ADORNO AND THE RETREAT FROM EROS

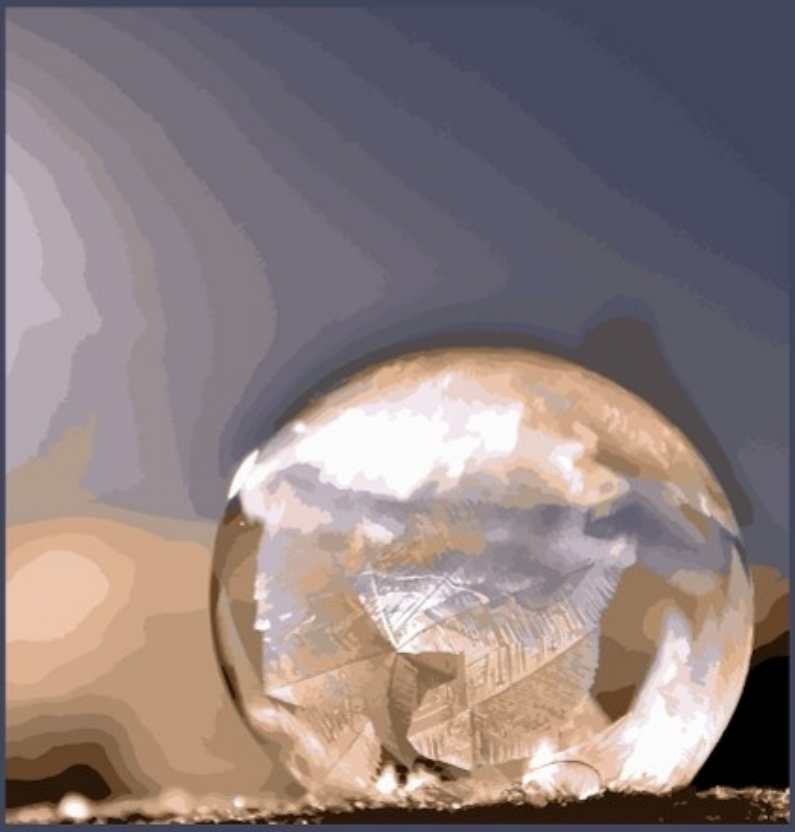

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Table of Contents

Adorno and the Retreat from Eros

Our consideration of Theodor Adorno in this chapter will be divided into three parts. First, we will look at Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of* Enlightenment, in order to set the stage, then Adorno's philosophical program, often called "negative dialectics," and finally, his psychological studies, also undertaken with Horkheimer. ft is only in his psychological studies that Adorno addresses the theory of narcissism per se. Yet it would be a mistake to think that the theory of narcissism can illuminate only this aspect of his work. In our discussion of Adorno's philosophy, we will be examining the issues raised by our consideration of Socrates, especially eros and wholeness, and will contrast the theory of narcissism expressed in Socratic philosophy with Adorno's philosophical program. Because Adorno's philosophy is terribly abstract, the link between it and the theory of narcissism must be established indirectly. In the section on Adorno's and Horkheimer's psychological studies, however, we will apply the theory of narcissism directly. Then, in the conclusion to the chapter, we will see how Adorno's philosophy and psychology are united by similar concerns, concerns that are illuminated by the theory of narcissism.

Habermas argues that the "promise, familiar in Jewish and Protestant mysticism, of the 'resurrection of fallen nature' . . . directs the most secret hopes of Walter Benjamin, Max Horkheimer, and Theodor Adorno. It is also present in Marcuse's thought."[205] These authors are commonly called "nature romantics," a term that connotes a certain irrationality. I will argue below, however, that Adorno is neither irrational nor romantic, that his alternative to instrumental reason is neither mystical nor irrational, unless one equates rationality solely with instrumental reason. Nor is Adorno a romantic. Quite the contrary. Adorno seems to reject eros, and for many of the same reasons that Socrates embraces it: eros is hubristic, wanting to know and possess the whole.

Adorno rejects the whole in both philosophy and psychology, and for much the same reasons: because today any philosophy that claims to know the whole and any individual who claims to be psychologically whole must be instances of false wholes. Wholeness today is inseparable from reification. Adorno's claims are worthy of serious study, for he is probably the most brilliant of all the Frankfurt theorists. Yet his rejection of the whole fills his project with difficulties and ironies and almost leads him to reject philosophy, not because he is a nature romantic, but rather because in an important sense he is not romantic enough. He rejects eros because he rightly intuits that eros is not entirely separable from instrumental reason (recall Socrates on the lineage of Eros). But in rejecting eros, he also rejects the motive force behind

philosophy: the quest to know the whole. It is this — not his so-called nature romanticism—that leads to a certain stasis in his project. Adorno's rejection of the ideal of psychological wholeness also influences his project, leading him, as Jessica Benjamin has shown, to embrace a developmental process — the oedipal conflict in the patriarchal bourgeois family—that seems to reproduce instrumental reason. Adorno's critics are correct in sensing that his project terminates in a certain stasis; but it is important to see why this is the case so that the wrong lessons are not applied to other thinkers, especially Marcuse. What we shall find is that Adorno's project could profit from a greater infusion of Socratic eros, not less.

As regards the strictly philosophical issues considered here, Horkheimer's views will be considered primarily as they illuminate Adorno's, since I assume that Adorno was the more original, stringent thinker of the two. With regard to psychological issues, however, Horkheimer's work will be taken as virtually inseparable from Adorno's. Before turning to Adorno's concept of reconciling reason, which would take the place of instrumental reason, it may be fruitful to consider Horkheimer and Adorno's critique of what they called the "dialectic of Enlightenment," in which reason comes to be an instrument of domination and control. For it is only as an alternative to instrumental reason that Adorno's concepts of mimesis and reconciling reason can be understood. Indeed, much of what is radical about Adorno's views is radical only because of, and in contrast to, what he calls

"instrumental reason."

Dialectic of Enlightenment

Dialectic of Enlightenment was written during World War II and published in 1947. It seeks to explain how fascism could develop within a nation that was apparently the embodiment of the Enlightenment. There must be something terribly shallow and vulnerable about Enlightenment ideals, Horkheimer and Adorno suggest, if they could be displaced so easily by the myths of national socialism. Horkheimer and Adorno trace this vulnerability back to a flaw at the core of Western reason itself.[206] The flaw is that Western reason is unable to carve out a midpoint between idealism and materialism. Reason and its objects are divided into two spheres. Ideals, values, ethics, and so forth are removed to the abstract realm of the intellect and the spirit, where, like religion, which is an instance of these ideals, they are applauded in the abstract. However, precisely because they come to be seen as an expression of our higher selves, they are split off from everyday life, which is then given over to a crass materialism that tolerates no opposition to the merely given.[207] The term "dialectic of Enlightenment" refers to this division of reason into abstract idealism and crass materialism.

In order to wrest human existence from nature, it has been necessary, according to the dialectic of Enlightenment, to ignore idealistic reason. In

practice, reason is equated with instrumental reason. Science epitomizes this equation, according to which the laws of nature are learned only by slavishly imitating the lawfulness of nature itself. This is the real story behind Homer's *Odyssey,* according to Horkheimer and Adorno.[208] Odysseus outwits nature and returns home safely, but only by denying aspects of his own nature, particularly the Dionysian aspects. Thus, he must have himself tied to the ship's mast, because he knows that he lacks the strength to resist the Sirens' call—a call that represents the desire to abandon the self for the sake of fusion with the All. Odysseus is rational enough to think ahead, to make plans to outwit his own nature, his own archaic needs. But his sailors, like most men, must have their ears stopped with wax, lest they cease their laborious rowing altogether. This episode, says David Held, "symbolizes the mode in which crews, servants and laborers produce their oppressor's life together with their own. . . . Their master neither labours nor succumbs to the temptation of immediate gratification. He indulges in the beauty of the song. But the Sirens' voices become 'mere objects of contemplation' —mere art."[209]

The Odyssey portrays the transformation of comprehensive reason into mimesis as the price of survival. Man was once weak and ignorant, whereas nature was powerful and mysterious. Man came to master nature, but only by imitating her most rigid, routinized aspects. One sees this in experiments in science, in which the researcher subjects his every action to the stringent discipline of experimental controls. Reason comes to be defined in terms of a

single task: prediction and control of the given. Thus man gradually learns to dominate nature, but at the price of renunciation. He must subject himself to a terrible discipline, under which he is forced to reject those facets of human nature that are incompatible with the controls of the scientific experiment. These are the same facets that are denied by the order and regularity imposed by the factory. Horkheimer and Adorno see the discipline imposed by the industrial system as merely the latest stage in the scientific conquest of nature. The outcome is the diminution of the concept of reason itself. Inasmuch as it is concerned with the potential of things to become more than they are. reason is split off as idealism, where it comes to symbolize little more than "an imaginary temps perdu" in the history of mankind. A reason powerful enough to ensure human survival and comfort in a hostile world is purchased at the price of Reason itself. Originating in human weakness, instrumental reason overcomes nature only by renouncing the Dionysian aspects of human nature, as well as the potential of reason itself. Thus it becomes powerful only by becoming an instrument.[210]

Horkheimer and Adorno's study is not merely philosophical; it is an explanation of modern history. As reason becomes an instrument of the cunning thinker, rather than an objective principle, it becomes solely a human attribute. But this attribute does little to make the individual more secure, because it cannot speak to his need for meaning and purpose, as objective reason once could. The result is an individual susceptible to mass movements

that speak to his needs for security via unity with a power greater than himself. In times of economic and social crisis, such an isolated, powerless individual is all too likely to respond to a demagogue like Hitler, who panders to the most regressive narcissistic needs for fusion. This, too, is the dialectic of Enlightenment.[211]

Almost every aspect of Adorno's project of reconciliation with nature can be understood as an attempt to formulate an alternative to instrumental reason that does not simply recur to an older concept of objective reason like Plato's. For in today's world, Horkheimer and Adorno both believe, Neoplatonism can be only ideology.[212]

Before going on to clarify further what reconciliation with nature means in Adorno's works, it may be useful to state what it is not. It is not man's mimetic identification with mere nature. As Adorno put it in one of his later essays "The picture of a temporal or extratemporal original state of happy identity between subject and object is romantic, however—a wishful project at times, but today no more than a lie. The undifferentiated state before the subject's formation was the dread of the blind web of nature, of myth; it was in protest against it that the great religions had their truth content."[213] Martin Jay interprets this passage as demonstrating that Adorno held that "for all the costs of leaving behind man's primal unity with nature, his departure was ultimately a progressive one."[214] Reconciliation with nature is fundamentally

about the reformation of reason, reformation of nature being quite secondary. Or rather, the reformation of nature is to be achieved only indirectly, via the reformation of reason.

Adorno's Philosophical Program: Reconciling Reason

One of Adorno's most famous aphorisms—"dwarf fruit" as he calls them—is "The whole is the false," an inversion of Hegel's famous dictum "The whole is the true."[215] How Adorno differs from Marcuse is succinctly captured by Marcuse's aphorism "'The whole is the truth,' and the whole is false."[216] This difference will be taken up later in this chapter. As far as Adorno is concerned, it is apparent that although reconciliation—with nature, man, and divided reason—is the goal, it has little to do with the recovery of a lost wholeness. Quite the contrary, for Adorno tends to equate wholeness with reification, and as Gillian Rose points out, Adorno sees reification in terms of identity theory, the nondialectical claim that concepts are perfectly adequate to the things they represent.[217] Identity theory is an especially aggressive form of categorization, which denies that reality can be anything more than the concepts we apply to it. Adorno writes of "idealism as rage" at a world too sparse to be dominated.[218] Identity theory is also rage; it forces reality into strictly human categories and denies the possibility that anything important could be left out if reality is considered under the horizon of human purposes. "The name of dialectics," states Adorno "says no more, to

begin with, than that objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder, that they come to contradict the traditional norm of adequacy. ... It indicates the untruth of identity, the fact that the concept does not exhaust the thing. . . . Dialectics is the consistent sense of nonidentity."[219]

In important respects Adorno is anti-Platonic. He denies the importance of definitions in capturing the essence of reality. For him, definitions are tantamount to an aggressive act against reality, whereas for Plato, they are knowledge, since it is not possible to know something until one has defined it (Republic 354b, 490b). (It would be most mistaken to see Adorno as a nominalist, however; the point of his antisystem is to avoid forcing thought into categories such as this.) Horkheimer equates eros with dialectics, in that both seek to know an objective order, a view that comes close to Plato's. Adorno's view is almost the opposite: dialectics, unlike eros, avoids attempting to grasp an objective order directly; it says only what reality is not, and then only tentatively. It makes little sense, therefore, to talk in terms of the "Frankfurt school's position" on reason or reconciliation. Adorno also denies that the goal of philosophical knowledge is the whole, in contrast to Plato, for whom philosophy is love for and knowledge of the whole (Republic 475b, 485b; Symposium 205d). In this respect, too, Adorno differs from Horkheimer, or at least from one of the poles of Horkheimer's thought. As both Susan Buck-Morss and Martin Jay point out, Adorno's "The Actuality of Philosophy" (1931) implicitly criticizes Horkheimer's embrace of a loosely

structured totality composed of research and theoretical synthesis.[220]

In his inaugural address as director of the Institute for Social Research (1931), Horkheimer stated that "the problems of empirical research and theoretical synthesis can only be solved by a philosophy which, concerned with the general, the 'essential,' provides the respective research areas with stimulating impulses, while itself remaining open enough to be impressed and modified by the progress of concrete studies."[221] Many have understood this to be the heart of the program of the Frankfurt school, a program that has proved enormously fruitful. One might call this position a commitment to a mutable whole. The goal of critical philosophy is to know the whole, while recognizing that the claim to do so is hubristic; thus, one's vision of the whole must be open to revision under the impact of empirical research, without surrendering to this research. In fact, this is precisely what Marcuse seems to mean with his statement that "'the whole is the truth,' and the whole is false." No method can be authentic that fails to recognize that both of these statements are meaningful descriptions of our situation, says Marcuse. The power of facts is an oppressive power. Against this power philosophy continues to protest with its claim to know the truth, which Marcuse, in the great philosophical tradition, equates with the whole.[222] Yet philosophy cannot claim a monopoly on cognition either. The facts are part of the true whole, as well as of the false whole. Marcuse is the member of the Frankfurt school with the greatest affinity for the classical concept of reason. But this

must not blind us to how far Adorno stands from Marcuse on this point. Apparently responding to Horkheimer, Adorno stated that "whoever chooses philosophy as a profession today must first reject the illusion that earlier philosophical enterprises began with: that the power of thought is sufficient to grasp the totality of the real. . . . 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."[223]

Adorno sees reconciling reason as nonhubristic. Unlike science, it does not impose its categories on reality, as though nothing meaningful could be left over. Unlike totalizing philosophy, it does not seek to know the whole. Indeed, it appears that for Adorno the search for the whole is simply identity thinking at a higher, more abstract level. This does not mean that he rejects the existence of objective reality. It is rather that aggressive, domineering reason, in both its instrumental and idealistic guises, has virtually destroyed it, putting human self-assertion in its place. To know reality today, one must pick one's way through its traces and ruins, focusing on these fragments as though they are all that exists. Jean-Frangois Lyotard, as Jay points out, sees a Hegelian "nostalgia" for totality latent in Negative *Dialectics,*[224] perhaps because Adorno sometimes writes as if it were human subjective reason that has fragmented reality, an argument that seems to imply a lost whole. However, as we have seen, Adorno also recognizes that nostalgia for a lost, mythic whole must be tempered by the recognition that this whole often

exacted human subjectivity as its price.

Adorno, it appears, will go neither forward with affirmative reason nor backward into a false (because it sacrifices human subjectivity) whole. This is seen in his method — or rather, antimethod—of negative dialectics, which is content to pick through the ruins. It is not difficult to see why so many philosophers, including Habermas, have thrown up their hands and asked in effect "What's left of reason?" For Habermas, nothing is left: Adorno's alternative to reason is a nonrational, mimetic, highly sympathetic, snuggling (anschmiegen) relationship to nature. Such a relationship, says Habermas, while expressing genuine human needs, lacks intellectual content. It is the "pure opposite" (bare Gegenteil) of reason, pure impulse.[225] Elsewhere Habermas states that Adorno practiced "ad hoc determinant negation."[226]

Although Habermas's frustration with Adorno is quite understandable, it may be that he gives up too quickly. Adorno's concept of reconciling reason actually possesses considerable intellectual content. "The cognitive utopia," says Adorno in *Negative Dialectics,* would be to use concepts to unseal the non-conceptual with concepts, without making it their equal."[227] Somewhat cryptic, this statement nevertheless lends itself to a relatively straightforward interpretation—albeit at the cost of modest violence to Adorno's subtlety. Reconciling reason, Adorno seems to be saying, takes the reality and the separateness of the things of the world seriously, without falling on its face in

front of these things. As he puts it elsewhere in Negative *Dialectics.* "It is not the purpose of critical thought to place the object on the orphaned royal throne once occupied by the subject. On that throne the object would be nothing but an idol. The purpose of critical thought is to abolish the hierarchy."[228]

From this perspective it may be useful to consider Adorno's brief, but complex, reference to Plato's Phaedrus, which shows aspects of Plato's thought to be a model for reconciling reason. The context is Adorno's criticism of the tendency of "enlightened" thought to equate rationality with quantification. Rationality, says Adorno, is not merely a matter of categorizing phenomena according to their species; it should involve great sensitivity to the phenomena themselves, so that they are not forced to lie in Procrustean beds. Procrustes should not be the patron saint of reason. Adorno calls this rationality that respects the integrity of phenomena "qualitative rationality" and says that it was introduced by Plato "as a corrective for the violence of unleashed quantification. A parable from *Phaedrus* leaves no doubt of it; there, organizing thought and nonviolence strike a balance. The principle, reversing the conceptual motion of synthesis, is that of 'division into species according to the natural formation, where the joints are, not breaking any part as a bad carver might.' "[229]

The quotation from *Phaedrus* is drawn from a particularly important

section of the dialogue (265e). Serving as a transition to Socrates' concluding discussion of rhetoric (266d-279c), the example to which the quote applies is the divine madness of eros. What are to be properly distinguished are the different types of erotic madness. Some, indeed, lead to a passionate frenzy that disrupts society; but others are gifts from the gods, which lead man to the divine. It would be a crude thinker, a clumsy carver, who would lump all forms of eros together, as though they were a single species without joints. Yet, in one respect Adorno is himself a clumsy carver regarding eros, for he seems unable to separate it from the cunning of instrumental reason, a point that will be taken up shortly.

It is this ability to discriminate carefully regarding the subtlety and integrity of reality that is the foundation of mimesis. According to Adorno, the capacity to discriminate "provides a haven for the mimetic element of knowledge, for the element of elective affinity between the knower and the known."[230] Habermas is certainly correct that mimesis is Adorno's alternative to enlightened—categorizing—reason. But why Habermas sees mimesis as tantamount to snuggling with nature, whatever that might mean, is puzzling. He states:

> As the placeholder for this primordial reason that was diverted from the intention of truth, Horkheimer and Adorno nominate a capacity, mimesis, about which they can speak only as they would about a piece of uncomprehended nature. They characterize the mimetic capacity, in which an instrumentalized nature makes its speechless accusations, as an

> "impulse." The paradox in which the critique of instrumental reason is entangled, and which stubbornly resists even the most supple dialectic, consists then in this: Horkheimer and Adorno would have to put forward a *theory* of mimesis, which, according to their own ideas, is impossible.[231]

Our interpretation of mimesis as an orientation toward reality that actively seeks to avoid forcing things into inappropriate categories fails to support this view. What Adorno says, in effect, is that the things of this world have their own order and purpose, which human thought and practice should respect. This is how the mimesis of reconciling reason differs from the mimesis of instrumental reason that Horkheimer and Adorno write of in *Dialectic of Enlightenment.* The mimesis of instrumental reason imitates only the most rigid, routine, and routinized aspects of nature, those most subject to technical control, whereas the mimesis of reconciling reason respects the integrity and uniqueness of the object, which is not, however, tantamount to slavish conformity to it. This is reconciliation with nature. It does not involve passive acceptance: indeed, it may be quite active. One sees the active dimension of mimesis most clearly in what Adorno calls "exact fantasy." This is "fantasy which abides strictly within the material which the sciences present to it, and reaches beyond them only in the smallest aspects of their arrangement: aspects, granted, which fantasy itself must originally generate."[232] As Buck-Morss points out, exact fantasy is mimetic in that it lets the object—the facts presented by science in this case—take the lead. Although the subject's imagination intervenes to create something new, it is

at the same time guided and constrained by the object.[233] Literary translation and musical performance are similarly mimetic. They do not merely copy the original; they maintain the "aura" — the presence — of the original by transforming it in the very process of reproduction. Such an active, transforming process, while perhaps not lending itself to a strictly theoretical account, is hardly a mere "impulse" either. That it is subject to rational elaboration has, I hope, been demonstrated.

For Adorno, mimesis has very little to do with a direct, unmediated encounter with nature. Such an encounter, were it even possible, would amount to a fetishization of nature. Abstracted from the whole, which includes its social context, the natural object "congeals . . . into a fetish which merely encloses itself all the more deeply within its existence."[234] In fact, our experience of nature is always mediated by history, culture, and science. The primacy of the particular that mimesis involves does not refer to the object per se, but rather to the constellation of mediating factors that Adorno substitutes for the intellectually lazy practice of apprehending an object simply by subsuming it under some familiar category. Perhaps the most dramatic way in which Adorno sought to abolish conceptual hierarchy is his own paratactic literary style, which places elements in opposition, rather than arguing from the general to the particular or vice versa.

Mimesis is reconciliation with nature, including human nature, for it

would hardly force human nature into fixed categories (such as defining it strictly in opposition to external nature). "While doing violence to the object of its syntheses, our thinking heeds a potential that waits in the object, and it unconsciously obeys the idea of making amends to the pieces for what it has done."[235] Adorno's statement calls to mind the stereotype of a primitive people asking the forgiveness of the soul of an animal before killing it. But kill it they do, in order to survive. One does not find this attitude in Plato. Platonic thought, while allowing itself to be guided by reality, seeks to know it all. Yet this hubris is tempered by the recognition that there exists an objective order to which human thought must conform if it is to be called knowledge. It is this objective order that instrumental reason abandons, and with it the moderating influence on the tendency of human thought to impose itself everywhere.[236] Because instrumental reason does not recognize that the animal has a soul, as it were, nothing stands between reason and world domination.

Why Adorno Spurns Eros

While Adorno's style is often cryptic, occasionally abstruse, this should not be allowed to obscure his concept of reconciling reason, which seems quite straightforward and not the least irrational, unless one equates reason with the subsumption of unique events under universal categories. But this does not mean that reconciling reason is unproblematic. At its worst, it leads

to philosophical and practical stasis. It is as if the philosophical hunter can neither kill his prey nor let it be, but continues to circle around it forever. On this point Habermas, Buck-Morss, and Jay agree, that negative dialectics seem to lead to a philosophical and certainly a practical cul-de-sac.[237] Theirs is a familiar argument and need not be pursued here. Just one example will suffice. As Buck-Morss points out, the substance of Adorno's work on anti-Semitism was not original, but relied heavily on the work of Erich Fromm. Their differences had to do not merely with Fromm's notorious optimism, but with the more fundamental fact that for Fromm the goal of knowledge was to make something—a theory, an account, or a hypothesis— whereas for Adorno even this was suspect, in that it risked reifying reality.[238] Adorno's cautions are well taken, his goal to keep criticism alive. Yet if this becomes the only goal, is there any hope that the future can be made better than the past?

We have seen that the power of Platonic philosophy stems in large measure from its ability to draw on the narcissistic quest for wholeness, transforming it into the philosophical desire to apprehend the whole. In *Marxism* and Totality, Martin Jay makes the interesting point that the perennial appeal of the philosophical concept of totality "cannot be attributed solely to its intellectual content."[239] To be sure, Jay notes that psychological explanations of philosophical concepts are sometimes reductive and debunking in intent. Nevertheless, the possible relationship between Freud's speculation on '"the oceanic feeling,' an infantile state of oneness with the

mother," and the appeal of the concept of totality should not be ignored.[240] These considerations hint at an interesting possibility: that it is Adorno's abandonment of the quest for the whole that contributes to the stasis of his project. For in abandoning the quest for the whole, Adorno abandons eros, which seeks to know and possess the whole; and in abandoning eros, he abandons the force responsible for the renewal of life itself.

Before proceeding further with this argument, a possible objection must be addressed: that different senses of totality and whole are being conflated here. After all, not only Adorno, but most Western philosophers, including Aristotle (N. *Ethics* 1096a6-1097al4), reject Plato's understanding of philosophy as a quest for an undifferentiated whole. Furthermore, not only Adorno, but thinkers of the stature of Kant and Nietzsche have questioned the power of reason to know the whole. Thus, Adorno's rejection of the whole can be seen as part of a philosophical tradition, not merely as a personal choice. However, the thoroughness with which Adorno rejects every sense of the whole is not required by this tradition. This is best seen by turning to Jay's Marxism and Totality, in which a number of different senses of the words *totality* and *whole* are employed. Among these the following can be distinguished:

1. A relational totality: the preservation of relational integrity, in which the whole makes sense of the parts. This is the view found in Lukacs's *History and Class* Consciousness.

2. A longitudinal totality: grasping the whole by seeing where history is coming from and where it is going. Hegel and Marx are exemplary here.

3. The whole as something bad or negative, because it is forced on individuals by a totalitarian or one-dimensional society and state.

4. The normative totality of a totally integrated and harmonious society. Plato's ideal republic is exemplary.

5. A latitudinal whole: a set of related or partial wholes—for example, various societies and cultures.

6. A whole comprised of research (Forschung) and representation (Darstellung), in which a sense of the whole guides research but can also be modified by it. Horkheimer's inaugural address is exemplary, as is much of Marx's project.

7. An expressive/humanistic whole which emphasizes that it is made by man, perhaps by a transcendental subject.

8. A decentered whole, the opposite of an expressive/humanistic whole.

9. A personal totality: the achievement of individual wholeness. For Hegel this depends on global totalization; but for others, such as Plato, it is possible as an individual act in a corrupt world.

Other senses are also mentioned by Jay: the whole as organic and

opposed to the individual; the whole as teleological in nature and prior to its parts (Aristotle); and the undifferentiated whole (Plato).[241] Jay makes no systematic distinction between wholeness and totality; nor shall I. However, he does cite psychoanalyst Erik Erikson's interesting claim that the quest for totality stems from a need for absolute boundaries between inside and outside, good and bad—that is, the demand for totality stems from the breakdown of wholeness, a more fluid integration of discrete parts.[242]

The key point, of course, is that Adorno rejects every sense of the whole and totality discussed above except for the third (the whole as bad). While one might think that Adorno would accept the possibility of personal totality in a corrupt world, we shall see that he praises Freud precisely because Freud rejects this possibility. Against totality Adorno asserts negativity. To be sure, he occasionally makes assertions such as the following:

> The only philosophy which can be responsibly practiced in the face of despair is the attempt to contemplate all things as they would present themselves from the standpoint of redemption. Knowledge has no light but that shed on the world by redemption: all else is reconstruction, mere technique. . . . But beside the demand thus placed on thought, the question of the reality or unreality of redemption itself hardly matters.[243]

It is remarks such as these that support Lyotard's claim that Adorno evinces a nostalgia for the whole—in this case what might be called, following Jay, a "redemptive latitudinal whole." Yet, even here the emphasis is almost totally on the negative. The perspective of redemption is valued because

"perspectives must be fashioned that displace and estrange the world, reveal it to be, with its rifts and crevices, as indigent and distorted as it will appear one day in the messianic light."[244] The whole is valued by Adorno not for itself, but almost entirely for how it heightens by contrast the negativity and fragmented character of the world. The whole is a useful imaginary construct to the degree that it reveals reality to be lacking in wholeness. That this is not backhanded praise of the whole is revealed by Adorno's statement elsewhere that "totality is not an affirmative but rather a critical category. Dialectical critique seeks to salvage or help to establish what does not obey totality."[245]

If it is true that it is eros—understood ultimately as the narcissistic quest to recapture a lost unity—that energizes the quest for wholeness, then it is apparent why Adorno's project seems to end in stasis: in abandoning the quest for the whole, Adorno abandons eros itself. In abandoning eros, Adorno abandons the source of life, the force which brings change and renewal—something new—into the world. One sees this, for example, in Adorno's difference with Fromm over the goal of knowledge. For Adorno, even the construction of a positive theory is suspect, because it must always risk reification—a false whole. Adorno's famous statement that "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" captures the spirit of his abandonment of eros.[246] Adorno calls his a "melancholy science."[247] Melancholia, says Freud, is characterized by a withdrawal of erotic interest from the world. It is for this reason that he classifies melancholia as a narcissistic disorder.[248]

One might expect that Adorno would embrace eros as an alternative to instrumental reason, as Horkheimer and Marcuse do. That he does not is perhaps because he recognizes how closely eros is related to instrumental reason. Eros seeks to own and possess all that is beautiful and good and will employ cunning and trickery to do so. In this sense it is not only instrumental reason, but also eros that is the opposite of mimesis. Although Socrates' distinction between common madness and divine eros, a distinction to which Adorno alludes, would mitigate the greed of eros, that greed is hardly eliminated in the sublimation of physical into philosophical eros. Socrates remains hubristic, not in spite of, but because of, his divine eros.

In a world in which the whole was an objective order, this hubris was tempered, as we have seen. Human reason would possess the divine only by copying it, assimilating itself to it, and thus becoming like it, at least insofar as it is possible for humans to do so (Republic 500c—d). Similarly, eros can create virtue and beauty (and thereby achieve its goal of a certain immortality) only by becoming virtuous. There are no shortcuts. Mimesis—the principle of elective affinity between knower and known, as Adorno puts it—is as central to Plato's work as it is to Adorno's. Indeed, it may be even more important for Plato, since he still believes in an objective order worth copying. For Plato, mimesis educates and sublimates eros, requiring it to become like the good in order to truly know the good. Mimesis thus serves the goal of progressive narcissism: it demands that eros abandon

polymorphous perversity, seeking satisfaction everywhere, and focus on the truly beautiful and truly virtuous. In so doing, eros will receive even greater pleasure.

Adorno's position appears to be that in an "enlightened" world such an objective order is no longer compelling. Released from the constraints of classical cosmology, allowed to be merely subjective, the madness of eros loses its divinity. Nothing then stands between eros and its mythological father, Cunning. Eros is cunning because it shares with its mythological mother that aspect of the world revealed under the perspective of redemption: it is indigent, in need. In its need and cunning, eros expresses precisely the orientation that led instrumental reason to become a form of wild self-assertion (verwilderte *Selbstbehauptung*) in a scarce, threatening world.

Perhaps Adorno is right. Certainly his work serves as an important and necessary corrective to the hubris of human reason. The importance of Adorno's project in this regard is revealed by how readily his program is misinterpretated as romantic irrationalism. Only a perspective that cannot imagine reason as anything other than a hierarchical, totalizing, synthesizing force could see Adorno's project as either irrational or romantic. In fact, our considerations suggest that Adorno's view of reason is quite the opposite. If eros and romance are related, as they are (for Freud, as for Plato, eros

encompasses every expression of love, from the most direct to the most highly sublimated), then Adorno's program is, if anything, not romantic enough. Rather, it is too self-denying, too demanding of what reason should and should not do—like Odysseus having himself tied to the mast, so that he cannot heed the Sirens' call. For to heed this call is to heed the most primitive, polymorphous demands of eros, which in its need and its selfishness might devour the world. Adorno, on the other hand, writes of approaching the world "without velleity (Willkür) or violence, entirely from felt contact with its objects—this alone is the task of thought."[249] But velleity is the weakest kind of desire, one that does not lead to the slightest action. The term seems an excellent rendering of Adorno's intent.[250]

Far from being a romantic, Adorno is like a spinster, fearful of the divine madness of eros, yet seeing it everywhere without its romantic guise, as instrumental reason. To see him as a nature romantic is entirely to miss the point. If one were to label his philosophy, it would probably be more accurate to call it "depressive," as in Melanie Klein's depressive position. Consider, for example, his statement that idealism is rage at a world too sparse to be dominated, a statement that recalls Klein's remarks on the sources of rage in greed and frustrated omnipotence. Indeed, one could read much of Adorno's philosophical program in Kleinian terms: as a depressive attempt to make amends to and help heal a world almost destroyed by human greed, aggression, and anxiety. Certainly Adorno's concern for the integrity and

autonomy of the object recalls Klein's work.

The "End of Internalization": Horkheimer and Adorno's Psychological Studies

Before turning to a genuine nature romantic, Marcuse, it may be useful to speculate a little further as to why Adorno (and Horkheimer to a somewhat lesser degree) fails to move beyond the critique of instrumental reason—that is, beyond negation. Such speculation will set the stage for the discussion of Marcuse, who moves from negation to utopia. The context is the Frankfurt school's assimilation of Freud, generally regarded as one of its most brilliant achievements.

Psychoanalysis or Philosophy?

Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse held fast to Freud's libido theory as a source of resistance to and nonidentity with an increasingly intrusive, rationalized world. Indeed, adherence to libido theory and to Freud's drive theory in general became the standard by which these thinkers measured the revisionism of Erich Fromm, Karen Homey, and Harry Stack Sullivan, among others, who promoted a premature reconciliation between man and world. This is not to say that Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse all believed that Freud's theory of drives, particularly the death drive, was literally and universally true. But, as Horkheimer put it in a letter to Leo Lowenthal, "even

when we do not agree with Freud's interpretation and use of them [the drives, particularly the Todestrieb], we find their objective intention is deeply right and that they betray Freud's great flair for the situation"[251]— "deeply right," because Freud's drive theory expresses the unalterable opposition between actual human needs and a historical world that demands the suppression of these needs as the apparent price of civilization.

The greatness of Freud, stated Adorno in "Die revidierte Psychoanalyse," consisted in his letting contradictions such as that between human nature and the needs of society remain unresolved. He refused "to pretend a systematic harmony when the subject itself is rent."[252] Whereas Marcuse sought to transcend this unalterable opposition between man and world by transforming the world to meet every human need, Adorno and Horkheimer embraced Freud's discovery of the mind as in conflict with itself, because this discovery stands opposed to false psychic wholeness, just as negative dialectics stands opposed to false philosophical wholeness.

Yet, in an important sense Horkheimer and Adorno see an end to contradiction where Freud and many of his psychoanalytic followers see a profound contradiction. They reject Freud on an issue on which they should have stuck to him closely: the contradiction between fantasies of world domination and the reality of human finitude. In "Totem and Taboo" (1912), Freud distinguishes three phases in the evolution of humanity's view of the

universe: animistic, religious, and scientific. "At the animistic stage men ascribe omnipotence to *themselves.* At the religious stage they transfer it to the gods but do not seriously abandon it themselves, for they reserve the power of influencing the gods in a variety of ways. The scientific view of the universe no longer affords any room for human omnipotence; men have acknowledged their smallness and submitted resignedly to death."[253] Horkheimer and Adorno see Freud as mistaken in his assertion that group fantasies of collective omnipotence over the natural world are but a collective version of narcissism, appropriate only to primitive tribes. They maintain that there can be "'no over-evaluation of mental processes against reality' [the phrase Freud used to characterize narcissistic and primitive thought] where there is no radical distinction between thought and reality."[254] Thus modern science, by virtue of its ability to turn the world into an idea, a scientific theory, is capable, through its technical application, of turning virtually any thought of world domination into actual domination. In the modern era, primitive narcissistic fantasies of world domination have become scientific and technological realities, which the "reality-adjusted ego" cannot help but recognize. To be sure, Horkheimer and Adorno loathe this development, for it leads to a conception of the world as prey;—but the tone of irony in their discussion relates solely to their assessment of the desirability of this development,[255] — not to any doubt that fantasy has become reality.

However, Horkheimer and Adorno have made a fateful error. Far from

being the realization of narcissistic fantasies of omnipotence, modern science and technology frequently serve to deny human dependence. Indeed, several theorists of narcissism, including Grunberger, Chasseguet-Smirgel, Andreas-Salomé, and Lasch, have interpreted the cultural role of science and technology in terms of how these enterprises abet the denial of human separateness and mortality. At the unconscious level, says Chasseguet-Smirgel, science is experienced "as magic itself."[256] As such, it promises to meet our deepest needs in an effortless fashion. Deepest of all needs, according to the theorists of narcissism, is the need to deny one's separateness and mortality. In fact, several of Marcuse's comments in Eros and *Civilization* to the effect that death is "perhaps even an ultimate necessity" (i.e., perhaps it is not!) and that it should not be converted from a biological fact into an ontological essence suggest that Marcuse is not immune to this tendency to denial.[257] Marcuse apparently hopes that scientific and technological progress may one day culminate in victory over the ultimate natural constraint.

Horkheimer and Adorno become revisionists at precisely the point at which a strict reading of Freud would have been more fruitful, for, unlike Freud, they fail to distinguish narcissistic fantasies of world domination from reality. The reality is that science can ease the material conditions of human existence. Under the best of circumstances it can also help heal the narcissistic wound, by promoting mastery of certain aspects of nature. The

fantasy is that science can effortlessly restore narcissistic omnipotence and perhaps conquer even death itself. The reason why Horkheimer and Adorno confuse scientific reality and narcissistic fantasy seems to be related to their critique of the dialectic of Enlightenment. They believe that philosophy, which is an act of thought, seeks to devour an entire world: "idealism as rage." They see science as fundamentally idealistic (not materialistic, as one might expect), insofar as its theories, or acts of thought, seek to restructure the world in their own image.[258] They are also tremendously impressed by the results of science. From there it is but a short step to the conclusion, false to be sure, that scientific theories, like philosophical idealism, can restructure the world any way the theorist chooses. Had they stuck more closely to Freud on this issue, they might have seen that the program of world domination which they deplore is better understood as a narcissistic fantasy. This makes this program no less dangerous, perhaps; its pursuit could conceivably destroy the world in its wake. Nevertheless, in order to understand the so-called domination of nature, it is necessary to understand its psychological, not merely its philosophical, sources, and Horkheimer and Adorno tend to confuse them.

One reason why Adorno and Horkheimer did not apply psychoanalytic categories to humanity's relationship with nature more insightfully may well have been that several of the psychoanalytic categories most appropriate to this relationship had not yet been developed, or at least, that they were not

aware of them (Melanie Klein's first major work, "A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Manic-Depressive States," was published in 1935). These categories concern how fantasies of world domination help to compensate the child, and later the adult, for his fear of separation and death, a fear that strongly evokes narcissistic injury. The Frankfurt school, however, tended to see almost all modifications of Freud's system as trivializing revisions. Thus, they saw psychoanalysis almost exclusively in terms of the oedipal conflict, whereas the theory of narcissism is concerned almost exclusively with pre-oedipal issues.

The oedipal conflict is central to the Frankfurt school, because it is the link back to Marx. It is the father's deflection of the son's libido from the mother that prepares the son for a lifetime of labor, by teaching the son that libidinal pleasure must be postponed, and later confined to the genitals, so that the rest of the body may become an instrument of labor. Marcuse goes further, drawing the parallel between Marx and Freud so tight that Marx's socially necessary and surplus labor become basic and surplus repression. In such a tendentious interpretation of psychoanalysis there is no place for the insights associated with the theory of narcissism. These insights—which members of the Frankfurt school were far too smart to ignore altogether—were left to philosophy, with the result that philosophy and psychology were sometimes confused, as we have just seen.

The "End of the Individual"

But there is another—albeit closely related—reason why Horkheimer and Adorno see psychoanalysis almost exclusively in terms of the oedipal conflict. They see the process by which the oedipal conflict is resolved as a source of potential opposition to a false harmony. The son's internalization of the father's authority provides a basis from which that authority may later be challenged. They argue, roughly following Freud, that the son at about four or five years of age comes to fear that his father will castrate him in revenge for his desire for his mother, as well as his murderous fantasies against his father. As a defense against this anxiety, the son internalizes the father's authority, taking over the father's values and attitudes as his own. It is this process, according to their interpretation of Freud, that is the foundation of the superego.[259] Society's values, embodied in the father, are internalized in the son. As Horkheimer puts it, "the self-control of the individual, the disposition for work and discipline, the ability to hold firmly to certain ideas, constancy in practical life, application of reason," are all developed through the child's relationship with the father's authority.[260]

There is, as Jessica Benjamin has argued so insightfully, something very puzzling about this argument.[261] Horkheimer recognizes that society's values are esteemed by the son in large measure simply because they are the values associated with power and authority. He writes: "When the child respects in

his father's strength a moral relationship and thus learns to love what his reason recognizes to be a fact, he is experiencing his first training for the bourgeois authority relationship."[262] But why would Horkheimer and Adorno embrace a process by which the son, in response to the fantasied threat of dismemberment, internalizes the values of society? Part of the reason seems to have to do with their recognition that in the best of circumstances the authority of the bourgeois father is combined with love, and that it is through internalization of the values of a feared and loved father that a strong ego is fashioned. As Horkheimer puts it, "In earlier times a loving imitation of the self-reliant prudent man, devoted to his duty, was the source of moral autonomy in the individual."[263] Similarly, Adorno sees the oedipus conflict as a source of adult spontaneity and nonconformity, apparently because the conflict can take such idiosyncratic forms, among which Adorno seems to include neurotic protest against society, which is better than no protest at all.[264]

Horkheimer and Adorno's position would seem to be that if the process of building a strong ego via authority and love requires the internalization of society's values, so be it. Such individuals at least have the potential to challenge authority someday, in that they possess what Horkheimer calls "moral autonomy." By contrast, individuals who have failed to internalize the father's authority lack even this potential. Their argument recalls Freud's observation that women, precisely because they have not internalized the

father's authority to the degree that men have (in part because girls do not face the same threat of castration as boys), tend to be more corruptible morally. Their superegos will always be less thoroughly internalized, which means weaker.[265]

It has not been overlooked, by Jessica Benjamin and others, that Horkheimer and Adorno are doing more than idealizing the patriarchal bourgeois family. They are also explaining why they themselves were able to transcend their upper middle-class origins and produce critical theory. Benjamin also points out the irony involved in their resting their hopes on a psychological process which, in effect, transmits instrumental reason from one generation to another. What one learns from the father, says Horkheimer, is that "one travels the paths to power in the bourgeois world not by putting into practice judgments of moral value but by clever adaptation to actual conditions."[266] This is instrumental reason. Benjamin argues that they have confused the process which produces a strong (primarily in the sense of harsh, demanding, and punitive) superego with the process which produces a strong ego. Internalization produces the former, but not the latter, for it fosters fearful compliance— cunning (which may be directed at tricking the superego as well)—but not criticism. Horkheimer and Adorno make this mistake because they confuse the oedipal conflict, in which the son's sexual identity is consolidated, with an earlier process, separation from the mother, in which the basis of individuality and autonomy is established.

In making her case, Benjamin turns to the object relations theory of Fairbairn and Guntrip, arguing that the issues of separation from the mother and the building of a strong ego should not be confused with the later oedipal conflict. From this perspective, it is the quality of the relationship with the mother, not the oedipal conflict, that is central to the development of a strong ego and individual autonomy. The theory of narcissism and the psychological theory associated with it support the general outlines of Benjamin's analysis, including her argument that it is the quality of the child's earliest, pre-oedipal relationships to the parents that is the foundation of genuine autonomy. The key issue is thus not the internalization of the father's authority, but whether the young child's relationships with its parents are sufficiently satisfying emotionally, that the child need not retreat into a world of compensatory internal objects. For as Fairbairn and Guntrip argue, this retreat is accompanied by ego splitting, which generally renders the individual less autonomous and more dependent. How later relationships with parents, which are also not fully explicable in terms of the oedipal conflict, reinforce this early pattern will be discussed shortly.

Horkheimer and Adorno and their associate Marcuse all reach the same conclusion. Horkheimer writes: "The socially conditioned weakness of the father prevents the child's real identification with him. . . . Today the growing child, who . . . has received only the abstract idea of arbitrary power, looks for a stronger, more powerful father."[267] Often he finds this more powerful

father in the state. Marcuse writes of a similar process, characterizing it by phrases such as the "obsolescence of the Freudian concept of man."[268] The process that all three describe in such similar terms has come to be known as the "end of the individual" or the "end of internalization." What is meant here is that the (male) individual no longer develops his ego in a protracted struggle with the father within the confines of the bourgeois family, a process which at least held out the possibility of various idiosyncratic accommodations, all resting on the process of internalization. Rather, as the family has become weaker as a result of social and economic changes, the child has come to be pre-socialized, as it were, by the administrative agencies of the state—for example, the schools. Thus, new generations are far more likely to be drawn into and corrupted by a false social whole. Not only is this social whole more powerful than ever before, but fewer individuals have the psychic resources to stand up to it. As usual, Adorno captures the process in the fewest words, stating that "the pre-bourgeois order does not yet know psychology, the over-socialized society knows it no longer."[269]

It is in the context of his analysis of the oversocialized society that Adorno writes:

> The introduction of the concept of narcissism counts among Freud's most magnificent discoveries, although psychoanalytic theory has still not proved quite equal to it. In narcissism the selfpreserving function of the ego is, on the surface at least, retained, but, at the same time, split off from that of consciousness and thus lost to rationality. All defense-mechanisms

> bear the imprint of narcissism: the ego experiences its frailty in relation to the instincts as well as its powerlessness in the world as 'narcissistic injury.'[270]

Adorno's point seems to be that individuals today cannot rationally confront their own all-too-real feelings of powerlessness vis-a-vis the industrial state, because these feelings are joined with primitive feelings of narcissistic injury, and both are split off from consciousness. Narcissism operates as a defense mechanism, but a clumsy one, for it conflates present and past, what might be changed—for example, political powerlessness—with what never can be—for example, infantile helplessness. In this sense it undergirds false consciousness and stands as a barrier to rational social change.

In the chapter on Marcuse this issue will be taken up in considerable detail. It is important, for it bears upon how radical social change might help to heal the narcissistic wound. For now we will conclude by saying that it is not only psychoanalytic theory "that has still not proved equal to" Freud's theory of narcissism, but Horkheimer and Adorno as well. To be sure, Adorno brilliantly intuits that narcissism is more about ego weakness than self-love.[271] However, it has been argued that neither he nor Horkheimer fully distinguish socially sanctioned narcissistic fantasies of omnipotence—for example, science as magic—from reality. Nor are they fully prepared to integrate the psychoanalytic focus on the first years of life into their accounts.

That this leads to certain ambiguities in their psychological, as well as their philosophical, studies has been demonstrated.

Lasch's Criticism

Lasch also detects an ambiguity in the Frankfurt school's treatment of authority and the family. He argues that the Frankfurt school, by which he means Horkheimer and Adorno, never fully confronts the discrepancy between its argument in The Authoritarian *Personality* that authoritarian families produce authoritarian personalities and the argument we have been considering, that it is not strong families, but weak ones, which promote authoritarianism. To be sure, Lasch recognizes that in commenting on The Authoritarian *Personality* Horkheimer makes statements such as "What they [authoritarian types] seem to suffer from is probably not too strong and sound a family but rather a lack of family."[272] However, Lasch is probably correct in seeing this as a discrepancy that the Frankfurt school noted but did not pursue. The real contribution of the Frankfurt school was its recognition that the decline of patriarchal domination under capitalism simply freed the individual for domination by new forces that would mold the ego more directly than ever before.[273]—"patriarchy without a father," as it has been called. Though our primary concern is the impact of narcissism on philosophy, not the psychological study of the family, it may be useful to consider briefly why the decline of the family makes personality structure

less autonomous. This is especially important if, following Benjamin, we reject the centrality of the oedipal conflict in building strong egos. If we agree that the contemporary modal personality structure is more compliant than the modal personality of several generations ago, but reject the Frankfurt school's explanation that this has to do with the decline of the oedipus conflict, then it is seemly to offer an alternative explanation.

Lasch argues that one result of the "socialization of reproduction"—the expropriation of parental functions by agencies outside the family—is to allow the child's earliest images of his parents to remain uncorrected and unmodified by later experiences of them. These earliest images, it will be recalled, can be characterized in Kleinian terms as split-off persecutors, avenging figures who represent the child's own split-off rage and anxiety. When the parents remain a strong presence in his life as he grows older, the child ideally has an opportunity to integrate his more mature experience of his parents as frequently helpful and loving, albeit often frustrating, with his more primitive images of them. In other words, the active presence and involvement of parents in the child's life allow him to continue to work through the depressive position, in which good and bad experiences of parents—and hence different aspects of the self (recall the assumption of object relations theory that the ego is always "twinned" with its objects—are integrated. It is this integrative process that is forestalled by the socialization of reproduction.[274]

The outcome, says Lasch, is the externalization of dangerous impulses. Unintegrated and split-off images of parents as persecutors are projected onto the outside world, reinforcing the— unfortunately not totally unrealistic —perception that the world is an incredibly dangerous place, beyond human control. This leads to a tendency to withdraw from this world altogether, leaving it to various elites, which often pander to the public's desire for an avenging force strong enough to counter the forces of evil and chaos. This is, of course, the ground of the minimal self, the withdrawal of the self into a world small enough that it can exert almost total control over it. This withdrawal, coupled with a willingness to hand over to others the burdensome responsibilities of public life, is the process behind what the Frankfurt School identifies as an increase in compliance or a decline in autonomy. A better description of this process might be that it is a decline in the belief that the world is subject to human mastery. Lasch puts it this way:

> The sense of man's isolation and loneliness reflects the collapse of public order and the loss of religion; but the waning of public order and of religion itself reflects the waning of parental authority and guidance. Without this guidance, according to Alexander Mitschlich, the world becomes 'totally inaccessible and incalculable, continually changing shape and producing sinister surprises.[275]

The preceding analysis is drawn almost entirely from Lasch's Haven in a Heartless World (1977). In this book, Lasch focuses on the way in which society, family, and individual psyche interact to make it more difficult for the

child to integrate his nascent self. He also deals with the consequences of this process for public life. In this, he employs a model that is consonant with the psychoanalytic theory associated with the theory of narcissism, which also sees the experiences of the early oral stage and their subsequent integration as the key to the integrity of the self. As stated above, it is the Frankfurt school's unfamiliarity with this theory, coupled with its consequent reliance on Freud's account of the oedipal conflict to explain more than it can, that largely accounts for the limits of, and contradictions in, the Frankfurt school's account of authority and the family.

The Convergence of Internalization and Negative Dialectics

Theoretical differences between the Frankfurt school and the theory of narcissism, while relevant, are not fundamental to our concerns as long as they are confined strictly to the realm of psychoanalytic theory. Our primary concern here is the way in which the theory of narcissism illuminates traditional philosophical issues. In fact, there is a relationship between Adorno's philosophy of negative dialectics and his account of the "end of internalization." Adorno and Horkheimer accept oedipal internalization because what in their eyes is the only available alternative, the end of internalization, is worse. For the product of internalization, instrumental reason, at least sets the individual against the world: man against nature, man against man, man against society (as described by Freud in *Civilization and its*

Discontents). In so doing, instrumental reason, the source of so much conflict, misery, and despoliation, stands as a barrier to something even worse: a false totality of man and world. The unpleasant truth is better than the hypocrisy of false harmony. Though internalization reproduces instrumental reason, it also serves as a barrier to a society in which every contradiction is smoothed over in an administered whole. Internalization protects against such a society not in spite of, but because of, its association with instrumental reason: both set a cunning individual against the world. Internalization is thus the psychological correlate of negative dialectics. Both embrace fragmentation, opposition, and lack of harmony, not as goods in themselves perhaps, but because the only historically viable alternative is false unity.

One sees an expression of this viewpoint in Adorno's attraction to Freud's supposed coldness and misanthropy. After praising Freud for "refusing to pretend a systematic harmony when the subject itself is rent," Adorno goes on to argue that only resignation and pessimism regarding human nature and civilization allow genuine criticism of society, since almost any expression of optimism can be co-opted as a justification for a repressive order. Only a "cold," "misanthropic," pessimistic thinker like Freud can maintain a "negative" perspective consistently. Critics who accuse Freud of lacking love for humanity fail to understand that only a thinker steeled against his own sentimentality can be truly radical and truly critical. Jessica Benjamin points out the parallel between these assertions and Adorno's

viewpoint that "only the hard, judging father can make the child fit for struggle in the world, teach the child to abandon the illusory hope of an easy life."[276] Adorno's praise of coldness and misanthropy as defenses against a love that might—even for just a moment—consider the possibility of harmony and wholeness in a less than perfect world, tells us about more than his view of Freud. It demonstrates how the principle of negative dialectics links Adorno's psychological and philosophical work, both of which stand opposed to the false promises of eros and wholeness, choosing coldness over love, because love is too easily blinded to the flaws of the beloved.

There appears to be another reason why Adorno rejects the whole, however, a reason that goes beyond his fear that the false whole will be mistaken for the true. Adorno may recognize that something of the cunning and strength that Odysseus needed to return home safely is also needed to navigate around the harms and dangers that stand in the way of the successful completion of everyday life, understood as what MacIntyre calls a narrative quest. For everyday life also seeks wholeness and unity, what Jay might have called a "biographical latitudinal" (that is, having a meaningful direction) whole. From this perspective it appears that the wild self-assertion of instrumental reason can be tempered but not fully transcended, because it is needed to overcome the Sirens of regressive narcissism, whose attractions are the principal danger to the successful completion of the narrative quest.

Why this is so, at least for Adorno, was revealed in our discussion of the psychological process that reproduces instrumental reason—namely, the young boy's internalization of the reality principle during the oedipus conflict, which leads the boy away from union with the mother, and hence away from the regressive solution to narcissistic injury, toward mastery of himself and the environment. It is this object mastery that will eventually help heal the narcissistic wound. It thus appears that instrumental reason is necessary to avoid the temptations of false and regressive wholeness. Because Adorno does not idealize a regressive wholeness that would sacrifice individual subjectivity, he sometimes seems, particularly in his philosophy, to retreat from the quest for wholeness altogether, as though the self-assertion associated with this quest will never be anything but wild. The conclusion is clear: without the accompaniment of instrumental reason, the quest for wholeness risks regression and false wholeness. However, with the accompaniment of instrumental reason, it risks domination of man and nature. This, of course, is a source of great tension in Adorno's work, for the psychological theory rejects the philosophical ideal of transcending instrumental reason.

In not fully coming to terms with these tensions in his work, Adorno's project remains incomplete, flawed, and filled with contradictions. Adorno appears to have recognized the power of the forces associated with eros and narcissism and to have been frightened by them. This is preferable, however,

to simply assuming that these forces do not exist or assuming that their power can be neutralized and transcended by language, as though they could become merely an object of discussion. In his epigrammatic, paratactic literary style, one sees what is perhaps his fundamental strategy for dealing with these forces. His style represents an attempt to sneak up on these powers, to catch them unawares, and thereby reveal their true magnitude. Although this strategy only heightens the contradictions in his project, it is superior to assuming that these forces need only be called by their right names to be fully subject to the power of reason.

Notes

205 Jurgen Habermas. Toward a Rational Society, pp. 85-86.

206 Theirs was a unique analysis, but not a unique approach. At about this time, Karl Popper, in The Open Society and its Enemies, attempted to trace fascism and Stalinism back to the teachings of Plato.

207 Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment, pp. 20-42.

208 Ibid., pp. 43-80.

209 David Held, Introduction to Critical Theory; Horkheimer to Habermas, p. 404.

210 Horkheimer and Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment, pp. 40-42.

211 Erich Fromm's Escape From Freedom is an excellent account of the psychological dimension of this process. Fromm was a member of the Frankfurt school during its early days.

212 Horkheimer, Eclipse of Reason, pp. 63-71.

213 Adorno, “Subject and Object," p. 499; quoted by Martin Jay, Adorno, pp. 63-64.

214 Jay, Adorno, p. 64.

215 Adorno. Minima Moralia, p. 50.

216 Herbert Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, p. xiv; quoted by Jay, Marxism and Totality, p. 208.

217 Gillian Rose, The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno, p. 43. See also Jay, Marxism and Totality, p. 268.

218 Adorno, Negative Dialectics, pp. 22-24.

219 Ibid., p. 5.

220 Jay, Marxism and Totality, pp. 254-56; Susan Buck-Morss, The Origin of Negative Dialectics, p. 66.

221 Horkheimer, "Die Gegenwärtige Lage der Sozialphilosophie und die Aufgaben eines Instituts für Sozialforschung,” p. 11; trans. and quoted by Jay, Marxism and Totality, p. 199.

222 Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, p. xiv.

223 Adorno, “The Actuality of Philosophy,” p. 120; quoted by Jay, Marxism and Totality, p. 256.

224 Jean-Franqois Lyotard, “Adorno as the Devil,” pp. 132-33; trans. Robert Hurley; quoted by Jay, Marxism and Totality, p. 515.

225 Habermas, The Theory of Communicative Action, vol. 1, Reason and the Rationalization of Society, pp. 382-83. The German terms are from the original. Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns, vol. 1, p. 512.

226 Habermas. "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Rereading Dialectic of Enlightenment," p. 29.

227 Adorno, Negative Dialectics, p. 10.

228 Ibid., p. 181.

229 Ibid., p. 43.

230 Ibid., p. 45.

231 Habermas, Theory of Communicative Action, vol. 1, p. 382.

232 Adorno, “The Actuality of Philosophy," p. 131.

233 Buck-Morss, Origin of Negative Dialectics, pp. 72-88. Jay (Adorno, pp. 155-58) discusses the complexity of mimesis, also showing it to be an active, constructive force.

234 Adorno, Kierkegaard: Konstruktion des Aesthetischen, p. 142: quoted by Buck-Morss, Origin of Negative Dialectics, p. 73.

235 Adorno, Negative Dialectics, p. 19.

236 It might seem that science would remain a bastion of belief in an objective cosmological order. What else is Karl Popper’s falsifiability criterion, for example, but an expression of the belief that an objective world exists and that it resists some experimental intrusions but not others? (The Logic of Scientific Discovery, pp. 40-42). But Adorno and Marcuse see modern science as an expression of what might be called “instrumental idealism,” for science believes that its theories constitute reality. See Horkheimer and Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment, pp. 9-11; Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), pp. 146-52. See, too, Marcuse’s “On Science and Phenomenology.” For a criticism of this view, see my Science and the Revenge of Nature: Marcuse and Habermas, pp. 53-57.

237 Buck-Morss, Origin of Negative Dialectics, pp. 186-87;)ay, Marxism and Totality, pp. 274-75. But see also Buck-Morss's fascinating analysis of how the large-scale empirical study of which Adorno was co-director. The Authoritarian Personality, benefited from the method of negative dialectics (pp. 177-84).

238 Buck-Morss, Origin of Negative Dialectics, p. 186.

239 Jay, Marxism and Totality, p. 21.

240 Ibid., pp. 22-23.

241 Ibid.. passim.

242 Ibid., p. 22.

243 Adorno, Minima Moralia, p. 247.

244 Ibid.

245 Adorno et ah. The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology, p. 12, quoted by Jay, Marxism and Totality, pp. 266-67.

246 Adorno, Prisms, p. 34. But see Jay, Marxism and Totality, p. 243, n. 5, for Adorno's amendment of this view.

247 Adorno, Minima Moralia, p. 15.

248 Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," pp. 243-44. On the relationship of narcissism and melancholia, see ibid., p. 252.

249 Adorno, Minima Moralia, p. 247.

250 See original, in Adorno, Gesammelte Schriften, vol. 4, p. 281 n. Willkür covers an enormous range of possibilities, from free will to arbitrary action. Selbstherrlichkeit and Laune are often employed in similar contexts. With such a wide range of dictionary meanings available, the translator must obviously choose according to the context.

251 Quoted by (ay, The Dialectical Imagination, p. 103.

252 Adorno, "Die revidierte Psychoanalyse," p. 40; my translation.

253 Freud, "Totem and Taboo," p. 106.

254 Horkheimer and Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment, p. 11; internal quote from Freud, “Totem and Taboo.”

255 Their tone is ironic in precisely the same sense as the title of Marcuse’s essay. “The Obsolescence of the Freudian Concept of Man”; Marcuse believes that the Freudian concept of man has become outdated, because men have changed, although he regrets this change.

256 Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel, The Ego Ideal, p. 218. See also Christopher Lasch, The Minimal Self, pp. 240-58.

257 Marcuse, Eros and Civilization, pp. 215-16.

258 See my Science and the Revenge of Nature, pp. 49-57.

259 Freud, "The Ego and the Id,” pp. 51-57. Actually, Freud’s argument regarding the superego is more complex than Horkheimer or Adorno suggest. It is not merely the mirror of the father’s values. Freud came to see the superego as representing not the father punishing the son, but the son attempting to punish the father within him—that is, the father with whom he has identified. Conscience—morality—is our aggression toward those who stand in the way of our satisfaction turned back against ourselves. It is this that accounts for the discontent of civilization. See Freud, Civilization and its Discontents, p. 123. See also “Totem and Taboo,” p. 156.

260 Horkheimer, “Authority and the Family,” p. 101.

261 Jessica Benjamin, “The End of Internalization: Adorno’s Social Psychology”; idem, “Authority and the Family Revisited: or, A World Without Fathers?”

262 Horkheimer, “Authority and the Family,” p. 101.

263 Horkheimer, "Authority and the Family Today," p. 365.

264 Adorno, “Sociology and Psychology,” part 2, p. 85.

265 Freud puts it this way: “In the absence of fear of castration, the chief motive is lacking which leads boys to surmount the Oedipus complex. Girls remain in it for an indeterminate length of

time; they demolish it late, and even so, incompletely. In these circumstances the formation of the superego must suffer; it cannot attain the strength and independence which give it its cultural significance, and feminists are not pleased when we point out to them the effects of this factor upon the average female character." ("Femininity," p. 129). This claim is related to Freud's assertion that women threaten civilization more than men, because they are less capable of sublimation. See idem. Civilization and its Discontents, p. 56; also "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex," p. 178.

266 Horkheimer, "Authority and the Family," p. 107. Often he finds this more

267 Horkheimer, "Authority and the Family Today," p. 365; quoted by Benjamin, "Authority and the Family Revisited," p. 48.

268 Marcuse, Five Lectures; Psychoanalysis, Politics, and Utopia, p. 51.

269 Adorno, "Sociology and Psychology," part 2, p. 95.

270 Ibid., p. 88.

271 Adorno, however, is not always entirely clear or correct regarding narcissism. At one point he states that "the kind of instinctual energy on which the ego draws ... is of the anaclitic type Freud called narcissistic" ("Sociology and Psychology," part 2, p. 88). In fact, narcissistic libido is precisely the opposite of anaclitic, or object-oriented, libido, as we have seen.

272 Horkheimer, "Authority and the Family Today," pp. 368-73; quoted in Lasch, Haven in a Heartless World, p. 92.

273 Lasch, Haven, pp. 91-94.

274 Ibid., pp. 165-83.

275 Ibid., p. 178.

276 Benjamin. "The End of Internalization," p. 61; Adorno, "Die revidierte Psychoanalyse," pp. 39-40. See also idem, "Sociology and Psychology." part 2, pp. 96-97, for a similar point. Actually,

this “coldness” does not seem to have been as much a part of Freud's practice as of his theory (or Adorno’s interpretation of his theory). In his account of his analysis with Freud, the “Wolf-Man” says that Freud often asked after his fiancee, remarked how attractive she was after meeting her, and loaned him considerable sums of money over a long period of time (The Wolf-man, pp. 113, 142, 303).

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