

## Adorno and the Myth of Subjectivity

Andreas Molt

### Introduction

The modern subject is in a state of crisis. Attacks from various sides have finally weakened its domination in modern philosophy. On the one hand French post-structuralists and post-modernists have attacked the notion of the subject and advanced a theory of decentered subjectivity or abandoned the idea altogether. On the other hand the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas has argued against traditional notions of the subject and in his book *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* strongly attacked the French alternative. Some have argued that Habermas's account of the discourse of modernity has been inaccurate in regard to his treatment of the French tradition.<sup>1</sup> One would still hope that Habermas's treatment of his own tradition of critical theory is more accurate. Yet I will show that Habermas's treatment of the philosophy of Theodor W. Adorno, Habermas's former teacher, is also somewhat inaccurate. For Adorno the subject had become the late form of myth,<sup>2</sup> although his actual attitude to the subject is more complex. In this paper I will explicate Adorno's attitude towards subjectivity while defending him against Habermas.

This paper is divided into four main sections. These consist of Habermas's two criticisms of Adorno, and each of these criticisms is followed by a response on Adorno's behalf, questioning Habermas's criticisms. The remainder of this Introduction will be used to reach a preliminary concept of subjectivity.

Subjectivity is a central concept for an understanding of modernity. The idea of modernity is tied to the Enlightenment and I will begin my explication of the concept of subjectivity there. Kant defined the Enlightenment as humanity's release from its self-incurred tutelage, and emphasized the individual's power to use her own reason or in Kant's case his own reason. He formulated the Enlightenment's motto as, "*Sapere Aude*, Have the courage to use your own reason."<sup>3</sup> This idea, that the subject exercise their own reason, is not only one of the most central features of the Enlightenment and thereby modernity, but also of subjectivity. Since the Enlightenment, reason is seen as residing in the subject, not the cosmological order on the whole as Greek metaphysics would have it. This movement from the rational cosmological order to subjective

reason that reached its conclusion in the Enlightenment was rung in by John Locke, but most clearly formulated by Kant,

If intuition must conform to the constitution of objects, I do not see how we can know anything of the latter a priori; but if the object (as object of the senses) must conform to the constitution of our faculty of intuition I have no difficulty in conceiving such a possibility.<sup>4</sup>

Objects are now fully constituted by categories of the subject's reason and this reason is now fully subjectified.

However, modern subjectivity has another important element to it: this is its alleged freedom. An essential part of modern moral and political thought is that individuals are considered to be free to make their own choices. That is what Kant means when he advises us to use our own reason, to examine issues ourselves, and to make informed choices. We can thus take two features of modern subjectivity from this short discussion of Kant. Firstly, the individual has the power for reason within her and can use it to make her own decisions: she is not bound by the rational cosmological order. As a result, secondly, the individual is free to make her own choices. It is these two features that make the individual a subject.

Adorno's philosophy is an attempt to come to an understanding of modern society. For him this includes the need to understand the tradition of the Enlightenment and modern notions of rationality. For Adorno the subject-centered reason of the Enlightenment has deteriorated into an instrumental reason. On this understanding reason cannot set goals, cannot evaluate standards; it is purely instrumental in fulfilling given functions. Reason has become a tool for something else. However, Adorno goes further and questions the autonomy of the subject altogether. People in modern society are passive and unfree. A clear illustration of the general dialectic of Enlightenment is the idea of the culture industry. Adorno defines the culture industry by the fact that "[it] impedes the development of autonomous, independent individuals who judge and decide consciously for themselves."<sup>5</sup> On the one hand, therefore, the culture industry prevents individuals from becoming free subjects, while on the other hand the culture industry would not have been possible without the liberating forces of the Enlightenment. In this way the Enlightenment created both the possibility of subjectivity, and destroyed its realization in modern society.

### **Habermas's Critique of Adorno: The Performative Contradiction**

Habermas's first criticism of Adorno is aimed at Adorno's critique of instrumental reason. In particular, Habermas focuses on the form critique. According to Habermas

Adorno's critique of reason is a totalising radical critique that leads Adorno into a performative contradiction. Here Habermas's lecture on *Dialectic of Enlightenment* forms the central point of his attack on Adorno. His treatment of this book becomes interesting when he begins to inquire into the motives that Horkheimer and Adorno might have had when they set their critique of the Enlightenment so deep that they were no longer able to recognize any of the rational content of cultural modernity.<sup>6</sup>

In order to formulate his criticism of Horkheimer and Adorno Habermas returns to the beginnings of ideology critique. This type of critique aims at disputing the truth of a theory by exposing its untruth. It is not a rival theory about the same object, just a challenge to prevailing theory. It works by showing what role power plays in the dominance of that theory, and thereby questions that theory's validity. The Enlightenment became self-reflective in this way when it struggled to overcome myth and superstition. Horkheimer and Adorno's book has gone one step further: it has become a critique of ideology critique itself. The doubt has been extended to where it includes a doubt of reason itself. Critique has now left its rational foundations behind and instead of standing by the research program Horkheimer and Adorno had themselves proposed, "they pushed for a radicalization and self-overcoming of ideology critique, which was supposed to enlighten the Enlightenment about itself."<sup>7</sup> Their critique thus becomes total: it has turned against its own foundation—reason: the only valid basis of criticism. For Horkheimer and Adorno reason had become instrumental reason in the service of money and power. They describe and criticize this type of reason, but Habermas points out that "this description of the self-destruction of the critical capacity is paradoxical, because in the moment of its description it still has to make use of the critique that has been declared dead."<sup>8</sup> Here Habermas identifies the performative contradiction in Adorno's work. Horkheimer and Adorno should have left at least one rational criterion intact for the critique of all rational criteria in order to justify their critique of instrumental reason. However, the 'uninhibited scepticism' regarding reason inherent in their work becomes too great and they are left without any rational basis for criticism.<sup>9</sup>

However, Adorno does not have to fall into a contradiction. In short, the apparent contradiction arises because Adorno uses reason to criticize reason and thereby removes the foundations of his own critique. First of all I will respond on Adorno's behalf that he is not in fact criticizing reason as such, but just the instrumentalized understanding of it. Secondly, my response will point to the fact that Adorno does have foundations for his critique, as he proceeds by way of immanent criticism.

### **The Critique of Instrumental Reason**

The critique of instrumental reason was Adorno and Horkheimer's project of the

1940s. The main results of this period were three books, the jointly written *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer's *Eclipse of Reason*, and Adorno's *Minima Moralia*. In the last two mentioned books both authors acknowledge each other as the authors of a joint theory. Horkheimer writes, "our philosophy is one."<sup>10</sup>

In the process of subjectivising reason the Enlightenment also changed the nature of reason. Reason has now become reduced to the role of a "general tool which serves for the creation of other tools, purely instrumentally."<sup>11</sup> In Horkheimer's words "[ultimately] subjective reason proves to be the ability to calculate probabilities and thereby to co-ordinate the means with a given end."<sup>12</sup> From this point of view reason changes in its fundamental nature: it loses the capacity to set goals and values, judge and criticize standards and thereby make the existence of an autonomous subject possible. It has become a mere tool to efficiently produce certain ends. Thus, we can see Habermas's question arising in a more detailed way: what on one level may seem to be a powerful critique of modern thought leads to the question, 'How can Horkheimer and Adorno be critical when reason itself, on their account, has lost all critical capacity?' Or, more drastically, 'How do they criticize modern thought, when on their account thought is not critical anymore?'

This criticism rests on a mistake and on a misinterpretation of what their critique of instrumental reason is and is meant to achieve. Their critique is not aimed at reason itself, but at the purely instrumental character reason has taken in modern times. In holding the view that reason has become instrumentalized they are not alone: Max Weber before them already recognized 'purposive-rationality', and Habermas's own views also contain a critique of functionalist reason. It is not even the case that Horkheimer and Adorno want to reject instrumental reason outright. They agree that it has a role to play, but it should only be one part of a fuller conception of reason. What Horkheimer and Adorno are critical of is the fact that the instrumental character of reason has come to predominate, pushing reason's other functions into the background, even denying them. In this sense they see reason itself under threat by instrumental reason. They favour a fuller conception of reason.

This, however, only raises other questions: What is this fuller conception of reason, and why don't they map it out? In *The Eclipse of Reason* Horkheimer does actually outline an alternative conception of reason, he calls it objective reason as the counterpart to subjective, instrumental reason. By Horkheimer's description of objective reason, too, it would seem on a first glance that he and Adorno actually wished to reinstate this type of thinking. On this understanding of reason rationality is found in actions that take part in the rationality of the larger cosmological order. This, however, was the understanding of reason prevalent before the Enlightenment. As the second chapter of *The Eclipse of Reason* demonstrates, Horkheimer and Adorno had no illusions about returning to this understanding of reason. The question remains, however, why don't they map out their preferred model of reason?

An answer to this question can be found by relating the rise of instrumental reason back to the Enlightenment. In *Dialectic of Enlightenment* Horkheimer and Adorno

write that myth could not resist the Enlightenment, because by using any arguments whatsoever myth would already accept the Enlightenment's values and methods of argument.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, if Horkheimer and Adorno began to sketch out a fuller conception of reason they would fall back into an instrumental mode of argument. They would be practising and exemplifying what they are actually attacking. Then and only then would Habermas's charge of a performative contradiction be accurate. Further, this picture of reason would only be their own subjective opinion, quite possibly tainted by personal and socio-historical prejudices. It is for these reasons that Horkheimer and Adorno feel that they are not able to map out a fuller conception of reason as an alternative to instrumental reason. Yet we do not have to satisfy ourselves with the simple argument that Horkheimer and Adorno criticize from this mysterious fuller conception of reason, but simply tell us nothing of it. We can find out more about the foundations of their critique by turning to look at reason itself.

The foundations of critique are to be found in reason itself. A. J. Nuyen has argued that going back to Kant will offer some help in explaining Adorno's conception of reason. Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason* was very much concerned with finding out the limits of reason and thereby critique. For Kant the concept of reason is tied to that of the free agent. Freedom is to be found only in actions which agents set for themselves, actions which are not imposed on them externally. Kant explains, "freedom in thinking means the subjection of reason under no other laws than those it gives itself."<sup>14</sup> For Kant, therefore, reason must not bow before any external goals and ends. Yet this is exactly what happens in modern times under what Horkheimer and Adorno label instrumental reason.<sup>15</sup> In its instrumental understanding reason serves to efficiently fulfil given goals and ends. It is this that Horkheimer and Adorno are critical of and wish to attack. Kant has another requirement, according to which reason must also be the object of critique; otherwise an authoritarianism of reason would result. Kant writes that if reason is not open to critique freedom will be harmed.<sup>16</sup> In this sense we can see that Horkheimer and Adorno actually feel like they are required to criticize instrumental reason. If modern reason is not the object of critique, Horkheimer and Adorno fear, the authoritarian tendencies in modern society will win out completely. But Habermas might still be able to ask Adorno, how does this work? How do you criticize reason using reason? Adorno's answer is the idea of immanent critique.

### **Immanent Critique**

Adorno's major theoretical work is *Negative Dialectics*. For Habermas, all that this book achieves is to explain "why we have to circle about within this performative contradiction."<sup>17</sup> This is a purely negative interpretation of Adorno's book and his

philosophy as a whole. There are, however, positive elements in Adorno's philosophy, and I will draw out one of these in particular.

Of the various elements in Adorno's philosophy, it is his use of immanent critique or negative dialectics that is most interesting here. *Prima facie* it is strange to consider positive elements of a theory, or rather a practice that is so often criticized for its negativity, and sometimes, rarely, even praised for it. Yet the negative character of Adorno's philosophy will be maintained even here where I will draw out some positive characteristics.

The main differences to positive dialectics will be important to keep in mind when elaborating the positive elements of negative dialectics. Firstly, Adorno's negative dialectics focuses on the non-identity of concepts and their objects, not their identity. Secondly, negative dialectics rejects the notion of synthesis. There is no notion of sublation and a proceeding to the next higher form of spirit. In terms of world history Adorno writes "there is no universal history that leads from barbarism to civilization, but there is one that leads from the slingshot to the megaton bomb."<sup>18</sup> Thus there is no synthesis, nor is there any point of final reconciliation where Spirit realizes itself. A final difference that may be pointed out at this stage is that the notion of contradiction of positive dialectics is not the same as the notion of non-identity in the practice of negative dialectics. This brings us to the use of immanent critique or non-identity thinking in Adorno's writings. A brief explication of the idea of immanent critique will be followed by an explanation of how it helps Adorno to avoid the performative contradiction.

Immanent critique makes use of given conceptual systems in order to criticize them. It focuses on the non-identity of concepts and objects. Such a conceptual relationship is given, for example, in a philosophical text or a social phenomenon. By pointing to the non-identity of the concept with the object parts of the object are revealed that were hidden before, when the object was assumed to be understood by the concept. The purely conceptual understanding of an object therefore represents a false totality. Y. Sherratt writes that "[paradoxically], it is the false totalizing claims of conceptual definitions and systems that give us room for critique."<sup>19</sup> Thus, critique becomes possible because identity-thinking, which lies at the basis of instrumental reason, makes the wrong claim to have understood its object. Non-identity thinking will reveal this to be mistaken by taking only what is immanent to the relationship of the subject's concept to the object.

We can thus claim against Habermas that Adorno is not engaged in a totalized critique at all, but rather that he is engaged in a critique of a totalized conceptual system of instrumental reason, which he is able to criticize immanently using the very power of reason which demands the criticism. This brings us to the second limb of Habermas's critique of Adorno. It is set one level deeper. We have established that both Habermas and Adorno are critical of instrumental reason; however, Habermas thinks that Adorno's critique will not lead us to a path of political praxis because of Adorno's unwillingness to map out an alternative to instrumental reason. Axel Honneth writes: "[unlike] Adorno's

philosophy, which, disappointed at the historical loss of emancipatory possibilities, retreated to a hermetic mode of description not immediately connected to political practice, Habermas draws other conclusions.”<sup>20</sup> Habermas, accepting Honneth’s critique of Adorno,<sup>21</sup> turns to his own theory of communicative action. Out of this turn, this ‘paradigm shift’ as he calls it, the second limb of critique arises.

### **Habermas’s Critique of Adorno: The Philosophy of Consciousness**

In his major work *The Theory of Communicative Action* Habermas writes: “the program of early critical theory did not falter on this or that contingent circumstance, but on the exhaustion of the paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness.”<sup>22</sup> His argument against Adorno still revolves around the fact that Adorno does not have a positive theory about what he wishes to replace the instrumental understanding of reason with. Worse, Adorno does not say how he will overcome the domination of instrumental reason in the first place. According to Habermas, Adorno simply does not have the conceptual tools available to him to end the domination of instrumental reason, and to move to an emancipated understanding of reason and society, because Adorno is still caught in the conceptual prison of the philosophy of the subject.<sup>23</sup> The rational core of Adorno’s philosophy, so Habermas claims, can only be found if the paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness is abandoned. This means to leave behind the idea of a subject representing or producing objects.<sup>24</sup> The critique of instrumental reason, according to Habermas, is forced to use this conceptual vocabulary which was created to make it possible to control nature, not to tell an objectified nature what is being done to her. The relationship between subject and object, using this vocabulary, is necessarily construed from the point of view of the controlling subject.<sup>25</sup> For Habermas, if Adorno wants to overcome this type of philosophy he needs to abandon the philosophy of consciousness altogether, in favour of a philosophy based on “mutual understanding between subjects capable of speech and action.”<sup>26</sup> Here we can also learn something of Habermas’s motives. His treatment of the various traditions in modern philosophical thought is always motivated and influenced by the need to set up, protect and make plausible his own program.

### **Adorno on Subject, Object and the Priority of the Object**

This raises the question, is Adorno’s philosophy really steeped in the philosophy of consciousness as much as Habermas claims? If I can show that Adorno’s philosophy is actually a different way out of the philosophy of the subject, rather than just a negative

theory about society, then Habermas's claims will be thrown into doubt. Further, his own communicative turn would not be the only option for critical theory.

The relationship between subject and object as it has become traditional in modern philosophy is described well by Habermas. 'Object' means everything and anything that can be said to exist (*alles Seiende*). The term subject means the ability to relate in an objectifying attitude to such entities (objects), and to appropriate them theoretically or practically. The two attitudes of the subjective mind are therefore representation and action. These two functions belong together: the cognition of states of affairs depends structurally on the possibility of intervening in the world; successful action depends on the recognition of the state of affairs in which it is intervening.<sup>27</sup> This is nothing than a more detailed description of the process that Kant described, cited in the Introduction, namely that the object must conform to the mind, yet is completely separate from the mind. This is the relationship of subject and object as it has come to be understood by the tradition of modern philosophy. Habermas maintains that Adorno is caught in this type of thinking and can therefore not fulfil the tasks of a critical theory of society. However, I will now argue that Adorno is challenging just this very scheme. This discussion can be seen as picking up where the earlier discussion of immanent critique was left.

An essay from the same time as *Negative Dialectic* is interesting here. It opens "When entering considerations about 'subject' and 'object' the difficulty arises in pinpointing what it is that is actually to be talked about."<sup>28</sup> He then goes on to add that these terms are particularly difficult to define, and so decides to take their meaning as it has developed in normal philosophical language. Subject and Object are divided, and it is a matter of subjects knowing objects. Adorno admits that there is some truth to this division, but also some untruth. The division is true in so far as it represents the divided state of humanity, but untrue in that it may not be hypostatized or perpetuated.<sup>29</sup> Adorno himself, however, wishes to declare the preponderance of the object, and its priority.<sup>30</sup> This priority of the object will offer Adorno a way out of the philosophy of the subject.

Adorno reads the history of philosophy as a continuous attempt to raise a first principle on which to rest all knowledge. There have been only very few exceptions such as Hegel and Nietzsche. In modern philosophy the subject has become this first principle. For Adorno the idea of the subject is based on the model of the living individual. However, in modern society this individual is powerless, a mere appendage to the social machinery with little real power. Only a second Copernican Turn can change this situation back to where living individuals have real power to make real decisions again. In the present situation the subject has absolutized itself epistemologically as compensation for its real loss of power.<sup>31</sup> The object is now whatever the subject makes it to be.

By claiming the preponderance of the object Adorno is challenging this priority of the subject. It is, he claims, not simply a matter of subjects knowing external objects. By emphasising the object's role in the act of knowledge he hopes to show that the

relationship of subject and object is not just a matter of the subject's choice. Further, this allows him to preserve the difference between subject and object, their non-identity. Adorno warns that he does not want to destroy the subject, for the object can only be reached by reflection on the subject. Neither is the object to be raised on the throne from which the subject was just removed. It is the hierarchical structure between subject and object that is wrong, not the positions accorded to the parties.<sup>32</sup> What has been primary for modern philosophy will in this way be brought to an equal level with the object. Ontologically the object even has priority: an object can only be thought by a subject, but it will always remain something other than the subject, while subject cannot even be thought without object, it is always at the same time an object itself.<sup>33</sup> Adorno turns to Kant as his example and support. Kant writes "the I think, that has to accompany all my representations,"<sup>34</sup> and Adorno focuses on the possessive pronoun 'my'. This pronoun points, he says, to a possession, to an object among other objects. Moreover, Kant actually held himself to the priority of the object, according to Adorno. For Kant it is not inconceivable that the object is in itself, and that the subjective mediation of the object is due to the insufficiency of the subject, not part of the object. While Kant does not take this any further, he thereby does preserve the otherness of subject and object.<sup>35</sup>

It is this idea of otherness, that the object is something other to the subject, that got lost when the subject reached out to become absolute. Paradoxically, Adorno holds that this otherness of the object can only be reached by subjective reflection. Thus, Adorno is given to say that he wants to break the spell of constitutive subjectivity by force of the subject.<sup>36</sup> Similarly his book *Minima Moralia* is written entirely from the standpoint of subjective experience.

But how does this work? How can subjective experience produce objective knowledge? The subject is not the radical other of the object, it is itself an object, and it is for this reason that it is able to grasp objectivity at all. The subject always already *is*; this is its moment of objectivity. The key is thus the objective core of the subject. Because the subject is object itself it can, indeed must, entrust itself entirely to its own experience. It must proceed 'fearlessly passive' and let its own objective side experience the object. In this passive way, the subject is "the object's agent, not its constituent."<sup>37</sup> By being the object's agent the coercive factor of power and appropriation is removed, and subject and object can be seen as co-operating in an interactive partnership. Knowledge would arise if thought gave itself up to the object, refrain from imposing its own categories on the object, "the very objects themselves would begin to speak under the lingering eye of thought."<sup>38</sup> The result of this is the removal of what Habermas sees the philosophy of consciousness inevitably producing: conflict and domination, distorted knowledge, ideology, untruth. Adorno writes:

In its proper place, even epistemologically, the relationship of subject and object would lie in the realization of peace among men as well as between men and their other. Peace is the state of distinctness without domination, with the distinct

participating in each other.<sup>39</sup>

We need to remember now that Adorno said that the division between subject and object was both true and untrue, true because it reflected the divided state of humanity, untrue because this state may not be hypostatized, perpetuated. Adorno's theory of the priority of the object is a direct response to this. I would even go as far as saying that Adorno is offering us elements of a theory to change the state of affairs, even if very abstractly.

We can thus gather some elements of Adorno's theory of subjectivity and attempt to draw a picture of the subject as it remains in Adorno's philosophy. First of all, and most importantly, it is always an object itself, and is on equal level with the objects. What Habermas identifies as the fundamental problem in Fichte's philosophy, namely that "subject can only be object for one another,"<sup>40</sup> becomes a virtue for Adorno. It is this that allows Adorno to establish a relationship between subjects and the world that is not necessarily one of appropriation. For Adorno the role of the object becomes just as important as that of the subjects. The subject still remains active to the extent that it must begin the relationship to the object, even by means of classification. However, it must then become 'fearlessly passive' to the object, and the object show sides that reveal its non-identity with the original classification. At the same time the original classification may reveal sides of the object where the object is insufficient. A case of that would be to apply the concept of freedom to the object of society: it would be revealed that the object does not fulfil all the qualities of the concept. The important thing to remember about Adorno's subject, however, is that it must not absolutize itself and its concepts: it must remain open to be corrected by the objects. In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* we find the following sentence, "Classification is a condition of knowledge, not knowledge itself; and knowledge in turn dissolves the classification."<sup>41</sup> We thus get a picture of the subject that is humble, that is one that does not impose its ideas on the object. We should, however, note that this is only Adorno's preferred picture of the subject, it is not descriptive of subjectivity in the reality of the twentieth century. However, I believe that Adorno does offer enough elements of a new theory of subjectivity, in order to avoid some of the problems of the dominant conception of subjectivity. Finally, I would just like to remind the reader that Adorno develops this theory of the subject negatively out of a critique of other conceptions of subjectivity, spinning a web of concepts always avoiding definitions that would totalize any of the concepts used.

Considering this, how accurate is Habermas's claim that Adorno's philosophy is still anchored in the philosophy of consciousness? It is clear that Adorno departs from within the conceptual framework of the philosophy of subject and object. However, it is also true that he has deconstructed the traditional meaning of these terms: he has shown how they depend on each other, how one cannot be given priority over the other in the sense of being more important, how the traditional hierarchy of the terms is mistaken.

Further, he has offered elements of a theory in which the flaws of the conventional model are overcome. I would therefore disagree with Habermas that Adorno's philosophy was bound to fail because it remained within the philosophy of consciousness even if that philosophy is exhausted, and emphasize that Adorno may well be leaving this philosophy behind in favor of a philosophy that does not rest on such a first principle. The subject remains in his philosophy but its mythical absolute character is removed.

In this way Adorno may well have a lot to offer as an alternative to Habermas' own theory. That is, Habermas depends on the ideals of communicative discourse that, so he holds, are always already presupposed in communication. Yet the idea that communication is aimed at mutual understanding can become a static first principle of its own. Jean-François Lyotard, who rejected the totalizing potential of the idea of consensus as it is found in Habermas' work of that time, levelled a similar criticism at Habermas.<sup>42</sup> Further, communication is still dependent on the speech of subjects, and in that sense you can still see the philosophy of the subject underlying even Habermas' approach. Simon Jarvis also noted a third point. He argues that Adorno's philosophy of the priority of the object has a wider application than does Habermas' philosophy of intersubjectivity.<sup>43</sup> The latter only extends to communication among subjects, whereas Adorno is specifically concerned with showing how nature and history are not clear opposites, but deconstructs them to show their mutual dependency. Adorno's philosophy extends to all of history and all of the object's nature, whereas Habermas still insists on an instrumental relationship with nature as the only possibility. Further, in this way Adorno may provide some insights into the problems of metaphysics which Habermas simply not answers. Finally, in this way Adorno hopes to step beyond the relationship of domination between subject and object, history and nature, man and his other, external to him as well as internally.

At this point it is worthwhile to note that Adorno's philosophy is not without problems. While I hope to have shown that Habermas' interpretation of Adorno is not accurate enough, and further that a negative interpretation of Adorno is not warranted because his philosophy does have positive aspects, some questions remain. Firstly, there is Honneth and Habermas's point that Adorno's philosophy leaves no route to political praxis. For this I will only indicate here that Adorno can be seen as advancing a different type of practice. This type of practice is one that leaves behind the traditional division between theory and practice, one that focuses on subjective experience and the power of subjective thought, but in which the subject must recognize its own objectivity. More importantly, a question remains as to how Adorno's actual theory of knowledge, only indicated here, actually works. His own proposals seem incomplete at best.

Andreas Molt  
Australian National University

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## Notes

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24. Habermas, *Die Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* page 523, See also 519.
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28. Theodor W. Adorno, "Zu Subjekt und Objekt," *Gesammelte Schriften*, band 10.2, 741.
29. Adorno, "Zu Subjekt und Objekt" 742.
30. Adorno, "Zu Subjekt und Objekt" 746; *Negative Dialectics* 184-185.
31. Adorno, "Zu Subjekt und Objekt" 745.
32. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* 182.
33. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* 184.
34. Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason* B131.
35. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* 187; "Zu Subjekt und Objekt" 753.
36. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* 10.
37. Adorno, "Zu Subjekt und Objekt" 752.
38. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* 38.
39. Adorno, "Zu Subjekt und Objekt" 743.
40. Jürgen Habermas, *Postmetaphysical Thinking*, trans. William Mark Hohengarten (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992) 160.
41. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialektik der Aufklärung* 231.
42. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984) xxv, 63, 65-66. On page 66 Lyotard writes that "consensus has become an outmoded and suspect value."
43. Simon Jarvis, *Adorno: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998) 221.

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