

**Deleuze's and Adorno's Nietzsche: Nietzsche as the  
philosopher of the unconscious and as inconsistent  
nonidentity, dialectical thinker**

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**Politics**

**February 2022**

## Abstract

Deleuze and Adorno are central figures in the currents of thought of poststructuralism and of Critical Theory respectively. The influence of Nietzsche in the thought of the former is open and has never been disputed, although, strangely, it has not been sufficiently investigated yet. The influence of Nietzsche in the thought of the latter, however, is much less recognised.

The thesis explores the influence of Nietzsche in these thinkers. In particular, it explores Nietzsche's appropriation by poststructuralism, as represented by Deleuze, with particular emphasis on Peter Dews' contention that the poststructuralist critique of identity appropriates the irrationalistic side of Nietzsche's critique of identity. Further, the thesis explores Nietzsche's appropriation by Critical Theory, as represented by Adorno, with particular emphasis to our hypothesis, inspired by Peter Dews, Karin Bauer and Gillian Rose, that there is also a rationalistic side in Nietzsche's critique of identity which is appropriated and developed by Critical Theory and Adorno, as well as investigates the transformation by Adorno of Nietzsche's critique of rationality into a critique of domination. Finally, regarding Nietzsche's philosophy, the thesis examines the 'paradox of Nietzsche', which consists in the existence of two contradictory claims about Nietzsche: by Deleuze of Nietzsche being a fierce critic of dialectics, and by theorists like Rose and Bauer of Nietzsche being the originator of Adorno's negative dialectics.

Such a research project is important as an intervention in Nietzsche scholarship because it advances a reading of Nietzsche as an inconsistent nonidentity, dialectical in the Adornean sense thinker, never attempted before; it is important as an intervention in Deleuze scholarship because it challenges the poststructuralist reading of Nietzsche, especially its critique of dialectics; it is important as an intervention in Adorno scholarship because it highlights the rarely mentioned and never explored origin of Adorno's negative dialectics in Nietzsche's thought.

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## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank my supervisors Werner Bonefeld and James Clarke for their continuous support and guidance throughout the duration of this PhD research project. I would also like to thank Kate Tebble for proof-reading the final version of the thesis. Her suggestions were not always followed, and the possible remaining errors are mine.

## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work, and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References. The proof-reader's assistance has been in accordance with the University Guidance on proof-reading and editing.



# Introduction

## The historical conjuncture and the theoretical context

Deleuze and Adorno are pivotal figures at the centre of poststructuralism and Critical Theory respectively. Similarities in their thought have been observed in the literature. For instance, Fred Dallmayr considers Adorno a “precursor of postmodernity” (Dallmayr, 1997, p. 34), Alberto Bonnet observes that in their respective books *Negative Dialectics* and *Difference and Repetition* both “aspired to the same vindication of difference in the face of a crudely “identifying” way of thought and reality” (Bonnet, 2009, p. 46), while David Toole argues that Adorno and Deleuze initially meet in their reflections about Auschwitz, about what Auschwitz means for Enlightenment thought (Toole, 1993, p. 228). Our thesis is offered as groundwork to a wider project which takes into account and tries to explore the theoretical and political repercussions of the totalitarian experiences of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Nazi Germany and Stalinist USSR, culminating in the unfathomable horror of the concentration camps. The political repercussions are still very much alive for us today as part of our collective political unconscious which blocks even the tiniest speck of thought regarding the possibility of a radical reorganisation of social life. The theoretical repercussions consist in what both Deleuze and Adorno point to with their finger, namely, Enlightenment’s identity thinking as the complicit perpetrator. In this way they participate to the still uninvestigated, real phenomenon of the ‘explosion’ towards nonidentity in the thought of the second half of 20th century, that includes philosophers as different as Sartre (his concepts of ‘facticity’ and ‘transcendence’ and their dialectic, (see Flynn, 2006)), Derrida and Castoriadis (his critique against “ensemblistic-identitary logic” (see Curtis, 1997, pp. 290-318)). This phenomenon is largely unexplored as such even if it represents the only promising response that philosophy has to offer for the theoretical ills that ache western civilization and Enlightenment reason. And at the centre of this explosion stands the controversial, troubled and troubling, thought of Friedrich

Nietzsche to which, again, both currents of thought, poststructuralism and Critical Theory, resort for a solution. However, as Bonnet insightfully observes, “while Deleuze called for the rejection of dialectics in order to think “a concept of difference without negation,”<sup>1</sup> Adorno called for the construction of negative dialectics conceived as a “consequent conscience of difference.”” (Bonnet, 2009, p. 46).

### **Critical Theory and Poststructuralism: Adorno and Deleuze**

If we were to give a concise definition of Critical Theory we would say that it is defined by two main interests: the first is to address the positivist turn in Marxism but also, more broadly, in all social sciences, and the second is to advance the emancipation, in contradistinction to the reproduction, of society (Horkheimer, 2002, p. 207). The body of work produced under its wings is quite loose and has many variations, but we think that all the members of the Frankfurt Institute are united by these two interests.

Critical Theory was born out of the initiative of Max Horkheimer, Friedrich Pollock and Felix Weil who, under the “generous financial support of Weil’s father, Hermann”, a wealthy grain merchant, founded the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt am Main in 1923 (Abromeit, 2018, p. 20). Its first, in effect, director (1924-1929) was Carl Grunberg, who gave the Institute’s research programme a clearly Marxist orientation (Held, 2004a, p. 29). However, it was only after Horkheimer succeeded Grunberg in the directorship of the Institute (1931-1958) that the distinctive brand of theory we today call Critical Theory was formed. With the ascension of Hitler to power in 1933 the Institute members, most of whom were Jews, fled to the United States of America only to return to Frankfurt in 1949. Adorno succeeded Horkheimer in the directorship of the Institute in 1958, a position he retained until his death in 1969.

It is customary to distinguish between three generations of critical theorists: in the first generation belong Horkheimer, Adorno and those around them (Herbert Marcuse, Leo Löwenthal, Otto Kirchheimer, Franz Neuman et. al.); in the second generation belongs Jurgen Habermas and

those influenced by him, while in the third generation the main author is Axel Honneth (Renault, 2018, p. 2).<sup>2</sup> The editors of the *SAGE Handbook of Frankfurt School Critical Theory* challenge this view and argue that there are fundamental departures of the ‘second’ and ‘third’ generation critical theorists from the ‘founding fathers’ of the ‘first’ generation which do not justify a linear continuity approach in the development of the Frankfurt School (Best, et. al., 2018, p. 9). This is a valid argument and we argued in a similar vein in this Introduction and in Chapter 4 when we will claim that Habermas’ argument about a “performative contradiction” in Adorno’s thought is in fact his inability to understand or reluctance to accept Adorno’s negative dialectics, a constituent part of Critical Theory.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, however, we think that a Marxian-communist reformulation of the Enlightenment project, as the leading project of the modern age and as a project of emancipation from the natural and social constraints of want and social heteronomy, presents certain orientational advantages for the understanding of modern history and for political action, and should not be abandoned to the bourgeois<sup>4</sup> or Habermas’ idealist formulations, as the editors or the ‘*SAGE Handbook*’ seem inclined to do (Best, et. al., 2018, p. 9).<sup>5</sup>

What is more, we think Held is right to say that “Critical Theory...does *not* form a unity”. However, he goes on to say that Critical Theory “does not mean the same thing to all its adherents” (Held, 2004b, p. 12). We have to keep in mind that Held is a representative of the continuity approach, considering Habermas, who obviously has a different understanding of Critical Theory, as Critical Theorist proper. Held’s other claim, that “[t]o the extent that one can legitimately talk of a school, it is only with reference to Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Löwenthal and Pollock...” (Held, 2004b, p. 12) is also debatable. The editors of the ‘*SAGE Handbook*’, while agreeing that there are differences between the theorists of the early Frankfurt School, propose a formal criterion of “coherence”: the journal *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, the official organ of the Institute for Social Research “which gave coherence to what in fact was an internally diverse and often disagreeing group of heterodox Marxists” (Best, 2018, p. 1). This is a more open understanding of what a School

could mean that allows disagreements to exist in a body of work, which does not adhere a strict dogma, without losing the character of a common direction and some basic presuppositions.<sup>6</sup>

There are two key moments in the development of Critical Theory in this sense. The first, is the publication of Horkheimer's essay *Traditional and Critical Theory*, published in the *Zeitschrift* in 1937, which sets the theoretical framework and basic tenets of Critical Theory;<sup>7</sup> the second is the departure from the Institute of Erich Fromm in 1939, and his 'replacement' as the closest collaborator of Horkheimer by Adorno, who arrived in the USA in 1938. Fromm, in essence, brought the synthesis of psychoanalysis and Marxism into the theoretical perspective of the Institute during his close collaboration with Horkheimer that dates back since 1926.<sup>8</sup> His departure, under "acrimonious circumstances" (Durkin, 2018, p. 55) coincides with the repudiation by the Institute of Humanism (Jay, 1972, p. 291).

However, Critical Theory does not only move away from Marxist Humanism but also, like poststructuralism, it develops having in the background the protracted crisis of orthodox Marxism. As a commentator put it, "[t]he problematic which sparked a Critical Theory of the modern form was the demise of the working class as an organ of appropriate revolutionary knowledge and action coupled with the rise of fascism and the emergence of Stalinization" (Rasmussen, 1996, p. 17). Although this is an aspect of the crisis of Marxism which certainly played its part in the formation of Adorno's view that the moment for the realisation of philosophy "was missed", it is not the part of the crisis against which critical theorists fought. As Hoff argues, the principal aim was the "positivist turn in Marxian thought" (Hoff, 2018, p. 1145; similarly in Memos, 2018, p. 1315). With their theoretical elaborations Critical Theorists tried to navigate away from the positivistic degeneration of orthodox Marxism without losing sight of the indispensable for the understanding and change of society Marxian insights. However, the crisis also left its mark on the reception of Critical Theory which includes both a lamentation for the "departure from Marxism" (Bottomore, 2004, p. 27)<sup>9</sup> and a regret for the retention of Marxian insights (Rasmussen, 1996, p. 19). The 'lamentation from the right' reveals the liberal positions of the lamenter rather than real

weaknesses of Horkheimer's essay. It is characteristic of the uncomfortable path Critical Theorists tried to walk, which would allow of them coming under fire from both sides of the political spectrum. However, most commentators who do not have an orthodox understanding of Marxism recognise the link between Critical Theory and Marxism (Wiggershaus, 2004, p. 3; McCarthy, 1994, p. 13; Renault, 2018, p. 1). It is only Bottomore that we know of putting forward the bold claim to the contrary but surely there are others.

Apart from Marx and Freud, other influences from which Critical Theory drew and are widely recognised are Kant,<sup>10</sup> Hegel, Weber, and Lukacs, "among others" (Held, 2004b, p. 13). As Renault notes:

"To begin, let's recall that the deep influence exerted by Marx on the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School goes without saying. The program of the first generation of the Frankfurt Critical Theory was mainly to draw on Hegel to support Marx's philosophical views and to use Freudian and Weberian concepts and theses in order to re-actualize his social theory." (Renault, 2018, p. 2)

And in the conclusion of his study, he adds that "Hegel ... has been decisive in the first and third generation of the Frankfurt school." (Renault, 2018, p. 77). We should note here that in these accounts, as is also the case with the monumental *The SAGE Handbook of Frankfurt School Critical Theory*, the Nietzschean influence is neglected. And if Hegel's influence is deemed decisive it is precisely the Nietzschean influence that marks the limit of the Hegelian influence, the difference of at least Adorno (and to some extent perhaps Horkheimer) from Hegel, as it will become evident from our thesis (see pp. 192-193).

On the other hand, poststructuralism is also a loose term used more for our own convenience than to denote a uniform theory. It is widely used in the English-speaking world to designate a current of thought that emerged in France in the 1960s, slightly later and for some time developing parallelly to structuralism. The main exponents of this current of thought are customarily considered to be Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and Jean-Francois Lyotard. Most

of them would reject this grouping together. Indeed, it is a challenge to try and pinpoint what exactly is that could hold this group together: although it is obvious that there are strong affinities that bind the thought of all the main exponents, there are also fundamental differences. For instance, while for Derrida, Foucault and Lyotard metaphysics is contemptible and something they try to overcome, Deleuze embraces ontology (Choat, 2012, p. 130), which is a branch of metaphysics, and, as we will argue, tries to construct the ontology of difference, in contradistinction to the hitherto ontology of identity. Overlooking this difference is what allows Hardt to claim, based on Deleuze, that poststructuralism in general, is not anti-foundationalist (Hardt, 1993, p. xv). Derrida and Deleuze, in particular, differ in other important respects such as that while for Derrida everything is a text and there is no outside the text, Deleuze tries to exit the text, “to execute lines of escape into extra-textual practice (not to interpret the word, Marx would say, but to change it!)” (Schrift, 1995, p. 63); moreover, according to Schrift again, while Deleuze is willing to utilise binary concepts (Schrift, 1995, p. 66) Derrida is a fierce critic of them (Schrift, 1995, pp. 15-17).<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps the task of delineating poststructuralism would be assisted if we tried briefly to demarcate its similarities and differences to structuralism. So, according to West, both share anti-Hegelianism and anti-Marxism (West, 2004, p. 154);<sup>12</sup> according to Choat, both share the critique of humanism and of teleology, both have been charged as idealist currents of thought and both share a critique of the rationalist subject (Choat, 2012, p. 16); Schrift would add that poststructuralists inherit from structuralism “insights concerning the workings of linguistic and systemic forces” (Schrift, 1995, p. 5), but:

“where the structuralists responded to existentialism’s privileging of consciousness and history by eliminating them both, the poststructuralists ... reinvolve the question of the subject in terms of a notion of constituted-constitutive-constituting agency situated and operating within a complex network of socio-historical and intersubjective relations.” (Schrift, 1995, pp. 5-6).<sup>13</sup>

More differences are detected by Choat who adds that where structuralism looks for the deep, invariant, quasi-ahistorical structures poststructuralism employs perspectivism, breaks with the depth/surface model of the orthodox structuralist tradition and concedes that there is only one reality; instead of structuralism's search for general laws, we have poststructuralism's sensitivity to the event; instead of the former's synchronic analysis of history, we have the latter's rejection of synchronic analysis without lapsing into teleology or crude historicism; while the former thematises language in Saussurean terms, the latter thematises it in Nietzschean (Foucault), Wittgensteinian (Lyotard) or Hjelmslevian (Deleuze) terms (Choat, 2012, pp. 15-16).

However, there are two more decisive differences of poststructuralism from structuralism which, at the same time, hold the loose body of work of poststructuralism together: a) the shared view about the bankruptcy of the (orthodox) communist programme for the emancipation of society, i.e. the crisis of Marxism, and b) the means to counter this crisis, namely the resort to Nietzsche. Regarding the first element, the aspect of the crisis of Marxism that is decisive for poststructuralism is the alleged disappearance of the working class. This manifests in Deleuze's neglect of the issue of class and class struggle in his theorising and in his bold or outrageous statement in *Anti-Oedipus* that "from the point of view of capitalist axiomatic there is only one class, a class with a universalist vocation, the bourgeoisie" (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p.275). As Fredrick Jameson contents in this respect in his introduction to Lyotard's *The condition of postmodernity*: "More orthodox Marxists will agree with the most radical post- or anti-Marxist positions in at least this, that Marxism as a coherent philosophy...stands or falls with the matter of social class" (in Lyotard, 2001a, p. xiv). On our part we will add that it is surprising the extent to which the poststructuralists 'fell' for perhaps the greatest deception in the history of ideas, the deception, that is, that "communism=Soviet Union=totalitarianism=Marxism".<sup>14</sup> Regarding the second element, we generally agree with Schrift when he writes:

"...what is called "poststructuralism" is not a monolithic theory with a rigid and uniform set of shared assumptions or axioms. It is instead a loose association of thinkers whose

works draw from several sources, one of the most significant of which...is Nietzsche.

(Schrift, 1995, pp. 6-7)

From the point of view of our own project we would say that one more defining feature of poststructuralism is its partaking in this explosion of interest for and critique of identity thinking, either as critique of the humanistic, rational subject from an irrationalistic point of view, or as critique of Enlightenment, traditional identity logic. Both directions of critique animate what we consider a common tradition of critical thought in the post-WWII era.

A last and all-important point for the understanding of what poststructuralism is, is to make the distinction between poststructuralism and postmodernism. Although the two currents of philosophical thought are closely related in the sense that the postmodernist current draws from the well of poststructuralism for most of its theoretical insights (let us not forget that Lyotard provided the “manifesto” of postmodernism with his *The postmodern condition*, 1979 – Dallmayr, 1997, p. 39) the two differ in two decisive respects: the poststructuralists do not abandon the project of emancipation altogether, despite their fierce critique of it and of the Enlightenment, but, in a move that resembles that of Adorno, they wage their critique in the name of emancipation. The postmodernists do abandon it. As West argues:

“But these poststructuralists”, [the word is about Derrida, Foucault and, we add, Deleuze, NK], “remain unwilling to make the final break with the Enlightenment project...But equally clearly, the ideas of both thinkers prepare the ground for postmodernism. It is a relatively small step from the uncomfortably sceptical positions they both adopt to a more whole-hearted rejection of modernity and Enlightenment.”

(West, 2004, p. 191).

The distinction is important because the bulk of the Marxist response to poststructuralism up till now fails to discern it and thus, unnecessarily misses the opportunity to profit from the part of the poststructuralist critique that is valid, to pinpoint its actual mistakes in a way that poststructuralists can understand or even accept, and thus fails to find the common ground in the resistance to



capital.<sup>15</sup> The political motives of the Marxist's lack of distinction between poststructuralism and postmodernism, and the second decisive difference between these two currents of thought, is picked up superbly by Choat:

“Incorporating post-structuralism into postmodernism, however, serves a useful purpose for critics: blurring or collapsing the distinction between the two allows the poststructuralists to be associated with various trends that have little to do with post-structuralism...identifying Foucault and the other post-structuralists as postmodernists assimilates them into this general espousal of consumerism – whereas in fact, as we shall see, each poststructuralist calls on Marx as a critic of capitalism.” (Choat, 2012, p. 30).

Moreover, it is worth mentioning Foucault's acknowledgment that if he had read Critical Theory earlier in his career he would have avoided many mistakes and that he places himself in the same tradition as Critical Theory (Dews, 1986, p. 29).

Indeed, there have been some studies devoted to the relation between Critical Theory and poststructuralism which recognise the affinity.<sup>16</sup> Attention has initially been given to the relation between Adorno and Derrida (Ryan, 1989 [1982]; Nägele, 1983; Dews, 1986;), or Habermas and poststructuralism (Dews, 2007 [1987]; Poster, 1996 [1989]; Benhabib, 1990), and only later in Adorno and Deleuze (Gandesha, 1991; Toole, 1993; Bonnet, 2009). This is understandable since deconstruction offers the most obvious and close affinity with Adorno's negative dialectics, and Habermas at the time was considered to represent the latest development in Critical Theory's tradition, while the affinity between Adorno and Deleuze is not so readily discernible. Still, the affinity and difference between Adorno and Deleuze is most visible and productive for the understanding of the thought of both on the same themes that Nägele observes the affinity between Adorno and Derrida is visible, namely, the critique of identity and of subjectivity (Nägele, 1983, p. 69). The difference is that unlike the relation between Adorno and deconstruction, where the best place to start the investigation is, allegedly, the thought of Heidegger (Nägele, 1983, p. 67),

the relation between Adorno and Deleuze becomes only visible if we start, as we will show in the course of our thesis, with the study of Nietzsche and his role in the thought of both of them: if their difference is greatest on the issue of the former's extreme critical negativity and poststructuralism's "happy positivism" of affirmation (Nägele, 1983, pp. 65-66), or on the issue of Adorno's persistence on the objectivity of truth versus poststructuralism's perspectivism (Toole, 1993, p. 239), it is the Nietzschean link which illuminates these differences.

A comparative analysis of Adorno's and Deleuze's thought on Nietzschean grounds will show how and why postmodernism ends up celebrating difference, "multiplicity and heterogeneity but can no longer criticise it" (Benhabib, 1990, p. 1448). It will also, hopefully, make visible that Poster's, anti-Habermasian, poststructuralist-leaning, call for a contextualisation of theory which will serve "to destabilize the concept of reason in its Enlightenment form, to maintain a tension between discourse and situation, truth and fiction, theory and politics" (Poster, 1996, p. 5) describes exactly what Adorno's negative dialectics already offers, save contextualisation which is required in Poster's approach because he embarks from the basis of perspectivism.

### **Deleuze's Nietzsche in the literature**

It is surprising that in Deleuzian literature more attention has been given to the relation between Deleuze and Marx than to the relation between Deleuze and Nietzsche. Although there are a few books that deal exclusively with the former<sup>17</sup> we have not managed to locate any monograph or collective work that deals with the latter.<sup>18</sup> This is surprising given the central role that Nietzsche plays in Deleuze's work.

The literature that does exist is characterised by what characterises Nietzsche literature in general,<sup>19</sup> namely, the absence, with only one remarkable exception, of the slightest trace of suspicion that Nietzsche may in fact be a dialectical in the Adornean sense philosopher. This, of course, does not come as a surprise: the importance of Deleuze's place in the history of philosophy is marked, to a large extent, by his absolute antithesis to Hegel and fierce critique of dialectics, both

of which, according to his own admission, are what he “detested above all” (cited in Hardt, 1993, p. x).

Thus, most commentators agree that the importance of Deleuze’s book *Nietzsche and Philosophy* is the spurring of enthusiasm for Nietzsche in France in the 1960s and 1970s (Patton, 2000, p. 4, Shrift, 1995, p. 14, Pecora, 1986, p. 35, Bogue, 1990, p. 404), and they put the emphasis on the importance of Deleuze’s appropriation of Nietzsche’s thought in various elements, depending on the angle or the book under discussion: its anti-Hegelian, anti-dialectic edge when the talk is about *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (Bogue, 1990, p. 404, note 10; Shrift, 1995, p. 60); the use of Nietzsche for the realisation and radicalisation of Kant’s critique of values, mentioned by Deleuze himself, when the talk is about the *Difference and Repetition* (Patton, 2000, pp. 59-60); the investigation of a Nietzschean version of the problem of obedience when the talk is about the common with Guattari works of Deleuze (Due, 2007, p. 80). In somewhat more general terms, if part of Deleuze’s project is the advancement of a materialist discourse in philosophy, Nietzsche’s will to power provided the substantive element of it (Hardt, 1993, p. xiii), or, if Deleuze aims at a critique of the entire western philosophical tradition, he follows the steps of Nietzsche in criticising concepts such as universality, unity, transcendence, reality, innateness, apriorism, binary oppositions and dichotomous thinking etc. (Zayani, 1999, p. 320). None of these commentators ever thinks or is willing to question Deleuze’s argument of Nietzsche as an anti-dialectical thinker, and this is precisely what we are going to do in Chapter 4.

The exception to this rule we mentioned earlier is the article by Vincent P. Pecora, *Deleuze’s Nietzsche and poststructuralist thought*. There Pecora makes a series of claims: a) that although Deleuze uses Nietzsche to subvert Hegel, dialectics persists in Deleuze’s own thought through “an opposition (and not simply a difference)...between dialectics and the play of difference” (Pecora, 1986, p. 42); b) that he managed to eliminate in his reading of Nietzsche any element of “desire for” and “struggle against” because they represent for Deleuze “the oppositional, dialectical, negating character of resentment”, which are, Pecora claims, so evident in Nietzsche’s thought

(Pecora, 1986, p. 44); c) that the subversion of the western philosophical tradition, which Deleuze claims is effected by Nietzsche's thought, is achieved through "the dialectic of reason as power" (Pecora, 1986, p. 46). These are all interesting but weak claims: a) Deleuze makes the distinction between a dialectical and non-dialectical negation in *Difference and Repetition*, b) desire plays a central role in Deleuze's *Anti-Oedipus* as transfiguration of Nietzsche's will to power, and c) the dialectics of reason as power and its subversive function, highlighted also in Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, is neither the only nor the most important form of dialectics that can be found in Nietzsche's thought. However, Pecora's article, with the claim that there may be a dialectics in Nietzsche's thought forms a kind of precedent to our own, much more radical, argument that Nietzsche is the originator of Adorno's negative dialectic and is himself a dialectical thinker in this very sense.

### **Adorno's Nietzsche in the literature**

What is the state of the literature in relation to the connection between Adorno and Nietzsche? It is helpful for the understanding of the evolution of the Adorno-Nietzsche relation in the literature to have an account in chronological order. An early study on Adorno's thought by Susan Buck-Morss, *The origin of negative dialectics*, 1979 [1977], stands out because it is the only study we know of that credits Walter Benjamin with exercising the decisive influence in the inception of Adorno's negative dialectics. Gillian Rose, in her excellent introduction in Adorno's thought, *The melancholy science*, 2014 [1978], steers the issue in the right direction when she observes the Adorno-Nietzsche connection on the issue of nonidentity by saying that Adorno "is perhaps the only neo-Marxist to make Nietzsche's criticism of logic (identity) into social criticism" (Rose, 2014, p. 29). However, she drops the matter on this level and neither analyses how Adorno achieves that nor the full depth of Nietzsche's influence in the formation of Adorno's nonidentity thesis; it is a gap in her argument that creates room for our thesis which will try to highlight the Nietzschean influence in Adorno. Another relatively early essay by Peter Pütz, (1981), notes Adorno's own reflection that

“there are more points of contact with the motivating experience of dialectics to be found, long after Hegel, in Nietzsche’s statement: nothing happens in reality that would strictly correspond to logic” (Pütz, 1981, p. 110). Martin Jay in his *Adorno*, (1984), although he recognises the influence of Nietzsche in the critique of mass culture, metaphysics and the dialectic of enlightenment, i.e. the critique of enlightenment rationality from the point of view of the critique of domination, he is missing the negative dialectic link. Habermas, is another thinker who stresses, in a way, Nietzsche’s influence on Adorno, and in fact considers Adorno’s thought to be a Nietzschean revision of Marx (Jarvis, 1998, p. 64). Although this observation moves in the right direction, his account suffers from a conspicuous absence of dialectical thinking, in the Adornean sense of dialectics as nonidentity. This absence is documented in Habermas’ important work *The philosophic discourse of modernity*, 2007 [1985], through his charge regarding a “performative contradiction” from which Adorno and Foucault supposedly suffer: this contradiction consists in “using the tools of reason to criticise reason” (Habermas, 2007, p. xv), or performing the critique of ideology by use of “the same tools which it has declared false” (Habermas, 1982, p. 22). This is how Habermas understands (or rather, fails to understand – a strange failure considering his personal proximity to Adorno) Adorno’s thesis in *Negative Dialectics* that nonidentity thinking or negative dialectics amounts to the effort to “think against our thought”. He is unable to fathom or willing to accept how it is possible to criticise traditional identity logic as harshly as Adorno and Nietzsche do and still employ it as indispensable part of the dialectical process of argumentation. How this becomes possible and what is required on the part of the thinking subject in order to become able to do so we hope to show in the course of our thesis. Here will suffice to indicate that Habermas’ charge of a performative contradiction in Adorno is a charge from the point of view of identity thinking against the critique of this identity thinking by nonidentity, dialectical thinking. Simon Jarvis, in his much later and informative *Adorno: a critical introduction*, (1998), seems to agree with Habermas’ stress on Nietzsche’s influence in Adorno and puts the emphasis on Adorno critique of rationality and domination, but he is still missing the link between Nietzsche’s critique of identity thinking and Adorno’s negative dialectics.

The only work we know of in the English literature that attempts an extended investigation of the influence of Nietzsche on Adorno is Karin Bauer's *Adorno's Nietzschean Narratives* (1999). However, even in this case, the decisive connection between Adorno and Nietzsche, as between the theoretician of negative dialectics and the originator of it, is not investigated in any depth and we are left just with the above-mentioned statement about the affinity between Nietzsche's explication of concept formation and Adorno's critique of identity thinking, and Adorno's partial endorsement of Nietzsche's thesis that truth is "entangled to error" (Bauer, 1999, pp. 84, 92). The above affinity had already been observed by Peter Dews who notes that "Nietzsche's account of the manner in which real, particular leaves come to be seen as poor imitations of the concept 'leaf', captures precisely that process which Adorno refers to as 'identity thinking'" (Dews, 1986, p. 37). His thought too, however, stops short of recognising Nietzsche's role in the inception of Adorno's negative dialectics, creating, like Rose's argument, just enough room for our thesis which will venture to highlight the Nietzschean influence in the inception of Adorno's negative dialectics.

In more recent scholarship, Cook mentions that "Adorno's work has been variously described as Nietzschean, Weberian, Hegelian, idealist, Marxist and materialist" (Cook, 2011, p. 7), but elsewhere, when she comes to analyse those thinkers who exerted the most significant influence in Adorno's thought, she only mentions Kant, Hegel, Marx and Freud, 'forgetting' Nietzsche (Cook, 2014, pp. 21-37). Similarly, Alison Stone does not think it essential to add in her treatment of the relation of Adorno and Hegel on dialectics (Stone, 2014) considerations concerning Nietzsche. This may be because she thinks, explicitly contrary to Habermas, that Adorno is not a Nietzschean (Stone, 2014, p. 1131, note 11). This is a misguided assessment in our view, because, as we will try to show in this thesis, Adorno's initial impetus in his critique of Hegel's dialectics is inspired by Nietzsche's nonidentity thinking and because we have Adorno's own admission that "of all the so-called great philosophers I owe [to Nietzsche, NK] the greatest debt – more even than Hegel" (cited in Plass, 2015, p. 382). Finally, Finlayson, in his sophisticated but rather confused elegance, argues that "from about 1950 onwards, Adorno begins to doubt the viability of immanent criticism ... as an

approach to critical social theory, and that these doubts move him to problematize the conception of criticism that he had hitherto somewhat naively endorsed, and to explore alternatives to it.” (Finlayson, 2014, p. 1157). His argument is based on the view that immanent critique in either Hegel or Adorno is different from their respective dialectics. Had he dropped this assumption he would have seen that Adorno’s *Negative Dialectics* and *Aesthetic Theory* mark nothing of the sort of “doubt” about immanent critique, but employ heavily negative dialectics, which is synonymous to it. And this is a failure that could perhaps have been avoided had the Nietzsche link on the articulation of Adorno’s negative dialectics been understood.

Very recently, we have a renewed interest in Nietzsche’s influence on Critical Theory as the publication of a conference proceedings in the collective volume *Nietzsche and critical theory: affirmation, animosity and ambiguity*, 2020, shows. However, in this case too, only a relation between Adorno’s nonidentity and Nietzsche’s Dionysian and Apollonian is observed (Ludovisi, 2020, p. 457).

As it is probably evident by this account of the state of the literature, we think that the influence of Nietzsche on Adorno’s thought is more than significant, we would say decisive, as much as it is also unrecognised. It consists in providing the inspiration for this sublime moment of self-reflection in the modern history of thought, self-reflection of enlightenment thought to be more precise, that tries to digest the historical experiences of totalitarianism in Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union and the semi-totalitarian effect of culture industry in the West, and draw the appropriate conclusions for tracing a way out of the self-destructive spiral in which modern history and Enlightenment thought are engulfed.<sup>20</sup> This inspiration has two main branches: the critique of Enlightenment rationality as critique of domination and the critique of rationality as critique of identity thinking, Adorno’s theory of negative dialectics, both of which we will explore in Chapter 3. The insufficient recognition of Nietzsche’s influence on Adorno in some quarters is partially due to the false impression that Adorno’s engagement with Nietzsche, in terms of style and content, is most evident in *Minima Moralia* (Plass, 2015, p. 381; Nelson, 2008, pp. 350-352). Our thesis will

challenge this perception arguing that there is a much more significant as well as inconspicuous influence that runs through Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and *Negative Dialectics*, consisting in the transformation of Nietzsche's critique of rationality from the point of view of will to power into a critique of the entwinement of rationality and domination and in providing in a nascent form the basic elements and brilliant examples of thinking in a negative dialectical way.

### **Nietzsche scholarship: what is Nietzscheanism?**

Nietzsche scholarship had many adventures, went through many stages at different times and different countries. He remained unrecognised as a philosopher while he still had control over his mental faculties and his fame was only starting to pick up when he collapsed in Turin in 1889.

As we learn from the astonishingly comprehensive study of Steven Aschheim *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany: 1890-1990*, Georg Brandes gave his now famous lectures on Nietzsche's "aristocratic radicalism" in 1888 in Copenhagen, Denmark (Aschheim, 1994, p. 17). In Germany, by the end of WWI having some knowledge of Nietzsche "was virtually mandatory" for the intelligentsia (Aschheim, 1994, p. 19). The range of Nietzsche's influence is immense. He influenced psychoanalysts like Carl Jung and Alfred Adler while it has been suggested that Freud completed, in some respects, Nietzsche's project (Aschheim, 1994, pp. 55-56). In sociology, a whole series of names has been influenced by Nietzsche including figures as different as Ferdinand Tönnies, Georg Simmel and Max Weber, as well as the philosopher of history Oswald Spengler. The influence spilt over into the general public and various semi-religious Nietzsche cults were formed. This forced authors and publicists from the entire political spectrum – conservatives, liberals and socialists – to intervene and take a stand for or against. For Marxism in particular, Franz Mehring set the tone of the official Marxist view on Nietzscheans as "bourgeois pseudoradicals" (Aschheim, 1994, p. 44) and later Lukacs would amplify this view establishing Nietzsche as the "irrationalist spokesman of reactionary bourgeoisie and an inherently protofascist thinker" (Aschheim, 1994, p. 4). There is not much point to try and follow the vicissitudes of Nietzsche reception in Germany through the pages



of Aschheim's fascinating, as much as informative, presentation. His study is more a study in the history of politics and culture rather than in the history of philosophy which is more relevant to our project. What we should say for the years after WWI is that in Germany nuanced Left and Right Nietzscheanisms had developed, as well as various religious ones (even Zionism visited and drew from the Nietzschean well (Aschheim, 1994, pp. 102-112)) and the period is, of course, marked by the arrival of the Nazi interpretation of Nietzsche (more of which in a while). The only other currents of thought with Nietzschean influences that Aschheim detects in Germany before and after WWII are the Frankfurt School and Heidegger's existentialism.

In France, the influence of Nietzsche in philosophy was minimal, exerted indirectly during the 1940s and 1950s mostly through the existentialism of Sartre and Heidegger. The French avant-garde, however, drew directly from Nietzsche in these years but until the 1960s the country's philosophical scene was dominated by the, so-called, "three Hs": Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger. Things started to change in the late 1950s and early 1960s with the Saussure-inspired linguistic turn of structuralism of Claude - Lévi-Strauss in anthropology, Jacques Lacan in psychoanalysis and Louis Althusser in political economy, before the poststructuralist explosion in the late 1960s and 1970s. (Schrift, 1995, pp. 3-4).

In the English-speaking world, the post-WWII view of Nietzsche was still informed by the largely Fascist interpretation of racial and social hatred, warmongering and bestiality, as is evident by Bertrand Russell's depiction of Nietzsche's thought (see Schacht, 1983, pp. ix-x). This changes in the 1950s after the tireless efforts of Walter Kaufmann, who in his *Nietzsche: philosopher, psychologist, antichrist* (1950) advanced a benign, Hegelianised version of Nietzsche which dominated the scene until the 1970s. In the mid-1960s Arthur Danto's "pragmatist" Nietzsche appeared (1965) (Clark, 1990, p. 5). In the 1980s Alexander Nehamas' *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (1985) and Richard Rorty's *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (1989) present the next landmarks in Nietzsche scholarship influenced by the poststructuralist explosion.

Relatively more recently, a heated debate arose in the English-speaking world, and perhaps internationally, regarding Nietzsche's political thought: is Nietzsche a political thinker, is there a politics in Nietzsche's thought, and if so what kind of politics?<sup>21</sup> The views range from reappropriations of his thought for contemporary, democratic and liberal political theory to disavowals of his thought as outright reactionary and fascist.<sup>22</sup> The latter tendency culminated in the 2019 publication of the translation in English of Domenico Losurdo's (2002) monumental polemic against Nietzsche, which was celebrated in some Marxist circles as the definitive critique of Nietzsche's thought.<sup>23</sup>

This extremely sketchy account<sup>24</sup> allows us a preliminary grasp of what Nietzscheanism is. It allows us to understand that, as Aschheim writes, "the whole history of Nietzscheanism abounds with unlikely combinations and politically ambiguous appropriations containing both novel radicalizing and, at times, unexpected conserving properties" (Aschheim, 1994, p. 112), or even, we add, apologetic and reactionary ones. Nietzsche's thought has a plasticity resembling a "magic picture" which gives a different image depending on the angle from which one approaches it. Some elements of this thought are inevitably discarded in any such approach, and the matter of which approach is more satisfactory could perhaps be decided by the answer to the question "which approach leaves out less and can explain more contradictions in the body of Nietzsche's work than the others?".<sup>25</sup>

## **The objectives, the argument, the originality and the research questions of our thesis**

Our thesis involves the investigation of two themes: the role of Nietzsche in the thought of Deleuze and Adorno, as representatives of poststructuralism and Critical Theory, and the precise character of the critique of identity thinking in Deleuze and Adorno in relation to its role in the thought of

Nietzsche himself. Indeed, while the influence of Nietzsche as a critic of dialectics in Deleuze and poststructuralism is obvious, in plain sight and has never been disputed, the influence of Nietzsche in Adorno's thought is much less recognised. The influence of Nietzsche in Adorno's thought that concerns the way in which Adorno takes Nietzsche's irrationalistic critique of rationality (the critique of rationality from the point of view of will to power) and transforms it into a critique of the entwinement of rationality and power, is only weakly stressed in the literature (Jay, 1984; Jarvis, 1998). The influence of Nietzsche in the inception of Adorno's negative dialectics is even less recognised. Peter Dews' article *Adorno, poststructuralism and the critique of identity* arrives very close to such recognition when he observes the coincidence of Nietzsche's and Adorno's critique of identity: "Nietzsche's account of the manner in which real particular leaves come to be seen as poor imitations of the concept "leaf", captures precisely that process which Adorno refers to as 'identity-thinking'" (Dews, 1986, p. 37); he also makes an extremely insightful and invaluable observation when he says that for Adorno "identity can only become adequate to its concept by acknowledging its own moment of nonidentity. In the more naturalistic of the French thinkers influenced by Nietzsche, however, this logical dimension of the critique of consciousness is entirely absent" (Dews, 1986, p. 39). This is an insightful remark because it puts the finger on the decisive difference of the Adornean/Critical Theory in contradistinction to the Deleuzean/poststructuralist critique of identity thinking, namely, that the poststructuralists develop Nietzsche's irrationalistic critique of identity, while Adorno develops a rationalistic critique of identity. What Dews stops short of observing is that Adorno's rationalistic critique of identity can also be found in Nietzsche: there are in fact at least two distinct Nietzsches on which each, poststructuralism/Deleuze and Critical Theory/Adorno, lay a legitimate claim. Dews stops short of this realisation because he fails to appreciate the epistemological aspect of Nietzsche's contention to stand "beyond good and evil":

“... without measuring reality against the purely invented world of the unconditional and self-identical, without a continual falsification of the world by means of numbers, mankind could not live – that to renounce false judgments would be to renounce life,

would be to deny life. To recognize untruth as a condition of life: that, to be sure, means to resist customary value-sentiments in a dangerous fashion; and a philosophy which ventures to do so places itself, by that act alone, beyond good and evil” (Nietzsche, 1990, pp. 35-36).

From the realisation that identity thinking falsifies reality, Nietzsche does not jump to the conclusion that identity thinking can be relinquished, as poststructuralists seem to infer. This would be a denial of life because conceptual thinking is indispensable for the preservation of our species. In this sense Adorno is more faithful to Nietzsche than the poststructuralists. Where Nietzsche and Adorno do differ, and where poststructuralists are more faithful to Nietzsche than Adorno, is in their contention, as Dews rightly notes, that conceptual, identity thinking has no bearing in reality at all, that reality is chaotic and not structured (Dews, 1986, p. 38). As we will see, Adorno holds, instead, that identity thinking, despite its falsification of reality to the extent that it claims to exhaust the objects, captures the intelligible forms that the objects do possess. Our argument then, developing Dews’ contention, will be that both, the poststructuralist’s irrationalistic critique of identity thinking and Adorno’s rationalistic critique of identity thinking, his negative dialectics, are inspired by and can be found in Nietzsche.

Hence, we are presented with a paradox in the philosophy of the 20th century: Deleuze sees Nietzsche as a fierce critic of dialectics and this is a consensus that extends to thinkers otherwise hostile to Deleuze, like Bonnet, who notes that “there is no doubt that Nietzsche rejected dialectics” (Bonnet, 2009, p. 50); other authors, though, like Gillian Rose and Karin Bauer, consider Nietzsche as the originator of Adorno’s negative dialectics. As Rose notes “Adorno thus developed Nietzsche’s criticism of ‘identity philosophy’ in his own restatement of the Marxian criticism of Hegel, of philosophy and of sociology. He is perhaps the only neo-Marxist to make Nietzsche’s criticism of logic (identity) into social criticism.” (Rose, 2014, p. 29); Bauer, following Dews, writes that “Nietzsche’s explication of the concept formation process renders a precise and distinct description of what Adorno identified as identity thinking” (Bauer, 1999, p. 84); however, she takes the extra

step of acknowledging Adorno's partial endorsement of Nietzsche's view that our truths are "entangled in error, necessitated to error" when Adorno entertains the idea that the possibility of truth relies on the "risk and the present possibility of error" (Bauer, 1999, p. 92). Nonetheless, both Rose and Bauer never investigate negative dialectics' debt to Nietzsche at any depth: the question is how can Nietzsche be a critic of dialectics and originator of negative dialectics at the same time?

Our thesis sets itself the task of making use of the insightfulness and concluding the investigation opened up by Dews', Rose's and Bauer's observations. Then, the three objectives of the thesis are:

- a) to explore Nietzsche's appropriation by poststructuralism, as represented by Deleuze, with particular emphasis in Dews' contention that the poststructuralist critique of identity appropriates the irrationalistic side of Nietzsche's critique of identity;
- b) to explore Nietzsche's appropriation by Critical Theory, as represented by Adorno, with particular emphasis to our hypothesis, inspired by Dews, Bauer and Rose, that there is also a rationalistic side in Nietzsche's critique of identity which is appropriated and developed by Critical Theory and Adorno, as well as to investigate the transformation by Adorno of Nietzsche's critique of rationality into a critique of the entwinement of rationality and domination.
- c) to examine the paradox in the 20th century's philosophy, the 'paradox of Nietzsche', which consists in the existence of two contradictory claims about Nietzsche: by Deleuze of Nietzsche being a fierce critic of dialectics, and by theorists like Gillian Rose and Karin Bauer of Nietzsche being the originator of Adorno's negative dialectics.<sup>26</sup>

We are going to argue that both Deleuze and Adorno find the inspiration for their respective critiques of identity in Nietzsche. However, they appeal to different aspects of Nietzsche's thought: Deleuze to the irrationalist Nietzsche of the theory of forces, of will to power and of perspectivism, i.e. to Nietzsche "the philosopher of the unconscious"; Adorno, on the other hand, transforms Nietzsche's irrationalistic critique of rationality, i.e. the critique of rationality from the point of view of will to power, into a critique of the entwinement of rationality and domination; further, he also appeals to Nietzsche, but to Nietzsche's rationalistic critique of identity thinking, i.e. to Nietzsche

as a nonidentity, (negative) dialectical thinker. Therefore, we argue that there are at least two distinct Nietzsches. In addition, we are going to argue that the 'paradox of Nietzsche' can be resolved precisely on the basis of the existence of these two Nietzsches, and it can be explained with reference to the fact that the Nietzsche to whom Adorno appeals is *an inconsistent nonidentity, (negative) dialectical thinker*. Finally, we are going to argue that Adorno's negative dialectics affords a comprehensive and formidable challenge of Deleuze's Nietzsche-inspired, as well as Bergson-inspired, critique of dialectics, if it is modified to include an affirmative moment at the heart of its nonidentity thesis, unacknowledged by Adorno and brought to light under the force of Deleuze's and Nietzsche's critique of dialectics.

Thus, our thesis' primary claims to originality regarding Nietzsche scholarship is, on the one hand, that it advances a reading of Nietzsche as a double character: a Nietzsche "the philosopher of the unconscious" and a Nietzsche as "an inconsistent nonidentity, dialectical in the Adornean sense thinker" never attempted before, and, on the other hand, that it brings attention to and explains what we called earlier 'the paradox of Nietzsche'; regarding Deleuze scholarship, the originality of our thesis is that it challenges the poststructuralist reading of Nietzsche, especially its critique of dialectics; regarding Adorno scholarship, the originality is that our thesis highlights the rarely mentioned and never explored origin of Adorno's negative dialectics in Nietzsche's thought, as well as that it brings to the surface the affirmative moment at the heart of Adorno's negative dialectics which goes unacknowledged by Adorno himself.

What is more, there are a series of secondary claims to originality that our thesis is going to make, the most important of which are the following: regarding Nietzsche, an interpretation of his work that keeps in the range of its vision both, the revolutionary elements (critique of religion, dialectical critique of morality, irrationalistic and rationalistic critique of rationality and generalised use of nonidentity, dialectical thinking) *and* the reactionary elements (condemnation of 'freedom from' as reactive and resentful, embrace of power as the state things are and the state things should be, regressing into apologia of the status quo on more than one occasion, incorporation of the

exigencies of capital in his theory of will to power, condemnation of *all* social science and of *all* socialism as reactive); also original is the claim that the ideas of eternal return and of genealogy lead directly to negative dialectics. Regarding Deleuze, it draws the consequences for his critique of dialectics of Michael Hardt's and Keith Ansell-Pearson's observation that Deleuze does not accept that being is embedded in pre-constituted structures (Hardt, 1993, p. xiii; Ansell-Pearson, 1999, pp. 82, 85). Regarding Adorno it claims that negative dialectics and immanent critique are one and the same critical process, and it defends Adorno's negative dialectics against Habermas' charge that it suffers from a "performative contradiction".

The potential political significance of our project is highlighted by Bonnet's contention that:

"the problem today does not lie so much in the fact that anti-capitalist political practices are conceived in terms of a reactionary positive dialectics – such as the one already dead and codified in the Soviet DIAMAT – but in that they are conceived in terms of a philosophy which is quintessentially alien or even opposed, to any dialectics, in particular poststructuralist philosophy." (Bonnet, 2009, p. 42)

Our project can add to the efforts to build a bridge, over the issue of dialectics, which would address the gap of understanding between Critical Theory and poststructuralism, and to this end we will attempt, in the Conclusion of the thesis, an appraisal of their respective strengths and weaknesses from the point of view of the interpretation of Nietzsche, which is simultaneously an appraisal of the political consequences of our argument for the thought of all three of them.

Our argument utilises the space opened by the above-mentioned observations of Peter Dews, Gillian Rose and Karin Bauer, all of whom indicate that there is something important to be said regarding the relation between Adorno, Deleuze and Nietzsche. The fact that none of them actually explore this triangle creates a gap in the literature which our thesis comes to fill. We will venture to provide the evidence missing in Dews' claim that poststructuralism employs an irrationalistic critique of identity inspired by Nietzsche while Adorno a rationalistic one, and point out what Dews falls short of observing, that Adorno's critique can also be found in Nietzsche. Moreover, we are

going to furnish Rose's and Bauer's contention that Nietzsche is the originator of Adorno's negative dialectics with the missing evidence. Finally, we are going to explore the consequence of the truth of Dew's, Rose's and Bauer's contentions, if they are juxtaposed to Deleuze's argument that Nietzsche is a fierce critic of dialectics, which creates what we call 'the paradox of Nietzsche', i.e. of Nietzsche being claimed simultaneously to be a critic of dialectics and originator of Adorno's negative dialectics.

In order to provide our argument with a solid foundation we have to embed it in an interpretation of Nietzsche's, Deleuze's and Adorno's work. We have to show that *there is* an interpretation of their work which makes sense and can support our argument. What is more, if part of our objectives is to examine Nietzsche's appropriation by poststructuralism, as represented by Deleuze, and by Critical Theory, as represented by Adorno, we have to place Nietzsche's influence in the context of the overall projects of Deleuze and Adorno, a process which will allow us simultaneously to assess the significance of this appropriation. The contention is that Nietzsche's influence is central in both cases, contrary, as we saw, to the dominant in the literature neglect of this influence in the case of Adorno, and to its insufficient investigation in the case of Deleuze. Therefore, a first research question is "what are Adorno's and Deleuze's respective overall projects?" In the case of Nietzsche, our argument will try to highlight the actual existence of two distinct Nietzsches, and such an argument, again, has to add up with an interpretation of the overall project of Nietzsche. Therefore, a second research question is "does Nietzsche's project allow for the existence of two Nietzsches, a Nietzsche "the philosopher of the unconscious" and a Nietzsche "inconsistent nonidentity, dialectical thinker in the Adornean sense"? Since the focus of our thesis, provided by Dew's, Rose's and Bauer's observations, is on Deleuze's and Adorno's critique of identity, a related and more specific series of questions is "what sort of critique of identity each of them espouses: a rationalistic or an irrationalistic one? How does it relate to their overall project and what is Nietzsche's contribution?" A further research question, of course, relates to what we called 'Nietzsche's paradox', i.e. to the fact that Deleuze uses Nietzsche as a critic of dialectics while



Rose and Bauer consider him as the originator of Adorno's negative dialectics. The question here is "does a 'paradox of Nietzsche' really exist and, if so, how does it become possible and how can it be explained?" Finally, since our aspiration and part of the political significance of our thesis is to facilitate a productive dialogue between poststructuralism and Critical Theory which could potentially contribute to the unification of the opposition to capitalism, another question our thesis tries to tackle is "what critical debate can be developed out of our thesis between Deleuze, as representative of poststructuralism, and Adorno, as representative of Critical Theory, over the issue of the critique and defence of dialectics?"; we will bring this line of investigation to a climax in the Conclusion when we will try to outline a direction towards answering the questions "what are the theoretical and political implications of our argument for poststructuralism and Critical Theory and for the interpretation of Nietzsche?"

## **Direction and structure of our argument**

We will start the unfolding of our argument with Nietzsche, because knowledge of his views is presupposed in order to follow the trail of the appropriation of his thought by Deleuze and Adorno. In Chapter 1 we basically have to show that the assumption that there are two Nietzsches, a Nietzsche "the philosopher of the unconscious" who entertains an irrationalistic critique of identity, and a Nietzsche the "nonidentity, dialectical thinker" who entertains a rationalistic critique of identity, which makes room for both the Deleuzean and the Adornean appropriation of Nietzsche, is valid and is consonant with an interpretation of Nietzsche's overall project. In agreement with a good portion on the literature in Nietzsche, we will argue that this project consists in the effort to overcome nihilism, and throughout the first chapter we will try to show that all of his important ideas are directed to this end. His critique of religion provides an advantageous starting point because it serves a threefold purpose: a) it allows us to present the very important for Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche ideas of active and reactive forces, of ressentiment and of the ascetic

ideal; b) it is the entry point for the unfolding of the argument of Nietzsche as “the philosopher of the unconscious” since we argue that the idea of active and reactive forces, along with that of will to power and of their consequence, perspectivism (developed in the two following sections of the first chapter) circumscribe this ‘character’ of Nietzsche; c) because, in the same breath, it allows us a glimpse of how this character goes hand in hand with the other character of Nietzsche as a “nonidentity, dialectical thinker” since the critique of religion culminates in the critique of the ascetic ideal, which, in turn, comes down to a critique of identity thinking in the form of the critique of the need for certainty in our truths.

In the section “Critique of rationality and the question of power” we point out again Nietzsche’s double character: the critique of rationality boils down to the critique of identity from an irrationalistic (theory of will to power) *and* a rationalistic point of view. The latter, we argue, is encapsulated in Nietzsche’s claim that his theory of truth stands “beyond good and evil”, as is encapsulated in his critique, but also retention, of dualisms and of the notion of the ego, all of which we interpret as a covert critique of identity thinking. In this section we also make a preliminary presentation of an interpretation of will to power as both ‘will *for* power’ and ‘will to empower’, which in the literature of Nietzsche are considered mutually exclusive. We argue that holding them simultaneously together is possible if we consider will to power as a dialectical, in the Adornean sense, notion and that such grasp holds an important key for keeping in the range of our vision both the reactionary *and* revolutionary elements in Nietzsches’ thought.

The following three sections (Overman, Revaluation of values and Eternal return) comprise, we argue (with Deleuze), Nietzsche’s proposal for a way out of nihilism. What we point out, diverging from Deleuze, is that they all lead Nietzsche’s thought, which is heavily leaning towards the irrationalistic critique of identity, into contradictions, aporias and dead ends which could have been avoided, as we will argue in Chapter 4, if only Nietzsche had put to work his own insight of the rationalistic critique of identity, his nascent negative dialectics.

In the final section of the first chapter, we focus on Nietzsche's critique of dialectics and argue that although undoubtedly he has a critique of dialectics and does not understand dialectics as nonidentity as Adorno does, he clearly entertains a rationalistic critique of identity thinking, which shows all the essential elements of Adorno's negative dialectics (we cannot conclusively make this argument before we present Adorno's negative dialectic in Chapter 3, and for the same reason we can conclusively make the case of Nietzsche as *inconsistent* negative dialectician only in Chapter 4). We can, then, provisionally say that Nietzsche has a rationalistic as well as an irrationalistic critique of identity: there are two Nietzsches.

In Chapter 2 on Deleuze, we have to present Deleuze's critique of identity and of dialectics indicating, but not spelling out, the Nietzschean contribution in them, a contribution which, we will argue in Chapter 4, is conscribing Nietzsche "the philosopher of the unconscious". The focus is again on the embeddedness of the critique of identity and of dialectics in an interpretation of Deleuze's overall project. We take this project from Deleuze's book *Difference and Repetition* and argue in the relevant section of the second chapter that this project consists in the effort to "construct the ontology of difference" against the hitherto in philosophy ontology of identity. In the following section we show that the interest of delineating the ontology of difference predates *Difference and Repetition*, and with the critique of dialectics as critique of identity, plays an important role in Deleuze's Bergson-inspired and Nietzsche-inspired critique of dialectics. In fact, we argue in the next section, that it is very difficult to distinguish between the critique of dialectics and the critique of identity in Deleuze and it is likely that he arrives in the critique of identity through the critique of dialectics. We then argue that Deleuze, having claimed that 'being is difference', is dissatisfied with the inability of conceptual, representational, identity thinking to capture difference and tries to grasp "difference without concept" and "difference without negation", conscribing for this purpose Nietzsche's ideas of eternal return and of will to power. The idea of will to power is invoked again when Deleuze comes to define the adequate concept of difference, a concept which he finds in the idea of repetition as the "identity of difference", which "presupposes a world (that of the will to

power) in which all previous identities have been abolished and dissolved” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 52). Finally, we argue in the last section of Chapter 2 that following the vicissitudes of desire, another name for will to power (will to power which is for Deleuze “affirmation of difference”), throughout pre-history and history in *Anti-Oedipus*, expresses Deleuze’s effort to extend the ontology of difference to the psychological and social field, and that it is the critique of identity as critique of representation and of the subject which now take the leading role and inform two of the three main arguments of this book: the critique of the Oedipus complex and psychoanalysis, and the delineation of the alternative to it, proposed by the authors: schizoanalysis.

In Chapter 3 on Adorno, we have to show what sort of critique of identity Adorno espouses, present his negative dialectics and embed both in an interpretation of his overall project. The difference with Chapter 2 on Deleuze is that Nietzsche’s influence on Adorno is not explicit, and this is why it went largely unacknowledged in the literature, as we noted. Therefore, the arguments about the appropriation of Nietzsche’s rationalistic critique of identity, the transformation of Nietzsche’s critique of rationality into a critique of the entwinement of rationality and domination, and the argument of Nietzsche as the originator of negative dialectics will be made in Chapter 4. In Chapter 3 will suffice to present Adorno’s relevant ideas and embed them in an interpretation of his project. We deem this project to be inspired by Marx and consisting in the effort to see ‘history as nature and nature as history’, using “the strength of the subject to break through the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity” which stands in its way and in the way of a materialist, reconciliatory dialectics. We then follow the development of this project in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and in *Negative Dialectics*, having always in the back of our mind Nietzsche’s contribution. In the first of these works the discerned “dialectic of enlightenment” is not only a dialectic between enlightenment and myth but also a dialectic between human subjectivity and the domination over inner and outer nature. Adorno and Horkheimer follow the development of the entwinement of rationality and domination/self-preservation from the early efforts to escape mythical fate documented in Homer’s *Odyssey* to the modern degeneration of enlightenment into instrumental,

identitarian reason as an end in itself rather than as a means to an end. They follow this entwinement to the eventual culmination and simultaneous self-destruction of the degenerated enlightenment reason in anti-Semitism and totalitarianism, as soon as enlightenment forgets that man is still part of nature, and nature, outer and inner, is not only the hostile “other” to be subdued. In *Negative Dialectics* Adorno undertakes in a more systematic way the self-critique of Enlightenment reason as critique of identity thinking. We first present the basic argument against identity thinking which is at the same time a sketch, in broad strokes, of negative dialectics (section Negative Dialectics 1). The emphasis is on the nature and function of contradiction and of determinate negation. In the course of this operation, we make an important addition of our own in the Adornean nonidentity thesis by arguing that this thesis includes an affirmative moment, that “A is A” which is simultaneously negated. This moment remained unacknowledged by Adorno himself with significant negative consequences. In the next section (Negative Dialectics 2) we turn our attention to the unfolding of Adorno’s project as we understood it and as it presented itself to us in this book. We argue that if the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity consists in the claim that the subject or the concept constitute the object then “a materialist negative dialectics will show that it is not the concept which constitutes the object but that the nonidentical, nonconceptual element in the object what constitutes the concept; a materialist negative dialectics will correct the flawed self-understanding that the self constitutes nature, by showing how the self is still constituted by nature, and hence reconcile man and nature restoring the forgotten inner nature not as the radical “other” to be dominated but as part of the self; finally, a materialist, negative, reconciliatory dialectics will also show how spirit and nature, history and nature, mutually constitute one another” (Chapter 3, p. 127). Hence the need to delineate the process of concept formation and of conceptuality in Adorno. We also argue in this section that identity thinking for Adorno is capturing the intelligible forms of the object and hence is real and not the arbitrary projection of subjectivity on the object, an invaluable observation as it will turn out in Chapter 4. Then (section Negative Dialectics 3) we turn our attention to the presupposition of the previous section, the dualism of

subject and object and its critical retention in Adorno's thought, along with a whole host of other dualisms. We argue that the problem with these dualisms for Adorno is the "rigid" distinction between the two parts of the dualism while the solution of abandoning them creates more problems than it solves, as is the case with the dualism of appearance and essence, which, if abandoned, results in siding with the total ideology of appearance which reality has become. The solution is to see one part of the dualism as a moment of the constitution of the other, to acknowledge that they mutually constitute one another. In the case of subject and object, however, the two poles are not equal; the object has preponderance over the subject, which is what makes Adorno's perspective and negative dialectics materialistic. We then, in the next section, discuss the ramifications of the critique of the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity for the theory of truth in order to have a complete picture of Adorno's thought, which argues in favour of the objectivity of truth, in acute antithesis to the relativism of poststructuralism. In the course of this operation we present Adorno's critique of perspectivism as an instance of the critique of the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity, whose proper place would be in Chapter 4. We argue that Adorno's position is calling for a second, higher level of reflection capable to see through perspectivism and discover what makes perspectivism possible and necessary, namely the contradictoriness of the object. This becomes possible if the objectivity of the object is adequately present in our concepts. The adequate presence of the object in our truths becomes, then, also the criterion of truth, beyond relativism.

Having shown in Chapter 1 that there are two Nietzsches, a Nietzsche "the philosopher of the unconscious" espousing an irrationalistic critique of identity and a Nietzsche the "nonidentity, dialectical thinker" espousing a rationalistic critique of identity, and that these two characters are supported by an interpretation of Nietzsche's overall project; having presented in Chapter 2, Deleuze's critique of dialectics and of identity with an eye in their embeddedness in his overall project and in Nietzsche's contribution; and having presented in Chapter 3, Adorno's critique of the entwinement of rationality and domination in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, and his critique of

identity thinking and reflections on a negative dialectics in the namesake book *Negative Dialectics*, all embedded in an interpretation of his overall project, we will make in Chapter 4 the arguments announced above: a) that Dews is right when he observes that poststructuralists, represented in our thesis by Deleuze, appropriate Nietzsche's irrationalistic critique of identity, i.e. they appeal to Nietzsche "the philosopher of the unconscious"; b) that our hypothesis, inspired by Dews', Rose's and Bauer's observations, that Critical Theory, represented in our thesis by Adorno, employs a rationalistic critique of identity which is also Nietzsche's and also that Adorno transforms Nietzsche's irrationalistic critique of rationality into a critique of the entwinement of rationality and domination; and c) that 'the paradox of Nietzsche' consisting in being claimed to be a critic of dialectics as well as the originator of Adorno's negative dialectics does exist, is made possible by the existence of the 'two Nietzsche's' and can be explained with reference to the fact that Nietzsche employed negative dialectics inconsistently. In this chapter we also develop a direct dialogue between Deleuze, Adorno and Nietzsche, and argue that Adorno's negative dialectics presents a formidable challenge of Deleuze's Bergson-inspired as well as Nietzsche-inspired critique of dialectics, if only it is modified to include an affirmative moment at the heart of negative dialectics, unacknowledged by Adorno himself.

# Chapter 1: Nietzsche, the philosopher of the unconscious and of nonidentity

## Introduction

It is only natural to start the pursuit of the aims of the thesis with an exposition of Nietzsche's thought, the appropriation of which, by Deleuze/poststructuralism and Adorno/Critical Theory, interests us. This exposition is also going to be an interpretation which will make room for the appropriation of Nietzsche from both Deleuze and Adorno.

The main concern of Nietzsche's thought is the overcoming of nihilism, and one of his explanations of nihilism involves the collapse of the religious interpretation of social distress. His extensive critique of religion will give us the opportunity to present a considerable portion of his key-concepts, notably the ideas of active and reactive forces, resentment and the ascetic ideal. His theory of will to power and of perspectivism (the latter is founded on the theory of the will to power) comprise, along with the theory of active and reactive forces, Nietzsche's attack on the rationalistic subject, in effect his critique of identity as critique of the subject, from an irrationalistic point of view, and justify our claim that Nietzsche is 'the philosopher of the unconscious'.

His critique of rationality will show that rationality is not only criticised by Nietzsche from the point of view of the irrational and the unconscious, but also equally severely 'from within' with the resources of rationality itself. Nietzsche, we will argue, is not only the philosopher of the unconscious but also the philosopher of nonidentity in the Adornean sense. In this section we will also draw attention to the disconcerting fact that although the poststructuralist and the Adornean critique of power and domination is inspired by Nietzsche, Nietzsche's own thought does not include a critique of power; on the contrary, it embraces power as the actual state of things of the living and, more, as the state things should be!



In the sections on Overman, Revaluation of values and Eternal return we will see how Nietzsche's irrationalistic leaning leads him in contradictions, aporias and dead ends when his thought comes to the point of tracing a way out of nihilism; these contradictions, aporias and dead ends, we will argue in Chapter 4, could be overcome if the resources provided by Nietzsche's own thought had been sufficiently developed and utilised by himself.

Nietzsche's corpus is traditionally divided in three periods but the inclusion of particular works in each of them can differ slightly: in Ansell-Pearson's periodisation, the early period comprises his first published book *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) and the collection of four essays published under the title *Untimely Meditations* (1874); the middle period includes *Human all too Human* (1878), *Daybreak* (1881) and *The Gay Science* (1882); his magnum opus (according to himself) *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-1885) serves as a bridge between his middle and mature period, as Ansell-Pearson says; the mature period comprises of *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), a new edition of *The Gay Science* with a new, fifth part (1887), *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), and *Twilight of the Idols*, *The Case of Wagner*, *The Anti-Christ*, *Nietzsche contra Wagner* and *Ecce Homo*, all written in 1888, the final year of his active life before his collapse in 1889, from which he never recovered.<sup>27</sup> We concentrated on his middle and late period leaving out of consideration, due to time restrictions, *Daybreak* and all his 1888 production except *Anti-Christ*. We also studied the somewhat questionable<sup>28</sup> collection from his *Nachlass*, edited and published posthumously by his sister Elizabeth Foster-Nietzsche under the title *The Will to Power*.

## Nietzsche's project: overcoming of nihilism

There is a 'micro-consensus' regarding the importance and place of the problem of nihilism in Nietzsche's work: Löwith (Löwith, 1991, p. 193) but also Kaufmann, argue that "to escape nihilism...is Nietzsche's greatest and most persistent problem" (Kaufmann, 1974, p. 101) and that Nietzsche "considers nihilism the central problem of his philosophy" (Reginster cited approvingly in Clark, 2012, p. 91). Indeed, as we will show in this chapter, almost all of Nietzsche's important ideas (the overman, revaluation of values, eternal recurrence, will to power) are directed towards the overcoming of nihilism.

How does Nietzsche define nihilism? Almost all the attempts to conceptualise it come from *The Will to Power*. In this collection of notes, he gives a number of definitions of nihilism from different angles. They can be grouped into three categories: a) those which put at the centre the problem of the value of the world and of the value of values; b) the one which puts at the centre the Christian interpretation of social distress; and c) the one which sees nihilism as a consequence of "physiological decadence".

Regarding the first category, Nietzsche argues that nihilism is the consequence and logical conclusion of our highest values: "What does nihilism mean? *That the highest values devalue themselves*" (Nietzsche, 1968, pp. 4 & 9). One example of how this is being done is the value of truth and truthfulness which reaches the conclusion that everything is ultimately false, including the transcendental 'true' world, hence devaluing itself. Nihilism means, as Deleuze pointed out, that the world takes "a value of nil" (Deleuze, 2005, p. 147).<sup>29</sup>

The second category of definitions of nihilism traces its origin in the Christian interpretation of social distress, social distress of the soul, body or intellect which the Christian interpretation of the world and of history tried to explain. Nihilism from this perspective is the "radical repudiation of value, meaning and desirability" of life and of this world rooted in the Christian interpretation of social distress which "rebound from "God is truth" to the fanatical faith "All is false"" (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 7). The third category of definitions seems to contradict Nietzsche's assurance that nihilism

should not be considered as a sign of physiological degeneration (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 7), and asserts that “the nihilistic movement is merely the expression of physiological decadence” (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 24). Dating the aphorisms that these contradictory assertions are mentioned is not very helpful to explain the contradiction in terms of Nietzsche’s intellectual development<sup>30</sup> so one can choose the interpretation that suits them. We tend to think that Nietzsche is here conducting thought experiments, he tries to think through different thoughts and see where they will lead him (Gemmes, 1992, p. 55).

Nihilism takes its most extreme form when it is thought of in terms of Nietzsche’s idea of the eternal return: “Let us think this thought [the “in vain” of nihilism, NK] in its most terrible form: existence as it is, without meaning or aim, yet recurring inevitably without any finale of nothingness: *“the eternal recurrence”*. This is the most extreme form of nihilism: the nothing (the “meaningless”), eternally!” (Nietzsche, 1968, pp. 35-36).

There is a variety of responses to the problem of nihilism: from the “this-worldly solution” of the “eventual triumph of truth, love and justice”, like in socialism, to the resuscitation of god and the beyond through the “antilogical “x”” which sounds like Kierkegaard’s (disputed) ‘leap of faith’, to the “old-fashioned divine governance” which sounds like a reference to Hegel, and the persistence in the belief on good and evil like in John Stuart Mill (Nietzsche, 1968, pp. 20-21). After the rejection of god people still seek an authority outside themselves to command a goal in life for them (Nietzsche mentions conscience, reason, history, the social instinct, as such authorities), and he concludes: “One wants to get around the will, the willing of a goal, the risk of positing a goal *for oneself*; one wants to rid oneself of the responsibility (one would accept fatalism)” (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 17).

What is Nietzsche’s own response then? We think that the idea of the overman and of the revaluation of values, what Deleuze termed as Nietzsche’s double “positive task” (Deleuze, 2005, pp.162-163) is meant to be his response to the problem of nihilism (Nietzsche, 2006, pp. 5 and 12; Nietzsche, 1968, p. 19). However, not only the overman and the revaluation are connected to the

overcoming of nihilism. The same applies for other important ideas of Nietzsche, such as the eternal return (Nietzsche, 1974, pp. 273-274) and the will to power (Nietzsche, 2003a, pp. 129-130). The presence of will to power in values is a necessary condition for them not being nihilistic and as a consequence, a necessary component of the revaluation of values.

We noted above that the collapse of the Christian interpretation of “social distress” is producing nihilism. We have to look a bit closer on Nietzsche’s critique of Christianity and religion, from which some very instructive conclusions can be drawn.

### **Nietzsche’s critique of religion: active and reactive forces**

The narrative for the emergence of nihilism that we are going to favour is the one that involves the collapse of the Christian moral interpretation of social distress, impressively coined by Nietzsche as “the death of God”. It is thus presented by Nietzsche, somewhat deceptively, as an event (when it is more of a process) of such fundamental importance that, according to him (and Deleuze’s interpretation), splits history in two (Nietzsche, 1974, p. 181). The grave danger for mankind out of the death of god is the suicidal nihilism that follows and may lead mankind to “bleed to death” as Nietzsche illustratively says in *Human all too Human* (Nietzsche, 2004, p. 78).

Nietzsche offers several accounts, from various complementary perspectives, of the origin of religion (Nietzsche, 1989, aphorisms 16 & 19 and p. 93; Nietzsche, 1974, p. 196; Nietzsche, 1990, p. 85). What all these perspectives have in common is their secular vantage point, the idea that it is man who created god and not the other way round. This idea was exemplarily articulated by Feuerbach who wrote that “man makes religion” (cited in Löwith, 1991, p. 353), and indeed Nietzsche seems to be indebted to him without ever acknowledging it (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 57; Nietzsche, 2004, p. 92). Nietzsche even describes the concept of religious alienation, without using the term, when he asserts that the Christian interprets his feelings wrongly: he assigns contempt

as well as contentment with oneself to god's anger or mercy respectively (Nietzsche, 2004, pp. 93-94).

However, Nietzsche's critique of religion is much more severe and insightful than Feuerbach's and goes much deeper. A sample of its severity is offered in *The Will to Power*:

"In Christianity, three elements must be distinguished: (a) the oppressed of all kinds, (b) the mediocre of all kinds, (c) the discontented of all kinds. With the first element Christianity fights against the political nobility and its ideal; with the second element, against the exceptional and privileged (spiritually, physically - ) of all kinds; with the third element, against the natural instinct of the healthy and happy." (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 126)

The key to understand in what sense can this be is provided by the concepts of "active" and "reactive" forces and of "ressentiment" used in the *Genealogy of Morals*. Nietzsche's critique of religion there takes down a psychological route that culminates in the critique of the ascetic ideal. Religion (and/as morality) is conceived as the product of the becoming creative of "reactive forces" in the context of the revolt of the "slaves" against the "nobles" waged through a morality motivated by ressentiment. This assault against the nobles is mediated by the relatively recent emergence of "bad conscience", of this "most uncanny and most interesting plant of all our earthly vegetation", which, according to Nietzsche, surrounds with slanderous connotations all that is natural in humans, reserving favorable judgments for those ideals that are "hostile to life". And Nietzsche concludes his polemic in the third essay by showing that all the ideals generated by the above assault, that is, all the ideals hitherto, are nothing but different embodiments of one ideal, the "ascetic ideal".

Before going any further, we need to discuss the concepts of active and reactive forces, of ressentiment, and of the ascetic ideal. We must note immediately that Nietzsche himself does not make extensive use of the terms "active" and "reactive". It is Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche which provides us the theory of forces which supposedly underlies Nietzsche's thought.<sup>31</sup> However,

the term “active” in Deleuze’s sense hardly appears at all in Nietzsche’s work while the term “reactive” appears only three times and the concept only four times in the part of Nietzsche’s corpus we studied (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 47, 136, 484; Nietzsche, 1989, pp. 36-37); what is more, the term and concept of reactivity appears in a sense explicitly denied in Deleuze’s interpretation! In Nietzsche, “active” is the “triumphal affirmation” of oneself through an act that “grows spontaneously” and “seeks its opposite only so as to affirm itself”. Active is the person that initiates their actions without reference to external stimuli, spontaneously, and their actions have an affirmative of its difference character, as Deleuze rightly points out (Deleuze, 2005, pp. 55-56). On the contrary, “reactive” in Nietzsche is what needs external stimuli to perform an action and the initiative belongs to the external world against which the person re-acts (Nietzsche, 1989, pp. 36-37). Reaction, in this sense, is “of the essence of resentment” for Nietzsche, contrary to Deleuze’s assertion that:

“We can see, therefore, that a reaction alone cannot constitute *ressentiment*. *Ressentiment* designates a type in which reactive forces prevail over active forces. But they can only prevail in one way: by ceasing to be acted. ...If we ask what the man of *ressentiment* is, we must not forget this principle: he does not re-act. And the word *ressentiment* gives a definite clue: *reaction ceases to be acted in order to become something felt (senti).*” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 111)

Nietzsche is very consistent on this point, the point of defining reaction as re-action to external stimuli (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 47, 136, 484). The understanding of reaction as re-action is extremely important for our interpretation of Nietzsche because it opens up the possibility of a non-reactive negation of the existing status quo, of a non-reactive critique, and of a non-reactive dialectics.

However, a question remains to be asked: why is reactivity a problem at all? After all it is impossible in the course of life to always have the initiative. Most of the time external reality has the initiative and people respond, re-act to situations they find themselves in. It is obvious that the question is not to always have the initiative but to *always* react and *never* have the initiative. A clue

for the problematic nature of never having the initiative is afforded, we think, by the following passage from *Beyond Good and Evil*, where Nietzsche is talking about the scholars: “[h]is mirroring soul, for ever polishing itself, no longer knows how to affirm or how to deny; he does not command, neither does he destroy” (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 135). Mirroring external reality, i.e. being reactive, prevents affirmation of life and denial of value, denial of twisted valuations. Taking this line of thought a bit further, we can say that if life is without objective meaning and value, a reactive character, who always takes their cue from the external world, cannot find positive meaning and value in it, remains trapped in nihilism, they are unable to bestow meaning in the meaningless world. This we think is predominantly for Nietzsche the problematic nature of being reactive.

Regarding resentment, it is the kernel of what Nietzsche calls “the slave revolt” and consists in taking “imaginary revenge” instead of actual ones. The slave revolt, according to the *Genealogy of Morals*, begins with the Jews: “with the Jews there begins *the slave revolt in morality*: that revolt which has a history of two thousand years behind it and which we do no longer see because it – has been victorious.” (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 34). The Jewish priest takes his revenge against the “nobles”, the “masters”, the “rulers” not directly, directing his rage against their physical presence, but spiritually (imaginary) by exercising the most “radical revaluation of their enemies’ values” (which constitutes the becoming creative of resentment according to Nietzsche (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 36)): “It was the Jew who, with awe-inspiring consistency, dared to invert the aristocratic value-equation (good=noble=powerful=beautiful=happy=beloved of God) and to hang on to this inversion with their teeth” (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 34). Revenge, hatred of life and of the world, hatred of those who have it better than one does in one way or another, and what in *Zarathustra* (and elsewhere) Nietzsche calls “the spirit of revenge” are the hallmarks of resentment. Resentment can appear as a passing phenomenon in the noble and powerful too, but “...the noble man, consummates and exhausts itself in an immediate reaction, and therefore does not *poison*...” (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 39). While the noble can easily get over moments of resentment the same does not apply for the

Christian-slave; “states of redemption”, of religious exultation are not effective to this end (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 134).

What is the touchstone of the triumph of resentment?

“Undoubtedly if they succeeded in *poisoning the consciences* of the fortunate with their own misery, with all misery, so that one day the fortunate began to be ashamed of their good fortune and perhaps said one to another: “it is disgraceful to be fortunate: *there is too much misery!*”” (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 124)

Our interpretation of this passage is two-sided: on the one hand, from the point of view of social theory, the view expressed here constitutes what we consider one of the most monumental failures of Nietzsche’s exclusively psychological point of view, which ends up functioning as a reactionary apology of socially induced misery; on the other hand, however, from the point of view of psychology, we think that Nietzsche’s view has a truth kernel of positive value which is the safeguarding of the self-esteem of the “fortunate” in the face of social misery. We will fully explain our comments in the Conclusion of our thesis (see section “Adorno as social theorist and Nietzsche as psychologist”).

We still have to specify the meaning of what Nietzsche calls the “ascetic ideal”, the culmination of his critique of religion. Nietzsche identifies as the “kernel” of the ascetic ideal atheism and its “will to truth”: the relentless quest for truth, nourished by the Christian faith itself, takes the form of atheism, as its latest embodiment, eventually turning against itself, against the belief in god (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 160). However, for Nietzsche, this is not the deepest layer of the issue. The “suicidal nihilism” that follows, and leads the drive of the quest of truth to its furthest consequences (that is, the prohibition of “the lie involved in the belief in God”), reveals an even deeper layer in human psychology from which men were protected with the belief in god, namely the lack of meaning in life, the inability to affirm the positive value of life, which is the breeding ground of resentment. The inability to affirm life Nietzsche calls the lack “of will for man and earth”. It is the



pointless, the “in vain” of human existence and more precisely the unintelligible suffering, or social distress that breeds nihilism (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 160).

But this is not the end of the issue. Clark argues that Nehamas sees in Nietzsche’s refusal to acknowledge science as the counter-ideal to the ascetic one (because science “still has faith in truth”), an argument against dogmatism: belief in truth is ascetic because it does not overcome the dogmatism on which the ascetic ideal depends. Clark dismisses the claim by saying that it is the self-denial which is characteristic of the ascetic ideal and not dogmatism (Clark, 1990, p. 182). Clark’s own interpretation seems to be that when Nietzsche says “faith in truth” he means “faith in the overriding value of truth”, that is, that truth is unquestionably considered as more important than anything else (Clark, 1990, 183-184). We think that although Nietzsche undoubtedly holds the view Clark is arguing for, his critique of the ascetic ideal aims to uncover the deepest layer in human psychology that sustains the faith in truth, which is not dogmatism as such, which refers to the cognitive level of human psyche, but the conscious or unconscious<sup>32</sup> need<sup>33</sup> dogmatism is satisfying. Which need is this?

Talking about the “philosophers and scholars” of his time, who are repudiating god’s existence while, at the same time, insist in the quest of “truth” Nietzsche observes: “They are far from being *free spirits: for they still have faith in truth.*” (Nietzsche, 1989, p.150). A couple of pages later he cites a passage from the fifth book of his *Gay Science*: “...It is still a *metaphysical faith* that underlies our faith in science - and we men of knowledge of today, we godless men and anti-metaphysicians, we too, still derive *our* flame from the fire ignited by a faith millennia old, the Christian faith” (Nietzsche, 1989, p.152).

What do these passages tell us? They tell us that “free spirits”, i.e. the persons or philosophers most highly regarded by Nietzsche, who, himself, was a free spirit in his own eyes,<sup>34</sup> cannot have faith in truth. They also tell us that the identification of god with truth, i.e. truth’s divine nature, is millennia old, and, what is more, they tell us that the anti-metaphysical critique, Nietzsche’s own included, is *ignited* by such a faith. What sense are we going to make of these, apparently,

contradictory statements, which deny free spirits their identity because of their faith in truth, only to affirm that faith as the legitimate motive behind free spirits' anti-metaphysical critique?

We think that an interpretive way out of this contradiction is afforded through the observation that what it is actually denied by Nietzsche is not the faith in the existence of truth as such, but rather, that such a faith is a guaranty or can give us any certainty for truth's actual existence: "We, too, do not deny that faith "makes blessed": that is precisely *why* we deny that faith *proves* anything" (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 148). On the other hand, what is affirmed in the faith in the existence of truth is exactly the need of certainty, the longing to make sure or to *prove the certainty of our truths*, this is to say, to reach the absolute truth. Towards this direction points a passage from *Human, all too Human* where Nietzsche is talking regretfully about the diminution of the longing for certainty (Nietzsche, 2004, p. 265). The longing for certainty must be preserved because it sustains the alertness against unwarranted convictions. The larger weight, however, of Nietzsche's argument is towards the side of the danger to transform this longing itself into certainty. A passage from Nietzsche's *Gay Science* is decisive in this respect because it allows a further elaboration in the above affirmation of the "faith in truth" on the part of "free spirits":

"Yet what is good-heartedness, refinement, and genius to me, [is, NK] when the human being who has these virtues tolerates slack feelings in his faith and judgments, and when the demand for certainty is not to him the inmost craving and the deepest need - that which distinguishes the higher from the lower men...*Not to question*, not to tremble with the craving and the joy of questioning...that is what I feel to be *contemptible*..." (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 149).

With this passage Nietzsche introduces a condition in the aforementioned longing for certainty and truth: it is indeed the motive behind the faith in, and the search for truth, but it should not be "the inmost craving", in the sense that the need for certainty should not blind us to the fact that such certainty is today impossible. In other words, the intensity of the need should not lead us to transform our longing itself into certainty that we possess absolute truth. In this direction points

also one passage from the *Gay Science* where Nietzsche warns that the case is that “The demand that one *wants* by all means that something should be firm (while on account of the ardor of this demand one is easier and more negligent about the demonstration of this certainty)...” (Nietzsche, 1974, p. 288). The need for certainty can lead to dogmatism, but the longing for certainty must be preserved because it keeps us closer to whatever truth is possible for us to discover (or create, in Nietzsche’s perspective). It then emerges that an attitude which “take[s] leave of all faith and every wish for certainty” and is “practiced in maintaining [itself, NK] on insubstantial ropes and possibilities” is the touchstone of the “free spirits par excellence” (Nietzsche, 1974, pp. 289-290). Later in our thesis, after we present Adorno’s negative dialectics, it will become apparent that this interpretation of Nietzsche’s view on truth is an outright dialectical position in the Adornean sense. We will see then that the irrationalistic critique of religion which detects the transformation of the unconscious longing for certainty itself into certainty in the belief in god and in its successor, science as the kernel of the ascetic ideal, i.e. Nietzsche’s character as ‘philosopher of the unconscious’, goes hand in hand with his other character as ‘nonidentity dialectical in the Adornean sense thinker’.

Before we move on to consider Nietzsche’s way out of nihilism, i.e. overman, revaluation of values and eternal return, our way will be considerably eased if we first look at Nietzsche’s views of the relation between conscious and unconscious, his theory of the will to power, the backbone of Nietzsche’s psychology, and its consequence: perspectivism. Such a study will substantiate the claim that he is the ‘philosopher of the unconscious’.

### **Will to Power: Nietzsche as the ‘philosopher of the unconscious’**

Nietzsche, with his concept of will to power and his understanding of human psyche is, like Hume, part of the irrationalist and materialist strand of Enlightenment, to the extent that he locates human ‘soul’ in the body or, better, *as* the body, and reverses the relative importance of

consciousness and ego, on the one side, and the unconscious, the locus of the “powerful commander” behind the thoughts and feelings, on the other side (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 23).

Who or what is this “powerful commander” behind the thoughts and feelings? Nietzsche’s response is: the will to power:

“...the will to power is the primitive form of affect, that all other affects are only developments of it; that it is notably enlightening to posit *power* in place of individual “happiness” (after which every living thing is supposed to be striving): “there is a striving for power, for an increase of power”” (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 366).

So, will to power, like Freud’s libido, is for Nietzsche the general energising power of the human psyche,<sup>35</sup> the difference being that while libido has no particular object and can be invested to anything, will to power has a single object, namely the striving for the increase of power.

Will to power is meant to be applicable to the whole of organic nature as a general exegesis of life itself: “In order to understand what “life” is, what kind of striving and tension life is, the formula must apply as well to trees and plants as to animals. ...For what do trees in the jungle fight each other? For “happiness”? – *For power!*” (Nietzsche, 1968, pp. 374-375); it is also, unfortunately, and contrary to Deleuze’s interpretation, who understands “power” as a verb and will to power as “will to empower”, a striving *for* power in all its forms (political, intellectual, psychological etc). This is how we understand Nietzsche’s constant references to “strong” people, the increase of “strength” and the “healthy” people. We choose this interpretation because replacing “striving for power” with “striving to empower” in Nietzsche’s texts, as we will see in more detail later, most of the time does not make good sense. Regarding intellectual power Nietzsche is very explicit in *The Will to Power* notes (Nietzsche, 1968, pp. 266-267) and in *Beyond Good and Evil* (Nietzsche, 1990, pp. 142-143). Now, if will to power is to explain all life, it must be able to explain the form of life of the slaves too. And indeed, will to power can be affirmative or negative, tight to active or reactive forces, in the Nietzschean sense of the terms: The slave will to morality is the slave’s will to power (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 37).

There is a somewhat perplexing point in Nietzsche's theory of the will to power. Kaufmann also understands will to power as "the basic drive of *all* human efforts" (Kaufmann, 1974, p. 192). However, in one point of *The Will to Power* Nietzsche explicitly distinguishes will to power and drives: "*Schopenhauer's* basic misunderstanding of the *will* (as if craving, instinct, drive were the *essence* of will) is typical: lowering the value of the will to the point of making a real mistake. ...for the will is precisely that which treats cravings as their master and appoints to them their way and measure." (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 52). Nietzsche, cannot here be referring to will in the conventional sense of human will to do something because he would then give consciousness a commanding power over instincts and drives which he has explicitly and repeatedly denied. He must be referring to the will to power then. But if will to power is not a drive or, as we said above, the general energising force in human psyche similar to libido, then it takes a very obscure, metaphysical meaning and arrests the understanding of Nietzsche's theory or human psychology. It is more likely that Nietzsche tries to say that will to power is not one drive among others, but the most general and archaic form of affect from which all other drives derive their energy; will to power is, more precisely, the object-specific libidinal energy mentioned above, at the bases of all other drives.

Drives, because of their origin in will to power, have a "lust to rule; each one has its perspective that it would like to compel all the other drives to accept as a norm" (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 267). This has, as a result, the unconscious life of the psyche to look like a battleground of war of all against all (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 359) of which consciousness is only scantily aware or hopelessly "torn back and forth":

*"Irresponsibility and innocence.* Man's complete lack of responsibility, for his behavior and for his nature, is the bitterest drop which the man of knowledge must swallow, if he had been in the habit of seeing responsibility and duty as humanity's claim to nobility. ...[actions are] chemical processes, and the clash of elements, the agony of the sick man who yearns for recovery, these have no more earned merit than do those inner struggles and crises in which a man is torn back and forth by various motives until

he finally decides for the most powerful – as is said (in truth until the most powerful motive decides about us)” (Nietzsche, 2004, pp. 74-75).

That “the body is only a social structure composed of many souls” (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 49) inflicts a decisive blow to the Cartesian supposition of the immediate certainty of the “I”, a supposition which Nietzsche considers as common sense (Nietzsche, 1968, pp. 267-268).

However, the situation of the warring clusters of drives that alternate in domination are, as we will see in the next section, the source of the multiple perspectives of the world inside the same person and are also, for Nietzsche, the source of the “diseased” condition of man in relation to the animals (Nietzsche, 1968, pp. 149-150). Viewing the multiplicity of souls as a problem<sup>36</sup> for the species, even if it brings with it some advantages to some members of the species in relation to other members, Nietzsche seeks a solution by the supposition of the unity of self as a goal, as Nehamas insightfully puts it (Nehamas, 1985, pp. 177-178). Gemes, who is inspired by Nehamas, agrees on this point (Gemes, 2001, p. 339). Nehamas, however ends up with a too “modern”, too rationalistic conception of Nietzsche’s views: Nietzsche’s view, even of the unified self under the domination of one cluster of drives only, is, in our view, neither that “desire follows thought” nor that “the distinction between choice and constraint” disappears (Nehamas, 1985, p. 187). In our understanding, dominated drives never stop to fight for the power of domination and the contradictions in the psyche are never resolved entirely as new contradictions are constantly generated for Nietzsche, as we will see shortly. Gemes observes that: “[t]he dogma of a pre-given unified self generates certain complacency and that is the core of Nietzsche’s objection. Assuming a world of ready-made beings it allows for the suppression of the problem of becoming” (Gemes, 2001, p. 342). However, if we suppose that the unity of self is somehow achieved *once and for all*, the problem of becoming is suppressed again, only on a different level.

Gemes is sensitive to the problems of Nehamas’ views and takes a different approach by recognising the irrationally-based unity of the self (Gemes, 2001, pp. 344-345). Consciousness and conscious effort on the part of the subject has a role to play in the creation of this unity, which is,

however, limited to that of the “catalyst” in the unconscious raging battle (Gemes, 2001, pp. 345-346). We are here before the problem of the relation between subject and object, where subject is the conscious efforts and object is the unconscious drives, the will to power. In Gemes’ view it seems that the unconscious drives have priority and circumscribe the limits of the potentialities of a human being, a human being, however, who is not a passive and helpless object in the hands of their drives, but has a degree of influence in the articulation of their libidinal constitution. In actual fact, however, we think that Nietzsche’s view is far from smooth, rather is teeming with contradictory frictions on this point, as will be demonstrated later in this chapter, in the section on revaluation of values.

Now, that becoming is never arrested for Nietzsche is quite plain by the following words uttered by Zarathustra:

“How does this happen? I asked myself. What persuades the living to obey and command and to still practice obedience while commanding? Hear my words, you wisest ones! Check seriously to see whether I crept into the very heart of life and into the roots of its heart! Wherever I found the living, there I found the will to power; and even in the will of the serving I found the will to be master. ...Along secret passages the weaker sneaks into the fortress and straight to the heart of the more powerful – and there it steals power. And this secret life itself spoke to me: “Behold,” it said, “I am that *which must always overcome itself*. To be sure, you call it will to beget or drive to a purpose, to something higher, more distant, more manifold: but all this is one, and one secret...Whatever I may create and however I may love it – soon I must oppose it and my love, thus my will wants it. ...Truly, I say to you: good and evil that would be everlasting – there is no such thing! They must overcome themselves out of themselves again and again. ...And whoever must be a creator in good and evil – truly, he must first be an annihilator and break values.” (Nietzsche, 2006, pp. 89-90)

So, Nietzsche plunges into the depths of life to find will to power and at the bottom of will to power finds self-overcoming as the essence of will to power. This means that becoming is a constant process, that we, as much as the overman, as the vehicles of will to power, are engaged in a constant and open-ended process of self-overcoming.

Abandoning the idea of a once and for all unified self, abandoning identity thinking and the notion of the "I", is for Nietzsche tantamount to the impossibility of thought itself (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 269). Nevertheless, there are two passages in which Nietzsche seems to talk about the "I" and the ego not as a concession to the requirements of thought but as if he was succumbing to traditional philosophy; the first comes from the *Genealogy of Morals* and is where Nietzsche argues that the philosophising ascetic priest will downgrade "the entire conceptual antithesis of "subject" and "object"" as error and finally will renounce belief in the ""reality"" of ego. Of course, one could note here that the word "reality" of ego is in quotation marks, a fact that denotes that ego is not actually a reality (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 118). The second passage we have in mind, however, does not have such ambiguity: "[b]ut at the bottom of us, 'right down deep', there is, to be sure, something unteachable, a granite stratum of spiritual fate, of predetermined decision and answer to predetermined selected questions. In the case of every cardinal problem there speaks an unchangeable 'this is I';" (Nietzsche, 1990, pp. 162-163). We must note straight away that the "I" here does not refer to the subject in the rationalistic sense, i.e. to the ego, but is located "right down deep" in the unconscious. However, it functions just like the rationalist subject securing the identity of the organism. The only difference is that the agent of unity has sunk into the unconscious. This case does not seem to be a slip of the pen but a declaration contradicting the rest of Nietzsche's thought about the subject, the significance of which will become visible later.

A lot more could be said about Nietzsche as the 'philosopher of the unconscious', for instance, about his insistence that thinking is happening mostly unconsciously (Nietzsche, 1968, pp. 264, 284, 357); about conscious thinking being directed by instincts (Nietzsche 1990, p. 35) etc. However, the unconscious nature and centrality of will to power in Nietzsche's thought have been, we think,



sufficiently stressed so as to substantiate the claim. For now, we are ready and it is time to move on and see Nietzsche's perspectivism.

## Perspectivism

The theory of the will to power supports Nietzsche's idea of perspectivism, "the view that *all* doctrines and opinions are only partial and limited by a particular point of view" (Solomon, 1996, p. 183). This is quite clear in the following passage from *The Will to Power*, dated between 1883 and 1888:

"In so far as the word "knowledge" has any meaning, the world is knowable; but it is *interpretable* otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings. – "Perspectivism." It is our needs that interpret the world; our drives and their For and Against. Every drive is a kind of lust to rule; each one has its perspective that it would like to compel all the other drives to accept as a norm." (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 267)

Similarly, in *Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche is talking about perspectivism as the "future "objectivity"" of mankind, objectivity

"understood not as "contemplation without interest" (which is a nonsensical absurdity), but as the ability *to control* one's Pro and Con and to dispose of them, so that one knows how to employ a *variety* of perspectives and affective interpretations in the service of knowledge...There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective "knowing"; and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our "concept" of this thing, our "objectivity", be." (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 119).

The objectivity referred to in inverted commas here is not the traditional objectivity which would compel everyone in its truth but the sense of the object, the sense of the objectivity of the object. We will see later, in the subsequent chapters, Deleuze's celebration of perspectivism and Adorno's

radicalisation of the notion of the 'objectivity of the object', at the same time when he objects to perspectivism.

Here we need to note that apart from this epistemological aspect of perspectivism there is also the moral aspect, the perspectivism of morals:

"Insight: all evaluation is made from a definite perspective: that of the preservation of the individual, a community, a race, a state, a church, a faith, a culture, – Because we forget that valuation is always from a perspective, a single individual contains within him a vast confusion of contradictory valuations and consequently of contradictory drives. This is the expression of the diseased condition in man, in contrast to the animals in which all existing instincts answer to quite definite tasks. ...The wisest man would be the one richest in contradictions, who has, as it were, antennae for all types of men ..." (Nietzsche, 1968, pp. 149-150).

It is not only our knowledge which is formed by our interests and drives but also our evaluations, our morals. And from the fact that people most of the time embody a plurality of contradictory valuations Nietzsche deduces that again it is the presence of the plurality of drives in us that accounts for the plurality of our evaluations.

Finally, we must observe that perspectivism is forced upon us not only by the realisation of the multiplicity of wills to power that work through us, but also as a consequence of nihilism, of the loss of the objective meaning and value of life, and only if we embrace perspectivism do we stand a chance of finding a way out of nihilism; Zarathustra's prescription 'find your own way' points in this direction:

"And I never liked asking the way – that always offended my taste! I preferred to question and try the way myself. All my coming and going was a trying and questioning – and truly, one must also *learn* to answer such questioning! That, however – is my taste: - not good, not bad, but *my* taste, of which I am no longer shameful nor secretive.

“This – it turns out – is *my* way – where is yours?” – That is how I answered those who asked me “the way.” *The way* after all – it does not exist!” (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 156).

## **Critique of rationality and the question of power**

In the section on the will to power we tried to establish Nietzsche as the philosopher of the unconscious. To a large extent, he rather than Freud, deserves the honours for this discovery. Freud himself has once said that “Nietzsche, the other philosopher whose premonitions and insights often agree in the most amazing manner with the laborious results of psychoanalysis, I have long avoided for this very reason.” (cited in Kaufmann, 1974, pp. 182-183, note 2). In *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche observed that “...the greater part of conscious thinking must still be counted among the instinctive activities, and this is so even in the case of philosophical thinking...most of a philosopher’s conscious thinking is secretly directed and compelled into definite channels by his instincts.” (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 35). Thus, thinking sinks into the unconscious and with it sinks in the unconscious the centre which gives unity in the organism (Nietzsche, 1974, p. 85). Therefore, rationality and consciousness find the ground under their feet taken away.

But Nietzsche’s critique of rationality does not stop in this irrationalistic aspect. He moves on to criticise rationality on rationalistic grounds too, and brands “the unconditional and self-identical” (the laws of logic) as “fictions”. They are not to be found anywhere outside our own heads, they do not correspond to the reality of the objective world but are only useful for the self-preservation of the species, for the domination of the species over nature. This usefulness, however, does not make these fictions any more true: contrary to Arthur Danto’s assertion that Nietzsche holds a pragmatic view of truth as usefulness (Clark, 1990, p. 12) Nietzsche explicitly rejects that the usefulness of a belief makes it true. What he does say is that the charge of untruth does not mean that these fictions are rejected for that reason. This view represents a novelty and the difficulty of Nietzsche’s thought, the element that places his epistemology “beyond good and evil” as he notes:

“The falseness of a judgment is to us not necessarily an objection to a judgment: it is here that our new language perhaps sounds strangest. The question is to what extent it is life-advancing, life-preserving, perhaps even species-breeding; and our fundamental tendency is to assert that the falsest judgements (to which synthetic judgments *a priori* belong) are the most indispensable to us, that without granting as true the fictions of logic, without measuring reality against the purely invented world of the unconditional and self-identical, without a continual falsification of the world by means of numbers, mankind could not live – that to renounce false judgments would be to renounce life, would be to deny life. To recognize untruth as a condition of life: that, to be sure, means to resist customary value-sentiments in a dangerous fashion; and a philosophy which ventures to do so places itself, by that act alone, beyond good and evil.” (Nietzsche, 1990, pp. 35-36).

This is a point in which many commentators, including the bulk of the postmodernists, are led astray: how can it be that one can sustain a belief which they are as acutely aware as Nietzsche is that it is not true? Dualisms also, such as subject and object, essence and appearance, true and false, are severely criticised by Nietzsche and yet retained in his work: to argue that “the faith in antithetical values” is the hallmark of the metaphysicians (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 34) is not the same as abandoning these values altogether; in Nietzsche’s case is meant to alert us to the possibility that antithetical concepts are not mutually exclusive but are entwined with one another and originate from one another; it is meant as a covert critique of identity thinking, identity thinking that does not allow “A and not A” to be true simultaneously:

“It might even be possible that *what* constitutes the value of those good and honoured things resides precisely in their being artfully related, knotted and crocheted to these wicked, apparently antithetical things, perhaps even in their being essentially identical with them. Perhaps! – But who is willing to concern himself with such dangerous perhapses!” (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 34)

Similarly, the notion of ego must be retained as Nietzsche writes in the notes of *The Will to power*:

“Must all philosophy not ultimately bring to light the precondition upon which the process of reason depends? – our belief in the “ego” as a substance, as the sole reality from which we ascribe reality to things in general?...Here we come to a limit: our thinking itself involves this belief (with its distinction of substance, accident: deed, doer, etc.); to let it go means being no longer able to think.” (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 269)

This retention and indispensability of such “false” notions is an element of the overcoming that mankind has to undertake if it is to find a way out of nihilism and its difficulty justifies Nietzsche’s claim that such overcoming is tantamount to the overcoming of man as a species. We will see later on, in Chapters 3 and 4, how Adorno’s negative dialectics modifies and retains the necessity in the belief in what for Nietzsche are ‘erroneous’ notions. We will see why we claim that Nietzsche is not only the philosopher of the unconscious but also the philosopher of nonidentity in the Adornean sense.

Here, we now need to stress the connection and exact nature of the connection between rationality and power in Nietzsche’s philosophy. We saw just a moment ago that what is called truth is for Nietzsche more of a fiction that advances the self-preservation of the species rather than truth proper. In this way, truth is related to power, since self-preservation is secured by the power exercised over objects or nature. Nietzsche explicitly relates self-preservation and will to power: “A living thing desires above all to *vent* its strength – life as such is will to power – : self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent *consequences* of it.” (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 44). There are, however, also direct references to the connection between truth, knowledge and power in Nietzsche’s work: “Knowledge works as a tool of power. Hence it is plain that it increases with every increase of power – ... In other words: the measure of the desire for knowledge depends upon the measure to which the will to power grows in a species: ...” (Nietzsche, 1968, pp. 266, 267).

What is more, is that the will to power, as we already argued in the relevant section, is regrettably considered by Nietzsche as will *for* power in all its forms. First, we have repeated

assertions that seeking power is an incontrovertible fact of all life. Thus in *Beyond Good and Evil*: “life itself is *essentially* appropriation, injury, overpowering of the strange and weaker, suppression, severity, imposition of one’s own forms, incorporation and, at the least and mildest, exploitation ...” (Nietzsche, 1990, pp. 193-194); thus in *The Will to Power*: “Life, as the form of being most familiar to us, is specifically a will to the accumulation of force; all the processes of life depend on this: nothing wants to preserve itself, everything is to be added and accumulated.” (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 368); and again: “There is nothing to life that has value, except the degree of power – assuming that life is the will to power.” (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 37); thus in the *Anti-Christ*: “I consider life itself instinct for growth, for continuance, for accumulation of forces, for *power*: where the will to power is lacking there is decline.” (Nietzsche, 2003a, pp. 129-130). In all these cases the meaning of will to power is best understood as strive for power in the conventional sense, which seems, ‘in the first instance’, to be the meaning of the controversial term. And we say ‘in the first instance’ because, as we will argue in Chapter 4, Nietzsche introduces underneath this meaning a meaning ‘in the second instance’, a meaning with a dialectical twist, which is pointed at by interpretations like Deleuze’s, Kaufmann’s (who understands will to power as the classical antiquity’s term ‘*dynamis*’ or ‘*potentia*’ (Kaufmann, 1974, p. 186)), and even more so by Ansell-Pearson’s who understands it as combining the interpretations of Deleuze and Kaufmann. Ansell-Pearson argues that the noun “*macht*” in *Wille zur Macht* derives from the verb “*mögen*” – meaning want, desire – and the adjective “*möglich*” – meaning potential. It does not mean strength “but an ‘accomplishment’ of the will overcoming or overcoming itself.” (Ansell-Pearson, 1997, p. 46). However, we think it would be a mistake not to acknowledge that there is a primary, as it were, meaning of *macht* as strength or lust for power in Nietzsche, which Hollingdale’s (Hollingdale, 1999, p. 158) and, unfortunately, the Nazis’ interpretation captures. In all the above-mentioned passages replacing “seeking of power” with “desire to empower” (Deleuze), or “potential” (Kaufmann, Ansell-Pearson), or accomplishment (Ansell-Pearson) does not make good sense. It is telling that Nietzsche is going so far as to propose the construction of a quantitative scale of force against which

all values can be measured and according to which can be given an order of rank (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 378).

However, what is even more important is that Nietzsche does not only acknowledge lust for power as a fact of life but also concedes that this is also how things *ought* to be. Thus, paying tribute to the true philosophers, in *Beyond Good and Evil* he notes: “Actual philosophers, however, are commanders and law-givers: they say ‘thus it shall be!, it is they who determine the Wherefore and Wither of mankind, ...Their ‘knowing’ is *creating*, their creating is a law-giving, their will to truth is – *will to power*.” (Nietzsche, 1990, pp. 142-143).

If we took such pains to make this point is for two reasons: the first is that we should not overlook the complicity of Nietzsche’s thought to the Nazi appropriation,<sup>37</sup> and the second is that Nietzsche’s critique of Enlightenment rationality *is not* at the same time critique of domination, as it becomes in Adorno while the poststructuralist critique of power is not to be found in Nietzsche either.

We can now turn to Nietzsche’s positive proposal for a way out of nihilism, his idea of overman, of revaluation of values and of eternal return.

## Overman

That overman is at the core of Nietzsche’s thought as part of the solution to the problem of the death of god and nihilism, seems to be a well-established view (for instance: Ansell-Pearson, 2005a, p. 18; Gillespie, 2005, p. 53). Time and time again Zarathustra exclaims: “*I teach you the overman. Human being is something that must be overcome. What have you done to overcome him?*”, and “*I want to teach humans the meaning of their being, which is the overman, the lightning from the dark cloud ‘human being’*” (Nietzsche, 2006, pp. 5 & 12).

It is useful to start the exposition of the characteristics of the overman with a passage from *The Will to Power* where Nietzsche connects his fundamental approach to existence as being contradictory, with the “highest man” (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 470). The man Nietzsche has in mind in

this passage is not actually any man but the overman themselves. If we are right, then the overman embraces the contradictory character of reality and does not try to deny it; his thought can stand contradictions and he is himself contradictory too, as Nietzsche states: "The essential point is: the greatest [men] perhaps also possess great virtues, but in that case also their opposites. I believe that it is precisely through the presence of opposites and the feelings they occasion that the great man, *the bow with the great tension*, develops." (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 507). It is true that here too Nietzsche seems to talk about man and not the overman: man needs this tension to cross over the bridge between him and the overman, man is this bridge (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 7). However, we have to ask ourselves what will happen with the above-mentioned tension when the overman is arrived at? Will it go away? Will the fundamental contradictory character of reality go away too? If we answer yes then we are also conceding that becoming is arrested and transformed into being, but we saw in the section on will to power that this is not at all Nietzsche's position. The will to power that works through man in the process of crossing over to overman constantly sets new goals and turns against itself, trying to overcome itself. If will to power is the "secret of all life" and has at its core self-overcoming, will the arrival of the overman change its character? We have no evidence in Nietzsche's corpus of anything of that sort; therefore we must either keep silent about the overman and adopt an agnostic stance ("we cannot know how the overman will be like") or, which is more likely in our view, infer that Nietzsche believed that tensions and contradictions characteristic of man in the process of crossing over to the overman, different tensions and contradictions perhaps, will carry on animating the unconscious and conscious life of the overman too.

The most fundamental tension that the overman is called upon to resolve is the tension between, on the one hand, a world and a life without objective meaning and value and, on the other, the need, the desire if you prefer, of man to have meaning in life and value life, i.e. the overcoming of nihilism. Nietzsche's position is that if the world does not have meaning we have to create it along with the creation of new values: time and time again Zarathustra talks about "the creative one", the 'bestowing principle' the "creation of new values" (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 14, 157). The one who



creates a goal for mankind is, of course, the overman who is giving meaning to life through the revaluation of old values and the creation of new ones. In this way, revaluation of values and overman are entwined.

The resolution of the tension between meaninglessness and meaningfulness presupposes, of course, that overman is the bearer of active forces and affirmative will to power, that they are out there in a quest for more power. This is a disconcerting but inescapable consequence of Nietzsche's thought: if all living is animated by will to power, if wherever will to power is lacking there is degeneration and nihilism and if overmen is the type of subjectivity needed for the overcoming of nihilism, it has to follow that an essential feature of the overman is that they are involved in a constant quest for more power. This is also the only substantial content in the outlook of overman that can be extracted from Nietzsche's thought.

Another essential feature of the overman is their ability to withstand and actively seek solitude. The creation of new values for oneself, of the good and evil for oneself demands departure from the dominant, or not so dominant, valuations of the many, an existential search for one's 'true', so to speak, self as Zarathustra declares (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 46, 58). These passages sound very much like calling for an existentialist search of authenticity as the necessary precondition out of which the overman will arise, who is "like only to himself" (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 59), the 'authentic being par excellence'.

Towards the same direction moves another pronouncement of Zarathustra, the inversion of the evaluation of the "you" and the "I" away from the "you" of the neighbour and towards the "I" of the friend (Nietzsche, 2006, pp. 44-45). What is interesting in this passage is that the call for a break from the morality and social control of the many, represented by the neighbour, is not drily counterposed to the development of individuality but is related to the otherness of the friend. Individuality need not necessarily result in competition between egoists but can end up in the mutual respect between friends as prefigurations of the overman.

Such an interpretation is consonant with the elevation of the 'bestowing virtue' to the status of the highest virtue (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 56). The bestowing principle, of course, refers primarily to the ability to ascribe value and meaning to the meaningless world, which is the paramount purpose and capacity of the overman. But overman does not bestow value and meaning in a world without people in it; overmen have to be able to extend their bestowing to other people too, to make them friends. The riches of the overmen are not material possessions but the overflow of their bestowing soul.

Another feature of the overman is somewhat unexpected. Overman is neither more nor less pronounced as the way to freedom! Zarathustra says:

“And you must be redeemed even from those greater than all redeemers, my brothers, if you want to find your way to freedom! Never yet has there been an overman. Naked I saw both, the greatest and the smallest human being – All too similar they are to one another. Truly, even the greatest I found – all too human!” (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 71)

This is a very rare positive evaluation of freedom, freedom which Nietzsche in his notes of *The Will to Power* has declared an impossibility,<sup>38</sup> and which as value is more often associated by Nietzsche with slave morality (Nietzsche, 1990, pp. 197-198). Freedom is of slave origin and therefore, a reactive value. There is obviously a contradiction here, the meaning of which we will explain later in our thesis.

Closely related to the feature of the overman as value-creator is another feature which does not belong exclusively to the essence of the overman but characterises the living in general, namely the idea that one has to and can only become what one is (Nietzsche, 1974, pp. 265-266). In this passage, the creation of one's own laws etc. and the contrast with "the many" hints towards the direction of the nobles and the overman. However, in *The Will to Power* Nietzsche implies that to become what one is is the one and only thing one can do, irrespective of whether they belong to the overman or not: "... in spite of all, one will become only what one is...Our view is rather that vice and virtue are not causes but only consequences. One becomes a decent man because one *is* a

decent man i.e. because one was born a capitalist of good instincts and prosperous circumstances –” (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 182); in this direction points also Nietzsche’s often repeated claim that lambs cannot act like birds of prey and vice versa: therefore, slaves and reactive beings can also only become what they are. Nehamas, as we saw in the section of will to power, explains “become what one is” in terms of the positing on Nietzsche’s part of the unity of the self as a goal and not as a given. However, this explanation leads in one of the aporias of Nietzsche’s thought for many readers, noted by Nehamas: “Nietzsche’s enterprise, however, may still appear to many of his readers to be doomed from its beginning. No one has managed to bring life closer to literature than he did, and yet the two may finally refuse to become one, making his ideal of unity impossible to approach.” (Nehamas, 1985, p. 198). We think that there is a way out of this aporia, if we see Nietzsche as a dialectical in the Adornean sense thinker and the view expressed as being of dialectical nature, but the articulation of this way out here would lead us beyond the scope of this chapter and we will leave it for later, for Chapter 4.

## **Revaluation of values**

We have already seen that revaluation is a constituent part of overman and that it plays an important role in the overcoming of nihilism. Clark goes so far as to claim that the project of revaluation is the most central of Nietzsche’s aspirations (Clark, 2012, p. 87). We think that revaluation is not an end in Nietzsche’s thought but a means to an end. The end always is the overcoming of nihilism. To the extent that revaluation consists in replacing life-depreciating values with life-affirming values, as Clark notes, it plays an important instrumental role to this end; however, the affirmation of life is the meeting point of overman and revaluation and it is not helpful to give greater importance to any of these two elements in Nietzsche’s thought: they represent a binding, mutually dependant whole.

What does revaluation mean? Kaufmann and Rosen argue that revaluation does not involve the creation of new values, contrary to Nietzsche's many explicit statements, but the reinstatement of the old, archaic Greek or Renaissance ones (Kaufmann, 1974, pp. 110-112; Rosen, 1995, p. 5). However, although the archaic values seem to be closer to the valuations that Nietzsche considers acceptable, the criteria used for the revaluation are precise and rather modern. The criterion is that of positivistic science: quantification. What gives or takes greater quantity of force has greater value than that which gives or takes less force (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 378). The point of view for moral valuations becomes physiological. In this way revaluation is bonded to the theory of the will to power: "The will to power. – How those men would have to be constituted who took upon themselves this revaluation. Order of rank as order of power: ..." (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 457). Kaufmann observes that "*the quantitative degree of power is the measure of value*" (Kaufmann, 1974, p. 200) but, strangely, does not evaluate the distinctly modern character of Nietzsche's mode of revaluation. For these reasons we are not going to exclude from the project of revaluation the possibility of the creation of new values and we, like Nietzsche, consider the two terms, "revaluation" and "creation of new values", interchangeable (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 22). To conclude with the criterion of valuation we need to stress that although on numerous occasions in Nietzsche's work it seems that the highest criterion of value is life, what enhances life or the fullness of life,<sup>39</sup> this is not the case. In *Zarathustra*, on the aphorism "On self-Overcoming", the same aphorism where the will to power is declared to be "the very heart of life" and self-overcoming "the roots of its heart", Nietzsche notes that "[m]uch is esteemed more highly by life than life itself; yet out of esteeming itself speaks – the will to power" (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 90). The value of life can be considered by Nietzsche's own valuation as higher to the values that depreciate life and produce nihilism, but the increase of power is for him *the highest* criterion of value not life itself.

Revaluation of values always involves a destruction of old values; the creation of new values always follows the destruction of the old ones: "Change of values – that is the change of creators. Whoever must be a creator always annihilates" (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 43).

Revaluation of values is founded on the singularity of will to power (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 57). The singularity of willing, the fact that all secondary wills must be aligned behind a single will which is dominant, is the basis of revaluation of values. It creates a new order of rank among values according to this alignment. This prescription is founded on Nietzsche's theory of will to power, which we saw earlier, and which is also at the base of Nietzsche's desire for an "order of rank" among values.

How do values emerge according to Nietzsche? Aspers argues that there are in Nietzsche two ways that values emerge: through resentment and through economic exchange (Aspers, 2007, p. 486). This is undoubtedly true. In the *Genealogy of Morals* we can see both of these mechanisms: the archetype of the emergence of values from the sphere of exchange is the production of the value of punishment from the relation between creditor and debtor (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 63), while the account of the emergence of Christian valuations from the Jewish resentment is the respective archetype of the mechanism of the production of values through resentment (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 34).

However, in Nietzsche's notes of *The Will to Power* he experimented with another mechanism of the production of values, closer to the type of active creation of values by the overman, the emergence of values and moralities through an act of will of great individuals (Nietzsche, 1968, pp. 501-502).<sup>40</sup> Nietzsche makes this claim in the context of his answer to the question "how shall the earth as a whole be governed" and he is not referring to the moulding of overman in particular. However, a few lines later he says that the future morality will have the task of training "a ruling caste – the future *masters of the earth*" (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 502). What is more, Nietzsche says that the will of man can be educated (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 484), that in the age of science "man acquires leisure: to cultivate himself into something new, higher. New aristocracy", and that is high time to consciously "breed" the opposite type of the "herd animal" that man now is (Nietzsche, 1968, pp. 500 and 501). All these suggest that the overmen, the new aristocracy of the future, will emerge through cultivation, through cultural education over a long period of time.<sup>41</sup> But, according to

Nietzsche, culture up till now has been taken hold of by the forces of resentment (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 42). There needs to be a different culture, cultivating different will and different, active values in order for overman to emerge. Therefore, revaluation of values must have a double meaning and purpose: on the one hand refers to the replacement of reactive and life depreciating valuations with active and affirmative ones; on the other hand, refers to the process of cultivation of such valuations, to the replacement of a reactive culture by an active culture. In the *Genealogy of Morals* this necessary stage of the transformation of culture is not clear and Nietzsche places himself somewhat miraculously at the end of this process (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 59).

Now, we have to look a bit closer as to how cultural education as revaluation can produce the effect Nietzsche desires according to his own views, since the view that the will can be educated does not sit comfortably neither with Nietzsche's already noted predominance of the unconscious (will to power) over the conscious nor with his assertion that lambs cannot act like birds of prey nor with his view about an "unteachable... 'this is I'" we mentioned at the end of the section on the will to power.

There are a series of passages that create an explosive tension in Nietzsche's thought in this respect. First, we have a passage from the *Twilight of the Idols* in which Nietzsche gives a hint about the meaning of what he calls "the innocence of becoming" (Nietzsche, 2003b, p. 65). Innocence of becoming is here the absolute unconditionality from external factors (god, society, parents, ancestors) and irresponsibility on the part of the individual for their constitution as persons and for their actions. It is as if one is born a certain way ("the fatality of their nature") and there and then their whole life is decided, a view which sounds like a secular version of the Protestant idea of predestination.<sup>42</sup> The view of absolute irresponsibility has been advanced already in *Human, all too Human* in connection with the rejection of the existence of free will, only with the difference that there, an absolute conditionality was proposed (Nietzsche, 2004, p. 43). The common ground of the two passages is the conclusion of the irresponsibility of man, either because of total determination of their being from the external conditions (man's nature is the inevitable outgrowth

of past and present things in the passage from *Human, all too Human*), or because their nature is totally unconditional in relation to external factors and absolutely conditioning their present and future (passage from the *Twilight of the Idols*). In both cases an identity between subject (consciousness) and object is assumed, in the first case between subject (consciousness) and external factors and in the second between subject (consciousness) and internal factors (their “nature”).

Things are complicated even further by other passages to the opposite effect, namely that the conditioning of the subject (consciousness) is not total, like one passage from *Human, all too Human* (Nietzsche, 2004, p. 76). Here we are told that innocence (of becoming) can be “implanted”, by cultivation in men during “thousands of years” of training. And in *Daybreak* Nietzsche concedes that “we have to *learn to think differently* – in order at last, perhaps very late on to attain even more: *to feel differently*” (cited in Dries, 2010, p. 34). These passages presuppose that consciousness (the subject) can also have a determining effect in the unconscious (object), which is quite the opposite of what was argued on the previously cited passages, and which suggests that the determination between subject and object works both ways for Nietzsche. A first sketch of the idea of the eternal return cited by Ansell-Pearson points in the same direction. Ansell-Pearson argues that Nietzsche’s idea of the eternal return is his solution to this riddle, the riddle of the relation between freedom and predestination (or of the relation between subject and object in our perspective):

“A draft sketch of this aphorism [aphorism 341 of *The Gay Science* where Nietzsche presents the idea of the eternal return, NK] from 1881 makes his intellectual concern clear. Here Nietzsche presents it as the “thought of thoughts”, offering it as a response to a well-known philosophical problem: to what extent are we free in what we do or is everything predetermined? The task of the return of the same is that of gaining a degree of power over our actions: “Thought and belief are a weight pressing down on me as much as and even more than any other weight. You say that food, a location, air, society transform and condition you: well your opinions do so even more, since it is

they that determine your choice of food, dwelling, air, society. If you incorporate this thought within you, amongst your other thoughts, it will transform you. The question in everything that you will: 'am I certain I want to do it an infinite number of times?' will become for you the heaviest weight'" (Ansell-Pearson, 2005a, pp. 5-6).<sup>43</sup>

We see here Nietzsche arguing that one's "opinions" can influence their being, can influence who they are and determine their being more than external factors such as location and social surrounding. These passages show that consciousness can have a strong influence on both the external and the internal object of the subject. From this whole discussion it seems to us that Nietzsche oscillates between two contradictory opinions: the total determinacy of consciousness from external factors or internal nature (drives) and the decisively determining effect of consciousness on these same factors, without ever being able to somehow bind them together. We think there is a way to move beyond this contradiction if we conceptualise it as a dialectical, nonidentity contradiction in the Adornean sense, but this requires resources that we have not yet developed and here it is not the place to do so (this will be done in the subsequent chapters, especially Chapter 4). We only want to document that Nietzsche's irrationalistically-oriented thought leads him again into a contradiction.

Finally, to come back to the question posed earlier of how cultural education as revaluation can effect the changes in the individual Nietzsche desires, we would say that we do not find any explicit answer in Nietzsche's work other than the assertion that through the repetition over thousands of years of an affirmative cultural education arrived at spontaneously by a combination of creative ingenuity and accident, the will to power of the individual will be transformed. However, the 'mechanics' of this transformation and how exactly the fatality of human nature, according to Nietzsche's own views, will be overcome remains a mystery.<sup>44</sup> Nietzsche's thought, we will argue in Chapter 4, implicitly, provides the resources for a solution to this mystery, resources consisting in the dialectical nature of his thinking, but these resources remained unutilised by Nietzsche himself.



## Eternal return

Eternal return is Nietzsche's most controversial and paradoxical idea. Together with overman and the revaluation of values it represents the peak of his project, if this project is understood as the overcoming of nihilism. In fact, it has been argued that overman and revaluation of values are only advanced by Nietzsche in order to facilitate the idea of the eternal return, the "thought of thoughts" and "the greatest weight" as Nietzsche brands it (Ansell-Pearson, 2005a, pp. 5-6, 8-11; Ansell-Pearson, 1992, p. 322).

Eternal return can be conceived and is advanced by Nietzsche in two distinct senses: a cosmological and a moral sense. As a cosmological principle it means that all things and events in life have happened before exactly as they are happening now and have done so in the past and will do so in the future an infinite number of times (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 178).<sup>45</sup> As a cosmological idea, eternal return is as unfounded, metaphysical and ridiculous as the idea of heaven and hell.

However, the moral sense of eternal return is much more interesting and much less easily dismissed. It is first expounded in *The Gay Science*, §341:

*"The greatest weight:* – What, if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: "This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it. But every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence – even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself. The eternal hourglass of existence is turned upside down again and again, and you with it, speck of dust!" Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: "You are a god and never have I heard anything more divine." If this thought gained possession of

you, it would change you as you are or perhaps crush you. The question in each and every thing, “Do you desire this once more and innumerable times more?” would lie upon your actions as the greatest weight. Or how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life *to crave nothing more fervently* than this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal?” (Nietzsche, 1974, pp. 273-274).

In this form (which repeats the cosmological sense) eternal return takes also a moral sense. It is meant to measure the extent at which one affirms the life they have lived, or life as a phenomenon in general. If one is ready to live this self-same in all its details life once more and innumerable times more then they satisfy Nietzsche’s requirement for the affirmation of life. The thought of the eternal return can also be used as criterion of the worthwhileness of any individual act: only acts that we are prepared to do again an innumerable number of times are worthwhile doing; only those actions the return of which we are prepared to relive an infinite number of times are active and only when we are prepared to relive the eternal return of our actions do we affirm life in the Nietzschean sense.

However, the thought of eternal return in this ethical sense is not an easy thought. The interpretation that when Nietzsche talks about affirmation of life he means affirmation of every single event that has ever happened and will happen, constitutes the difficulty of the thought of eternal return, a difficulty formulated powerfully by Gillespie: “To will the eternal recurrence means not merely to accept the murder and torture of children as necessary, but also to commit those murders and to carry out that torture, and *to want to do so*. The superman in this sense is infinitely distant from the innocence of the child.” (Gillespie, 2005, p. 63).<sup>46</sup> The “innocence of the child” in Nietzsche in this connection is a reference to the three transformations on the way to overman: how the “spirit” first becomes camel, the camel becomes lion and the lion becomes child in the section ‘On the three metamorphoses’ of *Zarathustra* (Nietzsche, 2006, pp. 16-17). The innocence of the child, however, is a portrayal of the innocence of becoming which appears to have two contradictory senses in Nietzsche. The first, appearing in the *Twilight of the Idols*, we mentioned

above, and has the meaning of the “fatality of nature”, the total irresponsibility of man for their actions. Here, on the occasion of eternal return, Ansell-Pearson proposes an opposite understanding of the “innocence of becoming”, an understanding as singularity, i.e. as the indeterminacy of the creative moment which can also be depicted by the image of a child:

“What the spirit of gravity cannot grasp is the teaching on time that Zarathustra’s vision and the riddle confronts him with. The gaze of the spirit is focused on the circle and not on that which makes the circle come onto being or appear as such. The eternal return of the same is the definition of that which comes in a manner that is innocent and wanton: the singularity of time always comes *the same*. There is no contradiction between the singularity of things and their eternal return simply because what comes back is the innocence of becoming (the moment liberated from the woe of time’s pastness)” (Ansell-Pearson, 2005b, pp. 16-17).

What the “singularity of time” in eternal return means, then, is that what is returning is the indeterminacy of the moment, the chance to act in one way or another, again.

Here we are reaching a double contradiction: firstly, a contradiction between two irreconcilably formulated notions of the innocence of becoming in Nietzsche’s thought (fatality of nature vs indeterminacy of the present); secondly, a contradiction between a notion of eternal return as repetition of the past, including all its barbarity, and a notion of eternal return as repetition of the indeterminacy of the present. The tackling of these two contradictions requires resources and a discussion that belong to Chapter 4 (see Chapter 4, section “Nonidentity concept of life...”).

What is more, the thought of eternal return, seems from what is said in aphorism 341 of *The Gay Science*, to also have a transformative intention. It is presented by Nietzsche as having the force to effect a transformation on those who ponder on it, a transformation of attitude from reactive to active, from nihilistic to affirmative predisposition. However, this intention contradicts aspects of Nietzsche’s thought, most strikingly his declarations about the birds of prey and about lambs:

neither of them can act in any other way than the way they are, and on top of that birds of prey do not need to, while lambs cannot and *should not* as well! We hit again the same dead end in Nietzsche's thought that, as we observed, runs throughout his thought when it comes to the problem of the overcoming of nihilism and of the transformation of men. Our argument, reserved for Chapter 4, will be that the rational aspect of Nietzsche's critique of identity, undeveloped and underutilised by Nietzsche himself, can afford a way out of this dead end.

### **Nietzsche's critique of dialectics and of identity**

Nietzsche on more than a few occasions refers to dialectics in a derogative manner. In *Genealogy of Morals* (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 154), and in *The Will to Power* notes he argues that one of the consequences of the "tremendous blunders" associated with consciousness is for him that "one approaches reality, "real being" through dialectic" (Nietzsche, 1968, pp. 285-286). However, we can distinguish between at least three kinds of dialectics: Hegel's, Marx's and Adorno's negative dialectics. Nietzsche, of course, must have in mind Hegelian dialectics<sup>47</sup> which he understands as aiming at a reconciliation between opposite terms and as at a par with theology (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 12). The description in this passage is so construed as to fit both the Christian doctrine and Hegel's thought, both aiming at a reconciliation of man with the world, and both being of reactive origin and having nihilistic consequences. Nietzsche's critique of Hegelian dialectics belies Kaufmann's reading of Nietzsche as an Hegelian dialectician, when dialectics is reduced to not thinking "in black and white" (Nietzsche, 1974, p. 99, note 22), as a commitment to question all presuppositions, and as reconciliation between opposites (Kaufmann, 1974, pp. 101, 178).<sup>48</sup>

To be sure, however, Nietzsche does not understand dialectics as nonidentity thinking either, as is evident from a passage from *Anti-Christ* where Jesus is thought as both, exponent of nonidentity and as lacking dialectical thinking at the same time (Nietzsche, 2003a, pp. 156-157).

Nietzsche's nonidentity thesis can be reconstructed from the fragments scattered in his work. The first step is taken in *Human, all too Human* and consists in questioning the belief in identical things and the equalisation of quantities on which our knowledge of the world is based, which Nietzsche thinks is false (Nietzsche, 2004, p. 26). In *Beyond Good and Evil* he becomes more specific and questions the accuracy of the correspondence between the concepts we form and the objects that these concepts refer to: "just as little do we see a tree exactly and entire with regard to its leaves, branches, colour, shape; it is so much easier for us to put together an approximation of a tree." (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 115). This is the meaning of his thesis that truth originates in error (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 33) and had been put forward already in *The Gay Science*: "[t]he dominant tendency, however, to treat as equal what is merely similar – an illogical tendency, for nothing is really equal – is what first created any basis for logic" (Nietzsche, 1974, p. 171). In his notes of *The Will to Power* we find a head-on attack on Aristotelean logic:

"We are unable to affirm and to deny one and the same thing: this is a subjective empirical law, not the expression of any "necessity" but only of an inability. If, according to Aristotle, the law of contradiction is the most certain of all principles, if it is the ultimate and most basic, upon which every demonstrative proof rests, if the principle of every axiom lies in it; then one should consider all the more rigorously what *presuppositions* already lie at the bottom of it. ...Supposing there were no self-identical "A", such as it presupposed by every proposition of logic (and of mathematics), and the "A" were already mere appearance, then logic would have a merely apparent world as its condition. In fact, we believe in this proposition under the influence of ceaseless experience which seems continually to confirm it. ...Here reigns the coarse sensualistic prejudice that sensations teach us truths about things – that I cannot say at the same time of one and the same thing that it is hard and that it is soft. (The instinctive proof "I cannot have two opposite sensations at the same time" – quite coarse and false.)

The conceptual contradiction proceeds from the belief that we are *able* to form

concepts, that the concept not only designates the essence of a thing but *comprehends* it – in fact, logic (like geometry and arithmetic) applies only to fictitious entities that we have created.” (Nietzsche, 1968, pp. 279-280).

All the above elements comprise the rational side of Nietzsche’s critique of identity, which remained underdeveloped and underutilised by Nietzsche himself, and which, as we will see, comprise in most of its essential parts Adorno’s negative dialectics! Nietzsche is not only the philosopher of the unconscious but also the philosopher of nonidentity in the Adornean sense. It is an aspect of Nietzsche’s thought that is missed out by almost all Nietzsche and Adorno commentators, including Peter Dews, who although places the decisive difference between Adorno’s and poststructuralism’s critique of identity precisely on the former’s rationalistic and latter’s irrationalistic critique of consciousness, fails to detect that Adorno’s stance finds its inspiration in Nietzsche’s thought. It is only Gillian Rose and Karin Bauer that we know of making this connection.

However, Nietzsche’s critique on identity goes a step further, where Adorno is reluctant, but poststructuralists are eager to follow. It takes the form of the irrationalistic critique of the rationalistic subject centred around the theory of the will to power which claims that the subject is ravaged by the unconscious battle of antagonistic wills to power and that birds of prey cannot act like lambs (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 45). One cannot act in any other way than the way one is: birds of prey like birds of prey, lambs like lambs. Consciousness is totally controlled by the unconscious drives that dominate the body and there is no centre of control, no subject behind the body other than the drives, the will to power itself. However, as we have seen in the sections of the overman, of revaluation of values and of eternal return, the theory of will to power becomes problematic when confronted with the problem of accounting for change in the character, self-change of the organism. One can argue that by placing self-overcoming at the core of will to power Nietzsche bypasses this problem: it is the will to power itself that propels change and self-change. However, it is difficult for one to see how a self-propelled will to power can transform itself from negative will

to power integrated in reactive forces, into affirmative will to power integrated in active forces, and in fact the birds of prey metaphor excludes this possibility. And if we also take into account Nietzsche's claim that "[n]ever yet has there been an overman. Naked I saw both, the greatest and the smallest human being – All too similar they are to one another. Truly, even the greatest I found – all too human!" (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 71), then we are reaching a dead end: all too human, reactive men, dominated by negative will to power, have to be transformed into active men, dominated by affirmative will to power, a transformation that is impossible according to the above interpretation of Nietzsche's reasoning. As we observed has often been the case, Nietzsche's thought leads to an aporia, a contradiction or a dead end. To see how he could have moved beyond them with the resources of his own thought is a task we reserve for Chapter 4. What we can see already, though, is that Nietzsche's critique of identity has two aspects, one rationalistic and one irrationalistic, which he somehow managed to hold simultaneously together while in his epigones, Adorno and Deleuze, develops into two distinct and irreconcilable perspectives.

## **Conclusion**

The objective of this thesis is the exploration of the appropriation of Nietzsche's thought by poststructuralism and Deleuze, on the one hand, and Critical Theory and Adorno, on the other, with particular emphasis on the aspects of Nietzsche's critique of identity which are appropriated by each of them. In this chapter we presented an interpretation of Nietzsche's thought which makes room for both Deleuze's and Adorno's appropriation, which, however, will become visible in the subsequent chapters unfolding Deleuze's and Adorno's thought.

This interpretation considers the overcoming of nihilism as the central preoccupation of Nietzsche's entire work. Most of his important ideas are meant to contribute to this end: the problem with the reactive forces is the inability of the person under their sway to affirm life and this is why they must be replaced by active forces; life is affirmed when the organism is animated

by affirmative will to power, when the quest for power is affirmed; perspectivism is the way forward if the overcoming of nihilism is to become possible; overman is the type of subjectivity which is needed for the overcoming of nihilism; revaluation of values is the primary capacity of this subjectivity, and cultural education as revaluation is the way in which this subjectivity can come about; eternal return is the touchstone of the affirmation of the value of life.

The irrationalistic side of Nietzsche's critique of identity is founded on his theory of will to power which sinks most of thinking into the unconscious and replaces the unity of self as a given, or as a result of conscious efforts, with the multiplicity of selves which alternate in the domination of the organism, each supplying their own perspective: Nietzsche, we argued, has to be considered 'the philosopher of the unconscious'.

However, in the section on the "Critique of rationality and the question of power" it becomes evident that in the work of Nietzsche is not present only the irrationalistic critique of consciousness and reason, but also their critique from the point of view of rationalism. It was also argued in this section that the much-celebrated critique of power and domination advanced by poststructuralism and Adorno and inspired by Nietzsche, is not to be found in Nietzsche's own thought. What we do find in his thought is the unmasking of power in the nooks and crannies where it is least expected, as well as the affirmation and positive evaluation of this power.

We then tried to highlight some contradictions, aporias and dead ends in Nietzsche's thought when his thought arrives at the moment to point a way out of nihilism. The first of these is the contradiction between overman being proclaimed as the way to freedom and freedom being considered as of slave origin. Then we encountered the aporia, observed by Nehamas and others, of Nietzsche bringing life closer to literature than anyone else before or since but failing to unite them. In the section on "Revaluation of values" we saw an explosive tension in Nietzsche's thought between the determination of man from unconscious internal drives or external factors and the proposal of cultural education on revaluation as the way to produce overman. This explosive tension is reproduced when we come to consider the transformative power that Nietzsche assigns



to the moral sense of eternal return. In the section on eternal return we also encountered another, double contradiction in Nietzsche's thought: we found that his thought is open to two, seemingly irreconcilable interpretations of his idea of the "innocence of becoming" as the fatality of one's nature versus the indeterminacy of the moment, and a contradiction between eternal return as repetition of the past versus eternal return as, again, indeterminacy of the present. Finally, we pointed out in the section of "Nietzsche's critique of dialectics and of identity" that the irrationalistic critique of identity is unable to explain the passage from nihilism to affirmation of life.

All these contradictions, aporias and dead ends can be fruitfully conceptualised and overcome with the development of the rationalistic side of Nietzsche's critique of identity undertaken in the work of Theodor Adorno. As we will argue later, Nietzsche's work contains the kernel of Adorno's negative dialectics without developing it into an elaborate theory, and Adorno's inspiration for his negative dialectics can be found predominantly in the rationalistic side of Nietzsche's thought. This connection escaped most Nietzsche and Adorno commentators, including Peter Dews, and is picked up only by Gillian Rose and Karin Bauer, who, nevertheless, refrained from investigating the matter in any depth. As we will see, Nietzsche uses extensively the basic idea of Adorno's rational nonidentity but not fully, and more significantly, he is not using it in the above-mentioned crucial moments in his thought. On the other hand, his thought leans heavily on the side of the irrationalistic critique of identity which poststructuralism uses extensively. We have to acknowledge the existence of at least two Nietzsches: Nietzsche the philosopher of the unconscious and Nietzsche the philosopher of nonidentity in the Adornean sense.

## **Chapter 2: Deleuze's project as it unfolds in *Nietzsche and Philosophy, Difference and Repetition* and *Anti-Oedipus***

### **Introduction**

In the previous chapter we presented our interpretation of Nietzsche's project and the way the central elements of his thought articulate with one another and with this project, deferring the full discussion of some points for Chapter 4. In this chapter we will present our interpretation of Deleuze's project as it emerges from the three books we are going to focus on: *Nietzsche and Philosophy, Difference and Repetition* and *Anti-Oedipus*, deferring again for Chapter 4 the discussion of the appropriation of Nietzsche by Deleuze and its critical engagement with Adorno's appropriation, centring around the issue of the rationalistic critique of identity thinking in Adorno's case, the irrationalistic critique of identity thinking, i.e. the critique of the subject, in Deleuze's case, and both around the critique of Hegel's dialectics.

### **Deleuze's project: the ontology of difference**

Deleuze's project can and has been variously understood according to the book under consideration and the focus requirements of each individual researcher. This is, of course, understandable and legitimate practice in the academic discourse. Our understanding of Deleuze's project, mentioned in the introduction, is that his deepest and most ambitious concern is the construction of an ontology of difference, as opposed to the hitherto in philosophy ontology of identity. This understanding is based on the project of the book *Difference and Repetition* which is arguably the most important of Deleuze's works, in terms of the development of his own thought (although his *Nietzsche and Philosophy* could arguably have been his most influential one). *Difference and Repetition* is the first book in which Deleuze advances a novel philosophy on his own

accord. As he testifies in the preface to its English edition: “After I had studied Hume, Spinoza, Nietzsche and Proust, all of whom fired me with enthusiasm, *Difference and Repetition* was the first book in which I tried to “do philosophy”. All that I have done since is connected to this book, including what I wrote with Guattari (obviously, I speak from my own point of view).” (Deleuze, 2015, p. xii). However, what makes us say that he aims at the ontology of difference?

In the preface of *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze describes the intentions of his research as follows: “We propose to think difference in itself independently of the forms of representation which reduce it to the Same, and the relation of different to different independently of those which make them pass through the negative” (Deleuze, 2015, pp. xv-xvi). Therefore, he aims at a philosophy that will be able to think difference beyond identity thinking (beyond “reduction to the same”) and its representations, and without determination through negation, that is without Hegelian dialectics. This he justifies as an extension of a movement “towards a philosophy of Difference” in his contemporary philosophy (Heidegger), anthropology and social theory (structuralism) as well as the fine arts (Deleuze, 2015, p. xv). “[M]odern thought”, he claims, “is born of the failure of representation, of the loss of identities, and the discovery of all the forces<sup>49</sup> that act under the representation of the identical” (Deleuze, 2015, p. xv).

One of the first moves Deleuze makes in the main body of the book is to determine the nature of being: “There has only ever been one ontological proposition: Being is univocal. There has only ever been one ontology, that of Duns Scotus, which gave being a single voice” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 45). And he goes on:

“In effect, the essential in univocity is not that Being is said in a single and same sense, but that it is said, in a single and same sense, of all its individuating differences or intrinsic modalities. Being is the same for all these modalities, but these modalities are not the same. It is “equal” for all, but they themselves are not equal. It is said of all in a single sense, but they themselves do not have the same sense. ...Being is said in a single and

same sense of everything of which it is said, but that of which it is said differs: it is said of difference itself.” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 46)<sup>50</sup>

Here, in effect, Deleuze claims that being *is* difference and in fact this claim is made more straightforwardly a little later: “With univocity, however, it is not the differences which are and must be: it is being which is Difference, in the sense that it is said of difference” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 50). What is more, it seems that this difference is what indefinitely (and inevitably) escapes conceptual, i.e. identity, thinking and one of the sources of Deleuze’s dissatisfaction with conceptual, identity thinking (Deleuze, 2015, p. 14). As he explicitly states: “the concept is the Same – indefinitely the same – for objects which are distinct. We must therefore recognise the existence of non-conceptual differences between these objects” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 16).<sup>51</sup> In effect, Deleuze’s dissatisfaction is directed towards the inability of conceptual thinking to capture what Kant called the “thing in itself”! What Deleuze does next is not to surrender to the deficiency of conceptual thinking but to use the idea of “repetition” which is constructed as “difference without a concept” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 16) in his effort to fathom what Kant thought was unfathomable. This is what the rest of the book tries to do: to construct the ontology of difference without concept, or, put another way, what the concept of difference in itself should be:

“That identity not be first, that it exist as a principle but a second principle, as a principle *become*; that it revolve around the Different: such would be the nature of a Copernican revolution which opens up the possibility of difference having its own concept, rather than being maintained under the domination of a concept in general already understood as identical. Nietzsche meant nothing more than this by eternal return.” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 52)

How this project extends to the future in Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus* and is rooted in the past study of Nietzsche in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* we hope will become evident in what follows in this chapter and in Chapter 4. We will start with the critique of dialectics in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* and, helped by Michael Hardt, with Deleuze’s reflections on Bergson. Then we will move

on to the content of Deleuze's critique of identity and the meaning of eternal return as repetition of difference, in *Difference and Repetition*, and end with the attempt to develop the ontology of difference into a combined psychology and social theory in *Anti-Oedipus* where the critique of representation occupies a prominent place.

### **The critique of dialectics in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* and before**

Deleuze's critique of dialectics predates his study of Nietzsche and had already been attempted in his early studies on Bergson as we learn from Hardt (Hardt, 1993). Hardt argues that Deleuze's article *La conception de la difference chez Bergson* [1956] presents the only and "most powerful" direct confrontation with Hegel's dialectics in Deleuze's work (Hardt, 1993, p. 9). He also argues that "many of Deleuze's claims for Nietzsche's attack on the dialectic remain obscure unless we read into them a Bergsonian critique of a negative ontological movement." (Hardt, 1993, p. xix). We are going to contest both these claims in the sense that we think that there is a direct confrontation with dialectics in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* which is stronger than the Bergson-inspired one. What is clarified by reference to the latter, instead, are the weaknesses of Deleuze's critique of dialectics which, moreover, are passed on in *Difference and Repetition*.<sup>52</sup> The force of the Nietzschean critique of dialectics is obscured rather than clarified if we bring in Bergson.<sup>53</sup>

The dissatisfaction with dialectics emanates from the fact that (in its Hegelian form) its negation is not radical enough, "is always directed toward the miracle of resurrection: It is a negation "which supersedes in such a way as to preserve and maintain what is superseded, and consequently survives its own supersession."" (Hardt, 1993, p. xii; quotation inside the quotation is from Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*). The first problem with dialectics is that its determination through negation

"both destroys the substantial nature of being and fails to grasp the concreteness and specificity of real being. ...The form of difference proposed by the process of

determination, Deleuze argues, always remains external to being and therefore fails to provide it with an essential, necessary foundation.” (Hardt, 1993, p. 4).

In order to understand what this means and why it is a problem we must introduce from Scholastic philosophy the concept of “efficient cause”. Efficient is the cause that is internal to being as its *causa sui*, as the cause of itself, which is the only kind of cause that can sustain the necessity of being (Hardt, 1993, p. 5). We can see then that:

“it is only the efficient cause, precisely because of its internal nature, that can sustain being as substance, as *causa sui*. In the Bergsonian context, then, we might say that efficient difference is the difference that is the internal motor of being: it sustains being’s necessity and real substantiality” (Hardt, 1993, p. 5).

How can that be? How is it precisely that determination through negation “destroys the substantial nature of being”, “fails to grasp the concreteness and specificity of real being” and remains external to being? In order to understand this, we need to think that for Deleuze, being is not embedded in “pre-constituted structures”, as Hardt but also Ansell-Pearson, extremely insightfully and decisively, observe (Hardt, 1993, p. xiii; Ansell-Pearson, 1999, pp. 82, 85),<sup>54</sup> and that for Deleuze being *is* difference. If, in order to determine being, dialectics has to negate it, it also negates its substance, concreteness and specificity, which is difference as the constitutive element in being itself, as its *causa sui*. The absence of pre-constituted forms also allows us to understand why the determination through negation remains external to being. As Hardt notes, for Hegel:

““Omnis determinatio est negatio” [Hegel in *Science of Logic*, NK]. This phrase describes for Hegel the process of determination and the state of determinateness. The *Logic* begins with pure being in its simple immediacy; but this simple being has no quality, no difference – it is empty and equivalent to its opposite, nothingness. It is necessary that being actively negate nothingness to mark its difference from it.” (Hardt, 1993, p. 3)

If this is the case then dialectical negation grasps being as a reflection of what is negated, as a reflection of the other, from outside and not internally through its *causa sui*, through its difference.

This is the difference between the difference in Hegel and Bergson. As Deleuze notes: “In Bergson...the thing differs with itself *first, immediately*. According to Hegel, the thing differs with itself because it differs first with all that it is not” (cited in Hardt, 1993, p. 7). And Hardt adds that “The core of the Bergsonian attack on the Hegelian concept of dialectical mediation, then, is that it cannot sustain being as necessary and substantial” (Hardt, 1993, p. 8).

Two further objections as to dialectical contradiction that Deleuze levels, based on Bergsonian ground, are that its “conception of difference remains abstract” and that it is unable to incorporate diversity and differences of degree. As Hardt notes:

““Now, if the objection that Bergson could raise against Platonism was that it remained a conception of *difference that is still external*, the objection that he makes to a dialectic of contradiction is that it remains a conception of *difference that is only abstract*”” [Deleuze, NK]. ... “This combination (of two contradictory concepts) cannot present either a diversity of degree or a variety of forms: It is or it is not”” [Bergson cited by Deleuze, NK] (in Hardt, 1993, p. 8).

Here again, we can in this chapter only note – we will fully explore it in Chapter 4 – that for dialectical contradiction to appear as abstract we have to presuppose the absence of pre-constituted structures. However, dialectical contradiction also appears abstract or rather a “crude” conception of difference because it can conceptualise only the existence or not of difference and not the degree of this difference and the form of difference. That this is not the case we will argue in Chapter 4.

With this observation we conclude the presentation of the Deleuzian critique against dialectics levelled from a Bergsonian point of view, as it is conveyed by Hardt.

Now, regarding *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, we already mentioned the sensation this book produced in France when it was first published in 1962 and that the explanation of this very favourable reception consists in its anti-Hegelian and anti-dialectic reading of Nietzsche. Indeed, what is most striking in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* is that two out of its five chapters (Chapter 1 –

The Tragic, and Chapter 5 – The Overman: against dialectics) and a considerable part of the conclusion are in effect developing arguments against Hegel and dialectics based on Nietzschean grounds. The driving force behind the development of Chapter 1 is, surprisingly, the effort to refute the “pretext” given by Nietzsche’s notion of the tragic in viewing him as dialectician.<sup>55</sup> This line of argument gives Deleuze the opportunity to go through most of the themes that he is going to develop in more detail in the rest of the book: the theory of forces and of the will to power, resentment and bad conscience, affirmation of life, nihilism, eternal return and the overman, are all treated in a preliminary way. In chapter five of this book it is argued that:

“Nietzsche’s work is directed against dialectic for three reasons: [1] it [dialectics, NK] misinterprets sense because it does not know the nature of the forces which concretely appropriate phenomena; [2] it misinterprets essence because it does not know the real element from which forces, their qualities and their relations derive; [3] it misinterprets change and transformation because it is content to work with permutations of abstract and unreal terms.” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 158).

This is to say [1] it lacks a theory of forces, [2] it lacks a theory of the will to power and [3] it jumps from subject to predicate and from predicate back to subject without ever determining what each of them is: “they remain as little determined at the end as they were at the beginning” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 157). At bottom, dialectics transforms “difference” into “opposition” and is the “natural ideology of *ressentiment* and bad conscience” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 159).

Nihilism is the bottom line of Deleuze’s, Nietzsche-inspired, critique of dialectics. The problem with dialectics is that it uses as its starting point the negation of the “other” instead of the affirmation of its own difference. This makes it an essentially reactive mode of thinking where the initiative belongs to the external “other” against which dialectical thinking re-acts. In this respect Deleuze quotes *Genealogy of Morals* where Nietzsche writes: “While every noble morality develops from a triumphant affirmation of itself, slave morality from the outset says No to what is ‘outside’, what is ‘different’ what is ‘not itself’ and this No is its creative deed” (cited in Deleuze, 2005, p. 10).



And Deleuze adds: “This is why Nietzsche presents the dialectic as the speculation of the pleb, as the way of thinking of the slave: the abstract thought of contradiction then prevails over the concrete feeling of positive difference, reaction over action, revenge and *ressentiment* take the place of aggression.” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 10). In a word, dialectics is condemned “as the ideology of *ressentiment*” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 121). However, the problem with a mode of thinking under the sway of *ressentiment* resides above all in its nihilistic consequences, i.e. to the fact that it brings along with it a “denying [of] life” and a “depreciation of existence” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 34).

Another aspect of Deleuze’s critique of dialectics is that dialectics is constantly posing a negation and then a negation of the negation to reach an affirmation or, as Schrift puts it, a unifying synthesis (Schrift, 1995, p. 60). It seems that Deleuze has a particular understanding of dialectics which leads him to brand it as the “ideology of *ressentiment*” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 121) and socialism as its “final avatar...before the nihilistic conclusion” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 162).

We think, contrary to Hardt, that all these elements are aiming directly at dialectics, have an independent standing as points of critique rooted on Nietzschean ground, and are much more challenging than those afforded by Bergsonian means. A full development of this point and of the challenge that Adorno’s negative dialectics represents to both sources of the Deleuzian critique of dialectics we will explore in Chapter 4.<sup>56</sup>

Deleuze has been accused of creating a caricature of Hegel against which he wages his critique.<sup>57</sup> This may be the case, as Deleuze does not have a good record on being faithful to the letter of the authors he discusses; we had the opportunity to experience this first-hand in the case of Nietzsche with the concepts of “reaction”, “will to power” and, as we will see, “eternal return”, all of which are significantly and decisively altered. However, we side with Žižek and Badiou in believing that “all great “dialogues” in the history of philosophy were so many cases of misunderstanding” (Žižek, 2004, p. ix). It is not actually a question of misunderstanding but of a fruitful appropriation, the germination of the thought of one philosopher by that of another that produces something new. This is why we are sceptical towards arguments about misreading that safeguard the “correct

dogma” about the thought of an author. Not that they do not have value, especially when one falsely usurps the authority of another, and we think it is a matter of intellectual integrity to openly acknowledge when one departs from the thought of an influence. All we are saying is that the charge of misreading is not a sufficient objection to the value of an argument. At the case in point, we also happen to believe that one does not have to resort to this argument to challenge Deleuze’s critique of dialectics and that this critique, as it stands, produces a fruitful dialogue between him and Hegel or proponents of dialectics like Adorno, as we will show in Chapter 4.

## ***Difference and Repetition: critique of identity; eternal return***

### **Critique of identity**

It is not always possible to distinguish between Deleuze’s critique of dialectics and his critique of identity. The two are intertwined and perhaps it is not very helpful trying to figure out which one comes first: is Deleuze arriving at the critique of identity through his critique of dialectics or the other way round? The evidence, that is his admission that “[w]hat I detested above all was Hegelianism and the dialectics” (cited in Hardt, 1993, p. x), and the way he puts the matter in the Preface of *Difference and Repetition*, namely that “[a]ll these signs may be attributed to a generalized anti-Hegelianism: difference and repetition have taken the place of identity and contradiction. For difference implies the negative, and allows itself to lead to contradiction, only to the extent that its subordination to the identical is maintained” (Deleuze, 2015, p. xv), would suggest that the critique of identity is a by-product of the critique of dialectics. Be it as it may, the two cannot be distinguished conceptually and, for this reason, some degree of repetition should be expected in what follows.

We will begin our exposition of Deleuze’s reflections from this very point where the critique of dialectics and the critique of identity meet: what does it mean to say that “difference implies the

negative, and allows itself to lead to contradiction, only to the extent that its subordination to the identical is maintained”? In what sense can difference imply the negative when it is subordinated to the identical, and lead to contradiction because of that? The answer can be found if we contemplate on the following passage from *Difference and Repetition*:

“Hegelian contradiction does not deny identity or non-contradiction: on the contrary, it consists in inscribing the double negation of *non*-contradiction within the existent in such a way that identity, under that condition or on that basis, is sufficient to think the existent as such. Those formulae according to which “the object denies what it is not” or “distinguishes itself from everything that it is not”, are logical monsters (the Whole of everything which is not the object) in the service of identity. It is said that difference is negativity, that it extends or must extend to the point of contradiction once it is taken to the limit. This is true only to the extent that difference is already placed on the path or along a thread laid out by identity. It is true only to the extent that it is identity that pushes it to that point” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 63).

What does it mean that “difference is negativity”? ‘Which difference? difference between what?’ is the guiding question. It is evident from the passage that Deleuze has in mind the difference between two objects, two “existents”.<sup>58</sup> If we have this in mind then we can see that the difference between them implies that in order to distinguish between them, we have to have one negate the other. But this is only needed if we presuppose that these two “existents” are identical and want to prove that they are not, as is the case with Hegel’s negation of nothingness in order to distinguish it from being. Then the phrase “difference implies the negative...to the extent that its subordination to the identical is maintained” takes up its meaning. Similar is the way in which “difference allows itself to lead to contradiction”: if we presuppose that the two objects are identical (or want them to end up identical) then the difference between them appears as contradiction because they are the same and yet they are different at the same time.<sup>59</sup> Instead of endorsing this presupposition Deleuze, as we saw, exposes it and tries instead to construct the ontology of being, where being, the “existent”,

is considered to be difference in itself by, as he says, constructing a “concept of difference without negation” (Deleuze, 2015, p. xvi).

How does Deleuze intend to proceed? We noted, when we gave the blueprint of his project, his dissatisfaction with conceptual thinking and representation which he ascribes, in a wholesale fashion, to the side of identity thinking. This dissatisfaction, on top of the charges against identity thinking, also extends to the ineffective nature of conceptual representation, i.e. extends to the problem of infinite regress of conceptual thinking:

“However, a concept can always be blocked at the level of each of its determinations or each of the predicates that it includes. In so far as it serves as a determination, a predicate must remain fixed in the concept while becoming something else in the thing<sup>60</sup> (animal becomes something other in man and in horse; humanity something other in Peter and Paul). This is why the comprehension of the concept is infinite; having become other in the thing, the predicate is like the object of another predicate in the concept” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 14).

Defining an object through a concept involves ascribing predicates to this object which, in turn need definition by ascribing to them predicates and so on and so forth indefinitely. The never-ending defining or grounding process is an exercise in futility. What then is Deleuze proposing us doing? He proposes to somehow abandon conceptual thinking, if we want to grasp difference of being (or better: being as difference) and introduces the idea of “repetition” which he defines as “difference without a concept” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 16). We will come to the idea of repetition in the next section of this chapter; what we want now to do is to document and stress Deleuze’s departure from conceptual thinking and his turn toward the dissolution of the self and toward the fragmented subjectivity on the way of the search for an adequate concept of difference.

An early indication of this departure is given already on page 2 of *Difference and Repetition* where Deleuze states: “[t]he head is the organ of exchange [which is ascribed on the side of identity thinking, NK], but the heart is the amorous organ of repetition” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 2). A further

indication is given when Deleuze opts for immediacy of understanding and of action instead of the mediation of concepts:

“Their [Kierkegaard’s and Nietzsche’s, NK] objection to Hegel is that he does not go beyond false movement – in other words, the abstract logical movement of “mediation”. They want to put metaphysics in motion, in action. They want to make it act, and make it carry out immediate acts. It is not enough, therefore, for them to propose a new representation of movement; representation is already mediation. Rather, it is a question of producing within the work a movement capable of affecting the mind outside of all representation;” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 10).<sup>61</sup>

One could object that Deleuze may not be rejecting conceptual thinking entirely. After all he is calling for the construction of an adequate “concept of difference” as much as for a “difference without a concept”. Indeed, Deleuze argues that:

“Here we find the principle which lies behind a confusion disastrous for the entire philosophy of difference: assigning a distinctive concept of difference is confused with the inscription of difference within the concepts in general – the determination of the concept of difference is confused with the inscription of difference in the identity of an undetermined concept” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 42).

However, we should look on how this “concept of difference” is being constructed by Deleuze. It is constructed with the help of the idea of eternal return and of will to power. In a passage, already partially cited, Deleuze writes:

“That identity not be first, that it exist as a principle but a second principle, as a principle *become*; that it revolve around the Different: such would be the nature of a Copernican revolution which opens up the possibility of difference having its own concept, rather than being maintained under the domination of a concept in general already understood as identical. Nietzsche meant nothing more than this by eternal return. Eternal return cannot mean the return of the Identical because it presupposes a world

(that of the will to power) in which all previous identities have been abolished and dissolved” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 52).

The clarification of how exactly eternal return and will to power illuminate the concept of difference involves the development of the idea of repetition in eternal return and it will have to wait until the next section of this chapter. Here we only want to stress that Deleuze evokes Nietzsche’s will to power to support the idea of a difference which has its own concept, will to power through which “all identities have been abolished and dissolved”. The theory of will to power dissolves being into becoming, the constant overcoming of being through the effect of a self-propelled, “noble”,<sup>62</sup> will to power which sweeps the identity of the subject along the dissolution of the fixed object: “The modern world is one of simulacra. Man did not survive God, nor did the identity of the subject survive that of substance. All identities are only simulated, produced as an optical “effect” by the more profound game of difference and repetition” (Deleuze, 2015, p. xv). Underneath the illusion, the simulacra, of the unified self lies the multiplicity of wills to power and of selves:

“Underneath the self which acts are little selves which contemplate and which render possible both the action and the active subject. We speak of our “self” only in virtue of these thousands of little witnesses which contemplate within us: it is always a third party who says “me”. These contemplative souls must be assigned even to the rat in the labyrinth and to each muscle of the rat” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 100).

We think it is now clear that the critique of the unified subject informs the concept of difference as constructed by Deleuze. For us it is also clear that he opts for a grasp of difference beyond conceptual thinking itself when he proposes a form of difference which “unfolds as pure movement”, which we take it to mean movement without any mediation:

“For there is no repetition without a repeater, nothing repeated without a repetitious soul. As a result, rather than the repeated and the repeater, the object and the subject, we must distinguish two forms of repetition. In every case repetition is difference without a concept. But in one case the difference is taken to be only external to the

concept; it is a difference between objects represented by the same concept, falling into the indifference of space and time. In the other case, the difference is internal to the idea; it unfolds as pure movement, creative of a dynamic space and time which correspond to the idea” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 28).

A conception of difference which is external to the concept is reminiscent of the Bergson-inspired critique of dialectics where the determination of difference through negation remained always “external to the *object*”. Now that the word is again against dialectical determination through mediation, it is claimed that difference remains external to the *concept* as well,<sup>63</sup> and, consequently, Deleuze’s aspiration is revealed to be for a concept of difference that will be identical to its object capturing it in its true existence as “pure movement”. In his concluding remarks in *Difference and Repetition* it is clear that if the aspiration is to think difference *in itself* this cannot be done through conceptual, identity thinking:

“Difference is not and cannot be thought in itself, so long as it is subject to the requirements of representation. ...In any case, difference in itself appears to exclude any relation between different and different which would allow it to be thought. It seems that it can become thinkable only when tamed – in other words, when subject to the four iron collars of representation: identity in the concept, opposition in the predicate, analogy in judgment and resemblance in perception. ...From this, it is concluded that difference in itself remains condemned and must atone or be redeemed under the auspices of a reason which renders it livable and thinkable, and makes it the object of an organic representation” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 345)

In relation to dialectics in particular capturing difference in itself cannot be done because difference is essentially affirmation rather than negation:

“This is what the philosophy of difference refuses: *omnis determinatio negatio*...We refuse the general alternative proposed by infinite representation: the indeterminate, the indifferent, the undifferentiated or a difference already determined by negation,

implying and enveloping the negative (by the same token, we also refuse the particular alternative: negation of limitation or negative of opposition). In its essence, difference is the object of affirmation or affirmation itself. In its essence, affirmation is itself difference.” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 66)

Difference, to be sure, can appear as negation but in fact this is a by-product of a prior affirmation:

“Negation results from affirmation: this means that negation arises in the wake of affirmation or beside it, *but only as the shadow of the more profound genetic element* – of that power or “will” which engenders the affirmation and the difference in the affirmation. Those who bear the negative know not what they do: they take the shadow for the reality, they encourage phantoms, they uncouple consequences from premisses and they give epiphenomena the value of phenomena and essences.” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 70)<sup>64</sup>

If, then, the categories of conceptual, representational, identity thinking, and the use of mediation and negation are unable to capture being as difference what is Deleuze’s alternative? Deleuze argues that we must try and use notions and categories with different qualities than those used by representational thinking, what he calls “ideas”<sup>65</sup> which develop in the context of “systems of simulacra”. The basic characteristics of these systems he summarises at the end of *Difference and Repetition* (Deleuze, 2015, pp. 363-364). The most important of these characteristics is, we think, the 7<sup>th</sup> (which is also the last one):

“7) the centres of envelopment which nevertheless testify to the persistence of these factors in the developed world of qualities and extensities. Systems of simulacra affirm divergence and decentring: the only unity, the only convergence of all the series, is an informal chaos in which they are all included. No series enjoys a privilege over others, none possesses the identity of a model, none the resemblance of a copy. None is either opposed or analogous to another. Each is constituted by differences, and communicates with the others through differences of differences. Crowned anarchies



are substituted for the hierarchies of representation; nomadic distributions for the sedentary distributions of representation.” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 364)

This characteristic is, from the point of view of our investigation, the most important for two reasons: first, because it reveals an aspect of Deleuze’s thought that had not surfaced in our exposition yet, that of the perspectivism (the “series” of “simulacra”) which informs the world viewed from the point of view of difference in itself; second, because it reminds us of the basic presupposition that Hardt extremely insightfully detected in the work of Deleuze, namely, the absence of pre-constituted structures which results in an image of the world as chaotic and anarchic: the world without identity is chaotic, as Deleuze repeatedly notes (Deleuze, 2015, pp. 72, 284). The explanation and significance of this presupposition will be developed in Chapter 4.

### **Eternal return: repetition as the identity of difference**

We cannot conclude either the exposition of Deleuze’s project or his critique of identity thinking without the exposition of his thought on eternal return, and of repetition as the “identity of difference”. We argued that the difference between objects that Deleuze attempts to fathom amounts to the attempt to grasp what Kant had termed as “thing in itself”. After the rejection, in silent agreement with Kant, of the ability of conceptual, identity thinking, and of the faculty of understanding to grasp difference (the thing) in itself, we saw Deleuze turning to the idea of repetition defined as “difference without a concept” on the search for the resources of such a grasp. He had already defined, negatively, repetition by distinguishing it from “generality”, which is assigned to the camp of representation, in the very opening pages of the book (Deleuze, 2015, pp. 1-9), a strange start for the supreme combatant of dialectical determination through negation!<sup>66</sup> This oddness is somewhat amended when Deleuze evokes Kierkegaard and Nietzsche as the forbearers of placing repetition at the centre of the “philosophy of the future”, and summarises the common ground between them:

“1. Make something new of repetition itself: connect it with a test, with selection or selective test; make it the supreme object of the will and of freedom. ... 2. In consequence, oppose repetition to the laws of nature. ... 3. Oppose repetition to the moral law, to the point where it becomes the suspension of ethics, a thought beyond good and evil. ... 4. Oppose repetition not only to the generalities of habit but also to the particularities of memory.” (Deleuze, 2015, pp. 7-9)

The first element (make it an “object of the will and of freedom”) has affirmative association if one has in mind Deleuze’s view of Nietzsche’s will to power as ‘affirmation of difference’, as we will see in Chapter 4; the rest, however, continue the line of determination through (non-dialectical) negation.

In any case, Deleuze distinguishes between two different notions of repetition as “difference without a concept”, one belonging to the realm of representation and one to the non-representational realm (Deleuze, 2015, p. 28; see the passage on pp. 94-95 above). Here Deleuze invites us to think beyond the realist theory of knowledge which puts the emphasis on the antithesis between the knowing subject (the “repetitious soul”) and the knowable object (the “repeated”), that is, to think beyond representation. He invites us to do so because the identities of the subject and of the object have been dissolved through the effect of will to power, as we already mentioned earlier (Deleuze, 2015, p. 52). Now, no matter if we think in representational terms or not, repetition is still “difference without a concept”, only that in the first case the difference found is “external to the concept” while in the second “internal to the idea”. This argument reminds, as we already mentioned, Deleuze’s Bergson-inspired critique of dialectics, that dialectics is able to arrive only at an external *to being* form of difference. However, we must take care to note that except of the externality of difference to being in the critique of dialectics, here an externality to the *concept as well* is argued. The externality to being we understood through the absence of pre-constituted structure of being in Deleuze which makes the negation of the other to be negation of the differential specificity of being and the determination of the object that this negation is purporting

to determine to be external to that object itself, a reflection of what is negated. Here, in *Difference and Repetition*, where repetition is considered as “difference without a concept”, as the difference which escapes the identical for the two objects concept, the difference arrived at through representational thought appears as external to the concept as well.<sup>67</sup> In both cases, here and in the Bergson-inspired critique of dialectics, the alternative is a call for immediacy: “In Bergson...the thing differs with itself *first, immediately*” Deleuze says there, “the difference is internal to the idea; it unfolds as pure movement” he says here, meaning that the unmediated grasp of the object cannot but be *pure* movement.

The unmediated grasp of the object can be achieved, he claims, by grasping difference as internal to the “idea”. What does he mean by ‘idea’, then, what is the status of ‘ideas’ beyond representation? Ideas differ from concepts in that they attempt to grasp “that which is not “representable” in things”, “[t]he idea has therefore not yet chosen to relate difference to the identity of a concept in general: it has not yet given up hope of finding a pure concept of difference in itself” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 74). Ideas do not belong to a particular faculty of the human intellect but can be found in all faculties and refer to “those instances that go from sensibility to thought and from thought to sensibility” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 191). They do not have the characteristics of concepts: clarity and distinctness. These characteristics:

“form the logic of recognition...both have already pushed the idea over into representation. The restitution of the idea in the doctrine of the faculties requires the explosion of clear and distinct, and the discovery of a Dionysian value according to which *the Idea is necessarily obscure in so far as it is distinct*, all the more obscure the more it is distinct.” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 192)

Finally, the idea is concerned with “the presentation of the unconscious not the representation of consciousness”, and it is by nature “necessarily unconscious” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 252). It is clear by this exposition what direction the unmediated grasping of difference as internal to the idea is taking, a direction which could even consider “eliminating Reason” as an “advantage” for thought (Deleuze,

2015, p. 252), and we will not follow Deleuze on this misguided route any longer, reserving our comments for Chapter 4.

Let us now go back to “difference without a concept”. If the difference which has no concept is the thing in itself which Deleuze tries to grasp by extra-conceptual, immediate means, he uses for this purpose the idea of “repetition” which he has defined as this difference without a concept (Deleuze, 2015, p. 16). He tries to explain it in the context of Nietzsche’s idea of eternal return in one of the most dense passages of the entire book:

“That identity not be first, that it exist as a principle but a second principle, as a principle *become*; that it revolve around the Different: such would be the nature of a Copernican revolution which opens up the possibility of difference having its own concept, rather than being maintained under the domination of a concept in general already understood as identical. Nietzsche meant nothing more than this by eternal return. Eternal return cannot mean the return of the Identical because it presupposes a world (that of the will to power) in which all previous identities have been abolished and dissolved. Returning is being, but only the being of becoming. The eternal return does not bring back “the same”, but returning constitutes the only Same of that which becomes. Returning is the becoming-identical of becoming itself. Returning is thus the only identity, but identity as a secondary power; the identity of difference, the identical which belongs to the different, or turns around the different. Such an identity, produced by difference is determined as “repetition”. Repetition in the eternal return, therefore, consists in conceiving the same on the basis of the different. However, this conception is no longer merely a theoretical representation: it carries out a practical selection among differences according to their capacity to produce – that is, to return or to pass the test of the eternal return. The selective character of the eternal return appears clearly in Nietzsche’s idea: it is not the Whole, the Same of the prior identity in general which returns. Nor is it the small or the large, either as parts of the whole or as elements of the

same. Only the extreme forms return – those which, large or small, are deployed within the limit and extend to the limit of their power, transforming themselves and changing one into another.” (Deleuze, 2015, pp. 52-53)

Deleuze resorts to Nietzsche’s idea of the eternal return in order to capture the adequate concept of difference, difference’s own concept beyond identity, difference without a concept, namely repetition. It is again the theory of the will to power that provides the background of the enterprise, abolishing all previous identities, subject and object included. By saying that “eternal return does not bring back the same”, Deleuze denies that Nietzsche could mean by it what in the previous chapter we saw Gillespie arguing, namely that eternal return would mean the return of all the horrors of history too. In doing so, we think, Deleuze departs from Nietzsche’s thought: his interpretation of eternal return cannot incorporate the idea of eternal return as it is described by Nietzsche neither in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 178) nor in *The Gay Science* aphorism 341. However, in order to understand what it is that returns in eternal return and how repetition comes to accurately depict difference without a concept and the thing in itself, we should remind that differences are singularities and think that, quite literally, repetition can occur only if what is repeated is such a singularity. As Deleuze notes: “By contrast, we can see that repetition is a necessary and justified conduct only in relation to that which cannot be replaced. Repetition as a conduct and as a point of view concerns non-exchangeable and non-substitutable singularities” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 1), like “two drops of water” Deleuze has mentioned before, which cannot be exchanged because they are different objects. In this sense it can also be understood how returning and repetition is the “identity of difference”: if difference is singularity and this singularity is repeated (the only repetition worthy of the name) then repetition is the identity of difference. In line with the impossibility to conceive the thing in itself in representational terms, repetition as the identity of difference is almost an unfathomable idea beyond anything that we can experience or commonly relate.

The aspect of eternal return as a “selective thought” in the above passage is also somewhat obscure but there is a clear invocation of the theory of will to power again when Deleuze says that what returns are only forms which go “to the limit of their power, transforming themselves and changing one into another.” Another aspect of the will to power is invoked in relation to eternal return towards the end of the book:

“The highest test is to understand the eternal return as a selective thought, and repetition in the eternal return as selective being. ...Not only does the eternal return not make everything return, it causes those who fail the test to perish. ...The Negative does not return. The Identical does not return. The Same and the Similar, the Analogous and the Opposed, do not return. Only affirmation returns...” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 389).

The presence of will to power as “affirmation of difference” is unmistakable.

### ***Anti-Oedipus: Deleuze’s social theory***

Deleuze’s collaboration with Guattari, far from being the result of deadlocks in his own philosophy and *Anti-Oedipus* being one of his worst books, as Žižek claims (Žižek, 2004, pp. 20-21), we think is a consistent effort on the part of Deleuze to extend the critique of representation from philosophy to psychology and to the social field, and also to develop a social theory of difference.

Indeed, in *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari are engaging in three parallel, complex and intersecting themes. The first and most obvious of these has to do with the critique of psychoanalysis and its central explanatory scheme of the psychic life, the Oedipus complex. Deleuze’s dissatisfaction with psychoanalysis embarks from reasons theoretical as well as political and practical: practically, psychoanalysis’ medical usefulness is limited to neurotic patients and it is generally considered unsuitable for the treatment of psychoses, a deficit that raises questions about the validity of psychoanalysis’ conceptual armoury and is the source of Deleuze and Guattari’s interest in schizophrenia (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 15). Politically, Oedipus complex is considered

the principal decoy agent of psychic repression and the nodal point in the articulation between psychic and social repression (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, pp. 123-124, 126). Theoretically, they locate the problem in the substitution of “representational” activity of the unconscious for what, they claim, is in fact a “productive” activity: psychoanalysis substitutes a “classical theatre...for the unconscious as a factory” (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 25).

Deleuze and Guattari put great emphasis in the productive nature of the unconscious. In fact, “desiring-production”, the idea that desire is constantly producing and is being produced, is, we think, one of the central concepts of the whole book (alongside the interest for the liberation from psychic and social repression). Not on its own, however, but at a par with “social-production”, the idea that society is constantly producing desire and is being produced by desire (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 31). They go so far in the direction of identification of social and desiring production as to claim that the two are ‘materially’ identical (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 32).<sup>68</sup>

The second case they are trying to make is to lay the foundations of an alternative to the “idealist” psychoanalysis, “materialist psychiatry”: “a truly materialist psychiatry can be defined, on the contrary, by the twofold task it sets itself: introducing desire into the mechanism [of psychotic deliriums, NK], and introducing production into desire.” (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 24). The lengthy analysis in the book of the way in which desiring-production and social-production are interlocked, today and throughout history, is instrumental to this end.

A third case involves the effort to give a convincing account of the phenomenon of fascism, convincing in the sense that the explanation will not be limited to conscious processes but will take desire into account too. They take up the investigation where Wilhelm Reich, who argued that the masses were not “innocent dupes” but “at a certain point, under a certain set of conditions, they *wanted* fascism”, had left off (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 31). Deleuze and Guattari think that Reich failed to provide such an explanation because he was missing the concept of desiring-production, but the question he posed resounds throughout *Anti-Oedipus* (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, pp. 127, 130, 279).

In order to furnish their arguments in these three themes they embark on the monumental endeavour to delineate the origin and destinies of desiring-production in its articulation with social production from the prehistoric times to the present: they construct a *genealogy*, (almost a *grand narrative*) of desiring and social production. They identify three kinds of “social machines”: a) the “primitive”, “savage” or “territorial machine”, encompassing the period before the emergence of the state; b) the “despotic” or “barbaric machine”, covering the period when there is a state in place; and c) the “capitalist” or “civilized machine” which covers the period since the emergence of capitalism, which is the only kind of social machine that uses what they call “axiomatic” (instead of the “codes” that the other two kinds of social machines were using) to repress and check desiring-production.<sup>69</sup>

Deleuze and Guattari conclude the book by making the case and outlining the content and objectives of an alternative to psychoanalysis, materialist psychiatry they call “schizoanalysis”. The radical difference between the two is that while psychoanalysis serves as an agent of “reterritorialization” of the “flows of desire”, schizoanalysis tries to “deterritorialize” them (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 348). “Territorialization” is the process by which the flows of desire are being checked, captured or neutralised in harmless and functional, for the existing organisation of society, manifestations. They are given a designated territory and form of manifestation. Deterritorialisation is their liberation from this designated territory and form, the freedom to manifest themselves as they please, i.e. productively (not in the economic sense but in the sense of the gratifying affirmation of their difference). An instance of deterritorialisation is considered the proletarianisation of the serfs by the enclosure policies during the British primitive accumulation era (Due, 2007, p. 105). Reterritorialisation is the recapturing of the flows of desire which for some reason have been, temporarily, deterritorialised. The close attachment between desiring-production and social production and Deleuze and Guattari’s diagnosis of the problems of psychoanalysis lead them to put forward a nascent political programme: they call for a “politicisation of psychiatry” which will try to articulate psychic and social alienation in the direction



opened up by R.D Laing and David Cooper (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 352). At bottom, their project is in great degree based on their conviction about the revolutionary potential of deterritorialised desire (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, pp. 126-127).

It may not be immediately visible how *Anti-Oedipus* continues and extends the problematic of *Difference and Repetition*. In order to see the connection we must consider the relation between the idea of “difference” in the latter, and “desire”, one of the central concepts in the former book. An initial problem is that difference is construed as an ontological category while desire is clearly a psychological one, so, again, it is difficult to see the connection. This connection is afforded if we introduce a middle term, that of will to power, which, in Nietzsche has a double status of being an ontological *and* a psychological category. Ontological because it is claimed by Nietzsche to inform being, animate and inanimate, the central explanatory category of all being, and psychological because it is often related and best, in our view, understood when it is related to drives, as we saw in the previous chapter.

In *Anti-Oedipus* the authors claim that “desire produces reality, or stated another way, desiring production is one and the same thing as social production” (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 32), and that “there is only desire and the social, nothing else” (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 31). Desire, then, is considered the constitutive element of social reality and indistinguishable from the construction of this social reality. Following its adventures throughout prehistory and history, its territorialisations, deterritorialisations and reterritorialisations, is an important by-product of the whole book. The background for the development of these adventures is Nietzsche’s theory of will to power: “desiring production”, it is claimed, “is pure multiplicity”, a direct reference to difference, and, as it is explained, “that is to say, an affirmation that is irreducible to any sort of unity” (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 45). As we already mentioned, one of the paramount characteristics of will to power for Deleuze is the affirmation of its own difference, and we must see the reference to affirmation here as a reference to will to power, and in fact we will argue in Chapter 4 that desire in *Anti-Oedipus* is another name for will to power. If we are right in doing so then we can see how following the fate

and transformations of desire is a development of the ontology of difference in the fields of psychology and social theory.

This view is reinforced if we consider the centrality of the critique of representation in *Anti-Oedipus*. In fact, the critique of representation informs the critique of two out of the three main arguments in the book: the critique of the Oedipus complex, and the proposal for the development of “schizoanalysis” in place of psychoanalysis.

We already hinted above the first of the objections (in terms of representation) to psychoanalysis and the Oedipus complex: it is the depiction of the unconscious life of the individual as a theatre rather than the factory, that Deleuze and Guattari argue the unconscious really is. Psychoanalysis may have discovered the production of desire, the productions of the unconscious but the Oedipus complex cancels this discovery because it makes the unconscious look like theatre rather than the factory it is. The unconscious produces, it does not represent in myth, tragedy and dreams (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 25). The second objection goes deeper and brands the Oedipus complex as the “displaced represented” in the psychic life of the individual. Psychic repression is effected by “dishonouring” what it aims to repress, namely desire, and in order to be able to do that it establishes a “disfigured and displaced image” of desire (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 177) called by Deleuze and Guattari the “displaced represented” (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, pp. 180-181). In the capitalist social machine (and *only* in the capitalist social machine) this disfigured and displaced image takes the form of Oedipus complex (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 194).<sup>70</sup> Thus, the argument against psychoanalysis is that “the order of desire is the order of *production*; all production is at once desiring production and social production. We therefore reproach psychoanalysis for having stifled this order of production, for having shunted it into *representation*” (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, pp. 325-326).

Schizoanalysis, accordingly, attempts to go “beyond anthropomorphic representation” which knows only two sexes, or, as in psychoanalysis only one, male sex (since the female sex is considered a male sex which has suffered castration, say Deleuze and Guattari) and is encapsulated in “the

schizoanalytic slogan of the desiring-revolution...: to each its own sexes.” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 325).

Here we can perhaps note that for Deleuze and Guattari psychic repression is caused by social repression (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, pp. 123-124), and that this relation explains the revolutionary potential that Deleuze and Guattari assign to the unbridled development of desire: “no society can tolerate a position of real desire without its structures of exploitation, servitude and hierarchy being compromised” (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, pp. 126-127). This interest in liberation from psychic and social repression, so obvious throughout the book even for the most prejudiced and inattentive reader, is, in turn, evidence that Deleuze (and the poststructuralists) stick to the project of emancipation, albeit in a non-communist form of it, unlike postmodernists, as we noted in the Introduction of the thesis.

Regarding the critique of identity as critique of subjectivity, we find repeatedly in *Anti-Oedipus* an idea that we saw in the previous chapter coming out of Nietzsche’s theory of will to power, the idea, that is, that the subject does not exist at the centre of the human organism, which is now occupied by the desiring-machines, but subsists as a parasite at the periphery, “with no fixed identity, forever decentred, and *defined* by the states through which it passes”. There is no one identity or individuality but many coexist inside every human being fighting each other and appearing successively (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, pp. 22, 314).

Finally, we must note that Deleuze and Guattari explicitly state that the Oedipus complex is occupied by “reactive forces”, is a “reactio[n] to daddy-mommy” (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 132) and that desiring-machines are occupied by active and reactive forces (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 312): Nietzsche’s theory of forces is very much active in *Anti-Oedipus* too.

## Conclusion

The objectives of our thesis are to explore the appropriation of Nietzsche's thought by poststructuralism and Deleuze, on the one hand, and Critical Theory and Adorno, on the other, following Dews' contention, that the former appropriate Nietzsche's irrationalistic critique of identity, and testing our hypothesis, inspired by Dews, Rose and Bauer, that the latter emphasise the rationalistic critique of identity which is also Nietzsche's; it also attempts to explore the paradox in the history of ideas of Nietzsche being claimed by Deleuze to be a fierce critic of dialectics and by Rose and Bauer to be the originator of Adorno's negative dialectics.

In this chapter we tried to lay the ground for the exploration of the poststructuralist/Deleuzian appropriation of Nietzsche's thought. We attempted a delineation of our understanding of Deleuze's overall project, which we extracted from the most important for his thought book *Difference and Repetition*. We took this project to be the effort to construct an ontology of difference, as opposed to the hitherto ontology of identity, and we tried to trace the origin of this project in his study of Nietzsche in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, its maturity in *Difference and Repetition* itself, and its development into a theory of psychology and into a social theory in *Anti-Oedipus*. The emphasis was always in the aspects of the project that involved the critique of identity, the critique of dialectics and the Nietzschean contribution to them.

In *Nietzsche and Philosophy* the emphasis was in his critique of dialectics as a part and as a pivotal point for his critique of identity in general. With the help of Michael Hardt we included in the Nietzschean critique of dialectics Deleuze's earlier critique of dialectics on Bergsonian grounds because Hardt's reflections gave us invaluable insights for Deleuze's overall project, particularly the observation that Deleuze does not accept the existence of pre-constituted structures of being, an insight which will come to fruition in Chapter 4.

In the section concerning *Difference and Repetition* the emphasis was in the delineation of Deleuze's project, the role of the critique of identity in it and the role of Nietzsche's thought to them both. We argued that the project of the construction of the ontology of difference is grounded

on the fact that for Deleuze “being is difference” and amounts to the effort to grasp what Kant thought to be impossible by the means of conceptual understanding, namely the thing in itself, which Deleuze restates as the effort to grasp “difference without a concept”. He attempts to do that with the use of “ideas”, which are not concepts, and have the quality of grasping difference “immediately”, as “pure movement” and without the mediation of concepts of understanding. Deleuze goes so far as to consider the “elimination of Reason” as an “advantage” for this project. In the search for “difference without a concept”, or for an “adequate concept of difference” Deleuze resorts to the idea of “repetition” which he tries to delineate in the context of Nietzsche’s idea of the eternal return, ending up in the formula that repetition is the “identity of difference” as the adequate concept of “difference in itself”.

Finally, in the section on *Anti-Oedipus* we tried to show how the ontology of difference has been extended by Deleuze and Guattari into a psychological theory and a social theory, and how the critique of representation and of the subject still play an important role, in fact, inform the core of the critique of Oedipus complex and of psychoanalysis, on the one hand, and of the authors’ proposal of schizoanalysis on the other.

In this chapter we tried to give Deleuze’s thought free reign, with minimal critical engagement, and laying the ground, without making the case, of the appropriation of Nietzsche’s irrationalistic critique of identity, both reserved for Chapter 4.

## Chapter 3: Adorno's project as it unfolds in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and *Negative Dialectics*

### Introduction

In this chapter we will present Adorno's thought with an eye toward his appropriation of Nietzsche's thought. We will focus on his collaborative with Horkheimer work *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, and his masterpiece *Negative Dialectics*. Contrary to the widespread view that the influence of Nietzsche's thought is most vivid in Adorno's book *Minima Moralia* (Plass, 2015, p. 381; Nelson, 2008, pp. 350-352) we will argue, in Chapter 4, that the critique of Enlightenment rationality as critique of domination in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and the critique of identity thinking in *Negative Dialectics* are the most significant influences of Nietzsche's thought on Adorno. In this chapter, like in the previous chapter on Deleuze, we will just set the stage for this argument to be made in the next chapter. We will present Adorno's thought independently, on its own right, only adding a few but significant parts of critical comments of our own that are inspired by, but do not belong to, Nietzsche's or Deleuze's thought.

We will start by giving a blueprint of what we think Adorno's project is and then present how this project develops in his *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and *Negative Dialectics*. To anticipate our presentation, we will say that the powerhouse of this project is the use of the "power of the subject" to break through "the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity". Hence our exploration of how the overcoming of the fallacy is achieved through the theory of concept formation, of the concept of the concept and the role of the non-conceptual in the concept; hence the discussion of the relation between subject and object; hence also the exploration of the ramifications of this theory for the theory of truth.

## Adorno's project: nature as history and history as nature

What is Adorno's project? There are at least three different ways to see it. First, if we put the emphasis on the book *Negative Dialectics* as to his highest accomplishment we can say with Simon Jarvis that Adorno's life-long project was the construction of a materialist dialectic finally delivered in this work (Jarvis, 1998, p. 16). If we put the emphasis on his most popular book, the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, we can say, with Jarvis again, that "[t]he central impulse ... is towards the possibility of a reconciliation of culture and nature."<sup>71</sup> Yet another way to formulate Adorno's project is provided by Adorno himself in his posthumously published *Lectures 1964-1965 on History and Freedom*:

"That then is the programme – if I may call it that – that philosophy would have to postulate for the relation of nature to history. If I may repeat myself here: because I believe that this programme is constitutive for all attempts to interpret the philosophy of history, or indeed philosophy in general, I think that the attempt should be made to behold all nature, and whatever regards itself as nature, as history. ...Conversely, however, everything historical has to be regarded as nature because thanks to its own violent origins it remains under the spell of blind nature, from which it struggles to dissociate itself." (Adorno, 2008b, p. 124)

It is a Marx rather than Hegel-inspired programme, according to Adorno himself, who just moments ago had quoted to his students from *The German Ideology* the following passage: "We know only a single science, the science of history. One can look at history from two sides and divide it into the history of nature and the history of men. The two sides are however, inseparable; the history of nature and the history of men are dependent on each other so long as men exist" (cited in Adorno, 2008b, p. 122).

There is no contradiction or disparity between the three ways to formulate Adorno's project, they are all contained in one another, all depend on one another: the materialist dialectics of the first formulation is also a reconciliatory dialectics. In this reconciliation, unlike in Hegel's 'false'

reconciliation where the universal always ends up dominating over the particular – the real marker of Hegel’s idealism and a consequence of the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity, i.e. of the idea that the subject’s concepts constitute *exhaustively* the object (Adorno, 2008b, pp. 42-43; Cook, 2011, p. 11) – the two items that are reconciled “remain different from one another” (Stone, 2014, pp. 53-54). This dialectics aims at breaking through “the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity” (Adorno, 2007, p. xx) – which stands in the way of its materialism and of reconciliation of culture, history and mind, with nature – through the force of subjective reflection itself. All this will hopefully become clearer later, but we can, perhaps, already glimpse how the critique of rationality as critique of domination and how dialectics as critique of identity thinking play a crucial role.

### ***Dialectic of Enlightenment: Adorno’s critique of domination***

How does the book *Dialectic of Enlightenment* fit into Adorno’s project, as outlined above? Writing when WWII was still raging and at a time when there was no doubt that the historical epoch was still belonging to the modern times, Adorno and Horkheimer could identify the “program” of the modern times as being that of Enlightenment. However, as Jarvis correctly notes, Enlightenment for them was not “a historical period running from Descartes to Kant” (Jarvis 1998, p. 24). It was a process that started much earlier than that, a process of what Weber had called “disenchantment of the world”. Challenging linear, progressive and uninterrupted notions of history they claim, in the opening lines of the book, that “the Enlightenment has always aimed at liberating men from fear and establishing their sovereignty” (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, p. 3). The talk is here of emancipation from “fear” in general and the establishment of man’s “sovereignty” in general but, as we will see, the talk becomes of liberation from fear of nature and the establishment of sovereignty over nature (and over other men). This is the link with Adorno’s project: the discerned “dialectic of enlightenment” is not only the dialectic between myth and enlightenment but also, at



the same time, the dialectic between human subjectivity, as a product of historical development, and inner and outer nature.

*Dialectic of Enlightenment* reads as an epic effort to account for the emergence, maturity and danger of irrevocable dissolution of the program of Enlightenment. Bacon had established modern Enlightenment's credo that "knowledge is power...power and knowledge are synonymous", as he wrote in his *Novum Organum* (1620), the birth certificate of modern science (cited in Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, p. 4). And this is what men of science do: "[w]hat men want to learn from nature is how to use it in order wholly to dominate it and other men. That is the only aim" (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, p. 4). In this respect myth is already enlightenment; it is the first, clumsy, effort to understand and explain the world in order to manipulate it: the anthropomorphic animation of nature as occupied by gods and demons, the cosmogonies, the narration of myths, all aim to name, present and explain the world; the magic rituals and sacrifices aim to manipulate it in favour of man's domination and self-preservation (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, pp. 8-9).

For Enlightenment "the supernatural, spirits, and demons, are mirror images of men who allow themselves to be frightened by natural phenomena" (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, p. 6). The mythical anthropomorphic subjectivation of nature is turned with Enlightenment into objectivisation, nature is turned "into mere objectivity", a process which increases men's power but is paid for "with alienation from that over which they exercise their power. Enlightenment behaves toward things as a dictator toward men. He knows them in so far as he can manipulate them. The man of science knows things in so far as he can make them" (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, p. 9).

The principal means to this end is quantification of nature, a process in existence at least since Plato's equation of Ideas and numbers (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, p. 7), but codified and heightened only in modern times, in bourgeois society: "Bourgeois society is ruled by equivalence. It makes the dissimilar comparable by reducing it to abstract quantities. To the Enlightenment, that which does not reduce to numbers, and ultimately to the one, becomes illusion; modern positivism writes it off as literature" (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, p. 7). The abstract quantities in question are

the reduction of labour to abstract labour time, which makes dissimilar labour similar and comparable, and the reduction of all values into money, which also makes the dissimilar similar and comparable. As Habermas notes, for Adorno and Horkheimer positivism and instrumental reason is Enlightenment's coming to its own (Habermas, 1982, p. 17). Sticking to the "facts" and focusing on finding the most appropriate means to achieve given ends serves best the effort to dominate nature for the given aim of self-preservation: "[t]he system the Enlightenment has in mind is the form of knowledge which copes most proficiently with the facts and supports the individual most effectively in the mastery of nature. Its principles are the principles of self-preservation" (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, p. 83).

The dialectics between subjectivity and domination of nature is documented in the chapter of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* which analyses Homer's *Odyssey*. What drives Odysseus forward is the drive for self-preservation (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, pp. 46-47), and the self is moulded through the effort to escape the mythical world represented in his adventures by the mythical creatures he comes up against (the Sirens, the lotus-eaters, Polyphemus, Circe, etc.). The means he uses are objectifying of inner and outer nature reason, and calculated imitation of nature through sacrifice of the self: "[l]ike the heroes in all true novels later on, Odysseus loses himself in order to find himself; the estrangement from nature that he brings about is realized in the process of the abandonment to nature he contends with in each adventure" (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, pp. 47-48). Odysseus is for Adorno and Horkheimer "the prototype of bourgeois individual" (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, p. 43), and they claim that "the lines from reason, liberalism, and the bourgeois spirit go incomparably farther back than historians who date the notion of the burgher only from the end of medieval feudalism would allow" (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, p. 45).

But the dialectic of Enlightenment and myth culminates in the relapse of Enlightenment into mythology as soon as the objectifying logic reaches to the point of "forgetting" that the subject it serves is itself still part of nature, and as soon as the means it uses are made into ends in themselves (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, p. 54). The self-destruction of Enlightenment is encapsulated in what

Nietzsche calls nihilism, of which Adorno and Horkheimer give their own version. In the realm of knowledge:

“Mythology itself set off the unending process of enlightenment in which ever and again, with the inevitability of necessity, every specific theoretic view succumbs to the destructive criticism that it is only a belief – until even the very notions of spirit, of truth and, indeed, enlightenment itself, have become animistic magic.” (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, p. 11)

The loss of objectivity and the reign of relativism (poststructuralists would say perspectivism) is for Adorno and Horkheimer the end point of the dialectic of enlightenment which “consumed not just the symbols but their successors, universal concepts, and spared no remnant of metaphysics apart from the abstract fear of the collective from which it [enlightenment, NK] arose” (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, p. 23). In the realm of morality, the self-destruction of Enlightenment takes the form of the realisation that morality cannot be founded in (instrumental) reason, that it is incapable of putting forward “any fundamental argument against murder [a fact that, NK] fired the hatred which the progressives (and they precisely) still direct against Sade and Nietzsche” (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, p. 118). In politics, the self-destruction of Enlightenment takes the form of totalitarianism and reaches the hard-bottom of its degeneration in anti-Semitism and the concentration camps; the root of totalitarianism, however, is traced to Enlightenment reason itself (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, p. 86).

Enlightenment’s nihilistic, totalitarian, self-destruction is the reason why a radical critique of Enlightenment reason is needed. Elements on the reasons and mechanism of self-destruction have already been afforded in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (self-preservation as the only aim of human activity, entanglement of reason and domination, “forgetting” of nature in man, degeneration of thought into instrumental reason).<sup>72</sup> The medium of this critique, negative dialectics and non-identity thinking, surfaces briefly but clearly in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*: “When the tree is no longer approached merely as tree, but as evidence for an Other, as the location of *mana*, language

expresses the contradiction that something is itself and at one and the same time something other than itself, identical and not identical” (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, p. 15); and again: “Metaphysical apology betrayed the injustice of the *status quo* least of all in the incongruence of concept and actuality.” (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, p. 22-23); and even more clearly: “self-preservation repeatedly culminates in the choice between survival and destruction, apparent again in the principle that of two contradictory propositions only one can be true and only one false” (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, p. 30). Of course, the dialectic of myth and Enlightenment, subjectivity and nature, and so many other moments in the book, are also instances of nonidentity thinking in practice; however, the critique of identity thinking is undertaken by Adorno more systematically and persistently in his *Negative Dialectics* which we will present next.

### **Negative Dialectics 1: Adorno’s critique of identity thinking**

As we learn from Bobka and Braunstein, the book *Negative Dialectics* was “the realization of a plan that he [Adorno, NK] and Horkheimer had pursued since the late 1940s. They planned a second volume of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, to continue the project of a dialectical logic” (Bobka & Braunstein, 2018, p. 186). This dialectic is “negative” in contradistinction to the prevalent idea of dialectics which is to achieve something positive through negation (Plato) or later through the “negation of negation” (Hegel). One of the aims of the book, Adorno says, is “the unfolding” of its “paradoxical title” (Adorno, 2007, p. xix). As we mentioned earlier, this negative, dialectical logic is also a materialist dialectic aiming to overcome the “fallacy of constitutive subjectivity” as part of a wider project to view history as nature and nature as history. “The fallacy” is part of the growing “naive” of philosophy which “broke its pledge to be at one with reality” and is now “obliged ruthlessly to criticize itself” (Adorno, 2007, p. 3). *Negative Dialectics* is Adorno’s part in this ruthless critique.

What is dialectics for Adorno? Very early on he provides us with a preliminary designation:

“The name of dialectics says no more, to begin with, than that objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder, that they come to contradict the traditional norm of adequacy. Contradiction is not what Hegel’s absolute idealism was bound to transfigure it into: it is not of the essence in a Heraclitean sense. It indicates the untruth of identity, the fact that the concept does not exhaust the thing conceived” (Adorno, 2007, p. 5).

The self-critique of philosophy mentioned above takes the form of the critique of identity thinking, the critique of the claim of the concepts to exhaust their objects. In this formulation the word is that the objects are always *more* than their concepts give away, that the concepts are missing part of the objects they refer to. However, this excess/lack relation works both ways: it is also that the concept is, at the same time, more than the object it refers to, that the object does not live up to its concept: it is *less* (Adorno, 2007, p. 146). The most lucid description of the untruthfulness and problematic nature of identifying is offered in Adorno’s posthumously, and relatively recently published in English (2008), *Lectures on Negative Dialectics*:

“Thus by subsuming them all under this concept, by saying that A is everything that is comprehended in this unity, I necessarily include countless characteristics that are *not* integrated into the individual elements contained in the concept. The concept is always less than what is subsumed in this concept. When a B is defined as A, it is always also *different from and more than* the A, the concept under which it is subsumed by way of a particular judgment. On the other hand, however, in a sense every concept is at the same time more than the characteristics that are subsumed under it. If, for example, I think and speak of ‘freedom’, this concept is not simply the unity of the characteristics of all the individuals who can be defined as free on the basis of a formal freedom within a given constitution. ...the concept freedom contains a pointer to something that goes well beyond those specific freedoms, without our necessarily realizing what this additional element amounts to.” (Adorno, 2008a, p. 7).

However, thought and knowledge cannot exist without concepts. For Adorno, immediate and intuitive knowledge, knowledge without reason does not qualify as thought, while thought is bounded in the confines of what Adorno calls “conceptual totality” (Adorno, 2007, p. 5). Conceptual totality, however, is “mere appearance”, the “façade of immediacy” of brute facts (Adorno, 2007, p. 167). It is the knowledge of essence, appearing in the cracks, in the “contradiction between what things are and what they claim to be” (Adorno, 2007, p. 167) that makes things what they are and gives us knowledge of them. The distinction between essence and appearance, Adorno notes, is retained in negative dialectics because otherwise we “side with appearance, with the total ideology which existence...become” (Adorno, 2007, p. 169).<sup>73</sup> We will say more of this in the next section, when we will discuss conceptuality in Adorno. Here we had to make this brief reference as a step between what negative dialectics is and what it does:

“Aware that the conceptual totality is mere appearance, I have no way but to break immanently, in its own measure, through the appearance of total identity. Since that totality is structured to accord with logic, however, whose core is the principle of the excluded middle,<sup>74</sup> whatever will not fit this principle, whatever differs in quality, comes to be designated as a contradiction. Contradiction is nonidentity under the aspect of identity” (Adorno, 2007, p. 5).

The relation between concepts and between concepts and objects is structured to accord with the rules of the mind, with logic. Now, these rules are the rules of identity thinking which demand that A cannot be A and not A simultaneously. Since the objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder, that as a matter of fact they are always A and not A simultaneously, concepts will always appear as contradictory from the point of view of identity thinking: “contradiction is nonidentity under the aspect of identity”.

The demand of non-contradictoriness does not belong to the object of cognition but is surrogated to it by thought. Here we can find the reason why Adorno’s thought appears and is groundless, judged by the standards of traditional, identity philosophy:

“...the Cartesian norm of explication [goes like this, NK]: reason for what follows...have to be found in what goes before. This norm is no longer compulsory. Measured by it, the dialectical state of facts is not explicable by a hierarchic schema of order summoned from outside. If it were, the attempt to explain would presuppose the explication that remains to be found; it would presuppose noncontradictoriness, the principle of subjective thinking, as inherent in the object which is to be thought” (Adorno, 2007, p. 140).

We cannot pre-decide on the foundation of our thought because this will blind us as to the nature and truth of the object of cognition. We need to become able to penetrate the object and see what it is from the inside. There is no Atlas holding the earth on his shoulders and we will do well, if we do not want to revert to mythology, to accept this level of relativity,<sup>75</sup> contenting ourselves with tracing the next possible steps from the conceptual point in time and place we find ourselves to be: the contradiction we find in the object will tell us what is needed for moving beyond it, the next step, not some external criterion smuggled into the object from outside.<sup>76</sup> The acceptance of contradiction in the objects is negative dialectics’ respect for its objects (Adorno, 2007, p. 141). The embrace of the contradictoriness of objects revealed by dialectical thinking is its attempt to stay truthful to its objects and, in this sense is more positivistic than positivism. In this passage, we need to pay attention to the fact that dialectical thought “is tangential”, meaning peripheral, “to the rules of thinking”; it operates “without abandoning” thought’s own legality, i.e. without abandoning identity thinking completely, and this is why those accusing Adorno of abandoning (traditional) reason are mistaken, as we will see shortly. The main point of this passage, however, is to alert us to the fact that negative dialectics mediates between two worlds: the world of external, objective reality and the world of internal, subjective thought, a point which becomes more explicit in the following passage:

“In fact, dialectics is neither a pure method nor a reality in the naïve sense of the word.

It is not a method, for the unreconciled matter – lacking precisely the identity

surrogated by the thought – is contradictory and resists any attempt at unanimous interpretation. It is the matter, not the organizing drive of thought, that brings us to dialectics. Nor is dialectics a simple reality, for contradictoriness is a category of reflection, the cognitive confrontation of concept and thing” (Adorno, 2007, p. 144).

Contradiction, one of the central categories of negative dialectics, is the bridge between these two worlds: is a category of reflection which most accurately describes an objective reality, and is found in this reality despite the fact that reflection outlaws it. This is why “thinking against our thought” is an accurate, second, definition of dialectics that Adorno provides.<sup>77</sup>

Without identity thinking negative dialectics has no material on which to work on: “[n]egative dialectics is thus tied to the supreme categories of identitarian philosophy as its point of departure. Thus, too, it remains false according to identitarian logic: it remains the thing against which it is conceived” (Adorno, 2007, p. 147).<sup>78</sup> Identity thinking is the necessary basis on the shoulders of which a second, higher order of reflection is needed to distinguish between its truth content and its ideological shell. This idea is also conveyed when Adorno states that contradiction arises only through identification: “[w]ithout the step that Being is the same as Nothingness, each of them would – to use one of Hegel’s favorite terms – be “indifferent” to the other; only when they are to be the same do they become contradictory” (Adorno, 2007, p. 157). What is more, the longing for identity, the longing of the concept to become identical to its object is also preserved in negative dialectics:

“To define identity as the correspondence of the thing-in-itself to its concept is *hubris*; but the idea of identity must not simply be discarded. Living in the rebuke that the thing is not identical with the concept is the concept’s longing to become identical with the thing. This is how the sense of nonidentical contains identity” (Adorno, 2007, p. 149).

The longing for identity which is preserved in negative dialectics is also its critical edge: it is this longing which deems the contradiction unacceptable and calls for its overcoming, calls for an identity that “is not yet” (Adorno, 2007, p. 151).<sup>79</sup>



It is this same critical edge that animates negative dialectics that animates immanent critique as well. Jarvis notes “[i]mmanent critique start out from the principles of the work under discussion itself” and “it uses the internal contradictions of a body of work to criticise it in its own terms” (Jarvis, 1998, p. 5). This means that it is the difference between what a work claims to do and what it is actually doing, the non-identity between them, that immanent critique is aiming at. In fact, we argue that negative dialectics and immanent critique are one and the same, two different names for the same critical process. This connection is clear in the following passage where Adorno describes the operation of dialectics in the terms Jarvis uses for immanent critique: “[t]o the fundamental ontologist, relativism is the offence of bottomless thinking. Dialectics is as strictly opposed to that as to absolutism, but it does not seek a middle ground between the two; it opposes them through the extremes themselves, convicts them of untruth by their own ideas” (Adorno, 2007, p. 35).

What is more, in the course of *Negative Dialectics* we have an excellent and lucid example of negative dialectics as immanent critique in practice: the critique of the bourgeois ideal of freedom: “[p]hilosophy”, Adorno writes, “had an unexpressed mandate from the bourgeoisie to find transparent grounds for freedom. But that concern is antagonistic in itself. It goes against the old oppression and promotes the new one, the one that hides in the principle of rationality itself.” (Adorno, 2007, p. 214). In its Kantian version, this mandate turns freedom into obedience: “[a]ll the concepts whereby the *Critique of Practical Reason* proposes, in honor of freedom, to fill the chasm between the Imperative and mankind – law, constraint, respect, duty – all of these are repressive. Causality produced by freedom corrupts freedom into obedience” (Adorno, 2007, p. 232). This self-contradictory mandate of bourgeois philosophy regarding freedom is also the cause for the antinomy of Kant’s moral philosophy (Adorno, 2007, p. 261). What is argued in this passage is a case where the bourgeois claim to promote freedom is revealed to be at odds with itself and promoting obedience instead; the same with rationality: the claim of the moral law to be rational is revealed to stand on a fundamental irrationality. This example, we think, illustrates vividly that

negative dialectics and immanent critique are one and the same thing. This point is important because in the secondary literature this identity goes undiscerned and causes bewilderment to some commentators.<sup>80</sup>

So far, we secretly kept our eye fixed on the concept of contradiction and tried to unfold Adorno's negative dialectics from this point of view. Let us now turn to another fundamental for negative dialectics concept, that of negativity, and see what negative dialectics looks like from this perspective.

First of all, why is negative dialectics called negative? We already noted in the beginning of this section that negative dialectics goes against the grain of dialectics hitherto, which was to construct something positive through negation, a point that marks a radical difference between Adorno and Hegel; in fact, consideration of negativity in Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* is tied up and goes hand in hand with his critique of Hegel. The most general difference in disposition and direction is captured when Adorno writes that "[d]ialectics is critical reflection upon [the] context of immanence" while in Hegel "there was coincidence of identity and positivity" (Adorno, 2007, p. 141). Because, as we mentioned above, the conceptual totality appears from the point of view of nonidentity thinking to be wholly immersed in falseness and the ideology of identity, nonidentity thinking takes a critical stance against this totality (conceptual as well as actual), has to negate identity; Hegel's operation, on the other hand, leads into the affirmation of this totality (Adorno, 2007, p. 147).

In the same direction moves Adorno's observation that "[a] contradiction in reality is a contradiction against reality" (Adorno, 2007, p. 145). Contradiction arises, as we said, because of the false identification of concept and object. The detection of a contradiction in reality carries with it the implicit demand for the removal of this contradiction, of premature identification, in order to create the space for the possibility of materialisation of the longing for (true) identity. However, Adorno goes on, "such dialectics is no longer reconcilable with Hegel. Its motion does not tend to

the identity in the difference between each object and its concept; instead, it is suspicious of all identity” (Adorno, 2007, p. 145).

We should not be taken aback by the paradoxical position presented here: negative dialectics is “suspicious of all identity”, it negates (premature) identity, but this negation is not an end in itself. It is justified by the prospect of incorporating the nonidentical elements of the object into the concept, by the prospect of achieving true identity. However, we need to be aware of the magnitude of the task, namely, that this ‘true identity’ means no less than acquiring access to what Kant called “thing in itself”, which Adorno considers as “hubris”. So, we should be wary before we proclaim a “happy grasp on affirmation” of identity. The difficulty of our presentational provocation is the difficulty of negative dialectics itself.

How are we going to get access to the nonidentical element in the object? Adorno answers to this question by first clarifying how we are not going to get access to it:

“The nonidentical is not to be obtained directly, as something positive on its part, nor is it obtainable by a negation of the negative. This negation is not an affirmation itself, as it is to Hegel. ...To equate negation of negation with positivity is the quintessence of identification; it is the formal principle in its purest form. What thus wins out in the inmost core of dialectics is the antidialectical principle: that traditional logic which, *more arithmetico*, takes minus times minus for plus” (Adorno, 2007, p. 158).

So, we see that Adorno directly confronts and rejects Hegel’s negation of negation as “the quintessence of identification”, noting that “[t]he structure of [Hegel’s] system would unquestionably fall without the principle that to negate negation is positive” (Adorno, 2007, p. 160). The answer he offers to our question is that negative’s “only positive side would be criticism, definite negation; it would not be a circumventing result with a happy grasp on affirmation” (Adorno, 2007, p. 159). It is through criticism, the famous or infamous “determinate negation”, that access to the nonidentical or to “the otherness”, is acquired.

Here we reach at a crucial, as well as controversial, point in Adorno's thought. If it is true that, according to his thought, negative dialectics cannot but start its operation from the conceptual totality and this totality is structured according to identity thinking, and therefore is false, then, indeed, it seems that negation of identity is the only way to break through the façade of ideology. In this perspective, determinate negation denies the identity between the concept and its object by bringing to the surface the disparity, the contradiction between them: i.e., by bringing to the surface how the concept fails to incorporate the nonconceptual remainder of the object and/or how the object fails to live up to the concept's expectations, to materialise the possibilities of the concept. Both, concept and object, are defined in this process through the recognition of the contradiction that animates them since "the factors that define reality as antagonistic are the same factors as those which constrain mind, i.e. the concept, and force it into its intrinsic contradictions" (Adorno, 2008a, p. 9). The "truth content" of philosophical categories is the social experiences, the human practice, locked within them (Bonefeld, 2009, p. 139), and deciphering this content defines both them and the society in which they are born or used. As Adorno notes "[t]he only way to pass philosophically into social categories is to decipher the truth content of philosophical categories" (Adorno, 2007, p. 198). Hence the adjective "determinate" that characterises this kind of negation.

The mode of philosophising which emerges out of this universe is one which is confined and exhausted in determinate negation in two senses: as a ruthless critique of "what is" and unreconcilable opposition to the status quo, as well as a refusal to clearly point to a way out, to point to an alternative way to organise social life. This is why Adorno has been severely criticised for his acute pessimism, for his unwillingness to offer the slightest trace of affirmation of anything (Buck-Morss, 1979, p. 190; Osborne, 1992, p. 190; Held, 2004a, pp. 382-383).

We think that there is real cause for these accusations which is revealed when the issue comes to the problem of affirmation of life: if the value of life is not affirmed in one sense or another under all circumstances, we have no chance to fence against the degradation of it and against

murder. Here is not the place to discuss this side of the issue extensively, we will do that in the next chapter. But we want to point out a way in which these accusations can be addressed without stepping out of the universe of negative dialectics. The starting point is the observation that if the bases of the nonidentity thesis is that “A is A and A is not A simultaneously”, then the nonidentity thesis incorporates an affirmative moment: it initially affirms that A is A which is simultaneously negated. In the perspective of the relation between concept and object this affirmative moment takes the form of the recognition that we start from the point of identity thinking: we recognise that the conceptual totality is structured according to identity and we simultaneously negate this totality as ideological and false. In effect, we say that “*there is an identity between concept and object but this identity is false*”. In the same way, when the issue comes to the affirmation of life, the nonidentity thesis should be that we recognise the value of life but the form and content of this value as it now stands is false. In effect, we say “*there is a value of life but this value is false*”. The attentive reader will, perhaps, observe that there is a difference between the two formulations: while in the second formulation we want to preserve the positive value of life (the first part of the formulation), in the first formulation we could not possibly want to preserve the identity between concept and object (again the first part of the formulation) because this would be tantamount to wanting to preserve ideology and the status quo. However, if in Adorno’s thought identity thinking is retained as the starting point of negative dialectics, i.e. of the critique of the claim of this identity to exhaust the object, *and as capturing the intelligible forms of the objects*, as we will see shortly, which means that identity thinking *does capture some real* aspects of the object, then the situation is reversed: it is not the affirmation that life has a value which is problematic from the point of view of negative dialectics but the rejection of such affirmation! More reasons why we so badly want to preserve the affirmation of the value of life in the present and under all circumstances will be presented in the next chapter and they have to do with Nietzsche’s intention to safeguard a healthy self-esteem, as a necessary precondition for the overcoming of nihilism (see Chapter 4, section “Nonidentity concept of life...”). For now we will

just say that this affirmative moment at the heart of nonidentity thesis goes unacknowledged by Adorno (for reasons we will also discuss in the next chapter) but has the potential of mounting a defence of negative dialectics against one of the most persistent and severe criticisms against it by incorporating this criticism's truth content without compromising its own critical edge.

## **Negative Dialectics 2: the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity: a) concept formation and conceptuality in Adorno**

As we indicated when we outlined Adorno's project, the idea about a "fallacy of constitutive subjectivity" is perhaps the best focal point for the unfolding of Adorno's thought, and consonant with his own self-understanding: "[t]o use the strength of the subject to break through the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity – this is what the author felt to be his task ever since he came to trust his own impulses" (Adorno, 2007, p. xx). It is the nodal point at which all the different ways to see his overall project converge. What does this "fallacy" consist of? We have mentioned in the section on the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* that Enlightenment reverts into myth as soon as its objectifying urge forgets that man is still part of nature. This forgetting, which is history's masking of "its own entwinement with nature" (Cook, 2011, p. 9), Adorno wants to unmask, correcting this way our:

"flawed self-understanding by employing negative dialectics "to break through the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity", or the illusory view (which takes many forms) that mind, or spirit constitutes nature. ...a critique of the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity would show that the mind is not primary" (quotation inside the quotation is Adorno's, Cook, 2011, p. 9).

One of the forms the fallacy takes is the idea that concepts constitute objects:

"To counter the mistaken idea that concepts constitute objects, Adorno urges us to recognise "the constitutive character of the nonconceptual in the concept". This

recognition would have the salutary effect of stemming “the compulsive identification which the concept effects unless halted by such reflection” (quotations inside the quotation are Adorno’s, Cook, 2011, p. 11).

Another way to formulate the fallacy is to say that the subject or subjective consciousness constitutes the object, as we will see in the next chapter is the case with Nietzsche. We can start comprehending now how the fallacy is the point where all the ways to see Adorno’s project converge: a materialist negative dialectics will show that it is not the concept which constitutes the object but that the nonidentical, nonconceptual element in the object is what constitutes the concept; a materialist negative dialectics will correct the flawed self-understanding that the self constitutes nature, by showing how the self is still constituted by nature, and hence reconcile man and nature restoring the forgotten inner nature not as the radical “other” to be dominated but as part of the self; finally, a materialist, negative, reconciliatory dialectics will also show how spirit and nature, history and nature, mutually constitute one another. On the way of demonstrating this entwinement, the next step in our unfolding of Adorno’s project will be the discussion of the process of concept formation emerging from *Negative Dialectics*.

As the traditional positivist/empiricist idea of concept formation has it, concepts are formed by drawing together the common characteristics of several objects which are then given a common name. For instance, from the perceptual experience of many beings that have two legs, arms, a head and a body, they can talk, think, construct tools etc, we come into the conclusion that we can gather them under a common name and call them, say, “humans”. Subsuming objects under concepts for purposes of classification, description and, more importantly, domination is the main function of concepts in traditional, identity thinking.

It can be said that identity thinking is capturing what is referred to as “intelligible forms” of objects. Adorno’s view about the intelligible forms comes, as Stone notes, from Hegel: “The general assurance that...insights, cognitions are “merely subjective” ceases to convince as soon as subjectivity is grasped as the object’s form’, as it is by Hegel” (Stone, 2014, p. 1129, quotation inside

the quotation is from Adorno's *Subject and Object*). And she also goes on to note that Adorno takes a step further than Hegel to accuse him that he "wrongly reduces the object to its intelligible form" a reduction that makes him an identity thinker (Stone, 2014, p. 1129). Intelligible forms are real, they are not arbitrary projections of the mind onto the objects. They appear so only if we abstract from the hundreds of thousands of years of the history of the formation of human perception, including the formation of our mind, through the constant exchange with nature in a social context.

As Horkheimer observes:

"Even the way they see and hear is inseparable from the social life-process as it has evolved over the millennia. The facts which our senses present to us are socially preformed in two ways: through the historical character of the object perceived and through the historical character of the perceiving organ. Both are not simply natural; they are shaped by human activity, and yet the individual perceives himself as receptive and passive in the act of perception." (Horkheimer, 2002, p. 200)

If intelligible forms were arbitrary projections of the mind onto the objects, if objective reality was chaotic, then, as Adorno observes, "the domination of nature would never have succeeded" (cited in Dews, 1986, p. 38; also in Bauer, 1999, p. 83), the success of a science informed by logic and identity thinking in mastering nature would be inexplicable. However, this historical formation of perception and of the mind consists in training them in the ways that can more effectively manipulate the environment and other men. To the extent that they claim to exhaust all there is to know about the objects they do falsify the objects.

Identity thinking and formal logic, as intelligible forms, are not abandoned by dialectical thinking.

Horkheimer again reminds us that:

"The traditional type of theory, one side of which finds expression in formal logic, is in its present form part of the production process with its division of labor. Since society must come to grips with nature in the future ages as well, this intellectual technology



will not become irrelevant but on the contrary is to be developed as fully as possible.”

(Horkheimer, 2002, p. 216)

Intelligible forms and identity thinking form part of the inescapable metabolism with nature and cannot but be retained. They are retained for the additional reason that negative dialectics is dependent on them as its point of departure, it ‘feeds’ upon their inaccuracy and inadequacy in the exchange with nature and other men, revealing this inaccuracy and inadequacy through determinate negation and immanent critique.<sup>81</sup>

We saw in the previous section that nonidentity thinking starts from the thesis that “objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder”, which points out that the classificatory process mentioned above abstracts from the differences that individual objects have between them, from the individuality of the object; nonidentity thinking comes to restore what has been left out of the concept as we saw in the passage from the *Lectures on Negative Dialectics* cited in the beginning of the previous section (Adorno, 2008a, p. 7). This omission cannot be rectified by an infinite addition of characteristics which aim at an exhaustive description of the object. In this case we would have to end up with one concept for each individual object and still something of the object would have been left out. On the other hand, such process of infinite regress usually ends up “with deist conceptions of the social existence, whether in their religious or secularised forms”, like Adam Smith’s Invisible hand or “the so-called logic of things” (Bonefeld, 2009, p. 126). However, concepts, traditional concepts, are not only inadequate but also indispensable, and philosophy “must strive by way of the concept to transcend the concept” (Adorno, 2007, p. 15). It is because of this and “[b]ecause entity is not immediate...it is only through the concept”, that “the concept’s own concept has become a problem” (Adorno, 2007, p. 153).<sup>82</sup>

“What”, then, “is the concept of the concept?” Werner Bonefeld asks the question, in a very enlightening essay about conceptuality in Adorno, which will be our companion in the investigation of this issue. He starts by distinguishing negative dialectics from Marxist epistemologies that move in the framework of traditional theory:

“Conceptual thinking is thus not external to reality in the sense that it requires validation by means of empirical corroboration [as A. Callinicos argues, NK]. The presumption of such externality lies at the heart of traditional theory. Contrary to Callinicos’s suggestion, a Marxist inspired realist epistemology does not alter tradition, it merely radicalises traditional theory from the standpoint of traditional theory. That is to say, theory does not possess photographs of the empirical world” (Bonefeld, 2009, pp. 124-125).

The reader should not be confused here by the seemingly derogative reference to realist epistemology: Adorno’s epistemology is also realist (Adorno, 2007, p. 12, 187; Adorno, 2008a, p. 8), to the extent that it recognises the difference in nature between concept and object (in fact, negative dialectics’ existence is based on the disparity between them). However, Adorno’s epistemology is *not naively* realist, it does not consider that the two are not intertwined, i.e. that the concepts play no part in the construction of the object and that the objects, what Bonefeld here calls “the non-conceptual”, take no part in the construction of the concept.<sup>83</sup> Bonefeld’s reference that “theory does not possess photographs of reality” means that theory, critical theory, is not so much interested in describing how things look like from outside, as it were, but is interested in what they really are, and what they really are is within them.

However, in their immediate factual appearance, things, concepts and relationships are and have always been rigidified and dogmatically understood. Therefore, “[t]he task of critical social theory is to demystify rigidified, thing-like, congealed relationships, rendering their immediacy transparent.” (Bonefeld, 2009, p. 125). Their immediacy is not transparent because the appearance of identity obscures what they really are, their essence. The dualism of appearance and essence is critically maintained in Adorno. Appearance and essence

“come from philosophical tradition and are maintained in negative dialectics, but their directional tendency is reversed. Essence can no longer be hypostatized as the pure, spiritual being-in-itself. Rather, essence passes into that which lies concealed beneath

the façade of immediacy, of the supposed facts, and which makes the facts what they are” (Adorno, 2007, 167).<sup>84</sup>

The retention of the distinction is not metaphysical: essence does not belong to a different reality than appearance. “Essence has to appear” and “cannot choose not to appear” (Bonefeld, 2009, p. 134). If we take the example of money, the essence of money, as Marx has shown, is the social relation between the worker and the owner of the means of production.<sup>85</sup> This relation appears as the essence of money, particularly in times of crisis, when the workers go to the merchants to redeem their wages for means of subsistence. The inflated prices they come up against, as Adorno observes, “present them with the bill which they have signed away to the manufacturer” while the merchant, who happens to be a Jew in the context Adorno makes this comment, takes the blame for it (Adorno, 2016, p. 173). This is how the essence “appears” in “its disappearance” (Bonefeld, 2009, p. 135). The reason why we must retain the distinction between essence and appearance is that “to deny that there is an essence means to side with appearance, with the total ideology which existence...become” (Adorno, 2007, p. 169).

We use concepts in order to grasp reality; “to conceptualise means to bring the thing to its concept” and not to analyse other concepts (Bonefeld, 2009, p. 126). But, as we established in the previous section, reality, its objects and, therefore, also the concepts we use to grasp it, are contradictory in character. Conceptualisation then:

“means articulating what is active in things, revealing their contradictory constitution and movement, ...However, to conceptualise means to identify. Identification does not crush the fetish; it affirms it. Conceptualisation is thus itself contradictory – it has to think against itself” (Bonefeld, 2009, p. 129).<sup>86</sup>

The movement in question is the movement of the concept “towards its opposite, the non-conceptual” (Adorno, 2008a, p. 6). What the concept strives to retrieve from the congealed object is its nonidentical element, which is, at the same time, a nonconceptual element. In this way negative dialectics destroys the “autarky” of the concept, a concept which “is entwined with a non-

conceptual whole" (Adorno, 2007, p. 12). In the field of social sciences, the nonconceptual element, the hidden essence of objects is, from a certain unorthodox Marxian perspective, and paradoxically enough, human practice (Bonefeld, 2009, p. 139), which is constitutive of the social object (Bonefeld, 2009, pp. 132-133; Cook, 2006, p. 725). From this follows that the nonconceptual element human practice is the constitutive element in the dialectical concept as well (Bonefeld, 2009, p. 141).

These last two propositions are supported by what Adorno calls "the preponderance of the object" over the subject, a theme whose appropriate place is on the next section that deals with the relation of subject and object in Adorno's thought.

So far, we dealt with the theme of concept formation one-sidedly. We dealt only with the way in which the concept is less than the object or the object is more than the concept. However, as we saw earlier, this relation works both ways: it is also the case that the concept is more than the object, it points beyond the object as it presently exists. This idea is made clear in the case of a concept such as freedom, the primary example of what Adorno understands as 'emphatic concept':

"Emphatically conceived, the judgment that a man is free refers to the concept of freedom; but this concept in turn is more than is predicated of the man, and by other definitions the man is more than the concept of his freedom. The concept says not only that it is applicable to all individuals defined as free; it feeds on the idea of a condition in which individuals would have qualities not to be ascribed to anyone here and now" (Adorno, 2007, p. 150).

The concept of freedom "is more than is predicated of the man" at the same time when "man is more than the concept of his freedom". To the extent that "man is more" thought points towards the objectivity of man, towards what the concept has eliminated from the particularity of man's objectivity; to the extent that the "concept is more" thought points beyond the facticity of man, to use Sartre's term, as they currently exist, to the restrictions that this facticity imposes on them and

a possibility that “is not yet”: it points towards transcendence and utopia, and punctuates the longing of the concept to become identical to the thing.

This double character of the concept lies at the heart of the nonidentity thesis and “animates every identifying judgment that is worth making” as Adorno says (Adorno, 2007, 151). Nonidentity thinking is precisely the exposure of the ‘reciprocal contradiction’, a contradiction that is a two-way road, between the two sides of the emphatic concept when the claim of identity between concept and object is made.<sup>87</sup>

### **Negative Dialectics 3: the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity: b) subject and object**

The dualism between subject and object is perhaps the most archaic form of dualism. We can say that a whole host of other dualisms present an analogy to this archetypical one: concept and object, freedom and necessity, individual and society, history (man) and nature, social sciences and natural sciences. It seems that there is an affinity between the first parts of all of them which lean on the side of the subject, as there is an affinity between the second parts of these dualisms which lean on the side of the object. Therefore, what is going to be said for subject and object might, by analogy, be valid for all of them.

For instance, all of them are critically retained by Adorno. Their retention is recognition of their reality; they are real not fictitious or constructed: “[t]he division which makes the object the alien thing to be mastered and appropriates it, is indeed subjective, the result of orderly preparation; but no critique of its subjective origin will reunify the parts, once they have split in reality” (Adorno, 2007, p. 175). Dualisms express “the antagonistic state of reality; insofar as [they] express that condition, the falsehood of dualism is truth” (Adorno, 2007, p. 175).

The critical element in their retention is the abandonment of the “rigid” distinction between the two parts of the dualism: “[w]herever a doctrine of some absolute “first” is taught there will be talk of something inferior to it, of something absolutely heterogeneous to it, as its logical correlate. *Prima Philosophia* and dualism go together. To escape from this, fundamental ontology must try to avoid defining what comes first to it” (Adorno, 2007, p. 138). What is more, dialectical thought dissolves the antithesis between the two opposed parts by conceiving the constitution of the one as moment of the existence of the other: “the rigidly dichotomical structure disintegrates by virtue of either pole’s definition as a moment of its own opposite. To philosophical thought dualism is given and as inescapable as the continued course of thinking makes it false. Transmission – “mediation” – is simply the most general and inadequate way to express this” (Adorno, 2007, p. 139).

From this perspective, Adorno argues against the ontological supremacy of consciousness (of the subject) over the object:

“[n]or does an ontological supremacy of consciousness follow from the counter-argument that without a knowing subject nothing can be known about the object. Every statement to the effect that subjectivity “is”, no matter what or how, includes an objectivity which the subject, by means of its absolute being, claims to have yet to establish. Only because the subject in turn is indirect – because it is not the radical otherness required to legitimise the object – is it capable of grasping objectivity at all” (Adorno, 2007, p. 185).

The argument here is that by the very fact that the subject claims that itself exists, has presupposed a moment in which it has contemplated itself as an object of contemplation, and that it is this ability the subject has, to be an object and to be able to view itself as an object, what makes it not the radical “other” of objectivity but akin to it and what makes it able to grasp any object at all. In fact, Adorno is very explicit that subject and object reciprocally constitute one another: “[t]he polarity of subject and object may well appear to be an undialectical structure in which all dialectics takes

place. ...They [subject and object] are neither an ultimate duality nor a screen hiding ultimate unity. They constitute one another as much as – by virtue of such constitution – they depart from each other” (Adorno, 2007, p. 174).

However, this reciprocity is not evenly balanced because there is a marked difference between subject and object: we cannot imagine a subject which is not simultaneously an object, but we can imagine an object that is not simultaneously a subject (Adorno, 2007, p. 183). This means, speaking on a highly abstract level, that the object is relatively more independent from the subject than the subject is from the object. This is the ground of the object’s “preponderance”, of its greater heaviness, in relation to the subject:

“The word “object”, on the other hand, is not related to subjectivity until we reflect upon the possibility of its definition. This does not mean that objectivity is something immediate, that we might forget our critique of naïve realism. To grant preponderance to the object means to make progressive qualitative distinctions between things which in themselves are indirect” (Adorno, 2007, p. 184).

The preponderance of the object over the subject is very important in Adorno’s thought; it is what makes negative dialectics materialistic (Adorno, 2007, p. 192): the constitutive character of the nonidentity, nonconceptual, objective element in the concept is the instance of the preponderance of the object in its relation to the concept.<sup>88</sup>

Having this relation in mind is easier to see how the recognition of the preponderance of the object over the subject is also conditional on the emancipation of the subject from the false objectivity of phenomenality:

“In negative dialectics not even the transmission of essence and phenomenality, of concept and thing, will remain what it was: the subjective moment in the object. What transmits the facts is not so much the subjective mechanism of their pre-formation [as in Kant, NK] and comprehension as it is the objectivity heteronomous to the subject, the objectivity behind that which the subject can experience. ...To give the object its

due instead of being content with the false copy, the subject would have to resist the average value of such objectivity and free itself as a subject. It is on this emancipation, not on the subject's insatiable repression, that objectivity depends today" (Adorno, 2007, pp. 170-171).

In order to be able to see the constitutive character of the nonconceptual in the concept, the subject must become able to see through the apparent objectivity, to see the objectivity beyond the immediate experience, to see the objectivity which makes the apparent objectivity what it is. In this sense the subject is in the paradoxical position where in order to recognise the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity must become able to free itself from it. This position is as paradoxical as Adorno's aspiration to use the force of the subject in order to break through the fallacy, without this to mean that the operation is impossible. It just means that what is required on the part of the subject is a self-overcoming movement of reflection of a higher order, as we will see in the next section.

Adorno ascribes the resistance to the idea of the preponderance of the object to the premature "emancipation" of the bourgeois "I" from social objectivity, to the stubborn defence of an autonomy already at hand:

"Preponderance of the object is a thought of which any pretentious philosophy will be suspicious. Since Fichte, aversion to it has been institutionalised. Protestations to the contrary, reiterated and varied a thousandfold, seek to drown out the festering suspicion that heteronomy may be mightier than the autonomy of which Kant already taught that it cannot be conquered by that superior power. Such philosophical subjectivism is the ideological accompaniment of the emancipation of the bourgeois I. It furnishes reasons for that emancipation. Its tenacious vigor is drawn from misdirected opposition to the status quo, from opposition to its thingness. In relativizing or liquifying that thingness, philosophy believes to be above the supremacy of goods, and above the form of subjective reflection on that supremacy, the reified consciousness" (Adorno, 2007, p. 189).<sup>89</sup>



The “thingness” of objectivity, fetishism, is not a matter of perspective, is not fictitious and cannot be done away by subjective thought’s imaginary dissolution of it. Adorno notes elsewhere that it was Hegel who first brought this insight to light:

“Mere being-for-itself, the immediacy of the subject that believes in its own self-sufficiency, is in actual fact pure deception. ...Without this Hegelian insight, a theory of society as we understand it today would not really have been possible. – So what I am saying is that he destroyed the illusion of the subject’s being-in-itself and showed that the subject is itself an aspect of social objectivity.” (Adorno, 2008a, p. 16)

The insight that, in the first instance, the subject is an aspect of social objectivity, is very important for our argument not because without it social theory is impossible, as Adorno rightly notes, but because it supports Adorno’s critique of the objections against the objectivity of truth, which we will see in the next section. If we do not recognise this social embeddedness of the subject *and become able to reflect on it* then the domination of the object over the subject takes place behind the back of the subject and we have a situation in which the subject thinks itself to be free when it is actually moved like a string-puppet by the unacknowledged social objectivity.

We argued above that human practice as the constitutive, nonconceptual element of social concepts, is the form that the preponderance of the object takes in concept formation and what makes negative dialectics materialistic. This is a direct refutation of the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity through the force of the subject itself. However, one could object that human practice is a subjective rather than an objective element, and instead of refutation of the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity the thesis about the preponderance of the object is a verification of the fallacy. We have to be careful here: “the fallacy” holds that the object is constituted by *consciousness or the mind, not human practice*. We will also remind the reader that the subject is “an aspect of social objectivity”, that subject and object in the dialectical perspective mutually constitute one another. Finally, it has to be made clear that the preponderance of the (social) object

is the form and expression of the unfreedom of the social subject, a social object that although is constituted by the social subject's practice dominates over it as a force alien to it.<sup>90</sup>

## **The ramifications of the critique of the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity for the theory of truth**

The critique of “the fallacy” has some important ramifications for the theory of truth, namely it furnishes an argument in favour of the objectivity of truth that Adorno espouses.

The dominant stance on the question of truth, at least since the end of WWII, has been scepticism and/or relativism. In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* Adorno and Horkheimer offer an explanation of their onset and dominance:

“...the brilliance of enlightened reason banished as mythological any form of devotion which claimed to be objective, and grounded in actuality. All previous obligations therefore succumbed to the verdict which pronounced them taboo – not excluding those which were necessary for the existence of the bourgeois order itself. The instrument by means of which the bourgeoisie came to power, the liberation of forces, universal freedom, self-determination – in short, the Enlightenment, itself turned against the bourgeoisie once, as a system of domination, it had recourse to suppression. ...unreflective enlightened thinking based on the notion of survival always tends to convert into skepticism, in order to make enough room for the existing order.”

(Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, p. 92-93).

The allusion in this passage is to Fascism: this is when Enlightenment got “recourse to suppression” and turned against the bourgeoisie, to the extent that it did. The description of the onset of scepticism is in fact a description of the mechanism of nihilism that Enlightenment sets in motion. The important observation is that scepticism tends to favour the perpetuation of the existing order.

In *Negative Dialectics* Adorno takes issue with relativism too, “a limited form of consciousness” in which:

“individual consciousness is taken for the ultimate and all individual opinions are accorded equal rights, as if there were no criterion of their truth. Proponents of the abstract thesis that every man’s thought is conditioned should be most concretely reminded that so is their own, that it is blind to the supra-individual element which alone turns individual consciousness into thought...relativism is popularised materialism” (Adorno, 2007, p. 36).

We can see that “the fallacy”, in the form of taking individual consciousness as the “ultimate” arbiter of truth, is present in the reflection and Adorno makes a bold, from the point of view of prevalent scepticism, claim: that there is still standing a criterion of truth. What criterion does he have in mind? Having in mind his realism we would look towards the correspondence of concept and object; having in mind his critique of naïve realism we would look towards the reciprocal constitution between subject and object (Adorno, 2007, p. 174); having in mind nonidentity thinking we would look towards the nonconceptual, objective element in the concept. We will leave the matter open for the moment. We will only note that the supra-individual element referred to in the quotation is an allusion to his claim that “to comprehend a thing itself...is nothing but to perceive the individual moment in its immanent connection with others” (Adorno, 2007, p. 25).

The necessary complement of relativism is the proliferation of perspectives, world-views (weltanschauungen) which have the problem that they are arbitrary, random, not necessary<sup>91</sup> (Adorno, 2007, p. 7). World-views can only offer “solace” to the scientists “according to taste and, one must fear, according to the structure of their own psychological drives...[i]n the end, one’s position...comes to depend upon his political creed, or upon the power he happens to recognise at the moment” (Adorno, 2007, p. 215). In another passage, later on in *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno adds the conditions that the overcoming of world-views should fulfil and what is needed for their fulfilment:

“The metaphysical categories live on, secularised, in what the vulgar drive to higher things calls the question of the meaning of life. The word has a ring of *weltanschauung* which condemns the question. All but inevitably, it will fetch the answer that life makes whatever sense the questioner gives it. Not even a Marxism debased to an official creed will say much else, as witness the late Lukacs. But the answer is false. The concept of sense involves an objectivity beyond all “making”: a sense that is “made” is already fictitious. It duplicates the subject, however collective, and defrauds it of what it seemingly granted. Metaphysics deals with an objectivity without being free to dispense with subjective reflection. The subjects are embedded in themselves, in their “constitution”: what metaphysics has to ponder is the extent to which they are nonetheless able to see beyond themselves” (Adorno, 2007, p. 376).

“Sense involves objectivity beyond all making” otherwise it just “duplicates the subject”. Since the subjects “are embedded in...their “constitution”” what is needed is to become able to see “beyond themselves”. Where is this objectivity going to come from?

Adorno, in his *Lectures on Negative Dialectics*, embarking from the logical side of negative dialectics, argues that concepts and objects are simultaneously more and less than each other and that this “discrepancy” turns into contradiction.<sup>92</sup> He then moves on to establish that the contradictory character of concepts just corresponds to and reflects the contradictory character of the antagonistic society we live in, a society which reproduces itself “by virtue of its contradictions”:

“I shall say here only that the essence of this model of an antagonistic society is that it is not a society *with* contradictions or *despite* its contradictions, but *by virtue of* its contradictions. In other words, a society based on profit necessarily contains this division in society because of the objective existence of the profit motive. This profit motive which divides society and potentially tears it apart is also the factor by means of which society reproduces its own existence” (Adorno, 2008a, pp. 8-9)

So, “we are compelled”, Adorno adds, “from the point of view of objective reality to apply the concept of contradiction...as an *immanent* contradiction...in the object itself” (Adorno, 2008a, p. 9). To the objection that the antagonistic character of concepts and of the object is the outcome of smuggling into them both this antagonism, his response is that the antagonism on both derives from the same causes:

“But I have the best intentions about showing you that the factors that define reality as antagonistic are the same factors as those which constrain mind, i.e. the concept, and force it into its intrinsic contradictions. To put it in a nutshell, in both cases we are dealing with the principle of mastery, the mastery of nature, which spreads its influence, which continues in the mastery of men by other men and which finds its mental reflex in the principle of identity, by which I mean the intrinsic aspiration of all mind to turn every alterity that is introduced to it or that it encounters into something like itself and in this way to draw it into its own sphere of influence” (Adorno, 2008a, p. 9).

In this superb way Adorno grounds the objectivity of negative dialectics in the objectivity of the antagonistic society, and both on domination of nature and men through identity thinking: “[t]his implies that dialectics is not an arbitrary invention, no world-view” (Adorno, 2008a, p. 2).

Adorno’s theory of the objectivity of truth is the most difficult thought to come to terms with from the point of view of perspectivism and we now have all the equipment to tackle the objection levelled from this point of view against Adorno’s thought. This objection is exemplarily formulated by Stanley Fish and conveyed approvingly by David Toole:

“Fish’s point is that negative dialectics is itself a fallacy because we can never approach the object of the world as anything other than constitutive subjects who mediate things through our economic, ideological, and psychological interests. These interests may change, and we may pit former interests against new ones, creating the illusion of “thought thinking against itself”, but never can we establish the relationship with

objects that Adorno calls us to. In broad strokes Fish is right, and his point is taken”

(Toole, 1993, p. 239).

Perhaps it is useful to start unravelling the response afforded by Adorno’s thought by inviting the reader to make a mental experiment: if we have a person known to two different people and we ask them to describe this person, they will give two quite different descriptions based on their own constitution and the understanding of who this person is. Their answer will be informed by the interests Fish is talking about. Now if we give these same people an x-ray of the person in question their description will be much less varied and the possibility that their interest will interfere with it is much less probable. This is precisely what Adorno’s thought is inviting us to do: to base our thought in an x-ray rather than who we are and what the object looks like from outside, by acknowledging the contradictory constitution of the object of cognition as an objective truth. By doing so we identify the object, we use identity thinking, but by identifying it as contradictory we immediately throw ourselves into a contradiction in terms. We have to become able to think against our thought to make this move. Contradiction is not only “nonidentity under the aspect of identity”, as Adorno asserts, but also becomes the intelligible form of the social object of cognition the moment we identify the object as contradictory.

From this position, having gained access inside the object, to its contradictory nature, and thinking out of the object instead of thinking about the object, we can now understand its ‘interests’ much clearer. Turning our eyes towards ourselves as an object of cognition we are able to do the same for our own perspective. Adorno is aware, as we saw, of the interest-laden nature of perspectival thinking, what he calls the “embeddedness” of the subject in its own constitution. What he calls for is an ‘ecstatic movement’ of self-reflection that will see the constitutive subjectivity of perspectival thinking as an object. As in psychoanalysis, the heightened level of self-awareness that is achieved by this movement is the only way to move beyond the embeddedness in our own constitution. Without this move, the subject, being “itself an aspect of social objectivity”, will only be able to see itself, project itself, its own objectivity, on the object (this is what interests do).

The matter becomes clearer if we reconsider the relation between the dogmatic, the relativist and the objectivist consciousness with regards to truth. The traditional understanding is that the three belong to the same level and that one can replace the other without any deeper change in perspective to be required. This is the presupposition if one conceives Critical Theory as trying to navigate between the Skyla of dogmatism and the Charybdis of relativism. However, we want to argue that these stances do not belong to the same level: the dogmatic consciousness is unable of any reflection on its social embeddedness; it takes its own volition as absolute and its particular truth as immediately objective: it has yet to arrive to the “popularised materialism” of relativism. Relativist consciousness is capable of a first level of reflection with which it sees volition as embedded in the economic, ideological and psychological interests of the individual. Adorno’s objectivist consciousness requires a second level of reflection by which perspectivism itself, the embeddedness as such, becomes an object of reflection. By this move it becomes able to see that the different perspectives exist because they are based on a contradictory object, the object is constituted in a contradictory way. Reflection on perspectivism should lead, and, as we will see in the next chapter, has lead Nietzsche’s genealogical investigation in the *Genealogy of Morals*, to dialectics as nonidentity. Perspectivism, as an instance of the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity, can and needs to be overcome through negative dialectics for one to arrive at negative dialectics and objectivity, a paradox that we already observed in the previous section (see pp. 135-136). This objectivity is the criterion of truth Adorno was talking about, which has to be understood as *the adequate presence of the preponderant object in our truths*, a presence which takes the form of the presence of human practice as a form of social objectivity in our concepts, if they are to penetrate the reified objects.

## Conclusion

At the end of this chapter, it is useful to remind again its place in the overall argument of our thesis. Our thesis aims to investigate the appropriation of the thought of Nietzsche by Deleuze, as representative of poststructuralism, and by Adorno as representative of Critical Theory. The particular emphasis is, as Dews has observed, the appropriation of Nietzsche's irrationalistic critique of identity (critique of the rationalist subject) by the first, in contradistinction, as our hypothesis, inspired by Dews, Rose and Bauer, is, to the appropriation of Nietzsche's rationalistic critique of identity by the second; in addition, one aim of our thesis is to investigate the transformation by Adorno of Nietzsche's critique of rationality into a critique of the entwinement of rationality and domination. At the same time, we are also meant to investigate 'the paradox of Nietzsche', the claim, from different quarters, of Nietzsche to be both a fierce critique of dialectics (Deleuze) and an instigator of negative dialectics (Rose, Bauer). We can already see clearly that Adorno's critique of identity thinking is conducted, mainly but not exclusively, on the rationalistic level, as Dews insightfully observed, to the extent that identity thinking concepts are considered to falsify the objects they refer to by claiming identity with them while in actual fact are simultaneously *more and less* than these objects. Adorno's thought incorporates part of the irrationalistic critique of identity thinking to the extent that identity thinking is considered as being fuelled by self-preservation, an irrational impulse.

Our strategy in this chapter, as in the previous chapter on Deleuze, was to present the thought of Adorno in its own right, with an eye on the appropriation of Nietzsche, which, however, remained largely mute (but for a few hints here and there). We have so far tried to 'set the stage', as it were, for the argument of the appropriation to take place in the next, comparative chapter.

We understood Adorno's project as a continuation of Marx's, consisting in the effort to 'read nature as history and history as nature', a program of research which includes alternative ways to approach his thought as aiming at the construction of a materialist dialectic or to a reconciliation of nature and culture. We argued that the key element in this project is the "effort to use the



strength of the subject to break through the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity”, and we organised our exposition of his thought around this axis.

In *Dialectic of Enlightenment* history is nature because the sole aim of Enlightenment reason is the domination of inner and outer nature (which goes hand in hand with the domination of other men) fuelled by self-preservation, a natural instinct. Nature is history because the self, man’s nature, is moulded through the effort to escape from the mythical forces that dominate it, a process documented in the adventures of Odysseus which is the story of the emergence of bourgeois subjectivity.

In *Negative Dialectics* Adorno continues the project of the construction of a dialectical logic, as part of a critique of identity thinking. Concepts in identity thinking leave out a remainder of the objects they refer to, they are “less”, at the same time when they are “more” than their objects. Negative dialectics is meant to rectify this double falsification of reality. This falsification occurs because the aim of identity thinking is to dominate nature by discerning the “intelligible forms” of the objects. It so happens that intelligible forms are arranged according to the laws of logic, which are the laws of identity thinking. Ideology begins when the claim is made that these laws exhaust the object, that the concepts are identical with the things they refer to. The first instance of the “fallacy of constitutive subjectivity” occurs when the law of non-contradictoriness and the law of the excluded middle, are projected by the mind onto things as an adequate comprehension of them. A second instance of the fallacy is when the claim is made that concepts or consciousness constitute the objects. Both instances are countered with reference to the “preponderance” of the nonidentical, nonconceptual, objective element: the fact that objects, and therefore, the concepts that refer to them, are indeed contradictory and do not abide to the rules of the mind. Instead of concepts constituting objects, materialist, negative dialectics argues that concepts and objects mutually constitute each other, and in this relation is the object that has preponderance over the concept. This is also the critique of “naïve realism”. The preponderance of the object is the common

denominator of the critique of identity thinking as negative dialectics (which thus becomes materialist dialectics), and of the critique of the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity.

# Chapter 4: Deleuze's and Adorno's Nietzsche, 'Nietzsche's paradox' and a critical debate between Critical Theory and poststructuralism over dialectics

## Introduction

In the previous chapters we presented successively Nietzsche's, Deleuze's and Adorno's thought in relation to our understanding of the project that each one of them tried to accomplish. In a nutshell, we saw Nietzsche as trying to document and find a way out of the nihilism of the modern age; Deleuze as trying to construct the ontology of difference in contradistinction to the, hitherto, ontology of identity; Adorno as trying to view nature as history and history as nature, through a reconciliatory, materialistic dialectics and using the force of the subject to break through the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity.

Now we can move on and see how the thought of Nietzsche germinated that of Deleuze and Adorno, that is, to test the objectives of our thesis: a) to substantiate Dews' observation that the poststructuralists, here Deleuze, appropriate Nietzsche's irrationalistic critique of identity; b) to test our hypothesis, inspired by Dews, Rose and Bauer, that Adorno, as representative of Critical Theory, appropriates and develops Nietzsche's rationalistic critique of identity thinking and transforms Nietzsche's critique of rationality into critique of the entwinement of rationality and domination; c) to explore 'the paradox of Nietzsche', that is, to see how the contradictory claims made, on the one hand by Deleuze, that Nietzsche is a critic of dialectics, and on the other hand by Rose and Bauer, that Nietzsche is the originator of negative dialectics are possible.

In the course of this chapter we will make the case of Nietzsche as an *inconsistent* non-identity, dialectical thinker, as well as take up the opportunity to engage in the dialogue that can be

developed between Deleuze and Adorno over the issue of Deleuze's critique of dialectics and the defence of dialectics that can be afforded by Adorno's negative dialectics.

## **Part 1: Deleuze's and Adorno's Nietzsche**

### **Objective (a): Deleuze's appropriation of the irrationalist Nietzsche**

Some elements of Deleuze's appropriation of Nietzsche's thought have already been presented in Chapter 2, notably Deleuze's critique on dialectics waged on Nietzschean grounds in his book *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. This book has a peculiar status in relation to our project: on the one hand, it is a direct blueprint of Deleuze's appropriation and understanding of Nietzsche's thought. On the other hand, however, it does not necessarily mean that what Deleuze says about Nietzsche there informs the rest of his thought. We will have to look closely to the other two books we studied (*Difference and Repetition* and *Anti-Oedipus*) and see what elements of his early study find their way into them in order to get the picture of Nietzsche's appropriation in Deleuze's work. Therefore, we will proceed by presenting the main themes in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* and then investigate which of them survive in the other books.

### **Deleuze's Nietzsche in *Nietzsche and Philosophy***

We will start with the theory of forces and of the will to power, upon which Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche's philosophy rests. The term "force" is adopted from physics (Deleuze, 2005, p. 49), an indication of Nietzsche's empiricist intentions, and designates roughly what we understand with the term "drives", the difference between the two being force's suitability for application in situations and phenomena that extend beyond the domain of psychology. In fact, every phenomenon of this world constitutes a "body"<sup>93</sup> and it is assumed to be governed by "active" or "reactive" forces and be possessed by an "affirmative" or "negative" will to power. Deleuze writes that forces are always

in a relation with each other and that active are called the forces that are superior or dominant quantitatively and reactive are called the forces that are inferior or dominated quantitatively (Deleuze, 2005, p. 40). He also writes that for Nietzsche, like for Freud, consciousness is the domain of reactive forces while active forces dwell exclusively in the unconscious and remain mostly unknown to us: "Consciousness merely expresses the relation of certain reactive forces to the active forces which dominate them." (Deleuze, 2005, p. 41). The terms active and reactive also designate the qualities of forces which "correspond to their difference in quantity" (Deleuze, 2005, p. 42): quantitatively superior forces have also the quality of being active while quantitatively inferior forces are qualitatively reactive.<sup>94</sup>

What determines the quantity and the quality of forces in Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche is the "will to power" (Deleuze, 2005, pp. 52-53). Will to power "is both, a complement to force and something internal to it. It is not ascribed to it as a predicate." (Deleuze, 2005, p. 49). This close proximity (but not identity) of will to power to force, prevents will to power from regressing into a "metaphysical abstraction" (Deleuze, 2005, p. 50): it is always connected to a tangible force of this world. Will to power can be either affirmative or negative. These are its qualities and they are giving forces their quality: affirmative will to power gives force the quality of being (more precisely, becoming) active, while negative will to power gives force the quality of being (becoming) reactive (Deleuze, 2005, pp. 53-54). We think it is very important to understand that although Deleuze talks sometimes as if forces and will to power had many different qualities, in fact their only qualities ("kinds of quality" is his expression) explicitly mentioned are these: active or reactive for force, affirmative or negative for will to power. It is important to have the distinction between active and reactive forces in mind because it seems to be one of the most fundamental in Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche. On the other hand, for Deleuze's Nietzsche, will to power is not a will that wants power but a will that wants "to affirm its difference [and not plainly what exists, NK] or to deny what differs" (Deleuze, 2005, p. 78). The determination of the qualities of forces and of will to power is an art of interpretation undertaken by will to power itself as the simultaneous subject and object of

interpretation: “will to power is not only the one that interprets but the one that evaluates...To interpret is to determine the force which gives sense to a thing. To evaluate is to determine the will to power which gives value to a thing” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 54). Will to power is the simultaneous subject and object since it does the interpreting and the evaluating and is what gives the forces and values their qualities (active or reactive for forces, affirmative or negative for values).

Closely related to the theory of will to power is the idea of perspectivism. Deleuze presents it in the context of Nietzsche’s critique of Kant as “the only possible principle of a total critique...there are no moral facts or phenomena, but only a moral interpretation of phenomena; there are no illusions of knowledge, but knowledge itself is an illusion; knowledge is an error, or worse, a falsification” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 90). For Kant “critique must be a critique *of* reason *by* reason itself” but he “lacked a method which permitted reason to be judged from the inside” although he conceived his critique as “immanent critique” of reason by reason (Deleuze, 2005, p. 91). He was oblivious to the fact that reason is entwined with irrational feelings or instincts, the will to power, and the acknowledgment of this entwinement by Nietzsche is what allows him and Deleuze to claim that “[i]n the will to power and the method which derives from it [genealogy and perspectivism, NK] Nietzsche has at his disposal a principle of internal genesis. ...Only the will to power as genetic and genealogical principle, as legislative principle, is capable of realising internal critique” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 91). However, the divorce of reason from the irrational will to power is reinstated in Deleuze’s Nietzsche when Deleuze is flipping the coin and claims that one of the points in which Nietzsche’s conception of critique is opposed to Kant’s is that he espouses:

“[a] thought which thinks *against* reason rather than a thought that believes itself to be legislative because it is subject to reason alone – “That which will always be impossible, a reasonable being”. It is a serious mistake to think that irrationalism opposes anything but thought to reason – whether it be the rights of the given, of the heart, of feeling, caprice or passion. In irrationalism we are concerned only with

thought, only with thinking” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 93; quotation inside the quotation is from Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra*).

We said earlier that active forces are always quantitatively superior to reactive forces. This does not mean that reactive forces cannot prevail over active forces and still remain quantitatively inferior and qualitatively reactive (Deleuze, 2005, p. 54). In fact, for Deleuze, this is exactly the meaning of the phenomenon of what Nietzsche calls *ressentiment*: reactive forces cease to be acted upon by active forces, that is, they manage to separate active forces from what they can do. The mechanism Deleuze describes is roughly as follows. Human experiences leave a trace in the unconscious. The “faculty of forgetting” is an active force the purpose of which is to keep these traces from entering consciousness so as to make the latter capable to respond to the constant excitations of the present. When the faculty of forgetting fails, reactions to traces cease to be acted upon (the active forces that acted upon them are separated from what they can do, that is, from acting upon the reactions), invade consciousness and the person instead of acting on the present excitation uses the reaction to the trace as their reaction to the present situation (Deleuze, 2005, pp. 112-114). It seems as if the mechanism of *ressentiment* in Nietzsche is similar or identical to the mechanism of “fixation” as described by Freud, only generalised to include the entirety of human psychological functioning.<sup>95</sup>

When an active force is separated from what it can do it does not disappear. On the contrary, Nietzsche notes, “[a]ll instincts that do not discharge themselves outwardly *turn inward* – that is what I call the *internalisation* of man...*that is the origin of the ‘bad conscience’*” (cited in Deleuze, 2005, p. 128). Bad conscience is the continuation of the becoming reactive of everything and everyone by means of cultural training. *Ressentiment*’s attitude is to ascribe blame to others: “it is your fault”; bad conscience, through the mediation and “genius” of the Judaic priest, takes the next step and ascribes blame to itself: “it is my fault” (Deleuze, 2005, pp. 131-133). The consequence of this process is the production of pain in the form of guilt (Deleuze, 2005, p. 129) and the transformation of debt into unpayable, infinite debt (Deleuze, 2005, p. 141).

Ressentiment and bad conscience are, along with the ascetic ideal, the three forms of nihilism in Nietzsche according to Deleuze (Deleuze, 2005, p. 87), when we put the emphasis of analysis on the development and fate of forces. If, however, we put the emphasis on values nihilism takes three forms defined somewhat differently: in a first stage, life is “denied and depreciated”, takes “a value of nil” when it is compared with the higher values which are considered superior to life. This is “negative nihilism”: it negates the value of life. In the second stage the higher values themselves are devalued and their existence denied, higher values “are reacted against” says Deleuze. This is “reactive nihilism”. The furthest consequence of reactive nihilism is “passive nihilism” where the value of this reaction is itself denied and to “fade away passively” is considered a better option (Deleuze, 2005, pp. 147-149).

Nihilism is the great sickness of the (our) age to be overcome. Every critique of reactive forces, of negative will to power, of resentment and of bad conscience comes down to their ultimate depreciation of life, to their nihilistic consequences. Nietzsche’s remedy, his “positive task” for the overcoming of nihilism is twofold according to Deleuze: the overman and transvaluation. For Deleuze the overman is defined as “*a new way of feeling: ...something other than the human type. A new way of thinking...*” non-metaphysical one, and “[*a*] *new way of evaluating: ...transvaluation*” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 163). We consider this description insufficient and we tried to go deeper in the description of the characteristics of the overman in Chapter 1. Regarding transvaluation we would only like to stress that, for Deleuze’s Nietzsche, it’s meaning is the change of the negative, depreciating of life will to power behind our current values into an affirmative and appreciating of life will to power.

Eternal return as a “selective thought” has an instrumental role in this respect. Deleuze discerns in Nietzsche two distinct senses of eternal return: one in a physical and cosmological sense and one in ethical sense as a “selective thought”. In its physical sense it is an answer to the “problem of passage”, the passage of time or the problem of the becoming of things. As Nietzsche notes in *The*



*Will to Power* “[t]hat everything recurs is the closest approximation of a world of becoming to a world of being” (cited in Deleuze, 2005, p. 48). In this sense, Deleuze notes, eternal return

“must not be interpreted as the return of something that is, that is “one” or the “same”.

We misinterpret the expression “eternal return” if we understand it as “return of the same.”...we can only understand the eternal return as the expression of a principle which serves as an explanation of diversity and its reproduction, of difference and its repetition. Nietzsche presents this principle as one of his most important philosophical discoveries. He calls it *will to power*” (Deleuze, 2005, pp. 48-49).

So, it appears that for Deleuze’s Nietzsche eternal return is an idea subordinate to the idea of will to power, as one of its expressions, aiming at explaining the reproduction of diversity and repetition of difference.

The second sense of the eternal return, eternal return as a selective thought, is meant to help us distinguish active actions from reactive actions. It is encapsulated in the proposition “whatever you will, will it in such a way that you also will its eternal return” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 68), or, in the words of Nietzsche, “If in all that you will you begin by asking yourself: is it certain that I will to do it an infinite number of times? This should be your most solid centre of gravity” (cited in Deleuze, 2005, p. 68). However, Deleuze notes that some reactive thoughts seem also to be able to pass this test. They have to be taken to their furthest, self-destructive and nihilistic consequences in order to be blocked by the thought of their eternal return, or rather for them to be transformed from reactive to active forces and actions (Deleuze, 2005, p. 70). When they reach their point of nothingness and measured against the test of the eternal return it becomes obvious that reactive forces cannot return: “It is sufficient to relate the will to nothingness to the eternal return in order to realise that reactive forces do not return” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 71). Such an analysis presents a challenge to our argument, presented in Chapter 1, that Nietzsche’s thought cannot possibly offer a mechanics of the transformation of reactive forces and negative will to power into active forces and affirmative will to power without the use of nonidentity thinking. We will take up the challenge a little later.

This is an incomplete but sufficient account of Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* which will allow us to trace, in conjunction with our reading of Nietzsche's thought in Chapter 1, the appropriation of Nietzsche's thought by Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* and *Anti-Oedipus*.

### **Nietzsche and Deleuze's project**

We mentioned in the Introduction of the thesis, when we summarised the content of Chapter 2 on Deleuze, that the appropriation of the irrationalist Nietzsche comprises of the appropriation of his theory of forces, of will to power and of perspectivism. We can see now that this is so because the theory of forces and of will to power refer to the unconscious, irrational drives that dominate the organisms (against the claims of Enlightenment's rationalistic subject and of its identity) and because perspectivism has on its base the multiplicity of wills to power between the various organisms and even inside one and the same organism. We do not aspire to give an exhaustive account of Nietzsche's influence in Deleuze's work and then draw the balance sheet. We do not have the time and space for that. What we think will suffice, instead, is to show that Deleuze's appropriation of the irrationalistic side of Nietzsche's thought takes place in the most strategic points of his thought.

The first indications were given when we presented Deleuze's project in Chapter 2 and noted his contention that "modern thought is born of the failure of representation, of the loss of identities, and the discovery of all the forces that act under the representation of the identical" (Deleuze, 2015, p. xv). We noted there that this formulation signals towards the critique of identity thinking as critique of the subject by way of Nietzsche's theory of forces. Indeed, as we saw in Chapter 1, the theory of will to power, has a knock-out effect for the identity of the rationalistic subject in favour of the multiplicity of irrational selves, and informs the theory of forces as the element which gives forces their direction and character. References to the theory of forces and of the will to power are in abundance in Deleuze's work. A case in point is the core of his project to 'construct the ontology

of difference without concept' which he explicitly links to Nietzsche's idea of eternal return (Deleuze, 2015, p. 52), and which we just saw a while ago that in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* he considers an expression of the more fundamental principle of will to power.

### **Nietzsche and Deleuze's critique of dialectics**

Then we saw that his critique of dialectics, for which his book *Nietzsche and Philosophy* is famous, is to a considerable degree based on the irrationalistic aspects of Nietzsche's thought. Four out of the six elements of this critique that we identified are related to the theory of forces and of the will to power: dialectics is accused of misinterpreting a) sense and b) essence because it lacks a theory of forces and a theory of the will to power respectively; c) dialectics is also accused of starting from negation instead of "affirmation of its own difference", the latter being the paramount quality of will to power; d) it is a reactive and resentful mode of thinking (see Chapter 2, pp. 87-89).

### **Deleuze's appropriation of Nietzsche in *Difference and Repetition***

In *Difference and Repetition* we noted Deleuze's preference for immediacy instead of meditation, supported with reference to Nietzsche and Kierkegaard (Deleuze, 2015, p. 10). This point plays an important role in Deleuze's thought because mediation is on the side of reflection while immediacy is on the side of irrational intuition and his effort to fathom difference without a concept also aims to bypass reflection, which is considered incapable to grasp difference in itself.

Deleuze's argument that "[i]n its essence, difference is the object of affirmation or affirmation itself. In its essence, affirmation is itself difference" (Deleuze, 2015, p. 66) has to be read with reference to his understanding of will to power as "affirmation of its own difference", which makes his conception of difference a Nietzsche, more precisely, an irrationalist Nietzsche-inspired notion.

Perspectivism also appears in *Difference and Repetition* as one of the characteristics of the "systems of simulacra" from which "ideas", which are meant to replace concepts and conceptual thinking, emerge: "...No series [of systems of simulacra or of ideas, NK] enjoys a privilege over

others, none possesses the identity of a model, none the resemblance of a copy..." (Deleuze, 2015, p. 364). Only the relativism of perspectivism can bring about this result.

Furthermore, ideas are explicitly concerned with "the presentation of the unconscious not the representation of consciousness", and are by nature "necessarily unconscious" (Deleuze, 2015, p. 252). This provides a key for the solution to the riddle of how can the elimination of Reason be an "advantage" for thought, as we wondered in Chapter 2. We have not but to recall what we noted above in this chapter about the reinstatement of the divorce between thought and reason in Deleuze's Nietzsche (Deleuze, 2005, p. 93), where Deleuze is merely flipping the coin between thought and reason and thought is assigned whole-sale to the irrational alone. Therefore, becomes obvious how the elimination of reason can be advantageous to thought. In this connection we also have the explicit reference about the "Dionysian value" (i.e. irrational value) of ideas "according to which *the Idea is necessarily obscure in so far as it is distinct*, all the more obscure the more it is distinct." (Deleuze, 2015, p. 192; our Chapter 2, p. 28).

Finally, and decisively, as already mentioned above, when Deleuze gives the most lucid presentation of what "difference without a concept" or the "concept of difference" might be he does so with reference to Nietzsche's theory of eternal return, which "cannot mean the return of the Identical because it presupposes a world (that of the will to power) in which all previous identities have been abolished and dissolved" (Deleuze, 2015, pp. 52-53). This means that the intimate connection between eternal return and will to power observed in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* is reaffirmed in *Difference and Repetition* in the most decisive moment of the latter book's argument.

### **Deleuze's appropriation of Nietzsche in *Anti-Oedipus***

In relation to *Anti-Oedipus*, we noted in Chapter 2 that one of the most important concepts of this work is desire and desire production. The liberation of desire from repression, the articulation of desire production to social production on the way to a materialist psychiatry, the genealogical

account of the adventures of desire throughout the millennia, are the concerns informing the book. Trying to show how the aims of the book represent an extension of Deleuze's project for an ontology of difference into the realm of psychology and social theory, we revealed an element whose proper place of presentation would be in this chapter, namely, that what connects difference and desire is their common origin in Nietzsche's will to power. In fact, desire in *Anti-Oedipus* is just another name for will to power. It may seem that the defining characteristic of affirmative will to power in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, the affirmation of will to power's own difference, is considerably underplayed in *Anti-Oedipus*. However, this is not the case. We have Deleuze and Guattari in one instance explicitly relating desiring production to affirmation of difference: "desiring production is pure multiplicity, that is to say an affirmation that is irreducible to any sort of unity" (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 45). What is more, difference also goes in the text by another name, or at least has inspired, a concept which characterises desire, the "molecular" in its opposition to the "molar". These concepts are rather obscure and difficult to grasp. Deleuze and Guattari summarise their multiple meaning as follows:

"At times we contrasted the molar and the molecular as the paranoiac, signifying, and structured lines of integration [to society, NK] and the schizophrenic, machinic, and dispersed lines of escape [from such integration, NK]; or again as the staking out of the perverse reterritorializations, and [respectively, NK] as the movement of the schizophrenic deterritorializations. At other times, on the contrary we contrasted them as the two major types of equally social investments: the one sedentary and biunivocalizing, and of a reactionary or fascist tendency, the other nomadic and polyvocal, and of a revolutionary tendency." (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 373).

Non integration, deterritorialisation and polyvocality are certainly hallmarks of difference and the terms molecular and molar constantly reoccur throughout the book.

In Chapter 2 we also put emphasis on Deleuze's and Guattari's critique of representation in *Anti-Oedipus* and to the fact that the critique of representation informs the main critique on two out of

the three arguments of that book: the critique of psychoanalysis and its Oedipus complex, and the proposal for the replacement of psychoanalysis by schizoanalysis. Although this emphasis was necessitated in order to show the continuity in the development of Deleuze's project of the construction of the ontology of difference towards psychology and social theory, it remains to be shown the relation of the critique of representation with the appropriation of the irrationalist Nietzsche by Deleuze. This relation seems all the more remote, or even absent, since we ourselves noted that Deleuze's dissatisfaction with representation in *Difference and Repetition* also has a rationalistic aspect, namely, the inability of conceptual thinking to adequately grasp its objects due to the problem of infinite regress. However, we need to observe (as we did there, see Chapter 2, p. 92) that Deleuze's next move is to abandon conceptual thinking altogether and turn towards the irrationalistic critique of the rationalistic subject. The decisive connection comes if we recall that for Deleuze modern thought aims at "the discovery of all the *forces* that act under the representation of the identical" (Deleuze, 2015, p. xv, emphasis added). Given that representation and identity thinking refer to consciousness, this means the discovery of the unconscious active or reactive forces and their respective will to power. And, in fact, this is the critique against representation in *Anti-Oedipus*: it stifles desire and its production, i.e. it stifles will to power.

The Nietzschean theory of forces also contributes to Deleuze and Guattari's critique against Oedipus complex. This critique does not consist in claiming that the Oedipus complex is a fiction produced artificially by psychoanalysis. Oedipus complex is real but far from explaining our psychic life plays a central role in social and psychic repression. The family, Deleuze and Guattari argue, is the delegated by society, repressive agent of psychic repression (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 130). By identifying desire as primarily an "incestuous drive", "desire is shamed" and its revolutionary potential checked. Occupying a central role in social and psychic repression is a serious enough accusation, but from the perspective of the economy of desire the bottom line is that the Oedipus complex pictures a reactive psychic life where almost everything is explained as a *reaction* to "daddy-mommy" (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 132).

The second argument of the book that is supported by the critique of representation, the call for the replacement of psychoanalysis by schizoanalysis, is also heavily indebted to Nietzsche's thought. To the extent that schizoanalysis consists in the introduction of desire into the mechanism of psychotic delirious states; it is interested in the deterritorialisation of desire; and is interested in moving beyond the "anthropomorphic representation" of man as having only two (or even one) sex instead of a multiplicity of sexes, it relies on Nietzsche's theory of will to power for its theoretical justification. This is because desire is, as we said, another name for will to power and the multiplicity of sexes corresponds to the multiplicity of selves under the influence of different wills to power.

The critique of dialectics does not play a significant role in *Anti-Oedipus* but there is a passing reference to dialectics as nihilistic endeavour which reminds us that the critique of dialectics in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* is still active in *Anti-Oedipus* (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 26).

Also, the Nietzsche-inspired critique of the subject appears in *Anti-Oedipus*: "something on the order of a *subject* can be discerned on the recording surface. It is a strange subject, however, with no fixed identity, wandering about over the body without organs, but always remaining peripheral to the desiring-machines..." (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 17). The importance of consciousness diminishes to make way for the unconscious functions of the desiring machines; multiple individual identities are considered to alternate in possession of the individual who is searching in vain for a unitary sense of selfhood, a picture of the subject which Deleuze largely shares with Klossowski's reading of Nietzsche (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p. 22).

We can see, then, how Nietzsche's irrationalistic side, his theory of forces, of will to power and of perspectivism, inform Deleuze's thought in *Difference and Repetition* and *Anti-Oedipus* in their most decisive moments: it emerges that Dews is right when he observes that the poststructuralists, here Deleuze, appropriate Nietzsche's irrationalistic critique of identity.

**Objective (b): Adorno's transformation of Nietzsche's critique of rationality into critique of domination and his appropriation and development of Nietzsche's rationalistic critique of identity**

**Adorno's transformation of Nietzsche's critique of rationality into critique of domination**

We already noted in the previous chapter Bacon's declaration that knowledge is power and that, for Adorno and Horkheimer, the impulse that moves rationality is self-preservation: "Self-preservation is the constitutive principle of science, the soul of the table of categories, even when it is to be deduced idealistically, as with Kant." (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, pp. 86-87). Self-preservation, forever present in our thoughts for as long as care for means of subsistence is our primary preoccupation, is for Adorno the irrational element at the heart of rationality, more so if it remains unconscious and unreflected upon: "But if the enlightenment principle of reason fails to become transparent to itself, if it fails to perceive its dependence on what is different from itself, it inevitably becomes transformed into the very fate that it thinks of as its own antithesis." (Adorno, 2008b, p. 17). The "what is different from itself" of rationality that Adorno is talking about here is first and foremost the impulse of self-preservation which motivates it.<sup>96</sup>

Nietzsche also entertains the idea that reason is fuelled by self-preservation. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, for example, he asserts that "the greater part of conscious thinking must still be counted among the instinctive activities, ...Behind all logic too and its apparent autonomy there stand evaluations...which may be necessary precisely for the preservation of beings such as us" (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 35). A few pages down the same book, and in the context of a critique of Kant, Nietzsche repeats the idea that knowledge, of synthetic judgments a priori for instance, is in the service of self-preservation of our species: "it is time to grasp that, for the purpose of preserving beings such as ourselves, such judgments must be believed to be true; although they might of course still be false judgments!" (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 42). Up to this point Nietzsche seems to be in



agreement with Adorno in that most of philosophy, Enlightenment philosophy and rationality alike, is still an *unconscious* activity, fuelled by the self-preservation of the species.

The first difference with Adorno emerges a couple of pages later in *Beyond Good and Evil* where Nietzsche argues that self-preservation is not, as is in Adorno, the deepest layer on the issue; self-preservation is a consequence of will to power: “Physiologists should think again before postulating the drive to self-preservation as the cardinal drive in an organic being. A living thing desires above all to *vent* its strength – life as such is will to power – : self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent *consequences* of it” (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 44). We see that Nietzsche places self-preservation in the wider context of his theory of will to power which is the actual last level of appeal. We saw in Chapter 1 that will to power is the irrational and unconscious energising force behind all living, and we also saw that will to power is will *for* power. Therefore, Habermas, coming from the direction of what he calls “totalizing critique” (meaning the relentless chase of domination in the dark corners of rationality either in order to affirm it (Nietzsche) or in order to criticise it (Adorno)), seems to end up pinpointing the same crossroad where Nietzsche’s and Adorno’s roads part: from the standpoint of the realisation of “the corruption of *all* reasonable standards... Nietzsche seeks refuge in a theory of power” while “Adorno and Horkheimer...took an opposite route: no longer desiring to overcome the performative contradiction of a totalizing critique of ideology, they intensified the contradiction instead and left it unresolved” (Habermas, 1982, pp. 28-29). The “opposite route” Habermas mentions is only the expression of the fact that Nietzsche leans towards the irrationalistic side of his critique of identity while Adorno continues to side with consciousness and the power of self-reflection. He does so by developing the rationalistic side of Nietzsche’s critique of identity which, as we noted in the introduction of the thesis, Habermas fails to comprehend and considers it as a performative contradiction: it is a performative contradiction only from the point of view of identity thinking as Adorno would probably say. The bottom line of all this is that Adorno’s reading of Nietzsche, as Bauer notes, takes Nietzsche’s critique of the Enlightenment ideals (truth, rationality, etc.) and transforms it into a critique of domination itself.

We should remind the qualification to this appropriation made in Chapter 1 and say that although Nietzsche's thought advances a fierce critique of rationality, it is itself affirming domination not only as the objective state of affairs of the living, but also as the way things ought to be. In this respect, if we are to mount a critique of domination, we have to read Nietzsche *against* himself, aided by the conceptual armoury of Marx's thought, as we will do in the Conclusion of our thesis (see section "Nietzsche's thought and capitalism").

This brings us to the second, and most important, difference with Adorno which is precisely the opposite evaluation of domination that underlies Adorno's thought. Adorno and Horkheimer are, of course, aware of this difference (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, p. 97-98). For them, as is documented in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the entwinement of reason and domination is not celebrated, as in Nietzsche, but is one of the elements that ail Enlightenment thought and lead it into a self-destructive reversion to mythology. Domination of inner and outer nature is the sole aim of Enlightenment (see Chapter 3, p. 113). Domination is in the service of self-preservation, and not the other way round as in Nietzsche: to see self-preservation as a means of the accumulation of power is to reverse the means-end relation and institute the means (power) as an end, which is part of the pathology of Enlightenment's instrumental rationality. This correlates with the institution of economic growth as an end in itself in capitalism, which Nietzsche's theory of will to power mirrors, as we will see in the Conclusion of the thesis (see section "Nietzsche's thought and capitalism"). Self-preservation is the irrational drive that pushes Enlightenment reason forward and domination of inner and outer nature is only the means to the end of self-preservation. Domination's own means is objectification, quantification and identification through equalisation of the unequal, i.e. through identity thinking (Chapter 3, pp. 113-114). With the transformation of these means into ends in themselves men "forget" that they themselves are part of nature, that nature is not solely the hostile "other" to be dominated, and the justification of the means themselves is thus annulled. Enlightenment reverts into mythology and is dominated by the natural, irrational impulse of self-preservation at the moment it thinks it has triumphed over nature and the

irrational. This is how Adorno and Horkheimer transform Nietzsche's relentless chase of the entwinement of rationality and power into a critique of power.

The passage from the critique of power to the critique of identity thinking is already discernible: if man knows things only insofar as to dominate them and if domination is achieved through identification, then successful domination, as the intermediate aim of self-preservation, is responsible for the shortcomings of identity thinking, for its indifference to the remainder of the object.

In this connection we should remind that Nietzsche's critique of rationality develops into a critique of identity thinking from both a rationalistic and an irrationalistic point of view. The rationalistic aspect of this critique, as we said in Chapter 1, involves branding "the unconditional and self-identical" (the laws of logic) as "fictions" which are not to be found anywhere outside our own heads, without, however, abandoning them for this reason. Adorno picks up this lead and develops it into a full-blown rationalistic theory of nonidentity thinking.

### **Adorno's appropriation and development of Nietzsche's rationalistic critique of identity**

That Nietzsche's thought includes a rationalistic critique of identity we tried to indicate in Chapter 1. Now, having presented Adorno's nonidentity thesis, his negative dialectics, it is easier to see the connections.

The idea that the equalisation of quantities is false is first presented in *Human all too Human*: "From the period of low organisms, man has inherited the belief that there are *identical things* (only experience which has been educated by the highest science contradicts this tenet). From the beginning, the first belief of all organic being may be that the whole rest of the world is one and unmoved" (Nietzsche, 2004, p. 26). This idea has its exact equivalent in Adorno's critique of abstract labour which appears in both *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and *Negative Dialectics*: "Bourgeois society is ruled by equivalence. It makes the dissimilar comparable by reducing it to abstract quantities. To the Enlightenment, that which does not reduce to numbers, and ultimately to the one, becomes

illusion; modern positivism writes it off as literature” (Adorno-Horkheimer, 2016, p. 7, our Chapter 3, p. 113)); and “Once critical theory has shown it up for what it is – an exchange of things that are equal and yet unequal – our critique of the inequality within equality aims at equality too, for all our skepticism of the rancor involved in the bourgeois egalitarian ideal that tolerates no qualitative difference” (Adorno, 2007, p. 147).

The same applies for the idea that the concepts do not correspond exactly to the objects they refer to: “just as little do we see a tree exactly and entire with regard to its leaves, branches, colour, shape; it is so much easier for us to put together an approximation of a tree.” (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 115); it has its exact equivalent to the initial definition of negative dialectics provided by Adorno: “The name of dialectics says no more, to begin with, than that objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder, ...It indicates the untruth of identity, the fact that the concept does not exhaust the thing conceived” (Adorno, 2007, p. 5, our Chapter 3, pp. 116-117)).

The decisive passage, however, is from *The Will to Power* where Nietzsche mounts a direct assault on Aristotelian logic (Nietzsche, 1968, pp. 279-280; see the passage in our Chapter 1, pp. 77-78). Here all the essential elements of Adorno’s negative dialectics are in display: the non-objective nature of the inability “to affirm and to deny one and the same thing”, the critique of the law of noncontradiction on which all logic is based, the doubt as to whether the concepts we form comprehend the things they refer to. It is all here.

And this is not all. The realisation that concepts and our truths are actually so many falsities does not lead either Nietzsche or Adorno to give up on them: “...to renounce false judgments would be to renounce life, would be to deny life” Nietzsche says in *Beyond Good and Evil* (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 36), and in *The Will to Power* he acknowledges the impossibility of doing away with the notion of the subject, no matter how false he considers it to be: “...our belief in “ego” as a substance...our thinking itself involves this belief...to let it go means: being no longer able to think.” (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 269). Adorno, unlike Deleuze, follows Nietzsche down in this path, accepting that it is impossible to avoid the falsification of reality by the mind; however, he enriches the argument

claiming that it is possible to think against the rules of the mind, to “think against our thought” (Adorno, 2007, p. 141).

Finally, we saw in Chapter 1 Nietzsche entertaining a very significant for his thought, and for the thought of Adorno, idea, namely, the idea that the longing to acquire certainty in our truths, although dangerously close to dogmatism, has to be preserved (see Chapter 1, pp. 50-51); in Adorno, we saw that is the longing for identity that has to be preserved, but this disparity between Nietzsche and Adorno is only because the former is interested in the unconscious need dogmatism is satisfying, while the latter is building the theory of dialectical reason and moves in the region of consciousness.

Therefore, we have good reason to argue that Nietzsche is indeed the originator of Adorno’s negative dialectics. He himself did not develop the theory of negative dialectics, in spite of the fact that he used it extensively, a disparity that holds the key to the riddle of what we called ‘the paradox of Nietzsche’ and to which we now turn.

## **Part 2: ‘the paradox of Nietzsche’**

### **Nietzsche as an inconsistent nonidentity, dialectical in the Adornean sense, thinker**

We have already mentioned many things about Nietzsche’s critique of dialectics and his critique of identity as both critique of identity thinking *and* as critique of the rationalistic subject, in the relevant section, towards the end of Chapter 1, and we will refer the reader back there (Chapter 1, pp. 76-79). Here we will make the case of Nietzsche as an *inconsistent* nonidentity, dialectical thinker by way of pointing out the instances of dialectical thinking in the Adornean sense in Nietzsche’s work, and by discussing the aporias, dead ends and contradictions which we have identified in the course of the presentation of his thought in Chapter 1 but deferred for this chapter: we had first to present Adorno’s negative dialectics and establish that Nietzsche is indeed the

originator of negative dialectics in order to be able to make this case. If we are successful the solution to the paradox of Nietzsche's thought, our third objective, will present itself.

There are numerous examples in Nietzsche's work of his dialectical mode of thinking. Some of his most important ideas are of dialectical nature. The all-important idea of will to power is one of them. In the passage from *Zarathustra*, where the idea is presented more impressively than anywhere else in his work, it appears as having two levels: it is lust for power but *not only* lust for power; it has a deeper layer which is related to self-overcoming (Nietzsche, 2006, pp. 89-90.; for the full passage see Chapter 1, p. 55). In our context, this means, as we said in Chapter 1, that becoming is a constant, open ended process of self-overcoming, but also that we, as much as the overman, as the vehicles of will to power, are and are not ourselves at any given moment. This is non-identity, dialectical thinking in the Adornean sense, and makes will to power a dialectical concept. Self-overcoming is of an inherently dialectical nature since it implies that we are involved in a constant process of departure from our own selves, we are and are not ourselves simultaneously at any given moment (Nietzsche, 2006, pp. 89, 90; Nietzsche, 1989, p. 161). Therefore, when Deleuze, Kaufmann, and more so, Ansell-Pearson argue that will to power means "will to empower", "potentia" or "an 'accomplishment' of the will overcoming or overcoming itself" they are capturing this deeper layer in the meaning of will to power. Our contention is that it would be a mistake to restrict the meaning of will to power to this deeper level and not to recognise that 'in the first instance' it means lust for power, and that self-overcoming is inserted as a dialectical twist underneath this primary meaning.

The other all-important idea of Nietzsche, his attitude towards truth, is also, in our view, of a dialectical, in the Adornean sense, nature. If the reader recalls, in the context of Nietzsche's critique of religion and of the ascetic ideal, the latest embodiment of which, Nietzsche considers to be science and its atheism, we argued that the aim of Nietzsche's critique was not dogmatism's faith in truth, as Nehamas contents, but the revelation of the deepest need that dogmatism satisfies: the need for certainty. We think that the best way to conceive Nietzsche's argument regarding certainty

is by grasping it as a dialectical argument of the same order as Adorno's argument about identity thinking: identity thinking is detrimental to our understanding of the world but the longing for identity must, nevertheless, be preserved. The need for certainty can, likewise, lead to dogmatism, but the longing for certainty must be preserved because it keeps us closer to whatever truth is possible for us to discover (or 'create' in Nietzsche's perspective). It then emerges that it is a dialectical attitude that Nietzsche is describing, an attitude which "take[s] leave of all faith and every wish for certainty" and is "practiced in maintaining [itself] on insubstantial ropes and possibilities", the touch stone of the "free spirits par excellence" (Nietzsche, 1974, pp. 289-290).

Yet another very important of his ideas, the eternal return, also has a dialectical aspect in the sense that subscribing to the eternal return of the same is for Nietzsche tantamount in subscribing to the return of the inherently contradictory nature of existence as Zarathustra confides: "Have you ever said Yes to one joy? Oh my friends, then you also said Yes to *all* pain. ...then you wanted *everything* back!" (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 263). What is more, eternal return, leads to negative dialectics if we reflect on the challenge its Deleuzean interpretation as a selective thought presents for our argument, mentioned earlier. We argued in Chapter 1 that Nietzsche's thought does not provide a mechanism for the passage from reactivity to activity, that it is difficult for one to see how a self-propelled will to power can transform itself from negative will to power integrated in reactive forces, into affirmative will to power integrated in active forces, and we said that in fact the birds of prey metaphor excludes this possibility. However, we saw Deleuze arguing that the idea of eternal return as a selective thought actually provides this shout after mechanism: it is sufficient, he argues, to push reactive forces to their nihilistic consequences and then place them in the frame of eternal return to see that the reactive forces do not return. The objection to this claim is twofold: first, it is not at all obvious that reactive forces, i.e. drives, will be in this manner transformed into active forces. There is no necessity for this transformation, it may happen, it may not happen. If we resort to the noble nature of forces and of will to power, i.e. their supposed inherent ability of self-transformation then, as we have already argued, the birds of prey metaphor is invalidated: birds of

prey should be able to act differently as much as lambs should. If we do not resort to the noble nature of forces and will to power the transformation argued for by Deleuze takes up a miraculous character: it can happen, but we do not know how. Secondly, if this miraculous character is to be avoided, we have to exit the conceptual framework of the irrationalistic critique of identity, i.e. the domain of the unconscious, and enter the domain of the rationalistic one, the domain of consciousness: Nietzsche himself, in aphorism 341 of *The Gay Science*, invites us to “incorporate this *thought*” of eternal return in order to be transformed by it, while in Deleuze’s argument we have to push the reactive forces into their nihilistic consequences and then place them in the framework of eternal return in order to have the desired transformation, a process which also implies the intervention of consciousness. The conclusion that we are and we are not totally dominated by the unconscious, that conscious reflection has to intervene in order for the transformation of negative will to power into affirmative will to power to take place, eventually the conclusion that we must resort to negative dialectics if we are to find the resources for an adequate explanation of this transformation, is inescapable.

There are, however, many more instances of dialectical thinking in Nietzsche’s work. Nietzsche’s view that truth originates in error is part of his nonidentity thesis (Nietzsche, 1974, p.219); Nietzsche’s paradoxical and famous idea that the ancient Greeks were “superficial – out of profundity” (Nietzsche, 1974, p. 38) can also be understood as an instance of dialectical thought as it implies nonidentity, the simultaneous coexistence of superficiality and profundity; his assertion that “in man, *creature* and *creator* are united” (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 155), which views man as the subject-object of his actions is also an instance of dialectics; another of Nietzsche’s paradoxical ideas, that one follows Zarathustra when one has denied him (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 59), which has the meaning that the teaching of Zarathustra is an encouragement for one to find their own way of affirming life, so that a denial of the particular way of Zarathustra’s affirmation of life would be a faithfulness to his teachings, can be understood as an instance of nonidentity too.



These are only the most striking examples of Nietzsche's dialectical, in the Adoranean sense, thinking, of the sense that A is A and not A simultaneously (see Chapter 3, pp. 117-118). We can think of at least a dozen of others!<sup>97</sup> Instead we would like to draw attention to the relation between his genealogical method and dialectics. The meaning of genealogy can be put together from Nietzsche's reflections in the *Genealogy of Morals*. The research question of that book is formulated as follows: "...under what conditions did man devise these value judgments good and evil? *And what value do they themselves possess?*" (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 17). In the Preface of the *Genealogy* Nietzsche refers the reader to other points in his work that are relevant to the subjects dealt with in the *Genealogy*; what they all have in common is the reference to "the value and origin" of moral values and morality itself (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 18). It seems, then, that Deleuze is right when he defines Nietzsche's genealogy as the search for "the value of origin and the origin of value" (Deleuze, 2005, p. 2). However, Nietzsche explicitly restrains genealogy to the status of a method, of a means to an end, the end being the determination of "the value of morality" (Nietzsche, 1989 p. 19). Genealogy seems to be the means to mount a critique of morality and one of the means to the revaluation of values: "Let us articulate this *new demand*: we need a *critique* of moral values, *the value of these values themselves must first be called in question* – and for that there is needed a knowledge of the conditions and circumstances in which they grew, under which they evolved and changed..." (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 20).

What does this critique amount to? Where does Nietzsche arrive by the use of genealogy? The answer to this question can be found in the arguments and conclusions of the *Genealogy*. In the first of the three essays of this book, his basic conclusion is that the concept "good" does not originate in the utility of unegoistic actions of men but in the egoistic "pathos of distance" of the noble men in particular (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 26). What is more, the tremendous revaluation of values, which took place with the decline of the power of the nobles, through the mediation of the Jewish priest, has its origin in ressentiment. Therefore, the concept "good" either in its archetypal form or in its more recent, Biblical form does not originate in unegoistic good-heartedness but in

its opposites: either in the egoistic pathos of distance or in the spirit of revenge (ressentiment) (Nietzsche, 1989, pp. 34-38). In the second essay of the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche arrives at the conclusion that morality has been acquired through cruelty upon oneself and others: “how dearly they have been bought! How much blood and cruelty lie at the bottom of all “good things”!” (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 62); that guilt is repressed freedom turned inwards (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 62); and that the Christian ideals that supposedly preserve life actually slander it (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 95). In the third essay the basic conclusion is that atheism, far from being the opposite of the ascetic ideal, is actually its very kernel (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 160).

What do all these mean? They mean that by the use of genealogy Nietzsche is trying to reach at the origin, the root of things and when he arrives there what he finds is the contradictoriness of reality, its dialectical nature. They also mean that genealogy, far from being opposite or antagonistic to dialectics is complementary to it and a very strong verification of dialectics from a different path.

This account leaves, we think, no doubt that Adorno should be right when he recorded the view in one of his works on music, conveyed by Ulrich Plass, that “the most lasting legacy of Nietzsche’s work will be its “dialectical character”” (Plass, 2015, p. 390, note 38).<sup>98</sup> Had the dialectical nature of Nietzsche’s thought been understood, the aporia that we saw in Chapter 1 Nehamas, for instance, detecting would have found its explanation. Nehamas notes that “[n]o one has managed to bring life closer to literature than he [Nietzsche, NK] did, and yet the two may finally refuse to become one, making his ideal of unity impossible to approach.” (Nehamas, 1985, p. 198). Under the light of our analysis unity is impossible because Nietzsche’s view is dialectical, in the Adornean sense, on this point and does not allow the identity between the subject (literature) and its object (life).

However, Nietzsche employed nonidentity thinking in a not entirely consistent manner. A first instance of inconsistency occurs in his evaluation of freedom. If you recall Chapter 1, we detected there, as one of the characteristics of overman, a very rare positive evaluation of freedom, freedom which Nietzsche in his notes of *The Will to Power* has declared an impossibility,<sup>99</sup> and which as value

is more often associated by Nietzsche with slave morality (Nietzsche, 1990, pp. 197-198). Freedom is of slave origin and therefore, a reactive value. There is obviously a contradiction here, a contradiction however that can be understood if we bring in mind a passage where Nietzsche draws a distinction between “freedom from” and “freedom for”:

“There are some who threw away their last value when they threw away their servitude. Free from what? What does Zarathustra care! But brightly your eyes should signal to me: free *for what*? Can you give yourself your own evil and good and hang your will above yourself like a law? Can you be your own judge and avenger of your law?” (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 46).<sup>100</sup>

In this passage it is clear that it is the “freedom from” that Nietzsche opposes; “freedom from” is the freedom of the slave striving for liberation and therefore is reactive in nature in Nietzsche’s eyes. “Freedom for”, on the contrary, Nietzsche endorses and connects it with the freedom to set one’s own good and evil and follow it “like a law”, in other words, he connects it with overman’s autonomy. Here we only want to observe the dual, contradictory nature of freedom: it is of reactive origin as “freedom from” but this does not stop it from being able to take an active form as “freedom for”. A consistently dialectical in the Adornean sense stance would be to say that freedom is and is not of reactive origin simultaneously. The exclusive disjunction between the two, implied, or at least allowed, by Nietzsche’s above-mentioned passages, we consider as a first instance of his failure to follow consistently his own argument against Aristotelian logic, against identity thinking, which is also one of the instances of the reactionary properties of his thought.

A second instance of inconsistent nonidentity, dialectical thinking is presented by Nietzsche’s ambivalent stance on the question of freedom and determination of the human will. We saw him oscillating between total freedom and total determination of man from internal and external factors without ever being able to bind the two views together. Such binding could be afforded by the use of his own insight of nonidentity thinking: the individual is neither subject to the fatality of their nature, nor the possessor of a free will but, in Adorno’s terminology, they are conditioned by the

preponderance of the object (external and internal) retaining a 'residue' of freedom through the power of reflection of the subject, by which they can act upon the object.<sup>101</sup> It also seems to us that Nietzsche's oscillation leans heavily on the side of the fatality rather than the side of freedom for many reasons, one of which is his belief, noted at the end of our section on the will to power in Chapter 1, that there is a part of the self that is beyond conditioning and is responsible for all the questions and answers that an individual will ever ponder on. Nietzsche is forced to consider a degree of influence of consciousness on its object when confronted with the problem of the change of the self on the road of the overcoming of nihilism. We saw above that Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche advances a solution to the problem of change with reference to the thought of eternal return which is considered able to transform reactive forces and negative will to power into active forces and affirmative will to power. We disputed the adequacy of Deleuze's solution and proposed an alternative solution to the problem of change in Nietzsche which can be afforded by putting to work his own insight of nonidentity. The fact that Nietzsche himself did not contemplate on this alternative solution suggests to us that he used nonidentity inconsistently and that perhaps he was not fully aware of the significance and applications of his own insight, a task left to the "future philosophers" such as Sartre, Deleuze, Derrida, Castoriadis, and above all Adorno.<sup>102</sup>

### **Objective (c): Nietzsche's paradox**

What we term 'Nietzsche's paradox' consists in the simultaneous claim, by thinkers such as Deleuze, that Nietzsche is a fierce critic of dialectics, and by thinkers such as Rose and Bauer that Nietzsche is the originator of Adorno's negative dialectics. If our argument so far holds truth, the answer to this riddle becomes apparent.

Deleuze's claim of Nietzsche as a critic of dialectics is based on two pillars: the first is the interpretive choice to see only the irrationalistic side in Nietzsche's critique of identity. As we saw, his Nietzschean critique of dialectics is predominantly based on the theory of forces, the theory of will to power and on perspectivism: his Nietzsche is the philosopher of the unconscious. The

rationalistic side, with the exception of his dissatisfaction with representational thinking because of the problem of infinite regress (which, incidentally, is of no Nietzschean origin), is totally absent. That there is such a rationalistic side, we hope we have adequately shown.

The second pillar of Deleuze's claim is the silent assumption that there is only one kind of dialectics: Hegel's. That there is in Nietzsche a strong strand of critique against Hegel's dialectic we showed in Chapter 1, and Deleuze is choosing to overlook the rationalistic side in Nietzsche's thought precisely because he is looking in Nietzsche for an ally in his anti-dialectic, anti-Hegelian and anti-identity thinking project. However, Nietzsche's thought has a strong strand of rationalistic critique of identity and exhibits the essential elements of what Adorno will later develop into a distinctive and innovative kind of dialectical thinking, his negative dialectics. Nietzsche employs this new kind of nonidentity thinking in a nascent form, and, lacking the clear theory of it, he employs it in an inconsistent manner. Coming in defence of Deleuze, we can grant that he perhaps was unaware (as clearly Foucault was unaware until too late in his intellectual development) of the elaborations of Adorno and Critical Theory. However, if the dialectical strand in Nietzsche's work is so strong, as we showed it to be, the question remains of how it has become possible for a whole host of subsequent knowledgeable readers to miss its dialectical character.

On the other hand, we have to note, that Adorno, on his part, chooses to disregard Nietzsche's irrationalistic critique of identity, to the extent that he puts the emphasis on the power of reflection of the subject as the emancipatory force, a subject which he considers to be entangled in a dialectics of domination with inner and outer nature and not entirely dominated by the will to power. As we mentioned above, Nietzsche's undialectical oscillation between freedom and domination is, in Adorno, replaced by the dialectics between the preponderance of the object and the residual freedom of the subject.

The paradox of Nietzsche, then, is the result of the coexistence in his work of two main and partially opposed strands of thought (the irrationalistic and the rationalistic critique of identity), which he was able to hold simultaneously together because (a) the latter was theoretically

undeveloped (despite the fact that in practice it was extensively used), (b) as a result he was able to hold them together only in an inconsistent manner, and (c) because they become opposed and contradictory only by the further elaborations of each strand by his epigones, Deleuze and Adorno, one of whom partially disregards the side the other develops.<sup>103</sup> They were developed into two distinct Nietzsches: a Nietzsche the philosopher of the unconscious and a Nietzsche nonidentity, dialectical (in the Adornean sense) thinker.

In order to risk a judgment on the merits and limits of each side in the Conclusion of our thesis we need to read them simultaneously and against each other, which is the purpose of the remaining sections of this chapter.

### **Part 3: Poststructuralism and Critical Theory: a critical debate over dialectics**

In the course of our thesis we left a trail of promises for a direct confrontation between Nietzsche, Adorno and Deleuze (and all the combinations between them), and also deferred, most of the time but not always, our own critical comments on each of them for the present chapter. Now is the time to fulfil these promises. This is a necessary preliminary work on the way for an appraisal of poststructuralism and Critical Theory: our chosen representatives must converse with each other before we are able to assess, based on the outcome of their conversation (or the outcome of their duel, hopefully not to anyone's death), the currents of thought they represent. This confrontation will take place on the grounds of the issue of dialectics, its critique and its defence.

## **The challenge of Deleuze's critique of dialectics that can be afforded by Adorno's negative dialectics**

It is useful to begin by reminding ourselves briefly of the main points of Deleuze's critique of dialectics. The Bergson-inspired critique consists in the claim that [1] determination through negation remains external to being, [2] dialectical conception of difference remains abstract, loses the concreteness and specificity of being, and [3] dialectics is unable to incorporate diversity of degree or differences of form (see Chapter 2, pp. 85-87). The Nietzsche-inspired critique of dialectics makes the further claims that dialectics [4] misinterprets sense, i.e. lacks a theory of forces; [5] it misinterprets essence, i.e. lacks a theory of the will to power; [6] jumps from subject to predicate and from predicate back to subject without ever determining what each of them is: "they remain as little determined at the end as they were at the beginning"; [7] dialectics constantly poses a negation and then a negation of the negation or a synthesis; [8] dialectics starts from the negation of the other instead of the positive affirmation of its own difference; this makes it a reactive mode of being: dialectics re-acts in the presence of otherness or difference; [9] in dialectics "the abstract thought of contradiction...prevails over the concrete feeling of positive difference, reaction over action, revenge and *ressentiment* take the place of aggression." (see Chapter 2, pp. 87-89).

We will begin again by reminding Adorno's first, preliminary definition of negative dialectics: "objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder" (Adorno, 2007, p. 5). Deleuze entertains the same idea, even if it is expressed somewhat differently: "the concept is the Same – indefinitely the same – for objects which are distinct. We must therefore recognise the existence of non-conceptual differences between these objects" (Deleuze, 2015, p. 16). If two distinct objects have the same concept this is only because their concept is missing the differential element of these objects, Adorno's "remainder". This is essentially a Nietzschean idea, the idea that the concepts of identity thinking 'falsify reality' (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 35), that both of our authors have in common. However, their response to it differs: while Deleuze's next step is to give up conceptual thinking and

try to construct the idea of “difference without a concept” (Deleuze, 2015, p. 16), Adorno sticks to conceptual thinking and says that “[a]ware that the conceptual totality is mere appearance, I have no way but to break immanently, in its own measure, through the appearance of total identity” (Adorno, 2007, p. 5). We need to note here that Adorno’s response seems to us more Nietzschean than Deleuze’s. Nietzsche, in the above-mentioned quotation contents that “to renounce false judgments would be to renounce life, would be to deny life. ...and a philosophy which ventures to do so [i.e. not to renounce false judgments, NK] places itself, by that act alone, beyond good and evil” (Nietzsche, 1990, pp. 35-36).<sup>104</sup> Identity thinking and its concepts cannot just be given up the way Deleuze suggests because this would be detrimental for the preservation of the species.

Now we need to observe that despite this difference between Deleuze and Adorno, they both join forces again in criticising contradiction, in the context of their critique against Hegel (see our Chapter 2, pp. 90-91, and Chapter 3 p. 118),<sup>105</sup> as an expression of identity thinking: Adorno holds that since the conceptual totality “is structured to accord with logic...whose core is the principle of the excluded middle, whatever will not fit this principle, whatever differs in quality, comes to be designated as a contradiction. Contradiction is nonidentity under the aspect of identity.” (Adorno, 2007, p. 5); Deleuze agrees when he says that “...difference implies the negative, and allows itself to lead to contradiction, only to the extent that its subordination to the identical is maintained” (Deleuze, 2015, p. xv). So, both Adorno and Deleuze criticise (Hegel’s) contradiction as an expression of identity thinking. And this is not all. In an astonishingly similar fashion, they both argue that the principle of non-contradiction is inserted in the world of objects from the “outside” as it were, it is a requirement of our reason rather than an element of “the existent”, as Deleuze puts it (Deleuze, 2015, p. 63; Adorno, 2007, p. 140). The astonishing thing is not that there is an agreement between Adorno and Deleuze; it is again the Nietzschean argument that the mind falsifies reality mentioned above that is at play here. The astonishing thing is that such an agreement has gone unnoticed in the literature, as far as we know.<sup>106</sup>



At this point in our presentation of Deleuze's thought (Chapter 2, p. 91, note 59) we observed that while Deleuze refers to the difference between two objects, Adorno refers to the difference between one object and its concept: contradiction is detected in different connection in Deleuze and Adorno. Why is that? It is evident from what we have said so far that this difference reflects the different direction each of them is taking as a response to the common recognition that there is no identity between concept and object: the first abandons conceptual thinking and turns towards the ontology of difference, while the second does not give up on conceptual thinking and tries to trace a path through the problem of nonidentity between concept and object. This difference in direction is reflected in the different paths that they follow after their brief reencounter in the critique of contradiction. Deleuze's next step is to break contradiction to the differences on which it consists and try to think through the object on this level as a play of differences (Deleuze, 2015, p. 63). Adorno, on the other hand, seems, still following Nietzsche, to take the stand that it is impossible to avoid the falsification of reality by the mind, but it is possible to think against the rules of the mind, to "think against our thought" (Adorno, 2007, p. 141).

To leave the matter here, however, would be misleading. For Adorno it may be that contradiction *first* emerges as a contradiction between the concept and its object but the embrace of contradictoriness in spite of the fact that the rules of the mind do not allow it, is a respect of thought for its object: the actual source of contradiction is in the object itself:

"In a sense, dialectical logic is more positivistic than the positivism that outlaws it. As thinking, dialectical logic respects that which is to be thought – the object – even where the object does not heed the rules of thinking. The analysis of the object is tangential to the rules of thinking. Thought need not be content with its own legality; without abandoning it, we can think against our thought, and if it were possible to define dialectics, this would be a definition worth suggesting" (Adorno, 2007, p. 141).

The dual character of contradiction in Adorno is an expression of the peculiar position it occupies as the nodal point between the rules of identity thinking, internal and subjective, and the external reality of objects.

At this point in our presentation of Adorno's thought (Chapter 3, p. 120) we emphasised that for him identity thinking is not abandoned but serves as the starting point of dialectical reflection, and later we argued that identity thinking captures what Hegel called the "intelligible forms" of the objects (Chapter 3, pp. 127-128). For Deleuze, on the other hand, the world of identity thinking is unreal, an "only simulated" world: "[t]he modern world is one of simulacra. Man did not survive God, nor did the identity of the subject survive that of substance. All identities are only simulated, produced as an optical "effect" [simulacra, NK] by the more profound game of difference and repetition" (Deleuze, 2015, p. xv). If identity thinking is considered to capture the intelligible forms of the object, then its total rejection sweeps along with it the possibility of any prior, or simultaneously to difference constituted structures. And we saw, relying on Hardt, this is what happens with Deleuze. However, as we argued in Chapter 3, if identity thinking was unreal and totally arbitrary, its success in mastering nature would be inexplicable. There has to be something real in the objects which is captured by identity thinking, which must be at least as important and archaic as difference is. Adorno's thought, by recognising this fact (weakly the truth is) and by arguing that the problem with identity thinking is its claim to *exhaust* the object, when it actually does not, incorporates a wider range of the 'existent' than Deleuze's theorising.

With reference to this fundamental difference between Deleuze and Adorno, a whole host of other differences can be explained. First, the Bergsonian critique of dialectics that determination through negation remains external to being [1]. In Chapter 2 we presented this critique, as it is conveyed by Hardt: determination through negation "both destroys the substantial nature of being and fails to grasp the concreteness and specificity of real being. ...The form of difference proposed by the process of determination, Deleuze argues, always remains external to being and therefore fails to provide it with an essential, necessary foundation." (Hardt, 1993, p. 4). We said in Chapter

2 that this can be understood if we introduce the notion of “efficient cause”, the only cause that can sustain the necessity of being, and then think of the absence of pre-constituted structures (see the discussion in Chapter 2, pp. 85-86).

However, if we drop the assumption of the absence of pre-constituted structures of being and accept identity thinking, the starting point of dialectics, as real, we get a very different picture of what dialectics, Adorno’s negative dialectics, that is, is doing. Identity thinking already captures some aspect of being. What is more, we saw that Adorno’s negative dialectics is after the “remainder” of the object that identity thinking left out of the object’s concept, it is after the non-conceptual individuality of the object which makes it what it is, and we argued that there is a coincidence in this interest with Deleuze who, in a similar fashion, is after what he calls “difference” in the objects. Determinate negation is Adorno’s proposed method to access this nonidentical, nonconceptual “otherness” of the concept and from our analysis so far it must be clear that dialectics, at least Adorno’s dialectics, does not commence with a negation of the other, as Deleuze has it; rather a negation of itself, of the identity between concept and object, which is reaching out for the otherness of the concept in the object, is involved. In this case, what Deleuze writes for Bergson applies for Adorno too: “In Bergson...the thing differs with itself *first, immediately*. According to Hegel, the thing differs with itself because it differs first with all that it is not” (cited in Hardt, 1993, p. 7).<sup>107</sup> Contrary to Deleuze, Adorno thinks that Hegel too partakes in such an understanding, at least in the case of the individual seen as an object: “The most enduring result of Hegelian logic is that the individual is not flatly for himself. In himself, he is his otherness and linked with others” (Adorno, 2007, p. 160). In any case, it is clear that in Adorno’s negative dialectics determinate negation negates the façade of identity of the intelligible forms with their object and tries to think “out of the things” (Adorno, 2007, p. 33) from the inside, internally. At this point, the discussion of concept formation in Chapter 3, especially in relation to the retention of the dualism of essence and appearance and of human practice as the constitutive element of social objects, should suffice in proving this point (see Chapter 3, pp. 130-132). It is the denial of pre-constituted

structures as the intelligible forms of the object captured by identity thinking which makes (negative) dialectics appear as external to objects. And what is more, the dialectical concept formation returns the charge of externality to the non-dialectical conception of concept formation of traditional theory. As Bonefeld observes in a passage already cited, dialectical “[c]onceptual thinking is thus not external to reality in the sense that it requires validation by means of empirical corroboration [as A. Callinicos argues, NK]. The presumption of such externality lies at the heart of traditional theory” (Bonefeld, 2009, pp. 124-125).

Regarding the necessity of being, Adorno is not interested in it, and we can imagine why: the notion of the necessity of being comes dangerously close to being theological, as it opens the door for the insertion of God as the only possible *causa sui* that can sustain the necessity of being. Deleuze charges that dialectical negation is unable to sustain such necessity, while difference is. The need to prove the necessity of being, seems to us, as a preoccupation of the foundational ontologists who need to hold on to something firm at any cost and cannot accept that being can be accidental. What we saw does interest Adorno, however, is the necessity of truth: “truth is objective not plausible” he claims in *Negative Dialectics* (cited in Buck-Morss, 1979, p. 85), and this is a differential parallelism in the thought of Adorno and Deleuze.

The other two Bergsonian charges that dialectical conception of difference/contradiction remains abstract and misses out the concreteness and specificity of being [2], while it cannot incorporate diversity of degree or differences of form [3], also presuppose absence of pre-constituted structures. The charge of the abstractness of dialectics is based on its externality in relation to the objects. However, we argued above that far from being external to things, negative dialectics claims to “think out of things”. This is a claim to concreteness too: it thinks out of things by restoring the individuating differences of objects that identity thinking omits and by revealing the essence of things, an essence which in the social world consists in the human practice stored within the congealed objects (see Chapter 3, pp. 131-132). The determinate negation of the identity between concepts and objects breaks this identity by moving beyond its abstractness, by making

the object concrete, as is evident by the example of the conception of freedom: the bourgeois claim that we are all free and equal in bourgeois society breaks down once its abstractness is challenged.

Negative dialectics advances the claim that freedom is delusive because:

“[t]he law of value comes into play over the heads of formally free individuals. They are unfree, according to Marx’s insight, as the involuntary executors of that law – the more thoroughly unfree the more rank [i.e. vigorous, NK] the growth of the social antagonisms it took to form the very conception of freedom” (Adorno, 2007, p. 262).

It is the discovery of these “social antagonisms” stored within the concept and the object that renders both of them concrete. What is more, negative dialectics can advance such claims because the argument for the preponderance of the object over the subject “means to make progressive *qualitative* distinctions between things which in themselves are indirect” (Adorno, 2007, p. 184; emphasis added). It is the qualitative element that is important in the process of making the object concrete, although “differences in degree” are not principally rendered impossible for negative dialectics, as the above quotation shows: “the more thoroughly unfree the more rank the growth...”. Bergson’s emphasis on quantity is of positivist origin and reminds us of the fundamental difference between bourgeois political economy and Critical Theory/Marxian critique of it: while the former is predominantly interested in the determination of the quantity of value it does not even once pose the qualitative question “why labour time takes the form of value?”, the answer to which is impossible without the employment of non-identity dialectical thinking, (see Backhaus, 1980, pp. 107-112); this reference to Backhaus’ essay *On the dialectics of the value-form*, in which nonidentity, dialectical thinking is presented as a theory of forms, illustrates, in its turn, that, in a certain sense, diversity of forms is not beyond the dialectical universe either.

None of this is comprehensible if we discard identity thinking, the intelligible, pre-constituted structures of the objects, by arguing that they are unreal. The significance of the rejection of pre-constituted structures cannot be overstated and leads to the further consequence of the world appearing as chaotic in Deleuze’s but also, partially, in Nietzsche’s thought. The flip side of this coin

is that the inability to discern the structures of this world contributes to the alienation from it since mind's own legality, which negative dialectics respects, demands structure and coherence. The two sides are intertwined, feed on each other and the dialectical attitude calls for dropping the effort to determine which one comes first: the world appears chaotic because of alienation, or are we alienated because we comprehend the world as chaotic? The dialectical answer would be that both propositions are true.

Adorno and Deleuze do not differ only in that the first retains identity thinking as the starting point of negative dialectics and as capturing the intelligible forms of the object, which the second rejects as unreal pre-constituted structures of being; they also differ in that Adorno, as we noted in Chapter 3, also retains the longing for identity as the end point of negative dialectics. This demand for the preservation of the longing for identity is a crucial, in our view, difference between Adorno and Deleuze. Its significance is brought to light if we think of the critique of identity not in examples taken from the natural world, but in examples taken from the social world: what does the critique of identity mean in the case of a concept such as freedom, for instance? It means that the concept of freedom is not presently in agreement with each and every individual, that we are not yet free, or, in other words, the concept freedom is more than the object of freedom, man; it also means that the freedom one enjoys is not the same as the freedom another enjoys, in the same way as no leaf is the same as any other, in other words, that the object of freedom, man, is more than the concept of freedom. If we discard the longing for identity and view the situation as a mere difference (as Deleuze does) and not as a contradiction (as Adorno does) then this situation is no longer implicitly evaluated as unacceptable. The critical edge of thought on the object is lost entirely or, at the very least, neutralised completely. Therefore, Gunn is right when he observes that "[e]mpiricist abstraction, from Thales' contention that everything is *really* water onwards, has sought to defuse contradiction by assimilating it to the *difference* (the reciprocal *indifference*) of terms hanging in some genus/species string" (Gunn, 1992, p.27).

Before we move on to tackle Deleuze's Nietzsche-inspired critique of dialectics we need to discuss affirmation of life in Nietzsche, Deleuze and Adorno. This discussion will equip us with a modification in Adorno's argument as a precondition in mounting an effective defence against Deleuze's Nietzschean critique of dialectics.

### **Nonidentity concept of life: the simultaneous affirmation and negation of the value of life in the present**

We mentioned above that dialectics, Adorno's dialectics, does not commence with a negation of the other, as Deleuze has it; rather a negation of itself reaching out for its otherness is involved. But we also argued in Chapter 3 that dialectics as "the consistent sense of non-identity" cannot be pure negation, as Adorno has it, either (see Chapter 3, pp. 124-126). There is an affirmative moment inscribed at the heart of the nonidentity thesis which goes unacknowledged by Adorno himself, and we noted that the acknowledgment of this moment can help us to amend the charge of Adorno's extreme pessimism without leaving the ground of negative dialectics. It also affords a response to Deleuze's Nietzschean charge against dialectics as animated by resentment and nihilism. How can this be?

In Chapter 3 we already put forward a philosophically-oriented formulation of the incorporation of the affirmative moment in Adorno's nonidentity thesis regarding life, by arguing that it amounts to saying that "there is a value of life but this value is false" (see Chapter 3, pp. 124-126). We would like now to add to this formulation a more sociologically-oriented response and say that it amounts in the negation of the particular sociohistorical conditions of life at the same time when it affirms the value of life as a phenomenon.

Let us start by hearing what Deleuze's Nietzschean charge consists of. The problem that Deleuze identifies in dialectics is that it uses as its starting point the negation of the "other" instead of the affirmation of its own difference. In this respect Deleuze quotes *Genealogy of Morals* where Nietzsche writes: "While every noble morality develops from a triumphant affirmation of itself, slave

morality from the outset says No to what is 'outside', what is 'different' what is 'not itself' and this No is its creative deed" (cited in Deleuze, 2005, p.10). And Deleuze adds: "This is why Nietzsche presents the dialectic as the speculation of the pleb, as the way of thinking of the slave: the abstract thought of contradiction then prevails over the concrete feeling of positive difference, reaction over action, revenge and *ressentiment* take the place of aggression." (Deleuze, 2005, p.10). In a word, dialectics is condemned "as the ideology of *ressentiment*" (Deleuze, 2005, p.121). However, as already mentioned, the problem with a mode of thinking under the sway of *ressentiment* resides above all in its nihilistic consequences, i.e. to the fact that brings along with it a "denying [of] life" and a "depreciation of existence" (Deleuze, 2005, p.34). The nihilistic consequences of dialectics and of *ressentiment* comes down to the inability of the people operating under their sway to affirm life. We already argued that in Adorno's negative dialectics a negation of itself reaching out for its otherness is rather involved and this saves his dialectics from the accusation of being an essentially reactive mode of thinking where the initiative belongs to the external "other" against which dialectical thinking re-acts, but it is still a negation and not an affirmation, as the critique requires. It seems to us that Nietzsche and Deleuze really stroke a sensitive and productive cord at this point which can be illustrated if we introduce Adorno's response to these allegations. Gillian Rose summarises this response as follows:

"For Adorno 'life' could not be affirmed as something apart from the life of a culture or society and its possibilities. Nietzsche in this sense had no concept of theory or society. Adorno too seeks to affirm 'life' but, given the present society, to affirm life is to affirm that society and thus a 'life that does not live'. Adorno instead affirms hope for a 'life (that is a society) which lives'. He accuses Nietzsche of bowing down before 'the powers that be' and of denying the validity of the hope that existence might be better." (Rose, 2014, p.33).

It seems to us that Adorno here is unable or unwilling to make the distinction between the affirmation of life as phenomenon and the affirmation of the particular sociocultural form that life



is happening to have. This is apparently because, for him, there can be no 'life in the abstract'. However, we have to observe that his conviction comes as a result of and refers to the level of rationality and conscious reasoning while Nietzsche and Deleuze refer to the level of the dynamic of unconscious forces and their manifestations. The affirmation of life they are talking about refers to the unconscious constitution of psychological forces and not to the rational processes of reasoning. On the other hand Nietzsche and Deleuze are not able or willing to make this distinction either. This is why they consider negation of the other as, by definition, reactive. They fail to see that it is possible the negation of the existing form of society or life, to be fuelled precisely by the affirmation of the value of life as a phenomenon. So, both camps go on to exchange relatively equally half-justified 'courtesies'. Dialectics, it seems to us, *can potentially but not necessarily entail* resentment and reaction; on the other hand, affirmation of life as a phenomenon *can potentially but not necessarily result* in compliance to the existing status quo. The fact that there is nothing in negation per se that is inherently reactive is amply illustrated by Deleuze himself towards the end of his *Nietzsche and Philosophy* when, in the context of the constitution of the overman, he says: "There is no affirmation which is not *immediately followed* by a negation no less tremendous and unbounded than itself. ...There is no affirmation which is not preceded by an immense negation..." (Deleuze, 2005, p.177). This impossibility to avoid negation in the process of the emergence of the overman is a strange subversion of both the Deleuzian critique of dialectics *and* of the Adornean critique of Nietzsche!

Karin Bauer, in similar to Rose's vein, summarises Adorno's relevant critique against Nietzsche as follows:

"For Adorno, the affirmation of life is synonymous with the affirmation of the degrading conditions of human existence and the false reality created under capitalism and by extension fascism. Synonymous with conformity, the affirmation of life is under the present circumstances no longer possible." (Bauer, 1999, p. 98)

The implications of this critique we saw vividly presented on the occasion of Nietzsche's idea of eternal return (see Chapter 1, p. 74). We noted there that the interpretation of affirmation of life in eternal return as affirmation of every single event that has ever happened and will happen, interpretation which Adorno shares with some contemporary commentators, constitutes the difficulty of the thought of eternal return, a difficulty formulated powerfully by Gillespie. Let us hear Gillespie again: "To will the eternal recurrence means not merely to accept the murder and torture of children as necessary, but also to commit those murders and to carry out that torture, and *to want to do so*. The superman in this sense is infinitely distant from the innocence of the child." (Gillespie, 2005, p. 63; see also Hamilton, 2000, p. 190). However, we also saw in Chapter 1 Ansell-Pearson arguing that only the singularity of the moment returns (see Chapter 1, p. 75).

We want to argue that the contradiction between the two views can be fruitfully conceptualised as a dialectical contradiction. On a first level, if we see Ansell-Pearson's case as a case of affirmation of the value of life as a phenomenon and Adorno, Gillespie and Hamilton, as proposing a negation of life's specific sociohistorical manifestation, then, when we are considering affirmation of the value of life as a phenomenon, eternal return appears as only the return of the "innocence of becoming", of the singularity of time (Ansell-Pearson, 2005b, pp. 16-17). When we are considering affirmation of life as affirmation of life's sociohistorical specificity eternal return cannot but appear as return of all the horrors and destruction too. Nietzsche himself does not make this argument; on the contrary, his thought seems to allow both views to coexist independently of each other. He is reluctant to discard affirmation of specific sociohistorical manifestations of life not, or at least not only, because his thought is, once more, reactionary at this point, but also, and we think predominantly, because he knows that in order for one to affirm their personal life, psychologically, they have to come to terms with their past, to affirm their past in its entirety, its good and its bad, no matter how bad, moments. The same, he thinks, applies to the human race as a species, i.e. to history. As he writes in his notes of *The Will to Power*: "...for everything is so bound up with everything else, that to want to exclude something means to exclude everything. A reprehensible

action means: a reprehensible world –” (Nietzsche 1968, p. 165). The past cannot be changed and the only thing we can do if we are to affirm the present is to accept it, more, to will it, if we are to affirm fully our present.

Of course, these thoughts open him up to Adorno’s critique that the present, the twisted and alienating present, cannot and should not be affirmed. At this point the usefulness of understanding life in a nonidentity, dialectical manner reveals itself as it allows for affirmation simultaneously with negation: it allows for the possibility to negate the particular sociohistorical form that life happens to have together with affirmation of the value of life as a phenomenon. Adorno would have retorted, following Marx, that there is no such thing as affirmation of life in the abstract, there is no life separated from its sociohistorical manifestations, in the same way as there is no such thing as abstract labour. However, such an approach leads to a dead end: if we are unable somehow to affirm the value of life under all circumstances, even under capitalism and fascism, then we have no way to argue against degradation of life and murder; if life has no value at all under capitalism why not kill each other? What is there to stop us from such actions? The value of man? But man, according to this argument, cannot be separated from the conditions in which they exist and if these conditions are valueless so are men. In a surprising manner Adorno’s argument appears to imply a false identity between the object man or life and the concept (determinations) of sociohistorical manifestation that life is happening to have.<sup>108</sup> If, on the other hand, we resort, like Gaygill, to the point of view of the future, by saying that it is the anticipation of the future communist society which gives value to the present, degradative “life that does not live” (Gaygill, 2015, pp. 37-38), then we regress to a religious mode of thinking. We must be able to negate and affirm the value of life simultaneously in the present if we want to preserve the ability to mount a critique of this present and remain on secular ground.

However, these considerations are not the reasons why Nietzsche is concerned with the affirmation of life. His reasons are not social but psychological: affirmation of the value of life is, or should be, the basic psychological mood of the individual towards life, what we today call *self-*

*esteem*, i.e. the feeling of the joy of life possessed by almost all children before the alienating society and upbringing takes it away from them. This is a necessary precondition for the overcoming of nihilism.<sup>109</sup> This feeling/attitude is, we think, what Nietzsche wants to preserve and what marks the difference between his gay science and Adorno's melancholy science: the first moves in the region of social theory the second in the region of psychology. The psychological content of Nietzsche's affirmation of life is also the response to the Adornean charge that life as a phenomenon is without content, is abstract: it is not abstract, it is only that its content is not social but psychological.

We can now face the double contradiction in the thought of Nietzsche concerning the eternal return that we noted in Chapter 1. This contradiction, we remind the reader, consists firstly, in a contradiction between two irreconcilable notions of the innocence of becoming, namely, as fatality of nature and as indeterminacy of the present. Secondly, in a contradiction between eternal return as repetition of barbarity and as indeterminacy of the present (see Chapter 1, p. 75). We can now see how these two contradictions can be incorporated into a nonidentity, dialectical conception.

Regarding the first, there is neither a fatality of nature alone nor an indeterminacy of the present without any determination, in the same way as there is no rigid dualism between determinism and free will. The fatality of (internal) nature presupposes an identity between the concept of man and its object, which is considered exhausted in the determinations of nature, an identity which is impermissible from the perspective of nonidentity thinking. On the other hand, the innocence of becoming, in the sense of the freedom to act liberated from any determinations, is also impermissible because, according to Marx's insight, men act in the unfree society of capital as the involuntary executors of the law of value. This, however, does not mean that there is no freedom at all. There is always a margin of contingency, a residue of freedom, dependant on the possibility of reflection upon these determinations and their transparency in the consciousness of the individual and of the species: as Adorno contents "...we may say that an action is free if it is related transparently to the freedom of society as a whole" (Adorno, 2008b, p. 266).

Regarding the second contradiction, and from yet another perspective, the innocence of becoming in the sense of this elementary joyful attitude towards life as a phenomenon, is possible and must be affirmed and preserved at the same time when the barbarity of history in the form of the specific sociohistorical manifestation life is happening to have (and have had) is negated. A consistent nonidentity conception of life allows and obliges us to do so in a mode of thinking that stretches nuances of meaning to their limit. Nietzsche's thought (and to a certain degree Adorno's too), lack this consistency and in this way run across dead ends, which are avoidable if we bring the former's psychological and the latter's social theory perspectives together.

We will turn our attention to this difference in perspective between Nietzsche and Adorno, the difference of the perspective of psychology and of social theory respectively, in the Conclusion of the thesis, when we will discuss the theoretical and political consequences of our argument.

### **The challenge of Deleuze's critique of dialectics that can be afforded by Adorno's negative dialectics (continued)**

We can now pick up again the thread of Deleuze's Nietzsche-inspired critique of dialectics. We can see where the criticism that dialectics misinterprets sense because it lacks a theory of forces [4], and misinterprets essence because it lacks a theory of the will to power [5], are coming from. They amount to the claim that dialectics, Hegel's dialectics, lacks a theory of the unconscious, which is undoubtably true. It is not so evident, however, in the case of Adorno's negative dialectics because we saw how Adorno takes up Nietzsche's theory of will to power and turns it into a critique of the entwinement of power and rationality, and we also saw how he waves the thread of the unconscious or half-conscious drive to self-preservation with domination of nature and other men.

What is more, Deleuze's critique implies that a theory of forces and a theory of will to power are sufficient to give content to all things, which means that, like Nietzsche, it considers that the psychological content of things is all there is to them. This is evident in *Anti-Oedipus* where the startling claim is made that from the point of view of desire there is only one class, the bourgeoisie

and this is all there is to it. His other claim, that there is only “desire and the social”, is implemented in a way that the social is all but annihilated under the pressure of desire. On the contrary, we see Adorno to be acutely sensitive to the social content of categories, as in his negative dialectical perspective the nonidentical, nonconceptual, objective element is their constitutive element, which in the case of social categories is human practice. However, we saw above when discussing the nonidentity concept of life, how Adorno’s thought commits in reverse the same mistake as Deleuze when he fails to incorporate in his perspective the psychological content of life, highlighted by Nietzsche’s thought and recognised by Deleuze, a fact which is the consequence of the non-acknowledgement of the affirmative moment in Adorno’s nonidentity thesis. On the other hand, Nietzsche’s blind spot regarding social theory, makes him easy prey to the exigencies of capital, as we will see in the Conclusion of the thesis, when we will discuss the inroads of capitalism into his thought. The point we are making is that the above-mentioned critiques of dialectics [4] and [5] are themselves as partial and inadequate as the position they criticise: we have to be able to combine psychology and social theory to reach a satisfactory level of adequacy in our explanations.

Point [6] of the Deleuzean critique of dialectics is a fair charge which is, however, levelled from within (Open) Marxism too against certain uses of dialectic:

“Dialectics is not a formal procedure or method applied to reality to determine the enduring structures of economic necessity in the anatomy of bourgeois social relations. The much-praised dialectics between structure and agency is not helpful. It moves in vicious circles as it hops from structure to agency and back again from agency to structure; and instead of comprehending what they are, each is presupposed in a tautological movement of thought; neither is explained.” (Bonefeld, 2014, p. 68).

Regarding the criticism that dialectics starts from the negation of the other instead of the affirmation of its own difference [8], we have already noted that Adorno’s negative dialectics starts with a negation of itself reaching out for its otherness. We then argued that the absence of affirmation, of affirmation of the value of life to be more precise, is an important shortcoming in

Adorno's thought, which, however, can be amended by the incorporation of the affirmative moment at the heart of nonidentity thesis. Instead of taking this step, Adorno offers an explanation of why non-identity is experienced as negativity, in a striking passage directly linked with the extreme individualism of Nietzsche's Zarathustra:

"Ideology lies in wait for the mind which delights in itself like Nietzsche's Zarathustra, for the mind which all but irresistibly becomes an absolute in itself. ...In the unreconciled condition [between subject and object, NK], nonidentity is experienced as negativity. From the negative, the subject withdraws to itself, and to the abundance of its ways to react. Critical self-reflection alone will keep it from a constriction of this abundance, from building walls between itself and the object, from the supposition that its being-for-itself is an in-and-for-itself. The less identity can be assumed between subject and object, the more contradictory are the demands made upon the cognitive subject, upon its unfettered strength and candid self-reflection." (Adorno, 2007, pp. 30-31).

In a way, Adorno here is returning the charge of negativity and reactivity against dialectics, back to Nietzsche (and Deleuze for that matter): the radicalisation of individualism in Zarathustra is itself a reaction of the split between subject and object and Deleuze's stress on 'difference' amounts to "building walls between subject and object".

A further defence to the charge against dialectics as being the ideology of resentment allegedly starting from the negation of the other instead of from the affirmation of its own difference, as in the moral formulation of the slave "You are evil, therefore I am good" instead of the noble, active and affirmative "I am good, therefore you are bad" (Deleuze, 2005, pp 119-122), can be afforded by the following passage:

"Even the theory of alienation, the ferment of dialectics, confuses the need to approach the heteronomous and thus irrational world – to be "at home everywhere" as Novalis put it – with the archaic barbarism that the longing subject cannot love what is alien

and different, with the craving for incorporation and persecution. If the alien were no longer ostracized, there hardly would be any more alienation.” (Adorno, 2007, p. 172).

We take this to mean that the question is not to be able to say “I am good, therefore you are bad” as Deleuze’s Nietzsche has it (the “archaic barbarism”), but to become able to say “I am good, therefore you are/can be good too”. And this seems to us a stronger version of respect and preservation of difference (the “alien” that is “no longer ostracized”) than the Deleuze/Nietzsche one in this instance. However, the conclusive solution to the problem of affirmation and negation is, we argue, the elaboration of a consistent nonidentity concept of life, lacking in both Deleuze/Nietzsche *and* Adorno.

Regarding criticism [9], we saw that resentment is not inherent to negation, negation is not necessarily subject to resentment and Deleuze himself uses negation as a necessary precondition and aftermath of affirmation, and all the above discussion regarding affirmation of life is relevant to this criticism too.

Finally, regarding criticism [7], Deleuze is right that in Hegel there is “negation of negation” as the positive, affirmative deed of dialectics but Adorno goes much further than Deleuze in his critique of Hegel on this point: he notes that such affirmation is the “quintessence of identification...which *more arithmetico*, takes minus times minus for a plus” (Adorno, 2007, p. 158), a step absent in Deleuze’s argument. And Adorno concludes that Hegel’s “system would unquestionably fall without the principle that to negate negation is positive” (Adorno, 2007, p. 160). Adorno also agrees with Deleuze that Hegel’s dialectics aims at syntheses but notes that this is not of the essence of dialectics: “The task of dialectical cognition is not, as its adversaries like to charge, to construe contradictions from above and to progress by resolving them – although Hegel’s logic, now and then, proceeds in this fashion.” (Adorno, 2007, p. 153). Adorno’s own solution is to keep the contradiction in suspension, without resolution. The negativity of his thought is in line with Nietzsche’s demand for the thought of free spirits to be “practiced in maintaining [itself] on



insubstantial ropes and possibilities” (Nietzsche, 1974, pp. 289-290): Nietzsche’s thought marks the limits of Hegel’s influence in Adorno’s *negative* dialectics.

We can see then that Adorno’s thought provides a comprehensive challenge to Deleuze’s critique of dialectics, and that it can profit from this critique if it incorporates an affirmative moment, the need for which is brought to light under the influence of Deleuze’s Nietzschean critique of dialectics.

## **Conclusion**

We showed that Dews’ claim that the poststructuralist/Deleuzean reading of Nietzsche incorporates the irrationalistic side of Nietzsche’s thought, and our hypothesis, inspired by Dews, Rose and Bauer, that the Critical Theory/Adornean reading incorporates and develops a rationalistic side which is also Nietzsche’s, are justified. We showed that the paradox of Nietzsche being claimed by Deleuze to be a critic of dialectics and by thinkers like Rose and Bauer to be the originator of negative dialectics can be explicated by a reading of Nietzsche which acknowledges the existence of at least two Nietzsches: a Nietzsche the philosopher of the unconscious and a Nietzsche the inconsistent nonidentity, dialectical in the Adornean sense thinker. His thought includes a critique of Hegel’s dialectic but also, in nascent form, the seeds of Adorno’s negative dialectics which Nietzsche employed extensively and inconsistently, without ever providing the detailed theory of negative dialectics that we find in Adorno. We argued in detail that Adorno’s thought presents a comprehensive challenge, on largely Nietzschean grounds, of Deleuze’s Nietzschean critique of dialectics. Therefore, we provided the missing in the literature evidence for Dews’, Rose’s and Bauer’s observations; we highlighted and explained the paradox of Nietzsche; effectively challenged Deleuze’s and poststructuralisms’ critique of dialectics waged on Nietzschean and Bergsonian grounds.

# Conclusion

## The objectives of our thesis

The springboard of our thesis was a number of insightful observations already available in the literature: Peter Dews' insightful observation, repeated by Karin Bauer, that the decisive difference between the poststructuralist/Deleuzian and the Adornean critique of identity is the formers' irrationalistic nature compared to the latter's rationalistic one. The opening in this argument that provided the room for our thesis is that although Dews recognises the Nietzschean origin of the poststructuralist/Deleuzian critique, he stops short of recognising that the origin of Adorno's critique is also Nietzschean. This Nietzschean origin of Adorno's critique of identity and of his negative dialectics has been noted by Karin Bauer and, more explicitly, by Gillian Rose, both of whom, however, refrained from investigating the matter in any depth.

Our thesis ventured to develop Dews' observation and complete the investigation opened up by Bauer and Rose, setting for itself three objectives: a) to take Deleuze as representative of poststructuralism and investigate his appropriation of Nietzsche with particular emphasis on Dews' inconclusive observation that poststructuralism appropriates Nietzsche's irrationalistic critique of identity; b) to take Adorno as representative of Critical Theory and investigate our hypothesis, inspired by Dews, Bauer and Rose, that Adorno appropriates and develops Nietzsche's rationalistic critique of identity as well as to investigate the transformation by Adorno of Nietzsche's critique of rationality into a critique of the entwinement of rationality and domination; c) to explore the 'Nietzsche paradox', the paradox in the philosophy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century of Nietzsche being claimed by Deleuze and poststructuralism to be a fierce critic of dialectics and by other thinkers, like Gillian Rose and Karin Bauer, to be the originator of Adorno's negative dialectics.

## What was established

Regarding the first objective, we established that Deleuze's project from its inception has a strong irrationalist-Nietzschean accent in it, as its aspiration to capture "all the forces that act under the representation of the identical" signals towards the Nietzschean theory of active and reactive forces; in the same direction points the effort to conceive "difference without a concept", which is explicitly linked to Nietzsche's theory of eternal return and will to power; we spelled out what was evident from the exposition of Deleuze's critique of dialectics, namely, that four out of its six Nietzschean elements enlist the irrationalist Nietzsche of the theory of active and reactive forces and of will to power; we pointed out that in *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze opts for immediacy instead of mediation, and assigns thought to the irrational alone, while the concept of difference is defined as affirmation, the paramount quality of will to power; we also spelled out that he indeed conceives "difference without a concept" through Nietzsche's eternal return and will to power; finally, we spelled out something that has already been shown in Chapter 2, namely, that the central concept in *Anti-Oedipus*, "desire", has, like "difference", its origin in Nietzsche's will to power, is in fact another name for will to power; we showed that the critique of representation, through the vehicle of Nietzsche's theory of forces, and of the will to power informs two of the three arguments of the book: the critique of psychoanalysis and the call for its replacement by schizoanalysis. Deleuze appropriates the elements that comprise Nietzsche's irrationalistic critique of identity, namely the theory of active and reactive forces, of will to power and of their consequence which is perspectivism: he appeals to Nietzsche as the philosopher of the unconscious.

Regarding our second objective, we established that in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* Adorno and Horkheimer take up Nietzsche's irrationalistic critique of rationality, which had the form of the detection of will to power in the remotest enclaves of rationality, and transform it into a critique of the entwinement of rationality and domination from the point of view of Enlightenment rationality itself, that is, as self-critique of Enlightenment rationality. We also established that they retain an element of Nietzsche's irrationalistic critique of rationality in the form of the detection of the

whole-consuming reign of the drive for self-preservation as the feature in human behaviour whose non-transparent entwinement with, and domination over this behaviour and over reason is the irrational element at the heart of an unsuspected rationality celebrating its own liberation from the irrational. Furthermore, we established that Nietzsche's rationalistic critique of the Aristotelian identity logic informs the core of Adorno's nonidentity thesis and is further developed and elaborated into a full-blown critique of Enlightenment identity thinking in Adorno's masterpiece, *Negative Dialectics*. The realisation that the concepts of identity thinking do not capture the whole truth of the objects, leave out a "remainder" as Adorno says or, they "falsify reality", as Nietzsche says expressing the same idea, does not lead either of them in abandoning conceptual identity thinking or the longing for identity (the longing for certainty in Nietzsche's case). We established, therefore, that Nietzsche is indeed the originator of Adorno's negative dialectics.

Regarding our third objective, the solution to 'Nietzsche's paradox', we established that Nietzsche is a nonidentity, dialectical in the Adornean sense thinker: some of his most important ideas, such as will to power and his attitude towards truth, are of a dialectical nature, or lead to dialectics like the case of eternal return; his genealogical method provides a strong verification of nonidentity thinking since it arrives at the contradictory, dialectical nature of reality; his work abounds of other instances of nonidentity thinking. We also established that he employed nonidentity thinking in an inconsistent manner as is evident from the contradictions, aporias and dead ends his thought falls into, which could have been avoided if he had put to use his own insight of nonidentity thinking. We therefore established that the paradox of Nietzsche being claimed to be a fierce critic of dialectics and originator of negative dialectics at the same time is the result of the existence of "two Nietzsches": "the result of the coexistence in his work of two main and partially opposed strands of thought (the irrationalistic and the rationalistic critique of identity) which he was able to hold simultaneously together because (a) the latter was theoretically undeveloped (despite the fact that in practice it was extensively used), (b) as a result he was able to hold them together only in an inconsistent manner, and (c) because they become opposed and

contradictory only by the further elaborations of each strand by his epigones, Deleuze and Adorno, each of whom partially disregards the side the other develops. They were developed into two distinct Nietzsches: a Nietzsche the philosopher of the unconscious and a Nietzsche the nonidentity, dialectical (in the Adornean sense) thinker.” (Chapter 4, pp. 173-174).

Furthermore, we argued that Adorno’s negative dialectics presents a formidable challenge for Deleuze’s Nietzschean, as well as Bergsonian critique of dialectics. On a point-by-point base we showed that it either refutes or incorporates and thus escapes this critique.

## **The theoretical and political consequences of our argument for the thought of Nietzsche, poststructuralism and Critical Theory**

What are the theoretical and political conclusions that can be drawn from our argument for the thought of Nietzsche, Deleuze and Adorno and the currents of thought they represent, poststructuralism and Critical Theory? We will begin with a call for a more balanced approach between social theory and psychology (lacking from all three Nietzsche, Deleuze and Adorno) by pointing out the monumental failure in Nietzsche’s exclusively psychological point of view and stressing once more the grave consequences from its absence for Adorno’s thought; we will then note the fatal consequences of such lack in the case of Nietzsche through the inroads of capitalism into the very cornerstone of his philosophy, the theory of will to power; we will finish by attempting an appraisal of the respective strengths and weaknesses of poststructuralism and Critical Theory.

### **Adorno as social theorist and Nietzsche as psychologist**

We noted in Chapter 4, in the section about the nonidentity concept of life, that the distinction between affirmation of life’s specific sociohistorical form and affirmation of life as a phenomenon,

marks simultaneously the difference between a social theory perspective and a psychological perspective respectively. What is the significance and ramifications of this difference?

We first have to stress that for Nietzsche, psychology is the “queen of sciences”: “...the psychologist...will at least be entitled to demand in return that psychology shall again be recognized as the queen of the sciences, to serve and prepare for which the other sciences exist. For psychology is now once again the road to the fundamental problems.” (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 54). In his work we can find some excellent specimens of psychological explanation<sup>110</sup> and penetrating observations. Chapter 1 is full of them, so we are not going to repeat them here.

In some other cases, however, Nietzsche’s psychologism reaches the point of ridiculousness, as is the case with attributing the importance of the clash between *ancient regime* and the bourgeoisie in the emergence and existence of Napoleon as a person (Nietzsche, 1974, p. 318), or the hope that the ‘decadence of the democracy’ can be reversed by the emergence of “spirits strong enough and original enough to make a start of antithetical evaluations”! (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 126).

Now, why is Nietzsche exhibiting such conspicuous neglect of social-theory-inspired explanations? Why is he blind to the fact that this way weakens the explanatory power of his thought, more, he thinks that instead he enhances it in this way? We think that there are two reasons inscribed in his thought that prevent him from looking in this direction. The first has to do with his theory of reactivity: social theory explanations are by definition reactive. As he writes in his notes of *The Will to Power* “our entire sociology... takes its own instincts of decay for the norms of sociological judgment.” (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 33). Society is immersed in reactivity because men are reactive beings. If social theory does not take this fact into account it ends up taking diseased conditions as the ideal of health, and prescribing poisons as medicines.

A response to this criticism can be organised around Michael Roberts’ ground-breaking essay *The Twilight of Work*, where he notes the “resonance”, as he calls it (we would call it near identity), of Nietzsche’s critique of the resentment of socialism and Marx’s critique of “crude socialism” (Roberts, 2016, p. 272). This indicates that not all socialism is subject to the criticism of

ressentiment, that this criticism, although fair when directed against the socialism of 19<sup>th</sup> century's social democracy, fails to adequately grasp the fundamental difference between that socialism and Marx's. As a consequence, it can be claimed that not all socialism is subject to resentment, as Nietzsche wrongly assumed. Similarly, it can be claimed that not all social theory is victim to reactivity, not necessarily anyway.<sup>111</sup>

The second reason of Nietzsche's rejection of social theory explanations has to do with the fundamentals of his own vantage point: the only reality for him is the individual and its passions and this suffices to explain everything that can be explained: "Granted that nothing is 'given' as real except our world of desires and passions, ...the world described and defined according to its 'intelligible character' – it would be 'will to power' and nothing else." (Nietzsche, 1990, pp. 66-67). These two observations explain, we think, why and how Nietzsche cuts himself off from the possibilities of socially informed explanations.

We can come now to what we termed in Chapter 1 as one of the monumental failures of Nietzsche's psychological point of view. Nietzsche argued that the triumph of resentment will be complete when the "fortunate began to be ashamed of their good fortune and perhaps said one another: "it is disgraceful to be fortunate: *there is too much misery!*" (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 124). We will now ask the question: "Who are these fortunate people? What their good fortune consists of, and what kind of misery are we talking about?" The clue to the answer to these questions is provided by another passage of the *Genealogy of morals* (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 34). From this passage we can get a good grasp of who the *unfortunate* are for Nietzsche: the "poor", "impotent", "lowly", "suffering", "deprived", "sick", "ugly". For the fortunate we get only the adjectives, the "powerful" and the "noble",<sup>112</sup> but, by contrast, we can assume that the rich, happy, healthy and beautiful are considered as fortunate too. Now, we have to observe that there are at least three different kinds of fortune that are implied here: fortune of birth or inherent fortune (ugliness / beauty); fortune of circumstances or acquired fortune (poverty, deprivation, sickness / wealth, health); and fortune that can be of either origin or of a combination of the two other kinds, inherent and acquired

(poverty, deprivation / wealth, health can belong to this category too). The distinction is important because much of the poverty, deprivation, sickness and misery in the world is man-made and amendable. By refusing to recognise this fact and by putting all these different forms of “fortune” in the same, psychological basket, Nietzsche provides an alibi for the ills of this world: he acts as an apologist of the status quo which constitutes a monumental failure of his exclusively psychological point of view.

His intention, however, we think, is not to act as an apologist. His true intention, and the truth kernel of his argument, can be clarified if we take into account the distinction between affirmation of life’s sociohistorical particularity and affirmation of life as a phenomenon, made in Chapter 4: if the above adjectives (poor, deprived, sick) are taken figuratively as denoting the absence of the ability to affirm life as a phenomenon, i.e. if they are taken as indications of low self-esteem, it is true that “fortunate” people (i.e. people with healthy upbringing and lucky enough not to encounter great misfortunes in their early life), people with sufficiently strong self-esteem, should not be ashamed of it and start telling to themselves “it is disgraceful to be fortunate: *there is too much misery!*”. This is we believe, what Nietzsche tries to safeguard against, although he does not yet have the scientific-conceptual tools to do so with the appropriate clarity.<sup>113</sup> This is also one instance of how our interpretation manages to keep in the range of its vision both the revolutionary and the reactionary elements in Nietzsche’s thought.

On the other hand, Adorno’s predominantly socio-theoretical point of view, is sufficiently indicated by his view that what is denoted with the biological category “life” is actually a social thing: “The anarchy in the production of goods is a manifestation of the social primitivity that vibrates in the word “life”, in the use of a biological category for a thing that is social in essence” (Adorno, 2007, pp. 262-263). This view, which denies the word life of having anything other than a social meaning, is also one-sided, and, as we saw, leads him to disregard the psychological content that the concept life can have, highlighted by Nietzsche’s care to safeguard self-esteem. Ultimately carries Adorno to



the pessimistic dead end of his thought mentioned above. A more balanced approach between the two fields of science is needed which is facilitated by the consistent use of nonidentity thinking.

### **Nietzsche's thought and capitalism**

In a passage from *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche enumerates the characteristics of life:

“...One has to think this matter thoroughly through to the bottom and resist all sentimental weakness: life itself is *essentially* appropriation, injury, overpowering of the strange and weaker, suppression, severity, imposition of one's own forms, incorporation and, at the least and mildest, exploitation ...” (Nietzsche, 1990, pp. 193-194).

Here a distinction has to be made: if we have in mind the relation between man and nature, the characteristics of life mentioned seem plausible.<sup>114</sup> If, however, we bring to mind the relation between man and man this plausibility is relativised in the sense that they refer to life in its alienated form: “appropriation, injury, overpowering of strange and weaker, suppression, severity, imposition of one's own forms, incorporation...exploitation” are elements of class divided, exploitative societies. This way Nietzsche is mirroring and takes as a given the condition of life in its alienated form: he extracts what life is from its alienated hitherto appearance. In this sense, strange as it may sound, he is thinking reactively! He is taking the stimuli for his evaluation of the world from the external world itself as it is. In the same way that one cannot bestow a world with meaning when the world is without meaning and one is thinking reactively, one can neither extract the nature of the world from the appearance of an alienated world without first mounting a critique of this appearance: the only meaning that can be extracted in this way is the meaning of the alienated world. The alienated world is the world Nietzsche is describing above!

Nietzsche has, in part, anticipated such an argument:

“...everywhere one enthuses, even under scientific disguises, about coming states of society in which there will be ‘no more exploitation’ – that sounds to my ears like

promising a life in which there will be no organic functions. 'Exploitation' does not pertain to a corrupt or imperfect or primitive society: it pertains to the *essence* of the living thing as a fundamental organic function, it is a consequence of the intrinsic will to power which is precisely the will of life. – Granted this is a novelty as a theory – as a reality it is the *primordial fact* of all history: let us be at least that honest with ourselves!" (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 194).

In this respect one can retort that there is a fundamental difference between man and every other living being and between man and the inanimate world: as Nietzsche himself notes, man is the creature and the creator of himself. His above description of life is one example of the monstrosities that the overlooking of this difference creates. What is more, it seems that here will to power is placed beyond man's becoming as "an animal whose nature has not yet been fixed" (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 88), elevated to a universal, eternal principle, a fact which makes will to power, as the drive to overcoming, an inherently antinomical concept: can this drive to overcome oneself be extended to the point of overcoming will to power as accumulation of power? Our reading of Nietzsche's thought tends to answer positively to this question, because it seems to us that this aspect of the conception of will to power is the, perhaps, most important concession of Nietzsche's thought to the capitalist functional requirements. This, however it should be stressed, constitutes a departure from Nietzsche's thought retaining simultaneously the core of Nietzsche's will to power as self-overcoming.

Indeed, it seems that will to power, i.e. the striving for ever more power, parallels the aimless growth of capital in ever greater quantities as an end in itself. There are several occasions in Nietzsche's writings which show this vividly and we will mention just the most telling one from his notes of *The Will to Power*: "Life, as the form of being most familiar to us, is specifically a will to the accumulation of force; all the processes of life depend on this: nothing wants to preserve itself, everything is to be added and accumulated. ...for life is merely a special case of the will to power;" (Nietzsche, 1968, pp. 368, see also p. 369 and p. 356). Nietzsche's blind spot regarding social theory

explanations makes him an easy prey to the functional requirements of capitalist economy at the very cornerstone of his philosophy: the theory of the will to power.

### **Poststructuralism and Critical Theory: an appraisal**

What conclusions can be drawn from our thesis for the respective strengths and weaknesses of the currents of thought that Deleuze and Adorno represent, poststructuralism and Critical Theory, from the point of view of the interpretation of Nietzsche?

We have to remind ourselves that both currents of thought emerge as responses to the crisis of Marxism, although they put emphasis on different aspects of it: poststructuralism on the alleged disappearance of the working class, while critical theory on the degenerative effect of positivism for Marxism. For poststructuralism this emphasis prepares the ground for the abandonment of social theory, at least in Deleuze's case, while in Adorno's case Bottomore's charge that his is a "Marxism without the proletariat" (Bottomore, 2004, pp. 23-26), i.e. without the revolutionary potential of the proletariat, might be justified but does not lead to the abandonment of social theory altogether.

What is more, it emerges from our argument in this thesis that not only poststructuralism resorts to Nietzsche as a counterweight to this crisis, but also Critical Theory draws inspiration from Nietzsche's thought to the extent that negative dialectics/nonidentity thinking are inspired by Nietzsche and constitute basic tenets of Critical Theory. However, we showed that poststructuralism and Critical Theory are drawn to different aspects of Nietzsche's thought: there are at least two Nietzsches.

They both appeal to Nietzsche's critique of identity thinking, but in the case of poststructuralism the appeal is to Nietzsche the irrationalist philosopher of the unconscious: to the irrationalistic critique of the subject through the theory of forces, of will to power and of perspectivism; in the case of Critical Theory the appeal is to Nietzsche the rationalist, inconsistent nonidentity, dialectical in the Adornean sense thinker, who is largely disregarded in the literature. Nietzsche's irrationalistic critique of the subject is not entirely dismissed by Critical Theory though: part of it survives as

critique of the entwinement of rationality and power/self-preservation. What poststructuralism and Critical Theory do have in common is an emphasis on the neglected by identity thinking elements in the objects, what in poststructuralism goes under the name of *difference* while in Adorno's case goes under the name of the *nonconceptual* element in the concept, which is considered the constitutive element of the concept and of the object.

Poststructuralism's emphasis on the irrationalistic aspect of Nietzsche's thought reinforces the tendency towards the neglect of social theory; its materialism is the psychological materialism of the will to power, as is evident in Deleuze's *Anti-Oedipus* where the guiding thread is the adventures and transformations of desire, desire being another name for will to power, and where the assumption is made that the liberation of desire is a sufficient condition for social liberation. On the contrary, in Adorno's Critical Theory the philosophical materialism takes the form of the preponderance of the object, of external *and internal* object, and the subject is defined, in strongly social terms, as a moment of social objectivity. Therefore, Adorno's materialism is both social *and*, to some extent, psychological.

In this way poststructuralism inherits the weakness of Nietzsche's psychologism. It also inherits the weakness of perspectival thinking. We discussed in Chapter 3 Adorno's critique of perspectivism in terms of the objectivity of truth, of the demand, that is, for the adequate presence of the object in our truths which perspectival thinking cannot fulfil because it embarks from the assumption that the subject's psychological, economic and ideological perspective is constitutive of the object and of the truth of the object. We argued that for Adorno this is only a case of the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity, that in order to reach objectivity a second order of reflection is required, a reflection that makes perspectivism itself an object of contemplation, and by doing so is able to reach, exactly like Nietzsche's genealogy does, in the objectivity of the contradictory, dialectical nature of reality. We must here observe that Adorno's critique of perspectivism is not only supported by Nietzsche's genealogy but also parallels the two levels of meaning that we observed in Nietzsche's idea of will to power: the first of these levels, the will to power as will *for* power, the level of the multitude of

drives which compete for domination inside the organism, is the basis of perspectivism; the second level, however, the level of the element of self-overcoming that Nietzsche discerns at the heart of will to power, which, we argued, is the dialectical twist in the idea of will to power, corresponds precisely to the self-overcoming of perspectivism that Adorno invites us to actualise in order to acquire access to the contradictoriness, the dialectical nature of reality. This is effected by making perspectivism, the first level of meaning of the will to power, an object of contemplation in its own right. This difference in levels can also account for the difference in what qualifies as “thought” in the perspective of Deleuze and Adorno respectively. We saw that for Deleuze “[i]t is a serious mistake to think that irrationalism opposes anything but thought to reason – whether it be the rights of the given, of the heart, of feeling, caprice or passion. In irrationalism we are concerned only with thought, only with thinking” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 93); for Adorno on the other hand, “[p]roponents [like Deleuze, NK] of the abstract thesis that every man’s thought is conditioned should be most concretely reminded that so is their own, that it is blind to the supra-individual element which alone turns individual consciousness into thought...relativism is popularised materialism” (Adorno, 2007, p. 36). This divergence in what constitutes thought for Deleuze and Adorno can be understood if we think that the first has in mind perspectival thinking, which presupposes the unconscious, irrational will to power, while the second wants to make room for the overcoming of the subjectivism of perspectival thinking by referring thought to the supra-subjective element beyond the constitutive subjectivity of perspectivism.

Why the relativism of perspectivism is a problem is captured superbly by Solomon who argues that from the realisation of perspectivism, its adherents jump “to the unwarranted conclusion that... perspectives cannot be compared” and ““one interpretation is as good as any other”” (Solomon, 1996, pp. 195-196). Solomon himself does not provide an answer regarding how to move beyond this relativism, but, as we saw, Adorno does: we need to acquire access to the nonconceptual element of the concept which makes the object what it is through a higher order of reflection that takes us beyond perspectivism, to the contradictory, dialectical character of the reality that

underlies perspectivism. Solomon's formulation of the problem, however, provides the explanation to Benhabib's criticism of postmodernism mentioned in the Introduction of the thesis, which applies to poststructuralism too, that it ends up celebrating difference, "multiplicity and heterogeneity but can no longer criticise it". This effect is a consequence of the diffusion of contradiction into mere difference that we noted in Chapter 4 which neutralises thought's critical edge, unlike contradiction. This effect is accentuated by the other disconcerting effect of the relatively recent political scene in France, of the far-right appropriating the rhetoric of difference for its own purposes.<sup>115</sup> At the same time, another disturbing for poststructuralist thought fact, is observed by the Deleuzian Brian Massumi who notes that;

"Capitalism starts intensifying or diversifying affect, but only in order to extract surplus-value. It hijacks affect in order to intensify profit potential. ... It's very troubling and confusing, because it seems to me that there's been a certain kind of convergence between the dynamic of capitalist power and the dynamic of resistance" (cited in Žižek, 2004, p. 185).

Critical Theory and Adorno's thought do not suffer from such problems. On the contrary, and especially for the case of the far-right appropriation, Adorno notes that it is the separation of will from reason which makes will available to "every conceivable purpose" (Adorno, 2008b, p. 260). We saw that Deleuze completely abandons reason, in its identity thinking form, and the same goes for reflection, which is also considered an element of representational thinking. But Adorno observes that

"By emancipating itself from the specificities of reason, will in itself, without any further specification, necessarily includes the domination of nature in its archaic, primitive form, namely, the rule of force. ...And in general, it could be shown in great detail that fascist irrationalism almost always involves breaking off the process of reflection" (Adorno, 2008b, pp. 261-262).

And we must here remind Nietzsche's remarks that the diminution of the urge to acquire certainty for our truths is regretful and that "everyone should have come to know at least *one* science in its essentials; then he knows what method is, and how necessary is the most extreme circumspection" (Nietzsche, 2004, p. 265). These remarks, part of his dialectical view of truth, according to which the longing for certainty must be preserved, run counter to Deleuze's abandonment of identity thinking altogether, and are consonant with Adorno's strong stress of the importance of reflection.

In Nietzsche's case they proved to be ineffective in protecting his thought from far-right appropriation, not only because they were extremely thinly stressed, but predominantly because of the outright reactionary properties of his thought. The most significant instances of these reactionary properties are, in our view: the branding of 'freedom from' as reactive and resentful endeavour; the excessively heavy leaning on the side of irrationality; the summary condemnation of *all* socialism and *all* social theory as reactive, which creates a blind spot in Nietzsche's vision of reality and leads him to act as an apologist of the status quo (see above section "Adorno as social theorist and Nietzsche as psychologist"); finally, the consequence of this, the conception of will for power as the ultimate law of the animate and inanimate nature alike (see above section "Nietzsche's thought and capitalism") resulting once more in the glorifying affirmation of the status quo (see Chapter 4, section "Nonidentity concept of life:...") and the elevation of the exigencies of capital into the ultimate laws of the existent.

On the other hand, Nietzsche's thought provides remarkable revolutionary insights: the penetrating critique of religion which goes deeper than that of Feuerbach (which Marx was too quick to accept as conclusive for the critique of religion; see Marx, 1970, p. 131); the critique of rationality; the dialectical critique of morality and generally the wide use of nonidentity, dialectical thinking, are prominent among them. The dialectical properties of his thought, notably the dialectical twist at the heart of the idea of will to power, which, in a certain sense, opens the prospect for the overcoming of will to power itself as a legitimate possibility for a being like man "an animal *whose nature has not yet been fixed*" (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 88), but most importantly

Nietzsche's dialectical view of truth which calls us to drop the need for certainty in our truths while we retain the longing for such certainty, should, had they been understood, invalidate far-right appropriations. A satisfactory interpretation of Nietzsche's thought should be able to account and keep in the range of its vision both aspects of his thought, the revolutionary *and* the reactionary.

A welcomed consequence of the psychologistic one-sidedness of Nietzsche's thought, from which Critical Theory could profit, is that it highlights the importance of the affirmation of value of life in the sense of the affirmation of the joy of being alive that comes with the preservation of the self-esteem of the individual and the species. The truth remains, however, that in Nietzsche's thought this affirmation comes at too high a price, the price of his thought digressing into an apology of the status quo.

Which reading of Nietzsche is then more satisfactory, the poststructuralist or the Critical Theory one? There is no unequivocal answer to this question. Neither the poststructuralist nor the Critical Theory reading satisfies the criterion of incorporating the whole of Nietzsche: the first appropriating the irrationalistic side of his thought, inherits its weaknesses and turns a blind eye to its reactionary properties; the second incorporating the rationalistic side of his thought, is more remote from the centre of gravity of Nietzsche's thought, which leans heavily towards the irrationalistic side, and only partially incorporates the irrationalistic side of this thought in the form of the entwining of rationality and domination/self-preservation. However, if Critical Theory acknowledges the affirmative moment at the centre of Adorno's nonidentity thesis, it can then assimilate in its perspective the positive contribution of Nietzsche's psychologistic one-sidedness and still mount a critique of the reactionary elements of his thought, while the poststructuralist perspective is embarrassed by them and by the dialectical, rationalistic side of Nietzsche's thought.

Regarding the Deleuze and Adorno literature we can say that the first is wrong to accept uncritically Deleuze's Nietzschean critique of dialectics, while the second can profit from recognising the decisive influence of Nietzsche in Adorno's thought.



Finally, we can see that Adorno's negative dialectics, by pointing to the falseness of the identity between concept and object, already offers what Poster called for as a way forward in the exchange between Critical Theory and poststructuralism: a mode of thinking which would be able "to destabilize the concept of reason in its Enlightenment form, to maintain a tension between discourse and situation, truth and fiction, theory and politics" (Poster, 1996, p. 5). This is also what Nietzsche's dialectical view of truth is calling for; and if we add Adorno's contention that "to suggest that we could ever know beyond doubt and unproblematically what is good, would be the beginning of all evil" (Adorno, 2008b, p. 262), we can say that the first building blocks towards the epistemology and morality of a 'philosophy of uncertainty' have already been laid.

Poststructuralism and Critical Theory, as the inheritors of Marx's and Nietzsche's critical tradition, are going to play a central role in any of our further elaborations. The refinement of the articulation between the rational and the irrational side in human psyche and in its theory, the refinement of the articulation of the psychological and the social, of subject and object, history and nature, are the important themes, as they emerge out of our thesis. We owe this yield to Dewey's observations regarding the decisive difference between the poststructuralist and Critical Theory critiques of identity, and Bauer's and Rose's remarks about the origin of Adorno's negative dialectic in Nietzsche's thought, all of which showed the door; we tried to walk through this door and we think we managed to furnish the truth of their insightful observations with good evidence.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> However, we must add immediately that in Deleuze there is a “nondialectical conception of negation”, as Hardt notes (Hardt, 1993, p. xii).

<sup>2</sup> For a comprehensive catalogue of members of the Frankfurt Institute and thinkers influenced by Critical Theory see *The SAGE Handbook of Frankfurt School Critical Theory*, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> We will say more on this in a while.

<sup>4</sup> For bourgeois versions of the project of Enlightenment see MacIntyre, A. (1990). *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, Tradition*; Gray, J. (1996). *Enlightenment’s wake: Politics and culture at the close of the modern age*.

<sup>5</sup> Such an understanding of the project of emancipation is also consonant with Horkheimer’s understanding of what Critical Theory’s task is.

<sup>6</sup> There is no room in our thesis for the exposition of these basic presuppositions.

<sup>7</sup> The editors of the ‘SAGE Handbook’ include here Marcuse’s essay *Philosophy and Critical Theory*, also published in the *Zeitschrift in 1937* (Best, 2018, p. 1).

<sup>8</sup> See Durkin, 2018, p. 60. Durkin’s essay highlights the, until recently overlooked, importance of Fromm in the early stages of the formation of Critical Theory by bringing together the findings of his own and other’s recent research of Fromm’s role.

<sup>9</sup> Helmut Dubiel shares, in 1992, the view that Critical Theory is “irrevocably becoming an object of mere historical interest” without the lamentation about the loss of Marxism. “Before long”, he asserts, “the minutest detail concerning the intellectual ties of Critical Theory and its context of origin will have been fully documented” (Dubiel, 2004, p. 38). Our thesis is a living example of the vitality that Critical Theory still has, since it explores an aspect of Adorno’s Critical Theory – it’s Nietzschean origins – which is still, thirty years after Dubiel’s assertion, virtually unexplored.

<sup>10</sup> Clarke and Hulatt are right in pointing out that the term “critical theory” is introduced and takes a positive meaning in philosophy with Kant’s “Critiques”. To that extent it is helpful to trace the lineage of Critical Theory back to Kant. What it is not helpful, however, is to consider Critical Theory as part of the legacy of post-

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Kantian idealism, as these authors suggest (Clarke & Hulatt, 2014, p. 1048). Such a move obscures rather than illuminates what is distinctive about Critical Theory, as we will show in the course of this thesis.

<sup>11</sup> We have to be careful on this point because Derrida's argument, as we understand it, is not actually against the use of binary concepts but against them relating through an exclusive disjunction of "either...or..." while he opts for them when they are related through an inclusive conjunction "both...and...", as Schrift himself notes (Schrift, 1995, pp15-17). And it is in this respect that Derrida's deconstruction comes the closest and overlaps with Adorno's negative dialectics, in our view.

<sup>12</sup> We would like to qualify this last and say that poststructuralism, for us, reacts against orthodox Marxism specifically and, as Coat correctly observes "each poststructuralist calls on Marx as a critic of capitalism" (Coat, 2012, p. 30).

<sup>13</sup> The last part of this quotation is perhaps right if one has in mind the work of Foucault but, as we will argue, is not true in the case of Deleuze who rejects any "pre-constituted structure of being" (Hardt, 1993, p. xiii).

<sup>14</sup> Indicative in this respect is a turn of phrase by Michel Foucault in a 1971 debate with Noam Chomsky as part of the Dutch initiative "International Philosophers Project". There Foucault, quite unproblematically, conveys the idea that the Marxist project of emancipation had been actually realised in the USSR. The part of the video of this debate containing the turn of the phrase is accessible at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3wfNI2L0Gf8> [accessed 10/03/2021].

The full video can be found at:

<http://www.docuseek2.com/if->

[philosophers#:~:text=In%201971%2C%20a%20Dutch%20initiative,one%20Don%20Done%20debates.](http://www.docuseek2.com/if-philosophers#:~:text=In%201971%2C%20a%20Dutch%20initiative,one%20Don%20Done%20debates.)

We make the argument about the above equation as deception in a still unpublished essay part of which was presented in 2014 at the 11<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the journal *Historical Materialism* in London under the title "The stillbirth of the Communist Russia".

<sup>15</sup> This is evident in David Harvey (1997), Fredric Jameson (1992), Terry Eagleton (1996) and Perry Anderson (2002). Habermas (2007) and Peter Dews (2007) suffer from different maladies, as we will see shortly.

<sup>16</sup> In chronological order, we have three book-length studies: Michael Ryan's *Marxism and Deconstruction: a critical articulation*, 1989 [1982], an early study of the affinity of Marxism with Derrida which includes a chapter on Derrida's deconstructionist, identity critique and Adorno's negative dialectics; Peter Dews' *Logics of disintegration: Post-structuralist Thought and the claims of Critical Theory*, 2007 [1987], which is influenced

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by Habermas' move towards intersubjectivity and attempts a critique of the poststructuralist thesis from this vantage point but fails to comprehend the fundamental position of the poststructuralist thesis that any claim to truth is also, inescapably, a claim to power; Mark Poster's *Critical Theory and Poststructuralism: in search of a context*, 1996 [1989], which investigates the possibility of a middle ground between the two currents of thought, dissatisfied as he is with both Habermas' disregard of the poststructuralist critique of power and poststructuralism's lack of a logical dimension in this critique. We also have a series of articles that are worth mentioning: in chronological order again: Rainer Nägele's *The scene of the Other: Theodor W. Adorno's Negative Dialectics in the context of poststructuralism*, 1983 [1982], which leans towards poststructuralism; the already mentioned article by Peter Dews *Adorno, Poststructuralism and the critique of identity*, 1986; Seyla Benhabib's *Critical Theory and postmodernism: on the interplay of ethics, aesthetics and utopia in Critical Theory* (1990) which is sympathetic to Habermas' project; Samir Gandesha's *The theatre of the "other": Adorno, poststructuralism and the critique of identity* (1991); David Toole's *On lingering eyes and talking things: Adorno and Deleuze on philosophy since Auschwitz* (1993); Fred Dallmayr's *The politics of nonidentity: Adorno, Postmodernism – and Edward Said* (1997); Alberto R. Bonnet's *Antagonism and Difference: Negative Dialectics and Poststructuralism in view of the critique of modern capitalism*, (2009).

<sup>17</sup> There is the excellent monograph by Nicholas Thoburn *Deleuze, Marx and Politics*, Routledge (2003), Jason Read's *The micro-politics of capital: Marx and the prehistory of the present*, State University of New York Press (2003), and the collection of essays *Deleuze and Politics*, edited by Ian Buchanan and Nicholas Thoburn, Edinburgh University Press (2008), as well as the special issue on Deleuze and Marx of the journal *Deleuze Studies*, volume 3:2009, edited by Dhruv Jain, Edinburgh University Press.

<sup>18</sup> Even the dedicated on Deleuze journal *Deleuze Studies* has not produced any special volume on Deleuze and Nietzsche in its series of supplements (twelve in total before its' renaming to *Deleuze and Guattari Studies* in 2018), while there is the above-mentioned volume on Deleuze and Marx.

<sup>19</sup> With three exceptions, one of which is mentioned here. The other two are an article by Vasilis Grollios mentioned earlier and Kaufmann's Hegelian reading of Nietzsche.

<sup>20</sup> Due to lack of space this theme will not be developed in our thesis but only hinted and implied.

<sup>21</sup> For an overview of the related literature see Keith Ansell-Pearson (ed), *Nietzsche and Political Thought*, Bloombury, 2015, and Manuell Knoll & Barry Stocker (eds), *Nietzsche as Political Philosopher*, De Gruyter, 2014.

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<sup>22</sup> See Richard Wolin, *The Seduction of Unreason*, Princeton University Press, 2019. Ronald Beiner, *Dangerous Minds*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018. Wolin's influential and engaging book has two important shortcomings: it is written from the point of view of identity thinking, and, a consequence of this, has a verdict about poststructuralism and the irrationalistic critique of rationality of 'being guilty by association' with counter-Enlightenment, reactionary critique; Beiner's book, on the other hand, written from a liberal perspective, although it is useful in drawing our attention to Nietzsche's politics it does so in a way common to liberal and left critique of Nietzsche of insufficiently explicating Nietzsche's ideas and thus its critique remains external to them and ineffective.

<sup>23</sup> This is the mood conveyed by Harrison Fluss, the scholar who wrote the Introduction of the translation, in the workshop organised to mark the occasion of the publication of the English translation, in which eminent academics like Robert Holub and Ishay Landa took part. There is no room in our introduction for a discussion of Losurdo's book. What we can briefly say is that although it makes a convincing case that there is a strong politically reactionary, anti-revolutionary and anti-socialist strand in Nietzsche's thought, the strategy of historical contextualisation of Nietzsche's thought is executed at the expense of the philosophical discussion of his ideas, and therefore Losurdo's critique, like Beiner's, remains external to philosophy and ineffective, while it remains one-sided as it fails to appreciate the novel and revolutionary elements that can be extracted from this thought, elements which our thesis will illustrate.

<sup>24</sup> There is a whole army of an older generation of Nietzsche interpreters who have an influential place in Nietzsche literature: Richard Schacht, Maudemarie Clark, Gary Shapiro, John T. Wilcox and in Germany Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, to name but a few. From the direct and indirect knowledge about the work of these scholars we acquired the impression that their work can provide very limited help to the interpretation of Nietzsche as an inconsistent nonidentity, dialectical thinker that we will try to develop. The most inspiring and helpful readings in this respect are Deleuze's own in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, with and against which we develop ours, and Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* which provides the lens through which we approach Nietzsche and Deleuze. From the most recent generation of Nietzsche scholars we find inspiration, positive and negative, in the strand of interpreters who read Nietzsche in relation to Marx's work such as Nancy Love (Love 1986 and 1987), Geoff Waite (Waite, 1996), Howard Gaygill (Gaygill, 1993 and 2015), Keith Ansell-Pearson (Ansell-Pearson, 2005a, 2005b, 2007, 1999, 1997, 1992), Ishay Landa (Landa, 2005, 2016), and especially Michael J. Roberts whose detection of a "resonance" between Nietzsche's critique of resentment

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and Marx's critique of "crude socialism" is, we think, of key importance for the reading of Nietzsche and the relation of Nietzsche with socialism and Marx (Roberts, 2016).

<sup>25</sup> Our thesis is not going to meet this requirement as its objectives are different and the time and length restrictions of our thesis do not allow it. However, it will provide the main body of an interpretation which, if extended to an exhaustive level, has the potential of making this case.

<sup>26</sup> We found some encouragement in our project in the fact that the possible connection between Nietzsche and negative dialectics is being investigated by another researcher, Vasilis Grollios. Upon the completion of our thesis an article of his was published in the journal *Critical Sociology* (Grollios, 2021). In this article Grollios argues that there is in Nietzsche a critique of the core capitalist values of "growth, as accumulation of wealth, competition and hard work" (Grollios, 2021, p. 1) which is very close to Marx's own, and that "Nietzsche, just like the first generation of the Frankfurt School, establishes a dialectic between appearance/fetishized form and content/essence/alienation in everyday life" (Grollios, 2021, p. 9). This project, though informative of possible connections between Nietzsche, Marx and Critical Theory, and interesting in that it tries, like ours, to combine the critical force of all three brands of theory, is very different from our own. Grollios argues that Nietzsche, like Adorno, is a nonidentity, negative dialectical thinker, when negative dialectics is understood in terms of the dialectic between form and content. And it may be the case that such an understanding of negative dialectics is the most adequate in bringing to the fore Marx as a negative dialectician, (as the work of Backhaus clearly shows – see Backhaus, 1980), however, it is not so effective in bringing to light the connection between Nietzsche and negative dialectics. This objective is better served, in our view, if we stick to *Negative Dialectics'* original terminology. Then it becomes clear that Nietzsche does not only exhibit negative dialectical elements in his thought but is the *originator* of Adorno's negative dialectics; what is more, it becomes evident that Nietzsche employs negative dialectics in an *inconsistent* manner; and finally, it becomes possible to highlight simultaneously the radically revolutionary *as well as* the reactionary elements in Nietzsche's thought. And this is, we think, the most significant defect of Grollios' approach: like most of Nietzsche literature, as we saw, fails to keep in the range of its vision simultaneously, let alone explain, both aspects of Nietzsche's thought: the revolutionary *and* the reactionary. Indicative of the distance that separates Grollios' approach from ours is his evaluation, among others, of Dews' above-mentioned article (Dews, 1986), which is of key importance for our approach: "their perspective is so far from mine, omitting

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alienation and Nietzsche's claim for defetishization, that I cannot see how a constructive dialogue could be made that would help me specifically reveal non-identity thinking in Nietzsche..." (Grollios, 2021, p. 9).

<sup>27</sup> For this periodisation see Ansell-Pearson, 2005a, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> For a discussion of the adventures and status of *The Will to Power* in Nietzsche's corpus see Kaufmann's Introduction to his 1968 translation of that book.

<sup>29</sup> For Deleuze's categorisation of nihilism see our Chapter 4, p. 152 or Deleuze, 2005, pp. 147-149.

<sup>30</sup> The aphorism on page 7 (aphorism 1) is dated between 1885-1886 and the one on page 24 (aphorism 38) is dated between 1883-1888.

<sup>31</sup> See Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Chapter 2: "Active and Reactive" See also our Chapter 4, section "Deleuze's Nietzsche in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*".

<sup>32</sup> "...this unconditional will to truth, is *faith in the ascetic ideal itself*, even if as an unconscious imperative..." (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 151)

<sup>33</sup> Deleuze would say *desire* instead of need.

<sup>34</sup> "But in saying this I feel I have a *duty*, almost as much towards them as towards us, their heralds and precursors, us free spirits! - ..." (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 71).

<sup>35</sup> This assertion by Nietzsche runs contrary to his other assertion that will to power is lacking in the nihilistic values of his age (Nietzsche, 2003a, pp. 129-130), which implies that will to power is not the energising force behind all action but only the energising force behind affirmative action. Both assertions belong roughly to the same period: the note from *The Will to Power* is dated between March and June 1888 while the earlier assertion is from *The Anti-Christ* published in the same year. However, the evidence in Nietzsche's work is overwhelmingly in favour of the view that will to power is found everywhere.

<sup>36</sup> "The multitude and disgregation of impulses and the lack of any systematic order among them result in a "weak will"; their coordination under a single predominant impulse results in a "strong will": in the first case it is the oscillation and the lack of gravity; in the latter, the precision and clarity of the direction." (Nietzsche, 1968, pp. 28-29)

<sup>37</sup> However, the fact that Nietzsche in Zarathustra places self-overcoming at the heart of will to power, gives will to power this remarkable dialectical twist we are talking about, the significance of which in relation to the Nazi interpretation will be pointed out towards the end of our thesis (see pp.166, 207).

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<sup>38</sup> “...what is necessary has come to disgust us (even though we realize the impossibility of any *liberum arbitrium* or “intelligible freedom”).” (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 11).

<sup>39</sup> For instance, Nietzsche, 1968, pp. 30, 141.

<sup>40</sup> The same mechanism is used for the explanation of the ‘changes of taste’ in *The Gay Science*, aphorism 39 entitled “Changed taste” (Nietzsche, 1974, pp. 106-107)

<sup>41</sup> Indicative of the scale that Nietzsche has in mind is that his time frame for the overcoming of religiosity extends to “a hundred thousand years” (Nietzsche, 1974, p. 186).

<sup>42</sup> Such an understanding of the “innocence of becoming” as “fatality” is the exact opposite of Ansell-Pearson’s who understands it as the “singularity of time”, i.e. the indeterminacy of the moment (Ansell-Pearson, 2005a, pp. 16-17).

<sup>43</sup> According to Ansell-Pearson Nietzsche’s solution amounts to the supposition of the “singularity of time” as the only thing that is returning in the scheme of the eternal return. Such an interpretation is based, as we noted earlier, on an opposite understanding of the “innocence of becoming”, an understanding as singularity, i.e. as the indeterminacy of the creative moment (see the discussion of this idea in the next section on eternal return)

<sup>44</sup> Deleuze proposes here two solutions: first, the idea that the term “noble” is taken from physics and implies the quality of a substance to transform itself (Deleuze, 2015, p. 53). Will to power is such a noble force. However, this solution does not lift the contradiction between this view and the view that birds of prey cannot act in a way other than the way they do: if they are noble they should be able to act differently; second, that it is the thought of eternal return that, for Nietzsche, facilitates the ‘mechanics of change’. We will discuss these challenging ideas in Chapter 4.

<sup>45</sup> See also Nietzsche, 2006, pp. 125-126 for the same idea.

<sup>46</sup> Similarly, Hamilton, 2000, p. 190.

<sup>47</sup> As Losurdo notes, Marx and Nietzsche “...knew nothing of each other. However, Nietzsche criticised Marx’s theses, although he encountered them only in partial, schematic and often distorted form, in Dühring” (Losurdo, 2021, p. 410).

<sup>48</sup> Kaufmann notes that “[t]he conception of the will to power as essentially self-overcoming suggests further that Nietzsche’s thought still moves along dialectical lines” (Kaufmann, 1974, p. 202). We noted too that for Nietzsche will to power is the core of existence and self-overcoming is the core of will to power. This, as it



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will be argued in the chapters to come, makes will to power an inherently dialectical concept. However, it is the nonidentity element in self-overcoming that for us makes it dialectical and not the reconciliation of opposites or constant movement as in Kaufmann.

<sup>49</sup> This formulation of the problem signals towards critique of identity thinking as critique of the subject by way of Nietzsche's theory of forces.

<sup>50</sup> This syllogism is the solution to the riddle of how it can be and what it means what Deleuze and Guattari name as their "magic formula...PLURALISM=MONISM" (Schrift, 1995, pp. 66-67). Objects are different, they exist in the plural, but they are all united by their difference, they all differ to one another, and this difference in itself is the univocity of being, its monism.

<sup>51</sup> This phenomenon is precisely what Adorno meant by saying that "the objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder" (Adorno, 2007, p. 5).

<sup>52</sup> These weaknesses will be discussed in Chapter 4 where we will attempt a direct confrontation between Deleuze and Adorno.

<sup>53</sup> We have not studied Deleuze's work on Bergson so we will rely entirely on Hardt's presentation of it.

<sup>54</sup> An observation, the decisive significance of which, for the relation between Deleuze, on the one hand, and Hegel and Adorno on the other, Hardt fails to realise. Ansell-Pearson express the idea that being is not embedded in pre-constituted structures somewhat differently, from the opposite end of the issue, as it were, when he says that Deleuze's "new" and "real transcendental field" in which differences are located is "populated by pre-individual singularities" (Ansell-Pearson, 1999, p. 85): differences, i.e. pre-individual singularities, pre-exist of any individuality, i.e. of any identification/classification of beings in genera and species. That Deleuze holds this view in *Difference and Repetition* is evident from the following passage: "[When we claim univocity of being, NK] [w]e must show not only how individuating difference differs in kind from specific difference, but primarily and above all how individuation properly *precedes* matter and form, species and parts, and every other element of the constituted individual." (Deleuze, 2015, p. 49, emphasis in the original). For holding this view already at the time of his early Bergson studies we rely on Hardt.

<sup>55</sup> We say "surprisingly" because Nietzsche, as we will see, gives plenty of other "pretexts" to be viewed as a dialectical thinker.

<sup>56</sup> See the section "The challenge of Deleuze's critique of dialectics that can be afforded by Adorno's negative dialectics" in Chapter 4.

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<sup>57</sup> Nathan Widder notes that there are at least two book-length studies which make this argument: Stephen Houlgate's *Hegel, Nietzsche and the criticism of metaphysics* (Cambridge University Press, 1986); and Elliot L. Jurist's, *Beyond Hegel and Nietzsche: philosophy, culture and agency*, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000). See Widder, 2003, p. 471, note 5.

<sup>58</sup> That Deleuze is primarily interested in the differences between objects is reinforced by the following earlier passage: "Here again, the concept is the Same – indefinitely the same – for objects which are distinct. We must therefore recognise the existence of non-conceptual differences between these objects" (Deleuze, 2015, p. 16).

<sup>59</sup> At this point we could mention that Adorno levels a similar charge against Hegel's contradiction: "contradiction is non-identity under the aspect of identity" he writes (Adorno, 2007, p. 5). However, Adorno refers here to the difference between one object and its concept not to the difference between two objects as in Deleuze.

<sup>60</sup> This phenomenon Adorno describes as "the remainder" of the object that does not go into the concept, which is one of his definitions of non-identity thinking.

<sup>61</sup> The objection to mediation on Bergsonian grounds in Deleuze's earlier work had to do, as we mentioned, with its externality and, hence, its inability to "sustain the necessity of substantiality" as Hardt writes (Hardt, 1993, p. 7). Here it is also charged with abstractness.

<sup>62</sup> "That is why the Overman is defined as the superior form of everything that "is". We must discover what Nietzsche means by noble: he borrows the language of energy physics and calls noble that energy which is capable of transforming itself". (Deleuze, 2015, p. 53)

<sup>63</sup> We will ponder on this difference a little longer on the next section of this chapter.

<sup>64</sup> Later on in the book Deleuze denies that there is such thing as negation and the negative at all: "There is a non-being, yet there is neither negative nor negation." (Deleuze, 2015, p. 264)

<sup>65</sup> We will discuss the nature of these "ideas" in the next section.

<sup>66</sup> However, we should remind Deleuze's previously mentioned view that the negative appears in the wake of affirmation as its shadow (Deleuze, 2015, p. 70)

<sup>67</sup> We would like to note again at this point that this is exactly the meaning of Adorno's turn of phrase "the objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder". We will discuss Deleuze and Adorno together in Chapter 4.

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<sup>68</sup> It is difficult to make it more straightforward that the emphasis is on production, and it is astonishing to hear Lyotard saying that the book subverts Marxism because it is putting the emphasis on “the predominance of the point of view of circulation over that of production” (see Lyotard, 2001b, pp. 234-235).

<sup>69</sup> In a very rudimentary way, we would say that a “code” is the dependence of the primitive and despotic machines in a particular system of beliefs, meanings and customs for their function, through which the flows of desire are captured and checked. In contrast, characteristic of the capitalist machine, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is that it is not attached to any particular such system of beliefs, but it can accommodate any number of “axioms” in order to ensure functionality. The overriding principle of axiomatic is that it consists of “abstract quantities in the form of money” (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p.153). As they pointedly observe “money and the market [are] capitalism’s true police”, the means by which capitalism ensures compliance and checks (represses) the flows of desire (Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, p.259). For the complicated definition of axiomatic in *Anti-Oedipus* see pp. 268-272. Also, Choat’s and Read’s discussions are helpful. See Choat, 2012, pp. 140-141 and Read, 2008, pp. 146-147.

<sup>70</sup> For this argument in a more concise form see Deleuze-Guattari, 2004, pp. 130-132.

<sup>71</sup> The same view is expressed by Alison Stone (Stone, 2014, p. 52). Our difference with Stone is that we think this project is inspired by Marx rather than Hegel.

<sup>72</sup> As it must be clear by our exposition of the argument of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* Adorno (and Critical Theory) are extremely critical of domination and self-preservation. This critique is all but lost if we align Critical Theory with the post-Kantian idealism, that is, with Fichte’s unproblematic endorsement of “total control of nature”, and talk about an “ineradicable desire for freedom, *self-preservation* and eradication of suffering” in Adorno (Clarke & Hulatt, 2014, pp. 1049, 1060; emphasis added).

<sup>73</sup> Adorno defines ideology in one place as the “identity of concept and thing” (Adorno, 2007, p. 40).

<sup>74</sup> The “traditional norm of adequacy” mentioned in a previous quotation (above Adorno, 2007, p. 5) refers to the three basic principles of classical logic one of which is the law of the “excluded middle” of this quotation. This principle states that a proposition is either true or its negation is true. The other two principles are the principle of identity (A is A) and the principle of non-contradiction (nothing can both, be and not be). They are all axioms of identity thinking.

<sup>75</sup> The claim of an acceptable level of relativity will be itself relativised later, when we will talk about the “intelligible forms” of the object and more so when we talk about the objectivity of truth in Adorno.

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<sup>76</sup> Here we encounter another instance in which placing Critical Theory in the tradition of post-Kantian idealism leads us astray: Critical Theory is not looking for an “epistemic and normative surplus...over and above those heteronomous interests external to reason” as such placing leads Clarke and Hulatt to claim (Clarke & Hulatt, 2014, p. 1056). Its epistemic claim is the disparity between what things are and what they are claimed to be, and its “normative surplus” is derived from this disparity itself, as it will become clearer later.

<sup>77</sup> We must also note here that the above passage offers an important clue for the explanation of perspectivism, as we will have the opportunity to discuss later and in the next chapter. The contradictoriness of reality, Adorno stresses, is not due to faulty subjective thinking but is objective, “the embittering part of dialectics” (Adorno, 2007, p. 151), and if there is anything like a foundation in Adorno’s theory of knowledge it is this objectivity of contradictoriness.

<sup>78</sup> This turn of phrase can be seen as an anticipation of the criticism levelled by Habermas and others that Adorno departs from reason and his thought suffers from a “performative contradiction”: negative dialectics “remains false according to identitarian logic”.

<sup>79</sup> Therefore, it is not the contradiction in the object alone that points to the next step of historical development, as we implied earlier, but the contradiction in the object in conjunction with the longing of the concept to become identical with the thing.

<sup>80</sup> This is the case with How and Finlayson who discern a transposition in Adorno from the immanent critique of the 1930s to negative dialectics after the 1940s (1950s for Finlayson) (How, 2003, p. 41; Finlayson, 2014, p. 1157).

<sup>81</sup> To avoid confusion we should stress once more that determinate negation, i.e. negative dialectics, and immanent critique are one and the same process seen from two different angles: determinate negation puts emphasis on the fact that by the act of the negation of identity between concept and object, the object is determined, while immanent critique puts the emphasis on the fact that through the critique of the concept itself and of its own claims to exhaust the object, to be identical to its object, the nonconceptual element that is left out by it comes to light. By the act of immanent critique the object is again determined, while by determinate negation the nonconceptual element left out is what determines the object.

<sup>82</sup> The analogy and difference with Deleuze’s project of investigating the possibility of “difference having its own concept” is striking.

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<sup>83</sup> We will say more about Adorno's realism and dualistic dichotomies in the context of the discussion of subject and object in the next section.

<sup>84</sup> The same idea without the use of the terms essence-appearance in Adorno, 2008b, p. 30.

<sup>85</sup> Money, as "the universal equivalent form" and as "a form of value in general" (Marx, 1990, p. 162), presupposes the equalisation of labour times, the emergence of abstract labour time, which in turn presupposes the separation of the worker from the means of production.

<sup>86</sup> These last three sentences verify the view expressed previously that nonidentity thinking does not and cannot simply do away with identity thinking but "feeds on it", as it were, and tries to move beyond it.

<sup>87</sup> Here we can glimpse how "an emphatic concept, carries an implicit prescriptive truth along with its descriptive incorrectness." (Jarvis, 1998, p. 66), i.e. we can glimpse that the "normative surplus" of Critical Theory is not shouted outside, "over and above...heteronomous interests" (Clarke & Hulatt, 2014, p. 1056) but is derived out of those interests themselves.

<sup>88</sup> In this respect it is strange to hear that Adorno, and Western Marxists in general, have "increasingly rejected realism and materialism, adopting the view that the social world was constructed in the entirety of its relation by human practice" (Foster cited in Cook, 2011, p. 25). Such a critique is possible only if one has a reified and undialectical point of view which sees social objectivity as thing-like reality and human agency as the "other" of objectivity and not as its constituent part. This is how we understand the meaning of what in the literature is called "objective illusion" (another name for the fetishism of commodities), an illusion which the above critique is unable to penetrate. As Bonefeld notes: "Neither are social structures external to human practice, nor is human practice external to social structures. Man is a social being and therewith a being *qua* objectification. Man is always objectified Man. ...Therefore, the immediacy of the objective world is not really an immediacy of things. It is the immediacy of things in the mode of an objective illusion: the subject's objectification exists in inverted form where the thing subjectifies itself in the person, and the person objectifies himself in the thing." (Bonefeld, 2009, p. 136).

<sup>89</sup> Here we have yet another instance of how the inclusion of Critical Theory in the tradition of post-Kantian idealism obscures what is distinctive in Critical Theory: taking apart the materialism of Critical Theory in contradistinction to this tradition's idealism, we see that while "Fichte's talk of activity is intended to capture the thought that we are radically free and self-determining" (Clarke & Hulatt, 2014, p. 1049), Adorno, instead, captures the thought that we are radically unfree and heteronomous.

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<sup>90</sup> In fact, the preponderance of the social object, which, as argued, makes dialectic materialistic, is meant to be overcome and to disappear, along with materialism itself (Adorno, 2007, p. 244; Adorno, 2008b, pp. 117, 118; Cook, 2011, p. 16; Bobka & Braunstein, 2018, p. 188). This is meant to be the purpose of the emancipation of society! However, this is a discussion we do not have the space to develop here.

<sup>91</sup> The problem of the lack of necessity (albeit in the case of determination of objects or being) has preoccupied Deleuze too, as we saw in the previous chapter.

<sup>92</sup> Basically what we developed in the section on Adorno's critique of identity.

<sup>93</sup> "Every relationship of forces constitutes a body – whether it is chemical, biological, social or political." (Deleuze, 2005, p. 40)

<sup>94</sup> In another instance Deleuze says that "Forces are said to be dominant or dominated depending to their difference in quantity. Forces are said to be active or reactive depending on their quality." (Deleuze, 2005, p. 53). We have to note in this instance that Deleuze's exposition of Nietzsche's theory of forces and of will to power is quite obscure and we had to make some bold interpretive inferences in order to present them the way we do, although one might say that the level of lucidity attained by Deleuze is already an achievement.

<sup>95</sup> See Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, 2015, pp.236-247. However, Freud notes that while every neurosis is related to a fixation, not all fixations lead to neurotic symptoms.

<sup>96</sup> One could argue that Adorno refers here to the non-identical element of the concepts, the "remainder" of the objects that is not captured by the concepts. However, self-preservation is such a remainder for the concept of reason, in its Enlightenment, 'pure' form.

<sup>97</sup> Epigrammatically:

From *Human all too Human* (Nietzsche, 2004):

"In almost all respects, philosophical problems today are again formulated as they were two thousand years ago: how can something arise from its opposite – for example, reason from unreason, sensation from the lifeless, logic from the illogical, disinterested observation from covetous desire, altruism from egoism, truth from error? Until now, metaphysical philosophy has overcome this difficulty by denying the origin of the one from the other..." (p. 13).

From *The Gay Science* (Nietzsche, 1974): "The "neighbor" praises selflessness *because* it brings him *advantages*...the motives of morality stand opposed to its principle" (p. 94); "Voltaire who may already have mastered the art...to dress up his hatred against certain things and people as mercy for animals" (p. 166);

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“Misanthropy comes of an all too greedy love of man and “cannibalism”” (p. 200); “the sadness of the most profound happiness” (pp. 203-204); “With this Homeric happiness in one’s soul one is also more capable of suffering than any other creature under the sun” (p. 242); “How little you know *happiness*, you comfortable and benevolent people, for happiness and unhappiness are sisters and even twins that either grow up together or, as in your case, *remain small together*” (p. 270).

From *Zarathustra* (Nietzsche, 2006): “To your own self you will be heretic” (p. 47); “you love yourself and that is why you despise yourself as only lovers despise” (p. 48); “What I am *not*, that, that is God and virtue to me!” (p. 73); “At bottom I love only life – and verily, most when I hate it!” (p. 84); ““Oh my soul, I taught you contempt that does not come like gnawing worm, the great, loving contempt that loves most where it has the most contempt” (p. 179).

<sup>98</sup> And not in the Hegelian sense of dialectics as Pütz misleadingly argues (Pütz, 1981, pp. 112-113).

<sup>99</sup> “...*what is necessary has come to disgust us* (even though we realize the impossibility of any *liberum arbitrium* or “intelligible freedom”)”. (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 11).

<sup>100</sup> Kaufmann makes the same observation in the context of his analysis of Nietzsche’s will to power: Nietzsche “wants not freedom *from* something but freedom to act and realise himself...” (Kaufmann, 1974, p. 186)

<sup>101</sup> This residue of freedom is what Adorno calls “the additional factor”. There was no space in our thesis for the exposition of this aspect of Adorno’s thought.

<sup>102</sup> There is a third instance of inconsistency which relates to the affirmation of life and will be discussed later in this chapter (see below section “Nonidentity concept of life:...”).

<sup>103</sup> This phenomenon is not new in the history of philosophy. Jean-Jacques Rousseau is another thinker whose thought stands in the crossroad where liberalism and socialism part company and become opposed and irreconcilable.

<sup>104</sup> The difference between Adorno and Nietzsche on this point is that for Nietzsche the subject is in this way constitutive of the world while for Adorno is merely capturing it’s intelligible forms. Nietzsche in this respect is victim of the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity for Adorno. There was no room for a more detailed discussion of this very important difference between Adorno and Deleuze in our thesis.

<sup>105</sup> In our discussion of this point in Chapter 3 we did not put the emphasis on the Hegelian aspect of Adorno’s critique of contradiction, which is nevertheless evident in Adorno’s *Negative Dialectics*, p. 5.

<sup>106</sup> With the exception of Bonnet, mentioned in the introduction of the thesis (see Bonnet, 2009, p. 46).

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<sup>107</sup> The term “immediately” here should be understood as meaning without the mediation of a second object like nothingness in relation to being in Hegel. This clarification is needed because the difference of the concept from its object in Adorno is not immediate but always mediated through concepts: “...entity is not immediate ... it is only through the concept”, Adorno notes (Adorno, 2007, p. 153).

<sup>108</sup> Owen Hulatt also makes the argument that Adorno is inconsistent on this point, albeit in a rather structuralistic fashion, instead of as an instance of failure on the part of Adorno to stay within his own nonidentity perspective (Hulatt, 2016, pp. 482-483).

<sup>109</sup> On the significance and function of self-esteem see Tony Humphreys’ excellent *Self-esteem: the key to your child’s education*, Newleaf, 1996. He points out there that one of the indicators or consequences of low self-esteem is that the person feels that life is not worth living (Humphrey, 1996, p. 78-79).

<sup>110</sup> Some examples from *The Gay Science* alone are the aphorism 13, *On the doctrine of the feeling of power*; aphorism 14, *The things people call love*; aphorism 117, *Herd remorse*.

<sup>111</sup> The appropriate development of this point would require an extensive discussion for which there is no space in this thesis. We intend to do so as a postdoctoral research in the thought of Marx and Nietzsche. The reference to Michael Robert’s essay indicates that such a line of argument is possible and defensible.

<sup>112</sup> The adjectives evil, cruel, lustful and godless do not count because they are what the powerful and noble are perceived to be by the men of resentment.

<sup>113</sup> Although the term “self-esteem” had been in use “in the English language, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, for at least four centuries”, it seems, as Emler notes, that the scientific attention to this psychological quality is far more recent, commonly introduced, in the English-speaking world at least, with the publication of William James’ *Principles of Psychology* in 1890 (see Emler, 2001, pp. 2 & 4). That was a year after Nietzsche’s irreversible psychological collapse in Turin, Italy.

<sup>114</sup> However, we should not forget Adorno’s Nietzsche-inspired critique of Enlightenment rationality concerning domination of nature, and the connection of domination of nature with the domination over men.

<sup>115</sup> See the informative, as much as disturbing, article of Ernesto Cordoba Castro *The philosophical sources of Marine Le Pen* in eurozine.com, <https://www.eurozine.com/the-philosophical-sources-of-marine-le-pen/>, 2017, accessed 15/09/2021. A similar tendency concerning the father of Marine, Jean-Marie Le Pen, was observed as already in action since the 1980s by Richard Wolin in his engaging *The seduction of unreason*, (see Wolin, 2019, pp. 6, 14).



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