

Art as a Form of Negative Dialectics: 'Theory' in Adorno's Aesthetic Theory

Author(s): WILLIAM D. MELANEY

Reviewed work(s):

Source: *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, New Series, Vol. 11, No. 1 (1997), pp. 40-52

Published by: [Penn State University Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25670205>

Accessed: 10/12/2011 23:11

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at

<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Penn State University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*.

Art as a Form of Negative Dialectics: 'Theory' in Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*

Adorno's dialectical approach to aesthetics is inseparable from his conception of art as a socially and historically consequential source of truth. Nonetheless, his dialectical approach to aesthetics is perhaps understood better in terms of his monumental work, *Aesthetic Theory* (1984), which attempts to relate the speculative tradition in philosophical aesthetics to the situation of art in twentieth-century society, than in terms of purely theoretical claims. In an effort to clarify his aesthetic position, I hope to demonstrate both that Adorno embraces the Kantian thesis concerning art's autonomy and that he criticizes transcendental philosophy. I will discuss how Adorno provides the outlines for a dialectical conception of artistic truth and how this aspect of Adorno's thinking is applied in his argument with Hegel. Hence, I intend to clarify the importance of Adorno's assessment of the Enlightenment on the basis of his interpretation of twentieth-century literature. Returning to the example of art as a sign of historical truth, I will conclude my study by stressing the political implications of Adorno's position.

I

Clearly, Adorno realizes that the "theoretical" status of art must be established before any claims concerning its capacity to change the world can be made. On the face of it, this insight seems to represent a complete departure from Marx's insistence that the purpose of philosophy is not to interpret the world, but to change it.¹ From the perspective of historical practice, however, theoretical insight generally precedes the attempt to create lasting social change. That Marx agrees with Hegel with respect to the importance of the Greek miracle could serve as a reminder of art's kinship with theoretical knowledge, but it also bespeaks the relevance of theory to praxis in general.² Adorno's insistence on the importance of the theoretical moment in aes-

thetic understanding is related to a need to clarify art's social and political meaning.

Adorno's belief of the importance of theory to aesthetics is also related to his criticism of Kant and Freud as aesthetic thinkers. Adorno admits that Kant and Freud are completely opposed with respect to the relevance of psychological criteria to artistic evaluation. Kant's transcendental subject is an antipsychological construct, unlike the empirical subject of psychoanalysis. However, a basically psychological orientation underlies the aesthetic attitude of both Kantian philosophy and psychoanalysis: "For both, the work of art exists only in relation to the individual who contemplates or produces it. There is a mechanism in Kant's thought that forces him, both in moral and in aesthetic philosophy, to consider the ontic, empirical individual to a larger extent than seems warranted by the notion of the transcendental subject" (1984, 16). Adorno argues that Kant "subjectivizes" aesthetics and fails to link theory and practice on the basis of an underlying principle of unity.³ If the nature of a work of art cannot be clarified prior to aesthetic reception, then its essential meaning must depend on the subjective apprehension or response of spectators.

Adorno argues that Kant's assertion concerning the "disinterestedness" of aesthetic judgment merely displaces the ontological status of the work of art as well as the issue of artistic content.⁴ Thus, in his attempt to suppress the heteronomy that threatens aesthetic coherence, Kant has deprived himself of the possibility of defining the nature of the work of art as a complex entity. The pleasure that he isolates and that constitutes one moment in the creative process substitutes for a theoretical elaboration of artistic form and content.⁵

At the same time, Adorno can appreciate Kant's aesthetic contribution to the extent that it sets limits on the play of psychology within a theoretical context. Kant's concern for art's autonomy allows him to formalize the role of aesthetic appraisal. The idea that art might be defined as the spontaneous elaboration of sensible contents would have been unacceptable to him. Adorno's concern for art's autonomy maintains that the work of art is more than a mere "elaboration" of material contents. It is linked to the idea that the work of art must "negate" the immediate before it can emerge as a positive accomplishment.

However, for Adorno, art's power to negate immediacy does not entail the eradication of sensible content or the psychological "repression" of illicit content from civilized consciousness.⁶ Kant's aesthetic formalism seems to involve the denial of unsatisfied and unconscious needs in spite of its apparent remoteness from psychology. The framework that it assumes does not allow various contents to emerge as the suggestion of a future world of

historically mediated happiness. Adorno's modification of Kant's belief in art's autonomy is intended to link the "inner truth" of the art object with its capacity to embrace historical possibilities. This profound modification of Kantian aesthetics anticipates the overcoming of psychology through the socially mediated conquest of human needs.

Adorno provides an understanding of Kant's principle of aesthetic autonomy that "conserves" much of its original meaning. For example, in his discussion of Kant's notion that the work of art is purposeful without demonstrating a purpose, Adorno affirms the relative autonomy of the work while alluding to the historical dimension that this doctrine tended to suppress: "Works of art were purposeful because they were dynamic fatalities wherein all individual moments exist for the sake of their purpose—the whole—while the whole in turn had the purpose of fulfilling the moments or redeeming them negatively. Works were purposeless because they fall outside the means-end relation governing the empirical world" (1984, 202). Although Adorno rejects Kant's belief in a teleology of nature, he recognizes that the nature of art objects supports a "purposive" interpretation of aesthetic experience. Works of art, however, only *seem* to exhaust their meanings in an expressive totality that guarantees their mutual significance. In truth, each work of art exhibits a structure whose relative autonomy is related to the possibility of "fulfillment" in time. Hence the belief in art's poetic autonomy need neither involve the suppression of historical content nor imply the neglect of dialectical procedures on the basis of which given works of art can be appreciated in linguistic terms.⁷

Kant's opposition to dialectics, as normally conceived, is well known. His view that reality itself fails to exhibit a dialectical structure is consistent with his emphasis on the function of judgment in the statement of truth (1958, 297). His rejection of a logic of contents is one aspect of his clear statement of purpose, which assumes that the relation between subject and object, rather than the immanent shape of the object itself, forms the basis for judgment as the locus of knowledge.

Nevertheless, an understanding of Kantian dialectics as a "logic of illusion" might prefigure dialectical thinking at its very best. The negation of the whole, a crucial moment in the corrective dialectic that Kant envisions, preserves the subject as a possible member in a community of free beings.⁸ The elaboration of the subject/object distinction, when upheld in the aesthetic context, might have special value as a dialectical strategy: "The Kantian regress to the subject is more valid in aesthetics than it is in epistemology (where it takes the form of *intentio obliqua*) because the objectivity of works of art is different, more directly mediated through the subject than is the case with knowledge elsewhere" (1984, 235). Adorno recognizes that, for Kant,

aesthetic subjectivity is the result of dialectical mediation. While the movement from subject to object involves the discovery of the being of the work of art, Kant's attempt to ground aesthetic experience in universality reveals an indebtedness to conceptual criteria (237–38). Yet, a truly dialectical aesthetics would demonstrate subjective mediation, not primarily in terms of conceptual experience, but in terms of the experience of art.

Adorno's criticism of Kant's aesthetics can be related to a basic criticism of transcendental "constitution" in general. In his studies of Kierkegaard and Husserl, Adorno explores the use of subjectivity in the philosophy of immediate existence (Kierkegaard), as well as in the notion of essential intuition (Husserl).⁹ Although the concept of subjectivity is used differently in each case, Adorno argues, both philosophers concur in basing their understanding of the world on a single aspect of experience rather than on an awareness of the dialectical structure of reality. Kant's failure to present a theory of art that integrates a belief in autonomy with an understanding of art's historical significance is related to a similar orientation.

For Adorno, nonetheless, Kant's emphasis on subjectivity contains the seeds of dialectical interpretation. Kant drew a distinction between the purely quantitative considerations of experience and the subjectivity of aesthetic experience: "The feeling of sublimity is not aroused by phenomena in their immediacy. Mountains are sublime not when they crush the human being, but when they evoke images of a space that does not fetter or hem in its occupants and when they invite the viewer to become part of this space" (1984, 284). Against the Hegelian reading of Kant, according to which "subjectivization" prevents the sublime from being understood in terms of substance, Adorno maintains that critical philosophy is capable of separating the experience of the sublime from that of immediacy.¹⁰ Thus, while the relationship between subject and world is dialectically interwoven, the two poles of this relationship must be thought together in order to be thought at all.

The problem with Kant's subjectivism is not that it fails to accommodate dialectical understanding, but that it promotes a disregard for aesthetic content. Adorno recognizes that Kant's relative indifference to matters of content threatens the basic coherence of the work of art.¹¹ The problem of heteronomy, which Kant attempts to solve by recourse to formalist procedures, remains an issue as long as the art object retains a physical aspect. This physical aspect cannot be dismissed as an aesthetic nuisance or expressed through a medium that perfectly communicates the relationship between art and world. If the problem of content cannot be solved within a Kantian framework, the Hegelian critique of Kant's aesthetics retains a certain plausibility. Adorno moves toward an original conception of aesthetic truth as soon as he begins to reformulate the dialectical conception of art.

II

Adorno recognizes that the problem of content is the problem of mediation *par excellence*. He acknowledges that artistic content must be arrived at discursively before its truth can be brought to light. To some extent, the Hegelian thesis concerning the “alien” nature of objectivity can be related to the early stages of cultural interpretation. However, the freeing of content from false issues allows the work of art to live in a new way. Insofar as it can be expressed philosophically, the content of any given work of art is related to its truth content. “Truth content” is, therefore, the criterion that decides if works of art are true or false in themselves (1984, 190).

The issue of content acquires meaning, in the first instance, because it is related to the question of how art can be posited as an object and remain in some sense true. Although every work of art is an attempt to represent the spirit in an objective mode, the truth content of art cannot be an artifact. For example, when art becomes conscious of nature as a nonidentical other, it refers to a manifold rather than to a unifying concept or nonidentical being. Art’s encounter with the nonidentical replicates something essential concerning the nature of art. Moreover, its encounter with plurality in the form of nature prefigures a discovery of plurality in the form of art (1984, 191). Such a prefiguration testifies to the particularity and historical being of the work of art. Adorno agrees with Hegel in maintaining that art’s “truth content” is linked to the state of art during any given period.¹²

The attempt to understand the work of art as a whole, rather than as a divided object, is evident in Adorno’s discussion of the relationship between truth and illusion. Rather than argue that the truth of a work of art is opposed to its illusory qualities, Adorno tries to relate truth to the nonillusory in terms of aesthetic illusion. The idea that appearance emerges alongside essence rather than in opposition to reality involves a movement beyond metaphysics.¹³ This idea is central to Hegelian logic and allows truth to be set above the work of art:

Truth cancels the art work along with its illusion. The definition of art in terms of illusion is only half correct: art is true to the degree to which it is an illusion of the non-illusory (*Schein des Scheinlosen*). In the last analysis, to experience art is to recognize that its truth content is not null and void. Each and every work, especially the uncompromisingly negative one, seems to say: *non confundar*. (1984, 191–92)

As an indication of the nonillusory, artworks are related to something other than art. Artworks speak the language of this relationship, suggesting how a rational displacement takes place in experience itself. From this standpoint, art does not copy reality, but provides an image of the way in which reality

comes to be experienced. Hence the work of art helps us understand reality as an active process, rather than as a reproductive result. At the same time, the process that it exemplifies testifies to the importance of otherness in the formation of reality.

The experience of otherness is part of any genuine aesthetic experience and produces a new understanding of past and present: "By their presence art works signal the possibility of the non-existent; their reality testifies the feasibility of the unreal, the possible. More specifically, in art longing, which posits the actuality of the non-existent, takes the form of remembrance. Remembrance joins the present to the past" (1984, 192). Here Adorno implicitly attempts to relate the non-existent to the possible as a poetic category. His reference to the function of memory in this process suggests how possibility can be related to historical actuality.¹⁴ The work of art does not merely replicate the world as given, either by copying it or by offering a record of past events. It negates the immediate and creates an illusion through which otherness can emerge in the mode of the possible. Through this dialectical action, the experience of the past begins to acquire historical meaning.

The work of art is related to history in its negative guise as an image of unrealized possibilities. This negative guise does not repress empirical existence: the empirical emerges in a more vivid form in the imagery of art, which may not be capable of "redeeming" reality, but testifies to a new experience of the world. Hence the historical emerges in art, not as a mere artifact, but in the form of a temporal difference. The truth content of art is a philosophical testimony to art's *indirect* participation in history.

The aesthetic experience of remembrance, for instance, is a faithful expression of art's rejection of brutal self-interest and its repressive ideology. A contestation with contemporary life is linked to the emergence of a new image of freedom: "Art's *promesse du bonheur*, then, has an even more emphatically critical meaning: it not only expresses the idea that current praxis denies happiness, but also carries the connotation that happiness is something beyond praxis. The chasm between praxis and happiness is surveyed and measured by the negativity of the work of art" (1984, 17–18). Art's promise is related to historical possibilities that may conflict with contemporary modes of realization, but this conflict defines the meaning of praxis. Since praxis can be understood both in terms of art's autonomy and in terms of its relationship to history, Adorno's understanding of aesthetic truth is the product of an encounter with both Kant and Hegel.

In his discussion of the beauty of nature, Adorno clearly reveals his relationship to both philosophers. The radical cleavage between aesthetic experience and artistic accomplishment, which typifies the transcendental attitude, minimizes the importance of artistic content. Although Hegel does not

seem to recognize the fallibility of making in his subordination of aesthetics to cultural history, Adorno's understanding of the beauty of nature allows nature to be considered within an artistic context, but entails a dialectical conception of experience. While maintaining an underlying connection between art and nature, Adorno conceives of the truth of this relationship in nonidentical terms. The nonidentity of things is a residue of beauty in nature. This means that beauty should not be conflated with vague concepts of universal identity (1984, 108).

However, while refusing to interpret Kant's thesis concerning art's autonomy in an abstract way, Adorno also refuses to accept Hegel's reduction of art to the movement of subjective spirit. Adorno suggests that the non-identical in Hegel's thinking ultimately sets limits on the power of subjectivity to encompass the real (1984, 113). At the same time, as a meditation on identity, Hegel's philosophy may be incapable of integrating the work of art into the dialectic process. Adorno's response to this dilemma is to redefine dialectical thinking in terms of the conjunction of aesthetics and history.

Adorno argues that the conjunction of aesthetics and history is intimated in the emergence of an unfamiliar truth: "The reason why people shy away from natural beauty is that they are afraid to damage nature's not-yet by grasping it as though it were already fully present. The dignity of nature lies in this quality of not-yet, which by its expression repels all attempts at intentional humanization. Dignity is another one of nature's bequests to art" (1984, 109). The emergence of the "not-yet" allows aesthetic experience to be related to questions of value and to the genesis of possibility as a prelude to historical awareness.¹⁵ This emergence recalls the Hegelian insight that art as an in-itself becomes something other than what it is on the basis of a dialectical reversal.¹⁶ For Adorno, however, even "natural beauty" loses its transcendental distance when aesthetic experience establishes a new relationship to time and history.

III

While his conception of aesthetic truth acknowledges the role of the future in cultural experience, Adorno's reflections on recent art are clear attempts to decipher the artistic meaning of the modern period.¹⁷ The writings of Samuel Beckett and Franz Kafka, for example, become more than mere commentaries on contemporary irrationality in his literary reflections.¹⁸ Adorno admits that there may be a link between the principle of construction that dominates so much modern art and the bureaucratic ideal of a totally administered life. However, he also implies that certain modern artists could be

moving toward new aesthetic forms whose rational organization prefigures the abolition of all types of social repression (1984, 319).

Adorno maintains that Beckett is an example of a contemporary artist who has fully explored the uncertain relationship between figuration and social content. The subjectivity of social life is the theme of Beckett's plays, which dramatize the failure of the living subject to master the brutality of history:

Beckett focuses on the negativity of the subject as being the true form of objectivity—a theme that calls for radically subjective figuration. If it were cast in the shape of an allegedly higher objectivity, it could not be adequately represented. Those childlike but bloody clown's faces in Beckett are the historical truth about the subject: it has disintegrated. By comparison, socialist realism is really infantile. (1984, 354)

Modern art often makes use of “innocent form” by virtue of an approach that distances it from praxis, but an innocence with respect to form has nothing to do with the deceptions of realism. In their enactment of political failure, Beckett's plays elevate social criticism to the level of form, while de-emphasizing social content. Although their “formalism” leads to a kind of dead end for praxis, it produces a pure art that reveals the distorted nature of reality itself. By negating the possibility of action, Beckett's plays serve as warnings to those who would confuse the consolations of art with the arrival of lasting happiness.

In partial contrast to Beckett's work, Adorno reads the novels of Kafka as uncanny signs whose relationship to history is a matter of serious conjecture. Kafka's novels seem to combine a lack of interest in economic and social realities with a belief in some sort of ideal order or prospect. His evidently objective style bespeaks the indifference of rational administration, as well as the sublime authority of myth (1984, 328). Kafka's novels actually suggest some sort of historical collusion between mythic awareness and reified consciousness.

While Kafka seems to remain faithful to modern rationalism, his method of writing suggests the deep disparity between the promise of reason and muted realities: “Kafka reacts in the spirit of the enlightenment to its aversion to mythology” (Adorno 1981, 268). The archaic residues upon which Kafka bases his literary archeology are a constant threat to the civilized mentality. They reveal a lack of congruence between two forms of total presence: the first form is that of “enlightened” consciousness, convinced that its own rationality is implicit in human history; the second form is that of mythic consciousness, which attempts to justify irrational practices on the basis of an inherited wisdom.

Adorno's excursions into literary interpretation illustrate one of his central concerns, namely, the problem of identity thinking in historical time.

Adorno's reading of the Enlightenment, which is implicit in his reflections on modern literature, is an attempt to explain how the neutrality of identity thinking entailed the subversion of reason: "This kind of neutrality is more metaphysical than metaphysics. Ultimately, the Enlightenment consumed not just the symbols but their successors, universal concepts, and spared no remnant of metaphysics apart from the abstract fear of the collective from which it arose" (Horkheimer and Adorno 1972, 23). The neutrality that is exemplified by Enlightenment rationality fails to recognize the nonidentical in the guise of various antagonists: first symbols and then even universal concepts become powerless to oppose the "abstract fear" of the modern collective.¹⁹ In a moment of supreme negation, the enlightened world ceases to possess a social foundation.

IV

Against this prospect, Adorno's "negative dialectics" is an attempt to recover rationality on a theoretical basis. The dialectical thinker, unlike the Enlightenment intellectual, does not try to master the nonidentical reality that he experiences. He proceeds mimetically, and in the process of imitating matter he transforms (negates) the given so that it can be "read" as the individual expression of social truth. This procedure, rather than tending toward the ultimate identity of subject and object, implies the heteronomy of mind and matter, as well as their mutual interaction as nonidentical polarities.

The nonidentical allows the subject to emerge as a "theoretical" insight into the difference between consciousness and the totality as a whole.²⁰ This insight prevents the totality from collapsing into a purely logical process in which materiality becomes a mere aspect of consciousness. Hence, the subjective moment in negative dialectics transforms the social whole into a "detotalized totality" (Sartre) whose true meaning can be understood on the basis of praxis alone.²¹ This development, however, cannot be separated from the objective structure within which material life emerges in a social form.

The function of cultural analysis in the dialectical context should be apparent to the extent that the status of the work of art as a material object can be linked to its historical meaning. The use of "negative dialectics" as an analytical tool depends upon an understanding of the work of art as a relatively free expression of social factors that art cannot determine in advance. Adorno's subtlety as a dialectician, which has been commented on by various critics, becomes especially apparent in many concrete analyses of specific works of art and their relationship to history.²²

Adorno provides a doing of negative dialectics (rather than a mere use) in luminous passages in which art emerges as freedom, but also as the vehicle

of historically mediated truth. For instance, in commenting on the “liberation” of the bourgeois from absolutist rule, Adorno suggests that intellectual and cultural achievements were structured in complex ways during the period at issue: “This seemingly paradoxical interchange between absolutism and liberality is perceptible, not only in *Wilhelm Meister*, but in Beethoven’s attitude towards the traditional patterns of composition, and even in logic, in Kant’s subjective reconstruction of objectively binding ideas” (1974b, 36). Negative dialectics rejects the hypothesis of ideal unity and attempts to define the truth of a given work in historical terms. However, the function of dialectics is not exhausted in the effort to relate the work itself to a nondialectical context. In the passage cited above, convergences in structure indicate a truth that is neither purely historical nor atemporal: “The precondition of tact is convention no longer intact yet still present” (36). The overcoming of history is implicit in the dialectical reversal, which allows the aesthetic moment to be conceived as a strategic accomplishment.

CONCLUSION

Negative dialectics is linked to praxis when it refers to a possible future that alters our relationship to the past through an experience of the negative.²³ While this experience can involve the work of art, the distance between art and world is always, in some sense, irreducible. This distance provides the space in which repressed contents can emerge as historically viable. Here Adorno discusses the “metaphysical” role of art in conjunction with the political value of aesthetics: “Art is the epiphany of the hidden essence of reality. It inspires shudder in the face of the falsity of that essence. In aesthetics it is legitimate to speak of the primacy of the object only in relation to the idea that art is an unconscious form of historiography, the memory of what has been vanquished or suppressed, perhaps in anticipation of what is possible” (1984, 366). Negative dialectics allows art to function as a counter to the reality of static categories. In this way, art’s relationship to aesthetic reflection becomes an aspect of its truth. Insofar as the truth of art is related to its historical content, the work of art encompasses the political possibilities that define an age. Insofar as art and aesthetics are coherent and related adventures, the task of negative dialectics must embrace the political task as well.

NOTES

1. Marx’s thesis 11 in “Theses on Feuerbach” reads: “The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point is to *change* it” (1970, 123).
2. Hegel’s identification of the classical in art with an adequacy of form and content is presented in *Hegel’s Aesthetics* (1975, 436–38). Marx’s famous remarks on the “childhood of

humanity” uphold the ideal compatibility of aesthetic form and sensuous content in *The Grundrisse* (1973, 110).

3. Gadamer’s hermeneutical approach to aesthetic critique also centers around the problem of subjectivity in *Truth and Method* 1.1.2(A)(1991, 42–81).

4. Kant’s faculty of taste functions in a “disinterested” manner because it is unconcerned with the existence of the object (Kant 1974, sec. 2, pp. 38–39).

5. Kant argues that the judgment of taste with regard to the beautiful is noncognitive and therefore cannot be reduced to conceptual schemata (1974, sec. 6, pp. 45–46).

6. Jay contrasts Marcuse’s version of Marxist holism, which also emphasizes the nonrepressive function of memory, with Adorno’s position in *Marxism and Totality* (1984, 220–40).

7. Adorno argues that transcendental aesthetics, like its dialectical successor, sustains the “phenomenon of a language of art” and questions the subsumption of part to whole that dominates traditional aesthetics (1984, 203).

8. Kant’s discussion of the “universal communicability” of aesthetic judgments, as an attempt to refute radical subjectivism in favor of a common sense (*sensus communus*), might be said to anticipate Hegel’s social orientation in some respects (cf. Kant, 1974, sec. 21, p. 75).

9. See Adorno’s *Kierkegaard* (1989) for further clarification of the aesthetic as a subjective category. This might be compared to Adorno’s dialectical critique of phenomenological subjectivity, culminating in chapter 4 of *Against Epistemology* (1983, 186–234).

10. Unlike Kant, for Hegel the sublime is not placed in the “pure subjectivity of the mind and its Ideas of Reason”; it is instead “grounded in the one absolute substance *qua* the content which is to be represented” (Hegel 1975, 363).

11. Donougho argues that Adorno rejects Hegel’s classicism, but that he does subscribe to an aesthetics of the work as opposed to a “textual” conception of art in “Hegel and the Subversion of System” (1991, 39). Jameson argues against assimilating Adorno’s thinking to “the aleatory free play of postmodern textuality” and its seeming indifference to matters of truth in *Late Marxism* (1990, 11).

12. Hegel’s effort to integrate cultural history into aesthetic theory contrasts with Kant’s attempt to purify aesthetics at the expense of cultural history. Both Hegel and Adorno maintain that philosophy must be assigned a special role in a new cultural situation that requires a critical response.

13. In contrast to the strategies of both Plato and modern rationalism, Hegel’s objections to the idea of a “senseless appearance” demonstrate how appearance and essence are dialectically linked in *Hegel’s Science of Logic* (1969, 499).

14. Aristotle maintains that the poetry is basically related to possible rather than to factual occurrences in *Poetics* 145b–146a (1961, 17–18).

15. The emergence of the “not-yet” on the horizon of beauty in nature might be generalized according to Jean-Paul Sartre’s phenomenological identification of value with an original uprising in consciousness (1966, 145).

16. Hegel contends that the realm of the Absolute Spirit requires an ascent from art to religion and ultimately to philosophy. Since the Hegelian notion of *Aufhebung* implies preservation as well as negation, it partially illuminates the relationship that Adorno would like to establish between art and (philosophical) criticism.

17. Adorno criticizes the formalism of much modern art when he argues that artistic and social reification share an underlying untruth, which fetishizes aspects of a temporal process (1984, 147).

18. Lukács offers a discussion of literary modernism that is consistent with Marxist orthodoxy in *Realism in Our Time* (1964, 47–92). Adorno’s critique of Lukács can be found in “Extorted Reconciliation” (1974a).

19. Hegel's version of this process constitutes one of the high points of his account of events leading up to and including the French Revolution. For further details, see Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* 6.B.3 (1981, 355–63).

20. Adorno clearly maintains that this insight is inscribed in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, rather than in Kant's moral philosophy. Kant offers a theory that opens up nonidentity on the level of perception, whereas his "practical reason is independent of any thing 'alien' to it, of any object" (1987, 236).

21. The concept of a "detotalized totality" is advanced by Sartre in *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1976). Adorno's modified conception of totality as demonstrated in his use of negative dialectics might be related to the way that a given totality can be detotalized in the manner that Sartre suggests.

22. Pertinent comments on Adorno's "dialectical intelligence" and impressive style can be found in Jameson's *Marxism and Form* (1972, xiii).

23. Jay identifies Adorno's use of negative dialectics with Ricoeur's "hermeneutics of suspicion" and contrasts his final position to that of Marcuse in *Marxism and Totality* (1984, 238, 272–74). However, Adorno's recourse to Bloch's ontology of the "not-yet" (e.g., in his discussion of natural beauty) may not involve eschatology, but it certainly implies hope.

WORKS CITED

- Adorno, Theodor. 1973 *Negative Dialectics*. Trans. E. B. Ashton. New York: Seabury Press.
- . 1974a. "Extorted Reconciliation: On Georg Lukács' *Realism in Our Time*." In *Notes to Literature I, II*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholson, 216–40. New York: Columbia University Press.
- . 1974b. *Minima Moralia*. Trans. E. F. N. Jephcott. London: NLB.
- . 1981. "Notes on Kafka." In *Prisms*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber, 243–71. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- . 1983. *Against Epistemology: A Metacritique. Studies in Husserl and the Phenomenological Antinomies*. Trans. Willis Domingo. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- . 1984. *Aesthetic Theory*. Trans. C. Lenhardt. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- . 1989. *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*. Trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
- Aristotle. 1961. *Poetics*. Trans. Kenneth A. Tilford. Indiana: Gateway Editions.
- Donougho, Martin. 1991. "Hegel and the Subversion of System: *Der Fall Adorno*." In *Writing the Politics of Difference*, ed. Hugh J. Silverman, 31–41. New York: SUNY Press.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1991. *Truth and Method*. Trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall. New York: Crossroad.
- Hegel, G. W. F. 1969. *Hegel's Science of Logic*. Trans. A. V. Miller. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- . 1975. *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art I-II*. Trans. T. M. Knox. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- . 1981. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans. A. V. Miller. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor Adorno. "The Concept of Enlightenment." In *Dialectic of the Enlightenment*. New York: Herder & Herder.
- Jameson, Fredric. 1972. *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- . 1990. *Late Marxism: Adorno, or, The Persistence of Dialectic*. London: Verso.
- Jay, Martin. 1984. *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kant, Immanuel. 1958. *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. Norman Kemp Smith. New York: St. Martin's Press.

- . 1974. *Critique of Judgment*. Trans. J. H. Bernard. New York: Hafner Press.
- Lukács, Georg. 1964. *Realism in Our Time: Literature and the Class Struggle*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Marx, Karl. 1970. *The German Ideology: Part One*. Ed. C. J. Arthur. New York: International Publishers.
- . 1973. *The Grundrisse: Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy*. Trans. Martin Nicholas. Baltimore: Penguin.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. 1966. *Being and Nothingness* Trans. Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Washington Square Press.
- . 1976. *Critique of Dialectical Reason: Theory of Practical Ensembles*. Ed. Jonathan Reé. Trans. Alan Sheridan-Smith. New Jersey: Humanities Press.