rise above Nature, Man can never realize this potential as an absolutely discrete, counter-natural entity within the real world. Within the real world, Man is constitutively a part of Nature. Thus, where the truth of the experience of "Mana" is merely abstractly negated, the human subject must also negate essential elements of itself. This self-negation takes the form of the growing predominance, in the diremptively-emerging human subject, of the "protecting" structures over the supposedly "protected". As domination over both external and internal nature progresses, more and more layers of the human psyche are commandeered as necessary parts of the "shielding" apparatus, until little or nothing remains to count as the "shielded", as the "self" itself. The subject, then, soon survives only as a kind of anonymous monument to itself. What had been the end of diremptive, self-ossifying subject-formation becomes a part of its means : another, deepest layer of ossification. In this way, hominization by diremptive path, as mere antithesis, "hebt sich auf". The subject, in its struggle to be "only itself", to be immediately and absolutely other than Nature, becomes its other, becomes mere Nature : "Man's domination over himself, which grounds his selfhood, is almost always the destruction of the subject in whose service it is undertaken; for the substance which is dominated, suppressed and dissolved through self-preservation is none other than that very life as a function of which the achievements of self-preservation are defined ; it is, in fact, what is to be preserved."[50]

Adorno's essay on "Odysseus : Myth and Enlightenment" - together with the part of it

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[50] Adorno and Horkheimer, "Dialectic of Enlightenment" (Herder and Herder, New York, 1972, reprinted Verso, London, 1979) p. 54. Although I will be citing, in my quotations from "Die Dialektik der Aufklärung", page numbers from this standard English translation, the translations will in fact in most cases be my own. The translator of the 1972 "Dialectic of Enlightenment" was plainly unable to read German, and mistranslates several key passages of Horkheimer's and Adorno's text.

which is displaced into the introductory "Concept" essay - gives the most trenchant and memorable concrete exposition of these abstract ideas. The point had already been made in the first essay of the "Dialectic" that "the myths that fell victim to enlightenment were already themselves enlightenment's product". Adorno in this essay shows how the myth of Odysseus already provides the paradigm of that enlightenment which consists in diremptive hominization. An enlightenment having its paradigm and origin in myth, is Adorno's implication here, can never really have transcended myth at all.

Adorno interprets several key episodes from the Odyssey in terms of the diremptive, counter-natural constitution of human subjectivity. The most concise and pregnant of his exegeses in this respect, however, is that of the "Sirens" episode. Homer's narrative of Odysseus's masochistic relation to the song of the Sirens, argues Adorno, is an image of enlightened Man's relation to Nature, above all to his own identity as inalienably part of Nature. Odysseus, by virtue of that resolute self-possession which has made him master of his slaves in Ithaca and of his crew at sea, is also the master of Nature. He has not only been able to carve a discrete self out of the undifferentiated flow of "Mana"; he even dares as this self to venture back into this all-dissolving flow, to listen to the song of the Sirens. Odysseus emerges by his own standards intact, victorious, from this proving of his own subjectivity, but in the details of Homer's narration of this episode, argues Adorno, we can perceive the essential moment of defeat in this the human subject's world-historical victory.

The victory which Odysseus gains over that primordial Nature represented by the Sirens is "nominal" in an exact sense : in the moment of actual confrontation with the force of Nature, nothing of the substance of Odysseus's self survives ; all that survives is the mere claim to subjectivity inherent in Odysseus's name, in the orders he has previously given to his crew to bind him to the mast and to ignore, in the name of the man now giving these orders, the gestures which this same man will later appear to make to them demanding his unbinding. In the moment of the Sirens' song, the subject that maintains itself separate from Nature is not a self - it is merely the restraining ropes holding the body of Odysseus to the mast and the dead authority of Odysseus's word in the memory of his crew - and the self that lives and rejoices in the song of Nature is not a subject.

The respect too in which the subjective misery of the dialectic of enlightenment is also a social misery can be read off from this image of Odysseus and the Sirens. It must be admitted that the proposed direction of causality has been largely reversed in this question

since the earlier, more orthodox Marxist texts of Critical Theory. Where previously, Horkheimer at least had held to the Lukácsian explanation of the mutilation of individual selfhood in terms of historical distortions in social modes of production, we are faced in "The Dialectic of Enlightenment" with an account of a negative social whole in terms of a fundamental "damagedness" of the structures of the self - a "damagedness" *so* fundamental that we are again uncertain whether it is best classified as "historical" or "ontological".

The imperative around which the whole is organized here is no longer the Marxist imperative of the Promethean, productive relation to Nature. Rather, the human community faces the more complex problem of how to mediate this Promethean relation to a Nature now realized to present itself in both external and subject-internal forms with the irresistible drive, arising out of inner Nature, to renounce and dissolve that self which is the foundation of Promethean practice : "The strain of holding the ego together adheres to the ego in all its stages, and always linked to this blind resolution to preserve the ego was the temptation to let it go." [51]

There appear to the "enlightened" man, to the subject-by-diremption, to be two ways of mediating these factors, "two possibilities of escape" [52]. To Odysseus, who has adapted himself soonest and best to this agonizing situation and is by virtue of this the "ruling class", falls the office of assigning these two possibilities to respectively himself and his "proletariat", the crew. This "society", however, affords no purchase to the "Zoroastrian" Marxist narrative of the relation between rulers and ruled as "privileged" and "deprived". The "privilege" which seems secured for Odysseus by his disposal over social power is, in this world, dubious to say the least. The sole "possibilities of escape" available to be distributed by any social power here are (i) the absolute insulation from the temptation of Nature by a "stuffing of the ears with wax", that is, by life as a worker who must, "fresh and concentrated, look always straight ahead and let every sleeping dog lie" [53] and (ii) Odysseus's own agonized wriggling at the mast whereby "what he hears remains for him without issue, and he can only gesture that he might be released" [54]. There hardly seems much to choose between these two social destinies in the way of "privilege" or "deprivation". Odysseus's, the "ruling class"'s, authority to distribute them is a hollow one. The negativity of this society is, in a more developed sense than was the

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[51] Ibid. p. 33.

[52] Ibid. p. 34.

[53] Ibid.

[54] ibid.

case in earlier Critical Theory, a negativity of the social whole.

The instance of "real history", too, which we have seen to be perhaps the key point of argumentational reference for the early Horkheimer, is - it is plain from the above - no longer properly operative in "The Dialectic of Enlightenment". Adorno's and Horkheimer's very fidelity to the vocabulary of Marxism and its established historiography of "the rising bourgeoisie" and "the waning feudal classes" here serves to transform these categories into phantasmagorical "reductia ad absurdum" of themselves. Odysseus - a mythical figure the first literary record of whom was extant some eighteen hundred years before capitalism emerged in the city-states of northern Italy at the end of the Middle Ages - appears as the archetype of the "bourgeois" character. Echoes of Kant's 1784 definition of "enlightenment" as the becoming "mündig" of a being once in tutelage to other powers resound eerily through the caves of prehistoric Man, and the smoke of sacrifices to "Mana" fills the salons of the Berlin "Aufklärung". That Habermas's "mot clé" "modernity" occurs hardly at all in these pages is due to more than to the fashion of the time. As we shall see below, this text composes part of one trend in Critical Theory's critique of this concept itself.

If "The Dialectic of Enlightenment " sees a marked retreat from the Hegelo-Marxist faith in an unexamined "real history" typical of earlier Critical Theory, however, the same does not appear, judging by the portions of the text which we have examined so far, to hold for the other Hegelo-Marxist tenet central to the theory of the 1930's : the tenet of (collective) subject - object identity and the rejection of the need for - even of the meaningfulness of - Kantian transcendence which follows from this in Hegel's system. The analyses of the force of mythical Nature which we have just examined seem to differ sharply from Benjamin's even in their similarity. The whole exposition of the subject / Nature opposition is structured along Hegelian rather than Kantian lines. The very fact that this opposition takes the form of a dialectic rather than an "antinomic" - that the conflict of the subject with Nature is portrayed as a kind of fundamental historical / ontological *error*, a misrecognition of a part of the self, rather than as a pure-ontological confrontation with *truth* - suggests that the thesis of "Mana"-borne unity and the antithesis of the diremptive disunity of Man and Nature can here still expect, in Hegelian fashion, an eventual *immanent* resolution into a synthesis. Another of the largely

Adorno-authored texts in the book, though - the "Elements of Antisemitism"[55] - asserts at key points, against the implicit Hegelianism of its basic framework, the familiar Kantian and Benjaminian proposition that the hope for a "horizontal" reconciliation between human subjects is a vain one, that the sedimentation of structures of self-alienation in the human subject is so profound that a "vertical" reference alone - a reference to a principle "quite other" than anything experienceable in the order of the immanent - can act as the lever which shifts off of the human community the paralyzing weight of myth.

The phenomenon of antisemitism is initially portrayed in this essay - in its third "thesis", for instance, in the authorship of which Löwenthal played a role - in terms still compatible with the theories of antisemitism emerging from Marxism. The conflict between Jew and antisemite is presented as one explicable out of social immanence: the Jews are scapegoats, a particular religious community made falsely and arbitrarily responsible for general social ills: "(The capitalist) points to the Jew and cries 'Stop, thief !' The Jew is in fact the 'Sündenbock', made responsible not only for individual manoeuvres and machinations but for the economic injustices of the whole class." [56]. Admittedly, even this initial account of the Jews' scapegoat function is premissed on the profound narrative of social alienation "à longue durée" which we have been tracing over the past few pages rather than the Marxist conception of a negative social formation "à courte durée". The Jews here are scapegoats not only for the immediate economic ills of capitalism but for the sedimented, quasi-ontological ills arising from Man's diremptive relation to Nature. Indeed, the thesis claims, the Jew comes in modernity to symbolize this rejected and yearned-for, destroyed and desired, principle of Nature itself. The Jew is, for the quietly desperate masses complicit in the "new barbarism" of triumphant enlightenment, "the 'alien' which recalls the promised land, beauty, which recalls sexuality"[57] and for this reason tends to suffer the mutilation and extermination to which these masses have had to subject the "alien" - the moment of inner Nature - in themselves.

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[55] The "Elements of Antisemitism" is, as pointed out in the book's foreword, in fact the result of a three-handed collaboration between Adorno, Horkheimer and Leo Löwenthal. The publisher of Horkheimer's "Schriften" quotes Rolf Tiedemann as stating that this text, according to Adorno's own account, was the result of an extensive rewriting by himself of an original sketch by Horkheimer. My own guess, based purely on the evidence of style and philosophical content, would be that - aside from the first three theses which, as the "Vorrede" informs us, were written with Löwenthal and, not by chance, are the closest in their analysis to a crude "Zoroastrian" Marxism - it is in the fourth thesis above all that we hear the voice of Adorno, while the fifth to seventh theses display a dominance of Horkheimer's thought in the general architectonic of the argument.

[56] Adorno and Horkheimer, "Dialectic of Enlightenment", p. 174.

[57] Ibid. p. 172.

Thus far, the analysis remains Hegelian. In the crucial fourth thesis on antisemitism, however, Adorno - it seems to me that here above all we hear Adorno's voice - makes it clear that the Jew stands not just *qua* historical scapegoat but *qua* Jew - *qua* believer in a specific form of the divine principle - at the centre of the historical problematic of the dialectic of enlightenment : "'Völkisch' antisemitism wants to ignore the question of religion, claiming that the issue is the purity of race and nation...But the religious enmity which has prompted the persecution of Jews for some two thousand years can hardly be said to be extinct...Religion has been incorporated into culture, not abolished."[58].

Adorno turns now, then, to examine the specific theological content of the Jewish religion. He presents the Judaic God as a God essentially more radically transcendent of the immanent, natural order than the God of the Christians. The Jewish God has indeed, concedes Adorno, preserved more fully than have other Gods certain characteristics of "Mana", of divinized Nature, but the very primitive awe of Nature comes here to be channeled into a conception of awesome, absolute transcendence, into a conception of counter-Nature operating on a broader ontological register, and hence inherently less immediately self-subverting, than the immanent counter-Nature of diremptive, self-asserting subjectivity : "Despite all the indescribable power and glory with which Man's sense of alienation from Him endows the Jewish God, He is nevertheless accessible to thought - to that thought which, precisely through the relation to a Highest, a Transcendent, becomes universal. God as Mind (Geist) confronts Nature as its opposite principle - as a principle which, unlike the gods of myth, does not simply substitute Himself for Nature's blind cycles, but can rather liberate from these." [59]

With these remarks, Adorno plainly introduces into the problematic of "The Dialectic of Enlightenment" the possibility of a response to the having-become-Nature of human subjectivity quite other than the Hegelian, synthetic response which the structure of the original argument had seemed to prepare. The "Elements of Antisemitism" chapter of the "Dialectic" is anti-Hegelian in the most literal sense that it shows appreciation of precisely that aspect of the Jewish religion which Hegel, since his 1799 "Spirit of Christianity", had

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[58] Ibid. p. 176.

[59] Ibid. p. 176-77 (Translation completely altered. The standard English edition here is inaccurate to the point of incomprehensibility. Due to its "translator"'s inability to distinguish between the German term for "latter" and that for "former", the roles of the Jewish and the Christian God in Adorno's argument become, in the English text, *reversed*, making complete nonsense of the fourth "Element of Anti-Semitism".)

censured and condemned : the conception of the "unhappy consciousness"'s dilemma of

"two servitudes, (either) to dead things or to the living God" [60] as rooted in some sense "on

the side of the object" rather than "on the side of thought". Indeed, Adorno here proceeds

also against the Marxist successors to Hegel in the dialectical tradition in that, far from reducing

the specific theological content of Judaism to a "reflection" of its adherents' social condition,

he assigns this content a progressive political function *as theology* in the real historical

conjuncture.

Christianity - that Christianity which had found resonance, in contradistinction to

Judaism, in the Hegelianism which had in turn found resonance in Marx and the culture of

Marxism - is assigned in the "Elements of Antisemitism" a profoundly negative role in the

dialectic of enlightenment. Christianity, claims Adorno, "draws the Absolute toward the finite"

and thereby "makes this finite absolute" [61] .The text makes clear that Adorno does not look

upon such a development with orthodox Hegelian or Marxist eyes - look upon it, that is, as a

step perhaps initially problematical - "unmediated" - but nevertheless a step toward truth. For

Adorno, the objectified, "naturalized" condition of Man in the world which Man has made is so

profoundly sedimented that a stand almost of principle can be taken against the Christian idea

that the divine has become, in history, this Man. The idea that the man Jesus was God is, for

Adorno, an idea which "presents as of the nature of 'Geist' that which 'Geist' itself recognizes

as in fact of the nature of Nature" [62] and "'Geist' itself consists in the deployment of

contradiction against such pretension on the part of the finite." [63] The corollaries of these

theological positions on the political-philosophical plane are clear. Social critique and social

progress depend not upon the identification - in Christian, Hegelian or Marxist manner - of an

ascendant bearer of the positive in a society torn between positive and negative, but upon

the fearless and pitiless recognition - in Judaic, Kantian or Benjaminian manner - of the

absolute negativity of the existing by reference to a "quite other" transcendent of all that

which now exists.

(iv)

Adorno, in a roughly contemporary - although at the time unpublished - text,

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[60] See Charles Taylor, "Hegel" (Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 59.

[61] Adorno and Horkheimer, "Dialectic of Enlightenment", p. 177.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

confirms Critical Theory's move away from Hegel in the period after 1940. It is in a "scribble-in book" which Adorno kept during his collaboration with Horkheimer on the "Dialectic of Enlightenment" in Los Angeles in the period 1942-43 that we first encounter the famous anti-Hegelian phrase "the whole is the untrue". It occurs here, however, in contrast to its first published appearance as a decontextualized "dwarf fruit" in the "Minima Moralia" of 1951 [64], in an identifiable context of philosophical reasoning. The phrase admittedly occurs even in the 1942 notebook in the form of an aphoristic "bon mot" and not as part of any contextualizing longer sentence or paragraph. Where in the "Minima Moralia", however, even its surrounding "bon mots" appear to be without any precisely determinable thematic connection with it, the phrase appears in 1942 at the head of a sequence of notes which deal precisely with Hegel and with his position in the history of Western philosophy and political thought. The relevant page from the notebook reads as follows :

"The whole is the untrue.

Is not the concept of 'objective tendency' which stands in the centre of Hegel's and of Marx's thought itself tied to positivism ? It has its origin in Aristotle and in Aristotle's turn against the Platonic Utopia.

Aristotle is really the historical origin of the bourgeoisie. Plato, however, already no feudal figure but rather a feudal*ist*, a bourgeois-rational apologist for aristocratic traditionalism (hence the role of the 'general interest'), basically a gigantic De Maistre.

On the case 'Kant vs. Hegel' : Hegel is indeed, thanks to his concept of mediation, his dissolution of the Kantian 'limit' and of Kant's 'theological' dualism, much more metaphysical than Kant, wandering off into the intelligible world. But he is also, thanks to this very same concept of mediation - the insistence, that is, on the rights of the existent even in the realm of the Idea - just as much more positivistic than Kant. Hegel indeed has over Kant the knowability of the Absolute, but Kant has over Hegel's 'State' the concept of 'eternal peace'". [65]

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[64] See Adorno, "Minima Moralia", p. 50.

[65] These passages from the "scribble-in book" are published in Türcke (ed.) "Perspektiven Kritischer Theorie" (zu Klampen, Lüneberg, 1988), p. 9 ff.

In Adorno's view - or so we must assume on the evidence of these notes from the early 1940's - a key issue in the history of both philosophical thought and political culture has been the rise and fall of the capacity to predicate something of "the whole" - specifically, to predicate of it, if need be, the quality of "falsity". Platonic thought created or preserved this capacity. *All* "topoi" could be legitimately declared false "topoi" from the standpoint of that "topos" which was not a "topos" : the "Platonic Utopia", or the absolutely transcendent realm of the Ideas. With Aristotle, a current of philosophical meditation began which made it its primary business to call just this logical / ontological possibility into question, to reduce it to the status of an "impossible possibility". From the Aristotelian "Metaphysics'" logical objections to the *chorismos* of the Platonic Ideas, through Hegel's critique of the transmundane Kantian Absolute as a "bad infinite", to the "contrast theory of meaning" developed by ordinary language philosophy, the Platonic idea of a transcendence persisting without any dialectical link to immanence has come again and again under philosophical attack.

Adorno in these notes does not deny legitimacy to these attacks. He is fully recognizant of the moment of philosophical verity in Hegel and of the moment of ideological dishonesty in Plato. Nevertheless, the main point of his remarks here is plainly that where the Aristotelian / Hegelian challenge to Platonic / Kantian *chorismos* is victorious right across the board - where "the existent" comes into its full "rights" even "in the realm of the Idea" - an important element of human culture becomes lost. Thought then remains "bourgeois" even where it is Marxist, "positivist" even where it is dialectical. In order for Marxist thought to be really Marxist, dialectical thought to be really dialectical, it would have - such is the implication - to "step out" of immanence, "step out" of dialectics, and recognize its dependence on a moment of "undialectisable" transcendence.

(v)

It is under the sign of such thoughts on the basic problematic of all philosophical and political theory that Critical Theory passes in the early 1940's. The preface to the "Dialectic of Enlightenment" - an example of a text authored largely by Horkheimer in which he does explicitly rescind his earlier key positions - in a sense sums up the changes which we have reviewed. It contains in the first place a clear renunciation of the ideal of interdisciplinarity enunciated in 1931. Still at the beginning of his work on the "Dialectic", Horkheimer tells us here, he had "trusted too much in present-day consciousness", believing that Marxist theory

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could be made adequate to contemporary experience by means merely of "the critique and continuation of existing, departmentally-classified doctrines" such as those of "sociology, psychology and the theory of knowledge". In fact, however, under conditions in which "thought had become a commodity and language its advertisement", critical social theory could only be pursued by "refusing obedience to current linguistic and intellectual conventions" and developing a discourse on society which recognized no obligation to remain commensurable or compatible with the mass of academic research pursued by other sections of the academy.[66]

The distance moved by Critical Theory between 1937 and 1944 is even more graphically expressed in the passage from the preface in which the theoretical goal which Horkheimer and Adorno set themselves in the book is described as "(understanding) why humanity, instead of entering into a truly human condition, (was) sinking into a new form of barbarism." [67] This phrase is a conscious or unconscious reference to the essay on "Traditional and Critical Theory" published some seven years before. There, we read : "(Critical) Theory says that the basic form of the historically given commodity economy on which modern history rests contains in itself the internal and external tensions of the modern era; it generates these tensions over and over again in an increasingly heightened form ; and after a period of progress, development of human powers, and emancipation for the individual, after an enormous extension of human control over Nature, it finally hinders further development and drives humanity into a new barbarism." [68]

The common recognition of the "new barbarism" as the *explanandum* only highlights the revolution in Critical Theory's conception of the *explanans*. In 1944, as we have seen, Critical Theory no longer links the "enormous extension of human control over Nature" to "emancipation for the individual" - or rather, these two ideas are now linked negatively with one another, as dialectically but nonetheless certainly countervailing developments. The "tensions" of existing society, moreover, are no longer traced to the "historically given commodity economy". Odysseus and his crew are not, and do not essentially symbolize, commodity producers. The relation to Nature which Adorno uses this image to illustrate is one inherent in more modes of production than the modern, commodity-based one alone.

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[66]Adorno and Horkheimer, "Dialectic of Enlightenment", pps. xi - xii.

[67] Ibid. p. xi.

[68] Horkheimer, "Critical Theory", p. 227.

Indeed, as we have noted, the very idea of "modernity" has, in the context of these theoretical developments, to be reconsidered and the basic thesis of Critical Theory as Horkheimer expounded it in 1937 consequently reversed : the "historically given commodity economy" does not "contain in itself the internal and external tensions of the modern era" ; rather, the "tensions", the dialectic of objectified subjectivity, of a "modern era" beginning before Homer contain and sustain in themselves the commodity economy, the inevitability of objectifying, capitalist or para-capitalist forms of social interaction. Where early Western Marxism of the Lukácsian stamp - and Horkheimer's rudimentary Critical Theory after it - had shown the emergence of reified human character structures out of the capitalist mode of production, post-1940 Critical Theory - at least until the onset of Habermas's era of "reconstruction" - shows the emergence of the capitalist mode of production out of a radical reification of the human character structure.

This last formulation perhaps sacrifices accuracy to pregnancy. The term "character structure" is plainly not, colloquially understood, adequate to the object of Adorno's and Horkheimer's meditations in "The Dialectic of Enlightenment". In this text, Marxist philosophy is again hoisted onto the intellectual level of the German Idealist thought in which it had had its origins. With the renunciation of that "obedience to current linguistic and intellectual conventions" in which the original Critical-Theoretical commitment to dialogue with "sociology, psychology and the theory of knowledge" had consisted, certain aspects and resonances of the ideas of character, personality and subjectivity as these had operated in classical German Idealism were regained for critical social theory. These aspects and resonances were explored and developed in the texts that followed the "Dialectic" through the 1950's and '60's - primarily in Adorno's series of masterpieces beginning with the "Philosophy of Modern Music" of 1949 and the "Minima Moralia" of 1951.

The conceptual structure of these texts was such as to maintain and develop the turn in Critical Theory from Hegel to Kant, from dialectics to antinomics, already evident in Horkheimer's texts of the late nineteen-thirties and in such passages of the "Dialectic of Enlightenment" as the "Elements of Anti-Semitism". This is a central and doubtless controversial claim of the present study, but I do not want to try to support it in detail in this chapter by reviewing the arguments of Adorno's and Horkheimer's post-1947 publications as we have reviewed those of the publications of the Frankfurt School up to the "Dialectic of Enlightenment". The themes and positions of texts like Horkheimer's 1947 "Eclipse of

Reason" and Adorno's 1966 "Negative Dialectics" will be the substance of our discussions of particular points of philosophical difference between classical and post-classical Critical Theory in Chapters Three and Four - particularly of Chapter Four's discussion of the specific concept of transcendence developed by the classical form of Frankfurt School thought. It is perhaps necessary here, however, to venture far enough into the history of the post-1947 Frankfurt School to clarify what precisely is meant by the claim that "classical Critical Theory" completed after 1947 a "turn from Hegel to Kant" already incipient in the School members' writings of the 'thirties and early 'forties.

Such a claim must be qualified by a distinction between a "mainstream" and a "marginal" current in classical Critical Theory. This latter distinction is, of course, relatively arbitrary, since the number of important theoretical personalities involved with the Frankfurt School in these years was so small that to set off a "majority" from a "minority" in this case means to set off three or four significant authors of one orientation from one or two of another. I am thinking here specifically, in talking of a "mainstream" of classical Critical Theory, of setting off, under this description, the work of Adorno and of the later "Adornian" Horkheimer from the work of Herbert Marcuse. Of a distinct difference in philosophical orientation between Adorno and Benjamin on the one hand and Marcuse on the other there can be no doubt. Among the members of the early Frankfurt School, Benjamin and Adorno - who during the nineteen-thirties remained in key respects Benjamin's philosophical pupil - represented, as we have seen, a definitely Kantian, "theological materialist" faction among the associates of the Frankfurt School, while Marcuse, despite his early association with Heidegger and existentialism, was by the 'mid-thirties producing exemplary essays in Hegelian Marxism.

The Hegelian, immanentistic nature of Marcuse's thought as against the basically Kantian, "theological" nature of Adorno's and Benjamin's is indicated, for example, by a passage, quoted in Wiggershaus's history of the Frankfurt School, from Adorno's and Horkheimer's correspondence of the early nineteen-forties. In a letter from September of 1941, Adorno makes to Horkheimer one of his clearest professions of his belief in the inextricability from one another of social-critical and theological logics : "I have a weak, infinitely weak, feeling that it is still possible to think the secret, but I am honestly not yet in a position today to formulate the way in which it might be possible. The premiss that theology is shrinking and will soon become invisible is one motif, while another is the conviction that, from the most central point of view, there is no difference between theology's relation to the

negative and its relation to the positive. (Marcuse's book, which thrives on this distinction, has only encouraged me here.) But above all I think that everything which we experience as true - not blindly, but as a conceptual impulse - and what presents itself to us as the '*index sui et falsi*', only conveys this light as a reflection of that other light." [69]

Wiggershaus, placing this passage from the Adorno-Horkheimer correspondence in relation to passages from Adorno's and Marcuse's published texts of the period, interprets the theoretical difference pointed to by the remark on "Marcuse's book" - the book was "Reason and Revolution", Marcuse's study of "Hegel and the rise of social theory" - as follows: "In Marcuse's view, the elements of the new society were inherent within existing society and were preparing to transform it into a free society. For Adorno, however, perceiving the world - from the point of view of redemption - as being displaced and alienated, a perception anticipating the 'messianic light', was on the one hand the simplest and most obvious thing of all, while on the other hand it was an utter impossibility. This was because for Adorno any such perception must be situated at some point beyond the scope of existence, while at the same time every possible insight was marked by the very distortion it sought to escape. Marcuse took the view that there was a positive essence inherent within negative phenomena, and saw the subterranean history of that positive essence as being the authentic and ultimately victorious side of history. Adorno, by contrast, did not accept that a subterranean history of this sort could offer any guarantee. Only at the moment of consummate negativity would it be possible for both the negative and the positive, and the victorious light of a redemption that would cancel at once the distinction between them, to reveal themselves simultaneously." [70]

Although we have not yet had the opportunity to adequately discuss these issues, it is clear already that Adorno and Marcuse stood in this regard at opposite poles from one another. The former placed an irreducible moment of transcendence at the centre of his philosophy of society, while the latter retained that fidelity to immanence and that anathematization of "das Eiapopeia vom Himmel" characteristic of orthodox Marxism. Seyla Benhabib also recognizes this essential difference between Adorno's programme on the one hand and Marcuse's intellectual project on the other. She writes in her "Critique, Norm and Utopia" that "despite all theoretical convergence with Adorno and Horkheimer about the role of psychoanalytic theory, and agreements at the empirical level about the changing role of the

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[69] See Wiggershaus, "The Frankfurt School", p. 503.
[70] Ibid. p. 503-4.

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family and developments in self-formation, Marcuse grounds autonomy not (like the later Adorno - A. R.) in the aesthetic realm but in a theory of needs. In this respect, he remains much closer to the project of philosophical anthropology than do (sic) either Adorno or Horkheimer, and gives the longing for 'the wholly other' a more immanent, subjective grounding." [71]

In eventually, in the early nineteen-forties, choosing Adorno and not Marcuse as his collaborator on that "book on materialist logic" which eventually became the "Dialectic of Enlightenment", Horkheimer ended a - partly institutionally diplomatic, partly genuinely intellectually ambivalent - balancing act between these two, Kantian and Hegelian, philosophical positions. Consequently, inasmuch as it was Horkheimer alone in his quality of Director of the Institute for Social Research who at this time personified "the Frankfurt School", "mainstream Frankfurt School theory" can be said to have been set from circa 1942 onward upon a definitely "Kantian theological" course. Marcuse for his part, it must however be noted , continued to publish influential philosophical and sociological texts all through the period 1940-70, while choosing not to follow this "Kantian theological" course at all, but rather to hold in all essential respects to the Hegelian Marxism of Horkheimer's original conception.

Already by the mid-1940's, in fact, Marcuse, for all his continuing friendship and admiration for Horkheimer, had become irredeemably alienated from the Kantian line of thought which Horkheimer was now pursuing. He was unable or unwilling to respond with any comment either to the receipt of the first, mimeographed edition of "The Dialectic of Enlightenment" in 1944 or to that of its second, published edition in 1947. [72] This diminishing possibility of intellectual dialogue with Horkheimer resulted in Marcuse's gradual exclusion altogether from the institutional structure and theoretical activities of the Frankfurt School. When, again in 1947, he produced proposals for the theoretical orientation of a refounded "Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung" - a project which was in fact never realized - these proposals were barely even discussed by Adorno and Horkheimer, since, although they strongly recalled Horkheimer's ideas of the early 1930's, they in no way accorded with the Director of the Institute's social-philosophical position of the late 1940's. They were, in

[71] Benhabib, "Critique, Norm and Utopia", p. 189.

[72] See Wiggershaus, "The Frankfurt School", pps. 344 and 392 : "When Marcuse and Kirchheimer received the "Philosophical Fragments" through the post in December 1944 both - independently of one another - reacted with bafflement. All they could do was send their thanks. Even later on, they had nothing more to say about the book."

Wiggershaus's words, "strictly orthodox (Marxist - A. R) in their implications".[73]

Marcuse's later works' spectacular success with the "revolutionary" student generation of 1968 put him in no better odour with his erstwhile theoretical collaborators. In Horkheimer's and Adorno's view, the capacity to immediately inspire and incite a constituency of subjects who, for all their good intentions, were as much the products of "damaged life" as were the institutions they were attacking could not be accepted as the criterion of a genuinely critical philosophy. For this reason, Marcuse's very success in "getting Critical Theory across" to impressively large numbers of students in the 1960's prompted Horkheimer to make the point that the ideas actually being communicated by Marcusan texts like "One-Dimensional Man" to the insurgent youth of Paris and Berlin were "ideas coarser and simpler than those of Adorno and myself" [74]

The legitimacy of Horkheimer and Adorno's expulsion of the incorruptibly Hegelian Marcuse from the institutional jurisdiction of an increasingly Kantian Critical Theory, and of their attempts to deny him appurtenance even to Critical Theory's intellectual and spiritual jurisdiction, need not, of course, remain unchallenged by the student of the Frankfurt School tradition. It can well be argued that, for all that it was Horkheimer and Adorno and not Marcuse who returned to Frankfurt to refound the Institute for Social Research in the early 1950's, the spirit of the Frankfurt School survived more fully in those works of Marcuse's which found such resonance among individuals actually involved in critical collective practice in the 1960's and '70's than it did in such permanently esoteric writings as the "Minima Moralia" and the "Philosophy of Modern Music", the core readership of which has consisted in a diaspora of cultural pessimists of no single identifiable political orientation. Such, indeed, is the implicit argument of certain currents in Critical-Theoretical writing at the present time. The political thrust, for example, of Stephen Eric Bronner's recent plea for the development of a post-Habermasian "Critical Theory with public aims" [75] might be summed up in terms of a call for an at least partial revival of the insurrectionistic Marcusan spirit in the Frankfurt School tradition. A disturbing light is cast on Bronner's admirably spirited Marcusan critique of the increasingly conciliatory direction taken by recent "communication-philosophical" Critical Theory, however, where we note, as we will have to in the next section, that Habermas's project too must be

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[73] Ibid. p. 390.

[74] Horkheimer to "Der Spiegel", 30 June, 1969, cited Wiggershaus, "The Frankfurt School", p. 654.

[75] See Stephen Eric Bronner, "Of Critical Theory and Its Theorists" (Blackwell, 1994), particularly Chapter Fifteen.

understood as a kind of development of the Marcusan trend in classical Critical Theory against the Adornian and late Horkheimerian. Clearly, given our central project in this study of disinterring the specifically Kantian, transcendentist element in classical Frankfurt School thought which eludes sublation into the essentially immanentistic "paradigm" of Habermasian Critical Theory, we must set aside the persistently non-Kantian elements of the Theory's classical form and concur at least provisionally with Horkheimer and Adorno in their understanding of Marcuse as in the end offering, with his persistence in an immanentistic approach to the negativity of our political and social experience, a "cruder" philosophy of society than the one they themselves, inspired by Benjamin's Kantian "theologism", aspired after 1940 to develop.

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I want now, after having traced at least the early and decisive stages of first-generation Critical Theory's development from an Hegelian into a Kantian philosophy of society, to trace the development of second-generation, Habermasian Critical Theory along the same intellectual itinerary in the opposite direction. Habermasian Critical Theory displays in its early stages at least some of the formal characteristics of a Kantianism. It has at least the appearance of a transcendentalistically - if never, like Kant's own version of the critical philosophy, also of a transcendentistically - structured theory. Admittedly, even Habermas's early "Kantianism" was a "Kantianism" as it were in the service of Hegelianism, of an ultimately immanentistic theory of the social. One tell-tale sign, for example, of this basic Hegelian orientation of Habermas's thought even in the earliest period of his Critical-Theoretical activity was his clear "elective affinity" with Marcuse above all his predecessors in the Frankfurt School's first generation as an intellectual and political model and "inspirateur"

The text which makes this "elective affinity" most unmistakably clear is the essay, explicitly commemorative of Marcuse, "Psychic Thermidor and the Rebirth of Rebellious Subjectivity". [76] In the opening pages of this essay, Habermas characterizes Marcuse in terms which clearly constitute him, in explicit contrast to Adorno and the later Horkheimer, as his chosen precursor in the project of Critical Theory as he understands it. Writing of his experiences as a young research assistant at the Frankfurt Institute of the mid-1950's,

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[76] Published in English in Pippin, Feenberg and Webel eds. "Marcuse : Critical Theory and the Promise of Utopia" (MacMillan, 1988) p. 3 ff.

Habermas tells us that "for us, the research assistants at the Institute of Adorno and Horkheimer, (the moment when we first heard Marcuse speak) was the moment when we first faced an embodiment and vivid expression of the political spirit of the old Frankfurt School."[77]

In the essay's opening paragraph, Habermas has already isolated the particular quality in Marcuse's work which gave rise in him to this impression : "We all remember what Herbert Marcuse kept denouncing as the evils of our age : the blind struggle for existence, relentless competition, wasteful productivity, deceitful repression, false virility and cynical brutality. Whenever he felt that he should speak as teacher and philosopher he encouraged the negation of the performance principle, of possessive individualism, of alienation in labour - as well as in love relations. But the negation of suffering was for him only a start. No doubt, Herbert Marcuse claimed negation to be the very essence of thinking - as did Adorno and Horkheimer ; but the driving force of criticism, of contradiction and contest, carried him well beyond the limits of an accusation of unnecessary mischief. Marcuse moved further ahead. He did not hesitate to advocate, in an affirmative mood, the fulfillment of human needs, of the need for undeserved happiness, of the need for beauty, of the need for peace, calm and privacy. Although Marcuse was certainly not an affirmative thinker, he was nevertheless the most affirmative among those who praised negativity. With him, negative thinking retained the dialectical trust in determinate negation, in the disclosure of positive alternatives. Marcuse did not, in contrast to Adorno, only encircle the ineffable ; he made straight appeals to future alternatives. I am interested in this affirmative feature of Herbert Marcuse's negative thinking."[78]

It should be noted here that Habermas confesses to esteeming most in Marcuse's thought precisely that quality which we have seen Adorno, above, reject as alien to the spirit of Critical Theory as he personally understood it. Even in his years as a research assistant at Frankfurt in the nineteen-fifties, it seems, it was the Hegelian, the immanentistic, the "positive" elements in Critical Theory which most appealed to Habermas - those elements, that is, which had been institutionally marginalized in the School at this period. Still and all, this Hegelianism remained a less than fully thematized aspect of Habermas's theoretical efforts throughout the 'sixties and 'seventies. As we have noted, Habermas first came to prominence

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[77] Ibid. p. 4. The moment referred to was Marcuse's delivery of a lecture at the Freud Centennial celebrations at Frankfurt University in 1956. Marcuse was at this time only a guest in Frankfurt, no longer being officially attached to the Institute.

[78] Ibid. p. 3.

as a "Marxist Kantian", although in a very different sense from the "Marxist Kantians" Benjamin and Adorno whom we have examined above. Habermas still lives, indeed, very much on the reputation of having, with the "discourse-ethical" ideas which he developed throughout this period, performed a Kantian "Copernican revolution" with regard to earlier Critical Theory and opened up perspectives unsuspected in the work of his predecessors.

The widely prevalent idea that Habermas's social philosophy is *somehow* "Kantian", somehow transcendentalist or "quasi-transcendentalist", lends the "paradigm shift" narrative great credibility. Where Habermas is taken to be making "Kantian" points, all the awesome philosophical reputation of that first and greatest of "paradigm shifts" in modern philosophy, the "Copernican revolution" of the "Critique of Pure Reason", is lined up behind his critique of Adorno and Adorno's generation. The comparison is misleadingly plausible. It is not actually incorrect - though neither is it the whole truth - to say that Benjamin's and Adorno's conviction that modern experience remains mythical, remains profoundly repetitive and undifferentiated, is grounded in their simple empirical constatation of this repetition and non-differentiation, grounded in their *own* experience. It also at least *appears* to be the case that Habermas grounds his arguments not in experience so much as in the conditions of possibility of experience, in the object- and world-constituting order of language. The first and second generations of Critical Theory thus seem to play, in a precise repetition of cultural history, the roles respectively of dogmatic eighteenth century rationalism and empiricism and of Kant : Adorno and co. wrangle fruitlessly about what the world *is* and *is not*, until Habermas arrives to enlighten them to the fact that what matters is rather what the world *can* and *cannot* be for those who know it, or rather - in Habermas's version of the Kantian "turn" - for those who talk about it.

The key advantage afforded to any set of philosophical theses by being identified with Kant's "Copernican revolution" is, of course, the relief from all obligation to engage with opposing theses on these latter's own terms. Kant was, after formulating the critical philosophy, in a position to defer to every argument of, for instance, D'Holbachian mechanism and still not be a mechanist. D'Holbach, for Kant, had given an exhaustively accurate account of the logic of *experience*; human freedom, however, was not a matter of experience, but of an "Idea of Reason". It is widely believed that a similar relation must hold between the profound "Kulturpessimismus" expressed, for instance, in Adorno's famous aphorism "In the

case of most men, to say 'I' is already a shameless exaggeration" [79] and Habermas's far greater

social optimism. For Habermas - so it is widely held - it is fruitless to contest the truth of

Adorno's *experience* of his fellow men as mere automata ; human dignity and freedom,

however, are not matters of experience, but of the pragmatic implications of the meanings of

our intersubjective speech-acts.

Does such a relation in fact hold between Adorno's and Habermas's positions ? It

hardly seems possible to doubt it. Surely - we think - when Habermas claims, as he does in the

final arguments of Volume One of the "Theory of Communicative Action", that that whole

vision of society as an "administered world" which was built up by classical Critical Theory in

the forties and fifties from *apercus* like the one just quoted from Adorno can be radically

questioned [80] , he must have in mind the possibility not of refuting Adorno's culture-

pessimistic insights one by one on their own level of existential experience but rather the

possibility of a radical Wittgensteinian "gestalt switch", the possibility of seeing a duck where

Adorno saw a rabbit ? Surely when he speaks of the necessity for a "shift in paradigm" in these

passages, he is using "paradigm" in the sense with which we have become familiar, that sense

of a *holistic* change in "seeing as" which has its immediate inspiration in the "Philosophical

Investigations" but which can be traced back through earlier concepts, such as the

Bachelardian "problématique", eventually to Kant's idea of a "Copernican revolution" ?

I want to suggest in this study that these assumptions are largely incorrect, that

Habermas's critique of Adornian "Kulturpessimismus" - his critique, that is, of that conviction of

the persistently mythical nature of our experience which we have examined above - is in

hardly any respect a Kantian one. This is to say that Habermas, contrary to a widespread

misconception of the nature of his work, almost nowhere transcendentally circumvents or

undercuts the experientially-based arguments of classical Critical Theory, as Kant

transcendentally circumvented and undercut the arguments of Enlightenment mechanism.

Rather, what Habermas proposes against these arguments amounts, if not to an attempt to

refute their anecdotal, existential contents one by one, nevertheless indeed to an attempt to

challenge them on their own experiential level - amounts, in short, not to a Kantian ontological

relativization of these arguments' truth-claims, but to the simple contradiction of these truth-

claims.

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[79] Adorno, "Minima Moralia", p. 50.

[80] See Habermas, "Theory of Communicative Action", Volume One, pps. 345-399.

This was already suggested by our remarks on Habermas's often non-Kuhnian usage of the terms "paradigm" and "paradigm shift" in Chapter One. When Habermas speaks of the intersubjective relation's being "paradigmatic for" communicative rationality, he appears to be characterizing his own critique of Adorno and his generation as precisely a *non* -Kantian, indeed in this respect non-Wittgensteinian, one. The rabbit that Adorno saw when he told of most men shamelessly exaggerating in saying 'I' and of other objectively mythical existential experiences is not, it seems, to be transformed into a duck by a holistic "gestalt switch" which leaves every *individual* detail of the rabbit's contours unchanged. Rather, we appear indeed to be being asked to "shift the focus of investigation" from the respects in which what we really have before looks like a rabbit to the respects in which it looks like a duck - to look, that is, for signs *objectively perceptible within a world however paradigmatically structured* of important autonomously communicative practices side by side with practices of instrumentality and objectification.

This understanding of Habermas's project in the paradigm shift is obviously quite at odds with some of the most quotable, and most quoted, passages from the rest of the "Theory of Communicative Action", such as the famous "reaching understanding is the inherent telos of human speech",[81] which seems to raise the strong transcendentalist claim that even instrumental and objectifying uses of language transcendentally imply language's communicative use, that even a mythical world contains in itself, insofar as its mythical experience is vehiculated by speech, a kind of latent modernity. We will need, then, at some point to consider in detail the precise philosophical status of such Habermasian claims and the structure of his arguments for them. I believe that such a consideration will confirm the thesis which we have put forward here to the effect that Habermas's critique of first generation Critical Theory's doctrine of objective myth is not substantially a transcendentalist one, but rather boils down to a mere empirically-grounded contradiction of this doctrine. Before tackling such key claims of Habermas's as this one, however, it will be useful to situate his questionably transcendentalist critique of "Kulturpessimismus" against the background of a more genuinely transcendentalist, if no more successful, critique of the same worldview - particularly as this latter critique did in fact contribute enormously in historical fact to the development of Habermas's own.

The idea that a non-mythical - an articulated, an intersubjective, a moral - experience

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[81] Ibid. p. 287.

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could be derived from mythical experience as its condition of possibility by paying attention to the fact that even mythical experience is mediated by language - this idea was developed shortly before it was developed in Habermas's work in the work of his colleague Karl-Otto Apel. Apel was the first and remains the greatest theorist of an idea that has been crucial also to Habermas's thought : the idea of "performative self-contradiction". [82] In the view of Apel and of his students the idea of the performative or pragmatic self-contradiction might be considered almost as the driving force behind modern European philosophy as a whole. Descartes' "*cogito ergo sum*" was, in a sense, an argument from performative self-contradiction inasmuch as it pointed out that, whatever the semantic content of a subject's cognitive acts, the performance of a cognitive act itself implies that certain things hold true, such as, in this case, that the cognizer *is* an existing subject. "*Cogito sed non sum*" is not just false ; it is, when considered from a pragmatic, performative point of view, literally self-contradictory, since in thinking a thought to this effect we cannot but at the same time be performing an act - the act of thinking the thought - to the opposite effect. [83] In Apel's view, however, this idea receives a much fuller and more self-consistent formulation in the work of Wittgenstein who, as we have seen in Chapter One, turns it against Descartes himself in conceiving of the "*cogito*" in terms of its linguistification and practical utilization. For Wittgenstein, the consideration of the "*cogito*" as a speech-*act*, as a case of language in *use*, reveals not so much that the subject must exist as that it must exist as a part of a *community* of subjects capable of understanding and replying to its speech-act.

Apel and his students are interested in moving on a third step in this direction, supplementing Wittgenstein's "thinking with Descartes against Descartes" by a "thinking with Wittgenstein against Wittgenstein". Within the expanding circle of those interested both in Wittgensteinian philosophy and in social and moral theory, the great problem to be solved has always been that of how the ontological indeterminacy characteristic of Wittgenstein's later thought can be made compatible with a moral worldview in the traditional sense. Wittgenstein's arguments for "seeing" as "seeing as" contribute on the one hand to what

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[82] See Karl-Otto Apel, "Toward a Transformation of Philosophy" (Routledge, 1980). This volume contains (pps. 225-301) Apel's seminal essay on the "The A Priori of the Communication Community and the Foundations of Ethics" in which the concept of performative speech is first developed in the transcendentalist direction which became influential on Habermas.

[83] That this conclusion has been shown to be false by - in their different ways - Hume, Kant, Nietzsche and Wittgenstein does not detract from my point here : that, in Apel's view, Descartes adopted a form of argumentation which prefigured that adopted by later thinkers, even if this form of argumentation was later applied to his refutation.

seems an eminently ethical cause : the cause of driving the private, Cartesian subject out of his splendid isolation into an *a priori,* constitutive relation to his fellow men. Once the argument of ontological indeterminacy, however, has driven this private subject out into the public world, the continuing validity of the point that language alone makes and breaks ontological distinctions seems to turn into a factor working against the ethical world-view which it had previously promoted. If intuitions like those represented by so-called "sense-data" require the mediation of a contingent conceptual scheme in order to be the particular intuitions which they are, then why should the same not hold for those objects of our experience which happen in fact to be *subjects* ? Since the world of the subject's experience is not "real" in the strict philosophical sense of this term, what obliges him to recognize other subjects as irrecusably commensurable with himself in any - ontological, aesthetic or moral - sense ?

Wittgensteinian philosophy had, of course, made a valuable contribution to overcoming this problem in principle. The doctrine of ontological determinacy had, inasmuch as it fed into the "private language" argument, established the principle that there *must* be "other subjects" in order for there to be "a" subject at all. The problem lies, however, in how, on the Wittgensteinian schema, this abstract intersubjective "ethicity" can be given any kind of ethical concretion. The Wittgensteinian transcendental imperative to recognize "other subjects" cannot on Wittgensteinian premisses ever be expanded into a Kantian transcendental imperative to recognize *all* other subjects, because "all", *qua* term with an intuitively obvious class of referents, becomes on these premisses a function entirely of the linguistic practices of *particular* speech-communities. Moral philosophy in an age committed, as a narrative like that of the Habermasian paradigm shift implicitly claims, to Wittgenstein's ontological insights can, it seems, raise no ethical objection to the actions of the SS in the Nazi concentration camps, provided it can be shown that the members of the SS formed a self-contained community of speakers of a language which constituted Jews as non-animate beings - an hypothesis perhaps not so historically improbable. [84]

The task before Apel and his pupils, then - a group of philosophers who decidedly do hold to the paradigm shift narrative's claim that we are today committed to Wittgenstein's ontological insights but who urgently need also to provide some answer to the question of the normative bases for criticism of the practices of the Nazis - is to preserve the main structure

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[84] See the essay by Dirk Rossvaer in Böhler (ed.) "Die Pragmatische Wende" (Suhrkamp, 1986).

of Wittgenstein's thought while eliminating from it its apparently relativistic consequences. Apel believes that this can be achieved via a further development of the key idea of performative self-contradiction. His argument is, briefly stated, as follows : Just as the Wittgensteinian can force the Cartesian out of the private into the public world by asking that he reflect on the transcendental conditions - in the sense of the conceptual conditions of possibility - of his own position, the Wittgensteinian himself can be forced out of a merely (speech-)communitarian into a morally universalist, para-Kantian stance by being asked to reflect on the transcendental conditions of his position as a player of a language-game - or rather, more specifically, as someone obliged always implicitly to be playing the language-game of *arguing* for his Wittgensteinian view that morality is a local and contingent practice not amenable to rational, but only to descriptive, justification.

Argumentation, for Apel, is a human institution which - despite the elements of rhetoric, deceit and disguised or undiguised violence which play a role in all actual situations of argumentation - depends, in its ultimately ineradicable essence, on our recognition of one another as rational, responsible and in these respects equal human beings. To engage in argumentation is thus to have "always already" recognized oneself and one's interlocutors as beings to whom some morally-relevant qualities, at least, are *commonly* ascribable. Participation in argumentation presupposes, for instance, that *all* participants in it have an equal right to a say in the discussion and an equal responsibility for its result. [85] And the idea of "all" here regains its traditional non-problematicity without there being any need to repudiate the ontological indeterminacy which was, problematically, the key to both the indispensable and the unacceptable in Wittgenstein's thought. He who undertakes to exclude certain speaking beings from the human community is, if the excluded really are speaking beings, obliged to argue out his reasons for this exclusion with the excluded themselves. But this argument he has lost with the first words exchanged. So soon as a moral localist makes the "reflective turn" and presents his language-game localism as a *thesis* as to the nature of moral verity, he - performatively - contradicts himself, since the propounding of a thesis implies participation in argumentation and argumentation in its very essence breaches the boundaries of all localisms, drawing proponent, opponent and audience together into a "universal communication community". [86]

[85] See Apel, "Toward a Transformation of Philosophy", p. 225 ff.
[86] Ibid.

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The non-moral practices the inherent moral moment in which we have here shown Apel's language-transcendental arguments attempting to reveal are plainly not the practices of a still-mythical modernity. Above all in recent years, Apel's theses on performative self-contradiction have been formulated almost exclusively with that kind of counter-thesis in mind to which we have in fact opposed his ideas in this short review of them : the "post-modern" ultra-pluralism of thinkers like Richard Rorty. There is a broad consensus in mainstream German philosophy that this ultra-pluralism is "the problem" for social philosophy today and that consequently the as it were extreme "infra-pluralism" which classical Critical Theory had attempted to grasp theoretically with its discourse on objectively mythical experience has become a mere theoretical-historical curiosity. As another member of Habermas's "second generation of Critical Theory" has put it : "Other fronts have over the last twenty years come into being, quite different from those on which (classical) Critical Theory once sought to take its stand. Our problem is no longer logical positivism along with various kinds of Idealist system-building, but rather the undifferentiated celebration of the multiple along with irrationalism." [87]

Such an idea, it might be argued, is only an indication of the retreat of Critical Theory and of German philosophy as a whole over these "last twenty years" further and further back into the spirit and practices of the professional guild . It is indeed undoubtedly the case that a computer analysis of the vocabulary used by articles in a representative selection of leading European and American academic organs would discover a rate of occurrence for the terms "difference", "alterity" and "plurality" at least a hundred times higher today than these terms' rate of occurrence in these same organs in 1964. This does not in the least, however, alter the real political fact that "pluralism", Max Weber's famous "many gods", remains the functioning bramble bush for the Bre'er Rabbit of the administered world. Rather, it tends to confirm it. Where bourgeois society screams loud and long enough about its being on the verge of toppling over into the anarchy of limitless individual difference, it is at least possible that some of the people some of the time will be momentarily distracted from the even more screamingly obvious fact that in this society everyone is thinking and doing exactly the same as everyone else.

Is, then, the adequate response to Apel's language-transcendental arguments the ideology-critical one of "the lady doth protest too much" ? To these arguments' function in the

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[87] Herbert Schnädelbach, "Dialektik als Vernunftkritik", in Von Friedeburg and Habermas (eds.) "Adorno Konferenz 1983" (Suhrkamp, 1983), p. 69.

debates of the last ten years, perhaps. Apel's conception of the "universal communication community", however, was first formulated in precisely the antediluvian era of "logical positivism and various kinds of Idealist system-building" to which Schnädelbach refers - the era, that is, in which the major challenge to liberal political and moral theory in Germany was not that phantom one apparently posed by the absurd suggestion that our society is *more* differentiated and unpredictable than liberalism would like to admit, but that real one posed by the classical Critical-Theoretical recognition that our society is infinitely less so, that it remains a continuum of homogeneous and ever-repeated myth. Apel's language-transcendental proofs of the inherence of the moral in the non-moral can measure themselves as well against Adorno's experience of the immanent as too "closed" to accommodate moral experience as against the post-Wittgensteinians' experience of it as too "open" to do this. This was surely a part of these proofs' original political intent and it is also surely in terms of this function that they have fed into Habermas's project of "reconstructing" classical Critical Theory.

But *how well* do these language-transcendental proofs actually measure up against the discourse of classical Critical Theory ? How *addressed* is a world-view like Adorno's, in fact, by Apel's arguments for the inherence of a "universal communication community" in the institution of argumentation itself ? The implicit *promise* made by Apel's discourse here is that promise which we have seen to be only vaguely and ambiguously made by Habermas's "Theory of Communicative Action" : the promise that the values of liberal democratic society - individualism, freedom and equality - can be reinstated *full in the face* of the Marxist and classical Critical-Theoretical denial of the reality of these values, that strict reflection on the performative aspect of language can reveal an order of moral truth which advenes upon the order of non-moral truth without shattering the continuum of this latter, just as the Kantian "causality of freedom" advenes on the order of the causality of Nature without shattering its continuum. The position of classical Critical Theory and of comparable "Kulturpessimismen" would thereby be genuinely "aufgehoben" into a new way of looking at the world. Apel would not - as liberal moral theorists have habitually done with Marxists and indeed, as Horkheimer often pointed out, with the "black" theorists of the bourgeoisie itself such as Hobbes, De Sade and Nietzsche - be fruitlessly wrangling over whether a seemingly normatively- or communicatively-motivated action was in fact not a prudential or functional action or even a mere physical event, whether the "I" was not in most cases a shameless exaggeration etc. He would rather be reconstructing, on a terrain which Marxism and other "black" theories of the

social had never even thought to try to occupy, the whole liberal idea of an autonomous moral motivation and a correspondent autonomous sphere of interpersonal interaction *from the bottom up* , in basic acceptance of the arguments with which Marxist and other thinkers had dismantled this idea.

Apel, however, can plainly only realize this puristically Kantian intention in a very limited manner. He cannot really *address* a discourse like Adorno's as the discourse which it in fact is. As we have seen, Apel's logic of performative self-contradiction is one which comes into operation only where a position negatory of the idea of universal moral principles is *explicitly thematized* , made a *proposition in argument* . Had, then, Adorno or someone propounding an Adornian view of the social undertaken to enter into argument with Apel and declared in argument that Apel himself and all those potentially participating in this discursive institution - the validity of which the Adorno-figure has here undeniably performatively recognized - were "shamelessly exaggerating" every time they said "I', this could indeed be said to represent a pragmatic self-contradiction on his part. The Adorno-figure would have on the one hand at least performatively declared that dialogue with the social subjects around him was somehow expedient to his search for truth and on the other hand denied in the name of this sought-for truth these social subjects' *capacity* for dialogue with him. He would at once have *recognized* language as that Piercian search for intersubjective consensus which Apel takes it to be and *refused* to recognize it as such.

But the actual context of the enunciation of the Adornian proposition which we have taken as our example - this context being the 1951 collection of aphorisms, "Minima Moralia" - is considerably more complex in its structure than is Apel's paradigmatic context of contemporary seminar-room argumentation. We have at least Adorno's and Horkheimer's word that their texts of this period were *not* attempts to enter into argument or dialogue with any significant number of their contemporaries or even with their posterity. These texts were rather "Flaschenpost", "messages in bottles" for a world which Adorno and Horkheimer did not believe to yet exist even in embryo, and which they were by no means certain would one day come into being. The "Minima Moralia", like the "Dialectic of Enlightenment", was written, admittedly, *for* those who had ears to hear - but, as the image of the "message in a bottle" clearly indicates, written also without the slightest certainty that such ears were actually anywhere listening, or ever would be.

The Apelian will retort at this point that Adorno's subjective *intentions* as to the

addressees of his enunciations were unimportant, that what defined their *meaning* was what *they*, the enunciations, meant, not what Adorno meant them to mean, and that the meaning of linguistic enunciations is inherently and essentially other-recognizant. But the Apelian preserves the force of his Kantian argument here only by revealing it to be Kantian in a sense surely unwelcome to himself : a sense not just transcendentalist but obscurely transcendentist. Surely it is understandable and forgivable that a subject perched in the agonizing Stylite position of the classical Critical Theorist should occasionally have descended and engaged, under a sky which he recognized to be cloudless from horizon to horizon, in a moment's communicative rain-dancing - that he should have found comfort in addressing words to his contemporaries as the prisoner finds comfort in addressing words to the birds who come to the window of his cell. To make out of this the "performative self-contradiction" which Apel makes out of it amounts, where it does not represent the most pedantic point-scoring, to the expression of a vague Platonistic belief that a subject who uses language without "really believing in it" is committing a "crime against language", comparable to the archaic Christian belief that casual sexual relations are a "crime against the body", the "real" function of the body being reproduction alone.

The Apelian objection, then, to discourse like Adorno's that it involves an essential performative self-contradiction may be a sound one where this discourse presents itself as a contender for the position of the generally-acknowledged doctrinal system of an academy constitutively communicative on the terms of the existing society. Where this objection is addressed, however, to a set of propositions which were enunciated only contingently or cynically (or, in the case of an independently-published work of philosophical literature like the "Minima Moralia", not at all) within the academy, it seems to have to rest either on mere impertinent pedantry or on a kind of Platonic language-mysticism more reminiscent of Heidegger than of the analytical philosophers whom Apel cites as his "*inspirateurs*". In short, the objection *fails* to address a discourse like Adorno's in its real context and status.

Let us, however, not move on immediately to the Habermasian revision of Apel's programme, which somewhat remedies this inadequacy of simple "*ignoratio elenchi*". The two apparent "*absurda*" to which the foundations of Apel's moral philosophy can be reduced are of some interest in themselves. The element of pedantry, admittedly, largely only as a topic for "Ideologiekritik", which need not be taken up here. The question raised of the role played by Platonic linguistic essentialism in the project of critical moral philosophy, however, is one we

should pursue. This is because Adorno and Horkheimer themselves undeniably also experienced this Apelian - and, as we have presented it, Platonic / mystical - feeling of a certain unkept promise inherent in their own and their fellow subjects' linguistic acts, and it is important to understand how they reconciled this feeling with their frequent characterizations of these fellow subjects as in fact non-subjects. Rolf Wiggershaus cites, for example, remarks from Adorno's and Horkheimer's correspondence of the nineteen forties which coincide with Apel's in important respects. "Language," wrote Horkheimer to Adorno in 1941, "intends, quite independently of the psychological intentions of the speaker, the universality that has been ascribed to reason alone. Interpreting this universality necessarily leads to the idea of a correct society. When it serves the status quo, language must therefore find that it constantly contradicts itself...To speak to someone basically means recognizing him as a possible member of the future association of free human beings. Speech establishes a shared relation toward truth, and is therefore the innermost affirmation of another existence, indeed of all forms of existence, according to their capacities. When speech denies any possibilities, it necessarily contradicts itself. The speech of the concentration camp guard is actually a terrible illogicality, no matter what its content is ; unless, of course, it condemns the speaker's own duties." [88]

The resemblance to Apel's ideas is indeed striking and it is not surprising that Wiggershaus should interpret these remarks as proof that "the idea developed later on by Jürgen Habermas - that reason is situated in language, and that Critical Theory might seek its ultimate foundations there - hung (here) in the air for a moment without being picked up." [89] It seems to me, however, that an important distinction must be drawn between this idea's role in classical, and its role in post-classical Critical-Theoretical culture. The *function* of the idea that "reason is situated in language" in the latter culture is actually *diametrically opposed* to its function in the former. For Apel and the post-classical, Habermasian Critical Theory which he has inspired, it follows from the idea that "reason is situated in language" that, since we use language, we must to some extent be reasonable, be participants in a moral world. For classical Critical Theory, it follows from this idea that, since we are clearly not reasonable, *we do not use language* . If there is some ambiguity about this in the passage quoted from Horkheimer, this ambiguity is completely dissolved in the response of the profounder and

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[88] Horkheimer to Adorno, 14 September 1941, quoted Wiggershaus, "The Frankfurt School" p. 505.
[89] Wiggershaus, "The Frankfurt School", p. 504.

more consistent thinker Adorno, also cited by Wiggershaus.

"I totally agree," writes Adorno, "with the thesis about the antagonistic nature of every language that has yet existed. If humanity is still not yet mature (mündig), then it means that, in the most literal sense, it has not yet been able to speak : Kraus's illusion was that it had lost the ability to speak...I have never experienced anything so intensely as the relationship to truth that lies, in a very specific way, in direct speech. It has always been difficult for me, and basically still is, to realize that a person who is speaking can be a villain, or can be lying. My sense of language's claim to truth is so strong that it vanquishes all psychology and tends to give me a degree of credulousness towards the person speaking which forms a glaring contradiction to my experience, and is usually only overcome when I see something written by the person concerned and recognize precisely that he *cannot* speak. My almost insuperable aversion to telling lies is connected only with this awareness, not with any moral taboos...When you ask me for my views on this question, I can only say that what are perhaps the most inward impulses I have - so inward that I am almost helplessly at their mercy - are based on the very level you describe." [90]

Adorno's discourse here can be taken as indeed paradigmatic for the experiential and intellectual structure of his whole philosophy. He describes, in profoundly personal terms, his sense that there inheres in language an unkept promise. It is clear from his very tone that he would resist the drawing of the conclusion, from this sensed infidelity of language-users to themselves, that there is some real immanent possibility of bringing the subjects of language to keep this unkept promise after all, of usefully appealing to them to "make the reflective turn". Language follows the subjects of Adorno's world not as a good angel encouraging them to listen to the promptings of their better nature but as a terrible Fury reminding them of a guilt which they will never expiate. Neither, however, would Adorno have wanted it to be taken to follow from his experiencing a keen sense of an unkept promise in all empirical speech that there must be a Platonic Idea of speech stored up in some intelligible realm, an Idea against which all empirical speakers were offending when they lied or manipulated through language. The status of Adorno's discourse on the inherent moral logic of language here is methodologically negativistic. Inadequate or aporetic as it may seem, Adorno took his philosophical stand solely on the negative truth conveyed by the very tone of the passage just quoted : the truth that, without regard to whether the promise given by language is kept

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[90] Adorno to Horkheimer, 23 September 1941, cited Wiggershaus, p. 506.

in *another* world or not, anyone knows, who is still capable of hearing and thinking, that it is never and never can be kept in *this* one.

In this light, the truth of an aphorism like Adorno's "In the case of most men, to say 'I' is already a shameless exaggeration" can be seen to be shielded against the Apelian charge of performative self-contradiction by the truth of an aphorism which stands close to it in the "Minima Moralia" and has also become a key point of reference for the best, now-marginalized, elements of post-war German culture. "The first and only principle of sexual ethics," wrote Adorno in that same twenty-ninth section of this book which contains both the former aphorism and the even more famous "The whole is the untrue", "is that the accuser is always wrong (der Ankläger hat immer unrecht) ." [91] Adorno here sets succinctly down, with particular reference to the most private and intimate of the spheres of human interaction, a characterization of our world which applies as well to its most public and universal spheres. In certain cases - such as the case of the matter between the sexual partner who has ceased to love and the one who still loves, but also of that between the liberal "Bürger" who insists on his privacy and the suffering fellow "Bürger" who for one reason or another needs to infringe or compromise this privacy - language is no longer that which establishes a relation, or illuminates an a priori existing relation, between human beings. Rather, it is what illuminates the terrifying absence of any relation, and that rational speech which should be, according to its "Idea", the transcendence of violence, becomes under these conditions itself a kind of violence, a "wrong", an "Unrecht". Where the brutality of absolute atomization obtains in reality, language, far from establishing a related-ness which transcends this real atomization, itself takes on all the appearance of brutality - in spite of, or rather precisely *because of* the rationality of its content. But in this very brutalization - in the very "wrong" which the language of love and warmth must do to bourgeois society - language fulfils its sole true "transcendental" function : the exclusively *negative* one of showing that there *is* no "universal communication community" neither in immanence nor in any practically accessible transcendentality. The Adornian critic of the closed, mythical reality of modern society is not then in fact *doing* the opposite of what he is *saying* in communicating the proposition that there is no communication in this society. The very *failure* of his speech-act - the inevitable public conclusion that he, "the accuser", "hat unrecht" - is its *success* , inasmuch as this failure is a solicitation of the Kantian recognition of the status of our whole experience as a "false

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[91] Adorno, "Minima Moralia", p. 50.

whole". As we have said, to claim with Apel that strict language-transcendental reflection can reveal a discourse like Adorno's as pragmatically self-contradictory is not really to *address* this discourse.

(vii)

Let us turn now to Habermas. He has taken up this Apelian thematic of language as the site of practical reason into his work gradually but extensively over the past thirty years, following Apel into a full "turn to the paradigm of communication" circa 1970. Since the very beginning of this process in the early sixties, however, Habermas's treatment of this theme has differed from Apel's in a way, which, not incidentally, goes some way toward remedying those inadequacies of the Apelian programme which we have just examined as a critique of Marxist and classical Critical-Theoretical mytho-criticism. Apel, as we have seen, has developed an argument for the latent operativity of liberal democratic ethical structures in all discursive activity which works really only within a narrowly academic context, in which all participants in this discursive activity make a "reflective turn" and present their views on the nature of social intersubjectivity as "theses" implicitly submitted *to the judgement* of this social intersubjectivity - an argument, then, which can well be charged with begging the mytho-critical question, with not *addressing* a discourse like Adorno's. Habermas, on the other hand, has concentrated in his work on developing a conception of the moral commitments *a priori* inherent in communicative speech which can dispense with the academicistic proviso that the communicating subject must always make the "reflective turn" - on developing, that is, a conception of linguistically-vehiculated practical reason which is valid not just for the professional philosopher but also and above all for the social subject *qua* social subject, irrespective of whether he propounds explicit "theses" about his social experience or not. This expansion of the claims of what Apel and Habermas have today come to call "discourse ethics" beyond the limits of the seminar room would seem to draw even a basically non-academic, only tentatively and despairingly "thetic", discourse like that of Adorno's "Minima Moralia" under its argumentational jurisdiction and make good the implicit promise of the "discourse-ethical" programme to "sublate" this discourse without directly contradicting it. In fact, however, as we shall see, the moment of direct contradiction of this discourse is considerably greater in Habermas's revision of Apel's programme than in Apel's programme itself. This is the price Habermas pays for succeeding in *addressing* Adorno's discourse in a

way Apel does not.

The basic contours of the Habermasian theory of linguistically-vehiculated practical reason are well-known. Where Apel had drawn his inspiration for an ethics of argumentation primarily from the work of the American Pragmatist Charles Sanders Pierce and Pierce's key idea of truth as the "ultimate opinion" of an "unlimited community of investigators" [92], Habermas drew in the formulation of his own version of the idea primarily on the speech-act theory developed first in England by J. L. Austin and later introduced into the United States by John Searle and Stanley Cavell. Expanding - expanding, indeed, less extensively than one might think [93] - on the work of these thinkers, Habermas proposed in texts of the late sixties and early seventies the thesis that linguistic utterances, qua speech-acts, inherently involved the implicit raising of three "validity claims" : a claim to validity in terms of their constative *truth* (Wahrheit), a claim to validity in terms of their normative *rightness* (Richtigkeit) and a claim to validity in terms of their expressive *truthfulness* (Wahrhaftigkeit). [94] Propositionally-differentiated language-use itself, he claimed, transcendentally presupposed the *a priori* existence of three "spheres of validity" at once articulated with and essentially discrete from one another. Constative, normative and expressive validity all had their foundation, as mutually implicative but also as mutually irreducible logics, in the nature of the communicative linguistic relation itself.

A further feature of Habermas's social philosophy at this time was the thesis that these three validity claims and concomitant three "spheres of validity" purportedly inherent in real speech in turn implied the anticipation, in every situation of real speech, of an "*ideal* speech situation". By this was meant a situation in which the claims thus raised could be tested under

[92] See Apel, "Der Denkweg von C. S. Pierce" (Suhrkamp, 1973).

[93] See J. L. Austin "How To Do Things With Words" (Oxford, 1962), John Searle, "Speech Acts" (London, 1969) and Stanley Cavell "Must We Mean What We Say ?" (Cambridge University Press, 1969). It is striking how far the substance of Habermas's "discourse ethics" was in fact present in Cavell's work in particular already at the end of the 1950's. See, for instance, the passage from the 1959 essay "Must We Mean What We Say ?" : "What needs to be argued now is that something does follow from the fact that a term is used in its usual way : it entitles you (or, using the term, you entitle others) to make certain inferences, draw certain conclusions. This is part of what you say when you say that you are talking about the logic of ordinary language. Learning what these implications are is part of learning the language, no less a part than learning its syntax or learning what it is to which terms apply ; they are an essential part of what we communicate when we talk...Misnaming and misdescribing are not the only mistakes we can make in talking. Nor is lying its only immorality." ("Must We Mean What We Say ?", pps. 11-12).

[94] The thesis that *all* speech-acts raise *all three* of these implicit validity-claims is, of course, a powerfully counter-intuitive one and enormous in its implications. Habermas does indeed propose this thesis. Whether he actually holds to it and develops it, however, is another matter, which we shall discuss at length shortly.

conditions in which the discursive force of the better argument alone would decide on their admissibility. Habermas hereby arrived at a parallel idea to Apel's idea of moral norms inherent in argumentation : the "ideal speech situation" necessarily took the form also of a moral ideal because a situation in which the force of the better argument alone decided on the validity of a discursive claim was a situation in which equality and mutual respect, at least on the procedural level of the dialogue itself, were guaranteed. [95]

Already during this period of the formulation of his version of discourse ethics, however, Habermas was making certain stipulations as to this version of discourse ethics' philosophical status which anticipated and prepared the ground for his explicit excision of the "hypostasizing" and "foundationalistic" concept of an "ideal speech situation" from his model in the mid-nineteen-eighties, and for the sharp theoretical differences with Apel which developed from this excision. [96] Although, as we have seen, Habermas held, in formulating his version of the idea that language is the site of practical reason, to the Apelian position that a moral relation to the "other" is an *a priori* feature of all communication, he had begun already by the early nineteen-seventies to differ from Apel on the issue of whether *communication itself* was an *a priori* or an *a posteriori* feature of human existence. This difference came to light, for instance, in 1973 in the book "Legitimation Crisis", where, in a long footnote to its culminating section - in which Habermas presents an early account of his own discourse-ethical "universal pragmatics" - we find both a warm appreciation and a sharp critique of Apel's transcendentalist position.

Referring to Apel's essay on "The A Priori of the Communication Community", Habermas writes of how "in this fascinating dissertation...there is developed the basic supposition of communicative ethics, namely that 'the search for truth, with its assumption of

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[95] See Habermas, "Einige Bemerkungen zum Problem der Begründung von Werturteilen" in "Philosophie und Wissenschaft : Proceedings of the 9th German Congress for Philosophy" (Anton Hain, 1969), Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien" in Fahrenbach (ed.) "Wirklichkeit und Reflexion" (Neske, 1973) and Habermas,"Legitimation Crisis" (Heinemann, 1976).

[96] The speed of development of Habermas's social-philosophical ideas often makes it difficult to know the exact status of certain concepts in his work at any given time. Although he was still using the concept of "ideal speech situation" with apparent confidence in the "Theory of Communicative Action" of 1981 - see e.g. Volume One, p. 42 : "Only in theoretical, practical and explicative discourse do the participants have to start from the (often counterfactual) presupposition that the conditions for an ideal speech situation are satisfied to a sufficient degree of approximation" - in interviews from the mid-1980's he is already describing the idea as "too concretist" and declaring that he regrets ever having used it - see e.g. "Die Nachholende Revolution" (1990) p. 131 ff. In his latest book, "Faktizität und Geltung" (1992) , it is stated that the concept of the "ideal speech situation" "misleads one into an impermissible hypostasization of the system of validity claims inherent in the foundations of the validity of all speech" (Suhrkamp, 1992, p. 392).

an intersubjective consensus, must also anticipate an ideal communication community'". With regard to Apel's more specific argument, however, that the participant in argumentation can and should be brought, by enlightening him as to the pragmatic presuppositions of this participation, to make the "reflective turn" and to accept "by voluntary affirmation" ("durch willentliche Bekräftigung") the principle of the "universal communication community" as the "condition of possibility and of validity of argumentation", Habermas comments critically that "this voluntary affirmation can only be stylized to an intentional act as long as one disregards the fact that discourses are not only contingently but systematically admitted into a life-context the peculiarly fragile *facticity* of which *consists* in the recognition of discursive validity-claims. Anyone who does not participate, or is not willing to participate, in argumentation stands nevertheless 'always already' in contexts of communicative action. In doing so, he has already naively recognized the validity-claims - however counterfactually raised - that are contained in speech-acts and that can only be redeemed discursively. Otherwise he would have had to detach himself from the communicatively established language game of everyday practice. The fundamental error of methodological solipsism extends to the assumption of the possibility not only of monological thought but of monological action. It is absurd to imagine that a subject capable of speech and action could permanently realize the limit case of communicative action, that is, the monological role of acting purely instrumentally and strategically, without losing his identity." [97]

Habermas here begins to shift the stress, in the concept shared with Apel of an "ethics of discourse", from the level of the "strictly transcendental" implications of communicative speech to the level of the factual-historical "institutionalization" of these implications within the framework of what he began in this 1973 text to call the "lifeworld". Both the mutual implication and the essential discreteness of constative, normative and expressive "validities" here begin to find their foundation on an unequivocally world-immanent level. We shall be examining this idea of the "lifeworld", and the problem of a purely world-immanent maintenance of both the mutual implication and the discreteness of the three separate "spheres of validity", in Chapter Three below. Here, we need only note that Habermas can be said hereby also to shift the argumentational strategy of communicative or discourse ethics onto a level such that, in contrast to what had been the case in Apel's version of the doctrine, the discourse of a text like the "Minima Moralia" is *prima facie* fully addressed

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[97] Habermas, "Legitimation Crisis" (Heinemann, 1976), footnote 16 to Part Three, Chapter Two.

by discourse-ethical logic.

Nothing, now, any longer turns on the Apelian "reflective turn" itself - that is, on the "voluntary affirmation" which follows as irrecusable consequence of the "pragmatic *a priori*" implicitly recognized by all those who actually participate in argumentation *as an intersubjective search for truth* , but which does not need to follow from the discursive acts of subjects who conceive language in terms of an "accusation" proved right only in its proving, within the order of our immanence, absolutely "wrong". With Habermas's "universal-pragmatic" schema as presented in "Legitimation Crisis", the strongly transcendental categorical claims of Apel's moral-philosophical conception are renounced - since they had in fact only been defensible as such within the narrow context of intentionally "thetic" debate and had failed to draw intentionally non-"thetic" discourses like Adorno's into their logical ambit. These claims are replaced by "quasi-transcendental", and therefore in the last analysis merely (in the Kantian sense) *hypothetical*, claims - such as the claim that, *on the premiss* that the social subject is not to forfeit his "identity", he cannot cease to participate in networks of communicative action presupposing a degree of mutual moral recognition. The Adornian critic of total, mythical reification is now tackled at this *a posteriori* level of the contingent, but for Habermas contingently *universal*, *fact* of his happening to *be* a subject who has been raised in, and continues to live in, real contexts of communicative action. Irrespective, then, of whether an enunciation like "In the case of most men, to say 'I' is already a shameless exaggeration" can be shown to involve a self-contradiction - to speak with the pre-critical Kant, a *logical* opposition - or not, there obtains, it is now claimed, a kind of - to adopt Kant's terminology again - *real* opposition between this belief and the empirical survival and well-being of the subject.

Plainly, however, this new capacity of communicative ethics to really address the Adornian discourse has been bought only at the cost of its beginning to infringe the condition it had set upon itself with its implicit Kantian commitment never to *contradict* , but rather to *sublate* or "circumvent" , the positions opposed to it. To set up as the basis for the ethics of discourse the *a posteriori* fact that modern subjects "stand in contexts of communicative action" and are sustained in their subjective identities by their standing in these contexts is to base the implicit discourse-ethical critique of Adorno's position not on a logic which circumvents or situates this position, as Kant's critical-philosophical ontology had circumvented and situated the ontological positions of his predecessors, but on claims as to

what empirically holds of the real social universe which simply contradict Adorno's claims as to what holds of this universe head-on and which Adorno could and would in turn have *head-on contradicted*.

It has been only in the last decade that this unblinkable *non*-transcendentalism of Habermas's central philosophical argument against Adorno's mytho-critical position has been widely noted - only, that is, in a decade in which the Adornian position itself has become, in mainstream German philosophy, something of a museum-piece and the question of the "transcendental therefore binding" or "non-transcendental therefore non-binding" status of Habermas's arguments is taken to be an issue as regards the matter of whether these arguments are telling against the exotic cruelties of Islamic fundamentalism, no longer as regards whether they are telling against the subtler and more monotonous cruelties of liberal society itself. It is doubtless primarily this circumstance - that moral-ontological arguments tend in Germany today to come infinitely less "close to home" than in the nineteen-sixties - that has given Habermas the latitude to make the attempt, in recent years, to operate philosophically in the interstices of the traditional division between a transcendental Kantian "Moralität" and an immanent Hegelian "Sittlichkeit". Only two years after the publication of the "Theory of Communicative Action", in the 1983 essay "Discourse Ethics : Notes on a Programme of Philosophical Justification", he presented that proceduralistic, and therefore *prima facie* Kantian, development of Austinian speech-act theory which we have described above as having, notwithstanding its Kantian form, its ultimate argumentational basis at the Hegelian level of an *a posteriori* existing "Sittlichkeit". After outlining several stages in the degeneration of an originally rationally-conducted argument between a proponent and an opponent of the position that communicative action itself provides a basis for a system of universal procedural ethical principles - the "opponent" here, of course, is implicitly no Adornian but rather a Rortyan ultra-pluralist concerned to oppose to this universalist ethical formalism a myriad of non-binding communitarian language-games - Habermas makes the conclusive point that "at this juncture...it helps to keep in mind that through his behaviour the sceptic (as to the inherence of a procedural ethics in communicative action itself - A.R.) voluntarily terminates his membership in the community of those who argue - no more, but also no less. By refusing to argue, for instance, he cannot, even indirectly, deny that he moves in a shared sociocultural form of life, that he grew up in a web of communicative action and that he reproduces his life in that web. In a word, the sceptic may reject "Moralität" but he cannot

reject the "Sittlichkeit" of the life-circumstances in which he spends his waking hours, not unless he is willing to take refuge in suicide or serious mental illness. In other words, he cannot extricate himself from the communicative practice of everyday life in which he is continually forced to take a position by responding 'yes' or 'no'."[98]

Here even more clearly, the level of truth which Habermas has elected as the level of his version of communicative ethics' ultimate ground and foundation can be seen to be a level at which Adorno's moral-philosophical position is in no way circumvented or sublated but rather simply contradicted. The Adornian, unlike the imaginary non-universalist interlocutor as Habermas here conceives of him, does not feel the least inhibition to deny that the social subject today, and he himself *qua* such a social subject, "moves in a shared socio-cultural form of life", "grew up in a web of communicative action", "is continually obliged to take a position by responding 'yes' or 'no' ". For the Adornian, such descriptions of a *posteriori* social fact - for this is now unambiguously what they are intended by Habermas to be - are to be challenged and rejected precisely *as* descriptions of a *posteriori* social fact : factually, people are simply *not* in late capitalist society regularly called upon to take positions on either the truth, the rightness or the sincerity of the sentences addressed to them ; the total incorporation of the "normal" social subject into the mechanisms of this society's material reproduction has made even the concept of constative truth a practical irrelevancy for most people, and the concepts of normativity and sincerity have long since sunk to the status of a hollow cant which can even be more or less publicly acknowledged as such. And the Adornian, though he may not be eager, will, where he is true to himself, be willing to run precisely the risk of "suicide or serious mental illness" if this is the price that must be paid for an unflinching recognition of these kinds of hard truths about the real social world. Indeed, there is nothing more revelatory of Habermas's current philosophical position's status as the voice of precisely those social classes to whom classical Critical Theory in all its forms remained to the end anathematic than the clear implication of the passage just cited that such terrible fates - the fates of Hölderlin, of Nietzsche, of Benjamin - constitute an argument against the truth of the philosophies expounded by those who suffer them. [99]

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[98] Habermas, "Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action" (Polity Press, 1990) p. 100.

[99] It is certainly to Apel's moral-philosophical credit that he has opposed this turn in Habermas's version of communicative ethics with all the vehemence which has been possible within the framework of the Frankfurt academic "Betrieb". See, for example, his attempt to "think with Habermas against Habermas" in the 1989 essay "Normatively Grounding Critical Theory Through Recourse to the Lifeworld ?" (in Honneth, McCarthy et al. eds. "Philosophical Interventions in the Unfinished Project of the Enlightenment", MIT Press, 1992, pps. 125-170.)

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A third example should establish how things stand in this respect between Adorno and Habermas once and for all. In a 1988 essay on George Herbert Mead and the concept of "individuation through socialization", Habermas again presents the to all initial appearances a priori moral logic of language as in fact a logic radically "balanced" upon an a posteriori factuality consisting in the existence of a real historical community which can plausibly be claimed to instantiate this logic in its "Sittlichkeit". Here, this "Sittlichkeit" is given the name of an indispensable substantial "further context" for the formal moral logic of propositionally articulated speech : "The self which is able to assure itself of itself through the recognition of its identity by others shows up in language as the meaning of the performatively-employed personal pronoun in the first person. Of course, the extent to which this meaning either emerges articulated, remains implicit, or is even neutralized in any concrete case depends upon the action situation and the further context. The universal pragmatic presuppositions of communicative action constitute semantic resources from which historical societies create and articulate, each in its own way, representations of mind and soul, of the person and of action, of consciousness, of morality etc." [100]

With the concession that the a priori "transcendental" logic of speech itself can be practically "neutralized" where a congenial "further context" of a posteriori, historically cultivated communal practices is not at hand to sustain it, we clearly arrive again at a strictly Hegelian moral-philosophical position : the identity-sustaining logic of performative speech is, in Habermas's view, plainly not "neutralized". It has its "further context" - and this "further context" is the given factuality of a "Sittlichkeit", a "lifeworld". But again, the Adornian would simply not agree. For Adorno, the historical or pre-historical fact of diremptive subject-formation set in motion a concatenation of a posteriori circumstances which, however it might stand with the a priori, will always "neutralize" the logic of mutual subjective recognition in the existing world, will never allow the emergence of that "further context" of non-objectifying, "person"- and "action"-constituting practices which sustain for Habermas the practical truth of speech-pragmatic moral logic.

(viii)

That second-generation, Habermasian Critical Theory has taken this course away from Kant, or from a certain semblance of Kantianism, towards Hegel, away from "quasi-

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[100] Habermas, "Post-Metaphysical Thinking" (MIT Press 1992) p. 191.

transcendentalism" toward an unequivocal immanentism, is, as we have said, of direct relevance to the question of the validity of Habermas's "paradigm shift" narrative. The decidedly Hegelian position in moral and political philosophy which Habermas, in the early nineteen-nineties, has arrived at makes, I believe, two important aspects of classical Critical Theory's position theoretically quite inaccessible to him, and thereby renders his aspiration to sublate the essential political and philosophical content of the classical form of the Theory into the "paradigm of the theory of communication" in the end a vain one.

In examining early Frankfurt School thought as a doctrine growing as it developed more and more Kantian in its basic conceptual structure, we have been able to observe that constitutive of this doctrine were two typically Kantian philosophical concerns. We had already raised these concerns on the broadest philosophical level in Chapter One. They were (i) "the problem of the pressure of naturalism" (the phrase, as we already know, is Dieter Henrich's) and (ii) the problem of the ontological status of "the whole" - that is, the problem of the possibility of thinking a transcendent Absolute from the perspective of which, in Norman Kemp-Smith's phrase, the whole of the experienceable - including our experience of "communicative action" - might be "condemned" as in an essential respect "false". In this chapter, we have seen these Kantian conceptual structures reinstantiated in certain key texts of first-generation Critical Theory. The "problem of the pressure of naturalism" emerged in classical Critical Theory as the problem of the objectivity, even in modernity, of "mythical", undifferentiated social experience. The theme of the Absolute suggested itself in texts like the "Elements of Anti-Semitism" as the only viable egress from the "mythical" in this sense.

Habermas's increasing Hegelianism renders him, I want to argue, neglective of these eminently Kantian issues which stood at the very centre of the social-theoretical problematic of earlier Critical Theory. The "paradigm of the theory of communication" is philosophically weakest and most vulnerable in precisely these areas in which the Kantian philosophy of the subject - and, we have argued, the philosophy of the subject developed by classical Critical Theory - displays its most characteristic features. But if the new Critical-Theoretical "paradigm of the theory of communication" has not sublated into itself, by thoroughgoing critique, the content of earlier Critical Theory's insights into precisely these problems, then it has failed really to address the specifically *classical Critical-Theoretical* - that is, Benjaminian, Adornian and late Horkheimerian - "paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness" at all.

In the second half of this study, I want to argue that Habermasian Critical Theory has in

fact largely failed to do this. Where we have attempted to gain in Chapters One and Two a general synoptic overview of what is philosophically at issue between classical Adornian and post-classical Habermasian Critical Theory, in Chapters Three and Four I want to focus in on the two specific Kantian problems which we have identified and on Habermas and his generation's response, or rather lack of response, to the challenge posed by them. In Chapter Four, we will be examining the perhaps more crucial and essential problem of classical Critical Theory's conception of the Kantian Absolute as a standard for social critique. As we have noted in Chapter One, however, the theme of the transcendent Absolute is in Kantian philosophical systems symbiotic with, even in a sense logically subordinated to, the theme of the immanent irrecusability of the logic of naturalism. It is to this problem, then, that I want first to turn.

CHAPTER THREE : THE PROBLEM OF NATURALISM.

(i)

As some of our remarks in Chapter One have indicated, we can take as our guide in this discussion of second-generation Critical Theory's failure to confront the problem of naturalism one of Habermas's most important German interlocutors, Dieter Henrich. It is revealing of the true, often overlooked or forgotten, structure of classical German philosophical thought that Henrich, who has devoted his life to the exegesis of Kant's, Hegel's and Fichte's theses on the ontological primacy of mind, should have chosen to make central to his "Twelve Theses Against Jürgen Habermas" - published in the magazine "Merkur" in 1985 and republished in Henrich's 1987 collection of essays "Konzepte" [1] - the argument that the theory of communicative action fails to confront the overwhelming force of philosophical naturalism, and have supported this argument by reference precisely to the work of Kant, Hegel and their contemporaries.

Henrich's "Twelve Theses" were a swift response to a 1985 piece by Habermas expressing reservations about a possible "return to metaphysics" in German philosophy. [2] Henrich tries in this counterblast first to clarify what could be meant by "metaphysics". He approaches this clarification via a prior clarification of the idea of "reflection". "Reflection", claims Henrich, is in the first instance "the consciousness of the differences between the modes of comprehension which arise spontaneously in conscious life." [3] What Henrich here calls "modes of comprehension" are equivalents for, indeed conscious references to, those three separate "validity spheres" which Habermas claims arise with the emergence of propositionally differentiated speech and become institutionalized in the modern "lifeworld" : the spheres of constative objectivity, practical normativity and subjective expressivity. Henrich, however, gives in this essay an account of the "differences" between these three orders of truth which is from the very first incomparably more recognizant of the reality of conflict between the three orders - recognizant, that is, of these orders' inherent tendency to encroach upon one another, and above all of the constative, objective order's tendency to

[1] See Henrich, "Was Ist Metaphysik - Was Moderne ? Zwölf Thesen Gegen Jürgen Habermas", in "Konzepte", Suhrkamp, 1987.

[2] See Habermas "Rückkehr zur Metaphysik ?" in Habermas, "Nachmetaphysisches Denken" (Suhrkamp, 1988), p. 267 ff. The piece does not appear in the English translation of this book.

[3] Henrich, "Konzepte", p. 19.

encroach upon the normative, intersubjective order - than is Habermas's conception of a given "autonomy" of constative, normative and expressive spheres which tends naturally to be given institutional expression within the "lifeworld".

This is expressed in the second stage of Henrich's determination of the meaning of the idea of "reflection". "Reflection" designates in the second instance, says Henrich, the attempt to cognitively *deal with* the "differences" between modes of comprehending the world which "reflection" in the first instance had merely brought to consciousness. That is, to deal with their *conflict*. Thought perceives in the co-existence of objective, normative and subjective truth a field of ceaseless contention, wherein each of these orders of verity tends to displace and consume the other two. "Reflection" in the higher sense, then, is the process of cognitively reconciling these contending logics. But in this higher sense "reflection" can take, claims Henrich, two forms. It can either genuinely reconcile the contending spontaneous modes of comprehension by sublating them into a single overarching conception, or it can cognitively dissolve the difference between these modes as an illusion and allow their apparent heterogeneity to be subsumed into the homogeneity of just one of the three orders.

For Henrich, what is common to all the forms of modern metaphysics is their having functioned as processes of "reflection" in the sense of the former of the two shapes taken by "reflection" in its second stage : "Modern metaphysics has been a sequence of cognitive efforts to resolve the problems and questions which arise from reflection upon conditions of validity and conflicts of validity in a sense favourable to the first of the two alternatives. Leibniz's system, for instance, is nothing other than an attempt to achieve a theoretical synthesis in which the different world-concepts represented by the material, the organic, the mental and the formal worlds could be brought together in a unitary ontology. Through such a synthesis of world-concepts the self-descriptions of human beings could also be stripped of their conflictuality and restated in terms of a continuum. It is still clearer that Spinoza's metaphysics serves the purpose of reconceiving and regrounding that basic anthropological concept of self-preservation on which Hobbes had built his political theory in such a way that it no longer stands in irreconcilable conflict with the concept of pure, and thus self-forgetful, knowledge. It is from attempts of this sort that the basic metaphysical ideas of classical German philosophy also arose." [4]

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[4] Ibid. p. 20.

Modern metaphysics, however, as the *synthetic* of the two higher forms of reflection, has had, throughout modernity, as its permanent "shadow" this higher reflection's other, *reductionistic*, cognitive possibility. This, claims Henrich, has taken the form primarily of radical philosophical naturalism, of the subsumption of all non-constative claims to truth, as mere "illusions", into constative claims : "For the later history of modernity, the determining moment has really been provided by the second of the possibilities of reflective distantiation from the primary cognitive tendencies of human life : the dissolution of the primary conflicts through insight into the illusions on which these conflicts entirely or very largely depend - that is to say, a merely naturalistic description of the world." [5]

At this point begins Henrich's real critique of Habermas's position. His cultural-historical situation of this position duplicates our own situation of the position of the communications-philosophical paradigm as a whole in Chapter One of this study. In Henrich's view, Habermas's Wittgensteinian belief that the modern philosopher need not opt for either one or the other of the two forms - synthetic / metaphysical or reductionistic / naturalistic - of higher "reflection" but has the option also of simply "dissolving" this dilemma by adopting an "ordinary language" viewpoint both synthetic and non-reductionist is fundamentally mistaken. He points out that the real cultural-historical fact about later modernity is that the shift of philosophical attention to language has most often, far from - as Habermas's Wittgensteinian indifference to the "bogey of mechanism" presupposes - opening a middle way between naturalism and metaphysics, only pushed philosophy all the more rapidly down the path of reductionistic naturalism.

Henrich draws attention to the enormous influence in the Anglo-Saxon philosophical academy of that ultimately naturalistic and behaviouristic form of linguistic philosophy propounded by writers like W. V. O. Quine : "(A certain particularly powerful form of naturalism) has emerged in the second half of our century. This naturalism is a product of the new regional cultures which have arisen in the former colonial territories of Europe, but it can only be understood as a kind of correspondent reversal of classical European attempts to achieve a clarity about and a synthesis of the elementary forms of discourse and comprehension - attempts for which Hegel's 'Phenomenology' might stand as an example...Such a naturalism makes use of the methods for analyzing forms of discourse which were provided by that theory of semantics which emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. It can for this reason

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[5] Ibid. p. 22

be held to be built into modern language-theoretical insights - insights which have indeed proven in our times to be indispensable to the clarification of fundamental philosophical problems - as a perspective which *has* to be taken into consideration. It analyses the primary forms of human discourse as different modes of the regularized usage of signs. The presuppositions about the nature of Man and world which feed into these discursive forms are reduced by it to the conditions of applicability of these signs. And in this way the possibility emerges of explaining the use of signs in terms of a theory of linguistic *behaviour*, which can in turn be reformulated in terms of laws governing the successive occupation of space-time points in the material world. Those cognitive presuppositions which are inherent in the primary discourses of living men and which presume in turn a system of 'valid reasons' and a rationality, inherent in the use of language, which would be comprehensible solely in its own terms are, by these logical steps, placed in suspense. They are seen to be indeed well-functioning forms of interaction, but also forms of interaction which, once analysed, must renounce all their claims to knowledge or to self-sufficient comprehensibility." 6

Rather, then, than - as Habermas's whole "communication-theoretical" philosophical construction implies - the "linguistic turn" in modern philosophy rendering "mechanism" a mere "bogey" and enabling the contemporary philosopher to dispense with the category of the autonomous subject without fear of thereby reducing the field of human experience to one of pure objectivity, there is "nothing so conducive to the definitive breakthrough of naturalism as the discovery of the use of signs to be a system sufficient to itself." 7 Habermas's dismissal of naturalism as a "Scheinproblem" is far from being, as it is often implied to be, indication of a broad philosophical "Bildung" as against the narrowly empiricist philosophical "Bildung" of those who undertake to raise behaviouristic objections to the theory of communicative speech-acts . Rather, Habermas's views are the result of a definitely *parochial* theoretical formation, of the enthusiastic abandonment of the German Idealist philosophical heritage for just *one* , today largely obsolete, current of thought within analytical philosophy. We should quote here again, in context, the passage from Henrich which we have quoted in Chapter One : "The German reception of linguistic-philosophical methods has been until very recently marked by precisely the basic weakness of an indifference to the pressure of the naturalistic problematic. This indifference is recognizable by the circumstance that basic

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6 Ibid. pps. 22-3.

7 Ibid. p. 39.

'semantic' concepts like 'meaning', 'truth' and the 'object-reference' of linguistic expressions have passed into German philosophical usage as if they were completely unproblematical and self-explanatory. This naive self-certainty is particularly characteristic of Habermas's theory of communicative action. It is only this naive self-certainty that enables him to expand the method of semantic explication of acts of sign-application, which could have been philosophically well exploited had it been deployed with greater caution and appropriate provisos, to a universalistic degree, and to introduce without further clarification or justification the concept of the 'lifeworld' as the ultimate foundational quantity of his philosophy. It is this same naivety that allows him to rely without a second thought on Austin's theory of speech-acts. This theory, in fact, was developed in a deeply conservative sub-milieu within Anglo-Saxon philosophy, one peculiarly immunised against the pressure of naturalism." 8

We can at this point note with regard to this passage something which we did not note above. Henrich recognizes that all that is "unclarified" and "unjustified" in Habermas's mobilization of the idea of a general philosophical "linguistic turn" in order to dismiss the problem of naturalism is epitomized in the concept of the "lifeworld". This "ultimate foundational quantity" of Habermas's "paradigm of the theory of communication" remains signally open to naturalist and behaviourist critique - or, on a more explicitly political-philosophical plane, to Marxian critique, inasmuch as in at least one of its moments Marxism opposes to liberal conceptions of human action and decision a naturalistic, behaviouristic account of the relation between material social conditioning and political will-formation, as in the "German Ideology"'s famous statement of the principle that, as a rule, "social being determines consciousness". I want in this chapter of our study to expand upon Henrich's point here by examining whether the Habermasian idea of the "lifeworld" can really, as Habermas's whole "paradigm of the theory of communication" presupposes it can, survive naturalistic or behaviouristic reduction.

Precisely because it remains, as Henrich points out, largely "unclarified" and "unjustified" as a social-philosophical concept, it is difficult to know on what philosophical level a critique of Habermas's "lifeworld" idea needs to be mounted. The concept has surely undergone the same evolution in ontological status over the last twenty years as have all the components of Habermas's social-philosophical system, being today no longer explicitly classifiable as even "quasi"-transcendental but rather presented as a feature of the entirely

8 Ibid. pps. 23-24.

world-immanent "Sittlichkeit" characteristic of specifically "modern" societies. On the other hand, the one really extensive description and justification of this concept in Habermas's work - that in the 1981 "Theory of Communicative Action" - still relies strongly on certain presuppositions about the nature of "communicative" as opposed to "instrumental" action, "verstehende" as opposed to "erklärende" social science, which, as we shall see, appear themselves to be justifiable only within the framework of the kind of "Kantian", transcendentalist reasoning which characterized the theory of "discourse ethics" in its early stages. I want, then, to approach in this chapter the Habermasian concept of the "lifeworld" at both of these levels. Firstly, I want to explore whether the concept is tenable as an implicitly transcendental idea - an idea, that is, grounded in arguments as to the necessary and *a priori* nature of language and social-theoretical understanding. I believe that sections two and three of this chapter will show that it is in fact on this level untenable. Secondly, I want to examine it as a purely empirical, a "political", concept. Also at this level, however, I will argue, the idea must be rejected. At the end of this chapter, then, we will again be faced with that problem of a thoroughgoing action-theoretical naturalism before which we are placed by Henrich's "Twelve Theses". A final discussion of Henrich's position will lead us into the theme of Chapter Four : the theme - in fact, as we have already seen, a theme central both to Kant's critical philosophy and to classical Critical Theory - of the idea of transcendence as the sole viable egress from the continuum of Nature.

(ii)

The "lifeworld" idea emerges, as we have noted, in Habermas's work of the early nineteen-seventies in a theoretical and political context in which the problem faced by German social philosophy still appeared to be that of demonstrating to Marxistic social pessimists like Adorno that the social field could not be an entirely "closed" and "administered" one, that the differentiation of a "political realm" or a "civil society" from the homogeneous continuum of instrumental, economically-determined action could constitute more than a mere ideological attempt to "transfigure" the capitalist *status quo.* This, as we have said, was the original meaning and intention behind Apel's and Habermas's "Kantian" claims for the logic of communicative speech. Apel's and Habermas's "Kantianism" - their attempts to demonstrate that a certain specifically norm-motivated mode of inter-relation inhered in the very act of speech itself - was, of course, in this sense already at this point really

no Kantianism at all but a functional Hegelianism. The theoretical goal of this "Kantianism" was precisely the refutation of the central Kantian proposition that "in mundo non datur hiatus", the demonstration that the human universe displayed a dualistic character on *one single*, not - as Kant's system stipulates - on *two separate* ontological planes. Consequently - and the reader will do well to remember this throughout the following two sections - the positions of "dualism" and "monism", in the broadest context respectively Kantian and Hegelian, need to be in this narrower context reassigned. As regards the theory of human social experience in its aspect of immanence alone, it is the Kantian who is the monist - and in this respect, as we have noted in Chapter Two, the Kantian is entirely solidary with the Marxist. It is the Hegelian, on the other hand - and as we have said both Apel's and Habermas's early positions were Hegelian beneath their "Kantianism" - who is here a "dualist" : a defender, that is of the *immanent* dualism of "economic" and "political" realms, "system" and "lifeworld".

The originally "quasi-transcendentalistic" foundation of the idea of a non-naturalistic realm of social action which we find in Habermas's early work is not entirely abandoned in his most recent texts, which are the focus of our interest in this study. Very definitely still in the 1981 "Theory of Communicative Action", Habermas's language is often such as to suggest that his social philosophy is a transcendentalist one. As much is strongly implied, for instance, by two of the best-known of the theses proposed in this latter book : that *all* speech-acts implicitly raise *all three* of the validity-claims (to constative truth, to normative rightness and to expressive sincerity) reviewed above [9] and that "reaching understanding is the inherent telos of human speech." [10] Such theses implicitly fulfill the same political-philosophical function as did Apel's early "Kantian" arguments for a non-natural element in speech *per se*. If, say, the first of these claims could really be established, the naturalist's - in the sense both of the behaviourist's and the Marxist's - scepticism as to the immanent reality of moral experience in modern society would be definitively refuted. We should perhaps state briefly again at this point exactly why.

The thesis that every speech-act implicitly raises all three Habermasian validity-claims clearly comprehends within itself sub-theses to the number of all the permutations of these three elements : the sub-thesis, for instance, that every constative speech-act raises not only the claim that the propositional content of the speech-act is true but that the speaker means it

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[9] See Habermas, "Theory of Communicative Action", Volume One, p. 306 ff.
[10] See ibid. p. 287.

to be understood as true, is sincere in enunciating it, or the sub-thesis that every normative speech-act raises not only the claim to be right but the claim that its existential presuppositions are true (that, for instance, the cow that a farmer indisputably ought to return to his neighbour is in fact still in a condition to be so returned, i. e. not dead or wandered off). By far the most important sub-thesis of the thesis that all speech-acts raise all three validity-claims, however - for our purposes in this study, but also, I would venture to state, for moral- and political-philosophical purposes altogether - is plainly the sub-thesis that proposes the inherence of a moral claim in every truth-claim, the sub-thesis to the effect that every merely constative act of communication inherently raises a normative claim and thereby establishes a moral relation between speaker and hearer.

If the "three-claim" thesis - or rather, more specifically and crucially, this last particular sub-thesis of the "three-claim" thesis - could really be firmly established, then plainly all the Kantian and Marxian arguments against the immanence within our social experience of a sphere of autonomous moral interaction - against, that is, what Habermas calls a "life-world" - would have to be withdrawn, since the very objectivistic, merely constative, language which Marxists - and, if pressed, consistent Kantians - must use to characterize the *absence* of a "lifeworld" in modern society would thereby implicitly prove this "lifeworld"'s *presence* . The presence in immanence of a certain autonomous moral logic - a logic which would indeed surely find its social-ontological "institutionalization" - would be demonstrable transcendentally, at a level above that of mere empirical wrangling about the "good" or "bad" nature of our society. If there could really be established the inherence in the very structures of discourse not just of the commitment to sincerity's transcendentality with regard to the commitment to objectivity, or the commitment to objectivity's transcendentality with regard to the commitment to normativity, but specifically the commitment to *normativity's* transcendentality with regard to the commitment to *objectivity*, then Habermas's (immanent) social-ontological dualism would plainly win out over Kant's and Marx's (immanent) social-ontological monism. The question is, however, *does* Habermas really establish this important claim in the "Theory of Communicative Action" ? I want to argue over the next few pages that - as our examination of the general tone of Habermas's work in the 1980's might already have suggested - Habermas does not. I want to argue, indeed, that he cannot even, strictly speaking, be considered to have *tried* in this text to establish this particular and most important sub-thesis of the general "three-claim" thesis. As a *transcendental* idea, at least,

Habermas's "lifeworld" is not a viable concept.

The general weakness of Habermas's arguments in the "Theory of Communicative Action" for the "three-claim" thesis is already indicated by the inconsistent series of statements and restatements of its basic principle given when the idea is first raised in the "intermediate reflections" on "social action, purposive activity and communication" in Volume One of this work. Here, it is first stated in the following terms : "In our previous examples, we have assumed that the speaker raises precisely one validity-claim with his utterance...This picture is incomplete, inasmuch as every speech-act in a natural context can be contested (that is, rejected as invalid) under more than one aspect." [11] This first statement is tentative. The phrase "more than one aspect" does not, of course, necessarily imply that every speech-act can be contested in terms of, and therefore implicitly raises, all three of the noted "validity-claims". To say that "every speech-act can be contested under more than one aspect" need not involve proposing the important thesis as to "normativity's transcendentality with regard to constativity " which concerns us here at all, but can be construed simply as proposing such - doubtless demonstrable but relatively trivial - theses as those mentioned above, for instance that a speaker stating a purported matter of fact can be challenged, besides with regard to whether what he says is actually true, with regard to whether he means it to be taken as true, or that a speaker making a normative claim can be challenged, besides with regard to whether what he says is actually right, with regard to whether the existential presuppositions of the normative claim he raises actually obtain.

On the following page, the thesis is amplified, made much stronger. Here, we read that "in contexts of communicative action, speech-acts can *always* be rejected under *each* of the three aspects : the aspect of the rightness that the speaker claims for his action in relation to a normative context (or, indirectly, for these norms themselves) ; the truthfulness that the speaker claims for the expression of subjective experiences to which he has privileged access ; finally the truth that the speaker, with his utterance, claims for a statement (or for the existential presuppositions of a nominalized proposition)" (my emphasis). [12] Within this thesis so formulated, as we have said, there plainly has to be comprehended the very strong, highly counter-intuitive and - for our purposes - solely really argumentationally crucial sub-thesis to the effect that every communicatively-performed *constative* speech-act - every claim to be

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[11] Ibid. p. 306.
[12] Ibid. p. 307.

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enunciating a matter of *fact* - has somehow to "answer for", and therefore must implicitly have raised, a *normative* validity-claim - a claim to be acting, in enunciating this matter of fact, in accordance with a *norm* . It is, we have said, this strong sub-thesis within the "three-claim" thesis alone which is significantly relevant to the issue between Habermas and Adorno. The Critical-Theoretical reader concerned to trace the line of Habermas's argument with this issue in mind, then, is somewhat confused to find the thesis stated once again on the following page in a much *weaker* form - a form which, by linking only *disjunctively* the three aspects under which the validity of a speech-act can be legitimately challenged, throws us back not just *to*, but even *behind*, the position stated two pages previously in Habermas's text.

"Communicatively achieved agreement," writes Habermas here, "is measured against exactly three criticizable validity claims ; in coming to an understanding about something with one another and thus making themselves understandable, actors cannot avoid imbedding their speech-acts in precisely three world-relations and claiming validity for them under these aspects. Someone who rejects a comprehensible speech-act is taking issue with at least one of these validity claims. In rejecting a speech act as (normatively) wrong or untrue or insincere, he is expressing with his 'no' the fact that the utterance has not fulfilled its function of securing an interpersonal relationship, of representing states of affairs or of manifesting experiences. It is not in agreement with *our* world of legitimately ordered interpersonal relations, or with *the* world of existing states of affairs, or with *the speaker's own* world of subjective experiences" (emphasis in original). [13]

The phrase "at least" in this passage's second sentence and the disjunctive "or"s between the three "world-relations" in its last shifts the meaning of the "three-claim" thesis back toward, and construably back behind, its first formulation as a thesis to the effect merely that "*more than one* claim"' is raised by every speech-act. The thesis is now construably an even weaker one than this, a thesis no stronger than the one upon which the first formulation was announced as an advance.   This latest thesis is also, strictly speaking, a thesis to the effect that only one - here "no less" than one - validity-claim is raised by every speech-act - conceivably, then, a thesis simply to the effect that claims to constative truth are raised by constative speech-acts, claims to normative rightness by normative, and claims to expressive sincerity by expressive.

Obviously, the reader would appreciate some clear answer to the important questions

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[13] Ibid. p. 308.

which seem only to be fudged and confused by these introductory formulations of the "three-claim" thesis in the "Theory of Communicative Action". Are, for Habermas, the aspects under which a speech-act can be legitimately challenged related to one another completely disjunctively - so that every speech-act is criticizable *either* as raising a constative *or* as raising a normative *or* as raising an expressive validity-claim and the constative, normative and expressive modes of speech consequently do not in the least imply one another mutually? Or are these aspects linked only *quasi-conjunctively* - so that every speech-act is criticizable from the point of view of its raising "more than one" but not necessarily from the point of view of its raising all three validity claims and the constative, normative and expressive modes of speech imply one another in some combinations of the three but not necessarily in all ? Or are these aspects, finally, linked *fully conjunctively* to one another, so that *every* speech-act really can be criticized in terms of its raising constative *and* normative *and* expressive validity-claims simultaneously and the constative, normative and expressive modes of speech consequently *do* necessarily imply one another fully mutually ?

As we have said, the first two forms of this thesis do not really interest us in this study. The first form is tantamount simply to a registration of three possible modes of language-use. It involves no deductive claim to the effect that the validity of one use follows from the validity or factual currency of another. The second form can imply the necessity of some such deductions but, since its conception of the relations of implication that hold between the "world-relations" inherent in speech-acts is not exhaustively mutualistic, it can be easily construed as establishing only such true but trivial conjunctivities as that between a claim to truth and a claim to sincerity or between a claim to normative rightness and a claim to the obtaining of this latter's existential presuppositions. As we have said, the only conjunctivity which is of real interest to us is a conjunctivity congruent with this last but logically kinetic in the opposite direction : the inherence in all merely existential, constative, objectivizing statements of certain normative presuppositions, the "transcendentality" of normative speech and the normative "world-relation" with regard to constative speech and the constative "world-relation". And as we have also said, it is only the third and strongest of Habermas's formulations of the "three-claim" thesis which would seem to *establish* this thesis as the irrecusable *a priori* truth which it needs to be if it is to be of relevance to our problem.

Is, however, this third formulation really given any concrete development in the "Theory of Communicative Action" ? Specifically, is the acid test of this third formulation, the

demonstration of a concrete inherency of normative implications in all mere constativity, braved and survived ? Quite simply, it is not. Habermas treats of this concrete problem with the same vague inconsistency as he treats of the theme of mutual implication among discursive "world-relations" in the abstract. Again already in the first set of "intermediate reflections", he recognizes that it can be argued that "no relation to normative contexts can be inferred from the meaning of non-regulative speech-acts." [14] His counter-argument, however, to the effect that such a relation *can* be inferred is modest to the point of self-contradiction, displaying that curious underexplicated flickering between the orders of the *a priori* and the *a posteriori*, the essential and the accidental, which we have noted to characterize all his work of the 1980's. Habermas first suggests that there obtains simply an *a posteriori*, contingent, indeed merely occasional dependence of constative speech-acts on a normative background : "Communications are *sometimes* 'inappropriate', reports 'out of place', confessions 'awkward', disclosures 'offensive'" (my emphasis). [15] He then, however - quite inexplicably given that he has just described the relation between constative speech and its normative context as an *occasional* one, one holding "sometimes" and sometimes, presumably, not - goes on to claim that "that they can go wrong under this aspect is by no means extrinsic to non-regulative speech-acts ; it springs rather from their character *as* speech-acts" (emphasis in original). [16] There is plainly at the very least much to be "unpacked" in the idea of a relation which is described as *intrinsic* to a phenomenon and yet affects this phenomenon only *occasionally* . Habermas makes no attempt to "unpack" it, contenting himself with the vague reassertion that "we can see from his speech-acts' illocutionary component that a speaker enters into interpersonal relations also when he performs constative or expressive speech-acts, and whether or not these relations agree with an existing normative context, they belong to the social world." [17] The question of *how* precisely a constative speech-act "belongs to the social world" other than in the vague sense of being addressed to other social subjects - a question which has been decidedly placed on the agenda by Habermas's own recognition that reports are only *sometimes* "out of place" etc. - is here dropped without further investigation.

It is astonishing but in fact the case that Habermas's efforts to establish this perhaps

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[14] Ibid. p. 311.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid. (translation altered).

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the most important moral-philosophical point raised by the "Theory of Communicative Action" are limited to this one paragraph of questionable coherence. In the course of the various "thought-experiments" by means of which he demonstrates the logic of the mutual implication of discursive "world-relations" throughout the book, Habermas frequently carries off flawless demonstrations of such trivial instances of this mutual implication as the implication in all normative speech that the existential conditions of the called-for norm-governed action do in fact obtain. [18] But he never again concretely tackles the inverse problem of the implication in all "existential" speech of certain normative conditions, nor discusses the obvious counter-example to his argument represented by the non-"out of place" constative report of fact.

It is doubtless due to the all too understandable neglect of this question on Habermas's own part that the Habermas exegete Maeve Cooke found herself obliged, in her discussion of the "three-claim" thesis in her recent "Language and Reason", to try to formulate her own concrete example of the dependence of the validity of constative speech-acts on a certain *a priori* normative context. Cooke offers the following imaginary example of this case : "If a speaker claims that it is raining, and the hearer can clearly see that it is raining, moreover judges the speaker to be truthful, but happens to find the remark 'inappropriate' (perhaps they are both at a Quaker prayer meeting), then the speech-act will be unsuccessful on Habermas's terms." [19] This does appear to be an example more or less in line with what Habermas has in mind, on the evidence of the last passage which we examined from the "Theory of Communicative Action". The speech-act is a constative one and meets the criterion of truth intrinsic to constative speech-acts. It is stated also to meet the criterion of sincerity or truth*fulness* characteristic of speech-acts *qua* expressive enunciation. But because it is "inappropriate" in its context and thus cannot be successfully defended under the third, normative aspect which completes the full triad of discursive validity-claims raised by speech-acts, it cannot be counted as valid or "successful".

But if this is an example really, as Cooke claims, representative of Habermas's position, then all the worse for Habermasian "universal pragmatics", since it clearly involves the same fundamental unclarity as to the essential and the accidental in speech which we have noted in Habermas himself. Cooke's example is not an example which illustrates the

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[18] See, for example, the teacher-pupil scenario in Volume One, pps. 306-7, or the senior labourer - apprentice scenario in Volume Two, pps. 120-24, where in both cases much is made of the possibility of normative demands being questioned in terms of the obtaining or not obtaining of their existential presuppositions.

[19] Cooke, "Language and Reason", p. 84.

inherence of a normative commitment in constative speech-acts at all, but rather one which illustrates only the inherence of such a commitment in certain already normatively-structured contexts of such constative speech-acts' *enunciations* . There is an important difference between something following from a speech-act itself - that is, from its very propositional content - and something following merely from the performance of this speech-act, the enunciation of this propositional content, under particular circumstances. Cooke's example plainly focusses on the latter phenomenon. The *enunciation* "it *is* raining" is only possible *during* and *in the context of* the prayer meeting, since it is only during the prayer meeting that it *is* raining. This constative *enunciation*, then, can be reasonably claimed to be inherently normatively challengeable. Speakers, however, can enunciate precisely the same *propositional content* , and hence raise precisely the same constative claim, *after* and *outside the context of* the prayer meeting, by saying to one another "during the prayer meeting it *was* raining." In the circumstances described by Cooke it seems unlikely that this claim could here again be normatively challenged on the same grounds. And if the performed speech-act were normatively challenged on different grounds this would surely be again *qua* performance, *qua* enunciation, not in terms of the claim raised. The *fact* that it was raining during the prayer meeting remains a fact to the objectivity, or intersubjective verifiability, of which speech-actors make claim with every particular performance of a constative speech-act to this effect, and the various challenges in normative terms that can conceivably happen on *every* occasion of such a performance to be able to be brought against the *performance* of the constative speech-act as a performance "inappropriate" on the occasion in question fail to connect with or affect in any essential way the claimed validity of this fact.

We might confirm this conclusion by contrasting this particular sub-thesis of the "three-claim" thesis, which is by far its most moral- and political-philosophically important but which cannot in fact be demonstrated to be valid, with one of the other sub-theses contained in this thesis, which can be demonstrated to be valid but which is moral- and political-philosophically trivial. Habermas himself, as we have said, devotes considerable energy in the "Theory of Communicative Action" to demonstrating that the acceptability of normative claims usually depends not just on their own normative validity but on the constative validity of their existential presuppositions. He gives, for instance, the examples of how a professor's normative exhortation to one of his students to the effect that the latter ought to go and fetch him a glass of water can be challenged not just on the grounds that a student has no such

moral duty toward a professor but also on the grounds that the existential presupposition of this exhortation - that there is a water fountain close enough for the student to go and return before the end of the seminar - does not in fact obtain [20] and how a senior worker's normative exhortation to an apprentice to fetch beer for the whole squad of labourers can be challenged, likewise, not just on normative grounds but on the constative grounds that the beer-shop is not open on Mondays. [21] The constative implications, or presuppositions, of normative speech-acts can be seen in these examples to penetrate into the very *nature* of the speech-acts performed in a way its normative implications, or rather the normative implications of its enunciation, do not penetrate into the constative speech-act in Cooke's Habermasian example. For the professor or the senior worker to persist in exhorting their addressees to carry out the normatively requisite action even in the absence of this action's existential presuppositions would be for them to perform *essentially different speech-acts* from those they would perform did these existential presuppositions in fact obtain, and no alteration in the mere context of these speech-acts' enunciations alters this. It is as unacceptable to say that the student *did* have to fetch the water, or *will* have to fetch the water, for the professor even if the fountain *was* or *will be* a hundred miles away as it is to say that the student *does* have to fetch the water even if the fountain *is* a hundred miles away. But it is not, as we have seen, as unreasonable to say that "it *was* raining during the prayer meeting" or that "it *will be* raining during the next prayer meeting" as it is to say that "it *is* raining during the prayer meeting which we are holding now."

Habermas's thesis as to the mutual implication of all three - constative, normative and expressive - "world-relations", then, appears not to be a thesis as to these "world-relations'" "full conjunctivity". Considered concretely, it is only a thesis as to their "quasi-conjunctivity" - a thesis, that is, primarily as to the obtaining of such trivial mutual implications as that between normativity and its existential presuppositions. This thesis, in short, produces a moral-philosophical *impression* - the impression of a Kantian transformation of the whole argumentational landscape - which its actual demonstrable content cannot back up. This holds also of the second of the apparently strongly transcendental theses mentioned above as being proposed by the "Theory of Communicative Action", the thesis that "reaching understanding is the inherent telos of human speech". Here too, we seem, given the talk of

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[20] See Habermas "Theory of Communicative Action", Volume One, p. 306.
[21] See Ibid. Volume Two, p. 122

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"inherence" and of a "telos", to have to do with the kind of Kantian, transcendental logic which would be capable of sublating rather than merely contradicting the objections of writers such as Marx and Adorno against the social-ontological concept of an autonomously norm-motivated "lifeworld" and establishing this autonomous moral motivation and its social-ontological corollary as structurally irreducible features of the experience of all language-using beings. But once again we discover, on close examination of the argument offered by Habermas for this thesis, that not even the *attempt* is made in the "Theory of Communicative Action" to establish any claim nearly so strong as this transcendentalistic formulation implies.

This second thesis occurs, like the first, in the important "intermediate reflections" on "social action, purposive activity and communication". The particular passage in which it occurs reads as follows : "If we were not in a position to refer to the model of speech, we could not even begin to analyse what it means for two subjects to come to an understanding with one another. Reaching understanding is the inherent telos of human speech. Naturally, speech and understanding are not related to one another as means to end. But we can explain the concept of reaching understanding only if we specify what it means to use sentences with a communicative intent. The concepts of speech and understanding reciprocally interpret one another." [22]

The logic organizing these remarks appears so confused and inconsistent as to make the incoherent remarks on normative challengeability as a "non-extrinsic but only occasional" characteristic of constative speech-acts analysed above seem almost coherent. The sentence to the effect that "reaching understanding" is the telos of human language has all the appearance, in Habermas's text, of a conclusion. It is remarkable then, that the sentence which immediately precedes it is clearly one from which nothing of the sort could possibly be concluded. The proposition that "if we were not in a position to refer to the model of speech, we could not even begin to analyse what it means for two subjects to come to an understanding with one another" is certainly a sound one, but what follows from it is, of course, that *language* is inherent in *"reaching understanding* ", that the former is the latter's necessary condition - not, as Habermas immediately adds as if this were a deduction from this first proposition, that "reaching understanding is the inherent telos of human speech".

To establish "reaching understanding" as language's "telos" Habermas would have at least to show that language is "reaching understanding"'s necessary *and sufficient* condition,

22 Ibid. Volume One, p. 287.

that "reaching understanding" arises always and everywhere where language is used. Nothing, however, which succeeds this strong main thesis in the passage quoted shows this any more than it is shown by the point preceding it. Rather, the rest of the paragraph simply repeats the glaring "non sequitur" structure of its first two sentences. The immediately following sentence, for instance, is a clear *denial* that one can conceive of "reaching understanding" as somehow instrumentalizing language, of the latter as being somehow a "means" to the former's "end" - which would have been one possible interpretation of the idea of "reaching understanding"'s being language's "telos". The reader's hopes of this central thesis's now being provided with some foundation are, however, here given a boost. The term "naturally" with which this sentence opens leads the reader to look upon it as a mere preposited qualification, leads him, that is, to expect the following sentence to consist in some information as to how understanding *does* in fact, despite its "naturally" not standing to language in a relation of end to means, somehow stand to language in a relation *like* that of an end to language's means. The reader awaits from the next sentence a reason why "reaching understanding" is still and all the "telos" of language, why language cannot be understood except in relation to "reaching understanding". But again, what the reader gets is precisely the trivial *inverse* of this strong idea. The next point made is a point about how *"reaching understanding"* cannot be understood except in relation to *language* , how the former concept can only be explained by "specifying what it means to use sentences with communicative intent", that is, to use language.

Habermas's conclusion, then, is clearly absolutely unwarranted by any of the points he has made. Given that nothing has even been *attempted* in this passage in the way of establishing the strong claim that "reaching understanding" is a condition of possibility, or a "telos", of language - given that, rather, the only points made have been far more trivial ones to the effect that language is a condition of possibility, a "telos", of "reaching understanding" - what can possibly justify Habermas's now stating, again with all the appearance of drawing a conclusion, that "the concepts of speech and understanding *reciprocally* interpret one another" ? No more *reciprocity* of interpretation or implication has been established, by Habermas's arguments here, between language and "reaching understanding" than was established, by his arguments reviewed above, between cognitive and normative validity-claims. Just as Habermas's "three-claim" argument, while *claiming* the essential norm-dependence of all cognitive discourse, *established* , and indeed really only attempted to

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establish, the trivial fact of the cognition-dependence of all normative discourse, this "telos" argument, while *claiming* the dependence of language on "reaching understanding", *establishes* and only attempts to establish the trivial fact of the dependence of "reaching understanding" on language.

(iii)

Besides the "three-claim" thesis and the "telos" slogan, there is a third idea proposed by the "Theory of Communicative Action" which regularly sends "Copernican" shivers down the spines of the "Critical Theory community". Habermas himself complacently describes it as a "disquieting thesis".[23] The theoretical intention of this third thesis is the same as that of the first two : to preclude, at some level transcendental, or at least methodologically prior, to the empirical, a stance of total social-philosophical objectivism, a "mytho-critical" stance toward modernity such as that adopted by Benjamin and Adorno. The "quiet" that is shattered here is the same "quiet" as is purportedly shattered by the logic of the "three-claim" and "telos" ideas : the "quiet of the grave" to which Marxist and classical Critical-Theoretical discourse had assigned concepts like "civil society" and its avatar the "lifeworld" by challenging the modern differentiation of experience into the orders of an objectifiable "merely natural" and an ultimately non-objectifiable "public sphere".

This time, however, the argument is pitched at a more strictly sociological-methodological level. It takes the form of the thesis that the social scientist can only understand, in any sense of the term "understand", the particular objects of his study - society and social action - where he undertakes to understand them in the pregnant sociological sense of the term "understand" - where, that is, he approaches them in that non-objectifying, humanistically respectful attitude characteristic of "verstehende" or "interpretive" sociology. Indeed, Habermas claims, what is required if the social scientist is to secure any real grasp of his specific object, is not only that he respect, take seriously, the norm- and reason-motivated actions of the social subjects he is studying - that he not attempt to reduce these actions to mere concatenations of naturalistically-explainable causes and effects - but further that he *participate* , if only "virtually", in the processes of norm- and reason-motivation which he observes and that he thereby recognize his own nature as an essentially norm-and reason-motivated being : "The lifeworld is open only to subjects who make use of their competence

23 Habermas, "Theory of Communicative Action", Volume One, p. 107.

to speak and act. They gain access to it by participating, at least virtually, in the communications of members and thus becoming at least potential members themselves." [24]

The concept of "gaining access to the lifeworld" here obviously works two ways within the system which Habermas has developed. The thesis that to understand the "lifeworld" is by definition to participate in it is a drawbridge that is let down to admit the interpretive, non-objectifying sociologist into the very heart of the citadel of social experience : the Habermasian sociologist need no longer, at least as regards the phenomena that compose the "lifeworld", struggle with the consciousness-philosophical problem of how the social-scientific subject "reaches" or "grasps" his object ; he is, in so far as he "knows" at all in this sphere, always already in the midst of the "known". This same thesis is also a drawbridge that is drawn *up* to refuse the "erklärende" sociologist - the "Ideologiekritiker" and the theorist of modern experience as mythical experience - *any* access to the object "society" in the strict sense. In so far as the "erklärende" sociologist *refuses* to consider himself to be in the midst of the "known", refuses to take apparently norm- and reason-motivated actions seriously and to recognize his own participation in them, he does *not* "know", or at least does not know the social. He may be cognizing something - the world of physics and of natural-scientific causality, perhaps - but he cannot continue to call this "cognized" the social world. [25]

Obviously, one is eager to discover what arguments Habermas offers for this very strong thesis. Why, precisely, can the social scientist not proceed as Adorno did - as, indeed, not only Marx but Kant did before him - and comment without "participating" ? Or rather, to state Adorno's position more adequately, why can he not comment to the effect that there is in fact nothing in the existing social world to participate *in* ? The bases of Habermas's argument for the strong claim that there is no theoretical alternative but to understand purportedly communicatively-mediated action in the same terms as those in which this action understands itself are laid in the first section of the "Theory of Communicative Action"'s discussion of "the problem of understanding meaning in the social sciences". In this section, Habermas has not yet introduced the concept of *communicative* action as such. The section is devoted rather to the analysis *in isolation from one another* of the three kinds of validity-claiming action which will eventually be argued to be all reflected *a priori* in every communicatively-intended discursive act : teleological action, or action which presupposes a

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[24] Ibid. p. 112.

[25] See ibid. pps. 102-141 passim.

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"world-relation" of pure constativity ; normative action, or action which presupposes the subject's relation to a world of intersubjectively recognized norms ; and dramaturgical action, or action which presupposes the possibility of that "world-relation" which we earlier called "expressive", under the aspect of which an actor's presentation of himself to others can be criticized as "sincere" or "insincere". Habermas describes these three "first-level models" as being "enriched" by their being taken up, in the second section of this part of the book, into the full "second-level model" of the idea of a *communicative* mode of action embodying all three of them. [26] But a certain theoretical sleight of hand should be well noted here. As the term "enrichment" implies, what in fact occurs in these passages of the "Theory of Communicative Action"'s argument is that already separately elaborated ideas of that in which constativity, normativity and expressivity *consist* pass up onto the "second level" of communicative action as a kind of "raw material". And this "raw material", like any raw material, *already* enjoys a certain form and substance. It is at least as indispensable to the process of "enrichment" as this latter is to it. Indeed, as we shall see, it is the "material" that is in the end determinative of the nature and result of the "process".

For our purposes, what is most important is that a certain already largely determined and elaborated conception of "the normative" feeds into the concept of communicative action as such. Habermas has in fact made it clear even before broaching this topic of "understanding meaning in the social sciences" that, for him, "the normative" is necessarily an idea with a specific autonomy - that, in his view, "normatively regulated action" is a category which remains *by definition* irreducible to causally-determined behaviour or to any other category of human or natural experience. In a long footnote to the previous section's discussion of "relations to the world and aspects of rationality in four sociological concepts of action", Habermas had declared his adherence to a central tenet of post-Wittgensteinian analytical philosophy which suggests, indeed imposes, a specific stance on the question of what - or rather, more crucially, *whether* - norm-motivated action is. This is the (profoundly questionable) post-Wittgensteinian tenet of the ultimate ontological irreducibility of every particular language-game.

We have remarked on this feature of post-Wittgensteinian philosophical thought, and on its questionability, in Chapter One. There, we argued that the conception of ordinary language as being, by virtue of its very "ordinariness", somehow immune to all reductivistic

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[26] Ibid. p. 120.

translation into the "extra-ordinary" language of scientistic naturalism represented a vision of the discursive structure of the human universe quite as naive as that propounded by logical positivism and its "Protokollsprachen", which saw, inversely, the language of science as impermeable, by virtue of its scientificity, to ordinary language. *Pace* Wittgenstein, we argued, it *can* make sense to say that thoughts, for example, are really electrical discharges in the brain. "Ordinary language" as it now exists has no special quality to it which would make talking about a thought in terms which are not the terms in which "we" have until now ordinarily talked about it tantamount to no longer talking about a *thought* at all. Habermas, however, plainly does hold that ordinary talk is in this way structurally untranslatable, or he believes this at least to be the case as regards talk about norms and norm-motivated action. "When we use the concept of normatively regulated action," writes Habermas in the footnote mentioned, "we have to describe the actors *as if* they consider the legitimacy of action norms to be basically open to objective appraisal, no matter in which metaphysical, religious or theoretical framework. Otherwise, they would not take the concept of a world of legitimately regulated interpersonal relations as the basis of their action and could not orient themselves to valid norms but only to social facts. Acting in a norm-conformative attitude requires an intuitive understanding of normative validity ; and this concept presupposes *some* possibility or other of normative grounding. It cannot be *a priori* excluded that this conceptual necessity is a deception embedded in linguistic meaning conventions and thus calls for enlightenment - for example, by reinterpreting the concept of normative validity in emotivist or decisionistic terms and redescribing it with the help of other concepts like expression of feeling, appeals or commands. But the action of agents to whom such categorially 'purified' action orientations can be ascribed could no longer be described in concepts of normatively regulated action." [27]

Here already, at a point before any actual argument for the specificity of the normative has even been attempted, the drawbridge of "access" to its domain is drawn up against all those who might have the intention of questioning this specificity. At first, it is very difficult to understand what precisely Habermas means to say with the last sentence of this passage. One's first impression is that its meaning is anomalously trivial, indeed tautological. *Of course* the action of agents to whom "categorially purified" action orientations are ascribed can no longer be described in concepts of normatively regulated action. *What we are doing* in ascribing to these agents such action orientations - orientations to pure emotivity or to pure

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[27] Ibid. p. 420 (footnote to p. 89).

causality etc. - is precisely ceasing to describe their actions in terms of normative motivation. *What we are doing* is claiming that apparently normative motivation is *really* motivation by, for example, mere natural causality. What, then, is the point of stating that actions which are no longer being described as normatively regulated are no longer being described in concepts of normative regulation ?

In order to clear up the anomaly of this apparent tautology, one must recognize that Habermas is in fact here making a much more substantial - although, as we shall see, also quite false - claim. This is the para-Wittgensteinian claim that the vocabulary of normativity is in fact an ontologically *irreducible* one. The meaning of the last sentence is, in this light : "The actions of agents with 'categorially purified' action orientations are no longer being 'described in concepts of normatively regulated action'. Therefore, he who in this way "categorially purifies' agents' action orientations and describes apparently normatively motivated action as, say, in fact merely causally motivated action is *no longer talking about normatively motivated action*. He is talking about something else altogether and the philosopher concerned with the nature of normative action need pay no attention at all to what he says."

Clearly, Habermas's whole argument so construed turns on a certain ambiguity in the very idea of "talking about something". The sceptic as to the existence of a specific normative motivation as a factor in present-day social practices - the Marxian "Ideologiekritiker", for example, who sees all such practices as functions of Nature and "second Nature" - is plainly not describing the objects which he discourses upon "in concepts of normatively regulated action" in the sense that he is talking about normatively regulated action and *accepting it as such*. He is not for all that, however, ceasing to talk, as far as his own conception of what he is doing is concerned, *about* normatively motivated action. It is an essential part of the norm-sceptic's and the "Ideologiekritiker"'s discursive projects to maintain the idea of an *identity* between the object "*apparently* normatively motivated action" and the object "*really* only causally motivated action". They in no sense intend, by redescribing normativity, to renounce the claim to be redescribing precisely *normativity*.

We shall discuss the issue of precisely who is right and who is wrong here - the Wittgensteinian who holds the theorist who radically redescribes a phenomenon to have "switched phenomenon", or the "Ideologiekritiker" who insists that a thing can be almost nothing that it *seems* to be and yet still be in important senses that thing - further on in this section. For the moment, let us continue to trace the presence of the former, Wittgensteinian

logic in Habermas's argument. The treatment of the category of "normative action" in the "problem of understanding meaning" section itself is one along the same lines as in the earlier passage which we have just examined. The concept of normatively regulated action is here again elaborated as a self-evidence and confronted only briefly with the position of radical norm-scepticism. The text of the latter brief confrontation runs as follows : "If the interpreter adopts a...sceptical standpoint, he will explain, with the help of a non-cognitive variety of ethics, that the actor is deceiving himself with regard to the possibility of justifying norms, and that instead of reasons he could at best adduce empirical motives for the recognition of norms. Whoever argues in this way has to regard the concept of normatively regulated action as theoretically unsuitable; he will try to replace a description initially drawn in concepts of normatively regulated action with another one given, for example, in causal-behaviouristic terms." [28]

The language of "replacement" here again implies an avoidance of real engagement with any conception of normativity which might disturb the one which Habermas adopts *from the start* as the "raw material" for his process of communicative "enrichment" of the modern world-view. Habermas is again not willing to recognize the possibility of an interpreter's adopting this norm-sceptical attitude and yet continuing to see himself as addressing precisely the phenomenon of normativity - as addressing this phenomenon, that is, precisely *as* an illusion. This is indicated clearly enough by the language of the passage. The "sceptic" who "replaces" the description of a particular action in normative terms with its description in causal-behaviouristic terms is generally not best described as regarding the concept of normatively regulated action as "theoretically unsuitable" for the understanding of the particular case or cases in point. Rather, he is generally more accurately thought of as regarding this description and this concept simply as demonstrably *wrong* as concerns this case or cases. The "norm-sceptic" is not, as Habermas clearly would wish him to be, turning, in claiming that norms can be explained in empirical terms, his attention *away* from norms and normativity as the objects of the discussion - performing his own small "paradigm shift" - but is rather, in his own eyes, still addressing precisely these objects and raising theses concerning them directly *competitive* with the theses of the "non-sceptic" in this field.

So much is vaguely indicated by Habermas's language. The most decisive indication, however, that for Habermas - before he makes even the least pretence to deduce the

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[28] Ibid. p. 104.

irreducibility of the normative sphere from the *a priori* structures of language - normativity is irreducible simply because to treat of it as mere empiricity is not to treat of *it* at all is that the "norm-sceptical" line of thought is, after these brief remarks, simply dropped, no longer discussed. The next sentence begins: "On the other hand, if the interpreter is convinced of the theoretical fruitfulness of the normative model of action..." and it is *this* kind of interpreter, for whom to approach a norm is to approach it always *as* a norm, who is the exclusive subject of the discussion throughout the rest of the section. The "norm-sceptic" has, for Habermas, ceased, in ceasing to talk about norms as "the things they are" - that is, as norms - to talk about norms at all. He no longer has a voice in the "debate about norms".

Now, since this Wittgensteinian idea of the irreducibility of the normative to the constative *by definition* has been fed into the "enriching" process of the paradigm shift to the concept of communicative action, it is not surprising that there re-emerges at the heart of this concept an argumentational figure parallel in all respects. This is precisely the "disquieting" thesis of social action's non-comprehensibility except in the participant - communicative and non-objectifying - stance. Habermas's specific argument for this strong thesis is precisely the Wittgensteinian one to the effect that vocabularies are ontologically irreducible to one another. The social-scientific interpreter must recognize his own virtual appurtenance to a communicatively and normatively mediated "lifeworld", argues Habermas, because "in order to understand an expression, the interpreter must bring to mind the reasons with which a speaker would if necessary and under suitable conditions defend its validity" and, in bringing to mind these reasons, the interpreter is "himself drawn into the process of assessing validity-claims", since "reasons are of such a nature that they cannot be described in the attitude of a third person...the interpreter would not have understood what a reason is if he did not reconstruct it with its claim to provide grounds." [29]

The thesis which forms the cornerstone of this argument - that the interpreter cannot understand "what a reason is" if he does not take it seriously *as* a "reason" and refrain from redescribing it in terms of, say, mere causes - is, of course, just a warming-over of the idea of the structurally irreducible specificity of the normative which Habermas had taken up, from Wittgensteinianism, as an *axiom* of the "Theory of Communicative Action"'s argument in the previous section. Just as the norm-sceptic who redescribes normatively motivated action as mere causally motivated behaviour is really no longer talking about norms at all but is building a

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[29] Ibid. pps. 115-16.

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quite different theoretical edifice without essential relevance to the topic which he believes himself still to be addressing, he who denies the force of "reasons" as a motivation for human action in present-day society has also changed topic without being aware of it. Whoever in his talk about reasons denies to these reasons the quality of being bearers of a "validity" in the last analysis distinct from mere causality is no longer talking about reasons, he has "not understood what a reason is".

Habermas's "disquieting" argument, then, as to social action's being interpretable at all only on the premiss of the interpreter's *a priori* recognition of his appurtenance to a "lifeworld" is itself premissed on the validity of the Wittgensteinian argument for the structural irreducibility of one vocabulary to another. This is unfortunate for Habermas, because this Wittgensteinian argument is, as we have already suggested in Chapter One, among the most easily demonstrable as fallacious of all arguments in twentieth-century philosophy. This is not to say that this argument is not still often to be encountered in contemporary thought. It occupies a key position, for instance, in the social-philosophical work of one of Habermas's close philosophical associates, the McGill University professor Charles Taylor.

In the first, analytical, section of his recent "Sources of the Self", Taylor opposes to behaviouristic and naturalistic attempts to replace the vocabulary of moral experience entirely with the vocabulary of natural science the argument that concepts like "freedom", "dignity" and "courage" simply "cannot be done without", because it is only in terms of such concepts that "what we need to explain" - namely, "people living their lives" - can be explained. "Theories like behaviourism," writes Taylor, "or certain strands of contemporary computer-struck cognitive psychology which declare 'phenomenology' irrelevant on principle, are based on a crucial mistake. They are 'changing the subject', in Donald Davidson's apt expression. What we need to *explain* is people living their lives ; the terms in which they cannot avoid living them cannot be removed from the explanandum, unless we can propose other terms in which they could live them more clairvoyantly. We cannot just leap outside of these terms altogether, on the grounds that their logic doesn't fit some model of 'science', and that we know *a priori* that human beings must be explicable in this 'science'. This begs the question. How can we ever know that humans can be explained by any scientific theory *until* we actually explain how they live their lives in its terms ?" [30]

We encounter here the same kind of *petitio principii* as we encountered above when

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[30] Charles Taylor, "Sources of the Self", Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 58.

we examined Habermas's argument to the effect that, if participation in communicative action is not, as Apel claims, categorically imperative, it is at least "hypothetically" imperative, imperative on the premiss that the subject wishes to continue to live as a healthy - non-insane, non-suicidal - social being. We pointed out above that this premiss rendered Habermas's argument no argument at all against Adorno's position, which, far from reckoning insanity and suicide to be definitive confirmations of the untruth of the social-philosophical stance of those who fall victim to them, at least allows - if not obliges to - suicide and insanity's interpretation as indications of an approximation to social-philosophical truth. Where Habermas left there unexamined the question of what Adorno had once called "the sickness of normality" [31] , Taylor leaves in this passage equally unexamined the question of *whether* subjects today can in fact be said to be "living their lives" at all or whether Adorno might not have been fully justified in placing at the head of his aphoristic portrait of contemporary life Ferdinand Kürnberger's epigram "Das Leben lebt nicht".

This *petitio principii* also stands as the *petitio principii* of the Wittgensteinian "save the phenomenon or change the subject" reasoning which is explicitly repeated in Taylor's argument. The Wittgensteinian idea that the behaviourist - although, of course, this holds as well of the Marxist or of the classical Critical Theorist - who refuses to speak of the events which he observes in the social world in terms of "freedom" and "dignity", "reasons" and "intentions", is simply "changing the subject" from "lived life" to some other topic is premissed on precisely the liberal certainty which classical Critical Theory most insistently questioned. This is the certainty that that "life" which we subjects of late capitalist society generally *believe* ourselves to be living - which the ever-swelling flood of TV advertisements, pop videos and womens magazines is constantly drilling into us that we are living - must always "trump" - to use the term which Taylor himself uses - any redescription of this "life" which might make it as difficult for us to live our lives as it was for Hölderlin, Nietzsche or Benjamin to live theirs. What makes this "lived life" a discrete "subject" which is by definition "changed" as soon as its immediate "lived-ness" is called into question could well be nothing inherent in the "subject" of our daily existence at all, but rather something inherent only in our systematically distorted experience of this existence. But if this is the case, then the "subject" may not be being "changed" at all where "lived life" begins to be spoken about in such a way that it can no longer be experienced as "lived". Rather, it could be that it is only when we cease to try to

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[31] See Adorno, "Minima Moralia", pps. 58-60, "The Health Unto Death".

explain the phenomena which Taylor holds to *have* to be part of the explanandum in any explanation, and dig behind these phenomena to an order of causality apparently of a radically different nature, that we have in fact *begun* to "explain" our condition in some significant and in some *critical* sense.

The structure of the issue at question here can be made even clearer by a brief examination of the debate around the latest major text by a philosopher who also belongs to the broad circle of Habermas's associates, interlocutors and "*inspirateurs*". John Searle has recently made the Wittgensteinian reasoning which we have examined in Habermas and Taylor the centrepiece of his counterattack against mind-brain identity theory, "The Rediscovery of Mind". [32] In this book, Searle gives an account of the nature of mental activity which initially seems entirely in accord with the classically materialist position of mind-brain identity theorists. He declares his adherence to a position of "biological naturalism", which involves holding mental phenomena to be caused by the neurophysiological activities of the brain. His claim to be presenting in this book a theory which rediscovers *mind*, in its essential *non-identity* with neurophysiological brain-activity, rests on the following argument : Mental states are irreducibly distinguished from mere brain-states by that quality of intentionality which inheres in them simply *qua* mental states. Searle gives the following example: "Consider what facts in the world make it the case that you are now in a certain conscious state such as pain...Naively, there seem to be at least two sorts of facts. First and most important, there is the fact that you are now having certain unpleasant conscious sensations, and you are experiencing these sensations from your subjective, first-person point of view...But the pain is also caused by certain underlying neurophysiological processes consisting in large part of patterns of neuron firing in your thalamus and other regions of your brain. Now suppose we tried to reduce the subjective, conscious, first-person sensation of pain to the objective, third-person patterns of neuron firings. Suppose we tried to say that pain is really 'nothing but' the patterns of neuron firings. Well, if we tried such an ontological reduction, the essential features of the pain would be left out. No description of the third-person, objective, physiological facts would convey the subjective, first-person character of the pain, simply because the first-person features are different from the third person features." [33]

Searle's argument here for the ultimate non-discussability of pain in any other

[32] John Searle, "The Rediscovery of Mind" (MIT Press, 1992).
[33] Ibid. p.117.

vocabulary than one inclusive of pain *qua* "pain" - that is, *qua* irreducibly "mental" experience -

is Habermas's argument for the non-discussability of reasons in any other vocabulary than that

of reasons and Taylor's argument for the non-discussability of moral experience in any other

vocabulary than that of moral experience. Or rather, Searle's, Habermas's and Taylor's

arguments are all developments - indeed, simply applications - of Wittgenstein's argument

that a thought is what "we" learnt the use of the word "thought" by reference to and *by*

definition cannot be anything else than this. In Searle's particular application of this argument,

however, its absurdity becomes unmistakably obvious. Paul Churchland, in a review of

Searle's book, has made the necessary points about it.

"Stated carefully," writes Churchland, "the argument...has the following form : 1.

John's mental states are known-uniquely-to-John-by-introspection. [34] 2. John's physical

brain-states are not known-uniquely-to-John-by-introspection. Therefore, since they have

divergent properties : 3. John's mental states cannot be identical with any of John's physical

brain-states...Once put in this form, however, the argument is instantly recognized as

committing a familiar form of logical fallacy, a fallacy instanced more clearly in the following two

examples : 1. Aspirin is known-to-John-as-a-pain-reliever. 2. Acetylsalicylic acid is not known-

to-John-as-a-pain-reliever. Therefore, since they have divergent properties : 3. Aspirin cannot

be identical with acetylsalicyclic acid. Or : 1. The temperature of an object is known-to-John-

by-simple-feeling. 2. The mean molecular kinetic energy of an object is not known-to-John-

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[34] Churchland's restatement of Searle's argument here is inapposite, and obscures the point which I am trying to make, inasmuch as it presents the argument as one based on the idea of "introspection", an idea which, as we have seen in Chapter One, has no place in a *Wittgensteinian* philosophical exposition at all. Is, then, Searle's argument not, like Taylor's and Habermas's, a Wittgensteinian one ? I believe that, *pace* Churchill, it plainly is. Searle states his adherence to precisely the Wittgensteinian position on "introspection" on p. 105 : "Consciousness is not known by introspection in a way analogous to the way objects in the world are known by perception...The model of 'specting intro', that is, the model of an inner inspection, requires a distinction between the act of inspecting and the object inspected, and we cannot make any such distinction for consciousness. The doctrine of introspection is a good example of what Wittgenstein calls the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language." Searle not only concurs in the Wittgensteinian rejection of the traditional notion of introspection but ends his book with the statement that we "need to rediscover the social character of the mind" (p.248). The "subjectivity" implied by the "subjective, first-person character of pain", then, we may assume, is a "subjectivity" of the order of the "subjectivity" which shows forth in Habermas's "expressive" or "dramaturgical" action : a subjectivity expressed into the public world and constituting itself only through this expression. The irreducibility of the irreducibly "first-person character" which Searle ascribes to mental states is not the irreducibility of the merely "introspected" subjective *feeling* that phenomena like pain are "first-person" phenomena, but rather the irreducibility of the intersubjective *meaning* of sentences like "I am in pain", which are not *ordinarily* translatable into sentences like "my neurons are firing". Most importantly for my purposes, however, Churchland's materialist counter-argument is decisive against *both* the "introspectivist" *and* the Wittgensteinian position. Whether the quality of being "intrinsically felt or experienced" is assigned to the phenomenon "pain" by the introspective subject or by the communicative intersubjective community, this quality is in both cases assigned "from the side of consciousness" and can be challenged "from the side of the object".

by-simple-feeling. Therefore, since they have divergent properties : 3. Temperature cannot be identical with mean molecular kinetic energy...In both cases, the conclusions are known to be false, despite the presumed truth of all the premisses. The problem is that the so-called 'divergent properties' consist in nothing more than the item's being recognized, perceived or known by somebody, by a specific means and under a specific description. But no such 'epistemic' property is an intrinsic feature of the item itself, which might determine its possible identity or non-identity with some candidate thing otherwise apprehended or otherwise described. Indeed, as the two clearly fallacious parallels illustrate, the truth of the argument's premisses need reflect nothing more than John's overwhelming ignorance of what happens to be identical with what." [35]

This simple and decisive refutation of the Wittgensteinian, "ordinary language" argument to the effect that universal mechanism is a mere "bogey" dissoluble by careful consideration of the "intrinsic" meanings of words is equally decisive against Habermas's claim that the reduction of "reasons" to "causes" is necessarily a "change of subject" and Taylor's parallel claim as regards the reduction of "moral experience" to "natural behaviour". As we have seen, both Habermas and Taylor make the same fallacious assumption as Churchland here convincingly argues Searle to have made. They characterize that "property" of the phenomenon standing at the centre of their problematics which consists only in its being "recognized, perceived or known by somebody, by a specific means and under a specific description" - Habermas's "reasons" being known by social reasoners to be reasons and Taylor's "lived life" being known by those living it to be a lived life - as an "intrinsic feature" of the phenomenon itself. But, as Churchland demonstrates, such a "property" is in fact not necessarily such an "intrinsic feature" of the phenomenon at all. It could well be a feature only of the relevant subject or subjects' perception, or better *mis*perception, of the phenomenon. Whether we are speaking, with Searle, about the perceptions of a single subject, or, with Habermas and Taylor, about the perceptions shared by a group of communicating subjects alters nothing essential in the matter.

The Marxian "Ideologiekritiker" and the Kantian naturalist can, then, no more be denied cognitive access to the object of the social world on the grounds that they are not approaching it, in approaching communication as mere ideology or moral experience as mere naturalistically-reducible behaviour, as "the thing that it is" than the chemist can be denied

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[35] See Paul Churchland, "Betty Crocker's Theory", in "London Review of Books", 12 May 1994.

cognitive access to John's "Aspirin" on the grounds that he is not approaching it, in approaching it as acetylsalicylic acid, as the "Aspirin" that it is. Just as in pure ontology "what will determine the answer to (such questions as the relation of mind to brain) is not whether our subjective properties seem intuitively to be different from neural properties, but whether cognitive neuro-science eventually succeeds in discovering suitably systematic neural analogues for all the intrinsic and causal properties of mental states" [36] , in the historical ontology of the social what will determine the answer to such questions as the possible existence of such a thing as a "lifeworld" transcendent of both "first" and "second Nature" is not whether "reasons" are intrinsically comprehensible only as "reasons" or "moral experience" intrinsically comprehensible only as "moral experience" - since they are not - but how far liberalism can demonstrate the late capitalist social field to be actually permissive and promotive of autonomy and plurality, freedom and dignity, and how far Marxism and classical Critical Theory can demonstrate it to be rather radically exclusive and destructive of these things. In other words, the "lifeworld" concept stands or falls as an *empirical*, a specifically *political*, concept.

(iv)

Before we go on to discuss the "lifeworld" idea on this empirical, political level, however, it is important - given that this is a study of the relations between the ideas of the second and those of the first generation of Critical Theory - to dispel certain increasingly widespread misconceptions about the stance of Adorno's generation toward that problem of naturalism which we are discussing in this chapter. It is more and more difficult for the present generation of students of Critical Theory to keep in mind that Adorno and his contemporaries really did take up just that thoroughly naturalistic, socio-theoretically monistic position which we have ascribed to them in sections two and three of this chapter. This has been one of the most pernicious consequences of the almost universal classification of classical Critical Theory as an Hegelian body of thought. The established account of first-generation Frankfurt School philosophy is an account of a philosophy inspired primarily if not exclusively by the Hegelian insight into the necessity for the subject to "reflect" with absolute consistency on its own experience of objectivity, to the point where no "positivity" survives as a practical or ontological "given" over against the creative force of this subjectivity. Such famous episodes

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[36] Ibid.

as the "Positivismusstreit" of the early to mid-nineteen-sixties are interpreted as evidence of this irreconcilable opposition on classical Critical Theory's part to all mere naturalism.

We have already in Chapter Two, however, carefully noted that ineradicable Kantian moment in early Frankfurt School thought which qualified and in key respects overrode this Hegelian anti-naturalism. We observed in our discussion of Benjamin's influential theory of myth that not only was myth here identified with "mere Nature", but this "mere Nature" accorded an "autonomous dimension", a "genuine form and function", immune to any - or at least to any *immediate* - "demystification". This Benjaminian position on the "false truth" of myth in fact carried over directly and intact into Adorno's stance toward naturalism and social-theoretical positivism.

It is doubtless clear how "positivism" can be smoothly inserted into the place occupied by "myth" in the Benjaminian discourse examined in Chapter Two. The basic structural equivalence between the two is clear. Where myth, as we have seen, consists for both Benjamin and Habermas in an experience of immediate unity, in a total non-differentiation, positivism tends toward unity and non-differentiation as toward ultimate truth - tends, that is, toward a "unified science" in which the Nature / culture distinction and the moment of individuality are as subsumed in the continuum of natural causality as they are in mythical experience. A barrier to any such equivalence seems of course to arise with positivism's conception of itself as the very *antipodes* of myth, as the end point and epitome of demystification. But from today's perspective, this self-image as pure anti-myth is only further confirmation of positivism's identity with myth. The later Wittgenstein and his many successors have proven to almost everyone's satisfaction that the narrative of "unified science" is as mythical - in the usual sense of "fictional" - a narrative as any other "grand récit" with pretensions to universal validity. This narrative is the epitome not of enlightenment but of delusion inasmuch as it constitutively overlooks the transcendental function of language with regard to all objectivity.

But are not the positions of first- and second-generation Critical Theory really the same as regards this mythical nature of positivism ? Does not the communications-philosophical point about the transcendental role of language with regard to all objectivity really converge precisely with Adorno's and Horkheimer's Hegelian point to the effect that positivistic enlightenment, where it is not "enlightened about itself", inevitably

metamorphoses into its mythical opposite? [37] The answer to both these questions is of course "no", because on closer examination of the two Critical Theories' positions on positivism we find ourselves having to make the same subtle but crucial theoretical distinctions as we have made in our discussion of these two Critical Theories' positions on myth. Classical Critical Theory, as we have said, differs from post-classical in according to the discourse of naturalism and positivism, which *is* itself the contemporary form of that mythical experience of Nature's "immer wieder" theorized by Benjamin, a great degree of "genuine form and function", an unblinkable "autonomous dimension". Far, then, from being the "anti-positivist" doctrine *par excellence* as which it is usually presented - indeed, in the present Habermasian climate, almost exclusively presented - classical Frankfurt School thought in fact always entertained the most nuanced, dialectical theoretical relations with the crude naturalism of positivistic philosophy. And in thus relating dialectically to the anti-dialectics of positivism, classical Critical Theory was a Kantian, not an Hegelian doctrine.

This is quite clear from any careful reading of what, for example, Adorno actually wrote on the topic of positivist methods in sociology, the theme in post-war Critical Theory debates which came to greatest public visibility in that "Positivismusstreit" of the early nineteen-sixties which established once and for all in the popular imagination the Frankfurt School as the "Hegelian", the "anti-positivist" counterpart to the "Popper School"'s "sociological positivism". Adorno had already in the early nineteen-fifties made it plain that the social philosophy propounded by Critical Theory in no way allowed itself to be blinded, by its own "Hegelian" recognition of the ontologically constituted, mediated status of all the purported "data" of the social and natural sciences, to the *real* "given-ness", the real "positivist" intractability, of these "data" in the particular world by which thinking subjects found themselves, in modernity, confronted : "The fact that social phenomena are mediated through 'Geist', through the consciousness of human beings, must not be allowed to mislead us into deriving these phenomena immediately (umstandslos) from a human (geistige) principle. In a world which is largely determined by economic laws which produce their effects without any regard to men's consciousness or will, to understand social phenomena as essentially 'imbued with meaning' ('sinnhaft') is to fall victim to an illusion. That which is indeed mere fact is quite adequately grasped by 'fact-finding methods'. Those who are up in arms about the misapplication of

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37 See Adorno and Horkheimer, "Dialectic of Enlightenment", Foreword, p. xiii : "Where enlightenment does not take up into itself a degree of reflection on this its own retrograde moment, it seals its own fate."

natural-scientific methods to the supposed sphere of the Geisteswissenschaften are overlooking the fact that the objects of the social sciences are themselves to a great extent blindly natural (blindnaturhaft), indeed anything but humanly determined (geistbestimmt)...The usual objection that empirical social research is too crude, too mechanical, too inhuman (ungeistig) displaces the responsibility for this crudity, this mechanicity, this inhumanity from the object of the science onto the science itself. The much-deplored inhumanity of empirical methods in the social sciences is still and all much more humane than is the humanization of the inhuman." 38

The later "Positivismusstreit" itself, in fact, was for precisely this reason not at all the philosophical tug-of-war between "objectivists" and "anti-objectivists" which the German academic community - already in the early nineteen-sixties well advanced on the road to becoming a network of "functioning research concerns" eager to grind all philosophical debate into the manageable form of non-dialectical "theses" and "counter-theses" - would have preferred it to be. Popper, of course, continued in the course of this "Streit" vehemently to deny that he was or had ever been a positivist. More importantly, however, Adorno refused to declare that he was *not* one , that the social-philosophical position which he defended in any way excluded the accordance to positivism's "naked factuality" of the status of a (false, mythical) truth. In reference to the debate on the place of "fact" and "value" in sociological analysis, Adorno stated that "the (positivist) separation of evaluative and value-free behaviour is *correct* insofar as the behaviour of the mind cannot extricate itself at will from the state of reification (my emphasis)." 39

Post-classical Critical Theory is increasingly unwilling today to recognize this anti-Hegelian, this Kantian moment in the work of the Theory's founders. In the historical characterizations of earlier Frankfurt School positions which make up much of Seyla Benhabib's "Critique, Norm and Utopia", for instance, one will find almost no recognition of that moment of grasping and holding to the false truth of positivism which classical Critical Theory considered indispensable to positivism's overcoming. Benhabib's very formulation of the idea of Critical Theory in the introduction to this book is one exclusively in terms of the Theory's Hegelian anti-positivism : "Whereas Durkheim juxtaposes the concept of Nature as

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38 Adorno, "Zur Gegenwärtigen Stellung der empirischen Sozialforschung in Deutschland" (1952) in "Gesammelte Schriften", Volume 8, p. 483.

39 Adorno, in Adorno ed. "The Positivism Debate In German Sociology" (Gower Publishers, 1976), p. 117.

fact to the old teleological world-view, Horkheimer, in a manner reminiscent of the young Marx, stresses that 'every given depends not on Nature alone but on the power Man has over it.' The modern, mechanistic conception of Nature which Durkheim takes for granted is criticized by Horkheimer for concealing the *social constitution* of Nature through material praxis (emphasis in original)".[40]

We have already observed in Chapter Two how even Horkheimer's earliest work had in fact involved recognition not only of the dependence of the constituted natural order on a constituting order of human praxis but recognition also of an unblinkable moment of "sedimentation" on the part of the constituted natural order : the human world was not *just* "our world" but *also* "the world of capital". Even as a synopsis of the position of the Horkheimer of the thirties, then - let alone of that of Benjamin, Adorno or the Horkheimer of the post-1940 period - a formulation like Benhabib's "If individuals view their social life as dominated by impersonal, natural or supernatural forces, this is due to the structure of the material praxis through which they appropriate Nature" [41] suggests the same sort of misinterpretation as we have seen Menninghaus warn against with reference to Benjamin above. Only the crudest construal of Horkheimer's position even of the later thirties would allow it to be reformulated in these terms which suggest that the structure of the material praxis through which individuals appropriate Nature has produced merely a *view* , a *belief*, on the part of these individuals that their social life is dominated by impersonal and natural forces. The position of Critical Theory very arguably before and quite indisputably after 1940 - and Benhabib speaks here of "Critical Theory" in general without explicit reference to periods or currents - was rather that the diremptive relation of human praxis, indeed of human identity itself, to Nature has produced a situation in which individuals' social life is *really* dominated by impersonal, natural forces. Plainly, as in the case of myth, the error here lies for the Habermasian Benhabib "on the side of thought", while for classical Critical Theory it lay "on the side of the object".

Benhabib, it must be said, does seem briefly to acknowledge that Critical Theory developed, after 1940, a critique of positivism fully recognizant of its "false truth". Amongst her remarks, for example, in those passages of "Critique, Norm and Utopia" which focus on the post-1940 period - on the post-"Dialectic of Enlightenment" transformation of

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[40] Benhabib, "Critique, Norm and Utopia", p.3.
[41] Ibid. p. 4.

"defetishizing critique" into "critique of culture" - one finds the perspicacious comment that "whereas Marx had demystified the naturalization of the historical" the Critical Theory of this period sought to "demystify the historicization of the natural". [42] On the whole, however, "Critique, Norm and Utopia" does not present the "demystification of the historicization of the natural" - the critique, that is, of that unmediated Hegelianism which models its conception of social truth directly upon the transcendental truth of the identity of subject and substance - as the central task for Critical Theory which it was and is.

Moreover, Benhabib here only follows in a hallowed tradition within the Anglo-American "Critical-Theoretical community" of describing the position of classical Critical Theory with respect to positivism with one eye, perhaps even both eyes, on Habermas's development of this position. The doyen of this Anglo-American "Critical-Theoretical community", for instance, Thomas McCarthy, describes in his "Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas" Adorno's and Horkheimer's stance on "empiricism" in terms which present it almost as an alternative formulation "avant la lettre" of Habermas's already quasi-communicativistic critique of positivism in texts like the 1965 Frankfurt inaugural lecture and "Knowledge and Human Interests" : "The theory of communicative competence is a new approach to a familiar task : to articulate and ground an expanded conception of rationality. In this century, the idea of Critical Theory was developed in opposition to the tendency to define reason solely in objectivistic and instrumental terms. The earlier members of the Frankfurt School were already concerned to overcome the empiricist split between 'is' and 'ought'." [43] In the light of the passages we have quoted from Adorno's remarks on "empirical social research", we must recognize McCarthy's summary here to be as tendentious, as neglective of the actually *dialectical* stance of the earlier Critical Theorists in this matter, as is Benhabib's statement to the effect that Horkheimer believed that "every given depends not on Nature alone but on the power Man has over it". Adorno, as we have seen, *also* recognized the "false truth" of the empiricist split between "is" and "ought" - recognized, that is, that "overcoming" it essentially involved *acknowledging* it. When McCarthy writes of a simple "opposition" on the part of Critical Theory to defining reason solely in objectivistic terms, he is thinking, whether he knows it or not, of Habermasian, not Adornian / Horkheimerian, Critical Theory.

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[42] Ibid. p. 175.

[43] Thomas McCarthy, "The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas" ,Polity Press 1984, pps. 272-3.

The tendentiousness of Benhabib's and McCarthy's Critical-Theoretical historiography here, of course, is largely a function of these thinkers' own generation's fixed convictions as to how Critical Theory *should* handle - and hence, by a rather suspect logic of hindsight, should *have* handled - the positivist thesis of the reducibility of social experience to mere Nature. Benhabib's own work, for example, itself allows space only in a very ambiguous manner for the Kantian idea dominant in Adorno's writing that it is possible for the objects of the "Geisteswissenschaften" to themselves become, in history, a form of non-"Geist", a universal "second Nature". This crucial theoretical component of the classical version of Critical Theory makes its appearance in "Critique, Norm and Utopia" in a qualifying paragraph appended to Benhabib's first full definition of what she means to express with the category which organizes the whole argument of this book : "plurality". To recognize "plurality" means, for Benhabib, to recognize that each human being has a "unique perspective on the world", that "the experience of becoming an 'I' necessarily entails the experience of learning to distinguish one's perspective from that of others and this entails learning to see how the world might look through the eyes of the other." [44] "Plurality", then, is that aspect of the human condition which supposedly elevates human beings above the undifferentiated continuum of myth or Nature. It is the aspect of this condition also on which that atavistic survival of the mythical form of experience - the cold third-person perspective of social-scientific objectivism - supposedly finds its limit and founders as a sociological methodology: "It should be clear that what I name 'plurality' is incompatible with the transsubjective standpoint (of Marxian 'second-guessing' of actual subjects' contingent will-formations from the point of view of an objective historical truth - A. R.) and the social epistemology implied by it." [45]

"This, however," admits Benhabib in the qualifying remarks to this thesis which will concern us here, "leads to a problem. Can one assume that only the *lived* perspective (that is, the first- and second-person perspectives from which the human condition of 'plurality' alone comes into its theoretical own - A. R.) of social actors themselves is the locus of social truth and knowledge ; can such a view be reconciled with a critical social theory which also criticizes aspects of everyday consciousness as ideological ?...Without an explanatory dimension (in the sense of an "erklärende", an objectifying, a 'third-person' or 'trans-

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[44] Benhabib, "Critique, Norm and Utopia", p. 140.
[45] Ibid. p. 141

subjective' dimension - A. R.) Critical Theory dissolves into mere normative philosophy (emphases in original)" [46] This is the closest Benhabib's "Critique, Norm and Utopia" comes to linking up with the central Benjaminian / Adornian - originally Kantian - insight that post-mythical "plurality" is not the whole story about modern social experience and that Critical Theory therefore cannot dismiss the "third-person" discourse of depluralizing positivism and objectivism in the naive "Enlightenment" fashion in which this discourse tends to be dismissed by Wittgensteinian transcendentalism - dismiss it, that is, as *mere* myth. Benhabib accepts in principle with these remarks the Benjaminian / Adornian reasoning to the effect that the mythical / positivistic "forgetfulness" of the transcendental role of language - objectivism's forgetfulness of the transcendental verity that we are constitutively plural and communicating beings - is in fact a forgetfulness with a "form and function", with an "autonomous dimension" which ensures that the world-experience resulting from it can *not* be described as an "error" in any usual sense of this term. She accepts in principle too, then, the idea that Critical Theory must, if it is to *be* Critical Theory, "take to itself" this "autonomous dimension" of objectivism's "false truth", acknowledge it and "mimic" it if it is ever to overcome it.

This linking-up in principle with the Benjaminian / Adornian recognition of the moment of the mythical is in itself a cause for satisfaction. What leaves one unsatisfied, however, that Benhabib's social philosophy has really taken up into itself the insights of classical Critical Theory is the very particular and circumscribed development which this recognition receives in the subsequent arguments of "Critique, Norm and Utopia". Benhabib's acknowledgement, in this passage occuring roughly at the middle point of her exposition, that the "lived" - that is, exclusively intersubjectively cognitively accessible - moment of human social existence cannot of itself form the basis of a Critical Theory of society is given concrete development in this exposition's latter half only in the form of her adoption, as a framework for social-theoretical analysis, of the Habermasian conceptual apparatus of "lifeworld" and "system". As we have already seen, there is ample reason to doubt whether this Habermasian conceptual apparatus can really sublate to any significant degree the approach to social reality developed by thinkers like Benjamin and Adorno.

In the context of Benhabib's discourse, of course, the question of the "lifeworld" is primarily a *political* question and not, as we have approached it up until now, a transcendental one. We shall discuss this question as such in detail shortly, with primary reference again to

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[46] Ibid. pps. 141-2.

Habermas's own work. Even within the limits of Benhabib's own adoption of these ideas, however, we can roughly make out the respects in which the second-generation attempts to re-theorize the first generation's insights into the phenomenon of objectification of the constitutively human might tend to distort and diminish these insights. The passages we have cited over the last few pages from Adorno certainly suggest that classical Critical Theory's characteristic ontology of the social world essentially involved a recognition, as moments of this social world, of *two* dialectically linked principles : (i) a constituting principle of "Geist" - specifically of human collective praxis - and (ii) a constituted Nature tending under all hitherto obtaining historical conditions to "sediment" against its own constituting principle and to challenge the sovereignty of human praxis as it were "from within". Adorno's in-principle recognition of the transcendental function of the human principle, however, in no way excluded in his work the possibility of a development of the process of constituted Nature's "sedimentation" against its human constituting to that Kantian point which we have described in Chapter One : the point where the transcendental reality of constituting human praxis becomes an *absolutely latent* reality and the order of the actual, of the intra-mundane, takes on the character of a *practically unconstituted* from which the principle of the human, despite its *in* principle continuing transcendental function, is for all immediate intents and purposes absent. Indeed, I shall argue below that Adorno's famous aphorism "the whole is the untrue" was an expression of his conviction that such was, in the world with which he found himself confronted, in fact the historical-ontological case. Under such conditions, plainly, Critical Theory would not be characterized by an even-handed attention to the constituting principle of the human on the one hand and the constituted principle of Nature on the other, but rather by a fearless recognition of the historical rout of the former principle by the latter - a recognition in no way merely negligently "defeatist" but rather indispensable there where any hope was to be preserved of reversing this rout and rendering the principle of the human once again actual within the constituted world.

In sharp contrast to this, Benhabib's definition of Critical Theory stipulates that it must be constitutive of this latter to incorporate and to maintain as actual within itself the perspectives *both* of objectified, "sedimented", "meaningless" experience *and* of constituting and animating (inter)subjectivity : "While being a healthy antidote to sociological functionalism, which happily disregards the meaning of lived experience of social actors, a single-minded emphasis on lived experience can also be distorting. A critical social theory

must incorporate both perspectives." [47] Indeed, the loss or renunciation of the ability to theorize a retreat into *total* latency of the human social world's constituting, meaning-giving foundation - the loss or renunciation of the ability to theorize an absolute predominance of the mythical - gives rise in Benhabib's work to a tendency to grant an *un* -theorized predominance to the immediate "counter-mythical", to the order of the "lived" experience of effective world-constitution. Benhabib conceives of Critical Theory's task decidedly not in the Adornian terms of seizing and holding to the "false truth" that our world *has* in fact become a field of pure functionality but rather in the left-liberal terms of dissolving the "illusion" of this functionality into the living medium of personal experience : "Social critique must show crises not only to be objectively necessary but experientially relevant as well. In the final analysis, it is the success of the theory in translating the functional language of crisis into the experiential language of suffering, humiliation, oppression, struggle and resistance which bestows upon it the name of 'Critical Theory.'" [48] It was not pusillanimity or mandarin indifference, however, which lay at the root of Adorno's abstention from attempting such "translations" in his own work, but rather a meditative suspicion that the language of "suffering, humiliation, oppression, struggle and resistance" might not, in the "administered world", represent quite the salvationary "other" to the language of functionality which it seems to represent, that the exit-door from myth is not as immediately accessible as such a stark opposition must imply.

This privileging of the "demystifying" moment in critical social thought, as opposed to its moment of recognition of a constitutive mystification, works itself out in turn in the form of an only doubtful sublation, into "Critique, Norm and Utopia"'s concluding proposals for a post-subject-philosophical Critical Theory, of that non-"pluralistic", objectivistic moment of the Critical-Theoretical project which, as we have seen, Benhabib acknowledges as indispensable to this latter mid-way through the book's argument. These proposals decidedly place the stress on the plural, the intersubjective, the cognitively indeterminate as the true experiential basis and the apposite theoretical form for critical social philosophy. Indeed, at points in these final passages, as for example when Benhabib writes that "what we call content and context in human affairs is constituted by the perspectives of those engaged in it (sic)"[49], the reader may ask himself whether Benhabib has forgotten her earlier

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[47] Ibid. p. 141.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid. p. 349.

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acknowledgement that Critical Theory degenerates into "mere normative philosophy" where it dispenses with its constitutive denial, to the "lived perspective of social actors themselves", of the last word on the true content and context of human experience. As already noted, the only expression, in these Benhabib's final theoretical recommendations, of the non-"pluralistic", objectivistic moment of social critique is Benhabib's declaration of adherence to the idea of a divisibility of the social field into the regions of "lifeworld" and "system". By its very nature, however, this division too must imply the preclusion of the Benjaminian / Adornian theoretical figure of a total, Kantian displacement of the moment of the constituting right out of the field of its own constituted. Just as Benhabib insists, when first introducing the theme of a critical mediation of the "lived" by the "objectivist" perspective on social life, that this mediation cannot legitimately develop beyond the limits of an Hegelian immanentism to a point where, in Kantian manner, the moment of "sedimented" objectivity completely "mediates away" the constituting moment of "lived" praxis - insists, that is, that "a critical social theory must incorporate both (objectivistic and intersubjectivistic - A. R.) perspectives" - here again in her concluding remarks she constructs, in adopting a descriptive vocabulary keyed to the theme of "constraints", of "complementation", of "limits", a social-philosophical narrative which, at the same time as it "critiques" the realm of "lived experience" by illuminating its boundaries, necessarily presupposes this realm's essentially ineradicable persistence as an immanently efficacious constituting order : "Nevertheless, such a phenomenological perspective must be complemented through an analysis of those *social constraints* under which action takes place and self-identities are constituted. A critical social theory cannot remain satisfied with an ahistorical analysis of the constitution of our lifeworld through the agents' perspectives. It is also necessary to place the lifeworld within a larger picture of the social whole, its limits and possibillities". [50]

(v)

Let us now examine once again, then, this key Habermasian idea of the "lifeworld". We have seen the idea of the "lifeworld" to fail as a "transcendental" argument against naturalism. Here, we shall consider it in the only form in which it can still propose itself as a limit to the "behavioural" : as an empirical concept.

In the "Theory of Communicative Action", the concept is in fact defined largely in what

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[50] Ibid. (emphasis in original).

appear to be empirical, political-historical terms. We see that we have to do here once again with a concept emerging out of the circle of problems connected with mythical experience and its relation to the experience of modernity. Habermas introduces the concept of the "lifeworld" towards the end of his argument in this book's Introduction for the superior rationality of modern over mythical world-views - two categories which, as we have seen in Chapter Two, he takes to be unproblematically conceivable as mutually exclusive. The concept of the "lifeworld" *per se* does not initially serve to differentiate modern from mythical experience. Both archaic communities in which experience remains an unarticulated flow of mythical repetition and modern communities in which experience has taken on a definitively articulated and differentiated form are, on Habermas's definition, communities built up around the central phenomenon of a "lifeworld". This latter is initially defined only as a "correlate of processes of reaching understanding" formed of "more or less diffuse, always unproblematic, background conditions" [51] and the uncriticizable, naturally or supernaturally grounded "mores" of archaic communal life fit this description quite as well as does the more articulated and less sacrosanct "Sittlichkeit" of modern civil society. The real significance of the "lifeworld" concept for Habermas's work emerges only where Habermas expounds his conception of what makes a "lifeworld" "rational" *as opposed* to merely mythical.

A "lifeworld" begins, for Habermas, to become "rationalized" where that balance between (i) "processes of *reaching* understanding" and (ii) pre-given, unproblematic, "background" understanding which is in principle constitutive of the "lifeworld" *per se* begins to shift in favour of (i). This is in Habermas's view the decisive argument for modern "lifeworlds"' being essentially more rational than archaic, mythical "lifeworlds" : modern "lifeworlds" are constitutively "decentred" in the sense that participants in them are able to take cognitive distance from greater and greater proportions of the interpretive presuppositions of their communicative activities : "The more the world-view that furnishes the cultural stock of knowledge is decentred, the less the need for understanding is covered *in advance* by an interpreted lifeworld immune from critique, and the more this need has to be met by the interpretive accomplishments of the participants themselves, that is, by way of risky (because rationally motivated) agreement, the more frequently we can expect rational action orientations (emphasis in original)." [52] The modern, the rationalized "lifeworld", then, is, for

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[51] Habermas, "Theory of Communicative Action", Volume One, p. 70.
[52] Ibid.

Habermas, a "lifeworld" which has made so bold as to transgress in its development the originally constitutive structures of the "lifeworld", just as Man himself is an animal which has transgressed in his development the limits of animal-hood. Modernity is a "project" almost in the Heideggerian sense of "Entwurf" : in undertaking to regulate more and more of their common affairs dialogically, without the "background" safety-net of mythical experience's "naturalization" of each dialogically-emerging culture, participants in a modern "lifeworld" daily project *themselves* recklessly forward into a potential chaos.

Habermas's conception of the "lifeworld" also aspires, however, to account for the presence in modernity of a degree of myth-like experience. Myth-*like* experience only, because - as we have said - Habermas repudiates completely the classical Critical-Theoretical thesis that those phenomena of "second Nature" which appear to be features even of late modern society can be conceived of as only illusorily interrupted *persistences* of an historically-ontologically disastrous diremption of subjectivity from objectivity stretching back into prehistory. For Habermas, the negative phenomena which Marxists had once interpreted, in a "subject-object" language which he himself no longer favours, as phenomena of "reification" and "second Nature", and which Adorno and Horkheimer had reinterpreted, in "The Dialectic of Enlightenment", in terms of the ultra-Marxist "histoire à longue durée" to which we have just referred, are more adequately to be interpreted in terms of a "pathology" conceivable in "communicational" rather than "subject-object" terms and decidedly unique to modernity. Habermas understands the apparent re-emergence in modernity of the objectively-grounded mythical experience of repetition and non-differentiation in terms of the modern "lifeworld"'s "uncoupling" from itself of a materially functional "system" and of this "lifeworld"'s being in turn "colonized" by this its own "systemic" institution.

The term "system" designates in Habermas's work a mode of the coordination of social actions which, in contrast to the mode of coordination represented by the "lifeworld", depends neither upon a communicatively secured nor upon a normatively presupposed consensus among social agents, but rather upon the objective functional interlocking of these agents' actions "behind the backs" of the agents themselves. To distinguish "lifeworld" and "system" is to distinguish "mechanisms for coordinating action that harmonize the *action orientations* of participants from mechanisms that stabilize non-intended interconnections of actions by way of functionally intermeshing *action consequences*. In one case, the integration of an action system is established by a normatively guaranteed or communicatively achieved

consensus, in the other case by a non-normative regulation of individual decisions that extends beyond the actors' consciousnesses (emphasis in original)." [53] Habermas does not hold the development of such mechanisms - the emergence, that is, of impersonal and largely opaque structures of action coordination like the market and the bureaucracy of public administration - to be *per se* "pathological". The modern "life-world"'s "uncoupling" from itself of regions of social activity in which the communicative, intersubjective character of the "lifeworld" proper diminishes or even vanishes is a necessary condition of this "life-world"'s self-reproduction at the ever-rising level of prosperity and experiential diversity which modernity seems unlikely to want to renounce. Modern society requires the "system" of mercantile and bureaucratic structures for its physical maintenance as a society.

What Habermas does see as "pathological", however, is a phenomenon which might still perhaps roughly be designated in terms of the concept made current by Marcuse, and taken up by Habermas himself in 1968 in "Knowledge and Human Interests" : the "surplus repression" inherent in those particular patterns of social structuration which have characterized the process of modernization in actual historical fact . [54] Habermas believes that the most crucial political and social problems of the contemporary world can be understood in terms of a general tendency for those non-communicatively-coordinated "systemic" regions of social activity which the modern "lifeworld" has "uncoupled" from itself in order to ensure its own material maintenance and reproduction not only to attain to an independence from the communicative "lifeworld" structures in which they have their origin but to encroach back upon the "lifeworld" proper and to transform the "lifeworld"'s characteristically normatively-linguistically mediated patterns of interaction into patterns of interaction in which neither traditionally-guaranteed nor communicatively-achieved normativity plays any longer an essential role and human communicative practice simply withers and dies : "In subsystems differentiated out via steering media (the infrastructure-maintaining media of money and governmental / bureaucratic power - A. R.) systemic mechanisms create their own, norm-free social structures jutting out from the lifeworld...The rationalization of the lifeworld makes possible the emergence and growth of subsystems whose independent imperatives turn back destructively upon the lifeworld itself." [55]

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[53] Ibid. Volume Two, p. 117.

[54] See Habermas, "Knowledge and Human Interests" (Boston, 1971) pps. 278-281 and McCarthy, "The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas" pps. 84-91.

[55] Habermas, "Theory of Communicative Action", Volume Two, p. 186.

This spread of functionality *surplus* to the material-infrastructural requirements of modern society Habermas calls the "colonization" of the "lifeworld" by the "system". It was in Habermas's view basically this phenomenon that Marx and Marxists were in fact pointing to when they spoke of "alienation" and "reification". Clearly, it does constitute a re-emergence in modernity of the structures of mythical experience, and one, moreover, rooted "on the side of the object", on the side of actual social reality. Where the "lifeworld" is "colonized" and its characteristic communicative practices become displaced by functional "systemic" imperatives such as profit-making or the maximization of bureaucratic power, the modern social subject feels himself once again, like his archaic counterpart, carried powerlessly along by an undifferentiated continuum of necessity. The Nature of pure material functionality becomes the substance of culture, and culture degenerates into the mere Nature of coerced repetition.

Plainly, however, even in the present age of "post-communism", we are not in a position to dismiss out of hand the political-historical arguments offered by Marxism to the effect that such a "colonization" is a *permanent* and *constitutive* feature of society as it is presently constituted in Europe and, increasingly, all over the world. If, therefore, Habermas's arguments for the *transcendental* necessity for a sphere of autonomously communicative, specifically "political" interaction fail, - and we have argued above that they do - then some empirically defensible answer needs to be offered to the Marxist question of how participants in the "lifeworld" are supposed to suspend the effects of their identities *as* functionaries of the "system" when they set themselves to the characteristically "lifeworld" task of "coming to an understanding"

Habermas, although convinced that his "quasi-transcendental" reasoning about the necessary conditions of communication and of social-theoretical understanding *per se* do, the naturalistic objections which we have raised notwithstanding, establish beyond doubt that there inheres in the immanence of real social experience *some* degree of "systemic / non-systemic" dualism, is in fact willing to recognize that empirical argument must play a role in establishing the respective limits of these two supposedly transcendentally given spheres : "There is no doubt that the coordinating mechanism of mutual understanding is put partially out of play within formally organized domains, but the relative weights of social versus system integration is a different question, and one that can be answered only empirically." [56] The differences between Adornian and Habermasian Critical Theory appear at first to be perhaps

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[56] Habermas, "Theory of Communicative Action", Volume Two, p. 312 .

reducible at this empirical level. It seems that, where the Habermasian idea of a "colonization" of the "lifeworld" by the "system" is developed in a radical enough spirit, second-generation Frankfurt School thought might be able to recuperate some of the Kantian insights of the first generation. Any close examination of Habermas's and his colleagues' recent work, however, reveals that this is not even the theoretical intention behind the discourse on "colonization".

The very language of Habermas's "lifeworld" narrative betrays the Hegelian limits of his critical project. Habermas's choice of the term "colonization" to designate the reification or "mediatization" of the "lifeworld" by the "system" has gained him considerable kudos within the "Critical-Theoretical community", since the metaphor itself seems as inherently politically *bien pensant* as the idea it expresses. The Habermasian theorist of the "colonized lifeworld" not only explicitly takes the field, in discoursing on this "colonization", against bureaucratism and against at least the unacceptable face of capitalism, but seems also implicitly to be raising, in using this language, the standard of anti-racism. On consideration, however, it becomes clear that the choice of this term amounts to more than a mere vanity of the *bien pensant* leftist, that it also carries a great *conceptual* weight. The phrase "colonization of the lifeworld by the system" implicitly but firmly closes the debate on *how* "mediatized" the "lifeworld" is or can be, before any empirical - or even "transcendental" - investigation of this question can begin. It defines Habermas's conception of critical social theory as grounded in an irreducible social-ontological dualism of no negligible amplitude, as definitively as does Benhabib's declaration that Critical Theory *must* combine the perspective *both* of objectivity *and* of lived intersubjectivity. It excludes, that is to say, the Adornian possibilty which is also excluded by Benhabib's declaration : the possibility that modern social reality might need to be approached as a "false whole", as a field of completely mythical experience, as a constituted order from which the "living" order of subjective constitution has been completely displaced.

To realize this, we need only open ourselves for a moment to the metonymic resonances of the term "colonization". The classical Marxist and Critical-Theoretical image of "second Nature" had strongly suggested a definitive invasion of the "living" by the "dead", a permanent annexation of differentiated, articulated experience by the non-differentiation and repetition characteristic of the non-organic. To replace this image with the image of a "colonization" of the organic by the mechanical is to radically curtail the suggestion of permanency, of "sedimentation". "Colonization" in the imaginary of the twentieth century is by definition a project doomed to fugacity, to failure. Phenomena of "colonization" are by

definition *exceptional, pathological* phenomena - brutal and deplorable indeed, but ultimately historically ephemeral, like the "scramble for Africa". The implication of the image of the sphere of language and communication as a sphere "colonized" by functionality is that language and communication must in the end win out in their own sphere, because after all *they belong there* and delinguistified mechanicity doesn't. In addition to the force of communicative reason itself, this image suggests, linguistic practices enjoy in the defence of their "lifeworld" against "mediatization" by the "system" a certain inherent "*avantage du terrain*", the "*avantage*" of indigenousness.

The Kantian imaginary which had inspired classical Critical Theory had not implied this. For all "Goethezeit" thinkers, Man was not only the measure, but the very stuff, of all things. Nothing, in the last analysis, confronted Man as a "colonizer" arriving from foreign parts. Human affairs were always "home affairs". The implication here, of course, is initially an optimistic, acritical one, but the pessimistic, critical implication which we have noted is always close at hand. The assumption that the ontological terrain of experience is a *homogeneous* one allows the movement of "Entäusserung" to swing *all* the way *both* ways : where the "enemy" is not Man's "other" but Man himself *become* "other", both total reconciliation and total, Kantian / mythical alienation are possibilities not to be excluded. It is worth asking, indeed, whether the "colonization" metaphor does not jar with Habermas's own professed conception of the problem. Looked at from the point of view of the "lifeworld" outward, Habermas's own account seems to imply that the "system" is of the same ontological stuff as this former, being "uncoupled" precisely from lifeworld practices and experiences. When it comes to the encroachment of the "system" back onto the terrain of its constitutor, however, the "system" is presented in terms that suggest its ontological heterogeneousness, that portray "mediatization" as a thrust from some radical "outside" into an indigenous "interior" - this "otherness" of the "system" to the "lifeworld" acting, of course, to block this thrust before it can become more than partially and remediably damaging to "lifeworld" structures themselves.

It is important to have traced this logic of the Habermasian *metaphor* "lifeworld / system / colonization" because it is in fact *its* logic which makes the theoretical running in much of mainstream Critical-Theoretical culture today. In Helmut Dubiel's 1988 synopsis of Critical Theory, "Kritische Theorie der Gesellschaft", for instance, we find Habermas's "lifeworld / system" distinction stated, and approved of, in the following terms : "The logic of

the system 'colonizes' the lifeworld. The former breaks into the latter like colonial masters into a tribal society and forces the adaption of the cultural lifeworld to a logic of practice alien to it...If the colonial masters had remained at home, or if they had been able to develop some form of contact with the alien culture which would not have damaged its integrity, then there would have been no crisis of modernity." [57]

What would it have meant, we must ask here, in social-philosophical terms for the "colonial masters" to have stayed "at home" - that is, for the "system" to simply have "stayed away" from the "lifeworld" in which it has, after all, its origin ? Can we really appositely speak of the "colonial masters" imposing on an "alien" culture a logic of practice "alien" to it - that is, of the "system" introducing into the "lifeworld" practices that do not in some sense "belong" there too ? That Dubiel is unlikely to be able to give adequate answers to these questions, that he has been carried away by the logic of the metaphor itself, is indicated by the astonishing linguistic circumstance that, in the German text, the verbs shift in the first sentences here quoted to agree with the *simile* of the "colonial masters" rather than with the literal subject "logic of the system" : "Die Logik des Systems 'kolonisiert' die Lebenswelt. Jene bricht in diese ein wie die Kolonialherren in eine Stammgesellschaft und *erzwingen* (sic) die Anpassung der kulturellen Lebenswelt in eine ihr fremde Handlungslogik."

This whole increasingly autonomous metaphoric of the "lifeworld" as "another country" almost in the transcendent sense of the famous hymn - a sense, then, which cannot but recall Marx's satirization of the bourgeois "political sphere" as a little "heaven on earth" in the midst of economic reality - determines the stance of the Habermasian theoretical community in current academic debates on "civil society" as a stance without even the slightest point of contact with the stance of classical Critical Theory. The fact that a discussion between the first and second generations of Critical Theory on this issue could only be a "*querelle de sourds*" is evidenced by the circumstance that writers like Axel Honneth refuse even to use a common *language* with Marx and Adorno in discussing the relation between economic and normative / linguistic logics as determinants of social action. The Marxist conceptual apparatus for the analysis of the social field as an homogeneous, non-insulated ontological terrain - "bürgerliche Gesellschaft", "Staat" and their dialectical identity - has been circumvented in recent German debate by the reconceptualization of "die bürgerliche Gesellschaft" in pre-Marxist, indeed pre-Hegelian, eighteenth-century terms, and this

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[57] Helmut Dubiel, "Kritische Theorie der Gesellschaft" (Juventa Verlag, 1988), pps. 113, 117.

"bürgerliche Gesellschaft"'s anglicistic redenomination as a "Zivilgesellschaft." Obviously, one can never know for certain now what Adorno or Benjamin might have had to contribute to such a restructured debate, had they lived. On the basis of Adorno's few exchanges with thinkers like Ralf Dahrendorf toward the end of his life, however, one can guess that it would have been little, and that little contemptuous.

Consider, for example, the exchange which occurred when Dahrendorf confronted his former teacher Adorno at the German Sociologists Congress of 1968 as a representative of a liberal sociology focussed on the analysis of a social field conceived of as "industrial society". Dahrendorf had at this congress critiqued Adorno's own aspirations to analyse a social field still essentially characterizable as "late capitalism" from the point of view of this latter sort of analysis's failure, due to its supposedly Hegel-inspired conceptual structure, to take account of the irreducible plurality of social phenomena and the consequent irreducible pluralism of human social organization. Adorno's brief remarks in reply to this critique not only demonstrate how far beneath contempt Adorno would have considered the idea of the "lifeworld" as an empirical concept to be. They also point up the important fact that Adorno was no social-philosophical "Hegelian" in any conventional sense of this term.

"If we lay such great weight on the totality of society, Herr Dahrendorf," said Adorno on this occasion, "this is not because we like to become drunk on grand concepts, on the power and glory of the totality, but, on the contrary, because we see in this totality the fateful truth that, if I may be permitted to quote myself, 'the whole is the untrue'. If, in the face of this truth, we still hear talk of 'pluralism' then we can only suspect that this 'pluralism' has, under the growing domination of the mechanical whole, become mere ideology. What is important is to shatter the real predominance of the totality, rather than to pretend that such a thing as 'plurality' already exists. What we must work toward is the goal of making something like plurality, an association of free individuals, one day possible...In the doctrine for which I am now, without any claim to authority, speaking, the greatest stress is placed on the concrete, on the individual, but in another sense (than in the sense of Dahrendorf's liberal methodological individualism - A. R.). In the sense, namely, that the predominance of the totality...can be grasped only in the experience of the individual, and interpreted through the interpretation of this experience...It is in this form alone that the potential for a better organization of society survives our present deep winter ("überwintert")." [58]

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[58] See Adorno, "Diskussionsbeitrag zu : 'Spätkapitalismus oder Industriegesellschaft ?'" in "Gesammelte Schriften", Volume 8, p. 586.

It might first be noted of this passage, as a point of general relevance to the argument of our study, that the Hegelian and Kantian projects here become strangely fused with one another. "Negativized", the once-immanent Hegelian concept of *collective* "Geist" becomes a transcendent Kantian "Idea of reason", and thereby a concept which "überwintert" in the consciousness of the isolated *individual*, who relates to it as to a negative Absolute. Of more immediate relevance to the topic at hand in this chapter, however, is the fact that this passage illustrates that Adorno was not willing to take seriously even for a moment the liberal idea that "politics" is an *actual*, and not merely a *potential*, feature of the social world as it is presently constituted. Perhaps foremost among the many aspects of the post-war work of Adorno to which, after the death of Marxism and the concomitant end of history, political philosophers need even more urgently than before to attend, is his position, expressed in these remarks, on the issue of social plurality and pluralism. Adorno's point about pluralism is an aspect of a more general point : that the critical social theorist has an obligation to be sceptical not just about the solutions which liberal political philosophy offers to the problems of the modern social world, but even about the way in which this political philosophy understands, or purports to understand, these problems themselves. Let us clarify this.

Liberalism presents the "problem" of modern political organization as one of how to introduce a degree of unity into a given situation of disunity. In the words of John Rawls, modernity is faced with a "fact of pluralism" and has to find some way to come to civilized terms with this "fact". Different forms of liberalism offer, of course, quite different solutions to the problem thus identified, but as regards the problem itself there is such general unanimity among bourgeois theorists that even their non-bourgeois critics have tended often to forget that it is *liberalism itself* which nominates "pluralism" as the implacable opponent which it supposedly faces. Adorno has been in fact one of the very few twentieth-century political theorists to suggest straight out that the whole liberal melodrama of modernity - that story whereby the "crooked wood of humanity" is threatening constantly to give rise to a diversity of opinion and action such as to burst the bounds of political organization and the bursting of these bounds is averted only by an arduous unearthing of certain tenuous bases for unanimity among the essentially profoundly idiosyncratic subjects of modern society - is simply a lie, an ideological feint. Adorno suggests that liberalism believes that if it protests loudly and longly enough about the difficulties of introducing moral and political order into a society in which everyone thinks differently from each other it will eventually be forgotten that

in the liberal society in which we actually do live *no one* thinks differently on any important matter from anyone else - that it will be forgotten the world we actually live in is a completely "administered world".

The fact is that, as far as Adorno was concerned, pluralism and relativism were just *not problems* for the serious social and political philosopher. In Adorno's view, nothing at all corresponded to these ideas in the real social world. What was of interest to the Critical Theorist was rather only the analysis of the complex ideological function fulfilled by liberal thinkers' relentlessly-maintained - in many cases to the point of becoming genuinely unconscious - *pretence* that the problem of political organization in modernity was that of coming to terms with a "fact of pluralism". The analysis of such a pretence requires the same subtlety and imagination as the analysis of the true function of Bre'er Rabbit's pleas not to be thrown in the bramble-bush. Just as Bre'er Rabbit can attain his desired end only by persuading his enemies that it is the last thing in the world he wants, liberalism can, under present conditions, sustain credence in what is in fact its central and foundational myth - "pluralism" - only by presenting this myth as something completely external to it, as the intractable "problem" which it is attempting with infinite effort to solve.

The "lifeworld" idea is profoundly dubious even as an empirical, merely political, concept because it is inextricably entangled in this ideology of a modern "fact of pluralism". In important senses from the moment of its introduction into second-generation Critical Theory, but decidedly since the beginning of the nineteen-eighties, the Habermasian "lifeworld" has been conceived of primarily as an arena in which modern society can attempt to bring its supposed radical diversity to some degree of fragile and temporary unity. The very term "Verständigung" - "coming to an understanding" - so central to Habermas's "lifeworld" narrative, suggests in German this idea of a movement from plurality to compromise. As we noted at the beginning of this section, the concept is defined in the "Theory of Communicative Action" as providing a "formal scaffolding" specifically for the "ordering" of "problematic contexts of situations" faced by communicating social actors. [59] The presupposition is always that of a "rest position" of "plurality", never that of a "rest position" of "negative unity".

In fact, this is the main *political* respect in which Habermas's "paradigm shift" narrative appears to be perpetrating a degree of historiographical fraud on the classical Critical Theory

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[59] See Habermas, "Theory of Communicative Action", Volume One, p. 70.

which it claims to sublate. Here too, second-generation Critical Theory tends to falsely present what is specifically its own - essentially liberal - conception of the problem facing social philosophy as the determinative problem of Horkheimer's and Adorno's work as well. Habermas himself is the main offender here. Central, for instance, to Habermas's main programmatic statement of the need for a "paradigm shift in Critical Theory" - the "From Lukács to Adorno : Rationalization as Reification" chapter of the "Theory of Communicative Action" [60] - is the thesis that the social-philosophical project of Adorno and Horkheimer - even, indeed particularly, after 1940 - was closely comparable to the social-philosophical project of Max Weber. Habermas here identifies Adorno's and Horkheimer's social-philosophical problematic with Weber's in two respects. Firstly, in respect of Weber's decided secularism, an aspect of Habermas's claim which we will undertake to challenge in Chapter Four. Secondly, in respect of Weber's conviction of the given pluralism or "polytheism" of the modern condition, an aspect of Habermas's claim which we need to challenge in this chapter.

Adorno's and Horkheimer's analyses, in their texts of the 1940's, of the pathologies of the "dialectic of enlightenment" converge, claims Habermas, with Weber's reading of the crisis of modernity in his "Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions". Common to Weber's reading of modernity on the one hand and Adorno and Horkheimer's on the other is, it is argued in "From Lukács to Adorno", the following basic idea: "The more sharply 'the specific nature of each special sphere existing in the world' comes to the fore, the more powerless does the quest for salvation and wisdom become in the face of a restrengthened polytheism, a struggle among the gods - which, naturally, is now carried on by subjective reason under the banners of impersonal powers. Because it has been stripped of its mythological form, this new polytheism has lost its binding force and has left to fate - which is deprived of its socially integrative function - only its blindness - that is, the contingent character of a conflict among subjective powers that have become irrational. Even science stands on a precarious foundation, which is no securer than the subjective engagement of those who are resolved to let their lives be nailed to this cross." [61] This, claims Habermas, is the real meaning of the "thesis developed in the 'Dialectic of Enlightenment' that enlightenment reverts to myth." [62] What Adorno and Horkheimer mean by "myth", he claims,

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[60] See ibid. pps. 339-399.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.

is Weberian "polytheism".

This thesis, however, is, as our analysis of Adorno's attitude to the "polytheistic" Weberian conception defended by thinkers like Dahrendorf has made clear, simply untenable as regards the main thrust of the political philosophy of classical Critical Theory after 1940. Habermas can only make such an idea appear halfway plausible by concentrating almost exclusively, in "From Lukács to Adorno", on the views expressed in Horkheimer's 1947 lectures on "The Eclipse of Reason". In this text, the reader does indeed encounter passages entirely credulous of the liberal claim that our present social experience is characterized by a "polytheism" of values. Horkheimer writes here, for example, of how, in modernity, "the fundamental unity of all human convictions, (previously) rooted in a common Christian ontology, was gradually reduced to ruins, and those relativistic tendencies which had emerged clearly in such pioneers of bourgeois ideology as Montaigne but had been subsequently temporarily pushed into the background by rationalistic metaphysics asserted themselves victoriously in all areas of cultural activity." [63] But "The Eclipse of Reason" is in many respects an example, like the clumsy "Juliette" chapter of "The Dialectic of Enlightenment", of the survival into Horkheimer's work of the 1940's of his relatively primitive philosophical views of the early 1930's. It is decidedly not, as Habermas claims it to be, an adequate "summing up" of the "systematic content" of this latter, jointly Adornian and Horkheimerian, text. [64]

Adorno and Benjamin had since their very earliest writings defended an idea of present social reality implicitly quite scornful of the Weberian ideology of "polytheism". Already Benjamin's 1928 "Einbahnstrasse", for example, sketches out a sociology of modernity in which "value-" and "goal-pluralism" are simply not seen to be significant features of modern collective experience. One of Benjamin's aphoristic descriptions in this latter text of the political landscape of Weimar Germany includes the remark that "although people have, when they act, only their narrowest personal interest at heart, they are at the same time more than ever determined in their behaviour by the instinct of the mass...The heterogeneity of individual aims and purposes becomes a negligible one in the face of the homogeneity of the determining forces." [65] It was on the basis of empirical assumptions analogous to these

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[63] Horkheimer, "The Eclipse of Reason" (Oxford University Press, New York, 1947), p. 16.
[64] Habermas, "Theory of Communicative Action", Volume One, p. 347.
[65] Benjamin, "One Way Street", Verso 1979, p. 55.

Benjaminian ones that Adorno developed that particular "ideology-critical" stance toward liberal discourse on "the fact of pluralism" which found expression in his polemical exchanges with thinkers like Ralf Dahrendorf.

Now, Habermas himself is today on *this* essential issue entirely of that liberal, Dahrendorfian camp against which Adorno's "Ideologiekritik" had been directed - irrespective of any more journalistically-graspable political differences which might still divide him from Dahrendorf. A phrase he uses in "From Lukács to Adorno" - writing that an Hegelian Marxism like Lukács's is "incompatible with Weber's austere insight into the disintegration of objective reason" [66] - is a paradigm example of the liberal "Bre'er Rabbit-ism" which Adorno perceived behind Dahrendorf's denunciation of social-philosophical "totalization". Habermas's description of Weber's non-objectivistic world-view as an "austere insight" insinuates that the liberal Weber arrived at this world-view only through a great Nietzschean "self-overcoming", that the recognition of the passing away, in modernity, of any objective standard for political and moral judgements went, though imposed by the facts, thoroughly contrary to Weber's political heart's desire. Adorno would have been quick to point out the essential dishonesty of this insinuation. For the liberal, the cloud constituted by the obsolescence of objectivities like the "common Christian ontology" of pre-modernity has a very broad silver lining - insofar as the charge of obsolescence is easily, on this basis, extended to similarly monistic contemporary world-views like the Marxist. Indeed, the silver lining here is for the liberal so broad a one that no one sincerely addressing this matter should describe the passing away of "objective reason" as, from a liberal point of view, a "cloud" at all. The liberal does *not* in general experience the fact of the definitive pluralization of modern experience as the "austerity" which he claims, or is claimed, to experience it as. It is the liberal himself who has invented this "fact" of pluralization, in order to camouflage the real fact that to the typical modern subject categories like "radical freedom" and "decision" are quite as alien as they were to the pre-modern subject, that the "facts" and "values" by which we live are prescribed to us at every juncture by the mechanism of a false totality still fully comprehensible in monistic, objective terms. The situation pointed to by classical Critical Theory's talk of "enlightenment's reversion to myth" is in fact this real situation of an as it were continuing *mono*theism - the universal service rendered even by modern subjects to a "false whole", the "mirror-image" of whose absolute negativity is provided by the totalized positivity of the Hegelian Absolute Spirit - and

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[66] "Theory of Communicative Action", Volume One, p. 364.

not at all, as Habermas claims, a situation of Weberian "polytheism".

Again, those of Habermas's contemporaries who have maintained a greater distance from the Critical-Theoretical tradition seem to be able clearly to recognize what Habermas fails, or refuses, to recognize in the "Theory of Communicative Action". Herbert Schnädelbach - a colleague of Habermas's, and a student of Adorno's, at the Frankfurt Institute in the mid-1950's - has made the point - at the 1983 "Adorno Conference" held at this same university - that "immediate commerce" with Adorno's texts is not possible for the current German academic generation because precisely the shift in "problem" which we have just described has occurred, or at least been perceived to have occurred, between Adorno's day and the present. "*Our* problem," Schnädelbach stated on this occasion, "is...the undifferentiated celebration of the multiple, along with irrationalism." The "fronts on which Critical Theory once sought to take its stand", however, were, he claimed, "quite different" : Adorno's and Horkheimer's "problem" was not the Weberian one of how to rationally limit the proliferation of the "relative" or "multiple" but rather that of how conscientiously to conceive of multiplicity at all in the face of an overwhelming real negative unity. [67] Schnädelbach, of course, is arguably more "Habermasian" than Habermas himself, insofar as he clearly holds Adorno and Horkheimer to have been radically *mistaken* in so posing the problem of political modernity. His blunt rejection of Adorno's and Horkheimer's social-philosophical position involves, however, a greater respect for this position's philological identity than does Habermas's partial acceptance of it in subtly distorted form.

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If, however, Habermas's arguments for the immanent efficacy in the modern social field of an autonomous logic of dialogue and normative motivation fail - or are open, at least, to serious objection - at both the transcendental and empirical levels, we appear to be left in the position which Habermas himself understands as the position of later classical Critical Theory and which he has argued, not unconvincingly, to be untenable for any social philosophy worthy of the name. We appear to arrive, that is, at a completely naturalistic, a completely "dehumanized", conception of social reality. Was this position really that of later classical Critical Theory ? Is it really an untenable one? Let us take up again the thread of the argument about naturalism and philosophy which introduced the discussion of this chapter : the

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[67] See Schnädelbach, "Dialektik als Vernunftkritik", in "Adorno Konferenz 1983" (Suhrkamp, 1983).

argument of Dieter Henrich's "Twelve Theses Against Jürgen Habermas".

In Henrich's view, as we have seen, the relation of constant antagonistic continuity and symbiosis between transcendentalism and naturalism leaves the as it were "naturalistic transcendentalism" of a system like Habermas's high and dry as philosophically neither fish nor fowl. The only viable philosophical counterweight to the pressure of naturalism even in modernity, Henrich claims, has proven to be *some* form of recourse to metaphysics in the sense of a higher, non-reductionist synthesis of competing discourses, "validity-claims" or "modes of comprehension". Where there has been opposed to the pressure of naturalism the mere *prima facie* fact of these discourses supposed historical differentiation and "autonomization", and the pious wish to "institutionalize" these historical developments in the "lifeworld", philosophy has degenerated into the kind of obfuscation or trivialization which we have recognized in the Habermasian arguments examined throughout this chapter. Indeed, it is plainly the case, as we have also repeatedly noted throughout this part of the study, that such a philosophical programme constitutes *no* opposition to the pressure of naturalism at all. The philosopher who excludes *a priori* any recourse to metaphysics has no choice but to also exclude from his thought the very *recognition* of the force of naturalist theses - of, that is, the force of Nature in its various mediated and immediate forms. As Henrich puts it : "The circumstance that Habermas represses, in all his philosophical analyses, the problem of that reversed shadow-image of modern metaphysics, naturalism, shows in its true light the apparent ease with which he dismisses modern metaphysics itself as a topic of rational discussion. His rejection of metaphysics stands in a complementary relation to his repression of the problem of naturalism." [68]

Were then - such is the implication of Henrich's argument - Habermas truly to engage with those naturalistic positions in contemporary analytical philosophy which stand in an antagonistic continuity with the thought of the "Goethezeit" - or, we might add in the light of our discussion, with those Marxist and behaviourist positions in social theory the rumours of the demise of which have been greatly exaggerated - he would be forced to mobilize against them precisely the kind of philosophical themes which most occupied this "Goethezeit" philosophy : the metaphysical theme of the Absolute itself, but also that theme which our discussion in Chapter One has revealed to be inextricably linked to that of the Absolute, namely autonomous *subjectivity*. This because, if no enduring distinction can be drawn

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68 Henrich, "Konzepte", p. 26.

between the communicative and the merely natural - and both our discussions in this part of the study and Henrich's points in his "Twelve Theses" suggest that it cannot, or at least that Habermas has not succeeded in drawing it - then the burden of foundation within the composite concept "communicating subject" falls decidedly upon the element of *subjectivity*. What distinguishes communicative interaction from mere physicalistically-reducible behaviour must be something inherent in the subject *qua* subject. As Henrich writes : "If it is true that subjectivity can only develop where human beings are addressed as human beings, it is nevertheless also true that a conversation which deserves the name can only develop where the participants in it are something more than the 'dramaturges' and 'enunciators' of basic semantic theory and of the theory of communicative action. One must be capable of holding to *oneself* and of meditating upon *oneself* in order to be also capable of speaking, as friend, a word to the other...Two hundred years ago, Herder objected to the fledgling philosophy of communion and community that any love which claimed to be more than mere vain exuberance had to presuppose the 'self-hood', the 'being-selves', of the loving subjects. Hegel no less than Hölderlin accepted and concurred in this critique, and from that point on their thinking was applied to the task of conceiving of the freedom of the individual in some non-reductive unity with the encompassing unity of life, including political life. Only in this way, they knew, could the irrescindable experiences of modernity be reconciled with the hope of a free but non-instrumental human community. But they recognized also that this reconciliation was not possible without recourse to the metaphysical. Whoever does not recognize this, steps back into the field of gravitation of Aristotelian politics, which, as is well known, was also entirely disconnected from reliance on the metaphysical." [69]

Henrich here identifies Habermas, just as we have, as a thinker standing firmly within the Aristotelian tradition, even if he does not go on to identify this latter entirely with the tradition of Hegel. Henrich has, in fact, quite a different conception of Hegel's philosophy and of its world-historical significance than the one propounded in this study. Like Robert Pippin, whose defence of Hegel against Habermas's reduction of him to a mere "consciousness-philosopher" we have mentioned in Chapter One, Henrich tends to conceive of Hegel's philosophy of the Absolute as more continuous with the philosophy of the Absolute in its Kantian form than can be conceded within the context of the argument of the present study, with its stress on the "immanentism / transcendentism" split. Henrich, then, does not defend a

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[69] Ibid. pps. 39-40.

"Hegelian" position in the sense in which we have been using the term here. This in fact becomes clear when we approach the at this point very pertinent question of how exactly "metaphysics" is supposed to offer egress from the philosophical *cul de sac* of thoroughgoing naturalism.

Henrich has suggested, as we ourselves had already suggested in Chapters One and Two of this study, that the price to be paid for theorizing subjectivity as a mere derivation from the intersubjective linguistic practices of a "lifeworld" must be an unwarranted reliance on a strand of modern philosophy which, emerging in an already convincedly "compatibilistic" philosophical culture, was "immunized" against - or rather, better put, simply insensitive to - that pressure of naturalism, and its social-theoretical cognates, which in fact cannot with impunity be ignored. What we have not yet observed, however, is that Habermas himself can retort to these objections that Henrich's own position presents a parallel structure to the one which he censures. Habermas did in fact reply to Henrich's critique with the essay "Metaphysics After Kant". The defence which he offers here against Henrich's main charge that his philosophy does not engage with the problem of naturalism is indeed a weak one, amounting to no more than a reiteration of his disinterest in the materialist forms of current analytical philosophy and a reiteration also of precisely that vague idea of the "metaphysical" which Henrich's essay had been a demand that he clarify : "Frankly, analytic materialism never impressed me very much - precisely because it is a metaphysical position, by which I mean one that sticks to what is universal when the real issue is *carrying through* an abstractly posed programme with scientific means." [70]

Habermas does, however, implicitly pose a counter-question to Henrich which appears eminently germane - and which is, indeed, the counter-question with which this our own study will at this point have lengthily to engage. What is more, this counter-question in a sense brings Henrich's position - which in the first instance clearly differs from the one argued for here inasmuch as it involves distinguishing between Habermas's "Aristotelianism" and a certain non-"Aristotelian" Hegelianism - back into line with our own. Even if Henrich characterizes Habermas's position in what from our point of view are "weltanschauliche" hybrid terms, Habermas in his turn situates Henrich's by reference solely to doctrines classifiable unequivocally in the "verticalist", the anti-Hegelian, tradition of subject-philosophy.

Habermas points out that the pre-communicative "self-hood" which Henrich claims to

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[70] Habermas, "Post-Metaphysical Thinking", p. 21.

have to precede and ground any communication "deserving of the name" is not just of a subjective but also of an absolute - and indeed of a transcendently, "theologically" absolute - nature. In a rare reference to the thought of Kierkegaard, Habermas recounts how the Henrichian philosopher of subjectivity is obliged to move from the empirical to the metaphysical idea of individuality : "First : the self is only accessible in self-consciousness. Since, then, it is impossible to go behind this self-relation in reflection, the self of subjectivity is only the relation that relates itself to itself. Second : such a relation, which relates itself to itself as to the self in the sense just indicated, must either have posited itself or have been posited by something else. Kierkegaard regards the first alternative...as untenable and therefore turns immediately to the second. The self of the existing human is this sort of derived, posited relation and therewith one that, by relating itself to itself, relates itself to something other. This other that precedes the self of self-consciousness is, for Kierkegaard, the Christian God of redemption, while for Henrich it is the pre-reflexively familiar anonym of conscious life, which is open to Buddhistic as well as Platonistic interpretations. Both interpretations refer to a religious dimension and thereby to a language that may be derived from the old metaphysics but also transcends the modern position of consciousness." [71]

Henrich's own position, then - and, insofar as Henrich's critique of Habermas has stood almost as a synopsis of the whole argument of this part of our study, our position too - represents in a sense a kind of mirror image of Habermas's. Just as the price to be paid for Habermas's derivation of the subject from intersubjectivity is a philosophically deeply questionable non-recognition of the pressure of naturalism, the price to be paid for Henrich's conception of subjectivity as a *non-* derived principle which can somehow weather the storm of naturalist and behaviourist analysis is recourse to an at least problematical religious or Platonic concept of "the Absolute". The readers of this study are, of course, long since familiar with this philosophical position on the subject and its relation to Nature. It is not only the Kantian position which we reviewed, on a rather non-specific level, in Chapter One. It is, more specifically, that position developed in Adorno's "Elements of Antisemitism" which we discussed in Chapter Two. Adorno too, it will be remembered, claimed, in the fourth of the important "theses" which compose this section of the "Dialectic of Enlightenment", that that Judaic God who "as Mind, confronts Nature as its opposite principle...does not simply

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[71] Ibid. p. 25

substitute Himself for Nature's blind cycles, but can rather liberate from these." [72]

We have seen in Chapter One how this concept of the Absolute, and of the subject as in key respects a function of the Absolute, indeed "transcends the modern position of consciousness" in terms of which Habermas usually characterizes that "subject-philosophy" which is the philosophy of communication's primary competitor in the provision of a basic philosophical framework for Critical Theory. But we have not yet examined in any detail the real nature and status of this metaphysical foundation of the concept of the subject which classical Critical Theory implicitly opposes to any attempt to ground radical social critique in the intersubjectivity of a "lifeworld". We have not expanded either upon Kant's conception of practical subjectivity as a transcendent "Idea of Reason" or upon Adorno's conception of a transcendent God as the key to all human transcendence of the blind, repetitive cycles of Nature. I want now, in Chapter Four of this study, to turn to examine this problem of as it were "subjectifying" transcendence which is essentially complementary to the problem of "*de*subjectifying" myth. I want, that is, to turn to examine the instance of the "counter-mythical" and counter-*natural* - ultimately also the "counter-ideological" - in classical Critical Theory. As we shall see, however, we will not at this point be *leaving myth behind us* in any sense comparable to Habermas's conviction that, with modernity, myth is simply transcended. This is because the classical Critical-Theoretical moment of "counter-myth", the subject-constituting Absolute, is plainly itself a - functionally indispensable - myth.

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[72] Adorno and Horkheimer, "Dialectic of Enlightenment", pps. 176-77.

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The mobilization in classical Critical Theory of the idea of transcendence or of the Absolute amounts to the mobilization of a "myth" inasmuch as this idea is mobilized in classical Critical Theory purely *negativistically* . Transcendence, the Absolute, is for classical Critical Theory *what the immanent is not* , and this alone. We shall trace this idea out in detail below. For the moment, however, it must be noted that the fact that the members of the first generation of Critical Theory subscribed only to such a purely negativistic conception of transcendence has made it easy for the members of the second and third generations of Critical Theory to portray their predecessors as, like they themselves, thoroughgoing "modern" immanentists. To portray, that is, the actually in key respects Kantian philosophers Adorno and Horkheimer as basically Hegelian philosophers and thereby to render the content of their philosophy easily sublatable into the new, equally Hegelian-immanentistic, "paradigm".

The *locus classicus* of this misportrayal of Kantianism as Hegelianism we have already noted in Chapter Three to be Habermas's "From Lukács to Adorno : Rationalization as Reification", where the social theory of Adorno and Horkheimer is claimed to have been in essence a Marxist variation on Weberianism. In the context of Chapter Three, however, where our discussion had focussed on the problems of naturalism and non-naturalism in social philosophy, we found ourselves obliged to take issue only with the sub-claim inherent in this claim to the effect that Adorno and Horkheimer were, like Weber, concerned to deal theoretically with the supposed "fact of pluralism" characterizing the modern social field. To this idea, we objected that "pluralism" was simply not recognized as a "fact" at all by classical Critical Theory. Rather, classical Critical Theory's "problem" was plainly the "fact of monism", the given "pure naturality" of modern social experience.

Inseparably linked to Habermas's identification of classical Critical Theory with Weberianism in this respect, however, is his identification of these two doctrines in a respect which, in Chapter Three, we were not yet in a position to discuss. The essential "pluralization" of modern experience was, of course, in Weber's work claimed to be causally linked to this experience's definitive secularization. Habermas, in "From Lukács to Adorno", claims Adorno and Horkheimer to have been Weberian also in this sense. He argues that Adorno and

Horkheimer were engaged in the conceptualization of the moral and political condition of Man in a definitively secularized world in which the archaic claim to a knowledge of theological or metaphysical truth as the unity of "the true, the good and the beautiful" had necessarily and definitively given way to a pattern of separate discourses on what is true, what is good and what is beautiful - that they were engaged, in short, in the conceptualization of a "modern" world in just Weber's sense : the sense of a *secularized* world which has definitively *lost* the possibility of a recourse to the idea of transcendence.

To this, of course, is appended, in "From Lukács to Adorno", all the rest of the "paradigm shift" argument. Particularly after 1940, claims Habermas, Adorno and Horkheimer began conspicuously to make the same sort of basic theoretical errors as had Weber - those errors as to the relative importance of cognitive-instrumental and communicative-practical rationalities in the modern world to which thinkers raised in the tradition of the philosophy of consciousness are prone - and for this reason their post-1940 work began to display a "Kulturpessimismus" comparable to but even more intense than Weber's, a conviction that modern life essentially involved a radical loss of both "freedom" and "meaning". But Adorno and Horkheimer, claims Habermas, hereby failed, like Weber, to see that, even if the archaic foundation of "freedom" and "meaning", of "practical reason", in some transcendent and unitary principle of the Highest Good was now without efficacy in human experience, this did not mean that value itself had fled from the modern social world. Again, it had to be recognized that the institutionalization of "practical reason" in the form of the everyday communicative practices of the "lifeworld" could adequately substitute for this vanished transcendent foundation. But insight into this fact was only possible where social scientists in the tradition of Adorno and Horkheimer consented to perform a "paradigm shift" and to make the communicative practices of the "lifeworld" the point of orientation for their investigations.

Here I want to address the extremely general claim - a claim, indeed, so general that it hardly at first occurs to one that it might be questioned at all - that Adorno's and Horkheimer's social-philosophical project, in its mature post-1940 form, was in this respect even *comparable* to Weber's, and to Habermas's own. I want, that is, to question whether Adorno and Horkheimer *were* trying to conceptualize that definitively secularized human condition which is certainly the assumed *explanandum* of both Weber's and Habermas's bodies of work. Again, Habermas chooses, with his concentration in "From Lukács to Adorno" on Horkheimer's "Eclipse of Reason", a documentary basis which makes it more difficult to

challenge his secularist reading of classical Critical Theory than would have been the case had the text at the centre of discussion been one in which Adorno had set the philosophical tone, such as the "Minima Moralia" or even the "Dialectic of Enlightenment". Unlike in the case of the issue of classical Critical-Theoretical "pluralism", however, even this relatively intellectually heavy-footed Horkheimerian text here provides ample evidence that Habermas's reading is an incorrect one.

One of the key elements of Habermas's characterization of Horkheimer and Adorno as social-philosophical Weberians, for example, is his claim that "(Horkheimer) agrees with Weber that the split between theoretical and practical reason, the splitting up of rationality into the validity aspects of truth, normative rightness and authenticity or sincerity cannot be undone by having recourse - however dialectical or materialistic - to the lost totality, to the whole of what is" [1]. He makes particularly much of Horkheimer's rejection, in the "Eclipse of Reason", of the Neo-Thomist philosophy of the "Absolute" [2], claiming that this rejection symbolizes classical Critical Theory's rejection of "any attempt to link up with Plato and Aristotle so as to renew the ontological claim of philosophy to comprehend the world as a whole..." [3]

On the basis of the whole preceding argument of this study, we might already suspect that these claims represent a serious misreading of Horkheimer's position in the "Eclipse of Reason" as regards the idea of the "Absolute", the idea of a perspective on the "world as a whole". We have claimed throughout that this idea, far from being presupposed by classical Critical Theory to be no longer philosophically viable, in fact stood at the very centre of classical Critical-Theoretical thought. And indeed Horkheimer's text contains numerous passages - we shall review them shortly - in which its author makes plain his *refusal* to renounce the ideal of philosophical thought as a thought about "the whole of what is" even in the midst of a modernity which, on Weberian terms, renders such a thought "obsolete". Moreover Horkheimer here, as our discussions above might have led us to expect, tends to invoke this idea of a philosophical "Absolute" not in its quasi-secularized - because immanent - Hegelian form, but in its more explicitly theological - because transcendent - Kantian form.

This in fact is one possible basis for Habermas's misunderstanding - be it wilful or

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[1] "Theory of Communicative Action" Vol. 1, p. 376
[2] See "Eclipse of Reason" pps. 62-91.
[3] "Theory of Communicative Action", Vol. One. p. 374.

otherwise - of classical Critical Theory's position. Habermas constantly stresses throughout Chapter Four of the "Theory of Communicative Action" that Horkheimer and Adorno came after 1940 to concur with Weber - and against Lukács - that the Hegelian ideal of "objective reason" could not be "reassembled", that it was not possible to "put back together again metaphysically the moments of reason that separated out in the modern development of the spirit - the different aspects of validity : the true, the good and the beautiful." [4] Insofar as it registers the movement in Critical Theory after 1940 away from Hegel, this description of Horkheimer's and Adorno's developing position indeed contains a modicum of truth. What it fails to register, however - and this, as we have seen, is the heart of the matter - is that the Critical-Theoretical move away from Hegel after 1940 was, in its most essential respects, not a move from an objective idealist immanentism toward a post-metaphysical immanentism - which could indeed not in the end but have come to coincide with Weber's position of secular pluralism - but rather a move from objective idealist immanentism toward *transcendentism* .

The grounds for misunderstanding are all the greater here because both of these diametrically opposed developments might, as we have also seen, be validly described as movements away from Hegel "towards Kant". Habermas could doubtless have described that recognition of the growing modern inaccessibility of "objective reason" which he reads out of Horkheimer's "Eclipse of Reason" in terms of a grudging acceptance on Horkheimer's part of the necessity, in modernity, for the social theorist to adopt a "Kantian" position. By this, he would have meant that Horkheimer was coming, in the "Eclipse of Reason", to accept that Kant's sober Enlightenment registration of the fact of modernity - the fact of the non-constitutive status of all ideas extending beyond the realm of experience and of the disintegration of once-unitary metaphysical truth into the separate and articulated "three truths" of the three "Critiques" - could not be reversed or sublated by any Romantically-inspired "philosophy of unity". As we shall see in a moment, however, the "Eclipse of Reason" also provides evidence enough of a movement of Critical Theory, circa 1940, "towards Kant" in quite another sense. This is a move towards the Kant whom we have noted above to have been the presiding spirit over the intellectual formation of both Benjamin and Adorno, and this Kant is not the Enlightenment "registrar of modernity" evoked by the account just given. Almost on the contrary, this Kant, as we have come to realize gradually throughout the course of this study, is a much subtler and more telling analyst of the negative

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[4] Ibid.

moment in all "enlightenment" than is Hegel or any other member of the Romantic and post-Romantic generations, including Marx. *Pace* the very Anglo-Saxon conception of the nature of the critical philosophy which Habermas has adopted, this Kant neither "crushes" the ideas of transcendence and the Absolute - "the ontological claim to comprehend the world as a whole" - nor divides reason neatly into three "validity-spheres" correspondent to the three "Critiques". And in refusing to do either, he is perhaps the greatest example of a "Critical Theorist" also in Horkheimer's sense, or at least in the sense which Horkheimer came to ascribe to this term toward the end of his life : a thinker who grounds a philosophy of Man's negative social condition in the theological idea of transcendence.

The "Eclipse of Reason" provides many indications that, if Horkheimer had abandoned by 1940 the idea of "objective reason", of the "Absolute", as Hegel had conceived of it, he had begun to replace it not with a Weberian secularism but with another idea of the "Absolute", in a more theological, Kantian form. The few values and practices, for example, which Horkheimer sets, in his profoundly pessimistic description of modern social life, partly outside the purview of "subjective reason" he invariably notes to have their foundations in that indeed highly compromised idea of transcendence which remains today accessible to the individual subject. Of the pleasure of tending a garden, he writes that "it is rooted in the old times when gardens belonged to the gods and were cultivated for their sake" [5] ; of the commercially-exploitable "good mood", he writes that "it can vanish along with all other stirrings of emotion as soon as we have lost the last trace of the memory that this 'good mood' was once connected with the idea of divinity" [6] ; and he places us as regards key moral values like "the dignity of Man" before a *choice* : they "either imply a dialectical progress in which the idea of a divine law is preserved and transcended or they become empty words, which reveal their emptiness as soon as someone enquires about their specific meaning." [7]

Admittedly, the references to the divine and the transcendent in these passages occur always only as *contrasts* functional to the description of our present godless immanence and its purely "subjective reason". This characteristic of his discourse, however, is far from placing Horkheimer outside the tradition of theology and within the intellectual camp of axiomatic secularists like Weber and Habermas. The determination of the divine solely in

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[5] Horkheimer, "Eclipse of Reason", p. 36.
[6] Ibid. p. 39.
[7] Ibid. p. 32.

terms of what the secular is not is, of course, a long-established form of religious discourse. Within Critical Theory at this time, it is practiced much more skillfully and subtly by Adorno, as in the 1945 entry in the "Minima Moralia" which states that "the thing would be not to speak of the self as any kind of ontological ground but rather to speak of it at most only theologically, in the name of its being an image of God." [8] Adorno here mobilizes theological discourse solely in order *not* to have to speak of "selfhood" in any way that would go to legitimate the false self-hood of the existing world : "whoever," he adds immediately, "holds to the idea of the self and dispenses with theological concepts is contributing to the justification of the devilishly positive, of naked interest". But a discourse like this one, in which "theological concepts" have an indispensable, if purely negative, function can certainly not be described as an axiomatically secular discourse and compared with Weber's unequivocally post-theological view of the world.

We encounter this "negative-theological" attitude toward ideas like the "Absolute" in Horkheimer's "Eclipse of Reason", too. Horkheimer plainly here still holds to the essentially non-Weberian, the Kantian, idea of a perspective on "the whole of what is", but he holds to it in Adornian fashion - holds to it, that is, as true by virtue of its being declared false by the false. For instance, in the context of his discussion of perverted "mimesis" in the "Revolt of Nature" chapter of this book, Horkheimer has occasion to speak of the potentially destructive force of laughter. He cites first Hugo's "L'Homme Qui Rit" and then the following passage from one Max Eastman : "One of our primary virtues is that we feel like laughing when we hear people talk about such things as 'the Absolute'. Laughter in fact plays for us the role which this 'Absolute' has played in Germany." Horkheimer's comment on this is that it represents an instance of the historical reversal of the function of materialist scepticism. In the eighteenth century and earlier, such mockery of the idea of transcendence had functioned critically and progressively, inasmuch as the *status quo* of early and pre-modernity had still rested largely on an ideologically-mobilized idea of a "beyond" contrasted with the "here-below". Today, however, claims Horkheimer, "the object of such laughter is no longer the conforming crowd, but rather the outsider who still dares to think autonomously." [9] In late modernity, claims Horkheimer here, the idea of absolute transcendence is not only still - albeit with difficulty and at the price of constant subtle persecution - accessible to the subject, but is a key factor in

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[8] Adorno, "Minima Moralia", p. 154.

[9] Horkheimer, "The Eclipse of Reason", pps. 117-18.

rendering this subject a *critical* subject, a subject capable of offering resistance to "the bad existing". Horkheimer contradicts Charles Beard's declaration that Eastman's position is exemplary of "the American spirit" by citing - and the context leaves no doubt but that this is a profoundly approving citation - the transcendentalist Emerson's words : "In perceiving without disguise the nature of justice and truth, we also experience the difference between the absolute and the relative. We seize this absolute. We exist as it were for the first time." [10]

Admittedly, numerous other passages could be quoted from the "Eclipse of Reason" in which the idea that one and the same philosophical thesis can fulfill different historical functions is mobilized to quite the opposite effect. Horkheimer also makes again and again in this text the orthodox Marxist point that religious and metaphysical doctrines tend to be used even in later modernity to bolster up the existing order and that the Critical Theorist must therefore ruthlessly reject them. It is such passages that Habermas cites in "From Lukács to Adorno" in support of his claim that Horkheimer held as unequivocally as did Weber to the position that transcendent and unitary metaphysical truth was irreversibly lost to modernity. But in fact, Horkheimer in this text is anything but unequivocal. He constantly shifts his position, describing the idea of transcendence in one passage as a mere ideological trick and in another passage suggesting this idea to be the key to any progress beyond ideology.

This extreme tension, indeed contradiction, in Horkheimer's thought can doubtless quite fairly be put down largely to his personal intellectual history. Despite his having selected the 1947 "Eclipse of Reason" as the almost exclusive textual basis for his analysis of post-1940 Critical Theory in the "Theory of Communicative Action", Habermas has elsewhere recognized that the period 1940-50 was a period of transition and profound uncertainty in Horkheimer's intellectual development. In a paper on this development originally published in Germany in 1986, for instance, Habermas speaks, in a striking and rather disturbing turn of phrase, of Walter Benjamin's ideas having begun to become "virulent" in Horkheimer's thinking only after 1940. [11] The arguments of the "Eclipse of Reason", and of all of Horkheimer's texts of the 1940-50 period, do indeed sometimes recall the struggles of a

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[10] Ibid. p. 118.

[11] See Habermas, "Bemerkungen zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des Horkheimerschen Werkes" in "Max Horkheimer Heute : Werk und Wirkung", Schmidt and Altwicker (eds.), Fischer, 1986, p. 169 : "(Adorno) hatte von Anbeginn Benjaminsche Motive aufgegriffen, die bei Horkheimer erst Anfang der 40er Jahre, unter dem Druck politischer Erfahrungen, virulent wurden." It is interesting to note that, in the English translation of this text, the shocking term "virulent" vanishes and the sentence becomes the innocuous "for Horkheimer, these (Benjaminian motifs) became *significant* only after 1940." (See "On Max Horkheimer : New Perspectives", Benhabib, Bonss and McCole (eds.), MIT Press, 1993, p. 55.

metabolism to assimilate a foreign body which initially takes the guise of a poison or disease and only gradually proves beneficently assimilable into the metabolism's own system. Horkheimer was surely personally uncertain in this period whether such components of the European intellectual tradition as the idea of a transcendent Absolute were, as the orthodox and Hegelian Marxist culture which had moulded his thought throughout the 1920's and early 30's had taught him, regressive, or, as the "theological materialism" with which he became thanks to Benjamin and Adorno more and more conversant throughout the period 1935-45, progressive ideas.

The equivocation in the "Eclipse of Reason" as to the inevitable "secularity" - both de facto and de jure - of the modern social field and of the Critical Theorist's position within it, however, is surely not just a function of Horkheimer's personal intellectual ambivalence at this point. As we have long since recognized in this study, Classical Critical Theory throughout and in almost all its forms - Benjaminian, Adornian and post-war Horkheimerian, if not, as we have noted, Marcusan - adopted a stance toward the idea of the transcendent Absolute which the benevolent commentator, at least, would describe as "dialectical". On the one hand, even in the more explicitly theological thinker Adorno's work we encounter repeated warnings as to the ideological, "transfiguring" function of metaphysical and religious discourse, apparent adherences to the famous Heinian and Freudian position : "den Himmel überlassen wir, den Engeln und den Spatzen" - and implicitly, indeed, adherences on the Heinian grounds that all those discoursing on the transcendent "tranken heimlich Wein, und predigten öffentlich Wasser." On the other hand, post-1940 Critical Theory is characterized by a growing recognition that at the present juncture critical social philosophy stands so much in need of the idea of transcendence that the danger of such an idea's contributing to a culture of political "quietism" cannot be treated, as it is in orthodox Marxism, as the decisive factor.

I believe we can say that already at the time of the "Eclipse of Reason", the balance of Horkheimer's thought had begun to tip in the direction of a decided non-secularism. Take, for example, the "Conflicting Panaceas" chapter of this book, in which Horkheimer takes issue with Neo-Thomism on the one hand and positivism on the other as proposed solutions to the crisis of Man's present historical condition. Habermas, in "From Lukács to Adorno", presents the argument of this chapter as an even-handed rejection in principle both of transcendentism and of an exclusively naturalistic, a positivist, approach to immanence. He interprets the critique of Neo-Thomism, as we have noted, as a critique of "*any* attempt to link

up with Plato or Aristotle so as to renew the ontological claim of philosophy to understand the world as a whole". Habermas hereby succeeds in portraying Horkheimer's position in the "Eclipse of Reason" as a crude, consciousness-philosophical prefiguration of the kind of Critical-Theoretical position which Habermas himself has developed since Horkheimer's death - an exposure of what Karl-Otto Apel has called the "relation of complementarity" in modern philosophy between mystical-existentialist and naturalistic-scientistic philosophical doctrines.[12] Close examination of the conclusions which Horkheimer actually arrives at in this chapter of the "Eclipse of Reason", however, calls Habermas's reading of the text seriously into question.

The beginning of the penultimate paragraph of the "Conflicting Panaceas" chapter reads : "The greatest fault of Thomism is not peculiar to its modern version. It can rather be traced back to Thomas Aquinas himself, indeed to Aristotle. This fault consists in the equation of truth and goodness with reality (Wirklichkeit). Both the positivists and the Thomists appear to be of the opinion that the adjustment and adaptation of human beings to that which they both call 'reality' would provide a way out of the cultural dead-end in which we presently find ourselves. The critical analysis of this sort of conformism would probably reveal the common basis of the two schools of thought : both accept as the model for human behaviour an order of things in which success and failure - be this in the secular world or in the world to come - plays an essential role. One could say that this dubious principle of always pushing human beings to adapt to that which theory recognizes as reality is a basic cause of our present spiritual and intellectual decay..." [13]

This passage reveals the line by which classical Critical Theory marks itself off from other theories of the social to be a line drawn - even in the "Eclipse of Reason" - not, as would have been the case had classical Critical Theory really been the Weberian theory which Habermas claims it to be, between "archaic" metaphysics and "modern" immanentism *tout court*, but rather between *certain* forms of "archaic" metaphysics *along with* certain "modern" immanentisms on the one hand and *certain other* forms of "archaic" metaphysics *along with* certain other "modern" immanentisms on the other. We must note a sharp recession here of that typically Marxist insistence on the thoroughly historical nature of all cultural phenomena which Horkheimer, elsewhere in the "Eclipse of Reason", seems to make constitutive of his

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[12] See Karl-Otto Apel, "Toward A Transformation of Philosophy" (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), passim.

[13] "Eclipse of Reason", p. 90.

philosophical approach. Where, in other passages, the point is frequently made that philosophical positions like theism and scepticism can completely reverse their social meaning and function - become false where they were true and true where they were false - within the space of two or three centuries, this passage suggests a continuity of philosophical error, and thus implicitly also one of philosophical truth, across two and a half millennia, from Aristotle to twentieth century Neo-Thomism. These continuities, moreover, are not the narrow ones existing between epigones of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas on the one hand and non-Aristotelian, non-Thomist philosophical schools on the other. The basic characterization of that millennial "fault" which Critical Theory here repudiates - adherence to the idea that truth and goodness are identical with the real - plainly situates within the continuity of error such an independent and influential "progressive" thinker as Hegel and within the continuity of truth such explicitly religious and metaphysical thinkers as Kierkegaard and Schopenhauer. Indeed, the specification that the fault of Neo-Thomism, ultimately identical with that of positivism, stretches "back to *Aristotle* " suggests a link to that most time-honoured of *intra*-metaphysical debates, the debate between Aristotelianism and Platonism . This, of course, has been our thesis throughout.

We have all the more reason to interpret Horkheimer's rejection of a "metaphysical / positivist" strain in Western thought running "back to Aristotle" in these - rather than in Habermas's Weberian - terms [14] as, in the years after the publication of the "Eclipse of Reason", this stance on the necessity to Critical Theory of a moment of absolute transcendence began to play a role in Horkheimer's work which was now, without any ambiguity, central. There is no question but that Horkheimer's work from the mid-nineteen-fifties onwards makes theology, precisely in its unique capacity to provide a perspective on "the whole" *as* a "whole" - as, that is, a "whole" situated and as it were "limited" - a constituent element of Critical Theory. Horkheimer, indeed, came increasingly to identify the "situation" of the existing world characteristic of Marxist thought with the "situation" of this same world - albeit with less stress on the historical moment in the predicate "existing" - to be found in religious discourse. In his 1966 essay "Religion and Philosophy", for example, he writes of how "relativization of the existing - be it as a 'finite' as in Christianity or as 'human prehistory' as

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[14] Again, of course, the confused and inconsistent exposition of the "Eclipse of Reason" can be made to provide counter-examples, passages suggestive of Horkheimer's having entirely failed to draw any distinction between Platonic and Aristotelian metaphysics. See, for example, p. 64 : "Despite all their differences, both Plato and the positivists are of the opinion that the way to rescue Mankind is to subject it to the rules and methods of scientific reason."

in Marxism - appears as nothing but a Romantic symptom in our administered world." [15] And in the 1963 essay on "Theism and Atheism", he had pointed out that, if the danger of theism was that its talk of "eternal justice" could serve as a pretext for temporal injustice, the correspondent danger of atheism was that it could cut off all possibility of the thought of a "quite Other" than the existing. [16]

Habermas's characterization, then, of post-1940 classical Critical Theory as a project, comparable to Weber's and his own, of conceptualizing the condition of Man in a definitively secularized and post-metaphysical social world seems to have to be rejected. The few passages from texts other than the "Eclipse of Reason" which he cites in support of his "Weberian" interpretation of his predecessors' thought also let him down. For example, Habermas quotes early on in the "From Lukács to Adorno" chapter the following passage from the "Dialectic of Enlightenment" : "Faith is a privative concept ; it is destroyed as faith if it does not constantly accentuate its opposition to knowledge or its agreement with it. As it remains dependent on the limitation of knowledge, it is itself limited. The attempt made within Protestantism to find the transcendent principle of truth - without which faith cannot endure - directly in the word itself, as in the earlier times, and to give back to the word its symbolic power, was paid for with obedience to the word...As faith remains unquestioningly bound to knowledge, as friend or as foe, it perpetuates the separation in the very struggle to overcome it. Its fanaticism is the mark of its untruth, the objective admission that whoever *merely* believes, by that very fact no longer believes." [17]

For Habermas, this indicates that Horkheimer shared with the most contemporary forms of liberalism the belief that religious faith is today indeed a "private matter" [18] , that convictions derived from theology cannot be allowed to play any role in the *public* sphere of a modern society. Again, however, such a conclusion can only be based on an extremely *selective* reading of the arguments of Critical Theory in the 1940-50 period. Both the "Dialectic of Enlightenment" and the "Eclipse of Reason" also contain passages which clearly

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[15] See Horkheimer, "Zur Kritik der Instrumentellen Vernunft" (Fischer Wissenschaft, 1967), p. 238.

[16] See Horkheimer, "The Critique of Instrumental Reason" (Seabury Press, New York, 1974) p. 50.

[17] "Theory of Communicative Action", Volume One, p. 348, cited from "Dialectic of Enlightenment" p. 23.

[18] It is significant that Habermas actually mis-cites, in the German text of the "Theory of Communicative Action", Adorno's and Horkheimer's phrase "faith is a *privative* concept" ("Glaube ist ein *privativer* Begriff") as "faith is a *private* concept" ("der Glaube ist ein *privater* Begriff"). This misquotation is reproduced in McCarthy's English translation of this text.

show Horkheimer and Adorno to have distinguished, in Kierkegaardian fashion, between "positive" religion - the doctrine of the established churches - and the philosophical substance of religion itself. The "Elements of Anti-Semitism" chapter of the "Dialectic", for example, centrally involves, as we have seen, a claim that believers in Judaism can, *qua believers in Judaism* , play a uniquely progressive role at the present social-historical juncture, and can play it on behalf of *all* subjects of the existing social order. [19] And in the "Eclipse of Reason" Horkheimer on repeated occasions distinguishes between merely *apparent* and *true* religious content, as when he writes of how the Neo-Thomist ontology "designed to create order, in fact lets the core of the ideas which it proclaims wither away." [20] The claim that Neo-Thomism is neglecting the "core" of the theological ideas which it propounds necessarily implies that these ideas have some substance independent of their ideological mobilization.

Indeed, *quoted in full* , even that passage from the "Dialectic of Enlightenment" just cited, which Habermas chooses to support his interpretation of Horkheimer as a Weberian secularist, contains a clear indication that Horkheimer made just this distinction between "positive" and "true" religious content. In the reproduction of this passage in the "Theory of Communicative Action", Habermas takes the frankly self-betraying step of omitting just *five words* from Adorno's and Horkheimer's original text. In the original, the third sentence reads : "The attempt made within Protestantism to find the transcendent principle of truth - without which faith cannot endure - directly in the word itself, as in earlier times, and to give back to the word its symbolic power, was paid for with obedience to the word, *and not indeed to the Holy Word* (my emphasis)." It is indicative of the profound unreliability of the standard English translations of Critical-Theoretical texts as a documentary basis for any study of the relations between Habermasian and Adornian-Horkheimerian thought that Thomas McCarthy's English version of the "Theory of Communicative Action" not only, as we have noted above, slavishly reproduces Habermas's misquotation of this passage's "faith is a privative" as "faith is a *private* concept" but also drops the punctuation which at least indicates, in Habermas's German, that the words "und zwar nicht auf das heilige" have been omitted. As we have observed before in this study, it seems almost to be a general policy of Anglo-American translators of Frankfurt School texts to give Habermas a helping hand in "secularizing" first-generation Critical Theory by mangling every passage of theological import in these texts beyond recognition.

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[19] See Chapter Two, section three.

[20] "Eclipse of Reason", p. 66.

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Habermas is wrong, then, in implying that there is no reference to transcendence in classical Critical Theory. The essential orientation of early Frankfurt School thought to a specifically Kantian - a "chorismatic", radically non-immanent - conception of the Absolute is one of the elements of Benjamin's, Horkheimer's and Adorno's work which cannot be sublated into Habermas's proposed "paradigm of the theory of communication". But numerous questions might still be posed about this essential classical Critical-Theoretical reference to transcendence. Of precisely what nature is it ? Does its presence constitute classical Critical Theory an unequivocally metaphysical theory ? Can it be reconciled with the usual characterizations of Frankfurt School thought as "historical", "materialist" and "sociocentric" ? These questions can perhaps be answered if we take up again the line of discussion suggested by our remark at the end of Chapter Three to the effect that the classical Critical-Theoretical idea of the Absolute was a "mythical" idea.

One of Benjamin's most famous remarks runs : "So long as there is still a single beggar, there will still be myth." [21] Our discussions of myth in Chapters Two and Three of this study have suggested two possible interpretations for such a remark. The classical Critical-Theoretical ideas which we reviewed and opposed to Habermas's throughout most of Chapter Three suggest in the first instance that Benjamin might have meant by it that beggars - persisting, like fragments of an archaic world, in the midst of a supposedly "rationalized" modernity - *themselves* incarnate myth, inasmuch as they betray this modernity's actual *non-transcendence* of myth, betray the fact of modernity's lingering within the ban of an endlessly repetitious "mere Nature". And the remark, so interpreted, certainly has its verity. Both from the point of view of the non-begging "insiders" of the present social order, who come upon these "outsiders" shivering under rags in front of their cash-dispensers and airport lounges like pieces of a past, somehow blasted into the present, in which Man had not yet gained the mastery of fire, let alone that of information technology and aerodynamics. And from the point of view of the begging themselves, for whom life and language are that endless continuum of repetition and non-differentiation which we have seen it to be the essential task of modernity to negate and transcend. Other of our remarks, however - particularly our discussion of the non-secularistic moment in classical Critical Theory in section one of this chapter - suggest a

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[21] Benjamin "Passagen-Werk" (Suhrkamp, 1983), Volume One, p. 505.

second possible meaning and a second, profounder kind of verity for Benjamin's remark.

This second kind of verity is profounder, more radical, in both a philosophical and a political sense - and, as we have observed on several occasions of classical Critical Theory, the radicality of the philosophical verity at issue here is one which arises from and reflects back upon the radicality of an original social and political acuity. Let us speak, then, first in political terms. Where we content ourselves with deploring, in liberal fashion, the contrast - or even, in orthodox Marxist fashion, the contradiction - between the mythical world of the beggar and the post-mythical world of those from whom he begs, we have not yet perceived and understood the social phenomenon of beggary in its verity. Marxism itself can tell us that no "difference principle" institutionalizable within the framework of the capitalist mode of production will eradicate from our social world the mythical experience of beggary. But neither, however, as classical Critical Theory has told us, will any "revolution" in the mode of production achieve this eradication - so long as it attempts to construct a *different* society from the *same* human material : the material of diremptively-formed and hence repetitively self-objectifying social subjectivities.

To recognize this is to recognize that from the mythicality of the experience of beggary there cannot be set off, in Zoroastrian manner, *any* area or level of our modern social experience as an immanent experience of the *non* - or *ultra-mythical*. We transcend this mythical experience neither *qua* liberal citizens - who escape beggary *spatially* by removing themselves into differently and better ordered areas of the polis - nor *qua* Marxist proletarians - who escape beggary *temporally* by incarnating a historical process which guarantees archaic destitution's "Aufhebung" into a future society of prosperity and equality. Beggary is the political *truth* of our society to a degree which neither liberalism nor even orthodox Marxism dares understand. And this political truth has philosophical consequences.

This is because in this light, the link between beggary and myth appears no longer as one of identity, as on our first interpretation of Benjamin's remark, but rather now as one of necessary implication. Egress from - indeed even survival, as a halfway intact human being, within - a society the paradigm and essence of which shows forth in the terrible monotony and homogeneity of beggary is only possible if the subject or the collective of subjects which seeks this egress can find some purchase and support, some leverage for practical reason, in a moment of non-monotony and non-homogeneity. But where, if the monotony and homogeneity of beggary *is* the truth of our society to such a degree that it can be neither

spatially nor temporally, liberalistically nor Marxistically, transcended, is such a supporting moment of difference to be found ? Nowhere, plainly, "within the world". And what is to be found nowhere "within the world" is with some degree of accuracy to be described as itself a *myth* . There will be myth, then, as long as there is a single beggar because the human condition which the persistence of beggary summarises and expresses is a condition which can only be *transcended by recourse to* the myth of an extra-worldly Absolute and by recourse to the strength with which the critical subject, by the thought of such an extra-worldly Absolute, finds himself endowed. The "myth" referred to by Benjamin's remark on this second, more radical interpretation of it is not the "myth" which we have examined throughout Chapter Three : mythical experience *qua* the experience of untranscended "first" and "second" Nature. Rather, it is the "myth" which we encountered in our analyses of Adorno's "Elements of Antisemitism" and of Henrich's counter-naturalistic theory of subjectivity : the "theological" myth of absolute transcendence which is mythical naturality's complement and cure.

I do not wish to propose either of these two interpretations of Benjamin's remark as the exclusively adequate one. Nevertheless, I want in this part of the study to develop primarily the latter of the two. Not least because it is this latter interpretation which is best supported by the work of the other most important of the classical Critical Theorists, Adorno. The essential message of this second interpretation we encounter not only in Adorno's "Elements of Antisemitism", but also in his explicit exegesis of and expansion upon this Benjaminian fragment in his "Minima Moralia", in one of those short passages on the logic of fairy-tales or "Märchen" which make up the section of this book entitled "Regressionen". [22]

Adorno admittedly first discusses the initial, related topic of the short piece in which this exegesis and expansion occur - Taubert's cradle-song, which describes the chasing of a beggar away from the bedroom of a beloved child - in terms more in line with the first of our two interpretations, that is, in the Marxistic / immanentistic terms of a transfiguration of the violence inherent in our historically arising and historically persisting "bourgeois" society. But the fact that the problematic of beggary and of the archaic destitution which it expresses must ultimately give rise to questions of transcendence in an only problematically historical sense is fully acknowledged in this short piece's final lines, in which Adorno turns to Benjamin's aphorism itself and propounds a conception of the nature of human suffering, and of the

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[22] See Adorno, "Minima Moralia" pps. 199-200.

transcendence of this suffering, which go not only well beyond Marxism but even beyond most of Adorno's own critical-theoretical analyses in the direction of the expression of an almost positive religious faith : "So long as there is still a single beggar, we read in one of Benjamin's fragments, there will still be myth ; only with the vanishing of the last of them will myth be reconciled. But would then all the violence not itself be forgotten as it is in the twilight of the child's falling softly into sleep ? Would the vanishing of the beggar not after all in the end somehow make good all that the beggar has had to suffer, and which can never be made good ? Is there not hidden somehow in all human persecution - that setting of the dog on the beggar which is the setting of all Nature on the weaker by the stronger - the hope that that last trace of persecution, which is the moment of persecution which inheres in Nature itself, can be eradicated ? Would not a beggar who were driven entirely out of and beyond the gates of civilization come thereby to be sheltered in his own home - a home freed from the spell of this earth ? 'Sleep now in peace, child ; the beggar has gone home'. " [23]

We shall not have time to discuss in this study the role within classical Critical Theory of this strange project of investigating how that which "can never be made good" - the wrongs done to those who have suffered and gone down to an undeserved and unavenged death - can perhaps "after all" be made good. And for the moment, we have a more urgent task before us. Even in the face of Adorno's exegesis of Benjamin's remark on myth and beggary, which - with its recognition that there is a moment within the problematic of "persecution" which is not in any usual sense historical, but rather inheres in "the spell of this earth" itself - seems to me at least to be fairly unequivocally religious, there will doubtless be some of my readers who will remain on principle unwilling to accept that classical Critical-Theoretical talk about "myth" was ever talk about an "Absolute" in any approbative, any counter-mythical and "mythically progressivist", sense. In short, many readers will be loth to accept the "Hegelian Marxist" Adorno as a Kantian.

Adorno's case, of course, does have its difficulties and obscurities in this respect. It must be admitted that numerous passages in Adorno's work do appear to sharply contradict the thesis that Adorno was a metaphysician of the Kantian type, that there played or could play any essential role in Adorno's thought the idea of an Absolute transcendent of all possible social, historical experience. The opening lines of the concluding section of the "Negative Dialectics", for example - a section entitled precisely "Meditations On Metaphysics"

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[23] Ibid.

- seem to constitute a clear refusal of that idea of the Absolute which was central, as we have seen in Chapter One, not only to antique "ontology" but also to the modern "philosophy of subjectivity" in its Kantian form : "That the Unchanging is the truth and the changing, the fugacious mere illusion, that the eternal Ideas and the temporal order are essentially indifferent to one another - these are claims that can no longer be sustained, not even in the daring Hegelian formulation to the effect that temporal existence serves, even by virtue of the destruction conceptually inherent in it, the realization of the Eternal, since this latter manifests itself precisely as an eternity of destruction." [24] Great caution and subtlety, however, is required in determining precisely *how and in what spirit* Adorno repudiates the idea of "an indifference to one another of the eternal Ideas and the temporal order", *how and in what spirit* he contradicts the thesis that the Unchanging is the truth and the changing mere illusion. The truth about the nature of classical Critical Theory - and consequently, in very many respects, the truth also about Habermas's post-classical version of this theory - lies here decidedly "dans les nuances".

Unfortunately, neither the Marxist not the left-liberal writers who have made up, in the Anglo-American world, the bulk of the "Critical Theory community" have shown much sensitivity to nuance. For analysts oriented to either of these basic worldviews, questions about the philosophical and political nature of classical Critical Theory tend to be formulated in the simple "either / or" terms of whether this theory was a theory of *transcendence* or a theory of *immanence* , since the political philosophies of both liberalism and Marxism themselves both constitute variations - admittedly extremely wide variations - on what might be called the "Heinian" theme of the absorption of the content of what has sometimes been conceived of as the essentially transcendent into the order of the immanent. Where for liberalism, the immanent order is more or less ready *here and now* to receive the classical content of transcendence, for Marxism this order is only *potentially* ready to do so and will be fully ready once the anachronistic trappings of a decayed social system have given way to the genuinely "contemporary".

It is plain that it would only be at the cost of crudely obvious distortions and misrepresentations that left liberalism might aspire to claim a writer like Adorno for its cause of drawing the content of transcendence into *present* immanence. The identification of Adorno as a thinker engaged in the Marxist project of harnessing once-transcendent values into an *as*

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[24] Adorno, "Negative Dialectics" (Seabury Press, 1973), p. 361.

yet not quite historically realizable programme of humanistic fulfillment, however, appears at first to have a much firmer objective basis. Dozens of passages can be found throughout Adorno's work in which a *historical* conception of transcendence is sharply distinguished from an *ahistorical* one. We find this distinction, for example, as early as the "Kierkegaard" monograph, where Kierkegaard's realm of "aesthetic" Ideas is contrasted with Plato's realm of "ontological" Ideas as an "historical / dialectical" conception over against an "eternal". Where, claims Adorno here, Plato's Ideas are crudely posited as transcending Nature, Kierkegaard's conception provides an almost materialist promise of historical redemption inasmuch as his Ideas are "darkly sublated into Nature" [25]

Clearly, then, there cannot be denied to be operative in Adorno's thought *some* kind of Marxist animus against the "ahistorical". Adorno's position on "history" and "ontology" cannot be understood, however, without bearing in mind all that we have said in Chapter Two about the relations between history "à courte" and history "à longue durée", without bearing in mind that insight of Kafka's cited on numerous occasions by Benjamin : "To believe in progress is not the same as believing that progress has already taken place." Adorno, if he envisages an essential "historicality" for human existence, nevertheless envisages this as an historicality in almost total *recession*. Since, as we have seen, the roots of that "sedimentation" of the constituted order against its human constitutors which we have called "myth" stretch, for Adorno, Horkheimer and Benjamin back into the "vordenklicher Zeit" of primordial subject-formation, the prospect of a "reactivation" of the constituted order's inherent constituted-ness - the prospect, that is, of the transcendence of myth and of the realization of modernity - is correspondingly deferred into the "nachdenklicher Zeit" of a "revolution" that will not occur *in history "proper"*. For classical Critical Theory, the continuum of history *qua actuality* is filled out *in its entirety* by that moment of "antithesis" constituted by the "false truth" of myth. As Adorno writes in the "Negative Dialectics" : "Universal history must be both construed and denied. It would be pure cynicism to claim, after the catastrophes which have advened and in the face of those about to advene, that some Providence is manifesting itself in history and guiding it always toward the better. But it would be false also to deny the existence of a kind of unity in history, which welds together its discontinuous, chaotically shattered moments - even if this unity must be recognized to be that of the domination of Nature, intensifying itself into the domination of men by men and finally into the

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[25] Adorno, "Kierkegaard" (Suhrkamp 1974), p. 181.

domination of the individual's own internal Nature by the individual. No universal history can really be traced which leads from savagery to enlightened humanism, but one can certainly be traced leading from the slingshot to the nuclear bomb...Hegel is hereby at once horribly vindicated and set upon his head. Where he transfigured the totality of historical suffering into the positivity of an Absolute realizing itself in history, that 'One and Whole' which has, from the first until the present day, with only occasional pauses for breath, rolled through the world has in fact been rather a teleology of suffering *as* the Absolute, a teleology of absolute suffering...The 'Weltgeist', a worthy object of definition, must be defined as catastrophe 'en permanence'." [26]

The "thesis" and the "synthesis" correspondent to this "antithesis" - the pre-primordial unity of "Mana" and the "things after all coming to some good" of reconciliation - are displaced into respectively such an anteriority and such a posterity as to enjoy the status only of an as it were invisible "frame" to this *actual* history. Such a frame can indeed dictate the *value* of all that appears within it, but only as a "Vorzeichen" dictates the value of a mathematical quantity. What it cannot do is emerge *within* this continuum as an "active historical factor" in any Marxist or liberal sense of this idea. Adorno tends to constitute as the bearer of the morally and politically positive moment in human experience not, as Marx did and liberal social theorists had done before him, historical classes themselves at particular points in their development and in the development of their relations with other historical classes. Rather, he places his moral and political hope primarily in the manifestations in history of that which history itself excludes - and "excludes" not, as the current rhetoric of "political correctness" still has it, by some physical or symbolic violence, but simply *by definition* , because history in every form in which we have known it has been exclusive of truth.

Exemplary of this position is Adorno's 1952 musicological essay "Hommage To Zerlina". Here, Da Ponte's and Mozart's creation is read as an "allegory of history in stasis". She appears on the borderline between feudal and bourgeois epochs, "no longer a 'bergère' and not yet a 'citoyenne'". But her humanity has no more to hope for from "bourgeois barbarism" than it does from "feudal coercion". The light which emanates from Zerlina is rather the light of that which preceded and which therefore may still succeed history, and which shows forth for a moment also in periods where one intra-historical force seizes the levers of power from another : "He who falls in love with her falls in love with that unenunciable thing

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[26] Adorno, "Negative Dialectics", p. 320.

whose silver voice is nevertheless perceptible ringing out of the no-man's-land between the warring epochs." [27]

Adorno's conception, then, really displays no greater correspondence in practice to the Marxist conception of the relation between transcendence and immanence than it does to the liberal conception. Adorno's ideas do not express a faith in the capacity of immanence to absorb the content of transcendence even *historically*. On the contrary. Read in context, the passage from the "Negative Dialectics" quoted above, which *appears* to dismiss transcendence and thus, at least by default, to affirm immanence, reveals itself as in fact a rejection in the first place of *immanence*, and a rejection of transcendence only in so far as a *certain* transcendentism tends to compromise the subject's capacity to totally negate the immanent. Adorno does not develop the point that the "eternal Ideas" and the "temporal order" can no longer be claimed to be indifferent to one another as an orthodox Marxist might have developed it, by Heinian or Feuerbachian demonstrations of how "das Eiapopeia vom Himmel" functions as a transparent attempt to distract from the wealth of meaning potentially inherent in the order of the worldly, but rather in diametrically opposite manner. He insists that there is a need to reject all *positively conceived* transcendence - the qualification should be carefully noted - because transcendence so conceived tends to imbue the *immanent* with a meaning which the thinking and feeling subject is morally obligated to *deny* to it : "That feeling which repudiates, after Auschwitz, all claims that existence must somehow be an expression of something positive, which perceives such claims as a vile sanctimoniousness and as a wrong done to Auschwitz's victims, which resists any attempt to squeeze any meaning, however minimal, out of these victims' fate - such a feeling has its moment of objective truth after events which must make a mockery of that construction of a meaning for the immanent order which is necessarily implied by any positive conception of transcendence." [28]

With such formulations, Critical Theory in no way imposes upon itself that obligation to translate the content of the transcendent always into the language of immanence which orthodox Marxism imposes upon *itself*. Rather, the obligation is *precisely* to think transcendence - but to think it in such a way that this thought does *not* imply, as the thought of transcendence traditionally has done, the "construction of a meaning for the immanent order". Adorno, in the "Negative Dialectics", is concerned to develop an idea of

[27] Adorno, "Moments Musicaux" (Suhrkamp, 1964) pps. 37-39.
[28] Adorno, "Negative Dialectics", p. 361.

transcendence, of the Absolute, which throws *no* transfiguring, legitimating light on immanence, which exhausts its whole substance and fulfills its whole function in enabling the subject to say, in the face of every immanently-encountered phenomenon, "*not* this".

In this, as in several other respects, Adorno's position in the "Negative Dialectics" is closer to Kierkegaard's than had been his position in the 1933 "Kierkegaard" monograph. It coincides precisely with the remark from Kierkegaard's "Stages On Life's Way" quoted on p. 162 of this latter text : "The only adequate form for the idea of the infinite is the form of the infinitely negative." [29] It is also, however, a position very close to Kant's. As we have noted in Chapter One, the Kantian conception of the "infinite" - that is, of the "Unconditioned" or the Absolute - is also a conception of the "infinitely negative". Norman Kemp-Smith, we have seen, puts it quite clearly : the Kantian "Unconditioned"'s sole function is to "condemn" the finite as finite.

But if this is the case - if Adorno's idea of the "infinite" is, like Kant's and Kierkegaard's, an idea of that which functions to constitute the finite as finite , the negative as negative, *the immanent as immanent* , and has no other function besides this - then Adorno's work remains uncategorizable in terms of the crude alternatives of "immanence" or "transcendence" before which it is placed by both liberalism and Marxism. What Adorno aspires to theorize is at once the essential "Immanenzbezogenheit der Transzendenz" - that moment in the antinomical thinking which is characteristic of a Kantian dualism which expresses the fact that antinomics, by the very nature of its cognitive project, remains inevitably linked to the unitary system of human social experience - *and* the essential "Transzendenzbezogenheit der Immanenz" - that moment in the dialectical thinking which is characteristic of an Hegelian or Marxian monism which expresses the fact that dialectics, by the very nature of *its* cognitive *and practical* project, requires at a certain point a *distantiation* from, a *stepping outside of* , this unitary system *as a whole* and the recognition of a certain "non-dialectisable", of a certain critically functional transcendence.

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[29] See Adorno, "Kierkegaard : Konstruktion des Ästhetischen" (Suhrkamp 1974), p. 162. Almost all the key themes of the "Negative Dialectics" can in fact be found in the "Kierkegaard" monograph, most often in the passages of it which are formed by quotations from Kierkegaard himself. Compare, for example, the key "negative-dialectical" idea of "grasping the concept-less with concepts" with Kierkegaard's remark in his "Concluding Unscientific Postscript" : "This, then, is the highest paradox of thought : to discover something which it itself cannot think." (quoted ibid. p. 161-2). Below, I shall argue that also Adorno's most famous philosophical aphorism - "the whole is the untrue" - is an expression of this Kierkegaardian idea.

(iii)

"Negative dialectics" in Adorno's sense is no more nor less than this, as a passage from the Introduction to the book of this name makes clear. Here, Adorno addresses the almost unaddressable problem of a dialectic *of* dialectics, the problem of the "science of the relation to the other"'s relation to *its* other. He contrasts mediated thought, dialectical thought in the strict sense, which he calls "theory", with a certain unmediatedly subjective, almost existentialist mode of cognition, which he refers to as "mental / spiritual ('geistige') experience". These two modes of thought, writes Adorno, "require each other. Theory does not contain the answer to everything, but rather simply reacts to this world which is false to its innermost core. Over that which might be conceived as falling outside of the spell of this false world, theory has no jurisdiction. Mobility is essential to consciousness, not one of its contingent characteristics, and mobility implies a dual mode of cognitive action : on the one hand a cognition from within the objects outward, an immanent process, that is, a genuinely dialectical mode ; on the other, however, a free, unbound moment of cognition, which as it were steps out of the dialectic. Moreover, these two moments are not just disparate. There exists a kind of elective affinity between the unregulated thought and the dialectical, since the latter, as a critique of the system, essentially evokes the idea of something quite outside of the system and the energy which is loosed in cognition by dialectical movement is the same energy as that which rebels against the system as such. These two positions of consciousness are linked to one another through mutual critique, not through compromise."[30]

This passage powerfully supports the main strand of our interpretation of classical Critical Theory in this study : our claim that this Theory was essentially a "subject-philosophy" in that Kantian sense which links subjectivity constitutively to the principle of the Absolute as determining limit of the experienceable world. "Theory", in the sense in which Adorno uses the term here, involves the dissolution of subjectivity's cognitive autonomy - if not, as in Habermas's philosophy, into the structures of intersubjectivity, then, as in Hegel's or Marx's, into those of objectivity, universality. Adorno is not insensitive to the critical truth and moral value of such a dissolution : "theory" is, in stressing objectivity, "reacting to a world which is false to its innermost core", that is, doing precisely what theory, in the view of Critical Theory, needs to do. But such a reaction plainly, where it draws, in the attempt to concretize and

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30 "Negative Dialectics", p. 31.

develop itself, only on the resources of this very world "false to its innermost core", cannot but be itself in essential respects false. And since it is inherently dialectical, inherently "an immanent process", "theory" has no choice but to draw on these resources. In order to *be what it is* , then, "theory" needs the co-operation of that moment, essentially quite alien to it, of stubbornly non-objective, stubbornly *subjective* , experience, which "steps out" of the dialectic and out of immanence. Only the non-dialectical, non-dialogical subjective consciousness which refuses to allow the standards of either intersubjectivity or of objectivity to determine the validity or invalidity of its fundamental perceptions as to the nature of the world it experiences has any hope of achieving what dialectics had set out to achieve - the consistent critique of the false existing - because only this subjective consciousness can be argued - if anything can be argued - to be without any constitutive complicity with the "system". Where dialogical intersubjectivity and dialectical objectivity must by definition be instantiated and sustained by a medium with some kind of intra-mundane "extension" and therefore cannot logically afford to negate the intra-mundane order in its entirety, subjective consciousness can perhaps, by retracting itself to become that "extensionless point" as which it has been theorized by philosophers in the Kantian tradition, indeed logically afford to enunciate what was implicit in dialectics' own critique : that this world is false *"to its innermost core"* , that the "system" and *everything* complicit with it needs to be and can be rejected, that "the whole is the untrue". Only a subjective consciousness, then, which stands in no essential relation either to the inner-worldly extension of intersubjective community or to the inner-worldly extension of objectivity can have access to that point "falling outside of the spell of the false world" which "theory" requires but over which it has "no jurisdiction". Only a subjective consciousness can have access to that Absolute which radical critique presupposes and requires.

To avoid, however, a regression of his counter-mythical doctrine back to the stage and status of a reactionary re-evocation of the need for myth, Adorno insists in the passage quoted that even when it comes to the dialectics of dialectics itself, "theory" is not completely disempowered. The strictly "dialectical" moment of insistence on transcendence's "Immanenzbezogenheit" - that is, on transcendence's necessarily merely *negative* and *negatory* cognitive status - must not relax its vigil even in the face of the proof of this same "dialectical" moment's own essential "Transzendenzbezogenheit", its symbiosis with an antinomical "Stillstand der Dialektik" : "These two positions of consciousness are linked to

each other through mutual critique." Lest this stipulation in turn, however, encourage vulgar Marxist interpreters of his work to marginalize the moment in it of dialectically *irreducible* transcendence, he stipulates further that the relation which links these two positions of consciousness is one of critique *and not compromise* . *Both* positions of consciousness - "transzendenzbezogene Immanenz" and "immanenzbezogene Transzendenz", dialectics and antinomics - must be preserved within consciousness autonomous and intact if consciousness is to gain access to truth. Indeed, where the former of these two positions *compromises* the latter, or where the latter of them *compromises with* the former - where, that is, dialectics does begin to deny and repress its symbiotic relation to antinomics or where the bad political conscience of metaphysical antinomics leads it to defer too far to dialectical "materialism" - dialectical logic becomes precisely *no more* than a logic of compromise. It is only the relation to that moment of antinomic transcendence which is the "other" to, but also the other within, the dialectical logic *of* "otherness" that preserves dialectics from degeneration into the inflated platitude which it is often, with bad or with misguided good will, understood in fact to amount to : a "political" logic par excellence, which proceeds from that most "politic" of premisses that there are "two sides to every story".

Adorno's development of a "negative dialectics" was a move against just this inherent tendency of dialectical logic and of the culture which has emerged from it to become unfaithful to themselves - dialectically, through an excess of fidelity to that moment of dialectics which consists in an unbending immanentism. For Adorno, it was crucial philosophically and above all politically to understand that dialectical logic was *not* a logic of compromise, that dialectics rather revealed the idea that "there are two sides to every story" to be the most pernicious of bourgeois lies. As he put it in an aphorism of the "Minima Moralia" : "The progress of the Weltgeist is not the Echternach dancing procession and qualification and revision not the signs of a dialectical form of cognition. Rather, this latter moves through the extremes and, instead of qualifying them, drives thoughts, by developing them with the most extreme consistency, into transformation into their opposites. That reflectiveness which forbids one to 'go too far' in a proposition is most often just the voice of social control and thereby of encroaching stupidity." [31]

For Adorno, it was important to show how dialectical thought was a thought centred on that idea anathematic to the bourgeoisie of his and still of our day : *objectivity.* Objectivity is

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[31] Adorno, "Minima Moralia", p. 86.

what is at issue in dialectics and it is for this reason that the term is itself dialectically racked, epitomising at once all that Adorno wished to eradicate from Hegelian and Marxist culture and all that he wished to preserve and strengthen in this culture. "Objectivity" on the one hand is precisely that "voice of social control" by which the theorist is dissuaded, or dissuades himself, from "going too far" in his propositions - from stating, for instance, that one side in an historical conflict is simply right and another side simply wrong. "Objectivity" in this liberal sense by definition precludes any such unequivocal taking of a position. To perform an "objective" analysis of such a conflict is in this sense to hedge all one's statements around with "ceteris paribus" clauses, with qualifications, reflections and concessions, with - to use the term in a degraded sense correspondent to this degraded sense of "objectivity" - "dialectical" considerations of "the other point of view". Marxists have pointed out the upshot of such "objectivity" often enough for the point which they made not to have been entirely forgotten even in the present climate. The "objective" liberal analyst ends up making no statement at all on the historical conflict in question. He has understood so many "points of view" on his object that he can genuinely be said to have "understood all". But "to understand all is to forgive all" and to knowledge of an object, of a subject or of an intersubjective conflict there seems to belong constitutively a moment of unforgivingness . Liberal "understanding", the pluralistic "objectivity" of liberal "dialectics", eventually produce only the non-statements, the non-knowledge of pure contemplation and the practical non-consequence that, since, seen "dialectically", no one is more right or more wrong than anyone else, everything is after all best left as it stands.

"Objectivity" on the other hand is the diametrical opposite to this. In Marxist parlance, it has signified the insistence that there is an objective truth about all events, social no less than natural, and that the process of weighing up "points of view" must be determined and precisely limited by this fact. This does not necessarily mean that for the Marxist the category of "point of view", of human plurality and difference, has eventually to give way entirely to an absolute intersubjective or "trans-subjective" unanimity around the one objective truth in all matters. What it means is that "plurality" and "pluralism" can emerge as grounded and legitimated social-philosophical categories only if their immediate, given form - that merely asserted plurality of "points of view" which liberalism takes up uncritiqued into its conception of "objectivity" - is allowed to be submitted to a process of critique from the side of the idea of objectivity in the Marxist sense. It is, that is to say, from out of objectivity , where the idea of

objectivity is "developed with the most extreme consistency" by dialectical thought, that its opposite, plurality, must emerge.

It was the capacity to think "objectively" and "dialectically" in this latter sense, and to set itself off clearly and definitively from the "objective" and "dialectical" thinking of liberalism, which Adorno was above all concerned to preserve for Marxist and Hegelian culture. The most difficult point in Adorno's work to grasp, however - so difficult that it tends to completely evade both his liberal and his Marxist commentators, for whom he is either a materialist thinker subject to occasional transcendent velleities or a transcendent thinker with a bad materialist conscience - is that the possibility of such an objectivity, of such a clear differentiation from all bourgeois pseudo-pluralism, can, as we have said above, be preserved for dialectics ultimately only by an infidelity to the ideal of "objectivity" in the terms in which it is presented in the passage from the "Negative Dialectics" on "theory" and "Erfahrung" - by dialectics' infidelity, that is, to itself qua dialectical "theory" and by an essential recourse to that antinomical "geistige Erfahrung" which Adorno, in this passage, contrasts to it. As we have seen, this means in concrete terms dialectical Critical Theory's recourse to a concept of subjectivity constitutively linked to an experience of transcendence.

(iv)

The appreciation of this logic puts paid to any attempt to characterize classical Critical Theory as in any but a very complex and equivocal sense an "Hegelian" theory. That a pantheistic, fully dialectical concept of the relation between world and Absolute, immanence and transcendence is but one step away from pure immanentism, from mere "positivism" - indeed not even one step away from it - is, as we have already had occasion to observe, almost a "petitio principii" of Adorno's thought. As far as Adorno, and the mainstream classical Critical Theory which was determined - indeed largely constituted - by his thought is concerned, Hegelianism meant identification of the Absolute with the whole continuum of immanent experience, and identification of it with this continuum *alone*. The classical Critical Theoretical "Hegel" permitted no philosophical access to a "*quite* Other" - except in a paradoxical, non-Hegelian sense which we shall examine below.

On Adorno's historical premiss of a continuum of immanent experience "false to its very core", then, the Hegelian philosophy itself cannot but be massively infected with falsity. That is to say, its ontological / historical *descriptions* remain structurally accurate, but the as it

were moral and political *status* of everything that Hegel describes is in reality radically other than the status which Hegel himself ascribes to it. A passage from Adorno's 1949 "Philosophy of Modern Music" illustrates Adorno's attitude to Hegel in this respect. In the introductory essay to this text, Adorno first states his adherence to Hegelian philosophical methodology : "The doctrine of the 'Phenomenology of Mind', whereby all immediacy is seen as already in itself mediated, must be applied to art." [32] This is indeed the methodology which Adorno adopts in the "Philosophy of Modern Music". But for Hegel this methodological procedure had confirmed the idea that "the real is the rational". Since no experience is non-conceptual, no experience is really individual either ; all experiences are, seen from an absolute point of view, participations in the Concept, in a rational universality. For Adorno, a dialectical analysis of art and society confirms quite the opposite idea. He immediately glosses the statement "all immediacy is already in itself mediated" with the non-Hegelian clarification : "In other words, all immediacy is something which is produced only by domination (Herrschaft)." [33] Adorno shares with Hegel the idea that all particularity and individuality is constitutively mediated by the whole, but where for Hegel "the true is the whole", for Adorno "the whole is the untrue".

This is stated even more plainly in the second of the three studies which Adorno devoted specifically to Hegel in the early nineteen-sixties : "The untruth of that Hegelian legitimation of the existing, against which the Hegelian Left rebelled and which has since been expanded upon to an absurd degree, cannot be denied. More than any other of his doctrines, the doctrine of the rationality of the real appears at odds with our experience of reality, even of its so-called 'general tendency'. This doctrine, however, is part and parcel of Hegel's idealism. A philosophy which, as the result of its development and as this development's 'whole', dissolves everything that there is into Mind - which, that is to say, although it is inspired in its details by the non-identity of subject and object, nevertheless announces in its general form these factors' identity with one another - such a philosophy will eventually inevitably come down apologistically on the side of the existing, which is supposed indeed to be itself one with Mind." [34]

Adorno is here apparently at his most Marxist. The talk of "Idealism"'s inevitable legitimation of the *status quo* could almost come from a "diamat" encyclopaedia of philosophy

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[32] Adorno, "Philosophy of Modern Music" (Seabury Press 1973), p.15.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Adorno, "Hegel : Three Studies", p. 85.

from the nineteen-forties or fifties. What we have said about Adorno's relation to metaphysics in general, however, applies also to his relation to Hegel and idealism in particular. One must be extremely careful in situating Adorno's rejection of Hegel's thesis that "the true is the whole" - in his remark that rather "the whole is the untrue" - as a mere Marxist insistence that truth has not yet been historically realized in the social whole. The meaning of this most famous aphorism of Adorno's, which is construed by some as a mere contradiction of Hegel's liberal optimism from the point of view of Marxism, is, as we have already begun to show above, far more complex and far more ramified in its philosophical implications.

It is a true - though vastly trivial - piece of information that Adorno's "the whole is the untrue" is a reversal of Hegel's "the true is the whole", and in this respect this aphorism can indeed be said to take up a place as an episode in Hegel's "Wirkungsgeschichte" in nineteenth and twentieth century philosophy. Understanding of Adorno's relation to Hegel and philosophical Romanticism, however, is in fact far better served by considering the "Wirkungsgeschichte" which the phrase "the whole is the untrue" forged for *itself* throughout the nineteen-forties, 'fifties and 'sixties. This is to say that what is required is to contextualize this phrase not so much in terms of the Hegelian phrase which served as its matrix as in terms of its context, or rather contexts, within Adorno's own philosophy. Indeed, consideration of the frequency and contextual variety of the formulation's occurrences and reoccurrences within this latter body of work reveals precisely how reductionistic must be any attempt to contextualize it univocally as a "materialist" rejection of Hegelianism alone. In the "Minima Moralia", of course, the phrase has, as we have already noted, no immediate context. It is one of those "dwarf fruit" which are assembled midway through the first part of the book under the number "twenty-nine" and here, as the commentator Friedemann Grenz has put it, "leaps out at the reader as the last of a series of short pronouncements, monolithic, aggressive and quite without commentary." [35]

We have also already noted, however, that we encounter this phrase in Adorno's writings also some years before the 1951 "Minima Moralia". As we have shown in Chapter Two, Adorno first formulates the phrase "the whole is the untrue" in his Los Angeles "scribble-in book" of the early nineteen-forties, and it here occurs in the context of a whole series of linked philosophical meditations, the theme of which is plainly the possible superiority of dualistic and transcendentistic over monistic and immanentistic ontologies as a

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[35] Friedemann Grenz, "Adornos Philosophie in Grundbegriffen" (Suhrkamp 1974) p. 114.

basis and framework for critical social and political theory. We should perhaps remind ourselves here again of the context of this anti-Hegelian phrase's original formulation :

"The whole is the untrue.

Is not the concept of 'objective tendency' which stands in the centre of Hegel's and of Marx's thought itself tied to positivism ? It has its origin in Aristotle and in Aristotle's turn against the Platonic Utopia.

Aristotle is really the historical origin of the bourgeoisie. Plato, however, already no feudal figure but rather a feudal*ist*, a bourgeois-rational apologist for aristocratic traditionalism (hence the role of the 'general interest'), basically a gigantic De Maistre.

On the case 'Kant vs. Hegel' : Hegel is indeed, thanks to his concept of mediation, his dissolution of the Kantian 'limit' and of Kant's 'theological' dualism, much more metaphysical than Kant, wandering off into the intelligible world. But he is also, thanks to this very same concept of mediation - the insistence, that is, on the rights of the existent even in the realm of the Idea - just as much more positivistic than Kant. Hegel indeed has over Kant the knowability of the Absolute, but Kant has over Hegel's 'State' the concept of 'eternal peace'".

Here, as we have already noted, Hegel's position that "the true is the whole" is plainly not being rejected from the Marxist point of view that "the whole is *not yet* the true" and has still to *become* "the true" by a process of historical struggle and construction. Rather, the very ontological essence of a position *common* to Hegel *and* Marx - as well as to Aristotle - is being at least tentatively rejected from the point of view of an essentially ontologically distinct philosophical position : that of Plato and Kant. Adorno's frequent quotations of his own aphorism after the publication of the "Minima Moralia" also tend to confirm this Platonic / Kantian interpretation of its meaning. It occurs again, for instance, in the "Three Studies On Hegel". Indeed, the reader need only read a few paragraphs on from this text's apparently purely Marxistic / immanentistic dismissal of the Hegelian philosophy which we examined some pages ago to recognize that Adorno's critique of the ideas that "the real is the rational" and "the truth is the whole", with their identification of immanence and transcendence, world

and Absolute, is here too a critique not primarily from the side of a Marxistic commitment to pure immanence but rather from the side of a Kantian insistence on the irreducibility of transcendence - an insistence motivated, as was Kant's own, by moral and political concerns.

The language of this part of Adorno's 1963 text often duplicates that of the 1942 "scribble-in book" exactly. "The case 'Kant vs. Hegel'," writes Adorno again in the 1963 text, "in which the damning proofs offered by the latter had the last word, is in fact not over. Perhaps because this very idea of 'proof', of the power of logical stringency, represents in the face of the Kantian ontological *caesurae* a kind of untruth. If Hegel, with his critique of Kant, succeeded in performing the magnificent feat of extending the critical philosophy beyond the region of the merely formal, he also conjured away, with this very feat, the highest moment of this philosophy : the moment of critique exercised upon the *totality* , upon the definitively given 'Infinite' itself. Hegel autocratically rolled away that block, that recognition of a certain moment of reality's always confronting consciousness as an 'indissoluble', which constitutes the core of the experience which Kant's philosophy expresses - and in its place stipulated a concept of knowledge *caesura*-less by virtue of its very *caesurae*, a concept of knowledge to which there attaches something of the illusoriness of the mythical. Hegel thought away the difference between the conditioned and the Absolute. He endowed on the conditioned the appearance of the unconditioned. And with this he in the end wronged that very experience from which his philosophy drew its force." [36]

Adorno's reasoning here points up that symbiosis of dialectics and antinomics which we discussed above. There is a clear implication that between that moment of experience "indissoluble in consciousness" which is pointed to by system's like Plato's and Kant's - the "unconditioned" or Absolute which challenges the Hegelian whole from a position of radical extra-mundanity - and that moment of experience "indissoluble in consciousness" which is pointed to by Marx - the "matter" and "real history" which challenge the Hegelian whole from a position absolutely "within the world" - there obtains at some level a kind of identity. Where critical thought "autocratically rolls away" that "block" which Kant's unquestionably mythical narrative of "two realms" places between the "conditioned" and the "unconditioned", there begins to attach to this critical thought itself "something of the illusoriness of the mythical", that is, of the merely natural, the "positivistic", the "bourgeois".

The idea "the whole is the untrue", then, appears in the next paragraph of this text in

36 Adorno, "Hegel : Three Studies", p. 86.

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a context which recalls the most extremely antinomicist, theologistic of Adorno's pieces of writing, the famous last passage of the "Minima Moralia" in which Adorno argues that all knowledge is a function of a certain "messianic light". Let us first remind ourselves of the text of this famous passage : "The only philosophy for which, in the face of despair, responsibility might still be taken would be the attempt to consider all things as they would appear from the point of view of redemption. Knowledge has no light other than this one, which shines back upon the world from the world's redemption. Everything else amounts only to reconstruction and remains mere technique. Perspectives must be produced from the point of view of which the world is dislocated, is made strange, reveals its cracks and tears - from the point of view of which the world stands needy and disfigured, as it will stand one day in the light of the coming of the Messiah. To gain such perspectives without recourse to conceptual arbitrariness or violence, to produce them out of empathy with the objective world itself - this alone is thought's cause and concern. This is the simplest of all things to do, because our condition irrecusably cries out for such a knowledge, indeed because consummate negativity, once looked steadily in the face, gathers itself suddenly together to form a mirror-script which describes the opposite of this negativity. But it is also a quite impossible thing, because it presupposes a standpoint which would be distanced - by however little - from the circle of the spell of our existence - whereas in fact every knowledge must not only, where it is to count for something, be torn from that which is, but also, for this very reason, must itself be marked by that disfiguredness and neediness which it was knowledge's intention to transcend." [37]

In the "Three Studies", the idea that "the whole is the untrue" is argued to serve the function of negativistically "soliciting" just such a "redemptive light" as Adorno describes in this passage from the "Minima Moralia". Hegel's "truth as whole" plays the role of precisely that "mirror-writing" as which the consummate negativity of our society can, in a certain light, be read : "'The whole is the untrue'," Adorno writes in the Hegel text, "not just because the thesis of the totality is itself untruth, itself just the principle of domination blown up to the status of the Absolute. The idea of a positivity which believes that it can overcome all that strains against it through the overpowering coercive force of comprehending Mind forms by its very nature the mirror-image of the experience of that overpowering coercive force which inheres in all existence due to its fusion together under the moment of domination. This is what is true in Hegel's untruth. That power of the whole which the untruth of this philosophy

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[37] Adorno, "Minima Moralia", p. 247.

mobilizes is no mere fantasy of Mind, but rather the power of the real concatenation of illusion to which every individual thing remains harnessed. Where philosophy, however, determines, against Hegel, the negativity of the whole, it fulfills for the last time the postulate of that determinate negation, which was for Hegel identical with position. That ray of light which reveals the whole, in all its moments, as the untrue is none other than that from and of Utopia, the Utopia of that whole truth which is yet to be realized." 38

Dialectical thinking appears here as that "simplest of all things" which Adorno speaks of in the last passage of the "Minima Moralia" - the "knowledge for which our condition irrecusably cries out" - but it can *become* this thing that it *is* only where it is supplemented by that "quite impossible thing", that last step *out* of immanence which Adorno calls on "philosophy" to take. Such a step is construably still Hegelian, a "fulfillment of the postulate of determinate negation", but it is also, as we have seen, even more construably Kantian, or Platonic : the step into "negative dialectics" is the reinstatement of that "block" which "the world" opposes to consciousness and which is, Adorno's work implies, somehow at once both a radically intra-mundane "materiality" and a radically extra-mundane Absolute.

Ironically, then, the presiding spirit of Adorno's "Three Studies On Hegel" remains in key respects the spirit of Kant. The same indeed, we have argued, can be said of classical Critical Theory as a whole, despite the fact that it has the reputation of being above all else an Hegelian theory. It is only where the researcher has, as Habermas himself tends to do, consciously or unconsciously resolved to overlook those Benjaminian elements in classical Critical Theory which became almost entirely determinant of the Theory's nature after 1940 that he can also overlook the basically Kantian rather than Hegelian structure of much classical Critical-Theoretical argument. The Habermasian Seyla Benhabib, for instance, is often driven, in her resolution to cram the whole spectrum of classical Frankfurt School writing into the category of Hegelian "subject-philosophy", to make statements about Adorno's work which betray a complete misapprehension of its real spirit and structure. As when she writes that "(Hegel's critique of Kant) has shaped not only Marx's dismissal of 'blueprint' utopian thinking, but Adorno's contempt for positive utopias as well." 39 As our discussions of the arguments of the "Negative Dialectics" and the "Three Studies On Hegel" over the last few pages have demonstrated, nothing could be further from the truth, at least as regards Adorno. Adorno's

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38 Adorno, "Hegel : Three Studies", pps. 87-88.
39 Benhabib, "Critique, Norm and Utopia", p. 71.

rejection of the "positive" took the form not of an Hegelian critique of Kant but, on the contrary, of a Kantian critique of Hegel. Despite constant attempts to bring Benjamin's insights more into line with the Marxist "Ideologiekritik" of pre-Hegelian Idealism, Adorno's work remained in one central strand at least a development of the Benjaminian position that it is Kant who provides the only viable basis for a materialist inversion of Idealism. [40]

We must at this point, however, reiterate again the other aspect to this question. Adorno's conception has, of course, not been understood where it has not been recognized that, as we have said, this Kantian Absolute to which subjectivity alone has access is itself a myth. Like the Judaic God, the antinomic idea of the Absolute *can* function as a counter-myth to the mythical experience of first and second Nature, as an empowerment of Man to realize that modernity which he has in fact not yet even begun to realize - and this precisely inasmuch as it can function to situate the "whole" as a "false whole" in a way which "theory" qua immanently-focussed dialectics is structurally debarred from doing. But like the Judaic God also, this Absolute's absolute opposition to Nature can easily flip over into an absolute identity with this latter. Myth as counter-myth can become simply myth as myth. This will certainly occur wherever the antinomic subjective experience of the Absolute endures a moment longer or attains a fraction more substantiality than is necessary for it to fulfill its *function* of situating the *"whole"* as the real object of dialectics' critique, a function which dialectics is unable to fulfill for itself.

It is essential to recognize that the "differentia specifica" which renders Adorno's thought quite distinct from the thought of Kant or of earlier Kantian thinkers like the later Fichte or the young Schlegel is the considerable intensification, in Adorno's twentieth-century body of work, of the moment of insistence on any transcendence's necessary "Immanenzbezogenheit" - that is, on any such Absolute as is mobilized here's having a purely

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[40] This is not to say that one does not encounter within the corpus of classical Critical Theory - indeed even within that particular part of this corpus, largely exclusive of the early Horkheimer and his continuator Marcuse, on which we have chosen to focus - genuine instances of a dogmatic Hegelian-Marxist approach to Kant. Horkheimer was, as we have remarked above, unfortunately often his own continuator in the way of dogmatic Hegelian Marxism for several years after the apparent 1940 watershed in classical Critical Theory. The treatment of Kant's moral philosophy in the "Juliette, or Enlightenment and Morality" chapter of the "Dialectic of Enlightenment", for example - plainly exclusively Horkheimer's work - constitutes a persistence into the - to use Dubiel's terms - post-Marxist period of the "critique of instrumental reason" of the most heavy-handed ideology-critical methods of the period of Marxist "interdisciplinary materialism". It would be theoretically disastrous to take Horkheimer and Adorno at their word and to look upon the crude Heinian reduction of Kant which Horkheimer attempts in this chapter as a statement also of Adorno's philosophical position. It is not until well into the post-war period that Horkheimer began to recognize that "materialist" function of Kant's "antinomic" thought which Adorno and Benjamin had recognized all along (see, for instance, Horkheimer's 1962 paper "Kant's Philosophy and the Enlightenment").

functional and *negative / negatory* status. We must, of course, even here be careful not to pass ignorant judgements as to what systems like Kant's, Fichte's and Schlegel's have and do not have to offer. There are surely only a handful of people alive today who have even read through the works of any one of these writers in their full daunting mass, let alone meditated on all that is implicit in the structure of their arguments. But there certainly inheres another, more dire sort of ignorance in failing to see how we are addressed by Adorno's work in a way in which we are no longer directly addressed by Kant's.

Where in the works of the philosophers of the "Goethezeit" such propositions as the proposition that the subject is an "image of God" or a "function of the Absolute" at least sometimes appear to coincide fully with the propositions of positive theology and the dogma of the established church, in Adorno's work there is (almost) never any equivocation on the status of such theological ideas as that which we have seen mobilized in the "Minima Moralia"'s "Goldprobe" and "Zum Ende". All such propositions appear with their verbs consistently in the subjunctive : "Vom Selbst *wäre* theologisch zu reden..." "Philosophie *wäre* der Versuch, alle Dinge so zu betrachten, wie sie vom Standpunkt der Erlösung aus sich darstellten." The idea of the Absolute, and of the self as grounded in the Absolute, are for Adorno precisely not "absolutes", but rather *means* by which the subject distances himself from that continuum of immanence which is, under present conditions, a continuum of thorough falsity. That "antinomics" propounded by the pre-Hegelian Idealist systems has, it might be said, for Adorno in itself no truth. It stands, as we have seen, exclusively in the service of a dialectics which can only realize *its* essentially immanent truth by a "step out of immanence" - a step which dialectics is incapable, of itself, of taking. Radically negative propositions like "the whole is the untrue" are consequently the *only* sort of propositions which the classical Critical-Theoretical subject is really empowered, by the mobilization of theological propositions, to make. Adorno would not have wished to see this subject empowered, by the mobilization of such propositions, to make any statement about what is positively *true* , inside of or outside of the "false whole".

By this very token, however, "antinomics" can be said to have after all, for classical Critical Theory, its specific and even in a sense its positive truth. The classical Critical-Theoretical subject *is* after all in one sense "grounded" in the Absolute : in the sense that, without reference to the *myth* , to the purely negative and negatory idea, of the Absolute, subjectivity *would really be* no more than that shell of subjectivity which is the end product of

the dialectic of enlightenment. The proposition "the whole is the untrue" is not just any arbitrary proposition which might or might not be enunciated by the classical Critical-Theoretical subject at any time. It is only in enunciating this proposition - which negativistically situates and distances the entirety of our experience as previous conceptions of the Absolute, which dogmatically contrasted a "here below" to a "beyond", had positivistically situated and distanced this entirety - that the subject maintains itself *as* a subject, that it preserves for its thought and practice a moment of other-than-falsity in the continuum of thoroughgoing falsity.

This was certainly what Horkheimer meant when he spoke in his last years of how Critical Theory was always determined by the desire for the Absolute and of how politics which dispensed with the moment of the theological became mere business. Adorno, however, as always, was more nuanced than Horkheimer in his analyses of this problem. Sometimes, indeed, we come upon passages or lines in Adorno's writings which express precisely the idea of the subject's being constituted as a subject only by the longing that all that is be negated and transformed - for example the concluding proposition of the "Minima Moralia"'s "Prinzessin Eidechse" : "In the end, the soul itself is nothing but the longing of the thing without a soul for salvation." [41] In other passages, however, particularly from Adorno's later work, the theme of the necessity to supplement dialectical, objective thought with a moment of "experiential", subjective thought seems to be developed without the recognition of a correlative need, wherever "subjectivity" is drawn upon in this way, to draw also on the idea of a negative transcendence.

This is the case, for instance, as regards a passage from the introduction to Adorno's "Negative Dialectics" - a passage which speaks more directly, perhaps, than any other passage in this text to the reader's immediate social experience but which remains somewhat problematical in its philosophical status and foundation. "In sharp contrast to the usual scientific ideal," writes Adorno here, developing certain themes of that passage from the "Negative Dialectics" discussed in the introductory remarks to this part of our study, "the objectivity of dialectical cognition requires not an elimination but an accentuation of the subjective. Otherwise, philosophical experience itself withers away. But the positivist spirit of our age is allergic to such an idea. 'Not everyone,' we hear, 'is capable of such an experience ; it necessarily takes the form of a privilege enjoyed by certain individuals, determined by their

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[41] Adorno, "Minima Moralia", p. 170.

talents and by their personal history ; to claim this experience to be a condition of true cognition is elitist and undemocratic.'...(This) argument, although it puts on democratic airs, ignores what our administered world has made of those who have no choice but to be participants in it. Intellectual resistance to such a world can be offered only by those whom it has failed to entirely model to its ends. The critique of privilege has become a privilege - the way of this world is really so dialectical...It is up to those who happen in their mental constitution to have escaped a complete adaptation and adjustment to the ruling norms - a piece of 'luck' for which they pay dearly enough in their relations with the world around them - to enunciate, with great moral effort and as it were as spokesmen, that which most of those for whom they thereby speak are unable or unwilling to see. The criterion of truth is not its immediate communicability to all. We must resist the almost universal pressure to confound the communication of knowledge with knowledge itself and even to place the former before the latter, because here and now every step taken toward communication in fact falsifies and betrays truth." [42a]

The authenticity of the experience which classical Critical Theory articulates shines out of this passage. It expresses the glaring truth about our society that most people in it do not and even cannot begin to reason - a truth which strikes at post-classical, communications-philosophical Critical Theory in its very foundations. It also, however, undeniably gives occasion to one of post-classical Critical Theory's most effective " *tu quoque*"s. The Herculean "moral effort" of that classical Critical-Theoretical subject who denounces the whole as untrue - of that utterly isolated figure who states that every step taken toward communication necessarily betrays the truth - is as mysterious in its ultimate source and origin as the "decency" and "goodness" which have been the matter of naive moral parable and folk-tale since time immemorial. Much more mysterious, in fact, since in the context of such naive moral narratives the nurture and support of a community of fellow subjects is at least not in principle excluded as their protagonists' "goodness"'s ultimate causal origin, whereas on Adorno's vision the "moral effort" of the Critical Theorist is one which is expended by definition without benefit of, indeed directly *against*, all community. Post-classical Critical Theory seems well justified, then, in asking how the classical Critical-Theoretical subject could possibly *sustain* such a "moral effort" were he really doing what he believes himself to be doing and critiquing his social world as a "false whole". For Habermas and his generation, there is only one course

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[42a] Adorno, "Negative Dialectics", pps. 40-41.

to be taken in clearing up this anomaly of the classical Critical Theorist's very capacity for "moral effort". The Critical Theorist as Adorno conceived of him - and indeed all those figures from Socrates to Nietzsche who to all appearances took up a position quite outside of their respective speech-communities and critiqued them as "wholes" - were in fact never in such a position at all. Their critiques of communicative practices, no matter to what point of negativism these critiques may have been developed, were always also by their very nature *communicated* critiques, critiques *addressed to* and demanding a *response from* other speaking subjects. And for this reason, these very critiques confirmed that what was "false" in the critiqued communal practices was something less than these practices' "whole". [42]

In the face of the apparently merely immanentistic, sociological account of the position of the Critical Theorist in society which Adorno gives in the passage which we have just cited, such Habermasian logic seems quite sound. For this reason, it is important to recognize that there must be implicit in this passage too, if it is of any real philosophical significance, a Kantian account of the nature of the subject and of his moral as well as cognitive capacities. It is only on the Tugendhatian / Habermasian narrative of "subject-philosophy" as an extended Cartesianism that the sources of subjective "moral effort" must lie *either* in "the subject himself" - an idea which, even without benefit of Wittgensteinian analyses, appears intuitively unsatisfactory - *or* in the nurture and support of a community. On that Kantian narrative with which Adorno's narrative about the subject often, as we have seen, converges, there is a third possibility : the subject draws the moral strength to speak against the "whole" in the name of the "whole" from something *outside* the "whole" - from the thought of an Absolute which limits and situates the whole of immanent experience.

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A major objection to such an idea is that it involves drawing Adorno's position much

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[42] See, for example, Habermas's attempt to expose Rousseau's "existential presentation of self" as in fact a priori communicative and intersubjective in the essay "Individuation Through Socialization : On Mead's Theory of Subjectivity" : "In January 1762 Rousseau writes M. de Malesherbes four letters in which he presents and projects himself as the one who he is and who, with the will to authenticity, he wants to be. With growing intensity and desperation, he continues this existential presentation of self in his 'Confessions', later in the 'Dialogues' and finally in the 'Reveries of a Solitary Walker'. But those initial letters already name the communicative presuppositions for the public process of mercilessly reaching self-understanding and of assuring oneself of one's identity. Rousseau turns to Malesherbes with his revelations in order to justify himself before him : 'You will pass judgement when I have said everything'. Of course, the addressee is only the representative of an omnipresent public. The form of the letter does indeed indicate the private character of the contents ; but the claim to radical sincerity with which Rousseau writes these letters requires unrestricted publicity." ("Post-Metaphysical Thinking", p.166.)

too close to that of the philosopher who is normally understood to be his very antipodes : Martin Heidegger. The enduring enmity between Adorno and Heidegger - evidenced by the "Negative Dialectics", "The Jargon of Authenticity" and numerous other classical Critical-Theoretical texts - would seem *prima facie* if not to provide an infallible touchstone for the establishment of the accuracy of an exegesis of the former's philosophical position, then at least to provide an infallible touchstone for the establishment of such an exegesis's inaccuracy. No understanding of Adorno which involves placing him in intellectual contiguity to that philosopher of "Being" whose ideas he consistently rejected more vehemently than he rejected those of any other thinker, it might be thought, can possibly be a correct understanding.

Obviously, the argument of the present study requires us at least to interrogate this *prima facie* certainty. In the first place, the limitations of Adorno's critique of Heidegger's philosophy must be clearly recognized. It has become generally accepted as a cultural-historical fact in the milieu of second- and third-generation Critical Theory that Adorno never seriously studied the work of such a key twentieth-century philosopher as Wittgenstein - in either its Tractarian or its ordinary-language phase. What is much less often recognized - or at least much less often admitted to have been recognized - in this milieu is the equally obvious cultural-historical fact that Adorno never seriously studied the work of Heidegger either. If Adorno was able to give the impression, in texts like the "Negative Dialectics", of knowing something about Heidegger's work, this was only because he was able to trade on his genuine familiarity with the particular form of phenomenology developed by Heidegger's teacher Husserl and to pass off Heidegger's own "Fundamentalontologie" as a mere school of Husserlianism - a procedure questionable already as regards "Being and Time", and completely indefensible as regards Heidegger's later work. No philosophically informed reader of the "Relation to Ontology" chapter of the "Negative Dialectics", for instance, can fail to be struck by this. Adorno tends here first to reductively identify key philosophical arguments of the later Heidegger as mere inflations of such elements of Husserlian doctrine as the "Wesensschau" and the phenomenological "epoche". He then frequently presents to the reader those solid refutations of Husserlian positions which he had worked out for himself already in the mid-nineteen thirties in the course of writing his doctoral thesis at Oxford as refutations of positions which Heidegger had begun to argue for only in the nineteen-fifties

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and sixties. [43]

How, then, do things really stand philosophically between Adorno and Heidegger ? Since we have presented classical Critical Theory in this study as a Kantian theory of the "limited whole", must we try to explain Adorno's undeniable rejection of the idea of a distinction between the "world" and the "being of the world" in its Heideggerian form - his contemptuous dismissal in all his writings of the "ontological difference" - solely at the level just suggested : that is, simply as an inconsistency or as a lapse of philosophical seriousness on Adorno's part ? Or can perhaps Adorno's critique of the specifically Heideggerian conception of the "whole as limited whole" be seen to be - notwithstanding the undeniable element of *ignoratio elenchi* involved in this critique - consistent with the complex stipulations which we have seen classical Critical Theory to lay upon the mobilization of the ideas of transcendence and of the Absolute ? Might Adorno have been prompted to reject Heidegger's ontological position not, as is often assumed, simply because it *was* an ontological - as opposed to a "historical" or "materialist" - position but rather because it was the *wrong* ontological position ? Could Heidegger's particular doctrine of the Absolute have been anathematic to classical Critical Theory for just the reason that we have suggested certain other doctrines of the Absolute were anathematic to it - for the reason that it was in the last analysis too *immanentistic*, too *Hegelian* a doctrine of the Absolute ?

In order to try to answer these questions, we must first remind ourselves briefly of the actual nature of Heidegger's mature philosophy. There appear *prima facie* to be good reasons for situating Heidegger's work firmly in the Platonic and Kantian rather than the Hegelian tradition. Heidegger's ideas are perhaps best characterized in terms of an extended experiment in the possible continuing uses, in the twentieth century, of the perennial philosophical categories of the constituting and the constituted. The adjective "perennial" is not an exaggeration. Already Plato's system of philosophy can be characterized in these terms. As we have mentioned in our review of Tugendhat's account of "Being-philosophy" in Chapter One, Plato understood the empirical universe to be a "constitutum" directly and substantively determined as all that it was by constitutive but transcendent Ideas. This ontological relation of substantive determination obtaining between transcendence and immanence had in Plato its practical-philosophical consequences, or rather there had grown up in his thought side by side the ideas of ontical and moral determination of the constituted

43 See, for example, "Negative Dialectics", p. 82.

order by the constituting. The practical-philosophical arguments of the early, "Socratic" dialogues invariably turn on the ontological assumption - shared by Socrates and even his most recalcitrant interlocutors - that a clear distinction is possible between an entity as it empirically exists and an entity "kath' auton", between the constituted shepherd and the Idea of a shepherd according to which he has been, in his empirical being, constituted. [44] This distinction, and the correlative relation it implies, is the motor of Plato's ethics : the constituted world is constitutively called upon to approximate to the constituting.

The central weakness of all such "ontological ethics", however, is brought to light first by Aristotle. His critique of the Platonic Idea of the good in the "Nichomachean Ethics" might be described as a first step on a path almost exhaustive of European philosophical investigation as a whole over the centuries to come : the path of the recognition that what Plato had placed on the side of the constituting order was usually more plausibly placed on the side of the constituted. By raising questions here about the relation between the Greek term "agathos" and "to agathos" as it functioned in Plato's order of Ideas, Aristotle initiated a long tradition of exposing concepts presented as "unconditioned" as in fact "conditioned". He laid the first foundations for our present reaction of mild amusement at the idea that a culture can look for its ontological orientation to elements of its own common vocabulary interpreted "in the strict sense" ("akribestaton") - as if this very "strict sense" were not itself inevitably a function of culture. The same goes of course for that moral orientation which for Plato was consubstantial with the ontological. As we have seen Adorno to have noted in his 1942 "Scribble-In book", "bourgeois" moral philosophy in a sense begins with Aristotle and his turn away from "the Platonic Utopia". With the becoming incredible of the vision of an order of the constituting radically independent of the order of the constituted, there became incredible too the idea of an acting subject achieving, as had the Platonic Socrates, a radical distantiation from the social order which men had actually happened to make. Moral opposition to the existing became on ontological grounds a "loyal opposition" in a way it had not been obliged to be in Plato.

This emptying of the content of the category of the constituting into the category of the constituted continued apace throughout post-Aristotelian cultural history. The non-philosophical sciences forced upon philosophy greater and greater masses of evidence for the mediatedness of all purported Absolutes by the specific structures of language and

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[44] The example, of course, is taken from Socrates' argument against Thrasymachus - the validity of the premisses of which Thrasymachus accepts - in Book One of the "Republic" (345 c-d).

history and the claim that the moral critique of the existing could, in Platonic fashion, dispense with a lever situated somewhere in the order of this existing became correspondingly weaker. At the end of the eighteenth century, the basic paradigm, at least, of philosophy as a study of the relation between constituting and constituted orders still seemed viable, and Kant attempted to give it new and contemporary form by conceiving of the universe as a constituted field of phenomena arising from the meeting of the unconstituted, constituting factors of noumenal "Dinge an sich" and transcendental human subjectivity. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the categories of constituting and constituted orders themselves seemed on the point of having to be abandoned. Even the elements of Kant's unconstituted constitutings - those transcendental-subjective forms and categories which had seemed to Kant as non-substantial and thereby as philosophically inassailable as had Plato's objects "kath' auton" to Plato - had begun to reveal their "substantiality", the cultural and historical contingency of the concepts of space, time and causality on which they were modelled. The category of the constituting was empty. There was nothing any longer plausibly presentable as a ground and guide of culture transcendent of culture. The Platonic model of moral orientation was likewise in crisis. Despite the survival by inertia of broad neo-Kantian and neo-Hegelian movements in moral philosophy, the age was an age of moral immanence.

It was Nietzsche who said what had to be said at this point in European cultural history, in this as in so many other matters. With his "How the Real World At Last Became a Myth" [45], a concise aphoristic essay in his "Twilight of the Idols" of 1887, he declared the categories constituting and constituted orders, which had organized philosophical investigation since Plato, once and for all dissolved. The essay takes the form of six numbered "steps" in "the history of an error", or rather in the process of disabusement from an error, since "number one" is explicitly stated to be Plato's position on the relation between the real and the apparent world and the last to be Nietzsche's, or "Zarathustra"'s, own. The Platonic position is described in terms similar to those we have outlined. In its naivety, it holds "the true world", the constituting order of Ideas "kath' auton", to be "accessible to the wise, the pious, the just" in the immediate forms of their culture : "I, Plato, am the truth." By step three of the process - a "Königsbergian" position arrived at, for Nietzsche, by way of Jerusalem - the "true world" has become inaccessible, a "sun shining through northern fog". The order of the constituting has

45 • See the "Complete Works of Nietzsche" (Levy edition, Foulis Publishers, London and Edinburgh, 1911), Volume Sixteen, pps. 24-25.

taken the form of Kant's apparatus of transcendental subjectivity, which hopes to preserve itself from recuperation into the order of the constituted by untenable claims of pure formality and absolute necessity. The definitive, Nietzschean steps are the penultimate and the ultimate. With the emergence of a full consciousness of the historical and cultural contingency of ideas like the Kantian "categories", the "true world" becomes "an idea which is of no more use for anything, which no longer even obliges to anything - a useless idea, a superfluous idea, and therefore a refuted idea : let us get rid of it !" But as we have noted, to "get rid of" the idea of an order of the constituting is to "get rid of" its whole paradigm, the whole mental grid which made it possible : "We have got rid of the true world. What world remains ? The apparent world, perhaps ? But no ! With the true world we have also got rid of the apparent !"

The corollary to this ontological "noon" to Plato's "midnight" was, of course, Nietzsche's practical philosophy, the consistent development of the idea that there was no longer a "true world" which might "oblige us to anything". Nietzsche differed from all those millions of his contemporaries who had registered the collapse of the moral constituting into the moral constituted - of necessary divine law into contingent human law - in that he faced all the consequences which really flowed from this. That Nietzsche wrote that "God is dead" is no sort of characterization of his philosophy. We can find the same idea expressed in much the same language two generations earlier in the work of Jean Paul or Wilhelm Müller. What characterizes Nietzsche is, of course, rather his conclusion from this death of God that Man, too, "God's shadow" is essentially dead, that the task of "fidelity to the earth" which had already faced the "philosophes" of the eighteenth century has to be confronted by subjects as bereft of the apparatus of humanism as of that of deism or theology.

We cannot discuss here exactly what kind of moral stance in the world flows from this consistent immanentism of Nietzsche's. Suffice it to say that even the most cursory examination of his writings shows this stance not to be exclusively the "post-modern bourgeois liberal ironist" stance which thinkers like Richard Rorty today attempt to construe as Nietzsche's message. Nor, however, can Nietzsche's thought be claimed to offer any firm and viable alternative to that "bourgeois" moral philosophy, that self-contented tarrying in the existent "faute de mieux", which had its inception in Aristotle. Nietzsche's thought teeters constantly, as regards its moral and political pathos, between that horror at the existing which Adorno treasured in his writings and that complaisance in it which Lukács mocked in them.

It is here that Heidegger's work can be argued to find its place and function. Nietzsche

was for Heidegger *the* thinker of late modernity, the thinker who most needed to be addressed. But the relation between these two philosophers was not necessarily the relation of "kindred spirits" which those whose knowledge of their work extends only to the information that they were "both Nazis" tend to assume it to have been. Whatever political choices Heidegger made, it is plain from every line of his work that he was constitutionally incapable of taking in philosophy that moral-ontological path which Nietzsche had taken. If everyone is born either a Platonist or an Aristotelian, Heidegger's constitution had in it at least a strain of pure Platonism strong enough to survive even the climate of the twentieth century, when, as we have seen, the very framework of Platonist thought seemed to have irremediably collapsed. Heidegger's reaction to Nietzsche was one of admiration for his consistency in dismantling the very categories of constituting and constituted in philosophy, coupled with instinctual resistance to the dilemma of actively barbarous "Übermenschlichkeit" and passively barbarous liberal "Menschlichkeit" which seemed to follow from this dismantling. And his response was to refuse the dilemma by refusing the dismantling.

It was of course not possible to refuse the constatation which had prompted the dismantling of the ideas of constituting and constituted orders : the constatation of the emptiness, in late modernity, of the category of the constituting. For Heidegger to have raised any element of that vast field now recognized to be a field of through and through human culture to the status of a constituting principle for this culture would have been only to repeat, anachronistically and ridiculously, Platonic or at best Kantian errors. Heidegger, therefore, undertook the experiment of preserving the category of the constituting precisely *as* an empty category. His conception of Being was just this : the idea of a world-constituting instance conceived in full recognition of the impossibility of nominating for it any ontical image, of concretizing it in terms of any "being" such as "goodness in the strict sense" or "transcendental subjectivity". The order of the constituting - of "Being" or of the "ontological" as opposed to the "ontical" - became in Heidegger's work more purely functional than in the work of any previous philosopher. It had itself no content, and survived only in order to *block* the conclusion arrived at in Nietzsche's "How the Real World Became At Last A Myth" : the conclusion that it was *meaningless* to speak of the existing as less than absolute.

In this way, Heidegger's "Being" seems capable of functioning as we have claimed Kant's idea of the Absolute might function : to provide the vantage point of a "utopian" topos from which a *critical* perspective upon the "whole" of the existing might still legitimately be

taken up. That is to say, Heideggerian "Fundamentalontologie" appears *prima facie* to be basically solidary with that Kantian tradition of the theorization of the Absolute as a means of "condemning" the existing as a "*mere* existing" which we have discussed from Chapter One of this study onward and within which we have tried to situate the thought of the classical Critical Theorists. Adorno's critique of Heidegger, however, was aimed precisely at denying the latter's work this function, at showing that the Heideggerian Absolute - the "Being of beings" at the centre of the doctrine of "Fundamentalontologie" - could not, like the Kantian Absolute, serve to distance the subject critically from the falsity of the "whole".

We will not have space here to adequately discuss the complex question of whether Adorno actually *succeeded* in showing this or not, whether Heidegger *was* in fact satisfactorily demonstrated in Adorno's writings to be an insufficiently transcendent thinker. What it is sufficient in the present context to recognize is that this was the primary *intention* behind Adorno's Heidegger critique. Contrary to a widespread misconception, Adorno did not reject Heidegger's philosophy in the vulgar Marxist spirit of a general rejection of metaphysics, of "ontology" *per se* . The issue between Adorno and Heidegger was not the issue of *whether* philosophical and political thinkers needed to place the idea of transcendence at the centre of all their thought, but only the issue of *what kind* of transcendence needed to be seen to play a determinant role in both these fields of problems. What is more, Adorno's arguments often suggest that the idea of transcendence inherent in Heidegger's thought can be aligned with that ambiguous and metaphysically deficient Hegelian concept of transcendence which we have seen classical Critical Theory to reject throughout this study. These arguments oppose to this Hegelian concept a concept definitely Kantian in substance.

I think this can be demonstrated by a brief review of the opening arguments of one of Adorno's best-known polemics against Heidegger, the 1964 "Jargon der Eigentlichkeit" ("Jargon of Authenticity"). The attentive reader of this text is persistently struck by the fact that the critique of the "sacral" and the "theological" here is seldom if ever a critique of these ideas *per se* . As a rule, Adorno's reproaches are directed against what he claims is the undue "rapprochement", in Heidegger's thought, of the "sacral" order to the order of immanence. This is the case, for example, where he plays off Benjamin's mystical theory of language against Heidegger's claims that German and Greek terms like "Sein" and "ontos on" constitute direct expressions, in their very empirical linguistic form, of a transcendent truth : "The transcendence which Heidegger accords to the individual word is a secondary, a ready-made,

transcendence : a changeling substituted for that transcendence which has been lost to us. Elements of empirical language are manipulated in their fixity, as if they were elements of a true and revealed language." [46] The false existentialist usage of "sacred words" is here implicitly contrasted with the possibility of a true usage of such words suggested by Benjamin's philosophy.

Shortly afterward, Adorno shows even more clearly that, for him, the issue is not *whether* the idea of a transcendent Absolute needs to play a central role in modern philosophical thought or not, but rather only *what* kind of a role this indispensable idea must play. The quarrel between Adorno and the Heideggerians in "The Jargon of Authenticity" is here seen to be whether this idea is *directly* or only *very arduously* graspable : "Against that highest thing (das Oberste), which must be thought but which is recalcitrant to being thought, the jargon of authenticity offends, because this jargon pretends to already - 'always already', as the 'authentics' themselves would put it - have this highest thing in its grasp." [47] Here, Adorno accuses the "authentics" of a kind of amphiboly of reason, of a presentation of that which is only *thinkable* as if it were empirically *experienceable* . The form of the critique is classically Kantian, and its object is implicitly cast in the role of a kind of Hegelianism. The Heideggerians' conviction that they hold ontological and moral truth "always already" in their grasp constitutes, it is implied, an intensification of the late Hegelian position that "Geist" is fully immanent in Nature, that "the real is the rational."

To this "Hegelian" position, then, Adorno opposes that "Hegelianism-become-Kantianism" - that conception of the "philosophy of the whole" as a "mirror-writing" expressive only of that which the "whole" is *not* - which we have examined in section four of this chapter. With the "jargon of authenticity", "hypocrisy becomes an *a priori* : ordinary language (alltägliche Sprache) is spoken here and now as if it were the language of God (die heilige)." [48] But "ordinary language" cannot express the truth about the Absolute by discoursing upon, or in such a manner as to imply, this Absolute's *presence* in the world. Karl Kraus once wrote that "the true believers are those who feel God to be *wanting* in this world" ("die wahren Gläubigen sind es, die das Göttliche vermissen."), and Adorno echoes him in writing in "The Jargon of Authenticity" that "to the language of God, profane language could approximate only by a

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[46] "Jargon of Authenticity", Northwestern University Press, 1973, p. 7.
[47] Ibid. p. 11.
[48] Ibid. p. 12

distantiation from the tone of holiness, not by an imitation of this tone." [49] The whole

difference between Adorno's position and the position of Heidegger - or at least Heidegger's

position as Adorno presents it in texts like "The Jargon of Authenticity" - can be said, without

trivialization, to inhere in this question of "tone". Where philosophical thought grasps too

eagerly at transcendence, taking on the discursive airs of a positive religion, it drives itself

deeper into immanence, into "myth" in the sense which occupied us throughout Chapter

Three. It is only where philosophy turns its attention initially and earnestly toward the nature of

the immanent that it has any hope of attaining, by the *via negativa* of the construction of the

idea of what this immanent is not, to a transcendence that will sustain itself against "mere

Nature". Nevertheless, it is the attainment of this transcendence which in the end counts.

Adorno, then, rejects Heideggerianism not because it is a metaphysical doctrine of

transcendence but, on the contrary, because its particular metaphysics fails, in his view, to

offer any real hope of transcendence. He implicitly opposes his own and Benjamin's doctrine

as a form of Kantianism to Heidegger's "Hegelianism". It must be noted, however, that this

opposition may rest on fundamentally false presuppositions. As our account of the structure

of Heidegger's philosophy above has already suggested, there is at least a powerful strain of

"antinomical", Kantian thought in Heidegger's work. Adorno systematically obscures this

strain by misinterpreting, in texts like "The Jargon of Authenticity" key Heideggerian

concepts. For example, in the passages which we have cited, Adorno makes great critical play

of the characteristic Heideggerian adverbial phrase "always already" or "je schon". He takes

this phrase, plainly, to be synonymous with "always and everywhere", and interprets its

frequent usage in Heideggerian literature as an indication that Heidegger and his followers

believed philosophical and moral truth to be somehow "always and everywhere" immediately

in their grasp. For Adorno, a statement like that in "Being and Time" to the effect that the

reconciled, solidary human condition of "Mitsein" or "being-with" with one's fellow men

"always already precedes" the conflictual human condition of "passing-one-another-by" could

only mean that Heidegger was claiming that human society is and has always been at bottom a

reconciled and harmonious one, that, as we have said, Heidegger's thought represented an

intensification of the political and moral complacency expressed in the late Hegel's conviction

that "the real is the rational". To what he took to be the ideology of "always and everywhere"

Adorno opposed a doctrine focussed on the "here and now", The latter phrase occurs in

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[49] Ibid.

"The Jargon of Authenticity" with roughly the same frequency as the phrase "always already" does in "Being and Time". "Here and now", insists Adorno, "being-with" does not take precedence over "passing-one-another-by". "Here and now", the highest truth remains beyond our grasp.

But all this is based on a - probably wilful - misunderstanding of what the phrase "always already" actually signifies in Heidegger's work. When Heidegger speaks of a state of affairs "always already" obtaining, he is not, of course, claiming that this state of affairs is - let alone has "always and everywhere" been - immediately and immanently the case. In "Being and Time", "je schon" is generally contrasted, as a designation of *ontological* truth, with "zuerst und zumeist" ("firstly and mostly") as a designation of *ontical* truth. Heidegger's adherence, for example, to the conviction that communal and solidary "being-with" takes precedence "always already" - that is, ontologically - over individual and antagonistic "being-there" no more clashes with the recognition that the really existing human world is an individualistic and antagonistic one than Kant's adherence to the conviction that Man is noumenally free clashes with his acceptance of the determination of all empirical human beings by "natural causality", or than Adorno's own adherence to the Hegelian principle of the "constituted-ness" of the "fact-value" distinction clashes with his recognition that this distinction is part of the practically irrecusable "truth of a false world". Adorno is simply at fault here, and his refusal to recognize the real status of the Heideggerian "always already" has led to bad scholarship among his exegetes, too. The Northwestern University Press edition of "The Jargon of Authenticity" gives Adorno's polemic against Heidegger an illegitimate helping hand by translating the Heideggerian term "je schon" where it appears in Adorno's text in a sense exclusively Adornian, as "from the beginning of time." [50]

In one respect at least, however, Adorno's critique, in "The Jargon of Authenticity", of that immanentistic "transfiguration of the existing" which he takes to be Heideggerian "Fundamentalontologie" *can* be harnessed to the service of the argument of the present study. Although the doctrine which Adorno undertakes to critique in this text bears little resemblance to Heidegger's, it does, remarkably, bear a striking resemblance to Habermas's. Insofar as present-day accounts of the development of Critical Theory discuss the question of Adorno's philosophical relation to Heidegger at all, they tend to portray it in terms strongly influenced by Habermas's general conception of the nature of the philosophical discourse of

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[50] See ibid. p. 11.

modernity - to portray it, that is, as a confrontation between "enlightenment" and "counter-enlightenment", "metaphysics" and "post-metaphysics". Implicit in such portrayals, indeed, is the even more strongly Habermasian position that Adorno, since he was a less "metaphysical", a more "rational" thinker than Heidegger, was incipiently a more "communication-philosophical" thinker as well. From the Habermasian point of view of much present-day Frankfurt School historiography, it goes without saying that when the schools of modern philosophy are drawn up into their lines of battle, Habermas and Adorno, for all their methodological differences, stand together on one side, and Heidegger against them both on the other.

It is strange, then, to have to note that, in "The Jargon of Authenticity", Adorno identifies Heideggerian existentialism's apparently radically individualist conception of language as in essence just another form of "communicative mischief" ("das kommunikative Unwesen"). Adorno understands the bad immanentism which glorifies positive transcendence and the bad immanentism which glorifies inner-worldly communication as in fact two sides of the same coin. The identity of these two apparently opposed doctrines manifests itself concretely in the form of the centrality, in that declining existentialist culture which was the object of Adorno's critique, of the ideal of the "Begegnung", the "Ich / Du" encounter in which the "authenticity" of the existentialist subject came to be expressed within the nurturing context of a like-minded community. Adorno condemns these "Begegnungen" in terms which, had he lived on into the nineteen-eighties and 'nineties, he might have applied without alteration to the "intersubjectivity" of the adepts of the "ethics of discourse" : "(As the 'Ich-Du' relation), communication supposedly becomes a supra-psychological instance - something which in fact it can only be where there is a moment of objective truth contained in what is communicated." [51]

From this perspective, it is Habermas and (Adorno's) Heidegger who must be seen to stand as philosophical allies over against Adorno. Speaking in the theological terms which alone cut to the heart of the problem of what has occurred in Critical Theory over the past thirty years, we might say that Habermas and this Heidegger are solidary with one another as *Catholic* thinkers - theorists of a divinity which extends as it were "horizontally" through the community of believers and finds its actuality in such a community alone. Adorno stands against both of them as a *Judaic* or, perhaps better, as a genuinely *Gnostic* thinker - a theorist

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[51] Ibid. p. 13.

of a divinity accessible only "vertically", by a step out of the axis of immanent community altogether into the order of what the existing human community is constitutively *not*. Adorno himself in fact argues against the "catholicity" of existentialist "Begegnungen" in precisely these theological terms, drawing into the ambit of his critique of Heidegger Habermas's great precursor in the theory of "the ethics of dialogue", Martin Buber : "Ever since Buber split Kierkegaard's concept of the 'existential' away from the Christological context in which this latter had developed it and manicured this 'existential' into a mere 'stance', there has ruled the tendency to present metaphysical content in general as essentially linked to the so-called 'Ich-Du relation'. This metaphysical content is referred back to the immediacy of lived life, theology is tied to determinations of the immanent order, which determinations in turn aspire to make themselves more than immanent by playing on the resonances of the theological." [52]

This is an appropriate point at which to conclude our argument that the Kantian idea of absolute transcendence constitutes a second element in classical Critical Theory - beside that first, likewise Kantian, element of a recognition of the irresistible "pressure of the problem of naturalism" discussed in Chapter Three - quite elusive of sublation into the "paradigm of the theory of communication" favoured by the Theory's post-classical, Habermasian form. Where the Kantian principle that "in mundo non datur hiatus" - that the logic of thoroughgoing naturalism remains immanently irrecusable - tends, as we have seen, to as it were "undercut" the whole Habermasian idea of an "*a priori* communicative intersubjectivity", the Kantian principle of an Absolute chorismatic from, not immanent in, human experience tends as it were to "overarch" this "communicative intersubjectivity" which Habermas makes the foundation of his whole social philosophy. Where Adorno's critique of thinkers like Buber is accepted, and "theology" no longer "tied to determinations of the immanent order", the "communication community" which is the be all and end all of second-generation Critical Theory can be *situated , as a whole* . Moral and political, as well as ontological, truth is no longer by structural or "grammatical" necessity an affair of "horizontality", catholic communicativity, alone. The "whole" has a position also on a certain "vertical" axis. And on this axis it is definable as a "whole" that is "untrue".

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[52] Ibid. p. 16.

CONCLUSIONS : THE MOMENT OF MODERNITY.

If the portrait which has been drawn of classical Frankfurt School thought in this study is a faithful one, then it is plain that the Habermasian arguments for "a paradigm shift in Critical Theory from the philosophy of consciousness to the theory of communication" are much weaker than this "paradigm shift"'s wide acceptance as a *fait accompli* in both German and Anglo-American "Critical-Theoretical communities" would suggest. We have tried to show here firstly that these arguments often take as their object what amounts to a "straw man". Habermas and Habermasians tend to refer with the terms "philosophy of consciousness" and "philosophy of the subject" to the methodological individualism of a Descartes or a Husserl - as when Habermas writes in his "Theory of Communicative Action" that "in the frame of the philosophy of consciousness, the 'experiencing subject' remains the court of last appeal for analysis." [1] Or, when not to Cartesianism , to refer with them to the immanentistic doctrine of "subject / Absolute" identity propounded by Hegel and by Hegelians like Georg Lukács. The American Habermasian Seyla Benhabib, for example, uses the term "philosophy of the subject" in this sense in her influential "study of the foundations of Critical Theory", "Critique, Norm and Utopia" : "The concepts of 'philosophy of consciousness' and 'philosophy of the subject'" Benhabib writes here, "are not equivalent. As I define it in this work, the philosophy of the subject means, first, that history can be viewed as the work of a collective singular subject that becomes through externalizing itself in the historical process, and second, that emancipation entails our reappropriating the heritage of this subject" [2] We have argued in this study that neither the Cartesian object of this critique nor its Hegelian / Lukácsian object find any essential instantiation in the most important currents of classical Critical Theory. The idea that guides the critique of first-generation Frankfurt School thought mounted by a writer like Seyla Benhabib - the idea that Adorno and Horkheimer were throughout their careers basically Hegelian theorists of a "collective subject of history" - is as at bottom as mistaken an idea as is the obviously mistaken idea that Adorno and Horkheimer were Cartesian methodological individualists directly comparable to Husserl or to the philosophers of British empiricism.

Secondly and more importantly, however, we have argued that the form of the

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[1] Habermas, "Theory of Communicative Action", Volume Two, p. 130 :

[2] Seyla Benhabib, "Critique, Norm and Utopia", p. 393, n. 37.

"philosophy of the subject" which the work of Benjamin, Horkheimer and Adorno actually does instantiate - the Kantian philosophy of subjectivity as trans-mundanely linked to, rather than as in Hegel pantheistically identical with, the Absolute - not only evades the critique of the "theory of communication" but implicitly contains a damning counter-critique of this latter. Habermas's "paradigm of the theory of communication", we have said, remains a programme to be taken philosophically seriously only on the assumption of the validity of certain presuppositions of Hegelian identity-philosophy, or at least of the validity of those twentieth-century homologues to the presuppositions of this philosophy which are to be found in Wittgensteinian "ordinary-language" thought. Confronted by the Kantian "paradigm" of philosophical investigation, however, this "theory of communication" reveals itself as barely a philosophical theory at all. It is, as we have said at the end of Chapter Four, completely *undercut* by the Kantian arguments for the "pressure of the problem of naturalism" and *overarched* by the Kantian idea that the "whole" of the field of communicative interaction which the "theory of communication" takes as its object may itself be ascribed an ontological status, may be characterized as a "*limited* whole", and thereby also conceivably as a "*negative* whole".

Some will doubtless object, however, that the portrait drawn here of classical Critical Theory has not in fact been a faithful one. A main focus of objection will surely be that our account of classical Critical Theory has been an account over-saturated with *myth* : with the myth of positivistic "naturality" as the irrecusable logic of the immanent and with the myth of theologistic transcendence as the sole possible egress from this "naturality". To approach classical Critical Theory in this positivistic / theologistic - this Kantian - manner seems to be to forget or to deny something which is axiomatic for Habermas and his generation and at least *prima facie* plausible for all contemporary students of the Frankfurt School : that Benjamin, Adorno and Horkheimer were, for all their political and philosophical differences with Habermas, nevertheless theorists, in common with Habermas, of the specifically *modern* condition of Man. The strategy which we have chosen in order to try to place classical Critical Theory outside of the range of the accusations which post-classical, Habermasian Critical Theory levels against the "philosophy of consciousness" seems to have involved ceding the cause of "enlightenment", the cause of the transcendence of myth - in short the cause of *modernity* - entirely to Habermas and his generation. Our portrait of the classical Critical Theorists has been a portrait of thinkers setting only myth against myth, thinkers seemingly

not recognizant of any specifically *modern* , post-mythical problematic for social philosophy at all.

There has certainly undeniably been something tendentious in the portrait of classical Critical Theory drawn in this study. But at the present theoretico-political juncture, I believe, there are very good reasons for "bending the stick" in this direction of an emphasis on the "anti-modernism" of classical Frankfurt School thought. An important key to understanding the difference between the positions of the classical and the post-classical forms of Critical Theory is the recognition that these two bodies of thought take up respectively very different positions within that field of questions and answers about "de-mythification" or "demystification" which has been central to progressive social thought since the Enlightenment and has been perhaps the major philosophical preoccupation of the Marxist tradition.

One progressivist position on the demystification of human experience was deathlessly formulated by Marx's friend Heine in his poem "Deutschland : Ein Wintermärchen". Here, Heine polemicizes against the "old song of renunciation" penned, by authors who "preached water and drank wine", to lull "the people" to sleep. Instead of this "alte Entsagungslied", Heine provides a song celebrating and encouraging the "building of the kingdom of heaven on earth", a recognition of the potentialities of the immanent which would "leave heaven to the angels and the sparrows." The premiss of Heine's poetical-political programme, which has certainly found enormous resonance in Marxist and social-democratic culture, is that the force of myth lies entirely "on the side of thought". Nothing more than a virile Enlightenment incredulity towards priests and kings is required to deliver immanence - and indeed transcendence, inasmuch as the only transcendence Man can know on this scheme of things is the transformation of the world into an earthly paradise - into the subjective governance of those who now experience this immanence as the objective order by which they are cruelly governed. This Heinian philosophy has had an interesting career in German culture. It has, of course, as noted, been the very foundation of the main current of socialist approaches to the problem of how to bring Man to that "Mündigkeit" to which Kant's Enlightenment had plainly failed to bring him. Heine has been praised as a great "Aufklärer" by German socialist thinkers from Marx to the ideologues of the German Democratic Republic. He and his views, however, have also been the object of an extraordinarily intense resistance, and not only "from the right".

Heine's whole *persona* - his unquestionably brilliant satires on the Idealist and Romantic ethos in which he had been educated, his innovatorily popular style of lyric verse, his political and social analyses - have called forth in those progressive currents in German culture which continued to draw on the heritage of the "Goethezeit" a hostility which has been all the greater for the knowledge that Heine was indeed a mind and a sensibility to be reckoned with. Karl Kraus, for instance, a figure perhaps epitomizing in his own person alone the most important spiritual elements of that non-Marxist, Idealistically- and Romantically-inspired tradition of radical social critique which has survived until today at the margins of German-speaking culture, devoted numerous pages to the critique of Heine and of all that had followed from him, both culturally and politically. [3] Behind all Kraus's concrete and particular criticisms of Heine, the reader easily senses the basic difference in "cast of mind" and governing conceptual strategy between the two men. Kraus, in contrast to Heine, saw the forces in human existence which had wrung from Man "the old song of renunciation" as rooted "on the side of the object". For Kraus, the spell of the mythical that still weighed upon modernity was not to be broken by any virile Heinian arms of critique, nor even by the still more virile Marxist critique of arms.

Now, Classical and post-classical Critical Theory align themselves, for all their apparent common appurtenance to the Western Marxist tradition, respectively on the Krausian and Heinian side of this divide. As we have seen, Benjamin and Adorno, who both made constant reference to Kraus in their writings, conceived of "demystification" not in the virile Heinian terms of a taking of a - theoretical or literal - axe to the roots of the false world but in the subtler Krausian terms of a pitiless and self-pitiless contemplation of this falsity in its unchanging "false truth." As Winfried Menninghaus feels obliged to warn us, however, a discourse like Benjamin's is so complex in its structure, so dialectical in its approach to any theme as important as myth and mythical experience, that the inattentive reader of Benjamin's texts can easily be misled into identifying the author's stance as precisely a Heinian, an unproblematically "aufklärerisch" one.

This because Benjamin was indeed very critical in his writings of the Romantic project of "reviving" myth as a form of "Sinnstiftung", as a "binding agent" for a modernity which seemed inherently to be tending toward a violent centrifugal disintegration : "Far be it from Benjamin," writes Menninghaus, "to wager on the stabilizing and consoling function of myth in

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[3] For Kraus's remarks on "Deutschland : Ein Wintermärchen", see "Die Fackel", August 1916. See also Kraus, "Heine und die Folgen", "Die Fackel", August 1911.

times of crisis of social legitimization ; violence and delusion remain integral parts of (the) concept of myth throughout his early and late works. But does this imply a regression to an Enlightenment position?" [4].

Clearly, given all that we have said above, it does not. The philosophy of mythical experience which Benjamin was attempting throughout his writings to formulate was a philosophy which laid the foundations for that *consistently* negativistic approach to truth which has been developed since his death by writers like Adorno, Ulrich Sonnemann and Michael Theunissen : a philosophy which could conceive of a condition as absolutely negative, absolutely false without thereby needing to conceive of it as correlatively in the last analysis philosophically negligible, as without "genuine form and function". *Pace* certain forms of Romanticism, Benjamin recommended conceiving of myth as "violent", "delusionary", false. *Pace* the naive Enlightenment critique of myth and of its Romantic revival, he recommended recognizing this violence, this delusion, this *falseness* as *constitutive* of the *truth* of all human historical experience from pre-antiquity to the present day. In this light, as Menninghaus argues, passages from Benjamin's works like the following must be approached with extreme caution if we are not to completely misunderstand the thrust of Benjamin's argument : "To clear fields, where until now only delusion ran rampant, to forge ahead with the whetted axe of reason, looking neither to right nor to left, in order not to fall victim to the horror beckoning from the depths of the primeval forest. At a certain point, reason must clear the entire ground and rid it of the underbrush of delusion and myth." [5]

This, as Menninghaus remarks, *sounds* exactly like "an Enlightenment call to arms" [6]. It evokes the impression of Benjamin's project as one identical to Heine's, to Habermas's : a virile opposition to mythical experience as mere delusion, a rallying-cry to "écrasez l'infâme" and take the step into the immanently accessible realm of freedom. But our having reviewed above the subtle distinctions and complex presuppositions implicit in Benjamin's remarks on mythical experience allows us to recognize with Menninghaus that Benjamin here is "adopting the *topoi* of Enlightenment argumentation...but not resorting to their content" [7] It is only where we bear in mind that Benjamin, *pace* all Enlightenment-style critiques of myth and mythical experience, accords to these latter an enormous degree of "genuine form and

[4] See Menninghaus, in Smith, "Walter Benjamin", p. 296.

[5] Ibid. pps. 297-8, cited from Benjamin "Passagenwerk" (Suhrkamp, 1982) pps 570-71.

[6] Ibid. p. 297.

[7] Ibid. p. 299.

function", an enormous "autonomous dimension", that we can begin to appreciate how subtly and strangely whetted the axe of reason will need to be before its blade will be sharp enough to cut away a single stalk of the underbrush of myth, how irresistibly "the horror" beckons not just from the primeval forest but, like Adorno's Sirens, from within the rational subject itself, and how ambiguous and unfamiliar even that landscape will remain which has been "cleared", by reason, of all "delusion".

It speaks volumes, then, of the philosophical and political ethos animating that Suhrkamp Verlag which provides the material infrastructure for practically the entire literary output of the Habermasian second generation of Critical Theory that it is this passage out of all the several thousand separate passages which compose the "Passagenwerk" which this publishing house has chosen to place on the flyleaf of the paperback edition of this key text of Benjamin's. These lines, which we have heard Menninghaus argue will almost certainly be radically misinterpreted as an undialectically "aufklärerisch", a Habermasian, declaration of "war on myth" where the reader approaches them uninformed and unprepared, appear in the standard popular edition of Benjamin's most important text in precisely a position such that the reader *will* approach them uninformed and unprepared.

This is too regular a feature of the packaging of classical Critical-Theoretical texts in Germany today for it not to say a great deal about the very state of Critical-Theoretical culture after Habermas's "paradigm shift to communication". The Fischer Wissenschaft edition of Horkheimer's "Kritik der Instrumentellen Vernunft" also displays a quotation from the text on its back cover which represents only the "thetic" side of that dialectic between enlightenment and mythology which is Horkheimer's text's essential theme - displays one of the very few quotations from Horkheimer, indeed, which could have stood quite suitably on the back cover of Habermas's "Theory of Communicative Action" : "For better or worse, we are the children of Enlightenment and of technical progress. To resist these through a regression to more primitive levels will not mitigate the permanent crisis which they have produced. On the contrary, such escape-attempts lead from historically rational to the most extremely barbarous forms of social domination. The only way of standing by Nature is to free Nature's apparent opposite, independent thought." [8]

This conscious or unconscious policy on the part of the "quality" German publishing houses of choosing "representative" passages from their publications with an eye to what the

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[8] Horkheimer, "Zur Kritik der Instrumentellen Vernunft" (Fischer Wissenschaft, 1985), back cover.

contemporary - *scilicet* Habermasian - Critical-Theoretical public will feel most "addressed" by ends in the kind of downright misrepresentation of classical Critical Theory which we find on the back cover of Suhrkamp's "Adorno Konferenz 1983." This collection of papers, edited by Habermas himself, is introduced to the potential reader by the following lines, authored by one Klaus Podak of the "Süddeutsche Zeitung" (these must be quoted in the original language if the reader is to appreciate how diametrically opposed Podak's very intellectual instincts are to everything Adorno himself stood for, and which the claim is made in this volume to be honouring) : "Adorno-Konferenz in Frankfurt : Das war keine Totenfeier und auch kein philosophisches Geburtstagsständchen. Es war lebendige - und das heisst hier kritische - Verständigung über die Sache der Vernunft in unvernünftiger Zeit. Der Ansturm der Zuhörer, unerwartet und erfreulich, zeigt an, wie gross das Bedürfnis ist, am Projekt der Aufklärung festzuhalten und weiterzuarbeiten." 9

These lines betray the shammery both of post-classical Critical Theory's claim to be taking up the social-critical mantle of earlier Frankfurt School thought and its claim to be respecting the integrity of this latter as a form of philosophical discourse. Already their breathless, "punchy" style marks them off as an unselfconscious product of that "administered world" which Adorno tirelessly exposed and opposed. "Lebendige - und das heisst kritische" irresistibly recalls the language of the advertising agency : "make my Theory a *Critical* Theory", "beanz meanz Heinz". Moreover, the fact that it is not even a Critical *Theory* here for which Podak is drumming up customers, but rather a "kritische *Verständigung*", reveals how Habermas's conceptual apparatus has become projected, in the minds of his contemporaries, back into Adorno's, displacing and eclipsing this latter completely. Where Podak steps across the boundary that separates tendentious reformulation from downright intellectual fraud, however, is where he describes the general interest evinced in a conference on the work of Adorno as an indication of the great need today to "hold firmly to the project of the Enlightenment and to develop it further." As in the case of Suhrkamp's Benjamin quotation and Fischer's quotation from Horkheimer, what is forgotten here, or what it is hoped in the making of such remarks that the reader will forget, is that Adorno was concerned with a *dialectic* of Enlightenment, with "holding firmly" to the project of the Enlightenment only in simultaneously letting go of it, and "developing it further" only in reminding it of the regressive moment it essentially and constitutively harbours in itself.

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9 "Adorno Konferenz 1983" (Suhrkamp 1983), back cover.

There can be no doubt, then, but that the cause of critical social theory today is best served by a re-emphasis of that moment in Adorno's and Horkheimer's work essentially desolidary with the project of the Enlightenment, with "modernity" as this idea is most commonly and vulgarly understood. On a first level, of course, such a re-emphasis can take the form of a fidelity to the rigourously *Marxist* insights of Critical Theory's first generation. An important part of the fraud being perpetrated by the "paradigm shift" generation on the Frankfurt School tradition is the claim that the theoretical apparatus of "lifeworld" and "system" can adequately substitute for Marx's apparatus of "state" and "economy" as a means of conceiving and expressing the profound negativity of our modern social world. From this point of view, interventions like that made by Stephen Eric Bronner with his recent book "Of Critical Theory and Its Theorists" are certainly to be welcomed. Bronner in this text states a fact which no honest scholar of Critical Theory today can fail to have registered, while noting that this fact has for all that been admitted to have been registered only by comparatively few of this Theory's most prominent contemporary personalities. "Habermas," he writes, "is a brilliant theorist of liberal democracy. But whether his democratic standpoint any longer offers anything more radical, let alone socialist, is questionable and to that extent a certain undermining of the critical character of Critical Theory has taken place. Especially criticism in the United States, however, has ignored issues of this sort." [10]

Bronner's own hopes for a revitalization of Critical Theory as a genuinely radical social-philosophical doctrine appear to be placed in a shift of attention to "history as the unfolding of political institutions" and "the social development of everyday life", phenomena which he argues to have been "defined out of existence" by Habermas's "use of static categories (such as the categories 'system' and 'lifeworld' - A. R.) and questionable anthropological assumptions." [11] As we have noted, the Critical Theory which writers like Bronner would like to see reintroduced into academic and public debate is a Critical Theory inspired and structured by the classical Hegelian and Marxist imaginary of "struggle", "movement" and implacably progressing "real history". The Critical Theory, that is, of the early Horkheimer, or rather - since the radical wing of the contemporary "Critical-Theoretical community" is concerned to draw into its project, as Habermas is concerned to draw into his own, the achievements and the agendae of such "new social movements" of the nineteen-eighties

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[10] See Stephen Eric Bronner, "Of Critical Theory and its Theorists", p. 285.
[11] Ibid. p. 303.

and 'nineties as ecology and feminism - the Critical Theory of Horkheimer's more pluralistic "soixante-huitard" continuator, Marcuse.

We have also, however, noted above one important reason for being wary of the project of Bronner and of all those contemporary writers on and of Critical Theory who wish to see Frankfurt School social philosophy become once again "radical" in the particular sense of this term which the Horkheimer of the nineteen-thirties, or Marcuse and his libertarian constituency of the nineteen-sixties and seventies, would have recognized as their own. As we have seen, it is in fact largely out of this same imaginary and for this same constituency that Habermas himself has constructed that "communications-theoretical" Critical Theory which Bronner holds to be today "defining out of existence" the real substance of radical social thought. When Habermas describes himself as "the last Marxist", or when Terry Eagleton describes Habermas as "the Bishop of Durham of Marxism" - a thinker holding to the Marxist "faith" while abandoning every single principle traditionally taken to have been constitutive of this "faith" - a profound truth is being spoken in jest.

The social philosophy which Habermas presents to us today as a critical theory of society can indeed raise a powerful claim to being a consistent development of the social theory of Marxism - provided only that "Marxism" is taken to be an idea definable primarily in terms of those principles of thoroughgoing immanence and relentless historical consciousness which already Heine, before Marx, had made the touchstones of socialist political "good will". Since Marxism in almost all its main currents has offered little or no resistance to being defined in just these terms, but has rather prided itself on being taken to be an unequivocally and uncompromisingly "historical" and "post-metaphysical" view of reality, it might be said that Marxism itself has given birth to the "last Marxist" Habermas as its end-point and even its "telos". Inasmuch as Marxism has conceived of itself all along as an *undialectically* dialectical social-philosophical doctrine - that is, as a theory of dialectics which needed never to concern itself with dialectics' dialectical relation to antinomics - it can be said to have come to instantiate in its own history the paradigmatic dialectical movement of self-subversion. The end point of a Marxist tradition intent on remaining "what it is" - "materialist" in stark opposition to the "metaphysical", "historical" in stark opposition to the "static", "dialectical" in stark opposition to the "antinomical" - is a doctrine that is "what it is" only in being all that it is not : a "Bishop of Durham" Marxism which has become untrue to its very substance in the vain attempt to remain rigorously true to its concept.

It was because the first generation of Critical Theory were fully recognizant of this more-than-Hegelian, this *Kantian* problem of the "dialectic of dialectics" that they very soon in their intellectual careers gave up any aspiration to "keep Marxism pure". There are seldom to be found in the work of Benjamin and Adorno, or in the work of Horkheimer after 1950, the kind of unthinking "four legs good, two legs bad" reactions to the basic constitutive elements of political and philosophical discourse which are characteristic of Marxist writing from Lenin's "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism" even up to the level of the works of Georg Lukács. Indeed, nowhere in the radical socialist tradition has there been expressed more graphically than in Benjamin's famous image of the puppet and the dwarf the truth that dialectical materialism is itself subject to a dialectic, that Marxism can only be preserved from collapsing into a practical solidarity with its "other" - that is, with liberalism - where this Marxism recognizes that it is already essentially solidary with its "other" - that is, with theology.

It is my belief, then, that present Habermasian attempts to excise from the idea of Critical Theory everything in it that was truly recognizant of a *dialectic* of enlightenment are not adequately responded to by a re-emphasis merely of the Marxist element in Benjamin's, Adorno's and Horkheimer's projects. It must be acknowledged that the political-philosophical project of the first generation of the Frankfurt School is to be distinguished from Habermas's not just by "degree" - by degree, that is, of political "radicalism" - but also in terms of essential philosophical "quality". In the face of the general trivialization of the project of Critical Theory in the work published under its auspices in the last twenty years, it is worth running the enormous political and philosophical risks involved in stating this "qualitative" difference in the following terms : Benjamin, Adorno and the later Horkheimer *cannot* in fact, contrary to what is normally assumed of them even by those who believe themselves to be defending these thinkers' philosophical project against its Habermasian "reconstruction", be classified together with Habermas as theorists of the structures of a specifically modern human condition ; or, at least, Benjamin, Adorno and Horkheimer were not theorists of "modernity" in that sense of a given and irremediable chronological "*fact* of modernity" which is the organizing assumption behind all of Habermas's writing.

The difference between the thought of the two generations is here again the difference between a Kantianism and an Hegelianism. As we have noted in Chapter Two, one of the most questionable discursive components of the Marxist philosophical and political tradition is this tradition's constant recourse, as to an indisputable existential "given", to the

idea of a "real history". This "real history" must always conceptually "trump", in the view of the orthodox and even of the less orthodox Marxist, all "idealist" claims to permanency or perenniality . In the face of the supposed fact of "real history", both ahistorical analyses of human experience, like Kant's, and trans-historical analyses of this experience, like Nietzsche's, appear as mere rationalizations, "transfigurations", ideological inflations of the ephemeral and contingent present condition of social Man into a timeless and therefore necessary "human condition". It cannot, of course, be denied that the Marxist historicist critique of the idea of a "human condition" in many instances really does strike home. Certain styles and forms of philosophical ahistoricism and trans-historicism have indeed indisputably fulfilled in modern culture primarily ideological, primarily "transfiguring" and politically legitimating, functions. In order, however, to give its critique of the ideology of a- and trans-historicism the requisite precision - in order, that is, to raise this critique above the level of a knee-jerk "diamat" condemnation of "bourgeois philosophy" as a whole - Marxism needs to lay *its* philosophical cards on the table. How, it must explain, can we analyse conceptually, philosophically, this instance of "real history" by the light of which "bourgeois" a- and trans-historicisms are purportedly exposed as of the nature of myths ?

Marxism, however, has not in this regard ever really laid its philosophical cards on the table. There has never emerged from Marxism - or at least never from any of those schools of "undialectically dialectical" Marxism which have made up the tradition's broad mainstream stretching from Heine and Engels to Lukács and Merleau-Ponty - a "philosophy of history" *genitivus subjectivus* . Marxism, "Oriental" and "Western", has remained almost exclusively a "philosophy of history" *genitivus objectivus* . "Real history" has formed the permanent paradigmatic "horizon" of Marxist discourse, the unquestioned and unquestionable mother of all Marxist invention. This, more even than the "dialectical" method itself, has been the heritage bequeathed to Marxism by the Hegelian system of philosophy. Hegel's "philosophy of history", too, had been a "philosophy of history" only *genitivus objectivus* : a construction so loaded down by the details of the supposed *fact* of history and of historical progress as to have been unable ever really to philosophically address the question of the *concept* of history, the question of *what* precisely this "real history" is through which the World-Spirit purportedly makes itself manifest. It was rather Kant who, by virtue of his notorious pre-Hegelian inability to fully appreciate the overpowering *fact* of history, was empowered to try to think the *concept* of history. Not only in his explicit discussions of "the idea of a universal

history" but in the very conceptual structure of the critical philosophy, Kant is plainly concerned to think the *possibility* of what for Hegel was already unquestioned actuality.

Classical and post-classical Critical Theory here again take their places as respectively Kantian and Hegelian philosophies of social experience. The philosophical discourse of Habermas and his generation, for example, remains in this regard solidary and continuous with precisely that Hegelian and Marxist philosophical discourse with which Habermas's "radical" critics have undertaken to unfavourably contrast the liberalistic theory of "communicative action". Habermas and his exegetes share with Marxism, all trace of which has indeed vanished from the *surface* of the "communication-philosophical" Critical Theorists' social-theoretical reasoning, the "deep-structure" common denominator of a self-dispensation from any *philosophical* meditation on the *concept* of "real history". Just as for Brecht, in his "Am Grunde der Moldau", it is an axiom of political action and orientation that "the night has twelve hours, and then comes the day", for Habermas and his exegetes there has already historically tolled a definitive "hour of modernity" and the framework of our lives and convictions have been from the hour of this tolling determined by this "modernity" as by a *fact* . Benjaminian and Adornian Critical Theory presents to us quite another historical-philosophical attitude. The efforts of the classical Critical Theorists are bent, like the efforts of Kant, to the task of understanding not the *fact* but rather the *possibility* of history, not the *fact* but rather the *possibility* of modernity.

The classical Critical-Theoretical "philosophy of history" - very decidedly a *genitivus subjectivus* - is a topic for a study in itself. Here, we can only make the broadest and most schematic points concerning this philosophy. The classical Frankfurt School's characteristic idea of "history" precisely parallels that characteristic idea of "Marxism" which we claimed earlier on in this section to be expressed in Benjamin's image of the dwarf of theology and the puppet of historical materialism. Like this "Marxism", this idea of "history" is *dialectical* . It is dialectical, however, again like this "Marxism", to a point where that logic of "other-ness" which is dialectics comes to have to confront *its own* "other", comes to have to confront a certain "un-dialectisable" which must stand rather under the jurisdiction of the logic of a (Kantian) antinomics. For classical Critical Theory, the *genitivus objectivus* "dialectic of history" as well must be expanded into a *genitivus subjectivus* . It is not only the *movement* of history which is dialectical ; "dialectical" is a description not just to be applied to the *interior* of an axiomatically given object "history". Rather, history is dialectical in terms of its very *identity* ; history *is*

history only in its relation to a radical *exterior*, to an "anti-history".

The *locus classicus* of the classical Frankfurt School idea of true history's symbiosis with "anti-history" is, of course, Benjamin's notes of 1940 "On The Concept of History". In this text - the last he ever wrote - Benjamin provides, besides that image of historical materialism as a puppet animated by the dwarf of theology, an account of "real history" - that "real history" which has traditionally been Marxism's last line of rhetorical retreat - which constitutes this "real history" a continuum of mere Nature, of lifeless and senseless catastrophe. For Benjamin, Marxist "real history" is not, left to its own devices, what it is. In its immediate reality, it is not history - or is history only in the sense of that "nightmare from which we are trying to awaken" which was James Joyce's experience of the continuum of the historical as expressed in his own reworking of the Odysseus myth. And as history, in the sense of an order of innovative practice distinct from the repetitive continuum of Nature, "real history" is not real. If it has a chance of *becoming* real, claims Benjamin in this text, this chance lies in a "messianic" contact of the order of "empty, homogeneous time" with a "now-time" which "explodes" and negates history in the usual, self-evident sense of this term shared, at bottom, by Marxism with liberalism. [12]

We can no longer, of course, try to fully investigate and expound in the present study, which has already almost overstepped the material limits prescribed for it, the profound and complex philosophy of temporality which implicitly underlies this key component of classical Critical-Theoretical discourse. There is no space here for the patient and lengthy analyses which would be required in order to clarify precisely what kind of phenomenon in the world, or ultra-phenomenal condition of the world, Benjamin intended, with his opposition of "now-time" to "empty, homogeneous time", to point to. In a sense, however, nothing more need be added to the present study at all in order to clarify the structure of this last, and perhaps most important, of the key concepts which we have introduced into its argument. Our entire exposition, our very presentation of classical Critical Theory as a Kantian philosophy of subject and society in opposition to the Hegelian philosophy of subject and society propounded by Habermas, has constituted a kind of clarification of what it might mean to conceive of history as being preserved from *becoming* identical with *one* "non-history" only by virtue of its *remaining* identical with *another* "non-history".

We noted at the beginning of this section that what we have presented throughout

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[12] See Benjamin, "Gesammelte Schriften", Volume 1 : 2, pps. 700-710.

this study is a portrait - purportedly classical Critical-Theoretical - of a modern social field devoid of all the essential characteristics of the modern. We have argued, in substance, that the Critical Theorists of Benjamin's and Adorno's generation held to the principle of "modernity" in the end only as to a pure *potentiality*, not as to anything yet made *actual* : "To believe in progress is not the same as to believe that progress has already taken place." Habermas's philosophy of society might be said to embody, by contrast to this, a vehement insistence that to believe in progress *must* be to believe that progress has already taken place. The theory of communicative action is indisputably a "philosophy of modernity" *genitivus objectivus* . The given *fact* of "our" modernity, of "our" difference from and historical progression over the world of the archaic, dictates, as we have seen, this theory's whole conceptual structure and strategy. Those readers, however, who have been able to clear their heads of all the Sunday supplement clichés about Habermas's position in present-day philosophical and cultural-political debate and approach the Habermasian arguments examined in this study with a clear and critical eye will have noted of these arguments something which initially appears impossible to reconcile with this latest characterization of Habermas's work. The Habermasian "philosophy of communication" displays in fact many features which might prompt its classification as exemplarily "*post*-modern".

Analysed as we have analysed it in Chapters Two and Three, Habermas's slippery, quasi- *a priori* , quasi- *a posteriori* discourse on the groundability of moral truth in communicative practice presents all the characteristics of what the Italian post-modernist Gianni Vattimo has called a "*pensiero debole*" , a "weak thought" no longer ashamed of its own "weakness", of its own ultimate lack of foundation. For all the subtle echoes, in Habermas's professed credo of "modernity as an unfinished project", of the heroic Heideggerian idea of the "Entwurf", Habermas's account of what it is to be a "modern" in fact strips "modernity" of all that is really heroic and conflictual in the modern experience. What Habermas portrays in his recent work is thus rather a decidedly " *finished* project of modernity", modernity as a mere *fact* "registered" by Kant with his three "Critiques" and handed down to the post-Kantian generations as a patrimony, a quietly accumulating capital. This is plain, for example, from such passages as those where we read that the desiderated balanced rationalization of modern society occurs where "the three cultural value-spheres (are) connected with corresponding action systems in such a way that the production and transmission of knowledge that is specialized according to validity-claims is secured, the

cognitive potential developed by expert cultures (is) in turn passed on to the communicative practice of everyday life and made fruitful for social action systems (and) the cultural value-spheres (are) institutionalized in such a balanced way that the life-orders corresponding to them are sufficiently autonomous as to avoid being subordinated to laws intrinsic to heterogeneous orders of life." [13]

The stress on "specialization", "heterogeneity" and the maintenance of boundaries between "autonomous" value-spheres in this passage, the emphasis on "*securing* the production and transmission of specialized knowledge", "*passing on* the cognitive potential developed by expert cultures" and "*institutionalizing* the autonomy of cultural value-spheres", betrays Habermas's underlying conviction that modernity has in the last analysis been given to us as a gift from Mother History. Our generation of "moderns", it is implied by this whole Habermasian conceptual apparatus, has already firmly in its hands the basic substance of all that modernity is or ever will be, because it has firmly in its hands, as a sedimented "Sittlichkeit" handed down from earlier generations, the Kantian differentiation of the world into objective, normative and expressive spheres of validity. Our task is to "secure" this modernity, to "institutionalize" it, to protect it from naked or disguised atavisms such as behaviourism and post-structuralism, which aspire in their different ways to de-differentiate this tripartite differentiation, to re-identify, for example, normative with cognitive or with aesthetic truth. All forms both of *moral* and of *progressive political* action are construable, for Habermas, basically in terms of such preservation of modernity's achievements in the way of the differentiation and autonomization of "value-spheres".

It should, of course, be noted that to make *Kant's* philosophy the symbol and touchstone of this conception of modernity constitutes an incredible impertinence. There are few facts about the critical philosophy which it is more dangerously misleading to impart to one who is not already familiar with this philosophy's details than the fact that it is divided into three books dealing with three spheres of human experience. A reading of any one of the three "Critique"s will bring home to the student that it is absolutely *not the case* that the "Critique of Pure Reason" deals specifically with the constative "sphere of validity", the "Critique of Practical Reason" specifically with the normative "sphere of validity" and the "Critique of Judgement" specifically with the expressive "sphere of validity" - and this not just inasmuch as each "Critique" anticipates or recaps the content of the other two. Rather, Kant's

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[13] Habermas, "Theory of Communicative Action", Volume One, p. 240.

philosophical analysis of each of the three spheres of modern experience is *essentially and constitutively* an analysis of the *systematic* "transgressions" into the sphere in question of the logics of the other spheres. Setting aside the analysis of the sphere of "constative" or phenomenal truth in the "Critique of Pure Reason", which is an analysis overarched and comprehended by the normative truth of absolute freedom in the complex manner which we have touched upon above, we might note how it is quite impossible to recount Kant's account of the logic of the sphere of "normative" or practical truth in the "Critique of Practical Reason" without recounting also his account of the systematic "transgression" of the logic of natural-causal truth into this sphere - to the point of the former's total phenomenal occupation by the latter - and to recount Kant's account of the logic of the sphere of "expressive" or aesthetic truth in the "Critique of Judgement" without recounting his account of the systematic "transgression" of the logic of natural-causal truth also into this sphere. Such categories as "pathological" moral action and "sensuous-aesthetic" judgement, then, without which the structure of the critical philosophy cannot even begin to be understood, indicate Kant to be something quite other than that registrar of modernity's historically given differentiation into distinct validity-spheres which Habermas would have him be. The *constitutive* presence of these categories in his system establish Kant as a philosopher of systematic boundary-*transgressions* as much as of a system of fixed boundaries, as a philosopher of systematic *de*differentiation as much as of irreducible difference. They establish, that is, the archetypal philosopher of modernity as in key respects also a philosopher of modernity *as myth* .

Moreover, in being in fact a philosopher of myth, of dedifferentiation and of the systematic transgression of the boundaries of discursive spheres, Kant does not even sacrifice his archetypality, does not even become in this respect a "non-modern" philosopher. The same might be said of modern discursive practice in general as we have just said of the discursive practice of the critical philosophy in particular. Hand in hand, in modernity, with the differentiation of experience into the discrete validity-spheres of constativity, normativity and expressivity has always gone the systematic dedifferentiation of these spheres, the qualification and the partial or total negation of their discreteness. Marxist and behaviourist scepticism, both in fully codified and in more diffuse, unconscious forms - such as Mandy Rice-Davies's "he would say that, wouldn't he ?" - are in simple fact as much a part of modern culture as John Rawls's conviction of our "reasonableness" or Charles Taylor's phenomenologistic imperative to explain "people living their lives". This is to say that, even on

a purely descriptive level - on the level of the attempt to honestly "synopsize" the factually current discursive practices of modernity - Habermas's account of modernity must be repudiated as false.

It is important to grasp the precise philosophical structure and logic of this falsity. It is a structure and logic which we are already familiar with. In Habermas's work, it might be said, modernity's aspiration to be thoroughgoingly identical with itself - to be able to present itself as an incircumambiable *fact* - has resulted in modernity's becoming quite "other" to itself. While the Sunday supplements and along with them much of the philosophical and social-theoretical academy continue to celebrate Habermas as a fearless St. George facing the raging dragon of "post-modern" and "post-structuralist" anti-foundationalism, the "paradigm of the theory of communication" has quietly emerged as a far more subtle anti-foundationalism, a far more sinister "anti-modernism", than that deconstructionist and ultra-Pragmatist irrationalism - which appears now, to any attentive observer, as no more than Habermas's anti-modernist modernism's secret shield and scapegoat. Habermas himself is today the great "post-" or "anti-modernist", because he has refused to recognize how what comes *after* modernity already inheres in modernity itself.

We have already become twice acquainted with the position characteristically taken up by the *classical* form of Critical Theory within such a dialectical configuration of essential self-subversion. Fully aware that, where modernity holds too rigidly to its "self-hood", modernity becomes non-modernity, Benjamin, Adorno and the later Horkheimer declined to be "theorists of modernity" in Habermas's sense at all. As we have seen, Benjamin's, Adorno's and Horkheimer's work consisted largely in an exegesis and development of those moments of modern culture which rendered this culture "non-identical with itself". By their stress on the "mythical" components of the modern experience, inclusive of that "myth against myth" that is the idea of a transcendent Absolute, the classical Critical Theorists contribute to the dialectical preservation / negation of the "modern condition". "Modernity" itself, then, joins "Marxism" and "history" as the third of those concepts which we have had, in the course of this study of the "paradigm shift in Critical Theory", to come to recognize to be dialectically structured to a degree that calls, to speak with Adorno, for the formulation of "a transformed concept of dialectics". Modernity, too, can be *preserved from becoming* that which it is not - post-modernity, post-history - only by *remaining* constitutively that which it is not - archaicity, mythicality, that is, a *Kantian* experience of the irreducible tension of myth and

counter-myth.

But if this is the case, then a still deeper gulf opens up between classical and post-classical Critical Theory. It stands unshaken and unshakeable for the Habermasian Critical Theorist, as for all those possessed of contemporary "common sense", that modernity must be something basically graspable in terms of *chronology* , of *diachrony* . Modernity is a *moment* in the sense of this term which takes, in German, the masculine article ('der Moment'). Modernity, on this account, sets in at a certain point in Man's historical experience. If it has no end - if modernity is by definition an "open-ended" historical experience - it certainly indisputably had a beginning. The Benjaminian and Adornian Critical Theory which we have examined suggests however, in implicit opposition to this, that modernity is not something graspable in chronological terms alone - indeed perhaps not even anything graspable in chronological terms *at all*. "Modernity" is rather, the discourse of classical Critical Theory seems often to imply, a *moment* in the sense of this term which takes, in German, the neuter article ('das Moment'). Modernity has been and is a *moment of* all human experience, precisely because non-modernity, the undifferentiated flow of mythical / natural repetition, has been and is a *moment of* all this experience as well.

Adorno's and Horkheimer's explication of the concept of the "bourgeois" by reference to the infinitely archaic mythical figure of Odysseus cannot be conceived of, then, as a merely rhetorical or allegorical operation - as something comparable, for example, to Marx's frequent interweaving of images and passages from Dante's "Divine Comedy" into his descriptions of the "Inferno" of modern capitalism. The "Dialectic of Enlightenment"'s shocking transposition of the vocabulary of the contemporary critique of political economy into this context of absolute non-contemporaneity conveys rather a political message which calls for a thoroughly literal interpretation. This message is that the modern "bourgeois" - and the modern "proletarian" who, in the face of the Siren song of a radically irreconciled Nature, can be set off only rhetorically and falsely from this latter as his unequivocally antagonistic "other" - is, for all the water that has apparently flowed under the bridge of "real history" between the fall of Troy and the fall of the Berlin Wall, at bottom no closer to, nor any farther away from, the political goal of shifting the weight of myth off of his social existence than was an inhabitant of a world dominated by the "alien powers" of Circe and Polyphemus. Modernity as much as modernity's inaccessibility was a *moment of* the political / ontological situation of Man in the era of his earliest hominization, and modernity's inaccessibility as much as

modernity is a *moment of* our situation today.

That is indeed a "melancholy science" which bears fruit in such sombre political- and historical-philosophical insights. It is worth bearing in mind, however, that it was Adorno himself who chose this designation for his own philosophy as this latter came to be expressed in the "Minima Moralia". He was taking up, with this self-description, a stance oppositional not so much to the "gaya scienza" of the Renaissance as to Nietzsche's "fröhliche Wissenschaft" - taking up, that is, a stance oppositional to a philosophy which, by a strict logic of immanence, had aspired to the ataraxy of a serene acceptance of eternal recurrence, a serene acceptance of myth. For Adorno, the "melancholy science" of the recognition of modernity and non-modernity as synchronic, not diachronic, moments of our experience was a weapon against precisely this Nietzschian ataraxy, a key to the breaching of eternal recurrence by the *novum* of a truly human history. Kafka's, and classical Critical Theory's, position that to believe in progress need not mean to believe that progress has already taken place cuts, in the last analysis, in two very different political and moral directions. On the one hand, it indeed goes to dissuade from much that passes for "politics", for "action" in the administered world in which we live. But on the other, it prompts to action with the same vehemence as Pascal's injunction that we no longer, after the crucifixion of the Messiah, have the right to sleep. If Kafka separated, in the aphorism which we have already quoted, the belief in progress from the belief in the actuality of progress, he joins progress and its actuality firmly together once again in the following aphorism : " The decisive moment of human development is a moment that is always with us. Those revolutionary intellectual and spiritual movements were right, then, which declared all that came before them to have been meaningless - because nothing at all has yet occurred."

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