



# Adorno and Politics

Istanbul Critical  
Theory Conference

2-4 June 2016  
Boğaziçi University



**PROGRAM**

## Thursday, June 2, 2016

### Rector's Conference Hall

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**9:30-10:00** Registration

**10.00-10:30** Welcoming Address by Volkan Çıdam,  
Zeynep Gambetti and Philip Hogh

**10.30-12.00** Keynote Address  
**Jay M. Bernstein**  
*New School for Social Research*

**12.00-13.00** Lunch Break

### Washburn Hall (IIBF)

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#### 13.00-14.45 Parallel Panels

##### Philosophy, Theory and Politics I

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**Naveh Frumer** *Tel Aviv University*  
The Indignity of "Humanity": Adorno's  
Deconstruction of the Categorical Imperative

**Luiz Philippe de Caux** *Federal University of Minas Gerais*  
Adorno's critique of Heidegger: two kinds of  
immanent critique?

**Sebastian Tobon-Velasquez** *Goethe University Frankfurt*  
The Nature of Mimesis: An Inquiry into its  
Normativity in Adorno's Work

##### Education and Politics I

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**Julia König** *Goethe University Frankfurt*  
Education and the Preconditions for the  
Indifference towards the Suffering of Others:  
On the Actuality of Adorno's "Education after  
Auschwitz"

**Helge Kminek** *Goethe University Frankfurt*  
Education, Politics and Negative Dialectics

**Christian Thein** *Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz*  
Adorno's Critique of Conceptual Dominance as a  
Concept for Educational Practice

### Rector's Conference Hall

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**14.45-15.15** Coffee Break

**15.15-16.45** Keynote Address:  
**Seyla Benhabib**  
*Yale University*

### Washburn Hall (IIBF)

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#### 17.00-19.00 Parallel Panels

##### Philosophy, Theory and Politics II

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**Alain Patrick Olivier** *University of Nantes*  
Identity and Difference in a Post-dialectical Theory:  
On Theodor W. Adorno's Parisian Lectures

**Barry Stocker** *Istanbul Technical University*  
Art, History and Politics in Adorno

**Robert Zwarg** *University of Leipzig*  
"Absorbing that which is spontaneous": Artificial  
Negativity and the difficulties of radical politics

##### Education and Politics II

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**Itay Snir** *Tel Aviv University*  
Minima Pedagogia: Education, Thinking and Politics  
in Adorno

**Alexandre Fernandez Vaz, Franciele Bete Petry**  
*University of Santa Catarina*  
Theodor W. Adorno: Teaching as Political  
Philosophy

**Krassimir Stojanov** *Catholic University of Eichstätt*  
Education as Social Critique: On Theodor Adorno's  
Critical Theory of Bildung

**19.00** Reception at Kennedy Lodge

## Friday, June 3, 2016

### Washburn Hall (IIBF)

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#### 10.15-12.00 Parallel Panels

##### Nature(s) and Critique

###### **Pauli Pyllkö**

Adorno's Notion of Begrifflosigkeit; and its use in understanding man's perplexed relation to nature

###### **Nishin Nathwani** *Harvard University*

Nature and Supranature in Adorno's Thought

###### **Umur Başdaş** *Yale University*

Adorno and Nonhuman Agency

##### Aesthetics and Politics

###### **Burç İdem Dinçel** *Trinity College Dublin*

Trying to Understand Aesthetic Theory

###### **Sebastian Truskolaski** *Goldsmiths College London*

Poetics and Politics in Adorno's Aesthetic Theory

###### **Josh Robinson** *Cardiff University*

The Aesthetics of Politics

##### Language, Concepts and Politics

###### **Philip Hogh** *Carl von Ossietzky University Oldenburg*

Adorno's Politics of the Concept

###### **Frederic Thomas** *University of Leipzig*

"Scoundrels", Proper Marriage" and "the Good Generality". A Pragmatic Reading of the Political Significance of Language

###### **Manfred Posani Löwenstein**

Adorno, Proust and the Problem of Translation

#### 12.00-13.00 Lunch Break

### Rector's Conference Hall

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#### 13.00-14.30 Keynote Address

###### **Maeve Cooke**

*University College Dublin*

#### 14.30-15.00 Coffee Break

### Washburn Hall (IIBF)

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#### 15.00-16.45 Parallel Panels

##### Adorno and Contemporary Political Theory I

###### **Michael Hauser** *Czech Academy of Sciences Prague*

Negative Dialectics in the 21st century: The shades of contemporary theory and the concept of non-identity

###### **René Dorn** *Lycée Hénin-Beaumont*

Facing phenomenology: Levinas and Adorno as defenders of an "imageless materialism"

###### **Joao Pedro Cachopo** *Universidade Nova de Lisboa*

Liotard and Agamben on Adorno: Or, the Anxiety of Radical Critique

##### Adorno and Contemporary Art

###### **Surti Singh** *American University of Cairo*

Adorno on the Self-Reflection of Philosophy and Art.

###### **Rose-Anne Gush** *University of Leeds*

"Nothing should be moist; art becomes hygienic": the meaning of action in art after Aesthetic Theory

###### **Alex Fletcher** *Kingston University*

Transparencies on Adorno on Film: The Alternative Filmmaking Practices of Alexander Kluge and Harun Farocki

## Friday, June 3, 2016

Washburn Hall (IIBF)

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### 17.00-18.45 Parallel Panels

Adorno and Contemporary Political Theory II

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**Thiago Ferrare** *Federal University of Rio de Janeiro*: On the Limits of Political Liberalism: An Adornian Starting Point

**Janos Klocke** *University of Leipzig*  
"True thoughts are those alone which do not understand themselves". Adorno's Critical Theory of the non-identical as a politics of performativity

**Jan Müller** *University of Basel*  
Society Fragmented and the Intelligibility of Human Practice

Resistance and Critique

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**James Murphy** *DePaul University*  
Integration, Obstinacy, and the Body Politic in Adorno's Negative Dialectics

**Asaf Angermann** *Yale University*  
Adorno on Race and Prejudice

**Zahid R. Chaudary** *Princeton University*  
On Assimilation: Adorno and Difference

## Saturday, June 4, 2016

Washburn Hall (IIBF)

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### 10.15-12.00 Parallel Panels

Suffering, Morality and Politics I

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**Marina Hervás Muñoz** *Autonomous University of Barcelona*  
The concept of "freedom" in Adorno's late writings and lectures

**Christine Kirchhoff** *International Psychoanalytic University Berlin*  
"Das Hinzutretende." On Subjectivity and Politics

**Volkan Çıdam** *Boğaziçi University*  
On Adorno's New Categorical Imperative: Recognition of the Damaged Past

Music and Politics

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**Dani Issler** *Princeton University*  
Composing Jewish Collectivity: Adorno's Sacred Fragment and the Notion of Volk

**Burcu Gürsel** *Kırklareli University*  
Schubert, but No Jazz, OverWebern: Adorno's Aesthetic Criteria and the Subject's Emancipation

**Susan Solomon** *Brown University*  
Language and Its Others: The Politics of Form in Adorno's Musical Writings and Notes to Literature.

12.00-13.00 Lunch Break

Rector's Conference Hall

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13.00-14.30 Keynote Address  
**Susan Buck-Morss**  
*CUNY Graduate Center*

## Saturday, June 4, 2016

**14.30-15.00** Coffee Break

**Washburn Hall (IIBF)**

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**15.00-16.45** Parallel Panels

**Suffering, Morality and Politics II**

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**Kyle Baasch** *School of Visual Arts New York*  
Archaic Moments in Adorno's Practical Philosophy

**Dilara Bilgisel** *Bilgi University*  
Expressing Atrocities: The Antihuman Element in  
Theodor W. Adorno's Moral-Political Dialectic

**Marius Dahmen** *Free University Berlin*  
On Damaged Life – The Emancipatory Potential of  
Psychoanalysis in Adorno's Critical Theory

**Adorno and Arendt**

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**Gaye İlhan Demiryol** *Bahçeşehir University*  
Adorno and Arendt. From Theory to Praxis

**Terence Holden** *Boğaziçi University*  
Adorno and Arendt: Radical Evil Viewed from  
the Perspective of the Contemporary Regime of  
Historicity

**Andreas Stuhlmann** *University of Alberta*  
Theodor W. Adorno and Hannah Arendt on the  
Figure of the Refugee

**Rector's Conference Hall**

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**17.00-17.30** Closing Address

# ABSTRACTS

*Alphabetical order by last name*

Asaf Angermann *Yale University*

## Adorno on Race and Prejudice

The paper examines the scope, significance, and implications of Adorno's views on prejudice, discrimination, and racial injustice. Although Adorno focused on these questions mostly by reflecting on problems of anti-Semitism, authoritarianism, and the trauma of the holocaust, arguments from his theoretical as well as empirical work entail epistemological and political implications also concerning other forms of xenophobia, racism, and social exclusion. Adorno's thesis about the principle of identity thinking which excludes the non-identical and eliminates difference, thus leading to a social mechanism of exclusion and repression, is an epistemological argument with social and political implications. In order to be a valid thesis, however, it must be applicable and extendable also beyond the specific context of anti-Semitism and fascism. The paper, therefore, suggests such an extension and reactualization by inspecting and reassessing these elements in Adorno's work: Which of the theses on the elements of Anti-Semitism could be applied to questions of racial prejudice? Can the arguments about instrumental reason and the exclusion of the incommensurable be useful for debates on racial discrimination? What can Adorno's – and the Frankfurt School's altogether - fundamental theses about the dialectics of reason and enlightenment, progress and regression, contribute to contemporary critical philosophy of race?

Kyle Baasch *School of Visual Arts New York*

## Archaic Moments in Adorno's Practical Philosophy

Whether in the context of foot-tapping or oppositional political demonstration, Adorno intransigently identified spontaneous bodily activity with bestial, regressive self-abandonment, earning him the reputation of a curmudgeon among the first generation Frankfurt School theorists. Indeed, the priority of thought over action in Adorno's philosophy might prompt the conclusion that Adorno endorsed resigned cognitive activity as a virtuous substitute for collective political involvement. But one cannot read Adorno's late writings and fail to notice the insistence upon instinctual bodily impulses as significant agents in political practice. I argue that these vestigial corporeal moments, engendered by a suffocating sense of indignation, function in Adorno's late lectures and writings not merely as a corrective to the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity, but also as intelligent forces that might guide the subject toward a praxis in the name of humanity. Adorno develops this idea by treating these archaic vestiges as plenipotentiaries from a phylogenetic epoch in which the logic of self-preservation is entangled with the empirical, bodily substance of the species. Yet the peculiar variety of examples Adorno employs to illustrate this impulsiveness in action dramatize the irreconcilability of a radically individual spontaneity and the collective action proper to a modern, reticulated socioeconomic situation.

Umur Başdaş *Yale University*  
**Adorno and Nonhuman Agency**

Even though “domination of nature” was a prevalent theme of the first generation critical theorists, recent attempts to come to terms with nonhuman agency only occasionally refer to the critical theory tradition and instead draw heavily on Spinoza, Deleuze and Latour (among others). This is partly a function of Habermas’s redefinition of agency in terms of human linguistic practices based on his critical reading of Adorno. Responding to this move, I excavate some of the resources in Adorno for thinking about nonhuman agency, focusing especially on his original concept of reification. According to a widespread understanding of reification, oppressive “man-made” structures are “reified” when they appear “natural” and therefore unchangeable. Adorno argued that this understanding of reification is built upon a prior reification of nature, because it equates “natural” with “unchangeable,” whereas nature itself is active, changing and historical. In his view, underlying this prior reification is the desire to shift all agency to the side of human beings, which turns nature into a “mere thing.” Consequently, “the livelier the subject becomes, the deader the world becomes.” Taking my cue from Adorno’s interpretation of Odysseus in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, I highlight the significance of his reification critique for the contemporary efforts to theorize nonhuman agency.

Dilara Bilgisel *Bilgi University*  
**Expressing Atrocities: The Antihuman Element  
 in Theodor W. Adorno’s Moral-Political Dialectic**

This presentation aims at clarifying the dubitable remark made by Gillian Rose in her *Melancholy Science* which has come to raise significant questions about Adorno’s moral-political dialectic. The said remark accuses Adorno of doing what he condemned Martin Heidegger for: putting distance between the realm of politics and that of moral values. As an attempt to look further into her claim, this presentation traces Adorno’s moral-political dialectic back to G.W. F. Hegel’s reading of reason and morality in his *Phenomenology of the Spirit* within the discipline of negative anthropology. Taking its motivation from the controversies surrounding Adorno’s affinity both with Hegel’s oeuvre and with the antihumanist tradition, this talk is going to utilize antihumanism as the vital link between Adorno’s moral and political opinions. Following up on his critique of pseudomorphosis in *Negative Dialectics*, the antihuman will be handled as an agent that prevents morality and politics from forming an illusory unity while manifesting these disciplines as two strongly tied constituents of Adorno’s philosophical constellation. This often ignored dimension of negative anthropology may be a unique way of understanding Adorno’s moral need to express atrocities and the political aspect of dealing with them.

Joao Pedro Cachopo *Universidade Nova de Lisboa*

## Lyotard and Agamben on Adorno: Or, the Anxiety of Radical Critique

This paper takes its cue from a paradox that lies at the core of Lyotard's and Agamben's readings of Adorno. On the one hand, both Lyotard and Agamben seem to engage in a critical understanding of modernity that bears significant similarities with Adorno's (namely with regard to the question of Auschwitz). On the other hand, if one considers Lyotard's and Agamben's references to Adorno more closely, it is hard to ignore the degree of animosity that his work arouses in both of them. What could explain this lack of sympathy when the conditions for the acknowledgement of a significant affinity among them seem to be in place? I will proceed in two stages: first, focusing on a few passages from Lyotard and Agamben, I will bring to light the anxiety that the denial of Adorno at once conceals and displays. Second, drawing this time on Adorno, I will argue not only that this anxiety corresponds to a challenge that no radical critique can make light of, but also that Adorno's appraisal of the link between theory and praxis, in that it postulates a discontinuous articulation between the two, offers crucial insights on how such an anxiety might be both recognized and overcome.

Luiz Philipe de Caux *Federal University of Minas Gerais*

## Adorno's critique of Heidegger: two kinds of immanent critique?

I wish in this paper to show how Adorno understood and exercised immanent critique in a double way in the case of Heidegger's fundamental ontology. For Adorno, the theoretical critique of a theory has the double character of being inside society and at the same time claiming independence to society's functional context. In the case of Adorno's critique of Heidegger, that double character appears in two separated strategies of critique: a) one called immanent in the strictest sense, i.e., through the dialectical self-reflection of the criticized theory; b) the other, immanent in a broader sense, by which Adorno situates that theory in its social context of emergency and shows to what kind of needs it corresponds, needs which are demonstrated to be subordinate to that false state. I claim that, in spite of seeming a classical case of external critique, that second strategy used against Heidegger could be considered a case of immanent critique in the light of Adorno's conception of the relation of theory to praxis. More than that, drawing very briefly on the classical example of Marx's critique of Hegel, I claim that a materialist immanent critique should take the two strategies and make them coincide.

Zahid R. Chaudary *Princeton University*

## On Assimilation: Adorno and Difference

How do modernity and its regime of equivalence produce or contend with racial difference? While Adorno does not address racial difference directly, his analyses of the increasingly disenchanted world that render people and objects homogenous provide some insight into the operations of difference in modernity. One of the problems revealed by the modern regime of equivalence is the universalizing tendency of legal categories as they confront a heterogeneous political and social world, and this is a problem Adorno explores in several texts. If, as Adorno points out, the fetish character of the commodity sets limits on what is knowable, how does racial difference operate within this economy of knowledge? What might a negative dialectical understanding of the inassimilable—of the racial mark—have to offer us in our contemporary political moment? This paper will explore Adorno's importance in analyzing the place of racial and historical difference today. Adorno, I argue, helps us to see past the sentimentalism around racial injury and provides a more textured account of difference, one containing enormous analytical potentials.

Marius Dahmen *Free University Berlin*

## On Damaged Life – The Emancipatory Potential of Psychoanalysis in Adorno's Critical Theory

Adorno's notion of emancipation differs considerably from the one put forth after Habermas' communicative turn. Focusing on the role of psychoanalysis in both Adorno and Habermas, my paper emphasizes the concept of a 'false whole' as a fundamental precondition in the conceptualization of emancipation. With Habermas' *Knowledge and Human Interest* (1968) psychoanalysis morphs from the negative, and (unintentionally) dialectical, philosophy it was to first generation Critical Theorists into a mere communicative strategy. The notions of damage, shock, and trauma, fundamentally important to Adorno's insistence on Freudian instinct theory, vanish in face of a self-reflexive hermeneutics of disclosure. The changed notion of emancipation is deeply implicated with such devaluation of Freudian theory. Against Habermas' communicative reason, my paper positions the universal dimension of damage and the emancipatory potential of negation, inherent to Adorno's Freud. Both concepts are furthermore brought in conversation with Eva Illouz's more recent 'emotional capitalism,' within which the blurred spheres of public, private, economic, and emotional life are pervaded by a logic of self-improvement that has integrated the cultural sediment of psychoanalysis as a language of personal emancipation.

Gaye İlhan Demiryol *Bahçeşehir University*

## Adorno and Arendt: From Theory to Praxis

Adorno's political quietism is often contrasted with Marcuse's active and vocal support of the student movement. The contrast between Arendt and Adorno, however, is rarely highlighted. There are numerous reasons to warrant such a comparison. Both Arendt and Adorno's personal experiences were deeply influenced by the World War II and the Holocaust. As a result, their respective political theories were marked by a similar attempt to come to terms with the "crisis of humanity", which the annihilation of European Jewry brought to the foreground as a problem of modernity, as well as a collective responsibility of the international community to prevent such future crimes. Yet, Arendt and Adorno had very different road maps. While Arendt was still confident in the power of the united actors to bring about a lasting transformation in political life, Adorno was concerned about the possibility of the moral revolt of the students changing into a new kind of fascism, that of the left. Was this merely a context-dependent disagreement resulting from their different evaluations of the situation in the 60s? Or is there something fundamentally conflictual in their respective political theories?

Burç İdem Dinçel *Trinity College Dublin*

## Trying to Understand Aesthetic Theory

The present paper seeks to *scrutinize Aesthetic Theory* so as to discuss how Theodor Adorno's conception of mimesis is not a far cry from that of Plato and Aristotle. After aiming at a dialectical account of the ways in which Adorno's distance from theatricalism aligns him with Plato, whereas his stress on the instinctive, creative, sensory and performative features of the notion goes very much hand in hand with Aristotle, the study will argue for the urgency of conceiving mimesis as a form of physical/performative/emancipatory action in lieu of its established comprehension as mere imitation. This account, in turn, lays the groundwork for the concluding remark of the paper that alludes to the artistic praxis of Samuel Beckett, to whom Adorno intended to dedicate *Aesthetic Theory*. After all, Beckett's mimesis of mimesis both on page and on stage stands not only as a substantial proof of how art can be political without being overtly political, but also how it can become a site of resistance simply with an obligation to go on.

René Dorn *LycéeHénin-Beaumont*

## Facing phenomenology: Levinas and Adorno as defenders of an “imageless materialism”

My paper would like to deliver a set of conceptual devices in order to track down the outlines of what Adorno wanted to call imageless materialism in the Negative Dialectics. Unlike Levinas – who has as well been lingering in the ruins of German and French phenomenology, subsisting in the shadows of Heidegger and Sartre – Adorno treated the being of society as a grimace of the existing, which in itself gives a second birth to the romantic appearance of an active subject-based identity. In examining the syllogistic order “work to eat”, I will demonstrate their description of (even) a (philosophical) world, in which the nature of mind is in danger to be overtaken by the merciless order “eat to work” - a pervert desire to conquer an image of substance that Kant had abandoned in means of limiting reason and religion. The inner conflict between substance and idea is the instance that is still setting the partly well paid corpse of western philosophy in motion.

## Thiago Ferrare *Federal University of Rio de Janeiro* On the Limits of Political Liberalism: An Adornian Starting Point

Proposing a political approach – not a metaphysical one - John Rawls wants to give to his conception of justice a social foundation: what our “political culture” presupposes in order to allow a stable and fair living together? In these terms, the overlapping consensus is the material result of the critical intent to make explicit the justice’s conditions of possibility. With Adorno it becomes possible to see the limits of political liberalism. The need to bring to light the *unspeakable suffering* evidences the ahistorical character of Rawls’s point of view. It is precisely the difference between the starting points – at a side, society as a fair system of cooperation; on the other side, the inevitability of suffering – that determines the possibilities for the two theoretical projects to access the standards of community’s self reflection: for not being sensible about the historicity of *experience*, political liberalism is not able to understand the present as a product of learning processes. The centrality of suffering makes possible to abandon the idea that the civil society is a place of passivity. It becomes now, with Adorno, an space for the articulation of counter hegemonic discourses.

Alex Fletcher *Kingston University*

## Transparencies on Adorno on Film: The Alternative Filmmaking Practices of Alexander Kluge and Harun Farocki

Written in the wake of Oberhausen, Adorno's 1966 essay "Transparencies on Film" takes the beginnings of an independent West German cinema in order to reflect on the problems and possibilities of an alternative filmmaking practice. As Miriam Hansen contends, this "shift of angle re-opens areas of speculation which seem stereotypically blocked in Adorno's earlier work". My paper seeks to trace how these problems and possibilities of an alternative filmmaking practice have been approached in the respective oeuvres of Alexander Kluge (1932-) and Harun Farocki (1944-2014), as well as how these two figures can offer a complex optic for revisiting of Adorno's writings on film. Drawing on works from *Composing for the Films* to *Aesthetic Theory*, my paper will compare and contrast how Kluge's and Farocki's theories of montage and their notions of the image connect to, and diverge from those of Adorno. Developing Hansen's observations, my paper will propose that Kluge and Farocki advance a "continuation of Critical Theory committed to alternative practices in mass culture", but also a "more imaginative, more pragmatic" model for "re-reading" Adorno's writings on film.

Naveh Frumer *Tel Aviv University*

## The Indignity of "Humanity": Adorno's Deconstruction of the Categorical Imperative

This paper joins the effort to read Adorno as putting forward an alternative moral philosophy. More specifically, to demonstrate how this involves Adorno's close critique of Kant's moral theory. Kant's insistence that moral reasoning requires purifying our considerations of any content—any concern, interest, or particular end—effectively empties the humanistic core of his morality: the ideas of dignity, humanity, and ends-in-themselves. Whenever Kant attempts to provide the latter with any positive definition, he ends up resorting to negative distinctions: humanity as the opposite of animality; ends-in-themselves as the opposite of mere means; etc. Herein lies the disavowed truth of Kant's moral philosophy: moral maxims are always negative rather than positive; and what they negate is not a universal form (humanity) but concrete socio-historical content (slavery, privilege, inequality, exploitation, etc.). For Adorno, moral critique begins from what he calls the "inhuman." The latter does not stand for a timeless form, nor does it imply a mere "reversal" of Kant's imperative. Instead it points (not unlike Marx) to the determinate (material) negation of moral ideals by social content. Moral critique means highlighting an impasse that calls not for the quantitative expansion of existing moral categories, but for their qualitative transfiguration.

Rose-Anne Gush *University of Leeds*

## “Nothing should be moist; art becomes hygienic”: the meaning of action in art after Aesthetic Theory

This paper will explore the concept of political and artistic “action” in the writings of Theodor Adorno, in relation to art that engages the body, new media and “action” as its medium, namely, Viennese Actionism and Feminist Actionism. Taking as its starting point the often-overlooked concepts of expression and sublimation this paper will first examine their contradictory unfolding in Adorno’s *Minima Moralia* (1951) and later incomplete *Aesthetic Theory*. This will then consider how these practices press on an idea that Adorno developed in his late essay, “Art and the Arts”, where art that looks to action and chance attempts to become *Gesamtkunstwerk* by taking the route of total anti-art. This paper aims to provide a way to understand the transformation of the concept of art that such practices from the 1960s and 1970s attempted. I argue that in paying attention to Adorno’s complex notion of expression in art, we can gain a critical insight into art that engaged the body, gender, media, violence and action, and that attempted critiques of fascism, in a way that also illuminates the *limits* of the commodity and capitalist society and raises questions anew for our understanding of political action, and action that resides in art today.

Burcu Gürsel *Kırklareli University*

## Schubert, but No Jazz, Over Webern: Adorno’s Aesthetic Criteria and the Subject’s Emancipation

For Adorno, good art has an essence, but no metaphysics; it thrives on a life-affirming but also “negating” aesthetic, and on the emancipation of the subject in his objectification. Yet, how to translate such theoretical paradoxes into critical practice? This paper asks where artistic value judgment falls in Adorno’s notion of the object-subject relation and shows that it sometimes serves to justify an aversion, not only toward the collective reception of art, but perhaps more intensely toward collective creativity. For Adorno, the truth of art is bound up with its persistent negation of its own tradition and ideological context—its “positive transcendence.” Paradoxically, the artistic negation of a tradition can only be possible with a full mastery of that tradition. Again paradoxically, art relies on an aesthetic illusion of universality and of objective necessity. In our judgments, then, we “wrongly” but “truly” follow a historically determined relativity. As an example of this conundrum, I explore how the same set of principles that surprisingly favors Schubert over Webern nonetheless fails to salvage jazz, which Adorno construes as the artistic incarceration of the individual in a mindless mass movement.

Michael Hauser *Czech Academy of Sciences Prague*

## Negative Dialectics in the 21st century: The shades of contemporary theory and the concept of non-identity

In Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*, concepts and theoretical strategies arise which were later to be cast into the philosophical underworld. These concepts, however, harbour a drive that has almost faded away in contemporary critical theory, poststructuralism, and post-Marxism. I will concentrate on the concept of non-identity in its two dimensions. First, this concept shows a capacity to reflect a philosophical position as a moment in a historical process and to take into account the social vicissitudes of philosophical concepts. Social meanings of concepts and their changes represent a non-identity within the identity of a philosophical system. The concept of non-identity as well makes it possible to relate a philosophical system to a given historical condition. Second, the concept of non-identity may suggest the Žižekian notion of the Real. The difference, however, lies in that the notion of the Real originates in Lacanian psychoanalysis whilst the concept of non-identity, considered in its "somatic" dimension, is embedded in Marxist anthropology. The concept of non-identity could arguably bridge the gap between post-Marxism and neo-Marxism.

Terence Holden *Boğaziçi University*

## Adorno and Arendt: Radical Evil Viewed from the Perspective of the Contemporary Regime of Historicity

I observe how Adorno and Arendt present us with different ways of understanding radical evil as an expression of the modern project of acceleration, and attempt to appreciate the contemporary significance of this observation. Arendt diagnoses radical evil as an excess of historical motion against which a reconfigured logic of exemplarity is invoked, whereas Adorno diagnoses radical evil as an absence of motion addressed via appeal to a notion of progress brushed against the grain of cultural pessimism. I seek to come to terms with this divergence by pursuing the transitional nature of both perspectives: both embody strategies of negotiation to be located within the modern regime of historicity at its point of exhaustion; both also point towards the emergence of the contemporary regime of historicity framed by the likes of Hartog and Rosa. For the latter thinkers, excess and absence of motion are interpreted together as symptoms of an underlying problematic relating to the evolution across which the 'project' of acceleration has become the 'process' of acceleration. The possibility will subsequently be explored whether, by virtue of the transitional character of their diagnoses of radical evil, Adorno and Arendt may not be well placed to address this underlying problematic.

Dani Issler *Princeton University*

## Composing Jewish Collectivity: Adorno's Sacred Fragment and the Notion of Volk

My paper explores Adorno's reading of Arnold Schoenberg's unfinished biblical opera *Moses und Aron* (1932/1954) in Adorno's essay *Sakrales Fragment* (1963). Situating *Moses und Aron* within the post-Wagnerian German-Jewish operatic avant-garde discourse on collectivity, I will argue that Schoenberg sought to create a non-oppressive formulation of Jewish collectivity (*Volk*): one that coincides with Adorno's critique of (Jewish) nationalism yet was left unaccounted for in Adorno's reading.

Christine Kirchhoff *International Psychoanalytic University Berlin*  
**"Das Hinzutretende." On Subjectivity and Politics**

The term "dasHinzutretende" is used by Adorno in his reflections on Kant's concept of freedom (*Freiheitsbegriff*), to mark something that neither belongs to the outer world nor to the conscious thinking. It is an "impulse" that is part of action therefore we can't think of action without it. A similar figure can be found at the beginning of *Negative Dialectics*, where Adorno identifies philosophy's task in "reaching beyond the concept through the concept". In this context the concept has to negate the longing without which it would be taken up in immediacy. This presentation traces the non-conceptual in Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* and tries to reveal its political content and aims at understanding it from a psychoanalytical perspective.

Janos Klocke *University of Leipzig*

## “True thoughts are those alone which do not understand themselves”. Adorno’s Critical Theory of the non-identical as a politics of performativity

The figure of the non-identical still remains a key object of debate for a variety of fields in the humanities and social sciences. This paper aims to re-read Adorno’s Critical Theory of the non-identical as a *politics of performativity*. The term politics of performativity refers to both the central analytic and emancipatory perspective in the thought of Judith Butler, who explores the ways in which subjects are always already socially and discursively formed. This theory in turn reveals the contingency of alleged essential categories of subjectivity, such as sex and gender, by emphasizing their performative and reiterated constitution. This paper advances the thesis that—under the historically specific conditions of neoliberal bourgeois domination and alienation, as theorized by Adorno—*performing* certain forms of identity remains the dominant normative mode of subjectivation, as well as the key to its possible subversive deconstruction. From a dialectical perspective, such deconstruction would operate in both an aesthetic *and* a political dimension. Through a comparative reading of Butler’s concept of performativity and Adorno’s concept of the non-identical, this paper pursues the question of whether a politics of non-identical performativity can disclose the semblance character of the dichotomy of subject and object within contemporary bourgeois society.

Helge Kminek *Goethe University Frankfurt*

## Education, Politics and Negative Dialectics

Works on education issues were part of Adorno’s thought for the whole of his academic career: empirically in the “Authoritarian Personality”, philosophically in the “Theory of Half Education” (1959), and as an unorthodox educator in “Education to Maturity” (1959-1969). The main question which I want discuss with and beyond Adorno is: What are the problems and duties today for a critical theory of education? For this question two points can be separated for the argumentation:

1. What are the (ideological) claims and goals of education?
2. How is the practice of education to be investigated?

Here we can work with the methodology of Adorno: “It [(the essence (of social practice) – H. K.) can be recognized only by the contradiction between what things are and what they claim to be.” But I will be arguing that this methodology of immanent critique has today reached its end-point, above all regarding the issue of educating the next generation about sustainability.

Julia König *Goethe University Frankfurt*

## Education and the Preconditions for the Indifference towards the Suffering of Others: On the Actuality of Adorno's "Education after Auschwitz"

Adorno's reflections on education within the perspective of what he called the "turn to the subject" tend to be systematically underestimated. Taking up this perspective though a decisive element within the perils of authoritarian rule in contemporary societies can be addressed: what happens to "regular" and for the time being seemingly unharmed people's subjectivity in the face of intimidation and the persecution of others? While there is no large scale causality of a certain set of psychological or social preconditions and the willingness to actively take part in the persecution or stay unaffected while witnessing injustices, it is this fragile connection, which is Adorno's reason for turning towards the issue of education. "Education after Auschwitz" is to be conceived as a crucial element of preventing a recurrence of fascism and authoritarianism. Adorno has this in mind, when he demands "one should work to raise awareness about the possible displacement of what broke out in Auschwitz". The political actuality of his reflections raises the burning question of what educational work there is to be done in the face of recent authoritarian developments in Europe and beyond.

Marina Hervás Muñoz *Autonomous University of Barcelona*  
 The concept of "freedom" in Adorno's late writings and lectures

It was in the decade of the sixties when Adorno worked harder on the concept of "freedom", especially in *Negative dialectics* (1966) and in the lecture *Zur Lehre von der Geschichte und von der Freiheit* (1964-1965). The idea of freedom connects with some of the main topics in Adorno's philosophy. This paper attempt to consider briefly this connection with his whole project and to go in depth into what we think are the four ways of understanding freedom in Adorno's philosophy, namely, i) the liberal freedom; ii) the fear of freedom; iii) the formal freedom and iv) freedom and responsibility. Adorno attempted to denounce the inhumanity of the "self" in Kantian terms, because it reflects the internalizing of the social coercion -disguised as freedom- in the conscientiousness. The provisional conclusions of this research lead to the relationship between freedom and utopia, specially taking into account Adorno's conversation with Ernst Bloch (in "Möglichkeit der Utopieheute", 1964) and with Arnold Gehlen (in "Freiheit und Institution", 1965).

James Murphy *DePaul University*

## Integration, Obstinacy, and the Body Politic in Adorno's Negative Dialectics

Adorno insists that late capitalism has "integrated" the proletariat by way of the culture industry, and that this tendency toward integration threatens the Marxist conception of class contradiction. My contention is that Adorno does not understand the term "integration" to mean that class contradiction has been resolved into a higher order essence (like the "state" in Pollock's concept of "state capitalism"), but rather that its poles have shifted to the relationship between the individual and the culture industry in what Adorno calls the "total guilt context." It is therefore not the *proletariat* that has been fully "integrated" but *capital*, and this integration allows for new forms of primitive accumulation focusing not on the expropriation of peasants from the land but rather of individuals' pains and pleasures from their subjective control. The integration of capital therefore presupposes a specific *disintegration* of individuals that facilitates the redeployment of their labor capacities for the purposes of capital accumulation rather than individual satisfaction. My concluding argument will be that it is Kluge and Negt's concept of "obstinacy" that properly reads the image of resistance implied in *Negative Dialectics'* image of the body and its resistance to both the idealist subject and the "integrated" body politic.

Jan Müller *University of Basel*

## Society Fragmented and the Intelligibility of Human Practice

In his early "Theses on the Philosopher's language", Adorno remarks that "without a closed society there is no objective, hence no truly intelligible language" – for in a "fragmented" modern society, social life is inevitably marked by the encounter of subjects who can never be understood to be fully transparent to each other, or even to themselves. Consequently an intelligible language is inconceivable, for homogeneity of use and meaning is unimaginable – leaving philosophy with a threefold dilemma: to succumb to subjectivism, or to skepticism, or seek refuge in the liberal model of conventionalism. With the very idea of rational self-understanding and collective self-governance or association at stake, one might expect that Adorno would argue for a homogenous community as the *telos* of normative and political practices. Yet he does not: Adorno's project renders the possibility of misunderstanding and conflict not an obstacle to be overcome (be it practically or theoretically), but an essential feature of the modern form of life. I shall argue that an adequate idea of thought and practice as mediated by language must hence include a precarious idea of successful modernity – an idea which not only conceives a different "good life", but conceives it differently.

Nishin Nathwani *Harvard University*

## Nature and Supranature in Adorno's Thought

Throughout Adorno's work, nature is a double-edged sword: it announces both the possibility of the subject's freedom from domination, and, too, the imminent danger of the subject's self-annihilation. While it is clear that a conception of nature is crucial for Adorno's larger political vision, it is equally true that throughout his writing, the term is often frustratingly ambiguous. At times, nature appears as the long forgotten materiality shared between humanity and the world in which it is embedded. At other times, nature emerges as the dreaded 'law of self-preservation' that has entrapped modern humanity in its attempt to repress the subject's inner nature. Similarly, Adorno's longing for a utopian condition often appears to be entwined with a remembrance of humanity's 'naturalness,' while at other moments in his writing, the utopian condition seems to depend on an escape from nature's inherent violence. In this paper, I reflect on Adorno's isolated but revealing reference to 'supranature' [*Übernatur*] in *Negative Dialectics* as a lens to critically reconsider the broader role of nature in Adorno's utopian vision, offering an epistemological framework to reconcile the seemingly contradictory uses of the term throughout his writing.

Alain Patrick Olivier *University of Nantes*

## Identity and Difference in a Post-dialectical Theory: On Theodor W. Adorno's Parisian Lectures

How should we think of identity and difference in a post-dialectical way? Within the frame of what Adorno called a "negative dialectics"? Adorno is usually considered as a theoretician of otherness, whereby otherness is taken as the opposite to identity. But what is the relation between the concept of otherness and the concept of difference? I would like to present in my paper the position of Adorno and the way he thought the topics of "identity" and "difference" in his 1961 Paris Lectures, those lectures given at the College de France which are sketches of his "Negative Dialectics". This is part of an edition project of mine in collaboration with the Theodor W. Adorno Archive in Frankfurt am Main. These lectures were given in a philosophical context dominated by the philosophies of Sartre and Heidegger. Adorno's purpose is to criticize the main philosophical conception based on a philosophy of identity, a philosophy of being – in order to make clear its political implications. In the post-World War II situation, this political reflection was connected with an educational project regarding the education of citizen in the time of late capitalism in order to avoid a relapse into barbarism.

Manfred Posani Löwenstein  
**Adorno, Proust and the Problem  
 of Translation**

In the last of his *Short comments on Proust*, Theodor Adorno remarks how a sentence from the episode of Bergotte's death, in the German translation, reminds of Kafka. This observation conceals a tribute to Walter Benjamin; to the translator Benjamin, of course (who didn't have the time, nevertheless, to work on Proust's *La prisonnière*), but also to the philosopher of translation. In his early essay *The Task of the Translator*, Benjamin developed a peculiar theory of translation, based on concepts such as the language of God, redemption, correspondence. But the problem of translation – explicitly suggested by the episode of Bergotte – had another important source: Adorno read Proust through a passage from Hegel's *Aesthetics*. In this paper, I will show how a line from Hegel and one of the most famous passages from Goethe's *Faust* converged in Adorno's interpretation of Proust; and most importantly: how these two extraordinary texts (the passage from Hegel and the one from Goethe) were born from a same dialogue. A philological discovery will thus reveal a hidden path in the German aesthetics from Goethe to Adorno: a path that leads far away from the notions of "autonomy" and "organic unity" of artworks.

Pauli Pylkkö  
**Adorno's Notion of *Begriffslosigkeit*; and  
 its use in understanding man's perplexed  
 relation to nature**

It is plausible that the obsessively exploitative attitude of the Western man toward nature originates from the repressively Oedipal structure of his unconsciousness. Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*, his "social psychoanalysis," and the notion of *Begriffslosigkeit* in particular, can be used to analyze and enlighten this "cultural neurosis". However, Adorno's *utopia of natural history*, i.e. his vision of man's reconciliation with nature, cannot be realized along the lines that Adorno has sketched. First of all, his psychoanalytic approach can help us only to the extent that the exploitation of nature is genuinely neurotic. The residue, namely the normal Oedipal structure, which hardly is innocent either, remains intact. For the second, Adorno's view of non-human nature is highly ambivalent. This is so mainly because his view of tribal or native cultures is quite dismissive. If we follow his universalist (or better: Eurocentric) habit of thinking, emancipation, and the development of subjectivity in particular, equals emancipation *from* nature and thus, self-defeatingly, requires exploitation of nature too. A stronger notion of non-conceptuality, namely *aconceptuality*, is called for. Aconceptuality makes meaning-preserving translations (from a language or culture into another) impossible, and thus subverts the alleged universality of the Oedipus complex. At the aconceptual level, language and nature become inseparably entwined. Consequently, the traditional class antagonism should be replaced by a new one, and some of the privileged achievements of the Western emancipation history must be renounced.

Josh Robinson *Cardiff University*  
**The Aesthetics of Politics**

This paper explores the implications of an Adornian critical aesthetics for theorizations of the relationship between art and political action. In particular, it considers how Adorno's accounts of the artwork (and of particular works of art) provide the resources not for a new kind of political action, but for the rethinking of the conditions of possibility of such action—not for an innovative or strengthened kind of intervention within the terms of the political sphere, but for a fundamental reconfiguration of the political sphere tout court. Focusing on Adorno's incipient writings on the complex relationships between the work of art and the commodity, I examine the consequences of his repeated insistence that artworks are "products of social labour", and in particular its implications for our conception of his account of the radical claim asserted by the autonomous work of art in "Commitment". I analyze the tension that results from the fact that works of art are composed out of elements of empirical (social) reality, and yet come to oppose and stand opposed to this reality, and expound its implications for political praxis today.

Surti Singh *American University of Cairo*  
**Adorno on the Self-Reflection of  
 Philosophy and Art**

In *Negative Dialectics* and *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno discusses the self-reflection of philosophy and art in the context of their exhaustion. Both late works begin with the claim that philosophy and art, having run their course in the mid-twentieth century, must become self-critical; they must turn against their own formations. In my paper, I examine the meaning of Adorno's claim that self-reflection is thought thinking against itself, which differs from both traditional metaphysical and materialist perspectives on reflection. I argue that there is a tension in Adorno's late works: self-reflection is both necessitated by the historical conditions of thinking, that is, thought has no choice but to turn against itself, and at the same time, also seems to be an obligation, an ethical position that consciousness must embrace. I then explore the implications of this tension in the context of contemporary art and politics.

Itay Snir *Tel Aviv University*

## Minima Pedagogia: Education, Thinking and Politics in Adorno

This paper brings together Adorno's thoughts on thinking and education, to develop a new approach to political education. Education, Adorno argues following Kant, must enable students to think for themselves and to break free of the authority of teachers, parents and other adults. Nevertheless, in his discussions of education Adorno says little about the nature of thinking, and the secondary literature on his educational theory addresses this question only cursorily. Important claims on the nature of thinking do appear elsewhere in Adorno's work. From his early writings up to *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno is preoccupied with thinking, sketching the outlines of critical-dialectical thought. Still, these reflections rarely touch upon educational questions, and the Adorno scholarship has yet to establish this link. Unlike studies which read Adorno's educational thought against the backdrop of the history of education and the German *Bildungstradition*, or in relation to art and aesthetics, the present paper brings together Adorno's ideas on education and thinking in an attempt to contribute both to the Adorno scholarship and to the growing field of education for thinking.

Susan Solomon *Brown University*

## Language and Its Others: The Politics of Form in Adorno's Musical Writings and Notes to Literature

The proposed paper turns to the "cryptic style" of Adorno's writing as an inseparable component of his philosophical and political thought to argue that for him the political significance of language lies in its dialectical relationship to its Others, its wordless, material elements, i.e., its musical and visual dimensions. It thus examines Adorno's writings on the relation of the nonverbal, material dimensions of language to its conceptual dimension, its political significance, and its potential for political action. According to Adorno's theory of aesthetics, art becomes linked to its contemporary culture by means of its antagonism to it. In other words, an artwork's material form registers and reflects its surroundings more authentically than its representation does. While this approach to art leaves many readers with the sense that their hands are tied, it actually opens the possibility of discovering where else politics and political resistance may lie: in the material base, the form and style, of the artistic or linguistic medium.

Barry Stocker *Istanbul Technical University*  
**Art, History and Politics in Adorno**

In *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno places art in the context of philosophy of history and politics, so suggesting how to place the aesthetic philosophy present from the earliest part of his intellectual career in his book on Kierkegaard to *Aesthetic Theory*. *Aesthetic Theory* develops the idea of a literature of disillusion challenging history as understood in the prevailing political order. Early on Adorno identified Kierkegaard as the example of an aesthetic subjectivity detached from history. Both Adorno and Kierkegaard give a major role to the emptiness they see in the Fichtean ego, so both are concerned with the limits of an isolated subjective aestheticism. Adorno establishes a position in which Kierkegaard has only engaged in another form of subjective isolation. The exploration of Kant and Hegel in *Negative Dialectics* continues the themes of the Kierkegaard book, but by looking at the background to Kierkegaard. In this way, Adorno continues a project where art is connected with subjectivism, but in ways which should take us to a political limit of hopelessness in which hope might take form, rather than a move into the transcendental.

Krassimir Stojanov *Catholic University of Eichstätt*  
**Education as Social Critique: On Theodor Adorno's Critical Theory of Bildung**

Adorno's most important contribution to educational theory is probably that he does conceptualize education as a process that is inherently, but at the same time negatively tied to social relations and structures. On the one hand, Adorno criticizes the mainstream of the German tradition that detaches *Bildung* from the mechanisms of material reproduction of the society. But on the other hand, according to him, *Bildung* should not be understood as the adjustment to and inclusion into the given society. Quite on the contrary, *Bildung* implies the opening of one's eyes to an objective world of meanings that transcends socially-domesticated stereotypes, and the cultivating of the ability to reflect critically on these stereotypes. Such an opening and cultivating requires a proper *Erziehung*, that is, an emancipatory pedagogical action. However, on Adorno's premise of the total dominance of a trivializing cultural industry which destroys both world-openness and individuality also of the educators, emancipative *Erziehung* is ultimately not possible. Yet this premise seems to be at odds with the fact that within the modern cultural industry there is a number of innovative streams and movements with a lot of utopian energy and with a high potential for social critique.

Andreas Stuhlmann *University of Alberta*  
**Theodor W. Adorno and Hannah Arendt  
 on the Figure of the Refugee**

In 1943, Hannah Arendt published her essay "We Refugees"; the essay was to become one of the building blocks for her 1951 study *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. In 1944, Theodor W. Adorno commenced his *Minima Moralia*, a collection of aphorisms and short reflections dedicated to his friend and collaborator Max Horkheimer which also came out in 1951. Both Arendt and Adorno shared as Jews the experience of violent expulsion from Nazi Germany, both went on to analyse and utilize this experience in their work. As fundamentally different as their views appear, they do complement each other in many regards and find their tertium comparationis in the thought of Walter Benjamin. (Weissberg 2011) Whereas Arendt in her essay speaks of the singular experience of the Jewish refugees, and refers to her own experience, Adorno departs from the experience of his own "damaged life" claiming that the "violence which drove me into exile simultaneously blocked me from its full recognition." Both texts are responses to the emergence of the (Jewish) refugee as a challenge to practical philosophy and the figure of the refugee is the symbol of a broader moral and political crisis.

Both see this crisis as direct consequence of a failure of the project of Enlightenment, a failure of the bourgeois middle class in Europe as the main agent of that project and the downfall of the public intellectuals like themselves. (Bering 1987, Auer 2012)

While Arendt writes an immensely timely political essay that is concerned with the flight of thousands of German and Central European Jews to the USA, she not only uses her own experience and employs anecdotal evidence but also relies on a narrative mode of story-telling, Adorno aims to remove his analysis from his own experience to "sublimate experience into theory" and hence to formulate a wide-ranging critique of the modern industrial form of life. (Benhabib 2012, Isaac 1998)

Christian Thein *Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz*  
**Adorno's Critique of Conceptual Dominance  
 as a Concept for Educational Practice**

In my lecture I interpret Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* as a critical reflection of the subject as the source of experience and knowledge, yet without giving up the non-identity between subject and object. For Adorno, this is not considered to be a theoretical question in the field of epistemologies, but rather additionally and primarily the fundamental task for practical questions, especially in the fields of politics and education. So at first I will show that, *Negative Dialectics* can be viewed as a material guide about the way thinking could correct itself, with regard to conceptual strategies that seem to determine, condition and undermine complex and dynamic objects by general or universal concepts. Secondly, I will illustrate the connection between the theoretical perspective and the relevance of this idea for an emancipator educational practice. This shall allow us to find the strong parallels between Adorno's critique of conceptual dominance in his *Negative Dialectics* and his critique of *Halbbildung* in his works about the problems in education in a wider sense, that remain politically relevant to this day.

Frederic Thomas *University of Leipzig*

## “Scoundrels”, Proper Marriage” and “the Good Generality”- A pragmatic Reading of the Political Significance of Language

The 'linguistic turn' had several impacts on contemporary practical philosophy. One insight is that our reflection of human emancipation is framed by the way we speak. Habermas and, more recently, Brandom give prominence to this idea. Unlike them, however, philosophers inspired by the classic works of Critical Theory skeptically reject the notion that linguistic interaction can be a direct blueprint for a good society. Ironically enough, Adorno and Horkheimer would have objected to this skepticism for a brief moment. Both would have suggested that my address to you involves a practical relation that could literally be regarded as my recognition of you as a “member of the future association of free human beings”. To exemplify this thought, I reread Adorno's “Minima Moralia” in terms of a rather pragmatist approach to language. Specifically, I interpret the concepts of “leniency”, “scoundrels”, and “proper marriage” as metaphoric descriptions of performative attitudes which condition recognition. However, my point presupposes the following: contrary to Habermas' notion of consensus, Adorno deems “the reconciliation of differences” and dissent, as in the notion of “leniency”, constitutive for mutual recognition.

Sebastian Tobon-Velasquez *Goethe University Frankfurt*

## The Nature of Mimesis: An Inquiry into its Normativity in Adorno's Work

In this paper, I aim to show how the concept of mimesis gains a normative character through the adoption of an anthropological viewpoint in its inquiry. I want to show that the concept of mimesis could be interpreted in two ways: on the one hand, from a collective-universal perspective (phylogeny) in analyzing the possibilities of radical transformation of the historical phenomenon of social progress; on the other hand, as a reflection on the main terms, which would describe the process of the formation of individual consciousness (ontogeny), i.e., as the ability to react to a certain collective configuration of society. According to my interpretation, this dual use of the concept of mimesis can be found in Adorno's work, both in its dialectical reconstruction of modernity as well as in his critical attitude towards capitalist societies. This new approach thus demonstrates the normativity of the concept of mimesis through an analysis of its ambiguous nature. Such an investigation might discover whether the concept of mimesis could be thought beyond self-preservation, that is to say, whether the mimetic faculty could be construed so that it could serve as a corrective to the irrational course of history.

Sebastian Truskolaski *Goldsmiths College London*

## Parataxis: Poetics and Politics in Adorno's Aesthetic Theory

Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* contains some striking passages on the "language-like" character of art. As Adorno argues, "artworks become like language in the development of the bindingness of their elements, a wordless syntax even in linguistic works." His estimation follows from the verdict that works of art possess a particular "logicality": a model for 'peace' articulated at the level of a 'nonconceptual, nonrigidified language'. Art *speaks*. But what does it say, or rather, how does it say it? How are we to conceive of its "wordless syntax"? Moreover, what are the political stakes of Adorno's formulation? In this paper I aim to explore these questions with reference to Adorno's particular adaptation of Hölderlin's poetics of parataxis. As I argue, it is through this prism that *Aesthetic Theory* enacts its immanent critique of capitalist modernity.

Alexandre Fernandez Vaz, Franciele Bete Petry  
*University of Santa Catarina*

## Theodor W. Adorno: Teaching as Political Philosophy

Theodor W. Adorno analyzed and denounced the social injustice and contradictions that hinder the human emancipation and the improvement of democracy. Through criticism of Enlightenment Adorno lays emphasis on social transformation, which requires the exercise of critical thinking. In this sense, education may be an effort to overcome *pseudo-culture* and the limits of aesthetic experience enthroned by the schema of culture industry. Education must be engaged in the political necessity of non-repetition of barbarism, in the fight against totalitarianism and social domination in a reified society. Education in Adorno's reflection requires thinking seriously about the task he assigns to teachers. Adorno had not only paid attention to teaching at school, but also maintained a reflexive attitude towards his own university practice. In his Lessons, the philosophical exercise and the analysis and application of the concepts, show that as important as the discussion of ideas, is the way in that one approaches them. This paper analyzes the teaching practice as political praxis in some Adorno's seminars at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University of Frankfurt am Main. It will be possible to observe how Adorno performed his philosophy not only in his writings and speeches, but also in his teaching practice.

Robert Zwarg *University of Leipzig*

## “Absorbing that which is spontaneous”: Artificial Negativity and the difficulties of radical politics

In his essay *Culture and Administration* (1959) Adorno contemplates the „dialectical idea“ that it might be possible to “plan the unplanned” and “absorbing that which is spontaneous”. Almost two decades later, Paul Piccone, the controversial founder and long-time editor of the journal *Telos*, took up this idea, replacing the notions of the “administered” or “one-dimensional” society with the concept of “artificial negativity”. Responding to post-1968 United States, Piccone held that the simple repression of negativity characteristic for the Cold War society was being replaced by a more subtle, liberal and allowing form of domination. The presentation will reconstruct Piccone’s attempt to actualize critical theory, which effectively anticipates ideas proposed by Eve Chiapello and Luc Boltanski in *The New Spirit of Capitalism* under the rubric of “recuperation”. In fact, in contemporary forms of activism, a notion of culture reemerges that can be criticized with both Adorno’s account in *Culture and Administration* and Piccone’s reflections on “artificial negativity”.

