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**Authenticity of Experience**

A Thesis Presented

by

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to

The Graduate School

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Abstract of the Thesis  
**Authenticity of Experience**  
by  
**Umi Hashitsume**  
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in  
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Recognizing that the many tensions that exist in Friedrich Nietzsche's various works correspond to Theodor Adorno's dialectical relationships, this paper aims to discuss the role of ethics within Adorno's work using Nietzsche. The aim of this paper is to discuss their evaluation of the subject in order to evaluate the idea of critical systems for ethics.

Nietzsche's works embody a reaction against German idealism as well as a reformulation of the reconciliation of opposing forces found in the early German Romantics. Nietzsche recognized the tensions involved within and between the historical subject and the idea of truth and reason. Nietzsche writes at length about the limitations of our systems and our adherence to such totalities of ideology and religion. Adorno recognizes Nietzsche's works as that which preserves the complexity of subjects, as animals and those that are historically formed, as seen in *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Reading Adorno through Nietzsche further allows us to understand the human condition of relying on ideologies that hinder human autonomy.

Adorno is well known for being influenced by dialectical relationships, being concerned with that "which relates to what is by relating to what is not, and relates to what is not by relating to what is" (Theodor Adorno, *Hegel: Three Studies*, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen. Massachusetts: MIT, 1993. p. xvi). Unlike Hegel, Adorno claims that the notion of a synthesis is presumptuous. Rather, he is concerned with how human subjectivity is related to historical context dialectically, claiming this is how the individual is formed. Failure to consider this ends in objectivism or idealism, or in other words, "the loss of critical (dialectical) reason" (Theodor Adorno, *Jargon of Authenticity*, trans. Knut Tarnowsky and Frederic Will. (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1973). Pg. xii). Adorno's critique of objectivism and much more modern existentialism is that it fails to recognize and consider itself idealistic or as symbols. They privilege the "what is not" over "what is" and does not give equal due to the relationship between the two, thus, Adorno claims that it fails to recognize its own lack of content.

I wish to examine ethical actions within this framework by using Nietzsche and Adorno to show that the insufficiency of ethics lies in ethics' claim to absolute Truth and Totality. This thesis will also argue that Nietzsche did not completely reject the Enlightenment project, but he rejects Enlightenment's claim to reason. This distinction will be used to accentuate Adorno's claims. As Bernstein states, Adorno "believed that modernity suffered from a deficit rather than a surplus of reason and rationality" (Bernstein, Adorno: Disenchantment and Ethics, p.4). Here, I will examine Adorno's thought as an extension of Nietzsche's project of examining Truth and Enlightenment. Discussion of Adorno's metaphysical experience offers the possibility of considering the subject and their experience critically as a series of relationships, as well as recognizing that ethical solutions go beyond any rational totality.

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## **Introduction**

Positivistic criteria for truth fail to account for all the possible relationships between subjects and objects, as well as, subjects and subjects. In fact, one fails to recognize that which is always an other in a totalizing system. All attempts to subsume the other, through Idealism, such as Hegelian dialectics, or capitalism provide problems for the functioning subject. Theodor Adorno and Friedrich Nietzsche recognize the failings of systems to nurture subjects in their agency. They both discuss the different relationships working between the subject, object, and system. Recognizing that many tensions that exist in Friedrich Nietzsche's various works correspond to Theodor Adorno's dialectical relationships, this paper aims to discuss approaching an anti-metaphysical artistic ethics based on Nietzsche supported by Adorno and Bernstein. I will examine and discuss their evaluation of the subject, world, and artwork to evaluate the idea of critical systems for ethics.

Nietzsche examines the relationships that involve both knowledge and man, and the relationship that exists between them. His works embody a reaction against German idealism as well as a reformulation of the reconciliation of opposing forces found in the early German Romantics. He recognized the tensions involved within and between the historical subject and the idea of truth and reason. To elucidate this we will discuss Nietzsche's method of execution in his



body of works as well as two primary works, *On the Genealogy of Morals* and *The Birth of Tragedy*. Nietzsche argues against what he calls Socratic enlightenment, in *The Birth of Tragedy*, which is the will to make everything intelligible and our belief that we can grasp the world. We will also discuss his ambivalence with science in regard to his phenomenology. Despite the traditional reading of him being a relativistic and perspectivist, we cannot ignore that he was very much concerned with truth, truth as value, and why we hold the values we do. It is by considering truth and the relationships surrounding it that we can see his move towards the aesthetic and to the social and moral in relation to knowledge. I hope to discuss Nietzsche, not just as a relativist, but someone who did not dismiss the idea of truth and someone who was very much concerned with developing a criterion for values.

Adorno is concerned with the same idea, the dialectical mediation of subject and object. As Trent Schroyer writes in his foreword to *The Jargon of Authenticity*, “The constitutive presuppositions of human subjectivity must themselves be dialectically related to the historical context in which determinate subjects are formed”<sup>1</sup>. Adorno recognizes that human beings are historical creatures, and to understand them, one must recognize this and think of them in that context. This is one relationship, which is necessary, among many. In this

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<sup>1</sup> Theodor Adorno, *Jargon of Authenticity*, trans. Knut Tarnowsky and Frederic Will. (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1973). Pg. xii.

way, within the individual, and within systems residing over them, various relationships exist. The system works in such a way, as we will clarify, that it ignores certain relationships that fall outside of its domain. The individual has many relationships, some being within the system and some outside the system. Adorno's dialectic allows one to understand what comprises a subject and its relation to the world.

### **Authenticity as Relationships**

For Adorno, dialectics is not just a set of axioms or formulas, such as thesis and antithesis give way to a synthesis, but experiential. In the introduction to Hegel: Three Studies, NicholSEN and Shapiro write, “[Dialectical thinking] must shape itself to the contours of the object – not as an irreducible given but as something with its own tensions and contradictions, which include those of the thought that tries to comprehend it”<sup>2</sup>. For example, an apple consists of various relationships, such as the fruit of a plant and that, which contains the seed, and other biological relationships as well as the history of its naming, animals that gather and consume it, and its identity to various animals. The discourse is not

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<sup>2</sup> Theodor Adorno, Hegel: Three Studies. trans. Shierry Weber NicholSEN. (Massachusetts: MIT, 1993). Pg. xv.

limited to just the apple in its solipsistic world, but includes subjects that encounter, use, or think about the apple. In addition to those relationships, there is potential for other new relationships and relevant discourse regarding the apple. Adorno's conception of the dialectic relies on an unfolding that is only available in experience. This dialectic is not in a closed system or predisposed. Adorno's dialectical thinking refers not only to current discourse, but the unfolding of new discourse. In the end, Adorno's dialectics is not that of the subject, like Hegel's. In Hegel's case, the dialectical relationship exists for the subject alone, just as the artwork for Hegel exists because of a subject's act of creation and for the sensuous apprehension by Spirit, or in other words, the subject<sup>3</sup>. This is how spirit comes to know itself, or the subject comes to know spirit. Adorno's use of dialectics preserves the complexity of the object and subject, each with its own tensions. In the introduction of Negative Dialectics, Adorno claims that this is his attempt to break out of the idea that something positive, a synthesis, occurs within opposition. The subsumption of the synthesis occurs as a projection of our consciousness, but as nothing more. He writes,

The appearance of identity is inherent in thought itself, in its pure form. To think is to identify [...] Since that totality is structure to accord with logic, however, whose core is the principle of the excluded middle, whatever will not fit this principle, whatever

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<sup>3</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art, Volume I, "Introduction". Trans. T.M. Knox. (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1988). Pg. 9. Note: Hegel claims art is a mode to bring to our minds the truth interests of the spirit.

differs in quality, comes to be designated as a contradiction. Contradiction is nonidentity under the aspect of identity; the dialectical primary of the principle of contradiction makes the thought of unity the measure of heterogeneity<sup>4</sup>.

Adorno scrutinizes the idea that nonidentity is contradiction; it is identification of the other. Thinking of the other is appearance of identity, and therefore the synthesis is only possible in appearance or as a mental experiment. Furthermore, Negative Dialectics is, he will go on to explain, the recognizing of the nonidentical under the rule of the law<sup>5</sup>. Identical is used to refer to what is, in this paper this will primarily correspond to the object or subject's relationships within the system. On the other hand, the nonidentical is referred to that which is not, or the relationships that exist outside the system and outside of our knowledge in respect to the subject or object. Adorno's dialectics show that what makes up the object or subject, is not only the subjective consciousness of the viewer or the subject himself, but the relationship they have with others, with what is not (it's negative), and its historicity or what is no longer, to name a few. For example, the object is not for the subject, but has a relationship with the subject that only makes up one facet of its identity. This use of a negative dialectic, recognizes the otherness of subjects, described as the nonidentity, and preserves objects and other subjects as a multi-faceted self that exists for more than just a subject or a

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<sup>4</sup> Theodor Adorno, Negative Dialectics. Trans. E. B. Ashton. (New York: Continuum, 2005). Pg. 5. Abbr. ND.

<sup>5</sup> ND. Pg. 6.

particular relationship. In this scheme, authenticity or truth, cannot be expressed in anything but series of relationships. There is no unchanging corresponding Truth. This preserves the individual identity of each subject and object.

The examination of various relationships around and between the idea of truth and ethics is valuable; because this gives a more coherent definition of these ideas. When considered without these relationships, these ideas fall flat and we run the risk of subscribing shallow definitions to them. Needless to say, this is not a very simple task. Nietzsche is famous for his work of deconstructing systems and ideologies in order to examine the idea of truth. Nietzsche writes at length about the limitations of our systems and our adherence to such totalities of religion and other ideologies. Adorno recognizes Nietzsche's works as that which preserves the complexity of subjects, as animals and those that are historically formed, as seen in *On the Genealogy of Morals*. This is important in Adorno's critique of the culture industry; he describes how this single-minded view perverts the relation between use and exchange value.

As enlightened rationality occludes ends-oriented rationality, so capitalist production occludes product for use; and as enlightened rationality subsumes particulars under universals indifferent and insensitive to sensuous particularity, so capitalist product subsumes the use value of things under exchange value.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *The Culture Industry*. Ed. J.M. Bernstein. (New York: Routledge Classics, 2004). Pg. 5. Abbr. CI.

The use and exchange value are two relationships the object has to the system and provides ways of interaction between the objects and subjects within the system. The systematic qualities Adorno refers to are the very thing that subsumes the subject into the culture industry, allowing the culture industry to propagate its own agenda by ignoring and cutting off authentic relationships to objects and denying the development of discursive subjects, creating an ideology. Totalities, such as the culture industry, ignore dialectical relationships. Adorno writes, “the more inexorably the principle of exchange value destroys use values for human beings, the more deeply does exchange value disguise itself as the object of enjoyment”<sup>7</sup>. The exchange value of the things the culture industry produces does not have a corresponding use value – It fetishizes<sup>8</sup> things. People buy products for its exchange value convinced of its false use value. For example, in the case of music, people will buy music by its supposed exchange value, thinking that this

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Pg. 39.

<sup>8</sup> Note: Adorno writes, “the fetish character of the commodity is not a facet of consciousness; rather, it is dialectical, in the eminent sense that it produces consciousness”. This is in response to the sentence, “Every epoch dreams its successor”. This sentence is a key to a phenomenon of created consciousness by a perverse dialectical relationship assumed by the enlightenment. “This means, however, that consciousness or unconsciousness cannot simply depict it as a dream, but responds to it in equal measure with desire and fear. But it is precisely this dialectical power of the fetish character that is lost in the replica realism (sil venta verbo) of your present immanent version of the dialectical image”. The dialectical relationship is hidden in the modern representation of the fetish character.

Theodor Adorno, Adorno et al. Aesthetics and Politics, “Letters to Walter Benjamin”. (New York: Verso, 2007). Pg. 111.

suggests use value, and accepting this valuation of music, making music into a commodity. This mechanism illustrates the first steps of the culture industry in creating an ideology. Of this fetishism, Adorno claims, “[it] is the flawlessly functioning, metallically brilliant apparatus as such, in which all the cogwheels mesh so perfectly that not the slightest hole remains open for the meaning of the whole”<sup>9</sup>. Later, Bernstein will use Adorno’s critique to criticize our standards for evaluating ethical problems. This totality that accounts for all, in the artwork, kills the art into ideology. In the culture industry, every component within an artwork is accounted for and an artwork is essentially a totality of its own to a minor degree. Without any tensions or conflict the object is without meaning. Thus, Adorno writes, “this transfer of use value of consumption goods to their exchange value contributes to a general order in which eventually every pleasure which emancipates itself from exchange values takes on subversive features”<sup>10</sup>. In the culture industry, the highest exchange value assumes the role of authenticity and to a degree, truth. One can begin to see how this would prove to be dangerous in ethical problems. In order to break free from this perversion of values, the object must do this by subversive and conflictual means.

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<sup>9</sup> CI. Pg. 44.

<sup>10</sup> CI. Pg. 39.

## **Genealogy as a Dialectical Project**

Prior to Adorno, Nietzsche is credited with recognizing the subversive effects of modernity. Often Nietzsche is credited with challenging the status quo with his controversial writings. As with Adorno's negative dialectics, Nietzsche also avoids providing axioms and formulas, and instead he critiques the ideological movement by using his pluralistic writings. These writings are actually an exercise of elucidating different relationships active in society and the current paradigm for truth and knowledge. However, this lack of a system garners much criticism and skepticism around the critical nature of Nietzsche's works. Nietzsche uses various tools, such as an account on the development of Socratic comedy from Dionysian Tragedy in *The Birth of Tragedy*, and the development of the dichotomy of good and evil in *On the Genealogy of Morals*. These accounts are not meant to be stories of foundation. However, Nietzsche recognizes that as historical and rational beings, we understand things as a sequence and stories that describe a foundational nature. He uses these two accounts to tell different permutations of the same story.

Nietzsche's style is surmised by Foucault's account of a history of truth, in *Truth and Juridical Forms*. When one looks to the origin of something, one assumes, Foucault thinks, that one is looking for the bedrock of where it has always existed. Instead, knowledge, religion, and everything that we value have



been invented. This distinction is important. In fact, Foucault comments on Nietzsche's very use of the word invention.

The word he employs, "invention" – the German term is *Erfindung* – recurs often in these texts, and always with a polemical meaning and intention. When he speaks of invention, Nietzsche always has an opposite word in mind, the word "origin"; when he says *Erfindung*, it's in order not to say *Ursprung*.<sup>11</sup>

This means one paradigm does not supercede the other, and instead of a pyramid or building scheme, a quilt would be more fitting. If one paradigm is favored over others, as they usually are for one reason or another, Nietzsche's main objective then must be to humble us and remind us to be malleable, adaptive, and open to change. We must also have a better way of judging paradigms other than supposed origins, hence his mission for a criterion for values. How were these ideas and paradigms developed and invented? To answer this question, Nietzsche gave us descriptions of knowledge as the birth of Socratic worldview and the death of Greek Tragedies in *The Birth of Tragedy* and as the birth of social morality resulting in *On the Genealogy of Morals*. If one views these ideas such as knowledge and morality as things that do not actually correspond to factual truths in the world or even "the things that need to be known,"<sup>12</sup> then we can only depict them in examples. This is why Nietzsche gives us the same developmental

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<sup>11</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power*, "Truth and Juridical Forms". (New York: The New Press, 2000). Pg. 6.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. Pg. 8.

story in different variations. The main idea is not in the individual account, but in a relational content. Thus, Foucault writes

Between the instincts and knowledge, one finds not a continuity but, rather, a relation of struggle, domination, servitude, [and] settlement [...] There can only be a relation of violence, domination, power, and force, a relation of violation. Knowledge can only be a violation of the things to be known, and not a perception, a recognition, an identification of or with those things.<sup>13</sup>

As such, each permutation of Nietzsche's story expresses this dialectical struggle, such as in the development of slave morality in *On the Genealogy of Morals* or the development of Socratic comedy in *The Birth of Tragedy*. It should be taken into consideration that Nietzsche calls our attention to the fact that there are multiple ways in understanding our relationship to the environment, as well as there are other factors to consider, not only historicity but as beings with future possibility. In this way, knowledge is never static, and to understand truth in relation to knowledge, one must understand the development of dialectical relationships surrounding each idea. This would be the only way to preserve its authenticity. Even then, just like Nietzsche's stories, the authenticity is in the space between, the relationships itself. Thus, to understand Nietzsche one must not only pay attention to his criticisms of ideological systems, but one must look at his ever changing techniques and his action of experimentation in writing. Often dramatic, Nietzsche's writings are an experimental example of the very idea

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid. Pg. 9.

he examines. He often represents these ideas in various contexts. The pluralism in Nietzsche's works expresses relational elements, which we also see within Adorno. The writing styles of both Nietzsche and Adorno encourage thinking and reading dialectically. It is important to consider these techniques as putting their theory into practice. It is also important to note that since ideologies often defend their stance using foundational arguments, critiquing ideologies by using dialectical systems in a dialectical way is essentially intuitive.

This pluralism in Nietzsche is the result of his phenomenological project. In Nietzsche: Life as Literature, Nehamas claims Nietzsche's perspectivism is the idea that each view is one among many views<sup>14</sup>. In the beginning of Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche compares us to bees in regards to being "honey gatherers of the spirit" that are constantly making for the "beehives of our knowledge"<sup>15</sup>. According to Nietzsche, we are necessarily lost in our phenomenological experiences and we cannot access noumenal or true knowledge about the thing in itself, or for that matter, ourselves as ourselves. This is due to our own deafness and blindness, as he describes in the beginning of *Genealogy* and our incapability of knowing the thing in of itself apart from our own sensuous experience. "What really was that which we have

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<sup>14</sup> Alexander Nehamas, Nietzsche: Life as Literature. (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985). Pg. 1. Abbr. NLL.

<sup>15</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, Basic Writings of Nietzsche, "On the Genealogy of Morals". (New York: Random House, Inc., 2000). Sec. Preface, 1. Abbr. GM.

just experienced?’ and moreover: ‘who are we really?’ and, afterward as aforesaid, count the twelve trembling bell-strokes of our experience, our life, our being – and alas! Miscount them. – So we are necessarily strangers to ourselves”<sup>16</sup>. In this case, we are necessarily entrenched in interpretation. Similarly, Nietzsche says, we would “rather will nothingness than not will”<sup>17</sup>. We will always create truths and ideology. Nietzsche says, “How else could this people, so sensitive, so vehement in its desires, so singularly capable of suffering, have endured existence, if it had not been revealed to them in their gods, surrounded with a higher glory?”<sup>18</sup> It is our sensitive natures that necessitate that we create these interpretations, in order to endure. Here, we see what Nietzsche offers us is not a look into the noumenal, the ideal, or thing in itself. Here, we see that what is richly human about us is our ability to create meaning. In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche describes this as our method for self-preservation<sup>19</sup>. It is necessary for us to create value, and this is what constitutes as our truths.

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<sup>16</sup> GM. Sec. Preface, 1.

<sup>17</sup> GM. Sec. III.1

<sup>18</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, “Birth of Tragedy”. Trans. Walter Kaufman. (New York: Random House, Inc., 2000). Sec. III. Abbr. BT.

<sup>19</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche. *The Gay Science*. Trans. Walter Kaufman. (New York: Random House, Inc., 1974). Sec 1. Abbr. GS.

## The Interpretive World

In Nietzsche's Philosophy of Science: Reflecting Science on the Ground of Art and Life, Babich further develops Nietzsche's idea on creating value. She writes, "[Nietzsche's] focus upon the interactional character of the world in contrast to our interpretation of it does not represent to the world as it is in-itself but interprets the world-process as being itself interpretive"<sup>20</sup>. Our experiences are themselves interpretational, where we follow to build a relational framework with other experiences and ideas. This interpretive quality is not created in the act of genealogy Nietzsche takes part in, but is made apparent in it. In this case, Babich states that what Nietzsche's works make apparent is interpretive movement of the world, made possible by all the relational qualities surrounding it. She radically suggests that Nietzsche in his writing is not only making an observation about human beings, but this description is also metaphysical. She claims that the world itself is interpretive, although something such as this cannot refer to anything outside of itself to validate itself. Regardless of whether this is a metaphysical quality of the world or whether this is a result of subjects' interpretive work, the result for the subject is still that the subject interacts with the world in an interpretive fashion.

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<sup>20</sup>Babette E. Babich, Nietzsche's Philosophy of Science: Reflecting Science on the Ground of Art and Life. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994). Pg. 43. Abbr. NSCI.

Without the ability for clarity, all of our systems of knowledge and beliefs become interpretations. In a similar vein, In *Twilight of Idols*, Nietzsche takes a Humean<sup>21</sup> route and claims that we build upon false presumptions and false causality. “Memory, which swings into action in such cases without our awareness, brings up earlier states of the same kind, together with the causal interpretations associated with them--not their actual causes.”<sup>22</sup> Nietzsche calls this “reason’s intrinsic form of corruption”<sup>23</sup>. Memory and reason associate similarities and closeness together as causes, instead of consequences. This error is the foundation of worldviews, such as slave morality, thus leading Nietzsche to qualify between worldviews as harmful or healthier. In contrast to slave morality, noble<sup>24</sup> worldviews, although still an interpretation, was healthier and did not hold the conceit of Truth. This assertion to truth will cause science to “bite its own tail”<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Hume claims that it is the human condition to associate events together that happen in close proximity, time, and constant conjunction as cause and effect. We project this as a necessary connection. This connection is not anything objectively outside in the world. (Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Ed. Norton and Norton. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.)

<sup>22</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of Idols and the Anti-Christ*, “Twilight of Idols”. Trans. R.J. Hollingdale. (New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., 1990). Sec. The Four Great Errors, 4. Abbr. TWI

<sup>23</sup> TWI. Sec. The Four Great Errors, 1.

<sup>24</sup> Nietzsche oftentimes uses noble to mean “better in contrast to.” He uses this dichotomy, of noble and slave, in the Genealogy to describe the useful morality, that of correct exchange and promises, and slave morality, that which is filled with *ressentiment*, “the will of man to find himself guilty and reprehensible to a degree that can never be atoned for” GM. II.23.

<sup>25</sup> Here, immediately following, Nietzsche says, “suddenly the new form of insight breaks through, tragic insight which, merely to be endured, needs art as a protection and remedy.” In *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche claimed that a Dionysian

Although our truths are created, Nietzsche distinguishes between noble truths and sickly truths. *The Birth of Tragedy* outlines the switch from Dionysian Tragedy to Socratic comedy in Greek Theater. In the Dionysian Tragedy, we see what Nietzsche considers a noble character of the Greeks in their expression of tragedy. The chorus and music has a dramatic role, where the focus is not on intelligibility. In the Socratic comedy, this character is changed to a cheerful disposition that forgets the tragic character of life. Instead, it was “fully articulate and intelligible”<sup>26</sup>. “The tragic drama, traditionally, had *not* attained to the logical clarity of rational exposition, of sensible motives, and of intelligible design”<sup>27</sup>. The comedy aimed to put emphasis on narrative, instead of the emotive ability to express the inexpressive in music. Both the Dionysian tragedy and the Socratic comedy are derived from an inner drive, the will for self-preservation. The Dionysian tragedy gives solace, in order to promote life. In doing so, this method provides change and the freedom to express unique creativity. In contrast, however, the Socratic is an expression of the will for survival in the form of preservation. The Socratic makes life easy and promotes leveling<sup>28</sup>. Thus, it strives to preserve the status quo, sameness. Again, it should be noted that Nietzsche says this Socratic will is a will towards death.

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spirit was the answer to failed science, the Dionysian abyss coupled by Apollonian beauty. BT. 15.

<sup>26</sup> David Allison, *Reading the New Nietzsche*. (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001). Pg. 57. Abbr. RNN.

<sup>27</sup> RNN. Pg. 57.

<sup>28</sup> GS. Sec. 1.

*On the Genealogy of Morals*, similarly, outlines the development of Judeo-Christian values, out of a cleverness that develops in man. “Man himself must first of all have become calculable, regular, necessary, and even in his own image of himself, if he is to be able to stand security for *his own future*, which is what one who promises does,”<sup>29</sup> writes Nietzsche. Thus, Nietzsche discusses the invention of the promise, which he says came out of another marker of enlightenment and modernity, cleverness, which turns man into a calculating, and therefore, Socratic animal. Rationality marks the point where man makes this transformation. Here, Nietzsche goes into depth when describing the consequences of this move towards the enlightenment. He discusses the development of new values, interacting through an exchange system, and the birth of a creditor-debtor relationship. Out of the hierarchy that develops, values are overturned in the favor of those that are weak and cannot pay a debt. As the rift between the strong and the weak widens, *ressentiment* or bad faith develops in the weak, they cannot express their guilt in any other way. From this *ressentiment*, the previous *noble* values are overturn and develop into *slave* morality.

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<sup>29</sup> GS. Sec. 1.



## Criterion for Judging Values

The distinction between values that promote life and the values that promote death are important for Nietzsche.

Nothing has preoccupied me more profoundly than the problem of decadence – I had reasons. ‘Good and evil’ is merely a variation of that problem. Once one has developed a keen eye for the symptoms of decline, one understands morality, too – one understands what is hiding under its most sacred names and value formulas: impoverished life, the will to the end, the great weariness. Morality negates life.<sup>30</sup>

Nietzsche uses various stories of the problem to elucidate unhealthy relationships that exist between the subject and the system. Socratic values are the arrogant ideologies that do not consider anything outside of itself. Without anything new or different, sameness promotes nothingness. For example, if everything is pretty, then prettiness will lose its meaning. Prettiness will no longer distinguish anything and it will come to mean nothing. Without distinction, there is no difference to carve out value. Without value, you are left with morality or a set of ideals that you cannot criticize or change. On the other hand, Dionysian tragedy and noble morality promoted change, which is made even more apparent by the fact that they were usurped. These values promote the expression of diversity, which makes values relevant and necessary. This is why Nietzsche refers to these values

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<sup>30</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, Basic Writings of Nietzsche, “The Case of Wagner”. (New York: Random House, Inc., 2000). Sec. Preface.

as noble. Nietzsche regards noble values to be important because they allow man to be flexible, always over coming and evolving, to *live dangerously*. And certainly, regardless of what is favored in a paradigm, the fact that there are values allows for a striving. This also allows for changes in values, which allow for the possibility to express various complexities of the human condition.

We now need many preparatory courageous human beings who cannot very well leap out of nothing, any more than out of the sand and slime of present-day civilization and metropolitanism – human beings who know how to be [...] content and constant in invisible activities; human beings who are bent on seeking in all things for what in them must be *overcome*; [...] human beings with their own festivals, their own working days, and their own periods of mourning, [...] more endangered human beings, more fruitful human beings, happier beings! For believe me: the secret for harvesting from existence the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment is to *live dangerously!*<sup>31</sup>

We will later see a similar characteristic in Adorno's description of the artwork. To live dangerously is to act in a way that will promote new values. This should be considered as subjects who are able to develop relationships outside of the ideology, to consider the other and nonidentity. For example, consider scientific revolutions. To explain certain phenomena that cannot be explained, one must be willing to go outside of presumed scientific laws. To be a fair scientist, one must concede that all scientific laws are valid until there is a phenomenon that calls for a revision or change. For Nietzsche the ability to be malleable and this spirit of creativity are important. Even with the arrogant assertion of scientific laws,

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<sup>31</sup> GS. Sec. 283.

scientists must value science enough to abandon these laws to create new ones, as in the case of every scientific paradigm shift. Considering values critically, only when something is valuable is it worth giving up. One hopes that when one abandons an idea, it is for something of greater value. Art will offer the possibility to exercise this activity for individuals. Art is very much the exercise of a creation of ideas, which we then judge and give value. As an extension of the project for a criterion for values, art is valuable to both Nietzsche and Adorno as a model for ethics.

In writing about science, Nietzsche once again shows ambiguity and certain ambivalence, torn between calling science noble and recognizing it as an ideology. Nietzsche writes in the *Genealogy* that those who tout the praises of science, these “trumpeters of reality” are “bad musicians.” He follows to write “scientific conscience is an abyss [...] science today has absolutely no belief in itself, let alone an ideal above it – and where it still inspires passion, love, ardor, and suffering at all, it is not the opposite of the ascetic ideal but rather the latest and noblest form of it”<sup>32</sup>. Here, he says that science is another totality, like Christianity. In fact, the only difference is that Science seems to be useful and noble. For Nietzsche, it seems that a characteristic of noble values are that they have use value and they are not unhealthy, or a will towards death. “[Science is still the] hiding place for every kind of discontent, disbelief, gnawing worm,

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<sup>32</sup> GM. Sec. III.23.

*despectio sui*, bad conscience”<sup>33</sup>. However, this might be to the extent that bad conscience hides in ideologies. However, it should be noted that Nietzsche recognizes that the weak herd mentality of the masses were, at one time, useful. Similarly, of science, Nietzsche says, “so much that is useful remains to be done” and “the last thing I want is to destroy the pleasure these honest workers take in their craft: for I approve of their work”<sup>34</sup>. What does it mean that science is useful, but harmful? In what ways is it useful and in what ways is it harmful? Most importantly, how do we confront a totality that is both useful and harmful? It is interesting to note here, that Nietzsche’s ambivalence points to thoroughness. He does not wish to approach this topic in a shallow manner. Even in his analysis, he considers the repercussions with all the relationships surrounding this ideology.

It should be taken to consideration what Nietzsche means when he refers to science. Babich describes Nietzsche’s use of science as the whole of theoretical thinking, which includes empirical science as well as humanities. She writes that *Wissenschaft* describes more than hard sciences and includes disciplines that are usually not considered in the vein of science, such as philology, theology, poetics, literary theory, and philosophy<sup>35</sup>. Nietzsche’s foray into music and poetry in *The Gay Science*, and Nietzsche’s later aphoristic works

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<sup>33</sup> GM. Sec. III.23.

<sup>34</sup> GM. Sec. III.23

<sup>35</sup> NSCI. Pg. 35.

in *Twilight of Idol*, where his ironic and accusatory prose can very well seem experimental, are both examples of expressing ideas in pluralistic mediums. Nietzsche condemnation is a reaction to the unhealthy possibility of *Wissenschaft*, what we traditionally judge as empirical science, a wish to build foundational thought. Natural laws are taken up to be consistent with our values in regards to universal accessibility and the leveling process of slave morality. Babich suggests,

Nietzsche's position on science is stated in such a way as to show that the ideal vision of natural laws, even in physics, is rooted in the nihilistic sociopolitical tendency of the modern soul to reduce everything to a common or average level. Thus Nietzsche presents our understanding of nature's conformity to law as a representation of our own democratic interests and wishes functioning on the level of nature.<sup>36</sup>

Nietzsche criticizes craft in so far as it limits activity. Science is subsumed into an ideology, where it loses touch with its interpretive and creative nature. This might be what Nietzsche means when he writes, "Having lost all the instincts out of which institutions grow, we are losing the institutions themselves, because we are no longer fit for them"<sup>37</sup>. In this interpretive process, which is part of the human condition, a new tradition emerged. This tradition is positivistic, puts claims on Truth, a "will towards death"<sup>38</sup>. In leveling, values are lost causing a nihilism to set.

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<sup>36</sup> NSCI. Pg. 42.

<sup>37</sup> TWI. Sec. Expeditions of an Untimely Man, 39

<sup>38</sup> GM. III. 1.

Finally enlightenment marks a turn in science. “Because the death of tragedy was at the same time ‘the demise of myth,’ this event signaled no less than the possibility of modernity itself, namely, the emergence of a secular world armed with the new resources of theoretical knowledge”<sup>39</sup>. Only with the assumption of the attainability of absolute truth can science fuel itself. This is what science has in common with religion, both which stem from modernity and enlightenment.

Before moving on, we must discuss reason’s affinity for ideologies. Nietzsche says, “accepting oneself as if fated, not wishing oneself ‘different’ – that is in such cases great reason itself”<sup>40</sup>. Reason necessitates the stability that resists change. In fact, one of his earlier optimistic predictions of science was that it would exhaust itself of value and fail us<sup>41</sup>. The danger of these totalizing systems is that they are bound to fail us. Later, we will discuss Adorno’s claim that culture had failed us in cases such as Auschwitz. Nietzsche seems to assert

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<sup>39</sup> RNN, 59.

<sup>40</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo, “Ecce Homo”. Trans. Walter Kaufman. (New York: Vintage Books, 1989). Sec Why I Am So Wise, 6.

<sup>41</sup> Later, Nietzsche calls the slave morality strong, and he gives credit to slave morality as the worldview that has won. This is due to our concern for self-preservation and wish for stability. He writes that the “species do not grow more perfect: the weaker dominate the strong again and again – the reason being they are the great majority, and they are also cleverer”.

TWI. Sec. Expeditions of an Untimely Man, 14.

It is interesting to note the difference here from his earlier optimism in Birth of Tragedy. His later works value individuality, losing hope for the masses all together.

that all ideologies are insufficient in that way. If our reliance on them is too great, this inaction perpetuated by totalities are dangerous to us. In Birth of Tragedy, he writes, “knowledge kills action”<sup>42</sup>. To counter this, Nietzsche claims, “I love brief habits [...] and consider them an inestimable means for getting to know many thing and states”<sup>43</sup>. By changing, one gets to know, not so much objective Truth, but experience, much more than before. Change allows one to be flexible, and this is why he encourages deliberate change. This allows one to grow stronger as well as become adaptable to unmediated change that might be unavoidable in the world.

On the basest of levels, Nietzsche seems to suggest that slave morality is too restrictive for a noble man. Aside from that, this type of morality is only positive when it preserves human agency and considers the subject’s physical, mental, and emotional health. A certain disposition develops where one cannot account for difference or anything new. This type of morality degenerates a population. There is nothing noble about a leveling of this kind, and from it moral problems develop. This type of morality promoted sameness, weakness, and nothing of excellence. Naively, an earlier Nietzsche seemed to think that rationality would eventually fail and expose itself<sup>44</sup>. Later on, he gives slave

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<sup>42</sup> BT. Sec. 7.

<sup>43</sup> GS. Pg. 295.

<sup>44</sup> “If ancient tragedy was diverted from its course by the dialectical desire for knowledge and the optimism of science, this fact might lead us to believe that

morality its due as the value that had won<sup>45</sup>. The morality that comes out of this falsehood is problematic, because it claims itself as an absolute truth and further tries to dictate human action based upon this presumption.

To quickly reiterate, subjects create meanings and relationships based on, around, and between the world, themselves, history, and future aspirations. Nietzsche's realization of this fact promotes the possibility for subjects to act with agency and offers us the possibility to consider metaphysics in a new way. Knowing that one's worldview is interpretational allows for people to live experimentally, and as we will discuss later, artistically. An ideology that neglects to consider this makes human experience shallow, one sided, and proceeds to sacrifice the subject's possibility for the preservation of the ideology. Adorno's critique of the culture industry discusses this in depth. Truth becomes a transcendental value. In modernity or enlightenment, the mass wrestles with the

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there is an eternal conflict between the theoretic and the tragic world view; and only after the spirit of science has been pursued to its limits, and its claim to universal validity destroyed by the evidence of these limits may we hope for a rebirth of tragedy”

BT. Sec. 17.

<sup>45</sup> Nietzsche calls slave morality strong and he gives credit to slave morality as the worldview that has won. This is due to our concern for self-preservation and wish for stability. He writes that the “species do not grow more perfect: the weaker dominate the strong again and again – the reason being they are the great majority, and they are also cleverer” (TWI. Sec. Expeditions of an Untimely Man, 14).

It is interesting to note the difference here from his earlier optimism in *Birth of Tragedy*. His later works value individuality, losing hope for the masses all together.



possibility that man can concretely rationalize and rely on present values as Truth. “Cheerfulness of the theoretical man [...] it believes that it can correct the world by knowledge, guide life by science, and actually confine the individual within a limited sphere of solvable problems, from which he can cheerfully say to life: ‘I desire you; you are worth knowing’”<sup>46</sup>. This is the transformation of the subject within the system. This cheerfulness only considers that which can be identified, fails to consider the limits of our worldview, or in other words, the nonidentity. The problem occurs when subjects within the system cannot act when confronted with something other. This is not only problematic for human agency, but poses a problem for the way subjects interact with other subjects. In the following sections, we will discuss how Bernstein uses Adorno’s critique of the culture industry to claim the only way outside of this problem is to take part in acts that occlude the ideology, such as in fugitive actions.

## **The Culture Industry**

Adorno’s analysis of the culture industry is the result of applying Nietzsche’s critique to the results of the enlightenment. “This is what transcendence is in mass culture,” he writes, “the poetic mystery of the product, in

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<sup>46</sup> GS. Pg. 17.

which it is more than itself, consists in the fact that it participates in the infinite nature of production and the reverential awe inspired by objectivity”<sup>47</sup>.

Objectivity described by Adorno refers to the Socratic nature, as Nietzsche would say, of enlightenment. The mechanical nature of reproduction builds a myth of the fetishized product. The product only has its worth by participating in the culture industry. Through mass production, a product is perpetually circulated; having its exchange value determined through prescription by mass culture and visibility, separate of use value. As we buy into the culture industry, we buy into its reality. Eventually, “reality becomes its own ideology through the spell cast by its faithful duplication. This is how the technological veil and the myth of the positive is woven”<sup>48</sup>. We see that Adorno is referring to the same mechanisms as Nietzsche. The system promotes itself, keeping subjects within its grasp. The system convinced them of the exchange value for objects and values. There is a spell case where we are fooled into valuing things for something other than usefulness or other healthy traits. There is a certain optimism and myth of the positive around the system, which makes the subject complacent. One becomes invested in the ideology, so that one cannot abandon this reality and can only perpetuate it. Adorno describes this as the “sacrifice of individuality,” where everything offered is the same for everyone, and thus this ultimately leads to the manipulation of

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<sup>47</sup> CI, Pg. 63.

<sup>48</sup> CI, Pg. 63.

tastes in the masses<sup>49</sup>. This is the leveling that occurs in the culture industry.

Adorno asserts that “Kant intuitively anticipated what Hollywood has consciously put into practice: images are precensored during production by the same standard of understanding which will later determine their reception by viewers.”<sup>50</sup> In order to totalize this ideology, culture perpetuates itself using the same phenomenological model hard wired into us.

We see this subsuming metaphysical quality in mass culture. Bernstein writes in *Ethical Modernism* that a consequence of Auschwitz, the prime example for the failure of culture for Adorno, is that “metaphysics has merged with culture”<sup>51</sup> and he cites Adorno’s Negative Dialectics, writing, “culture has turned into entirely the ideology it had been potentially”<sup>52</sup>. This is an example of fitting something into a positivistic mold. The insufficiency of this system, however, leads to insufficiencies in the new imperative to offer a rationalization to something like Auschwitz. Ultimately Bernstein states that for Adorno “truth content is an imagining of otherness that transcends ‘empirical’ experience”<sup>53</sup>. The truth content for Nietzsche and Adorno resembles authenticity rather than absolute Truth and fact. In addition, for Nietzsche, What is important is the

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<sup>49</sup> CI. Pg. 40.

<sup>50</sup> Adorno, Theodor. Dialectic of Enlightenment. Trans. Edmund Jephcott. (California: Stanford University Press, 2002). Pg. 65.

<sup>51</sup> J.M. Bernstein, Adorno: Disenchantment and Ethics. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Pg. 422. Abbr. ADE.

<sup>52</sup> ADE. Pg. 422.

<sup>53</sup> ADE. Pg. 418.

creation of value, deeming a quality important and meaningful. If we are discussing actions between subjects, what is important is honoring the authenticity of the relationship. Subjects must consider that which is outside of oneself, or the nonidentity. Here, one recognizes that the totality of one's experience may not encompass another subject's. Recognizing the other, difference, or what is not, subsequently gives qualities their value and meaning. Since this authenticity should be regarded as changing, since it cannot be subsumed into a system, Adorno and Nietzsche are not concerned with a corresponding absolute Truth. Therefore truth content depends on the possibility of reconciling the identified with the nonidentity. The truth content comes out of the activity of trying to reconcile context of relationships, the temporal nature, environment, the particular climate (political, emotional, etc.), and individual with what is not. It is not the synthesis, which is important, but the ability to get closer to authenticity by considering the nonidentity or other.

The culture industry that Adorno describes controls every object that is developed, including works of art. Adorno describes the calculation that goes into creating an object for the culture industry in *On the Fetish Character*. In addition, the industry works in such an efficient way, each part reflective of a mechanical machine. In the light of the scientific worldview, this reflects a very positivistic way of looking at the world. Positivism, the idea that we can reduce the world to True knowledge, is perpetuated within the culture industry. Thus, the culture

industry promises us true knowledge, and as a result, happiness and the ability to control the world around you, while in reality, it idealizes everything and it leaves us in stasis. “Self reflection of culture brings a levelling down process in its wake. In as much as any and every product refers back to what has already been preformed”<sup>54</sup>. Everything that the industry produces has been touched, handled, and formed every step of the way. Everything the culture industry produces is same as before. As a result, everything becomes “easy” and remains the same. This totality does not allow room, due to the need for its own preservation, for infallibility, change, and development. Similarly, this conceit prevails in Nietzsche’s own description of positivism and Socratic worldview.

This leveling poses as an interesting situation in the case of art. The very idea of art, presupposes a creative freedom. When taken in and subsumed within the culture industry, what we are left with are artifacts and products for the culture industry. Therefore, art is necessarily a critical and opposing force. Bernstein writes about Adorno’s metaphor of the sirens, “the song of the sirens, which tells of all that has ever happened, promises happiness through relief from the relentless striving that is the meaning of the future under the aegis of the drive for self-preservation”<sup>55</sup>. Similarly, the culture industry offers its own products to the laborers, those that are lost within the totality. There is no escape for them. In his

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<sup>54</sup> CI. Pg. 66.

<sup>55</sup> CI. Pg. 6.

metaphor, the song of the sirens is high art. Necessarily, the rowers in the boat, or the laborers, need to stuff their ear with wax in order to work. The laborers are cut off from art in the culture industry. Where, if one were to fall into the grasp of the ecstasy of the sirens, this Dionysian phenomenon, one will not be able to recover and function within the totality anymore. Similarly, all that can be offered to the laborers is amusement from work, or illusory universality. Without art, one is within the masses and has only the illusions of art. “Art is the emphatic assertion of what is excluded from Enlightenment’s instrumental rationality: the claim of sensuous particularity and rational ends [...] Autonomous art is the quintessence of the division between mental and manual labor in a class society”<sup>56</sup>. In fact these amusements are the very object the culture industry offers, using exchange value as a criteria of value. Art offers what enlightenment and positivistic worldview could not, through its tensions, and therefore, art that manages to escape the culture industry. Art that offers the possibility to transcend outside the culture industry is valuable for Adorno. Art escapes the universal. Adorno continues to write, “high art is bought at the price of the exclusion of the lower classes – ‘with whose cause, the real universality, art keeps faith precisely by its freedom from the ends of the false universality’”<sup>57</sup>. Art necessarily must exclude those that belong and perpetuate the culture industry. In order to be included in

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<sup>56</sup> CI. Pg. 6.

<sup>57</sup> CI. Pg. 7.

the culture industry, Art must lose its critical nature and promote the culture industry by becoming fetishized. Things that do not promote the culture industry and become necessarily discursive to it are kept apart from the totality. In its unique position, art mediates between the ideology and the particular. Art offers itself as a nonidentity, other, in relation to the totality and promotes the dialectic.

Art offers a possibility apart from the culture industry that is unique to art itself. Adorno recognizes this in Nietzsche's works, which allow for a means of promoting a negative dialectic from within the culture industry. In the Paralipomena fragment in Adorno's Aesthetic Theory<sup>58</sup>, Adorno alludes to the idea that positivistic consistency, which is presupposed in the current scientific worldview and in the culture industry, "destroys the motivation and meaning of the enlightenment". The idea of consistency and positivism, of knowing, is mutually exclusive with the idea of progress. Although the enlightenment ended up being criticized for its limitation and failures to expand upon human optimism, its original promise was noble. Adorno continues, by noting that Nietzsche was consistent by recognizing this about progress and change. Adorno notes in the same fragment that Nietzsche advocates an "anti-metaphysical but artistic philosophy". Art, for both Adorno and Nietzsche, will be a way of getting out of the metaphysical and positivistic ideology, and bringing about change. The key to

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<sup>58</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, Aesthetic Theory. Trans. Robert. Hullot-Kentor. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997). Pg. 281. Abbr. AT.

this change, according to Nietzsche and Adorno, was to engage in a negative dialectic, to be confrontational against the culture industry just like the artwork.

## **Lack of Value**

In the introduction to Disenchantment and Ethics, Bernstein writes that nihilism is the most economical way of stating the ethical failure of modernity. He quotes Nietzsche saying, “What does nihilism mean? *That the highest values devalue themselves*. The aim is lacking; ‘why?’ finds no answer”<sup>59</sup>. In the culture industry, or Nietzsche’s herd mentality (the masses), the highest values are turned on their heads. Ethical systems develop from other means, not from usefulness or healthiness. This perversion of value systems is the danger and causes disenchantment with the world, which Bernstein describes. Bernstein writes,

Adorno, like numerous other critics of modernity, understands the predicament of ethical life to be a consequence of the overlap and convergence of the domination of scientific rationality in intellectual life and, let’s say, the bureaucratic rationalization of practical life in the context of indefinite economic (capital) expansion [...] The result of this convergence is a disenchantment of the world which drains from it the sources of meaning and significance that traditionally anchored ethical practices.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> ADE. Pg. 4.

<sup>60</sup> ADE. Pg. 3.



Systematic thinking encourages capitalistic expansion, imbuing everything that supports to bureaucratic system value. The intersection of systematic thinking and capitalistic expansion leaves little room for that which goes against either ideological thread. The disenchantment results from what is not included in the bureaucracy. Anything that does not fit its purpose is purged or ignored, which is problematic when considering noble values, avant-garde values, and especially when considering ethical problems and conflict in the present system. How does one bring about change in an exclusive self-perpetuating ideology? Bernstein explicates this idea out further, from Adorno's Aesthetics, when considering his own ethical modernism.

Bernstein addresses the ethical problems that arise in the ideology, such as the occurrence in Auschwitz during the holocaust. This situation will offer a clear view of how totalities rationalize and normalize perverse ethical acts. In "Ethics 'after Auschwitz,'"<sup>61</sup> Bernstein describes the quality of bare life that exists in Auschwitz, the idea that there is still a life that lies in the prisoners who are denied fundamentally what gives them life, their bodies. This is to say, there is still a culture in Auschwitz, a life, despite being extracted from their previous life. "Bare life, I have been suggesting, is the rationalized remnant of the claim of the living being as living, the sweetness of life. And this rationalized remnant is

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<sup>61</sup> J.M. Bernstein. "Ethics 'after Auschwitz.'" NGC: New German Critique. (Winter 2006): 31-52. Pg. 41. Abbr. NGC.

indeed produced through inclusion by exclusion; however, pace Agamben, the mechanism of that process is to assimilate the living to the nonliving by establishing the authority of abstract, enlightened reason”<sup>62</sup>. This leveling and assimilation to the nonliving or *muselmann*, as he suggests, is the move one makes to make the situation in Auschwitz intelligible. It also privileges rationalization as a necessary factor for bare life. This is the role of rationalized reason, regular reason once removed, referring back to itself in an abstract manner. This is the same reason that Nietzsche describes as a will towards death.

Bernstein coins the term rationalized reason as “abstracted from its being the reason of a living being and then, in a second gesture, reapplied to what remains”<sup>63</sup>. The result of a rationalized reason is a caricature of what remains, which is far removed from the authenticity of the living being. The intersection between Adorno and Nietzsche within ethics and their critique of the enlightenment occur in what Adorno identifies as “the nonidentical – as that which is the refuse of identifying practices or as what does not fit the ideal categories and concepts of rationalized reason”<sup>64</sup>. This is to say that the rationalized reason subsumes in the identical. Nietzsche was familiar with this propensity and called it Socratic reason and this was at the root of slave morality. Rationalized reason taken as life, ignores the unintelligible and nonidentical in

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<sup>62</sup> NGC. Pg. 41.

<sup>63</sup> NGC. Pg. 46.

<sup>64</sup> NGC. Pg. 46.

terms of ethics, and perverts interaction and life. Rationalized reason is a reinternalization, very much like Nietzsche's bad conscience, which is a reinternalization of guilt. It fails to consider the living being and what promotes life. Instead, it is abstracted and reinstated as "what is important for the totality." This is in fact what happens on a smaller scale in Auschwitz, as the wellbeing of those beings kept in the camp is ignored. In Auschwitz, the same mechanism abstracts the subjects further away from life than even the culture industry. This is in part what is meant by, nonliving or *muselmann*. This intersection in the conception of what perverts life is the underlying reason for my claim that Adorno is heir to Nietzsche's ethics. Adorno carefully considers Nietzsche's ethics and applies them to the question of modernity.

### **Disruptions to Engage in the Dialectic**

Ways of breaking out of a totalizing system is described by Adorno and Nietzsche as disruptions, negativity, and chaotic Dionysian drive. However, it should not be considered a mere distraction or chaotic nihilism. Instead, a disruption, such as a loud clap, is suppose to bring momentary clarity, a listening, a seeing, and/or a thinking, that resides outside of the totality. This bridge between reality and disruptions is important for these two thinkers. Disruptions

are a way of breaking the spell of totality, as the totality is not an authentic experience. Disruptions are valuable within totalizing systems because it allows for change when the totality does not meet our needs. It allows us to experience the world metaphysically and authentically, as Bernstein will state. As I prefaced before, for Adorno and Nietzsche, these disruptions can easily be examined in the case of art.

In a fragment of Adorno's *Paralipomena*, he writes of Nietzsche's "antimetaphysical but artistic' philosophy"<sup>65</sup>. Given art's ability to transcend one out of the totality, it can be used to think about ethics. Despite the contradiction of an antimetaphysical philosophy, given that the history of philosophy and positivistic endeavors were to explain metaphysics, Adorno claims Nietzsche to be the most consistent figure of enlightenment. This cryptic claim illustrates Adorno's confrontational writing style, which also celebrates Nietzsche's writings on contradictory ideas. The result of the technique of these two authors is a struggle of ideas that is made present through those writings, as Foucault also recognized. Adorno continues, "[Nietzsche] did not deceive himself that sheer consistency destroys the motivation and meaning of enlightenment" and "rather than carrying out the self-reflection of enlightenment, he perpetrated one conceptual *coup de main* after the other"<sup>66</sup>. Instead of developing a consistent

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<sup>65</sup> AT. Pg. 281.

<sup>66</sup> AT. Pg. 281.

ideology or theory, like metaphysicians, Nietzsche attacked them without establishing a foundational positivistic idea of his own. In every piece of work, he describes specific ideas and gives a particular example that is not meant to be mimicked, but examined and discarded. This antimetaphysical exercise allowed Nietzsche to do something unique and not fall under the same mistakes as those before him. In this way, Nietzsche's works are creative and act as disruptions. This also further accounts for his experimental methods, quickly changing, going from *The Birth of Tragedy*, to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and to the aphoristic *The Gay Science*, just to name a few examples.

Dialectical and relational ideas of truth allow for the space and opportunity of nonidentity and the other. The negative dialectic is constantly encountering and changing in a rogue experience that does not fit the framework or the possibility of that which does not fit the framework. This space of transcendence outside of the totality is where modernist art practices, Bernstein writes about Adorno<sup>67</sup>. For Adorno, the artwork has the power to dislodge us from the totality. All art is polemical and conflictual, according to Adorno, and the idea of conservative art is absurd<sup>68</sup>. Mass culture, on the other hand, lacks conflict due to its "all-encompassing concerns of the monopoly"<sup>69</sup>. Returning to the metaphor of the sirens, Adorno claims that aesthetics is in a very unique position as an

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<sup>67</sup> ADE. 419.

<sup>68</sup> AT. 177.

<sup>69</sup> CI. Pg. 73.

artwork is a useless object, other than for its aesthetic values. This means that an artwork does not exist for the culture industry. This does not include fetishized objects, which necessary is subsumed by the culture industry and works for the culture industry. The result of a fetishized object is that it is no longer an artwork. Artwork, which necessarily must be successful to be an artwork<sup>70</sup>, has the power to transcend ideologies through the tensions that exist freely, apart from the culture industry, within it. Self-criticism in art is what makes it art<sup>71</sup>. As a result, art is unbiased towards the culture industry and holds the power to initiate discourse outside of the masses. In *Paralipomena*, Adorno writes that

Art is directed towards truth, it is not itself immediate truth; to this extent truth is its content. By its relation to truth, art is knowledge; art itself knows truth in that truth emerges through it. As knowledge, however, art is neither discursive nor is its truth the reflection of an object.<sup>72</sup>

Here, Adorno makes clear that the discursive nature of art is not from the object, but the object's content. The object is not truth but has a truth content, which makes the object an artwork. The truth content has a relation with the object, but is not a reflection of the object. Truth of the truth content is not fact or timeless, but is contingent to the art having content, which may change, develop, or not. The artwork gives us the medium for the truth, through its own content, but there is no direct correlation or correspondence between the artwork and the truth

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<sup>70</sup> AT. Pg. 188.

<sup>71</sup> AT. Pg. 188.

<sup>72</sup> AT. Pg. 282.

derived. The dialectical nature of the object to the truth content allows the object to be an artwork and allows the object to have the ability to initiate discourse and transcend the culture industry.

In addition, Adorno claims that an artwork has its own humanity, a living experience, and it goes towards death. We saw previously with Nietzsche that it is important that things be able to be discarded. Adorno says, “what is nothing but consistent, regardless of what is to be formed, ceases to be something in-itself and degenerates into something completely for-an-other”<sup>73</sup>. Without the distinction between value and loss, value would be meaningless. Importantly, art going towards death gives them the ability to transcend the totality and to never become subsumed by it. If the artwork is subsumed, it is lost, fetishized, and is no longer an artwork. Adorno says that an artwork must seek its own ends for it to have any meaning. What he means by the living experience of an artwork is that it exists for itself apart from anything else. Bourgeois and neoclassicism is guilty of this, by trying to preserve the object as timeless, usually through its reproduction and universalizing the work, it is no longer art and falls into the totality of ideology. Instead, the autonomy of the art is expressed in its ability to transcend these ideologies. Adorno says, “ugliness and cruelty are not merely the subject matter of art”, instead, “In aesthetic forms, cruelty becomes imagination: Something is exercised from the living, from the body of language, from tones,

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<sup>73</sup> AT. Pg. 188.

from visual experience. The purer the form and higher the autonomy of the works, the more cruel they are”<sup>74</sup>. This cruelty or ugliness in art is more than the content of the art and what it is expressing, it is what incites the imagination, the content allows for reflection out of the totalizing system.<sup>75</sup> In this case it can be inferred that what gives the artwork its autonomy is that it has a life, a creative interpretive quality that has the ability to have relationship with it’s environment, subjects, past, and future in order to have a truth content. There has to be this movement. Art cannot always be the same or stay the same. It will necessary go towards a death if it has the ability to have relationships, if it has a truth content, and if it takes part in a dialectical process.

For Adorno, art has the ability to become the “truth of society insofar as in its most authentic products the irrationality of the rational world order is expressed”<sup>76</sup> (Aesthetic Theory, 84). This irrationality or otherness becomes a disruption for the system, where we manage to experience authenticity and derive the truth content. Art within our enlightenment period can provide, by being for itself and not a monotonous product of mass culture, a critique of mass culture.

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<sup>74</sup> AT. Pg. 50.

<sup>75</sup> However, Adorno should not be mistaken as a radical contextualist. Adorno also says “no particular in the artwork is legitimate without also becoming universal through its particularization” (AT. Pg. 180). He recognizes the subsuming nature that is necessary in interpretation. However, as mentioned before, immanent analysis that falls prey to ideology, if this interpretation is made absolute, the artwork will likely succumb.

<sup>76</sup> AT. Pg. 84.



Art in the enlightenment holds true to enlightenment while provoking it. What appears in art is no longer the ideal, no longer harmony; the locus of its power of resolution is not exclusively in the contradictory and dissonant. Enlightenment was always also the consciousness of the vanishing of what it wanted to seize without any residue of mystery; by penetrating the vanishing – the shudder – enlightenment not only is its critique but salvages it according to the measure of what really provokes the shudder in reality itself.<sup>77</sup>

Coming from a Marxist tradition, in writing about the enlightenment, he believed that art could become a beacon, salvaging what the enlightenment sought to do and failed. Within the positivistic ideology, art can offer a critique by “penetrating” enlightenment’s subsuming goals. Adorno refers to this as the “shudder in which subjectivity stirs without yet being subjectivity” and it is the “act of being touched by the other”<sup>78</sup>. We never completely take in the disruption caused by the shudder, as it is the other and we cannot fully comprehend it. Since we cannot subsume it by our rationality, it avoids becoming part of the totality. By showing us the irrationality of our positivistic age and offering a glimpse outside our totality, within all its tensions, art offers us transcendence. This transcendence is important when we consider all the acts within the totality. Mass culture makes people complacent, not willing to recognize and act against the system in times of ethical ambiguity or straight cruelty.

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<sup>77</sup> AT. Pg. 84.

<sup>78</sup> AT. Pg. 331.

In regard to art, in *Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche also appeals to art as an alternative to the totality, but not necessarily the disruption. “When they see to their horror how logic coils up at these boundaries and finally bites its own tail – suddenly the new form of insight breaks through, tragic insight which, merely to be endured, needs art as a protection and remedy”<sup>79</sup>. For Nietzsche, art is a solace from the terrors of the noumenal world. The noumenal world, itself, needs mediation. We necessarily cannot digest the noumenal world, as is. The Socratic rationality alienates us from the world. On the other hand, Dionysian art expresses the noumenal world in edible amounts. This type of art offers us a glimpse of disruption, allows us to experience the noumenal world, or the other, while giving us a lifejacket. In the positivistic ideology, “nature [...] has become alienated, hostile, or subjugated”<sup>80</sup>. It would seem that nature and the artwork has changed between Dionysian and Socratic ideology. Tragic unintelligible Dionysian nature is different from the alienated nature of the Socratic world. In the same way, art no longer does the same work in the Socratic ideology as it did in the Dionysian. Of the Dionysian art, Nietzsche writes, “the Dionysian excitement is capable of communicating this artistic gift to a multitude [...] this process of the tragic chorus is the *dramatic* proto-phenomenon: to see oneself transformed before

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<sup>79</sup> BT. Sec. 15.

<sup>80</sup> BT. Sec. 1.

one's own eyes"<sup>81</sup>. Art or music in light of the Dionysian worldview allows audience a glimpse of the other and they become transformed. It is not concerned with intelligibility, such as with the Socratic comedy. Socratic comedy, on the other hand, completely disengages from the other and noumenal, what Nietzsche regards as authentic. Socratic art or craft, will be that which makes the Socratic ideology intelligible, such as Socratic comedy. Although slightly different from Adorno, for Nietzsche art has the ability to mediate authentic experiences. Nietzsche, in his earlier optimism, predicted a fall of the Socratic ideology. He thought that it would exhaust its uses and fall by the side. However, in his later works, he is disenchanted that the totality will ever dissolve. His project then becomes a call to action for the individual. The masses or the weak are the cleverer ones<sup>82</sup>, which managed to persevere. Regardless, Nietzsche had the intuition that we must account for the irrational and the other, through a Dionysian abyss. This can only be soothed by Apollonian art, which veils the disruptive Dionysian force. Although Adorno and Nietzsche differ on the role art plays in mediation of the truth content, in both cases, art preserves man's creativity and ability for change<sup>83</sup>. Art offered an escape from the intelligible, a taste of the other, and experimentally allowed us to experience authenticity.

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<sup>81</sup> BT. Sec. 8.

<sup>82</sup> TI. Sec. Expeditions of an Untimely Man, 14.

<sup>83</sup> "In Dionysian art and its tragic symbolism the same nature cries to us with its true undissembled voice: 'Be as I am! Amid the ceaseless flux of phenomena I am

After the death of Dionysian ideology, we cannot invoke the same measures within the Socratic ideology. Nietzsche writes,

*What one should learn from artists.* – How can we make things beautiful, attractive, and desirable for us when they are not? And I rather think that in themselves they never are [...] To place them so that they partially conceal each other and grant us only glimpses of architectural perspectives [...] – all this we should learn from artists while being wiser than they are in other matters. For with them this subtle power usually comes to an end where art ends and life begins; but we want to be the poets of our life<sup>84</sup>.

Nietzsche expresses disenchantment where art is concerned for its ability to have any impact on life. However, he writes that we want to be “poets of our life” and as the wording suggests, living and ethics is an artistic matter for Nietzsche.

Living and ethics is a creation of value. As Adorno notes, “artistic and anti-metaphysical philosophy,” for Nietzsche, converge in life. In addition, within art, Nietzsche is always concerned with the half veiled, what we can see and what we cannot. This strongly correlates to the dialectic between the identity and nonidentity. Whether we call it art, what is important is the consideration of an other. To be creative poets of our life is an example of Nietzsche’s ethical motto.

To summarize our project so far, the consequence of ideology for ethics is that we are convinced that everything becomes intelligible. Art, on the other hand, has the opportunity to express that which is not intelligible, that which is

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the eternally creative primordial mother, eternally impelling to existence, eternally finding satisfaction in this change of phenomena!”(BT. Sec. 16.)

<sup>84</sup> GS. Sec. 299.

dynamic, and that which goes against our values and worldviews. The totality promotes a limited experience, because it cannot account for the endless possibility of relationships between objects and subjects. This in turn results in the inability of authentic experience, where authentic experience is that which challenges us. The totality results in an inauthentic experience in its existential reduction. Similarly, ethics confronted in a systematic way is insufficient to provide a guide for the endless possibility of human relationships, relationships between subject to subject. The truth content is valuable, because it allows for an authentic encounter between a subject and subject, which in turn will allow for an authentic action in regards to ethical problems. Art is an extension of the human project of creating values, according to Nietzsche. The problem of totalities becomes apparent, when there are ethical problems that the ideology cannot rationalize. These problems point to faults within the system, and often can take on the role of a disruption. Either the system adapts or changes, which it is unlikely according to Adorno and Nietzsche, or the system subsumes and/or ignores the problem at hand. The possibility of the latter is cause for alarm.

## **Ethical Life and Disenchantment**

Bernstein claims that Adorno calls for a new culture, in light of the one that has failed. However, Adorno does not carve out any positive solutions in this

regard. Adorno in Negative Dialectics says “[culture] abhors stench because it stinks – because, as Brecht put it in a magnificent line, its mansion is built of dogshit. Years after that line was written, Auschwitz demonstrated irrefutably that culture has failed”<sup>85</sup>. Just as Nietzsche laments the switch to slave morality and Socratic life, Adorno laments on how modernity has failed us in his Culture Industry. The human faculty of rationalized reason, is appropriated by society. Adorno follows to say “the moral teachings of the Enlightenment bear witness to the hopelessness of attempting to replace enfeebled religion by an intellectual motive for enduring within society when material interest no longer suffices.”<sup>86</sup> This is the main critique of the modern age, for Adorno. Culture can no longer support its own self, and us. However, it keeps going for the sake of capitalism. A world where something like the holocaust would occur for so long is one that severely needs to be self-reflective.

Bernstein reflects on the situation where the system could not meet the needs of the cruelty and atrocities of the world during World War II. In this way, the worldview failed in light of the atrocities of Auschwitz, just as Nietzsche describes it would in *Birth of Tragedy*. On one hand, the camps in Auschwitz were an extension of the totality, bodies were treated as commodities and labor, and masses of people were uprooted, kept like animals, killed, and even worse,

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<sup>85</sup> ND. Pg. 366.

<sup>86</sup> DE. Pg. 66.

kept alive<sup>87</sup>. Confronted with this situation, even after the fact, Bernstein writes that we could not react in a normative way. Although Auschwitz was an extension of a system in place, the atrocities that went on were irrational, and there was no action that could take place in the totality to change or right this. Our only recourse after the fact was to state, “never again!” and no action was able to take place in prevention or change<sup>88</sup>. This is a prime example of how the totality was and continues to be insufficient to meet the needs of all actions, and when faced with something that is not within its bounds, the totality can do nothing but to ignore it and after the fact, nothing can be said other than, “never forget.” The totality is unequipped to deal and provide answers for actions such as Auschwitz.

The very forces of materialism and culture created Auschwitz by “employ[ing] the products of culture to make the horizon of material existence, bare life, absolute for the victims”<sup>89</sup>. This situation arrived from systems all ready in place. These victims were extracted from the system, quarantined by the system, and denied objects from mass culture, which make up the identity of these subjects. Auschwitz has managed to create its own totality. The most tragic detail

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<sup>87</sup> “The destruction of individuality is the cruelest of the camp’s practices. It begins with the removal of all distinguishing characteristics: clothing, hair, even one’s proper name [... As Arendt describes when the SS took over administering the camps,] ‘The old spontaneous bestiality gave way to an absolutely cold and systematic destruction of human bodies, *calculated to destroy human dignity*; death was avoided or postponed indefinitely’ (OT, 454; emphasis [Bernstein’s])” (NGC. Pg. 37)

<sup>88</sup> ADE. Pg. 415.

<sup>89</sup> ADE. Pg. 421.

of Auschwitz is that it transcended all intelligibility. Bernstein writes “suffering becomes the limit of intelligibility when we can no longer distinguish between cruelty to the body and cruelty to the self, when the mechanisms of cruelty are meant to leave no physical self to suffer physical pain as its mode of attacking the self”<sup>90</sup>. Extracted from the system, the subjects lose their identity and they are suspended. They cannot make the suffering meaningful or intelligible, since they have completely lost their connection to the system. These subjects fell between the identity and nonidentity, and the suffering itself was irrational and beyond action. As we have covered previously, the human condition is to rationalize even irrationality. The act was subsumed, ignored and incorporated within the system.

What should have produced critical discourse, unfortunately, did not become discussed until embarrassingly later. When mass culture outside of Auschwitz is unable to answer for the unintelligible actions that have occurred, this re-rationalization that happens, an inner repression is the equivalent to Nietzsche’s *ressentiment* that results from guilt. The comparison can be extended to even incorporate the lack of accountability within Auschwitz that causes the perpetrators, victims, and spectators to all internalize and do nothing against this tragedy. Finally, Bernstein also states while citing Adorno, “culture not only failed motivationally, but the radicality of that failure inclines to the thought that it was not something accidental or wholly external to culture. The ‘untruth’ of

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<sup>90</sup> ADE. Pg. 420-421.



culture in itself is its claim to self-sufficiency”<sup>91</sup>. The failure of mass culture does not only lie in the lack of ability to provide an answer. As an extension of mass culture, Auschwitz only proves what is lacking within the totality, the ability for culture to regulate itself. The myth of self-sufficiency of culture happens by either excluding from the totality or subsuming, and incorporates no change or accommodation. The totality does not recognize mistakes and has no recourse against them. There were no mechanisms in place then and even now to prevent something like this from happening and to stop it once it did happen.

This disconnection and unaccountability within the world is what Bernstein would refer to as Adorno’s disenchantment. However, the disenchantment brings another irreconcilable rift. “If the world is constituted as disenchanted, as a universal guilt context, then there is a potential antinomy between the requirement to think what is outside existence and the requirement that metaphysics must now be a matter of experience,”<sup>92</sup> explicates Bernstein. Bernstein recognizes that we must reconsider our experiences as within the metaphysical. He realizes that if we are to be closer to authenticity, we cannot reject experiences, even though it will be from within the culture industry. However, we must participate in thinking outside of the culture industry and recognizing fragmentary experience, as with art. Engaging in a negative dialectics

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<sup>91</sup> ADE. Pg. 421.

<sup>92</sup> ADE. Pg. 427.

in this way allows for a range of action beyond what the culture industry offers. What Bernstein challenges us to do is participate in authentic metaphysical experience. This act gives us the context necessary for future discourse, allowing us to assert agency and experience authentically. In the most practical sense, this is the ability to sense, experience, and appreciate disruptions as that, which indicates a disconnect between necessity and current mass culture. In addition, this requires one to regularly engage in discourse that takes us away from mass culture, transcending beyond it, if just for a moment. Bernstein discusses this in regards to dialectical negation, where reification of truth may be overcome with experience that delivers the truth<sup>93</sup>. The action that provides us with the non-identity, thinking about the other, might bring us to an authentic experience, the space between identity and nonidentity. He later writes, “If the metaphysical ideas are to represent a possibility for the unification of the sensible and intelligible realms, then they must do so as an historical possibility”<sup>94</sup>. Bernstein suggests that although we are still participating in mass culture in the culture industry, which presumably also means we must reconcile the metaphysical experience with the intelligible, but we can still preserve the authenticity of our actions. To do so, these experiences cannot be prescribed, such as in ethical systems. He writes, “the sort of meaningfulness such events reveal cannot be conceptually or rationally

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<sup>93</sup> ADE. Pg. 430.

<sup>94</sup> ADE. Pg. 433.

grounded because *they* represent all the grounding that is possible”<sup>95</sup>. Bernstein tries to save authentic metaphysical experience by rejecting re-internalization of rational reasoning. Without re-rationalizing these events and bogging them down with limitations of mass culture, such as conceptualizing them with a purpose from within the culture industry, Bernstein believes that authentic action can still follow. Authentic action, however, in the end cannot come from the rational, and instead must be the basis that discourse arises from. Thus, Bernstein describes ethical disruptions as fugitive ethical experience.

### **Living Dangerously, Anti-Metaphysical Artistic Action**

Fugitive ethical experience, begetted from actions that reside outside of the normalcy within the totality, acts like art as it provides a discourse for rationality. However, how does one provide a criterion for this when one cannot rationalize it? Similarly, can one provide a criterion to create art? In both cases, the answer is no, or we will be guilty of creating a systematic scheme for ethical action and in creation of art. However, as this very relation to art allows us to surmise, not being able to talk about how to act, which is the very definition of metaphysical experience – fragmented action that speaks of the other – should

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<sup>95</sup> ADE. Pg. 441.

not keep people from action. In Bernstein's "Ethical Modernism,"<sup>96</sup> he discusses metaphysical experiences as a fragmentary experience, which initiates discourse. However, Bernstein never gives us a criterion for a Fugitive Ethical Act. The nature of the fugitive ethical act is a metaphysical experience and discourse comes after the fact. Similarly despite all the discourse around creating art, art is created and the act of creation of the artwork is unintelligible and cannot be completely subsumed. So, this metaphysical action necessarily cannot be completely subsumed into rationality. The only requirement for a fugitive ethical act is that it be apart from the culture industry. The act then, in the case of Auschwitz did not have to single handedly stop these acts. A metaphysical act should start and promote other ways of thinking and acting in relation to the event. To elucidate fugitive ethical experience, Bernstein gives a real example on the course of action taken by Danes during Auschwitz. This disruption led to the end of World War II. The need for fugitive ethical experiences in light of actions that fall outside of our system is seen in this example, exhibiting a practical need for disruptions for discourse. This disruptive act and further disruption in the totality through discourse are the very things that hold the possibility to break the enchantment of the culture industry. Bernstein states, "It is precisely the fugitive character of ethical experience in late modernity which reveals the event-character of ethical truth, that ethical events disclose ethical truth and that there is no ethical truth

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<sup>96</sup> ADE. Pgs. 415-456.

without the event structure of a charismatic episode”<sup>97</sup>. Fugitive experience reveals the truth content of experience, just as the artwork provides the truth content of experience. Only when one realizes the truth content of the experience of Auschwitz, did one realize the system’s grave mistake. Only through fugitive ethical action is authenticity revealed. The nature of fugitive ethical experience is to give way to metaphysical experience. Bernstein quotes Adorno, “[only a subject who has] escaped from the bondage of tradition and feudal hierarchy, can have a metaphysical experience that is not based on delusion,” and further notes “metaphysical experience is possible only with the fall of metaphysics”<sup>98</sup>. This just means that for metaphysical experience to actually correspond to certain actual experience, we must sacrifice ideological metaphysics. In the latter Adorno is concerned with an artistic philosophy, as mentioned before, thus an “anti-metaphysical” philosophy. Only when we are beyond the idea of metaphysics as either what is beyond experience or most importantly foundational, can we start to act authentically in regards to specific situations. Metaphysics in this case refers to that outside of our totality, the culture industry. We must regard authentic experiences, that which is fragmented from the totality, as metaphysical and take part in a dialectic to garner discourse and to arrive at truth contents and value. Metaphysical experience, then, is the glimpse of truth following the shudder, a

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<sup>97</sup> ADE. Pg. 445.

<sup>98</sup> ADE. Pg. 441.

fugitive experience. The negative dialectic gives us the tools to act authentically, which in part gives us a glimpse of the other. Similarly, “art’s promise is the world’s promise,”<sup>99</sup> Bernstein notes. Art’s ability to give us the other is equivalent to our ability in the world to exert agency. Here, we can see the connection between Adorno’s aesthetics and an ethical system that Bernstein wants to derive.

When Nietzsche writes,

Human beings who are bent on seeking in all things for what in them must be *overcome* [...] build your cities on the slopes of Vesuvius! Send your ships into uncharted seas! Live at war with your peers and yourselves! Be robbers and conquerors as long as you cannot be rulers and possessors, you seekers of knowledge!”<sup>100</sup>

This seems to be the very action prescribed by Bernstein less poetically. To *live dangerously* as *seekers of knowledge* without becoming *rulers and possessors*, or in other words, those *rulers and possessors* who reside within the totality.

Nietzsche’s dictum still only points to the individual. Bernstein laments that Adorno only hints that the promise of otherness might be offered outside of an artwork.<sup>101</sup> Bernstein instead develops this idea as that which will bring about discourse, alluding to an interaction of subjects. As to how to step out, Nietzsche still does not offer any clear ideas of where to start. Of course, giving us a set of tasks would be counter intuitive to his work. However, once one sets sail, in which uncharted direction should one go? If there is only a small-unknown area,

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<sup>99</sup> ADE. Pg. 438.

<sup>100</sup> GS. Sec. 283.

<sup>101</sup> ADE. Pg. 437.

out of elimination the choice is easier. However, if there is not, is one to go completely out of character, not listening to sense, or should one rationalize the best route? In the case of Bernstein, the act is a precursor to discourse. Is the act a completely reactionary act against the culture industry? Finally, after all the similarities drawn between this artistic ethics and art, one must ask, how does one create art?<sup>102</sup>

Preliminarily examining art, art itself is not a totality, but houses tensions that are not reconcilable. Art, as a fugitive experience, offers a means to a truth. Similarly, its tensions give rise to various truth contents. Art, therefore, is a momentum towards truth, instead of laying truth upon a silver platter in front of us. Art does not make any claims like that of mass culture. Similarly, Adorno says the artwork comes to truth through untruth, “their pure existence criticizes the existence of a spirit that exclusively manipulates its other”<sup>103</sup>. Art criticizes the culture industry, however, Adorno maintains that art does not exist for any other reason than itself. If fugitive metaphysical experiences are like art, they cannot be purely reactionary. If these acts were reactionary, they would still be engaged with the culture industry and therefore would not provide metaphysical experience. Then, these acts cannot be a fugitive metaphysical experience. Art promises the other and is able to hold up in solidarity against this untruth, despite

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<sup>102</sup> It is not within the scope of this paper to begin discussing these questions, Nietzsche, Adorno, and Bernstein elude, in depth.

<sup>103</sup> AT. Pg. 283.

the fact that “what they posit they are actually not permitted to posit”<sup>104</sup>. Art holds on to its paradoxes and its lies. The life of the artwork, then, exists as long as the artwork criticizes, offers authenticity, and dies when it is no longer relevant. Once an artwork is fetishized, it is subsumed by the culture industry, and is no longer an artwork, since it offers us nothing of the other. In the case of metaphysical fugitive acts, the fugitive act is not meant to serve as an act that calls forth consequence or successors. Bernstein writes,

Only by an actual following event does an exemplary event become, retrospectively, exemplary. Fugitive events cannot satisfy this criterion; that, in part, is what makes them fugitive. Yet their emphatic actuality makes them appear as if they must contain the possibility of their succession. It is the absence of the actual succession and the lack of the social conditions [,] which would underwrite future succession [... and] they contain succession only in the mode of a promise.<sup>105</sup>

These fugitive metaphysical experiences are ethical action that invokes the other, a nonidentity. We experience a metaphysical experience. In addition, we must remember that “ethical actions are not undertaken in order to make theoretical points, but in response to damaged life”<sup>106</sup>. Fugitive metaphysical experience then is an artistic action, the “filling [of] the space between logical and actual possibility”<sup>107</sup>, or in other words, it fills the space between what is intelligible and unintelligible. This is how fugitive experience gives us a glimpse of the

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<sup>104</sup> AT. Pg. 79.

<sup>105</sup> ADE. Pg. 443.

<sup>106</sup> ADE. Pg. 443.

<sup>107</sup> ADE. Pg. 419.



unintelligible. It is a promise of a realization of an authentic world. Fugitive action does not have the criteria in place to become a successful event. They necessarily lack the intelligibility for the action to develop into an event or for an event to follow. However, the very nature of a fugitive action, must assume an enthusiasm as if it will succeed. Hence, they are only successful through the promise. Like the artwork, fugitive action is a promise because, it goes towards authentic action, and only in the conclusion is there a possibility of reconciliation between intelligibility and authentic action. Fugitive action fills the middle, without actually bridging the gap. The responsibility for bridging lies in discourse and further exemplary action. Fugitive action cannot offer a solution. In case of fugitive action, it is acting irrationally against irrationality, the other, in the system. However, fugitive action is important in the totality, because it is the only response against the culture industry or any totality. Just as art mediates between the familiar with the other, fugitive action offers a promise of authenticity through its disruption and by providing discourse.

## Conclusion

Authentic relationships between the subject and their environment are denied through the totality. The culture industry perverts the relationship between the subject and those that the subject interacts with. Living apart from the culture industry, however, is not realistic, since everything is subsumed by it. Finding a nook outside of the culture industry, to deny everything that is a commodity and fetish, and to deny relationships with those within the totality would be impossible for the situated being. Nietzsche does not think that man would be able to stand the terrors of the world, without any veil to cover it. Also, man would necessarily try to organize, piece together the world, and make sense out of what they sense. This is the nature of man, to create value. Nietzsche recognizes that the culture industry is a result of our human interpretation. This instinct allows for the creative process, but also perpetuates certain rationality that harbors slave morality and Socratic tendencies. Therefore, there can only be instances of authenticity. From which beings would piece together, creatively, some value. What one should hope to accomplish, according to Nietzsche, would be to develop something meaningful that is unique, dangerous, that can broaden our creative horizons. Then, we should start again.<sup>108</sup> This is how we progress further

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<sup>108</sup> We should also note here that Nietzsche was not unique in thinking in this way. Soren Kierkegaard was also a philosophy that advocated creative expression

towards truth, or in other words, authenticity. The promise offered through art and fugitive action, is the promise of the other. We arrive at truth contents through dialectical relationships through the other. Fugitive metaphysical experience allows for the artistic living necessary for Nietzsche and later Adorno, especially with our failed culture.

When we consider the artwork, we recognize the responsibility to an other, as something we cannot subsume for our own means. Using this as a model, this responsibility bears markings of Kant's categorical imperative, where one recognizes an other as other and not as a means. Recognizing the nonidentity allows us to encounter other relationships with ethical responsibility. This is the importance of Adorno's negative dialectic. Just as we understand the artwork as that which promises us the other, fugitive acts gives us metaphysical experiences, which allow us to act in a way that brings us closer to that which is outside of experience and the totality. Although the very nature of the other presumes that we cannot know it, the act of trying to know allows one to live more experimentally. This act gives us hope for ethical acts. Although Nietzsche, Adorno, and Bernstein do not offer us any way of ethical acting, Bernstein's ethical modernism begins to allow for us to consider actions that are outside of the

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and experimentation. One can see this in the variety of pseudonyms that he published his works under.

totality. It is this that I hope will bring our discourse towards an ethic that can begin to consider and preserve the otherness of subjects.

In addition, our work in life is to create these valuations, as Nietzsche would say. The only way that we may come to know values is by experiencing the other. Otherwise, nihilism results in the lack of values. Then, we might say that art and that which gives us metaphysical experience is the pinnacle of the work we do.

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