



## Exile, Statelessness, and Migration

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## The Elusiveness of the Particular

Hannah Arendt, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor Adorno

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### [-] Abstract and Keywords

This chapter examines the subterranean affinities between Hannah Arendt and Theodor Adorno, two of the most famous exiles of the last century, through the so-called “Benjaminian moment” present in their work. It is widely known that any consideration of Arendt and Adorno as thinkers who share intellectual affinities is likely to be thwarted by the profound dislike that Arendt seems to harbor toward Adorno. However, such psychological attitudes and personal animosities cannot guide the evaluations of a thinker's work. This is particularly true in the case of Arendt and Adorno, who both shared a profound sense that one must learn to *think anew*, beyond the traditional schools of philosophy and methodology—a concept that will be referred to as their Benjaminian moment.

*Keywords:* Hannah Arendt, Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Benjaminian moment, exiles, think anew, traditional philosophy, traditional methodology

### Benjamin and the Chess Master

Chess appears to have been not just a pastime for Walter Benjamin but a complex metaphor for thinking about history, progress, teleology, and the ironies of fate. The first thesis of Benjamin's “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” composed in shock at the signing of the Hitler-Stalin pact, reads as follows: “The story is told of an automaton constructed in such a way that it could play a winning game of chess, answering each move of an opponent with a countermove. A puppet in Turkish attire and with a hookah in its mouth sat before a chessboard placed on a large table. A system of mirrors created the illusion this table was transparent on all sides. Actually, a little hunchback who was an expert chess player sat inside and guided the puppet's hand by means of strings.”<sup>1</sup> The puppet, for Benjamin, was “historical materialism.” Arendt had been entrusted to bring Benjamin's suitcase, which contained a version of this manuscript after his death, to the United States. Two decades later, she lovingly edited these and other texts of Benjamin's into a volume called *Illuminations. Essays and Reflections* in English.<sup>2</sup>

The ironic contempt towards the doctrine of “historical materialism” expressed by Benjamin via the metaphor of the chess-playing puppet was undoubtedly shared by Arendt and Blücher. Blücher, who had been **(p.35)** a member of the Spartacist league in Berlin, founded by Rosa Luxemburg, broke with his faction after her death and escaped to Paris ahead of the German police. Yet neither he nor Arendt nor Benjamin gave up the hope that one would somehow beat the little mysterious hunchback dwarf, that is, the chess master who seemed to pull the strings of history. “To articulate the past historically,” wrote Benjamin in Thesis 6, “... means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger. ... In every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition from the conformism that is about to overpower it.”<sup>3</sup>

These few lines can serve as a guidepost for understanding Arendt’s own practice of historical narrative, ranging from her discussions of anti-Semitism and imperialism in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* to her account of the French and American Revolutions in *On Revolution*, and even to *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. For Arendt, as for Benjamin, there was “redemptive power” in narrative.<sup>4</sup> The political philosopher, as narrator, had “to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger,” and undo the chess master’s moves that always seemed to outwit historical actors by suffocating the new under the weight of historical conformism and false teleology.

It is the “Benjaminian moment” in their work that best reveals the subterranean affinities between Arendt and Adorno, two of the most famous exiles of the last century.<sup>5</sup> It is widely known that any consideration of Arendt and Adorno as thinkers who share intellectual affinities is likely to be thwarted from the start by the profound dislike that Arendt, in particular, seems to have borne towards Adorno.<sup>6</sup> In 1929 Adorno was among members of the faculty of the University of Frankfurt who would be evaluating the “Habilitation,” essential to Günther Anders (Stern), Hannah Arendt’s first husband, securing a teaching post in a German University. He found the work unsatisfactory, thus bringing to an end Stern’s hopes for a university career. It was also in this period that Arendt’s notorious statement regarding Adorno was uttered—“Der kommt mir nicht ins Haus”—meaning that Adorno was not to set foot in their apartment in Frankfurt.<sup>7</sup>

This hostility on Arendt’s part never diminished, while Adorno endured it with a cultivated *politesse*. Arendt’s temper flared up several **(p.36)** more times at Adorno: first, when she was convinced that he and his colleagues were preventing the publication of Benjamin’s posthumous manuscripts,<sup>8</sup> and secondly, when his critique of Heidegger—*The Jargon of Authenticity*—appeared.<sup>9</sup>

Of course, such psychological attitudes and personal animosities cannot guide our evaluations of a thinker’s work, text, and legacy. And this is particularly true in the case of Arendt and Adorno, who not only reflected upon the “break in civilization” caused by the rise of fascism and Nazism, the Holocaust, and the defeat of the working classes in Europe and elsewhere, but also asked, “what does it mean to go on thinking?” after all that. They shared a profound sense that one must learn to *think anew*, beyond the traditional schools of philosophy and methodology. It is this attempt to think anew that I will refer to as their “Benjaminian moment.” Put succinctly: Arendt as well as Adorno came to believe that thinking must free itself from the power of “false universals.” This means not only refuting historical teleologies, but at a much-deeper level, it involves a categorical critique of all philosophical attempts at totalizing and system-building. For Arendt, honest thinking can only be accomplished in fragments; for Adorno, thinking must resist the temptation to overpower the object, letting it instead appear and assert itself over the

epistemic imperialism of subjectivity. “Fragmentary constellations,” which for Arendt illustrate the criss-crossings of tendencies, trends, and structures in culture, history, and society, all of which could have happened otherwise, and the “primacy of the object”<sup>10</sup> for Adorno, are central themes that reveal the legacy and influence of Walter Benjamin. This critique of false universals, shared by both, frees thought to face the “elusiveness of the particular” and leads to an eventual encounter with Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*.<sup>11</sup> Arendt finds in Kant’s doctrine of “reflective judgment” an epistemology for elucidating the particular without dismissing the intersubjective quality of all judgment. For Adorno, aesthetic judgment becomes a paradigm for thinking beyond the false harmonies of the “*Naturschöne*” (the naturally beautiful), on the one hand, and the awe caused by “*das Erhabene*” (the sublime) on the other. Can reflective judgment, whether moral, political, and aesthetic, restore the power of thought, then? **(p.37)** Adorno’s 1934 essay on “The Actuality of Philosophy” and Arendt’s 1946 essay on “What Is Existenz Philosophy?” will serve as my entry-points to this question.

### Adorno’s Early Critique of Philosophy

On May 7, 1931, upon assuming a position in the Faculty of Philosophy of The University of Frankfurt, Adorno held a lecture with the title “Zur Aktualität der Philosophie” (“The Actuality of Philosophy”).<sup>12</sup> The opening statement of this text already indicates the militant rigor with which the young professor is ready to take on the establishment of philosophy: “Whoever chooses philosophy as a profession today must first reject the illusion that earlier philosophical enterprises begin with: that the power of thought is sufficient to grasp the totality of the real. No justifying reason could rediscover itself in a reality whose order and form suppress every claim to reason; only polemically does reason present itself to the knower as total reality, *while only in traces and ruins is it prepared to hope that it will ever come across correct and just reality*” (AP, 120; my italics). Since the Left Hegelian critique (Feuerbach, Marx, Engels) of Hegel’s phrase “that the actual is rational, and that the rational is actual” (*Was vernünftig ist, das ist wirklich; und was wirklich ist, das ist vernünftig*),<sup>13</sup> faith in the capacity of reason to “grasp the totality of the real” was shown to be a chimera at best and an ideology at worst. Following this tradition, Adorno is not only criticizing the hubris of philosophical thought but also indicating that “the real” itself “suppresses every claim to reason”; the failure of philosophy is not that of the thinker alone but also that of a reality that does not permit itself to be grasped as rational. “Only in traces and ruins,” writes Adorno, introducing a Benjaminian phrase wholly unknown to philosophical discourse of the time, can a “correct and just reality” be encountered.

Adorno proceeds to survey the contemporary German philosophical scene. The question of Being, which calls itself the most “radical” (Heidegger), is according to Adorno “powerless ... it is nothing more than an empty-form principle whose archaic dignity helps to cover any content whatsoever” (AP, 120). By contrast, the neo-Kantianism of the **(p.38)** Marburg School has preserved its “self-contained form as a system, but has thereby renounced every right over reality”). Georg Simmel’s *Lebensphilosophie* is an attempt to reach beyond the categories to the real itself, but instead it “becomes resigned to the ‘living’ as a blind and unenlightened concept of nature” (AP, 121). Furthermore, the German Southwest School of Rickert tries to mediate between the extremes by producing “value” categories that set reality in relation to these values. But their locus and source remain undetermined: “they lie between logical necessity and psychological multiplicity somewhere” (AP, 121).

Adorno’s greatest esteem in this essay is reserved for Husserl and his efforts at “transcendental phenomenology,” aimed to gain “a trans-subjective binding order of being” (AP, 121). Even if he took as his beginning point the post-Cartesian “transcendental idealism,” it was an

“authentically productive and fruitful discovery of Husserl” that he recognized the meaning of “the non-deducible given” (*unableitbaren Gegebenheit*) as “the fundamental problem of the relationship between reason and reality” (AP, 121–22). But every Husserlian analysis of the given still rests on transcendental idealism, and it is proof of Husserl’s “great and clear honesty” that “the jurisdiction of reason” (*Rechtsprechung der Vernunft*) remains “the court of final appeal” (AP, 122).

Adorno returns once more to Heidegger in this context: whereas Husserl, despite the origins of his phenomenology in transcendental idealism, acknowledges the problem of the “given” and the irreducibility of reality to the jurisdiction of reason, Heidegger transforms the ontology of being into “the existential analytic of Dasein.”<sup>14</sup> “It is thus no accident,” observes Adorno, “that Heidegger falls back precisely on the latest plan for a subjective ontology produced by Western thinking: the existentialist philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard” (AP, 123).

As I will show in the next section, there are astonishing parallels between Adorno’s account of the collapse of objective idealism and the transition from Husserlian phenomenology to existential phenomenology and eventually to existentialism *tout court* and Arendt’s own reconstruction of these same philosophical currents in “What Is Existenz philosophy?”. Whereas Arendt will proceed from the failure of philosophy to restore a sense of being-at-home-in-the-world to the political (p.39) implications of the analytic of *Dasein*, Adorno draws a suggestive parallel between Kierkegaard’s leap into faith and the Heideggerian resolve unto death: “However, a leap and an undialectical negation of subjective being is also Heidegger’s ultimate justification, with the sole difference that the analysis of the ‘existing there’ (*Vorfindlichen*—of the ready-to-hand), whereby Heidegger remains bound to phenomenology and breaks in principle with Kierkegaard’s idealist speculation, avoids the transcendence of belief ... and instead recognizes solely the transcendence of a vitalist ‘thus being’ (*Sosein*) in death” (AP, 123).

Writing in 1931—before Heidegger joined the NSDAP and assumed the rectorship of the University of Freiburg, forever casting a shadow on his standing as a philosopher—Adorno, unlike Arendt in 1946, does not seek to uncover the possible links between Heidegger’s existential ontology of death and anxiety and his Nazi politics. Instead, Adorno is still asking how “The claim to totality made by thought is thrown back upon thought itself, and it is finally shattered there too” (AP, 124). The categories of thrownness, anxiety, and death “are in fact not able to banish the fullness of what is living,” but swinging between an irrational exuberance for the “pure concept of life,” and feelings of dread and anxiety in view of the finitude of Dasein (AP, 124), the pendulum of phenomenology after Husserl disintegrates through these wild gyrations.

After the failure of these attempts at philosophical system-building, is philosophy itself actual? Adorno considers the efforts of the Vienna School to self-liquidate philosophy into science. Not denying “the extraordinary importance of this School,” (AP, 125) he nevertheless argues that two problems cannot be mastered by the positivist turn to the sciences: first is the meaning of *the given* itself, which according to Adorno, “is not ahistorically identical and transcendental, but rather assumes changing and historically comprehensible forms” (AP, 125); the second is the problem of “the alien ego,” accessible for empirio-criticism only “through analogy” (AP, 125). In singling out the problem of “the given” and that of “intersubjectivity” as the two problems to which empirio-criticism can provide no answers, Adorno may have been following Georg Lukács’s *History and Class Consciousness*; Lukács, in the famous essay on “Reification and the Consciousness of the (p.40) Proletariat,” highlighted these same two issues as being the

pitfalls of bourgeois philosophy.<sup>15</sup> For Lukács, both problems had their roots in the inability of bourgeois thought, from Descartes to Kant and through Locke to Hume, to grasp the relation of the epistemic subject to the world not in terms of mere contemplation, but as a form of active, involved, material praxis of transforming nature in the process of socially laboring in cooperation with other human beings. Adorno does not take this materialist route of dissolving the problems of modern philosophy into a teaching of historically situated social labor.<sup>16</sup> Instead, he asserts that although “philosophy will not be transformed into science” under the positivist and empiricist attack, “philosophic problems will lie always, and in a certain sense irredeemably, locked within the most specific questions of the separate sciences” (AP, 125–26). He continues: “Plainly put: the idea of science (*Wissenschaft*) is research; that of philosophy is *interpretation* ... philosophy persistently, and with the claim of truth, must proceed interpretively without possessing a sure key to interpretation” (AP, 126; my emphasis).

Adorno’s magisterial survey of the history and actuality of philosophy results in a rejection of “the power of thought to grasp the totality of the real” (AP, 120). Husserlian phenomenology confronts the non-deducible given; Heideggerian ontology leads to an existentialism of dread and death; Simmel’s *Lebensphilosophie* results in an irrational exuberance toward an uncritical concept of life; the Marburg School of neo-Kantianism remains caught in a teaching of categories without any persuasive connection to the real; the Rickert School postulates values neither the origin nor the extent of which it can explain; the Vienna School, like Husserl, cannot resolve the problem of the given nor of “alter ego,” nor of the constitution of intersubjectivity. How then is the concept of “interpretation” supposed to provide an answer to this formidable array of problems? And what does interpretation mean?

Interpretation is not to be confused with the problem of meaning; it is not the task of philosophy to present reality as if it were meaningful; nor should interpretation suggest a “second, secret world,” behind the appearances. Referring now explicitly to Benjamin’s *Ursprung des (p.41) deutschen Trauerspiels*,<sup>17</sup> on which he had been teaching a seminar at that time, Adorno writes: “Authentic philosophic interpretation does not meet up with a fixed meaning which already lies behind the question; but lights it up suddenly and momentarily, and consumes it at the same time. Just as riddle-solving is constituted, in that the singular and dispersed elements of the question are brought into various groupings long enough for them to close together in a figure out of which the solution springs forth, while the question disappears—so philosophy has to bring its elements, which it receives from the sciences into changing constellations, or, to say it with less astrological and scientifically more current expression, into changing trial combinations, until they fall into a figure which can be read as an answer, while at the same time the question disappears. The task of philosophy is not to search for concealed and manifest intentions of reality, but to interpret unintentional reality, in that, by the power of constructing figures, or images [*Bilder*], out of the isolated elements of reality, it *negates [aufhebt] questions, the exact articulation of which is the task of science*” (AP, 127; my emphasis). Although Adorno concludes this passage with a gesture towards the “strange affinity between interpretive philosophy. ... and the thinking of materialism,” (AP, 127) his Frankfurt colleagues at that time, including Max Horkheimer, could not but have been astonished at this turn in Adorno’s thinking towards this elusive concept of materialist interpretation.

In his 1937 essay on “Traditional and Critical Theory,” Horkheimer would reverse Adorno’s contentions: first, it is the task of philosophy to pose the questions, “the exact articulation” of which remains its (philosophy’s) task. The sciences enable an answer, in that one can integrate their results into some kind of analysis of an “epoch approaching its end,”<sup>18</sup> but they do not

supply philosophy with *its* questions. Second, Critical Theory rejects the problem of *the given*, by showing that, following Marx and Lukács, the given is constituted in and through a process of social labor and that nature is formed sociohistorically. Third, Critical Theory is critique in that it allies itself with the oppositional forces capable of transforming the false social totality.

**(p.42)** Even if between the 1931 essay on “The Actuality of Philosophy” and the 1937 programmatic essay by Horkheimer on “Traditional and Critical Theory” Adorno’s thinking underwent changes, he never accepted the program of social labor subscribed to by Horkheimer and Lukács, and insisted instead on the concept of “Naturgeschichte,” with all its paradoxical implications. He defended the idea of the nature of history and of the historicity of nature, neither of which could be reduced to the intentional activities of empirical or transcendental subjects. Furthermore, Adorno resisted sociologizing philosophy. As Susan Buck-Morss (alias Benjamin Snow) observes, “Horkheimer believed as firmly as Adorno that bourgeois philosophy was in a state of decay, but he seems to have concluded that if metaphysics were no longer possible, then the philosopher had to look to the social sciences in order to find truth. For Horkheimer, the problem of “the object” tended to dissolve into (Marxian) sociology, the problem of “the subject” into (Freudian) psychology, and Critical Theory attempted to explain their interrelations. ... Adorno ... had an almost Hegelian faith in the immanent logic of philosophy.”<sup>19</sup>

“A configuration of reality”; “changing constellations”; the “configuration of unintentional truth” through “historical images”—these are the Benjaminian phrases that tumble out of Adorno’s pen in the last pages of this magisterial essay. In a grand dialectical move, however, at the end of the essay Adorno once more returns to the problem of Being and considers the following objection that could be raised against his own efforts as well. Could it not be objected, he asks, that “out of blind anxiety before the power of history ... I bestowed upon historical facticity, or its arrangement, the power which actually belongs to the invariant, ontological first principles, practiced idolatry with historically produced being, destroyed in philosophy every permanent standard, sublimated it into an aesthetic picture game [*Bilderspiel*], and transformed the *prima philosophia* [first philosophy] into essayism”? (AP, 132). Adorno admits that these objections are legitimate, and that he will gladly accept the reproach of essayism. Essay-writing is a form of experimentation with the “power of freshly disclosed reality,” (AP, 132) and if with the disintegration of philosophical certainties and **(p.43)** pieties, the essay makes its reentry into philosophy, then Adorno welcomes this. “For the mind [*Geist*] is indeed not capable of producing or grasping the totality of the real, but it may be possible to penetrate the detail, to explode in miniature the mass of merely existing reality” (AP, 133). As we know, Adorno did not just practice the essay form, and in many of his writings he retained the urge towards the totality (and showed repeated failures to attain it) by making the dialectic “suffer violence in its own hands,” to use a phrase of Hegel’s.<sup>20</sup> Yet what I am calling the “Benjaminian moment,” is not confined to this early essay but is deep and lasting in Adorno’s philosophy, informing his well-known mature theses such as *the primacy of the object* and *the non-identical concept of the concept*.<sup>21</sup>

The next German thinker who uses concepts such as “configurations,” “changing constellations,” and “crystalline structures” in such prominent fashion is none other than Hannah Arendt in her preface to *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. The German title of this work—“Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft”—“Elements and Origins of Totalitarian Domination,” recalls Benjamin’s “Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels” more explicitly.<sup>22</sup> In her first “Preface” in 1950, Arendt distinguished between “comprehension” and “deducing the unprecedented from precedents,” which she rejected (OT [1950], viii). In the 1967 preface to part 1 of *The Origins of*

*Totalitarianism*, around the time that she was editing Benjamin's writings in *Illuminations*, she wrote of totalitarianism versus "its elements and origins" (OT 1967, xv). Arendt is not concerned to establish some inevitable continuity between the past and present that would compel us to view what happened as what *had* to happen. She objects to this trap of historicist understanding and maintains that the future is radically underdetermined. If we recall Benjamin's chess-playing puppet, Arendt wants to show that the mysterious hunchback behind it does not pull the strings of history after all. Instead, she is searching for the elements of totalitarianism, for those currents of thought, political events, and outlook, which form a particular *configuration* and *crystallization of elements*, quite differently than they did in their original context. All historical writing is implicitly a history of the present. And it is the particular constellation and **(p.44)** crystallization of elements into a whole at the present time that serve as methodological guides to their past meanings. Thus, none of the elements she assesses—anti-Semitism, the end of the rights of man, and the decline of the nation-state, the European scramble for Africa, race thinking, and bureaucracy—are sufficient by themselves alone to explain how a racially based Nazi exterminationist anti-Semitism, totally dependent upon a well-functioning bureaucracy, emerged. "The book, therefore," explains Arendt, "does not really deal with the 'origins' of totalitarianism—as its title unfortunately claims—but gives a historical account of the 'elements' which 'crystallized' into totalitarianism. This account is followed by an analysis of the 'elementary structure' of totalitarian movement and domination itself. The elementary structure of totalitarianism is the hidden structure of the book."<sup>23</sup> In view of the deep and lasting influence Benjamin had upon their thinking, the struggle that broke out between Adorno and Arendt (and also Scholem) over Benjamin's legacy may be more intelligible in retrospect. My goal in this chapter is to identify those Benjaminian elements in their thinking that go beyond matters of intellectual influence and personal entanglements to a much-deeper level of orientation in their thought. And for this, we need to turn to Arendt's own first properly philosophical essay after World War II, namely, "What Is Existenz Philosophy?" written in 1946 for *Partisan Review*.

### Hannah Arendt: Explaining European Philosophy to an American Audience

Adorno's "The Actuality of Philosophy" is a magisterial essay, astonishing in its self-confidence for one writing so early in his academic career. The same cannot be said of Arendt's "What Is Existenz Philosophy?"<sup>24</sup> It is written in a halting language, probably due to the fact that she had not yet gained fluency in English; it is pedagogical in tone, trying to introduce to an American audience, curious about trends in recent European thought, themes in German Idealism. There are a few too many "firsts" and assignments of periodicity: for example, that the word "existence" **(p.45)** is used in the modern sense for the *first time* in Schelling's late work (EP, 167); "Modern existential philosophy *begins* with Kierkegaard" (EP, 173); "Kant, who is *the real, though secret*, as it were, founder of modern philosophy" (EP, 168; My emphases). The reader has the sense that Arendt is trying very hard to render manageable for a general, and not necessarily philosophical, audience some of the deepest currents of European philosophy since the death of Hegel.

Like Adorno, Arendt sees the collapse of the Hegelian system as the crucial point of entry into philosophical trends of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She writes that "immediately after Hegel's death it became apparent that his system represented the last word of all western philosophy, at least to the extent that, since Parmenides, it had not ... ever dared call into question the unity of thought and Being" (EP, 164). But this questioning had already been accomplished by Kant; in that sense what culminated with Hegel was not an unbroken tradition but rather the illusion of restoring a tradition. It was Kant who had distinguished the concepts of our understanding from the sensory impressions that originate with the impact of the external

world upon our sense organs—our intuitions (*Anschauungen*). The *that* of our conceptual apparatus can never explain the *what* of our sense perceptions. I may know from someone else's description what a lilac is and looks like, but I will never know what a lilac smells like until I have actually smelled one!

Arendt, however, draws from this two conclusions that diverge from Adorno's: first, "If Being and thinking are no longer the same, if thinking no longer enables me to penetrate the true reality of things because the nature of things has nothing to do with their reality, then science can be whatever it likes; it no longer yields up any truth to man, no truth of any interest to man" (*EP*, 168). Arendt, unlike Adorno, does not envisage an intellectual division of labor between the sciences and philosophy. For her, even until her last work, *The Life of the Mind*, scientific knowledge accounts for factual reality and establishes truth, while the task of thinking, generally, and philosophy, more specifically, is to generate meaning (*LM*, vol. 1, *Thinking*, 14–15; 61). This concept of meaning in Arendt's mature work is quite close to Adorno's concept (**p.46**) of interpretation. Meaning searches for illumination via building constellations and via attempts to think the break in tradition such as to reveal the emergence of the new and the unprecedented in all their moral and political ambiguity. (See chapter 6 below for the legal and political dimensions of the new and the unprecedented in history, pp. 107–9.) This feature of Arendt's thought is best exemplified through her interpretations of the history of political philosophy, illustrated by her essays such as those collected in *Between Past and Future. Eight Exercises in Political Thought*.<sup>25</sup>

In her 1946 essay, unlike Adorno, Arendt turns to the disunity of thought and being mainly for its implications for the human being as a moral and political actor, as a "doer of deeds and a speaker of words," as she will later state in *The Human Condition* (*HC*, 176).<sup>26</sup> The Kantian opposition of thought and Being, of concept and intuition, subjects man himself to a set of untenable dualisms and antagonisms. As bodies in space and time, human beings, like all matter, are subject to scientific laws; they are determined, in ways that are obscure and unintelligible to them, by forces in nature, including human nature. But they are also creatures of reason who can act on the basis of moral principles that they alone can formulate. Humans are creatures of freedom insofar as they determine their actions in accordance with the moral law; yet, as material bodies in space and time, they are subject to the laws of nature. "At the same time that Kant made man the master and the measure of man, he also made him the slave of Being" (*EP*, 171). "With this position, which followed directly from Kant," Arendt writes, "man was cut off from the absolute, rationally accessible realm of ideas and universal values and left in the midst of a world where he had nothing left to hold onto" (*EP*, 169). Certainly, Arendt's reading of Kant here is not compatible with Kant's own self-understanding according to which human dignity resides in admitting the limits of reason when confronted with its antinomies. Existential despair about the human condition, despite many pessimistic passages about the "crooked timber of humanity" is not Kant's disposition. (See below chapter 9 on Isaiah Berlin's appropriation of this term.)

When Adorno himself reflects on these Kantian antinomies in his other works,<sup>27</sup> it is to free the sensuous nature of humans as well as (**p.47**) nature in general, from being the Other of reason—but also more radically, to rethink the relationship of concept and intuition, form and matter, reason and the impulses in such a way as to go beyond the metaphors of self-legislation and the hierarchical subjugation of impulses to reason. Here Arendt and Adorno agree: "Just as it was decisive for the historical development of the nineteenth century that nothing disappeared as quickly as did the revolutionary concept of the *citoyen*, so it was decisive for the development of



post-Kantian philosophy that nothing disappeared as quickly as did this new concept of man that had just barely begun to emerge" (*EP*, 170). Adorno is not reluctant to bid this new concept of man a speedy farewell, whereas Arendt is more concerned with the damage done to the shared human world, when the *citoyen* disappears as quickly as the autonomous individual.

Into this rift caused by the disappearance of the rational subject and the *citoyen* enters Kierkegaard, who is seen by Arendt, as well as Adorno, as the one who has faced the abyss created by the antinomies of Kant no less than by the disappearance of Hegelian truths. "Kierkegaard set the 'individual,' the single human being, for whom there is neither place nor meaning in a totality controlled by the world spirit," against Hegel's system, writes Arendt (*EP*, 173). It follows, therefore, that "All essential questions of philosophy such as those concerning the immortality of the soul, the freedom of man, the unity of the world—which is to say, all the questions whose antinomical structure Kant demonstrated in the antinomies of pure reason, can be comprehended only as 'subjective truths,' not known as objective ones" (*EP*, 173). The universal is only significant in its relationship to the singular: this is Kierkegaard's deep insight. The *self* cannot be captured through abstractions such as the rational moral being; nor can "the knight of faith," in Kierkegaard's terms, be encountered via general sociological terms referring to the average bourgeois citizen. And the self is most singular in those limit situations (*Grenzsituationen*) when it encounters its own singularity most intensely. "Death is the event in which I am definitely alone, an individual cut off from everyday life" (*EP*, 174). Arendt, at this point in her reconstruction of these currents of thought, much like Adorno, moves from Kierkegaard to Heidegger's philosophy of Dasein to explore how existential ontology, (p.48) following Kierkegaard's precedent, turns into a philosophy of dread, death, and anxiety.

Through their broad brush strokes that trace the dissolution of the unity of thought and being, and most importantly, in their singling out of the *emergence of the singular as opposed to the universal*, and in their acknowledgment of the absence of easy mediations and reconciliation between the universal and the singular, Arendt and Adorno come closer to each other in their diagnoses of philosophy after Hegel than either of them recognized or may have been willing to admit. In Arendt's exposé and critique of Heidegger in this essay—the first time after World War II that she expresses herself on his thought—we see the outlines of how she intends to think her way beyond false universals to a concept not of *the singularity of the self, but of the uniqueness of the person*. Where Adorno will resuscitate the dignity of the other of reason through his unique form of practicing dialectics without teleology, Arendt will go back to a move she first sees attempted by Husserl, namely the recovery of *the world* as an epistemological and even ontological category. Arendt actually begins this essay by considering phenomenology and pragmatism (she says nothing about the latter) as "the most recent and interesting epochal philosophical schools of the last hundred years" (*EP*, 164). Arendt views Husserl's attempt to "reestablish the ancient tie between Being and thought," through "the intentional structure of consciousness" (*EP*, 164) as a noble failure. Even if philosophical reconstruction can enable me to understand why there are chairs and tables at all, "it will never be able to make me understand why *this table is*. And it is the existence of *this table*, quite apart from tables in general, that evokes the philosophical shock" (*EP*, 165). Adorno saw a moment of honesty in Husserl's admission that the "non-deducible given" remains a problem for phenomenology; Arendt sees revealed in this an attempt "to evoke magically a home again out of a world which has become alien" (*EP*, 165; 36 in the original *Partisan Review* version which I use here). "Husserl's phrase 'to the things themselves' is no less a magic formula than Hofmannsthal's 'little things'" (*EP*, 165). "By transforming this alien Being into consciousness ...," writes Arendt of Husserl, he "tries to give the world a human face again, just as Hofmannsthal, with the magic

of little things, tries to reawaken in us the old tenderness toward the world” (p.49) (*EP*, 166). It is this “tenderness toward the world” that Arendt thought had collapsed around her with the events of the twentieth century, never to be quite restored. Nevertheless, it was the task of the thinker, as Benjamin wrote in Thesis 6 of his *Theses in the Philosophy of History*, “To articulate the past historically ... to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger ... In every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition from the conformism that is about to overpower it.”

### How to Account for Heidegger?

The personal and philosophical drama<sup>28</sup> behind Arendt’s essay cannot easily be captured in her reconstruction of the history of philosophy after Hegel up to the point when the existential analytic of Dasein emerges and the “world is well lost,” to use Richard Rorty’s famous phrase.<sup>29</sup> It is the first time after World War II that Arendt comments on Heidegger’s political behavior during his rectorship of the University of Freiburg and establishes a philosophical, and not merely characterological, link between his actions and his philosophy. In a surprising move, Arendt turns to elements of Jaspers’s philosophy—his concept of limit situations (*Grenzsituationen*) and communication—to move beyond the pitfalls of Heidegger’s ontology toward a concept of the world.

The Arendt-Heidegger saga has been recounted many times and this is not the place to revisit it.<sup>30</sup> Arendt is just as skeptical in her evaluation of the Heideggerian analytic of Dasein as Adorno was in 1931. After crediting Heidegger with “picking up the question that Kant had broached,” (*EP*, 177) she writes that “Heidegger claims to have found a being in whom essence and existence are identical, and that being is man. His essence is his existence” (*EP*, 177). Yet, far from recovering a sense of being-at-home-in-the-world, when Heidegger argues that Dasein has an “ontically-ontologically pre-eminent rank,” he “puts man in the exact same place that God had occupied in traditional ontology” (*EP*, 178).

We may want to contest this interpretation, which hardly does justice to the principles of “thrownness,” “temporality,” and “care,” all of which have their sources in a more traditional philosophical theology with (p.50) Augustinian roots. We also know that Heidegger, after his turn (*die Kehre*), much like Adorno, forfeited the epistemic priority of the subject and insisted on a receptivity and openness to Being with bucolic phrases such as “Man is the shepherd of Being.”<sup>31</sup>

Arendt is not unaware of these other dimensions in Heidegger’s thought and gives very careful reconstructions of being-unto-death and resoluteness. But she insists that “the crucial element of man’s being-in-the-world, and what is at stake for his being-in-the-world is quite simply survival in the world. That is the very thing that is denied man, and consequently the basic mode of being-in-the-world is alienation, which is felt both as homelessness and anxiety. In anxiety, which is fundamental fear of death, is reflected the not-being-at-home in the world” (*EP*, 179). The *who* of Dasein is the unique, singular self who can only face her death as hers. But a “Self, taken in isolation, is meaningless,” observes Arendt (*EP*, 180). The only thing that this Self can do is to resolutely take its singularity into account, and this “taking into account” has no determinate moral and political content. In fact, it can only be filled with a political content that is either naïve in its lack of judgment concerning the political world or is mendacious in its willingness to jump resolutely into the flow of events after hearing history’s call.<sup>32</sup>

Arendt, as well as Adorno, sees in Heidegger's attempt to restore the unity of thought and being via the analytic of Dasein a colossal philosophical failure that moves towards a vacuous subjectivism and that cannot recapture being-in-the-world. It is at this point that Arendt locates the intrinsic, and not merely accidental, link between Heidegger's philosophy and his politics. "Later, and after the fact, as it were," she writes, "Heidegger has drawn on many and muddled concepts like 'folk' and 'earth' in an effort to supply his isolated selves with a shared, common ground to stand on ... *But if it does not belong to the concept of man that he inhabits the earth together with others of his kind, then all that remains for him is a mechanical reconciliation by which the atomized selves are provided with a common ground that is essentially alien to their nature. All that can result from that is the organization of these selves intent only on themselves into an Over-self in order somehow to affect a transition from resolutely accepted guilt to action*" (EP, 181-82; my emphasis).<sup>33</sup>

**(p.51)** With this comment Arendt is not only diagnosing Heidegger's political *parti pris* (siding with) for the Nazis, the full extent of which she still did not know in 1946, but she is stumbling upon one of the leading insights of her mature thought, namely, that Heidegger's existential analytic of Dasein as Self makes it impossible to think the *site of the political*, which is always that of Being-in-the-world with others. Heidegger himself had already written: "By reason of this with-like-Being-in-the-world, the world is always the one that I share with Others. The world of *Dasein* is a with-world. Being-in is Being-with-Others. This Being-in-themselves within-the-world is *Dasein-with*."<sup>34</sup> However, concepts such as *Self* and *Dasein* are singularly inappropriate to disclose the dimension of "*Mitsein*" (Being-with). This is the case because "existence itself is, by its very nature, never isolated. It exists only in communication and in awareness of others' existence. Our fellowmen are not (as in Heidegger) an element of existence that is structurally necessary but at the same time an impediment to the Being of the Self ... In the concept of communication lies a concept of humanity new in its approach though not yet fully developed that postulates communication as the premise for the existence of man" (EP, 186). Arendt's programmatic path is now clearer to see: from here on, she will reinterpret Heidegger's concept of "being-in-the-world-with" through a concept of communication, the outlines of which are not given here, but wherein she sees herself indebted to Jaspers.

It is in *The Human Condition* that the new category of "plurality," which brings these dimensions together, will be articulated (HC, 175 ff.). Humans inhabit a space with others who are both their equal and yet distinct from them. Plurality is expressed through speech. "If action as beginning corresponds to the fact of birth, if it is the actualization of the human condition of natality, then speech corresponds to the fact of distinctness and is the actualization of the human condition of plurality, that is, of living as a distinct and unique human being among equals" (HC, 178). But this is precisely the step that Heidegger does not take: although the world is always a world shared with others, although *Mitsein* is a fundamental condition of Dasein, all forms of *Mitsein* other than being-unto-death are dismissed as inauthentic. They represent the **(p.52)** fallenness of Dasein into the chatter (*Gerede*) of the everyday and into the "light of the public that darkens all"—(*Das Licht der Öffentlichkeit verdunkelt alles*). Although I cannot develop the point here, it is noteworthy that with the category of *plurality*, and her insistence on the unity of speech and action, Arendt, along with Wittgenstein, becomes one of the few twentieth-century thinkers to note the significance of language as speech, as the give-and-take among human beings. Admittedly, this concept of speech is not much developed in her thought, and is interpreted instead through metaphors such as "the web of human relationships" (HC, 181-84).

Arendt's 1946 critique formulates an insight that is crucial to her analysis of totalitarianism: that societal atomization—the breakdown of civic, political, and cultural associations—and the loneliness of the atomized masses make them susceptible to the influence of totalitarian movements. Atomized existence in a mass society creates worldlessness. The world is constituted by our common and shared experiences of it to the degree that we can trust that the orientations and significations we follow are more or less those shared by others as well. This commonness of the world is the background against which the plurality of perspectives that constitute the political can emerge. Politics requires a background of commonality as well as the recognition of plurality and perspectival character of judgment of those who share this common space. Although Heidegger, through his analysis of Dasein's worldliness as a form of Mitsein, made "being-with" constitutive of the human condition, his analytic of Dasein, rather than illuminating human plurality, testified to the progressing atomization, loneliness, and worldlessness of the individual in the concluding years of the Weimar Republic.

Departing from what I have called "Western philosophy's love affair with death,"<sup>35</sup> Arendt in *The Human Condition* turned to natality, plurality, speech, and human action to open up a categorical realm for thinking the political. It is only through this form of being-with-others as talking and acting selves that the singular can be recaptured and can free itself from the dominance of the universal. Whereas Adorno's mature thinking formulates a novel interpretation of the "concept" such as to reclaim the singular and the particular against false universals, Arendt (p.53) sees in narrative in general, and Kant's theory of judgment in particular, a move beyond the defunct ontological unity of thought and being. The Benjaminian moment returns for her.

### Totalitarianism and the Question of Ethico-Political Judgment

With the rise of European fascism and Nazism, for Arendt as well as for Adorno, the critique of false universals and ontological certainties through the exercise of good judgment assumed an urgent moral and political dimension. Although little-noted, the "authoritarian personality" type theorized by the Frankfurt School and other social scientists of the period is one who singularly lacks the capacity for good judgment and this was an issue that greatly preoccupied Arendt as well. For Adorno and his coworkers, the authoritarian personality was incapable of evaluating individuals and circumstances without being imprisoned by rigid categories. These types of personalities submitted their will as well as their judgment to those higher than themselves while demeaning those who stood in a position of social inferiority to them.<sup>36</sup> Such personalities were prone to paranoia in that they projected their own aggressive feelings towards individuals whom they then claimed to be hostile to themselves, who wanted their destruction and the like. Anti-Semitism, argued Adorno and Horkheimer, was based on complex processes of projection and paranoia. As the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* expresses it, "If mimesis makes itself like the surrounding world, so false projection makes the surrounding world like itself. If for the former the exterior is the model which the interior has to approximate, if for it the stranger becomes familiar, the latter transforms the tense inside ready to snap into exteriority and stamps even the familiar as the enemy."<sup>37</sup> The result of such psychic processes of projection is loss of judgment, of the capacity to assess and properly evaluate both the circumstances around oneself as well as the consequences of one's actions.

Whereas Adorno uses the language of psychoanalysis and social psychology to characterize this general loss of capacity for judgment, (p.54) Arendt asks repeatedly what the relationship is between "Thinking and Moral Considerations."<sup>38</sup> "Might the problem of good and evil, our faculty for telling right from wrong, be connected with our faculty of thought?," she asks.<sup>39</sup> This is why she claims that the most striking quality of Eichmann was not stupidity, wickedness, or

moral depravity but what she describes as “thoughtlessness.” This claim leads to the further puzzle that Martin Heidegger, the one who thought in a fashion that no other could, and Adolf Eichmann, the one who could not think at all, both were complicit in the Nazi regime. Could the power of thought alone not only prevent one from doing evil, but also enable one to judge the moral and political salience of particular circumstances?

It was the Eichmann affair that showed the centrality of judgment for human affairs in many and varied ways: there was the *retrospective judgment* that every historian and narrator of past events exercised; there was the *moral judgment* of the contemporaries who conducted the trial against Eichmann and judged his actions; and there was also the *lack of a faculty of judgment* on Eichmann’s own part. (See chapter 4 below.) Prompted by the urgency of these problems, Arendt turned to Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*.<sup>40</sup>

Arendt’s unusual and somewhat idiosyncratic reading of Kant’s moral philosophy in relation to the problem of judgment has been discussed widely. As Richard Bernstein has remarked: “Arendt well knew that, even though she invokes the name of Kant, she was radically departing from Kant. There is no question in Kant that the ‘ability to tell right from wrong’ is a matter of practical reason and not the faculty of reflective judgment which ascends from particulars to generals or universals.”<sup>41</sup> Judgment, for Kant, “as the ability to think the particular as contained under the universal,” is *determinative* when the universal is given and the particular is merely subsumed under it. It is *reflective*, if only the particular is given and the appropriate universal has to be found for it (*CJ*, 18–19). Although Kant thought that the faculty of judgment was most needed with respect to teleological judgments concerning nature and with respect to aesthetic judgments to ascertain the beautiful, Arendt insisted that judgment was a faculty of “telling right from wrong,”<sup>42</sup> and not just the beautiful from the ugly.

**(p.55)** In view of our analysis of Arendt’s 1946 “What Is Existenz Philosophy?” essay, we can now see that for Arendt the problem of judgment, although it was of prime importance in the moral and political realm, originated early on with her critique of the search for false universals in the history of philosophy. Her attempt to move beyond the crises of philosophy by discovering a way of thinking the new and the unprecedented in all their particularity points precisely to that conceptual problem that Kant’s “reflective judgment” was supposed to tackle. The evidence for this interpretation of Arendt’s interest in the problem of judgment is provided by the fact that already in 1961, before the Eichmann trial, in an essay on “The Crisis in Culture” Arendt explicitly discusses Kant’s doctrine of reflective judgment and the role of *sensus communis*. The latter, she writes, is “the idea of a sense shared by all of us ... that in reflecting takes account (a priori), in our thought, of everyone else’s mode of presenting [something], in order as it were to compare our own judgment with human reason in general” (*CJ*, 160).<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, “the power of judgment rests on a potential agreement with others, and the thinking process which is active in judging something is not, like the thought process of pure reasoning, a dialogue between me and myself ... And this enlarged way of thinking, which as judgment knows how to transcend its individual limitations, cannot function in strict isolation or solitude: it needs the presence of others ‘in whose place’ it must think, whose perspective it must take into consideration and without whom it never has the opportunity to operate at all.”<sup>44</sup>

Enlarged thought (*erweiterte Denkungsart*) is not empathy, for it does not mean assuming the standpoint of the other. It means making present to oneself the perspective of others involved, and it means asking whether I could “woo their consent.” Enlarged thought displays the qualities of judgment necessary to retrieve and to do justice to the perspectival and plural

quality of the shared world. Judgment requires the moral and cognitive capacities for worldliness, that is, an interest in the world and the human beings who form the world; it also requires a firm grasp of where one's own boundaries lie and where those of others begin. Whereas thinking requires autonomy, consistency, tenacity, independence, and steadfastness, judging requires worldliness, an interest **(p.56)** in one's fellow human beings, and the capacity to appreciate the standpoint of others without projection, idealization, and distortion. There are certainly tensions between the faculties of thinking and judging. Tenacity of thought may lead one to ignore the others' claims upon oneself and to deny their perspectives as valid. Often, philosophical thought suffers from a certain worldlessness, precisely because it seeks consistency, not perspectivality. But it is the task of judgment to restore the commonality of the world in its full plurality. May we say then that judgment is needed to establish "configurations" and "crystallization of elements" in their singularity as well as commonality? How can we capture these configurations? Can we do so by building metaphors? "In other words," observes Arendt, "the chief difficulty here seems to be that for thinking itself—whose language is entirely metaphorical and whose conceptual framework depends entirely on the gift of metaphor, which bridges the gulf between the visible and the invisible, the world of appearance and the thinking ego—there exists no metaphor that could plausibly illuminate this special activity of the mind, in which something invisible within us deals with the invisibles of the world" (*LM*, 123). Thinking dwells in the language of metaphors and tries to bridge the gap between the visible and invisible realms. The political thinker, as opposed to the speculative philosopher, must have the capacity to *share* the power of metaphor with her fellow-human beings such as to nourish and sustain the fragile plurality of the shared world, which, at any moment, can disintegrate and be overwhelmed by propaganda, kitsch, and the loss of common sense.

What I have been calling Arendt's "Benjaminian moment" is caught up in this tension between the universal and the particular, metaphor and reality, the faculties of thinking and judging. Metaphor provides abstract, imageless thought with an image drawn from the world of appearances and "whose function is 'to establish the reality of our concepts'; it thus undoes, as it were, the withdrawal from the world of appearances that is the precondition of mental activities" (*LM*, 103). Arendt is referring once more to Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, paragraph 59, "On Beauty as the Symbol of Morality." "Now," writes Kant, "I maintain that the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good; and only because **(p.57)** we refer the beautiful to the morally good (we all do so naturally and require all others to do so, as a duty) does our liking for it include a claim to everyone else's assent, while the mind is also conscious of being ennobled" (*CJ*, 228). Arendt herself does not explore this connection between beauty and the morally good. It is Adorno who, through his concept of the *Naturschöne*, will explore this link and introduce another mode for retrieving the particular from being swallowed by false universals.

### Judgment in Adorno's Aesthetic Theory

Whereas Arendt sees in Kant's theory of reflective judgment and *sensus communis* a categorical strategy for retrieving the specificity of the particular, Adorno engages in a dialectical struggle with Kant's moral theory for some eighty pages in *Negative Dialectics* (*ND*, 268ff.). Freely deploying psychoanalytic categories against Kant's theory of the self and of the Categorical Imperative, Adorno writes: "According to the Kantian model, the subjects are free, insofar as, conscious of themselves, they are identical with themselves; and in such identity they are once more unfree, insofar as they stand under its compulsion and perpetrate it. They are unfree as non-identical, as diffuse nature, and as such free, because in the stimulations that overcome them—the non-identity of the subject with itself is nothing else—they will also overcome the

compulsive character of identity” (*ND*, 295ff.). Adorno repeats a charge brought against Kantian moral philosophy since the young Hegel’s critique that the Kantian moral law, formulated through the principle of the Categorical Imperative, amounts to a principle of tautology. “Act only in such a way that the maxim of your actions can be a universal law for all,” is translated into the principle: “Act in such a way that the maxim of your actions does not contradict itself.”<sup>45</sup> This translation of the universalizability principle in ethics into tautological identity is a rhetorical tour de force. What Adorno adds to this is that the compulsion towards identity, displayed through the search for a moral principle that does not contradict itself, actually is not autonomy but unfreedom. The epistemic and moral subject of Kantian philosophy—“the I that **(p.58)** must accompany all my apperceptions”—reveals this rigid search for an identity that can only be achieved at the cost of denying not only otherness but the otherness within the self as well. The Kantian moral law is a perfect instance of rigid identity-formation through repression within and without.

“Utopia,” writes Adorno, “would be the non-identity of the subject that would not be sacrificed” (“Utopie wäre die opferlose Nichtidentität des Subjekts,” *ND*, 277). This non-sacrificial non-identity, however, must not be understood as reconciliation,” as “being-by-oneself-in-otherness.” In Hegel’s understanding of freedom “as being-by-oneself-in-otherness,” otherness simply becomes the narcissistic mirror in which Spirit can contemplate itself. To be by-oneself-in-otherness can only be achieved through the aesthetic experience of the *Naturschöne*—the “naturally beautiful.”<sup>46</sup> To be sure, one cannot interpret the *Naturschöne* as if it were an eternally given and unchanging substratum of beauty. Rather, the “naturally beautiful” is antithesis, the antithesis of society (*AT*, 101-3) and as undetermined, the antithesis of determination (*AT*, 113). It is an “allegory,” a “cipher,” a “sign” (*Zeichen*) of reconciliation. It is a mode in which the mediation between humans and nature, between subject and object, can be thought of; it is not a state of affairs, a final condition, but an aporetic longing that can only be captured as “allegory” and as “cipher.” In terms that unmistakably remind us once more of Benjamin, Adorno writes, “The naturally beautiful is the cipher [*Spur*] of the non-identical in things set upon their course of universal identity” (*AT*, 114).<sup>47</sup> From the standpoint of conceptual thought, the naturally beautiful, precisely because it can only be intimated but not stated, is deficient. But the utopia of a non-sacrificial non-identity of the subject is intimated in that noncompulsory relation to otherness that forces the subject to forget him-or herself and thus to catch a glimpse of the moment of reconciliation. As Albrecht Wellmer observes, “Adorno sees in natural beauty a cipher of nature that does not yet exist, of nature in a state of reconciliation, which has thus developed beyond the splitting of life into mind and its object ... The work of art, as an imitation of natural beauty, thus becomes the image of a nature which has found its speech, a nature redeemed **(p.59)** and liberated from its muteness, just as it becomes the image of a reconciled humanity.”<sup>48</sup>

Yet this image requires *philosophical interpretation* (*AT*, 193). It is important to properly capture the interpretive complementarity as well as dissonance between art and philosophy: To quote Wellmer again: “Philosophy, whose utopia is ‘to unseal the nonconceptual’ by means of concepts, but without reducing it to conceptual categories ... remains tied to conceptual language (what Adorno calls ‘die meinende Sprache’) in which the immediacy of the aesthetic presentation of truth cannot be reconstituted. Just as a moment of blindness adheres to the immediacy of aesthetic perception, so does a moment of emptiness adhere to the ‘mediacy’ of philosophical thought. Only in combination are they capable of circumscribing a truth which neither alone is able to articulate.”<sup>49</sup> Undoubtedly, for Adorno the naturally beautiful was not an aesthetic

paradigm alone but a moral ideal as well: the “non-sacrificial non-identity” of the subject suggests a life-form and a form of conduct that we can only capture in moments of intimation.

In contrast with Arendt, and above all with Kant, there is one dimension in this experience of the naturally beautiful that is missing in Adorno: the *communicability* of this experience, the necessity that our judgments of the beautiful be communicable and shareable with others. Kant’s theory of aesthetic judgment for Arendt accomplishes both the revelation of particularity and a model of communication that is not based on coercion, but upon “wooing the consent of others” in whose place we must think. Following a similar line of thinking, Albrecht Wellmer has juxtaposed a Wittgensteinian theory of the concept to what he names “the rationalistic fiction” to which Adorno subscribes, and writes that “there is a mimetic force at work in the life of linguistic meaning, a force which enables what is non-identical in reality—as Adorno would say—to be reflected as something non-identical in linguistic meanings.”<sup>50</sup> Arendt herself saw this “non-identical in linguistic meaning,” to be revealed through the web of relationships, embedded in narratives that are constitutive of the “who” of the self and the “what” of our actions (*HC*, 181–85). It was in this constant and inevitable tension between the standpoint of the I and the other, between what my **(p.60)** actions mean for me and how they are understood by others, that the perspectivity of the world was lodged. And because action is speech, this perspectivity does not just shatter into so many shards of a broken glass, but can be woven, undone, and rewoven just like a web. Arendt, in this sense, anticipated Habermas’s critique of Adorno, which signaled the transition from the critique of instrumental reason to communicative rationality in the history of the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School.

In his 1969 article, “Theodore Adorno—The Primal History of Subjectivity—Self-Affirmation Gone Wild,” Habermas writes with reference to the utopia of the non-identical: “Whoever meditates on this assertion will become aware that the condition described, although never real, is still most intimate and familiar to us. It has the structure of a life together in communication that is free from coercion. We necessarily anticipate such a reality, at least formally, each time we want to speak what is true ... Adorno might just as well have not assented to this consequence and insisted that the metaphor of reconciliation is the only one that can be spoken ... The wholly other may only be indicated via determinate negation; it cannot be known.”<sup>51</sup>

In her critique of the false universals in the history of philosophy, Arendt herself already made this communication-theoretic turn with means derived from Kant’s aesthetic theory and her not fully developed concepts of speech, action, and narrativity.

Exploring the intellectual affinities and dissonances between Adorno and Arendt, as I have tried to do in this chapter, not only permits us to reconstruct what still remains one of the most impressive traditions of philosophical flourishing in the history of Western thought, it also permits us to see that beyond all schisms among schools and personal hostilities among persons lies the vast horizon of philosophical moves and countermoves of the German-Jewish tradition, which is breathtaking in its conceptual configurations.

### Notes:

(1.) Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” in Benjamin, *Illuminations. Essays and Reflections*, ed. and with an introduction by Arendt, 253–65, here 253. For the history of the invention of this automaton by a Hungarian civil servant with the name of Wolfgang von Kempelen in the service of Empress Maria Theresa, and its eventful sale and purchase by others,



see Tom Standage, *The Turk. The Life and Times of the Famous Eighteenth-Century Chess-Playing Machine* (New York: Berkeley Books, 2002).

(2.) Arendt, "Walter Benjamin: 1892–1940," in Benjamin, *Illuminations. Essays and Reflections*, 1–55. There were apparently two versions of the "Theses," one that was published in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* in the commemorative issue on Walter Benjamin (Los Angeles, 1942) and another version that Arendt had in her possession and that she subsequently published. I am grateful to Asaf Angermann for clarifying this point for me. For discussion regarding the "Theses," see Theodor Adorno and Gershom Scholem, *Briefwechsel 1939–1969*, ed. Asaf Angermann (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2015), 36. Referred to in the text as *Adorno-Scholem Correspondence*. All translations from the German are mine.

(3.) Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 255.

(4.) See Benhabib, "Hannah Arendt and the Redemptive Power of Narrative," in *Social Research* 57, no. 1 (1990): 167–96. The idea of redemptive critique and narrative is indebted to Jürgen Habermas's essay, "Bewußtmachende oder rettende Kritik—die Aktualität Walter Benjamins," in *Philosophisch-politische Profile* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1981), 336–76 [trans. as Habermas, "Consciousness-Raising or Redemptive Criticism," in *New German Critique*, Special Walter Benjamin issue, no. 17 (Spring 1979): 3–59].

(5.) For an original and subtle account of the themes of exile and metaphysics in Adorno's work, see Asaf Angermann, "Exile and Metaphysics. Adorno and the Language of Political Experience," *Naharaim* 9, no. 1–2 (2015): 179–94.

(6.) See *Arendt und Adorno*, ed. Dirk Auer, Lars Rensmann, and Julia Schulze Wessel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2003); referred to hereafter as *Arendt und Adorno*. See in particular the introduction by the three editors, "Einleitung: Affinität und Aversion. Zum theoretischen Dialog zwischen Arendt und Adorno," 8ff.

(7.) For this whole episode, see Young-Bruehl, *For Love of the World*, 80.

(8.) For Arendt's reference to Adorno and Horkheimer as a "Schweinebande," (a bunch of pigs) for not wanting to publish Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History," referred to in this letter as "Über den Begriff der Geschichte," see Hannah Arendt to Heinrich Blücher on August 2, 1941, reprinted in *Arendt und Benjamin*, 146; also, *Within Four Walls*, 72–73. For further correspondence on the edition of the "Theses," which Arendt was preparing for the English publication in *Illuminations*, see Arendt's letter to Adorno of January 20, 1967, in *Arendt und Benjamin*, 175; Adorno's answer of February 3, 1967, 176–77; and their further exchange, again in *Arendt und Benjamin*, 178–81. The patient politesse was at least the public face that Adorno portrayed in his dealings with Hannah Arendt, but in private he revealed that the dislike was mutual. In a letter to Scholem, dated February 17, 1960, concerning a posthumous edition of Benjamin's writings on which they were collaborating at the time, Adorno writes: "the choice of what is to be included is to be decided by you and me; under no circumstances should Mrs. Hannah Arendt in some fashion or another be involved." *Adorno-Scholem Correspondence*, 191. And he continues. "By the way, on the matter of Hannah Arendt, I am intransigent, not only because of my own low esteem of this lady, whom I consider a laundress (*eine Waschweib*), rather, and primarily because, I know what Benjamin thought about her and her earlier

husband.” 191–92. Adorno means here “Gunther Anders,” who was Benjamin’s cousin. See also Young-Bruehl, *For Love of the World*, 167.

(9.) See Theodor Adorno, *Jargon der Eigentlichkeit* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1964), trans. Knut Tarnowski and Frederic Will as *The Jargon of Authenticity* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973). On April 18, 1966, Arendt writes to Jaspers concerning a new publication on Heidegger by Alexander Schwan, *Politische Philosophie im Denken Heideggers* (Verl: Köln-Opladen, 1965), that “the attacks on him are coming only from that quarter and no other ... Then too, I can’t prove it, but I’m quite convinced that the real people behind the scenes are the Wiesengrund-Adorno crowd in Frankfurt. And that is grotesque, all the more so because it has been revealed (students found this out) that Wiesengrund (a half-Jew and one of the most repulsive human beings I know) tried to go along with the Nazis. For years now he and Horkheimer have accused or threatened to accuse anyone in Germany who was against them of being anti-Semitic. A really distinguished bunch, and yet Wiesengrund is not untalented.” *Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers. Correspondence. 1926–1969*, ed. Lotte Kohler and Hans Saner (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1992), 634. Arendt is referring to an article by Adorno in 1934 in a Frankfurt student newspaper called *Diskus*, discussing a poetry collection by the “Reichsjugendführer” (Youth Leader of the Reich), Baldur von Schirah. See *Arendt und Adorno*, 8. Given how extensive Adorno’s critique of Jaspers is in this book, it is unclear to me whether Arendt actually was familiar with this text or was referring to general reviews of it in the German press. Otherwise, it is hard to account for the fact that she leaves Adorno’s critique of Jaspers unmentioned upon. See Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, 8–9, 22–23, 28. Ironically, Adorno’s critique of Heidegger’s “jargon” is quite akin to the objections to Heidegger that Jaspers himself had raised in his “Letter to the Freiburg University Denazification Committee,” on December 22, 1945, in Richard Wolin, ed., *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 147–51. Jaspers writes of “the torrent” of Heidegger’s language and that his “manner of thinking to me seems in its essence unfree, dictatorial, and incapable of communication ... today in its pedagogical effects [it would] be disastrous.” 149.

(10.) This is a complex phrase that captures multiple epistemological, methodological, and even psychoanalytical dimensions for Adorno to which I shall return. See his statement from the preface to *Negative Dialectics*: “To use the strength of the subject to break through the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity—this is what the author felt to be his task ever since he came to trust his own mental impulses,” in Adorno, *Negative Dialektik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973); trans. E. B. Ashton as *Negative Dialectics* (New York: Seabury Press, 1973), xx. Referred to in the text as *ND*.

(11.) Cf. Samir Gandesha’s statement: “Mit anderen Worten, wenn für beide die Moderne die Unterordnung des ‘Neuen’ unter das immergleiche beinhaltet dann wurde das ‘Neue’ gerade im ästhetischen Urteil als Problem behandelt.” (“In other words, when for both modernity means the subsumption of the ‘new’ under repetitive sameness, then precisely in aesthetic judgment ‘the new’ is treated as a problem.”) Gandesha names “das Auffressen oder Verschlingen des Partikularen durch das Universelle” (the devouring or swallowing whole of the particular through the universal) as one of the central features of the development of modernity, in “Schreiben und Urteilen. Adorno, Arendt und der Chiasmus der Naturgeschichte,” in *Arendt und Adorno*, 199–233, here 227.

(12.) Adorno, “Zur Aktualität der Philosophie,” in *Philosophische Frühschriften. Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973), 325ff.; this lecture was not published until after

Adorno's death. English translation by Benjamin Snow (a pseudonym for Susan Buck-Morss) as "The Actuality of Philosophy," with an introduction in *Telos* (Spring 1977), 120–33. All page references in the text are to this English translation. Professor Buck-Morss personally clarified that she had used Benjamin Snow as a pseudonym during an Adorno Conference at Bogazici University held in Istanbul on June 2–4, 2016. Adorno's text is abbreviated as *AP*.

(13.) Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* [1821], in *Werke*, vol. 7, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp-Taschenbuch Wissenschaft, 1970), 24; English edn., *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. Allen W. Wood, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 20.

(14.) See Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 10th edn. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1963) [1927]; English edn., *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962 [1927]). For a masterful discussion of Kierkegaard, Husserl, and Heidegger in Adorno's thought, see Peter E. Gordon, *Adorno and Existence* (Cambridge, MA, and London, UK: Harvard University Press, 2016).

(15.) Georg Lukács, "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat," in *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), 110–31.

(16.) Referring to Lukács's solution of the "thing-in-itself problem" through an analysis of the "commodity structure," Adorno writes that "the truth content of a problem is in principle different from the historical and psychological conditions out of which it grows" ("Actuality of Philosophy," 128). This is a reductionist reading of Lukács, because for Lukács "the commodity structure" is a category that shapes the form of a world as well as of consciousness; it is not merely a psychological or historical "fact." Adorno does not so much reject the analysis of the commodity structure as much as he substitutes his Benjaminian materialism for Lukács's ontology of social labor, and writes that "Like a source of light, the historical figure of commodity and of exchange value may free the form of a reality, the hidden meaning of which remained closed to investigation of the thing-in-itself problem" (128). Of course, the Marxian theory of the emancipation of humans from the forces of nature through the transformative activity of labor is subject to a devastating critique in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Quite to the contrary: the process of social labor is now seen as subjecting not only nature but the nature within humans themselves to domination, such that the price of civilization is the repression of the nature within us. This, of course, is the well-known argument of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Cf. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, 7th edn. (Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 1980); trans. John Cumming, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972); cf. Benhabib, *Critique, Norm and Utopia. A Study of the Foundations of Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 164–71. As Deborah Cook observes, "The affinity between mind and nature should not be understood as positive, it does not authorize a foundational conception of nature because the human mind partially extricated itself from nature in its attempts to dominate it. The mind becomes 'something else,' something other than instinct by virtue of 'reflecting existence' with a view to ensuring its survival ... Consequently, reflection on nature in ourselves involves both acknowledging our resemblance to nature as instinctual, embodied beings, and respecting nature's heterogeneity." Deborah Cook, "The One and the Many: Revisioning Adorno's Critique of Western Reason," in *Studies in Social and Political Thought* 18 (Winter 2010), 69–80, here 74.

(17.) See Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osbourne (London: New Left Review, 1977). See Susan Buck-Morss's exploration of the terms "configuration" and "crystallization of elements" as methodological dimensions of Benjamin's work in *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin and the Frankfurt Institute* (New York: Free Press, 1977), 96-111.

(18.) Cf. Max Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory," in *Critical Theory*, trans. M. J. O'Connell et al., (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 188-244. "It is easy," writes Detlev Claussen, "to imagine Horkheimer also having been irritated by the lecture Adorno gave on the occasion of the *Habilitation*, with the challenging title, 'The Actuality of Philosophy' ... Horkheimer, who according to Adorno thought that people were like animals, tends to derive his thinking from the French materialism of the Enlightenment, while Adorno does the reverse: feeling that animals are like humans, he aspires to go beyond German idealism." *Theodor W. Adorno. One Last Genius*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 228.

(19.) Susan Buck-Morss (alias Benjamin Snow), "Introduction to Adorno's 'The Actuality of Philosophy,'" 116.

(20.) Hegel, *Die Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. J. Hoffmeister. *Philosophische Bibliothek* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952 [1807]), 69; English edn., *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller, with an analysis and foreword by John Findlay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 138.

(21.) Although it has not been much discussed in the literature on Adorno, careful commentators have noted the significance of this early essay in anticipating central themes of Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*; cf. Detlev Claussen, *Theodor W. Adorno. One Last Genius*, 321. Thus, Adorno returns to Husserl many times throughout his life. His discussion of Husserl in *Against Epistemology: A Metacritique. Studies in Husserl and the Phenomenological Antinomies* [trans. Willis Domingo (Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1982)], first composed in Oxford during 1934-37, in preparation for a second dissertation that never came to fruition, is much more critical. Siding with Hegel's critique of epistemology in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Adorno criticizes the Husserlian search for an "absolutely first," unmediated beginning, as illusory. "The first and immediate," he writes, "is always, as a concept, mediated and thus not first" (7).

(22.) For an extensive discussion see Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, 63ff.

(23.) Arendt, "A Reply," exchange with Eric Voegelin about his review of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, in *Review of Politics* 15 (January 1953), 78.

(24.) See Arendt, "What Is Existenz Philosophy?," *Partisan Review* 18, no. 1(1946): 35-56. The essay was published in German as "Was ist Existenz Philosophie?" in *Hannah Arendt. Sechs Essays* (Heidelberg: Schneider, 1948). It has been reprinted as Arendt, "What Is Existential Philosophy?," trans. Robert and Rita Kimber, in *Arendt, Essays in Understanding. 1930-1954*, ed. Jerome Kohn (Harcourt, Brace, and Company: New York, 1994), 163-87. Referred to in the text as *EP*. As I explain in *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (56-60, fn. 35) because the term *Existenzphilosophie* in German connotes a much-wider philosophical movement—including Dilthey's *Lebensphilosophie* for example—than do the terms existentialism or existential philosophy in English, I will retain the original title. All references in the text are to the Kohn edition, unless otherwise noted. I have consulted the original and used my own

translations as indicated when necessary. For Arendt's shyness that Jaspers may not have appreciated what she had to say about his philosophy, see Letter 42 in *Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers. Correspondence. 1926-1969*, 47.

(25.) Arendt, *Between Past and Future. Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: The Viking Press, 1961). Referred to in the text as *BPF*.

(26.) Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 8th edn. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973 [1958]). Referred to in the text as *HC*.

(27.) See Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 295ff.; cf. also Benhabib, *Critique, Norm and Utopia*, 209-11.

(28.) See Letters 40 and 42 in *Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers. Correspondence. 1926-1969* on their exchange concerning the circular issued by the Nazi Ministry of Education, which Heidegger had also signed, prohibiting Husserl from using the university library (42-49); on Jaspers's own version of these events and Arendt's insistence that Heidegger can be regarded "as a potential murderer" for having done this to Husserl, see p. 48. For similar concerns about the education of the German youth in the post-World War II period, see Adorno, "Education after Auschwitz," in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, ed. Henry Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 191-204.

(29.) Richard Rorty, "The World Well Lost," originally in *Journal of Philosophy* (1972) reprinted in *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 3-18.

(30.) See Benhabib, "Appendix: The Personal Is Not the Political," in *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, 221-35. Not much of philosophical import has been added in the last decade to understanding the Arendt-Heidegger nexus better, but ever-new biographical accounts of this fascinating story abound. Most recently, cf. Daniel Maier-Katkin, *Stranger from Abroad. Hannah Arendt, Martin Heidegger, Friendship and Forgiveness* (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2010). Their love affair remains at the center of Margarete von Trotta's much-acclaimed biopic on Hannah Arendt (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1674773>). Ada Ushpiz's *Vita Activa. The Spirit of Hannah Arendt* focuses on her Jewishness and her theory of totalitarianism. (<https://zeitgeistfilms.com/film/vitaactivathespiritofhannaharendt>).

(31.) Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper and Collins, 1993), 213-67, here 234; also Heidegger, "Überwindung der Metaphysik," in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Günther Neske, 1978 [1954]), 67-97. These notes were originally composed between 1936 and 1946.

(32.) Again, there are remarkable parallels between Arendt's and Adorno's assessment of these aspects of Heidegger's thought. See Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, 71, 136, 147ff., 151, where Adorno writes: "For Heidegger the They become a cloudy mixture of elements which are merely ideological products of the exchange relationship."

(33.) For an early diagnosis of this aspect of Heidegger's thought much before the Heidegger scandals of the 1970s erupted, see Karsten Harries, who writes: "*Being and Time* invites a resolve to be resolved, a readiness to commit oneself without prior assurance that there is a cause worthy of our commitment. To insist on such assurance would be a mark of inauthenticity.

But what is to distinguish the readiness to be resolved from a readiness to be seized?" "Heidegger as a Political Thinker," *Review of Metaphysics* (June 1976): 648.

(34.) Heidegger, *Being and Time*, English edn., 155; German edn., 118; emphasis in the German original.

(35.) See Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, 135.

(36.) See Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson, and R. Nevitt Sanford, "The Authoritarian Personality," abridged edn., *Studies in Prejudice*, ed. Max Horkheimer and Samuel H. Flowerman (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1982 [1950]), particularly part 3 called "Qualitative Studies of Ideology," authored by Adorno, 295ff. Adorno writes of the "mental rigidity" of those who score high on the various scales designated to study prejudice and anti-Semitism (299), and that "the object must possess features, or at least be capable of being perceived and interpreted in terms of features which harmonize with the destructive tendencies of the prejudiced subject" (300). For further discussion of parallelisms and divergences between Arendt's and Adorno and Horkheimer's analyses of anti-Semitism, see my essay, "From 'The Dialectic of Enlightenment' to 'The Origins of Totalitarianism' and the Genocide Convention: Adorno and Horkheimer in the Company of Arendt and Lemkin," in *The Modernist Imagination. Intellectual History and Critical Theory. Essays in Honor of Martin Jay*, ed. Warren Breckman, Peter E. Gordon, A. Dirk Moses, Samuel Moyn, and Elliot Neaman (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009), 299-331.

(37.) Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, 167.

(38.) Arendt, "Thinking and Moral Considerations: A Lecture," (1971), reprinted in *Social Research*, 50th anniversary issue (Spring/Summer 1984).

(39.) *Ibid.*, 5. See also, Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, 172-99.

(40.) Arendt, *Lectures of Kant's Political Philosophy*, ed. and with an interpretive essay by Ronald Beiner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); and Arendt, "Preface," *Thinking*, vol. 1., *The Life of the Mind* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanovich, 1978 [1977]), 3ff.; Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. and with an introduction by Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987). Abbreviated in the text as *CJ*.

(41.) Richard Bernstein, "Judging—the Actor and the Spectator," in *Philosophical Profiles* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 232-33.

(42.) Arendt, "Introduction," *Thinking*, vol. 1., *The Life of the Mind*, 5 and Arendt, "Thinking and Moral Considerations," 8.

(43.) Arendt's reflections on judgment continue to fascinate scholars. In an extremely interesting article, David L. Marshall discusses Arendt's view in the light of her reading of Hegel's doctrine of judgment in his *Logic*. See David L. Marshall, "The Origin and Character of Hannah Arendt's Theory of Judgment," in *Political Theory* 38, no. 3 (April 2010): 367-93.

(44.) Arendt, "Crisis in Culture," in *Between Past and Future. Six Exercises in Political Thought*, 220-21.

(45.) I have dealt with these themes in great length in my *Critique, Norm and Utopia*; for Hegel's critique of Kant, cf. 70–84 and for Adorno's critique of Kant, 205–13.

(46.) Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970), vol. 7, 111. Abbreviated in the text as *AT*.

(47.) Susan Buck-Morss investigates this search for the “cipher” in relation to Benjamin's method of building constellations in *The Origins of Negative Dialectics*, 96ff.

(48.) Albrecht Wellmer, “Truth, Semblance, Reconciliation,” in *The Persistence of Modernity. Essays on Aesthetics, Ethics and Postmodernism*, trans. David Midgley (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 7–8.

(49.) *Ibid.*, 6–7.

(50.) Wellmer, “Modernism and Postmodernism: The Critique of Reason since Adorno,” in *The Persistence of Modernity*, 71.

(51.) Habermas, “Urgeschichte der Subjektivität und verwilderte Selbstbehauptung,” in *Philosophisch-politische Profile*, 167–79; English trans., “Theodor Adorno—The Primal History of Subjectivity—Self-Affirmation Gone Wild,” in *Philosophical-Political Profiles*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), 99–111, here 107.