

Non-idealizing the Theory of Autonomy: Theodor W. Adorno's Psychological and Political Critique of Immanuel Kant

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INTRODUCTION

Martha Nussbaum's recent book *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* challenges philosophers of education especially in one respect: in demanding psychological balance and political balance in education.² Nussbaum particularly emphasizes the significant role emotions, needs, and drives play in the process of growing into moral agency.³ In this article we will analyze the relationship between the psychological and the political in Theodor W. Adorno's conception of autonomy. Adorno's critique of the Kantian notion of autonomy points toward the same issue Nussbaum raises in her book, that is, the importance of one's unconscious emotions in moral development. In our view, Adorno's thinking provides a vital perspective on how the concept of autonomy might be redefined to effectively address today's educational challenges, such as reforming our relationship to others and to nature.

Adorno's critique of the Kantian notion of autonomy relates to the contemporary discussion concerning a *non-ideal theory* of education. While Kantian autonomy can be interpreted as a solution for the philosophical puzzle of determinism, Adorno instead attends to the obstacles to genuine autonomy that arise from real-life circumstances, where the structures of society and its members' personalities have complicated relationships to one another. Whereas Kant constructs a purely philosophical theory of an ideal autonomous subject,⁴ Adorno strives for a multidisciplinary theory rooted in material praxis.⁵ In this attempt, Adorno draws upon the insights of psychoanalytic theory.⁶ However, his interpretation differs in one crucial respect from that of Sigmund Freud, and from that of other members of the first generation of the Frankfurt School.

In this essay we argue that Adorno's theorizations concerning autonomy are revolutionary in understanding nature — both inside and outside of human beings — as a potential source of freedom and autonomy. In this philosophical step, Adorno breaks down one of the most influential distortions of the Western philosophical tradition: the dichotomy between reason and nature, which is often also understood as the dichotomy between reason and emotion.⁷ The idea of nature as a source for important information, and as something with which humans should live in dialogue, distinguishes Adorno's conception of autonomy both from Kantian autonomy and from Freud's interpretation of the unconscious.

In what follows, we will first discuss Adorno's critique of the Kantian notion of autonomy. In our view, Adorno does not actually refute the legitimacy of Kant's philosophical reasoning on autonomy within Kant's own philosophical framework,

but rather challenges the very premises on which Kantian autonomy is based in the first place. While Kant conceptualizes human freedom and autonomy as antithetical to nature, Adorno argues that the process of understanding oneself as a reflective part of nature is actually a key feature of autonomy. The main obstacle to autonomy for Adorno is not nature (as deterministic or uncontrollable), but the distorted rules of society that the subject has unconsciously internalized. The attempt to reconcile with nature — both inside and outside of a human mind — holds the possibility to become conscious of these rules and thus entails new potential for changing them.

Second, we will discuss the role of psychoanalytic theory in Adorno's account of autonomy. Adorno's interpretation of psychoanalysis is consistent with his critique of Kant both in emphasizing the importance for an autonomous subject to become conscious of the distorted rules of society and in seeing nature (which, in Adorno's psychoanalytic framework, refers to the suppressed emotions, needs, and drives of the subject) as a potential source for genuine autonomy.⁸ Furthermore, in emphasizing the role of unconscious emotions, needs, and drives as a potential source of freedom and autonomy, it differs from Freud's account of conceptualizing the unconscious primarily as a chaotic part of the psyche.⁹

In conclusion, we will discuss Adorno's account of autonomy as a non-ideal theory of education. In connecting the conception of autonomy not only to philosophical theory, but also to the psychological development of a moral subject, Adorno's thinking provides a valuable basis for formulating a theory of autonomy with high educational relevance. In elaborating the idea of the interconnected nature of the development of a moral subject and the prevailing social and cultural conditions, Adorno's thinking is balanced in terms of its psychological and political dimensions. In exploring the possibility for a subject to transcend his or her own cultural conditions, Adorno understands the autonomous subject as being capable of changing the current social conditions. By linking this possibility to an attempt to reconcile with nature, the ancient dichotomies of reason/nature and reason/emotion can be transcended. Adorno's conception of autonomy provides important conceptual tools for understanding the tendencies of our era's economic competition and ecocatastrophes.

ADORNO'S CRITIQUE OF THE KANTIAN NOTION OF AUTONOMY

One cannot act autonomously if one has no freedom over one's actions. Adorno, who formulated his thinking both based on and in contrast with Kant's philosophy, shares this basic premise with Kant. In terms of obstacles to and sources of human freedom,¹⁰ these two philosophers fundamentally disagree. One of Kant's main concerns was the possibility of human autonomy in relation to the philosophical problem of determinism. For Adorno, the main concern was the possibility of seeing beyond the current cultural and social status quo. As Adorno puts it:

In the abstract universal concept of things "beyond nature," freedom is spiritualized into freedom from the realm of causality. With that, however, it becomes a self-deception. Psychologically speaking, the subject's interest in the thesis that it is free would be narcissistic, as immoderate as anything of the kind. There is narcissism even in Kant's arguments, for all his categorical localization of freedom in a sphere above psychology.¹¹

In what follows, we will briefly introduce the dimensions of Kantian autonomy, which are crucial for understanding Adorno's criticism. This implies that we cannot

do justice to Kant's account of autonomy as a whole; the focus of this article is Adorno's interpretation of Kant's conception and its relevance for today's educational philosophy. We will then explore Adorno's conception of autonomy with particular attention focused on the Adornian redefinitions of the concepts of freedom, nature, and reason. Both Adorno and Kant take these three concepts as crucial for defining autonomy, but their interpretations of these concepts are fundamentally different.

The concern over determinism explains why Kant conceptualized freedom as antithetical to nature. In order to be free, humans must transcend the causal laws, which determine everything in nature. As Kant himself states:

[T]he moral law reveals to me life independent of animality and even of the whole sensible world, at least so far as this may be inferred from the purposive determination of my existence by this law, a determination not restricted to the conditions and boundaries of this life but reaching into the infinite.¹²

For Kant, as for most of the Western philosophers before him, nature manifested itself also in the instinctual drives, needs, and emotions of humans. Thus, freedom from the causal laws of nature requires that one must transcend these instincts and choose one's actions independently of them. In this framework, it is not surprising that rationality is the main source for autonomy. Rationality is constitutive of freedom because it enables the subject's self-determination. In other words, autonomy is the capacity of an individual to apply to him- or herself the self-given rational laws. The subject is free when acting according to the principles that he or she has self-imposed, because as a lawgiver the subject is not governed by nature.¹³ Due to the assumption of emotions as a part of nature and of reason as important for self-governance, Kant also consolidates the ancient philosophical dichotomy¹⁴ of reason and emotion.¹⁵

Adorno is not concerned about the philosophical problem of determinism, but about the human inclination to internalize and follow the distorted moral rules of one's culture and society. Furthermore, his interpretation of the key concepts in relation to autonomy — that is, the concepts of freedom, nature, and reason — differ fundamentally from the Kantian interpretation of these concepts.

In Adorno's view, understanding oneself as a part of nature is actually a key feature of autonomy.¹⁶ He emphasizes that not only do human emotions and instincts originate from nature, but reason does as well. The main obstacle to human autonomy is not nature — either inside or outside of humans — but, rather, humans' instrumental and repressive relationship to nature. In Adorno's words, "[w]hat makes the subjects aware of the bounds of their freedom is that they are part of nature, and finally, that they are powerless against society, which has become independent of them."¹⁷ Adorno sees as fatal for the development of the autonomous subject that, in suppressing one's needs and emotions, and in promoting instrumental relationships toward other persons and nature, the rules of modern society work against the requisites of the balanced structure of a personality.¹⁸

Although Adorno criticizes "instrumental reason"¹⁹ and its repressive role over nature, rationality also plays an important role in his conceptualization of autonomy. Adorno defines humans as reflective parts of nature.²⁰ Even though the person's potential for developing into an autonomous personality has, in Adorno's view, at

least partially developed earlier than the higher cognitive functions, rational reflection, once developed, is crucial for a subject's self-understanding. The problem of modern society is that it tends to leave to reason only the role of suppressing and rationalizing, instead of facilitating a subject's genuine relationship with the self, others, and nature.

The crucial question for Adorno, of course, is how it is possible for the subject to transcend the limits of modern society and reconstruct his or her relationship to nature. As already mentioned, Adorno aims to develop a non-ideal theory and builds his account of autonomy not merely on philosophical but also on "empirical"²¹ grounds. For this purpose, he constructs his eccentric interpretation of psychoanalytic theory.

ADORNO'S INTERPRETATION OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

People who blindly slot themselves into the collective already make themselves into something like inert material, extinguish themselves as self-determined beings. With this comes the willingness to treat others as an amorphous mass.²²

Like the Critical Theorists in general,²³ Adorno thinks that the structure of society and the structure of its members' personalities are fundamentally intertwined. For Adorno, psychoanalysis is a tool for relating the concept of autonomy both to the current conditions of society and to the processes of development of its members' personalities. The significance of psychoanalysis, in Adorno's view, is twofold: it can make visible the distorted principles of society that were earlier internalized by the subject,²⁴ and it can bring into awareness the resources of a subject's "inner nature" that were previously suppressed by instrumental reason. In what follows, we will first consider briefly the centrality of the concept of nature in Adorno's interpretation of psychoanalysis and, in particular, the role of "inner nature" in the Adornian conception of autonomy. Second, we will discuss Adorno's critique of late capitalist society as suppressing this source of genuine autonomy.

A central concept for understanding Adorno's idea of nature within humans is his interpretation of the psychoanalytic concept of the *unconscious*. Adorno's idea of the unconscious differs from that found in Freud's theory: Adorno sees the unconscious as a potential source for the person's reconciliation with nature.

For Adorno, the origin of the experience of freedom lies in the archaic impulses prior to such cognitive functions that developed later as reasoning.²⁵ These impulses direct our attention and motivate our action, and are thus crucial both for the development of morality and in giving force and motivation to moral action.²⁶

According to Adorno, the modern self suffers from separation both from exterior and interior nature, where the latter refers to one's own archaic impulses. A repressive and controlling attitude thus determines the subject's relationship to nature in both senses. In psychoanalytic terms, the problem of the current society is that *ego* (the part of the psyche whose task should be that of mediating between natural impulses and the demands of society) is inclined to take overall control of the subject's impulses. This control, together with late capitalist values, results in problems with developing morality and an autonomous personality. For example, one must restrict feelings of compassion and empathy in order to get along in the world of competition and "self-entrepreneurship." Or, in order to learn to be critical

consumers, children in late capitalism must learn that people are allowed and even expected to fool others in advertisements and sales talks. Emotions of empathy and compassion are of crucial importance for moral development, and the cynical attitude toward others forms an obstacle to moral behavior.

The possibility for exercising agency in a particular society requires that one (at least to some extent) adapt the norms and ideals of this society. Furthermore, one's psychological well-being necessitates that the contradictions between a person's inner and outer realities are not overwhelming. Therefore, both in order to protect oneself from unbearable feelings of discomfort and anxiety, and also enable one's agency in current social conditions, one must mold either one's inner sphere or the outer conditions. The molding of the inner sphere can be fatal for the development of a mature personality and genuine autonomy. For example, in order to survive the desensitizing demands of competition, one may (sometimes unconsciously) choose a strategy of seeing others as means instead of as ends.²⁷

According to Adorno, surviving the demands of the current society inclines one to substitute the more genuine functions of the psyche with the unthinking processes of self-governance.²⁸ In this process, the structures of society operate as intrapsychic mechanisms. This leads to the misconception of freedom as repressing the nonconscious impulses,²⁹ which results in fundamental distortions in the developmental processes necessary for an autonomous personality.³⁰ For Adorno, psychoanalytic theory is first and foremost a tool for accessing the suppressed parts of nature and humanity and bringing them into a genuine dialogue with reason. This process, when successful, provides the subject the possibility of seeing the world, oneself, and others in a different, nonrepressive manner.³¹

Adorno's creative interpretation of nature enables him to construct a theory in which a subject can transcend the limits of current cultural and social conditions. As Adorno also admits, however, the subject is a product of the society in which he or she is brought up. In Adorno's view, society has its effect not only within the cognitive sphere, but society also partially determines our (social) needs and emotions. However, Adorno thinks that by getting in touch with our inner, more "private" source of emotions and needs, we can learn to accept the vulnerability and fragility of nature, ourselves, and others, and ultimately to achieve at least some level of autonomy in the Adornian sense.

CONCLUSION

Adorno's motivation for constructing a non-ideal theory of autonomy was the Holocaust. In this catastrophic context, the philosophically sophisticated Kantian escape from the alleged dangers of determinism seemed beside the point. Adorno was interested in studying the real-life obstacles that prevent people from following the Kantian maxim of the respect for persons. In his search, he explored both the psychological and the political obstacles to the genuine exercise of autonomy. In linking the possibility for societal change to the reconciliation between human beings and nature, Adorno's theory provides important conceptual tools for understanding in much greater depth the tendencies of our era toward economic competition and ecocatastrophes.

Adorno argued that the conditions of late modern society work against the development of mature personalities. To see others as ends in themselves, and act accordingly, requires the feelings of empathy and compassion. These feelings, however, contradict demands of the current society, such as competition with others and cynicism about the motives of others.

Our psyche is not independent of the norms and values of the society within which it has developed. Society shapes both our emotions and our cognition during their development. Furthermore, the capacity for exerting agency in a particular society requires that one has, to some extent, adopted its norms and rules. However, Adorno sees that in the psyche, there is the possibility of seeing both oneself and society in a different light. This possibility is related to giving up repressive attitudes toward one's inner emotions, needs, and drives. In seeing oneself as a part of nature and as being vulnerable, together with nature and others, opens the very possibility of personal and societal change.

Due to its parallel theorization of the political and psychological dimensions of the development of autonomy, Adorno's theory provides important conceptual tools for the philosophy of education. Within the frame of this article, we present two perspectives. First, in relation to more individualistic interpretations of autonomy, Adorno's philosophy emphasizes a sense of subjectivity that is not based on traditional individualistic premises. Rather, the Adornian account of autonomy builds on the understanding of how subjects are materially combined as one and the other as well as with nature in a wider sense. This means that the subject's relations to others and to nature become an irreducible part of his or her autonomy. Second, in relation to the political emphasis of critical pedagogy,³² the Adornian version of the combined analysis of the political and psychological causes of oppression conceptualizes the emotional dimensions necessary for genuine autonomy, such as coming to terms with one's own vulnerability and dependency on others, and the ability to feel empathy with others.

Of course, many of the intrinsic values of the late capitalist society work against this educational aim. For example, there is a Finnish saying, usually chanted, that is a widely accepted maxim: "One is not foolish for asking, but for paying."³³ The point of this saying is that fooling others is morally acceptable, and consequently, the right attitude toward others is mistrust. The transmission of this view of morality through education serves as a paradigmatic example of the antithesis of what education should be in light of Adorno's thinking. However, encouraging children to face the difficult emotions within themselves, and to change their views regarding their relation to others as well as their own self-image, might offer new perspectives to the canon of embedded capitalistic attitudes and social structures.

1. The authors made equal contributions in writing this article.

2. In order to avoid misunderstandings, it is important to distinguish between three different discussions concerning the role of psychology in educational theorizing. The first of these, the so-called "psychologization" discourse, refers to the fallacious explanation of structural and societal factors as psychological. The second discourse refers to the increasing role of empirical psychology in educational research,

experienced today at many universities, often with reference to the “scientific” nature of psychology in contrast to the humanities. The third discourse, which motivates this article, is that the psychological and social dimensions are fundamentally intertwined in education, and educational philosophy that neglects one or the other is inherently unbalanced.

3. Martha C. Nussbaum, *Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 27–46.

4. This does not imply that Kant was not concerned with how humans are able to live in peace and mutual respect. On the contrary, Kant saw the furthering of peaceful existence among human beings and societies as an important task for philosophy. For example, in his *Zum ewigen Frieden* he suggests concrete ways to achieve perpetual peace between nations. See Immanuel Kant, *Zum ewigen Frieden, ein philosophischer Entwurf* [Perpetual peace] (Königsberg, 1795). Adorno, however, questioned in particular Kant’s interpretations of the concepts of rationality and freedom. For Adorno, such atrocities as the Holocaust evidenced that fundamental problems exist in a subject’s ability to resist authorities and act under his or her own moral compass.

5. See also Christiane Thompson, “Exercising Theory: A Perspective on Its Practice,” *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 30, no. 5 (2011): 449.

6. On Adorno’s conception of psychoanalysis, see also Helmut Dahmer, “Adorno’s View of Psychoanalysis,” *Thesis Eleven* 111, no. 1 (2012): 97–109.

7. Aristotle, for example, considered nature, emotions, and women to be analogous. Women — distinguished from men and rationality — are closer to nature as more emotional, hence less rational, beings. See Christine Garside Allen, “Can a Woman Be Good in the Same Way as a Man?,” in *Women in Western Thought*, ed. Martha Lee Osborne (New York: Random House, 1979), 35–47. Contemporary thinkers such as Sara Heinämaa and Martina Reuter have argued that in Nussbaum’s article, “Emotions and Women’s Capabilities,” her argumentation also falls into the problematic Aristotelian dichotomy between reason and nature, and, analogously, reason and emotion. See Sara Heinämaa and Martina Reuter, “Naisten tunneherkkydestä: filosofinen keskustelu tunteiden järjellisydestä” [On Women’s Emotional Sensibility: A Philosophical Inquiry on Rationality of Emotions], in *Tunteet*, ed. Ilkka Niiniluoto and Juha Räikkä (Helsinki, Finland: Helsinki University Press, 1996), 132–148; and Martha C. Nussbaum, “Emotions and Women’s Capabilities,” in *Women, Culture, and Development: A Study of Human Capabilities*, ed. Martha C. Nussbaum and Jonathan Glover (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 396.

8. Adorno’s interpretation of psychoanalysis thus differs from those interpretations that see its legitimacy as being primarily in healing and therapeutic relief. See also Jussi Kotkavirta, “Adorno ja psykoanalyysi” [Adorno and Psychoanalysis], in *Kätkettyjä hahmoja: Tekstjä Theodor W. Adornosta*, ed. Olli-Pekka Moisio (Jyväskylä, Finland: Minerva, 2008), 65 and 68.

9. Sigmund Freud, *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis: “Beyond the Pleasure Principle,” “The Ego and the Id,” and Other Works*, ed. James Strachey and Angela Richards, trans. James Strachey (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 51–56, 191–192.

10. Of course, Kant’s philosophy contains various discussions and conceptualizations of freedom. See, for example, Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy edition, ed. and trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and Immanuel Kant, “Vastaus kysymykseen: Mitä on valistus?” [An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?], in *Mitä on valistus?*, ed. Juha Koivisto, Markku Mäki, and Timo Uusitupa (Jyväskylä, Finland: Vastapaino, 1995), 76–86. In this article, we focus only on his interpretation of freedom as antithetical to nature because this is crucial for Adorno’s critique of Kant.

11. Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 220.

12. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy edition, ed. and trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 134.

13. *Ibid.*, 98.

14. On this point, see also Martha C. Nussbaum, *Love’s Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 79–82; and Katariina Holma, “The Fallibilist Pluralism and Education for Shared Citizenship,” *Educational Theory* 62, no. 4 (2012): 397–409.

15. However, Kant did not subscribe to the idea that emotions do not matter in morality. See Jesse J. Prinz, “The Moral Emotions,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, ed. Peter Goldie (Oxford:

Oxford University Press, 2009), http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com.libproxy.helsinki.fi/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199235018.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199235018-e-24_2 (accessed November 2012); and Kenneth Baynes, "Freedom as Autonomy," in *The Oxford Handbook of Continental Philosophy*, ed. Brian Leiter and Michael Rosen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

16. See also Rolf Wiggershaus, *Theodor W. Adorno* (Munich, Germany: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1987), 40.

17. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 221.

18. Nussbaum makes a similar observation: vulnerability is not an acceptable feature of personality in our time, and this has fatal consequences to children's moral development (Nussbaum, *Not for Profit*, 28–29).

19. "Instrumental reason," for Adorno, refers to the type of rationality that concentrates merely on means instead of ends and thus leads to the domination of nature and humans at the expense of individual and social morality. In the American tradition of educational philosophy, Israel Scheffler has defended an ideal of rationality that exceeds the limits of instrumental reason: Israel Scheffler, *Reason and Teaching* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973). He also rejects the dichotomy of reason and emotion: Israel Scheffler, *In Praise of the Cognitive Emotions and Other Essays in the Philosophy of Education* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

20. See also Wiggershaus, *Theodor W. Adorno*, 40–41.

21. For Adorno, "empirical" does not refer to the use of large quantities of statistical data as a basis for scientific knowledge; rather, "empirical" refers to the concrete psychological and societal conditions of the development of an autonomous person.

22. Theodor W. Adorno, "Education after Auschwitz," in *Can One Live after Auschwitz? A Philosophical Reader*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Rodney Livingstone and others (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 26–27.

23. The main characteristic of critical theory is that it examines the connection of the structures of society and the individual psyche, which it takes as fundamentally entangled. See, for example, Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Avon Books, 1965); Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (London: Ark Paperbacks, 1987); and Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (London: Verso 1979). Erich Fromm (1900–1980) played the key role in initiating the marriage between Freudian and Marxian ideas in the research skill set of the Frankfurt School. However, the insight on psychoanalytic theory was not consistent among members of the Frankfurt School. For a discussion, see, for example, Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), 86–112.

24. See also Kotkavirta, "Adorno ja psykoanalyysi," 74–75.

25. Addendum (*das Hinzutretende*) is a physical, bodily impulse that plays a role in Adorno's conception of willing. It is a part of willing that does not transcend physical conditions (Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 221–223).

26. Brian O'Connor, "Adorno and the Rediscovery of Autonomy," in *Nostalgia for a Redeemed Future: Critical Theory*, ed. Stefano Giacchetti Ludovisi and G. Agostini Saavedra (Rome, Italy: John Cabot University Press, 2009), 66–67; <http://www.sfu.ca/~andrewf/books/volume%20J.Cabot-Layout%20I.pdf>.

27. This implicates the ways in which Kantian ideal theory based on the maxim of "respect for persons" is revoked in concrete, real-life conditions. Adorno seconds the Kantian maxim but sees that it is conceivable only through non-ideal theory.

28. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 271–273; and Henry W. Pickford, "The Dialectic of Theory and Praxis: On Late Adorno," in *Adorno: A Critical Reader*, ed. Nigel Gibson and Andrew Rubin (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002).

29. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 221–223; and O'Connor, "Adorno and the Rediscovery of Autonomy," 66–67. This critique at the social level parallels Adorno's critique of the Kantian notion of autonomy at the philosophical level.

30. See also O'Connor, "Adorno and the Rediscovery of Autonomy," 61–62.

31. In this article we have touched mainly on the subjective side of this phenomenon; however, one intrinsic dimension is that reified minds of the past still play an active role in the structures of today's society. In other words, with the passage of time, ideologies are objectified and materialized. See also Dahmer, "Adorno's View of Psychoanalysis," 98–99. Hence, not only can psychoanalytic theory be understood as a way to reveal the distorted structures of personality and society; in addition, it can provide critical

insight on the dynamics and historicity of the collective unconscious that has become cemented into the structures of contemporary society and that still echoes in our experiences. In order to alter the experience of today, we need to examine those experiences of the past.

32. As Nicholas Burbules and Rupert Berk frame the main commitment of critical pedagogy: “The primary preoccupation of critical pedagogy is with social injustice and how to transform inequitable, undemocratic, or oppressive institutions and social relations.” Nicholas C. Burbules and Rupert Berk, “Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy: Relations, Differences, and Limits,” in *Critical Theories in Education*, ed. Thomas S. Popkewitz and Lynn Fendler (New York: Routledge, 1999). Adornian philosophy, of course, aligns with this preoccupation; however, it turns not merely to political reality but also to psychological reality in its search for the deeper causes of oppression.

33. This means that it is morally acceptable to enact any self-centered requirements (such as overpricing): the responsibility falls on the one who assents.

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