

Freedom within Nature: Adorno on the Idea of Reason's Autonomy

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Introduction

A commitment to the thesis of the autonomy of reason can be located across various phases of German Idealism. Initiated in Kant's critical work, it developed diverse conceptualizations and functions in the philosophy of Fichte's Jena period, early Schelling and, arguably, all of Hegel's mature writings. For Kant the self-governance of reason was to mean, at the practical level, that rational agents could determine themselves through reason alone. To do so they would endorse principles for action, these principles taking the form of a law compelling for all rational beings. As materially pure, universal laws, practical principles were valid independently of the normative authority of existing socio-cultural practice and of the pathological and wholly subjective preferences of any given empirical agent. The rational agent, through the use of autonomous reason, could both identify what a rational will should will and be at the same time moved to act upon what it wills.¹ Kant's theory of reason offered a framework within which practical reason itself could be defended, and theories that privileged sentiment, happiness or any other variety of affective motive were exposed as antithetical to moral legislation.

For Kant it was not only practical reason that was capable of autonomy, that is, of providing us with laws that are independent of empirical causality. The very practice of philosophy itself – of theoretical reason – was to be reconceived as an exercise of

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autonomous reason. Without reference to experience it was supposed to be possible for reason to identify its own capacities and limitations. It could establish the different kinds of governance reason brings to bear on the various regions of concern to it. The limit points of reason were revealed when reason recognized its own contradictoriness within particular domains. Philosophy, construed in this new form, might be considered as reason's own self-explication.

Among the philosophers who succeeded Kant theoretical reason was set to validating the fundamental claims of human knowledge, on purely conceptual considerations, in order to provide those claims with a security they did not apparently possess when conceived within their separable, original empirical disciplines. These claims, if they were claims of reason, could be understood as elements or moments of reason's own system.

Autonomous practical and theoretical reason were not to be understood as distinct rationalities. Implicit in the very idea of reason's autonomy – i.e. its capacity to endorse principles in independence from empirical criteria – is, according to the idealists, its unity. There is not one faculty of reason for philosophy and another for morality: it is one and the same reason applying itself in differing ways depending on what it chooses to analyze. The theory of the basis of that unity can take different directions: practical or theoretical reasons might be seen as derivations of each other (giving rise to claims about the primacy of either practical or theoretical reason) or as belonging to a single substance.

The appealing historical precept that human beings have an entitlement to make new and emancipating social arrangements in independence from existing sources of authority, habit or tradition was bolstered by the idealists' insights into reason's autonomy. Politics and theory were implicit partners. The interest in the autonomy of reason for the sake of human freedom was, though, to recede sharply in the period of post-idealist philosophy, with history and philosophy playing their parts in complicating the classical ideals of emancipation. It is through the development of critical theory, in explicit negotiation with the legacy of idealism, that this distinctive interest regained philosophical attention. For critical theory, the capacity of human beings to create a rational society – one in which antagonism, want and institutionally generated suffering are absent – depends on our capacity to reason without the determinations of social normativity, that is, autonomously.

The autonomy of reason, critical theory maintains, is imperilled by the forces of prevailing intellectual conventions. Reason loses its connection with emancipation and instead is turned towards the exigencies of successful management within existing institutional life. The idealists believed that their account of the autonomy of reason could promote the development of a capacity that human beings had, in the main, lacked the confidence to exercise. The critical theorists, however, found themselves in a quite different environment. The concept and value of reason was well understood, but, tragically, it was the wrong notion of reason – instrumental, manipulative, strategic – that had taken hold. The critical theorists did not recommend a return to the classical formulations of reason's autonomy as a solution to the problem of reason's current limitations. In fact, those formulations had in certain

respects reproduced developing social practices of reason: the control of ‘natural’ being, including human being.

Early critical theory’s preoccupation with providing a defensible account of reason’s autonomy – one which at the same time specifically rejects the formulations of the idealist tradition – has been obscured by the ferocity of that movement’s criticism of reason in general. Adorno and Horkheimer’s sweeping indictment of the dialectic of enlightenment – the charge that every effort to lift ourselves from nature appears to entail nature’s destruction – might lead us to suppose that early critical theory is eager, in sympathy with Nietzsche, to expose the motives and, thereby, inherent heteronomy of reason. It appears to be, in other words, an effort to undermine the very principle of the autonomy of reason. Arguably the force of their rhetorically coloured argument leads irrevocably to that conclusion. But this cannot be critical theory’s intention, at least. Were it so, criticisms of the distortion of reason and the attendant irrationality of society (it produces antagonism, want and suffering while proclaiming freedom) would be groundless (at least in terms of ‘rationality’) since there would be no way of taking a normative stance, based on ‘true’ reason, against them. What critical theory actually attempts is to offer ways of thinking about human experience that can explain our capacity to take a reflective view of that experience without also holding that reflection separates us from experience’s natural basis.

In drawing out the relationship between German idealism and critical theory on the question of reason’s autonomy I will concentrate on Adorno’s criticisms of transcendental idealism as it is the most sustained and detailed discussion within the critical theory tradition of the autonomy of reason. These criticisms open up for

Adorno the conceptual space within which a more inclusive account reason's autonomy might be articulated. The next section of this paper will turn to that criticism and a consideration of the new theoretical direction that the critique seems to necessitate – the direction Adorno attempts – will follow.

Criticisms of the Transcendental Theory

Adorno's various criticisms of Kant's notion of the autonomy of reason attempt to reveal the limitations and implicit dangers of that notion when conceived purely within the terms of idealism. Idealism articulated in a revolutionary manner the power of reason to free us from authority, but its theoretical basis actually narrowed what the exercise of freedom was to be. At the centre of this difficulty, according to Adorno, is the fundamental opposition between reason and freedom on the one side and nature on the other. This opposition detaches reason from, Adorno will try to show, its natural basis. His criticisms concentrate on three main issues, to be considered in turn in this section: autonomous agency as coercion, the unity and heteronomy of reason, and reason as ontology.

The worry about transcendental idealism's opposition between reason/freedom and nature can be found within the history of German Idealism itself. The respective *Naturphilosophien* developed by Schelling and Hegel seek to address the explanatory insufficiency of the concept of nature permitted by transcendental idealism. The latter was perceived to have reduced nature to product, to what mind or reason had made (*natura naturata*) and thereby to have neglected the question of nature's own productivity (*natura naturans*). Conceived solely as *natura naturata*, Schelling argued, nature was deprived of its dynamic and converted into 'absolute rest' (*absolute*

Ruhe).² Furthermore, the physical actuality of reality itself came, implausibly, to be posited purely as an act of the subject. Transcendental idealism, Schelling argued, would have to be reinterpreted as an explanation of one side of experience only, namely, of our productive capacities. Beside that explanation a philosophy of nature would have to be placed in order, as he wrote, ‘to explain the ideal by means of the real. Hence, the two sciences form a unity, and differ only in the opposing orientations of their tasks. Furthermore, not only are the two directions equally possible, they are equally necessary, and hence both receive the same necessity in the system of knowledge’.³ This endeavour to identify the unity of reason/freedom and nature was also to be pursued by Hegel. In the *Encyclopaedia*, he argues that nature like spirit has its own history of development, a history which parallels that of the development of spirit. Far from being ‘dead’ and animated solely by human consciousness nature, he writes, ‘is to be regarded as a *system of stages*, one arising necessarily from the other and being the proximate truth of the stage from which it results: but it is not generated *naturally* out of the other but only in the inner Idea which constitutes the ground of Nature’.⁴ It may be arguable that Schelling and Hegel respectively represent challenging responses to the inevitably inert conception of nature framed by transcendental idealism. But viewed from within the critical concerns of Adorno – who refers hardly at all to the *Naturphilosophie* – it is continuous with what it attempted to succeed in that it is an effort to conceive nature as something which can be systematized. He peremptorily dismisses Hegel’s work on nature and natural beauty as ‘virtually unreflected partisanship for subjective spirit’.⁵ The ‘spirit’ supposedly at work in nature – what it is that licences the task of reconstructing its inner system – is an anthropomorphism. As we shall see in more detail below, Adorno holds that nature, of which we are a part, is not translatable into

the language of reason. Hence the symmetry of reason in nature and nature in reason is, for him, excluded from the start.

For the most part Adorno proceeds not by criticizing Kant's position by the measure of his own presumed account of reason's autonomy. Rather he attempts to read Kant's position *immanently*. This involves an examination of the conclusions that Kant wishes to establish and the concepts that are deployed in developing that conclusion. Adorno will find that contradictions appear, and inevitably so given the impossibility of realizing the intention in its idealist form. The lessons that are drawn from these difficulties guide Adorno in determining the parameters within which a space for a new account of reason's autonomy is to be developed. This approach indicates the significance for Adorno of Kant's endeavour. In criticizing Kant Adorno understands himself to be engaging with the exemplary articulation of idealism's conception of the autonomy of reason: if that conception ultimately fails then it is symptomatic of idealism's failure, on this point, as a whole.

The central significance of Kant's thesis for Adorno is that it attempts to give foundation to the idea that human beings are capable of reflective engagements with immediacy (ND 221 / GS 6: 220).⁶ By immediacy is meant anything which serves as a quasi-natural trigger for action, and that includes those forms of life that have taken on the character of what critical theory thinks of as 'second nature': in particular, the norms of our institutionalized existences, the blind application of manipulating forms of reason. The autonomy of reason implies that we have the possibility of withstanding and in that specific sense placing ourselves outside the conditioning of

these forms of immediacy. That is the principle, though it is faced with a difficult reality.

In the era of what Adorno the Frankfurt School identify as 'late capitalism' reason's autonomy has become problematic. Capitalism, it is claimed, does not merely structure the exchange of goods, it influences all forms of interaction, thereby reducing them to acts of strategic calculation. Agents manipulate themselves and others in order to succeed within this system. Even love, Adorno believes, does not escape that conditioning. In *Minima Moralia*, following Proust, he writes: 'The exchange relationship that love partially withstood throughout the bourgeois age has completely absorbed it; the last immediacy falls victim to the distance of all the contracting parties from all others. Love is chilled by the value that the ego places on itself'.⁷ In this environment reason is anything but autonomous: it is the mechanism of negotiating intra-institutional life, never a critical attitude towards the norms that allow capitalism to be experienced as second nature.

In ways Adorno's identification of late capitalism as a destructive dynamic falls within a longstanding the form of social criticism: that the human capacity for reason or wisdom is compromised by the independence sapping influences of the collective ideas of the mob or of the priests or of the system. But there is a further claim in Adorno's position that separates it from social criticism in that perennial form. Whereas conventional criticism attempts to identify the ways in which reason is suffocated by powerful social forces Adorno argues that reason itself is vulnerable to unreasonableness. Human beings can live by means of a model of reason, valorize it and order the world according to it, but yet the model may be destructive. He holds

that the very notion of reason's primacy comes with this danger, that it can position itself as 'taming, suppressing, ordering and governing whatever is unreasonable, instead of absorbing it into itself in a spirit of reconciliation'.⁸ Adorno theorizes this problem as what he calls, following Lukács, the phenomenon of reification (*Verdinglichung*).

Reification is a state of affairs in which there are only quantitative and therefore mutually translatable differences within and between objects. Adorno believes this is typical of the scientific 'mode of procedure' (*Verfahrungsweisen*) (ND 233, translation emended / GS 6: 232), but it now reaches outside scientific processes of the classification of nature and into the space of everyday judgments about how one should act and how we are to think about other people. Differentiations between objects are established by reference to the preconceived conceptualizations of human beings acting on those things. This behaviour excludes the possibility of surprise at the distinctive character of particular objects. It gains its grip on us because, as Adorno puts it, we forget what objects really are. As he explained in a letter to Walter Benjamin, an explanation later echoed in *Dialektik der Aufklärung*: 'For all reification is a forgetting: objects become purely thing-like the moment they are retained for us without the continued presence of their other aspects: when something of them has been forgotten'.⁹ Theories that take consistency as a criterion of reason are reified. According to Adorno they place 'logical stringency' (ND 233) over experience of the complexity of objects, a complexity that must be 'forgotten' for that stringency to succeed. Under these conditions, Adorno writes, the 'autonomy of reason vanishes: *the part of reason that exceeds the subordinate reflection upon and adjustment to pre-*

given data'.¹⁰ Acts of reason, in other words, are limited in advance by what is to count as reasonable.

Autonomous agency as coercion. Adorno understands reifying judgments as a kind of coercion, a coercion he finds reproduced by idealism's autonomous reason. The word he generally uses to capture the manner in which these judgments act on objects is 'Zwang', and from its range of connotations – which include compulsion and constraint – it is that of coercion that is emphasized. As coercion it is violence against objects but also against self. That *Zwang* and reification are conceptually related for Adorno means that knowledge as *Zwang* is itself a kind of forgetting. Thought begins its engagement with objects by fitting them into patterns that are familiar. In this respect objects are made into something they are not, but that should be only the beginning of knowledge: 'without a coercive moment there could be no thinking' (ND 233 / GS 6: 232).¹¹ Idealism, however, conceives knowledge wholly within this structure. Because it locates the autonomy of reason in the subject alone it excludes the possibility of an account of how we can proceed beyond the coercive moment with which thinking begins.

Hegel's idealism is accused of placing priority on the systematization of knowledge over experience. With the assumption that the fundamental principles of reality as the products of reason must somehow fit together Hegel forces, Adorno alleges, reality into a system.¹² Contrary to Hegel's claim that the system simply unfolds as necessitated by the objects under consideration, Adorno argues, the 'Hegelian system in itself was not a true becoming; implicitly, each single definition in it was already preconceived. Such safeguards condemn it to untruth' (ND 27 / GS 6: 38).¹³ Kant too

is accused of distorting experience by operating with a system. However it is his notion of freedom as causality that, for Adorno, marks out its distinctive form of coerciveness.

Adorno critically considers Kant's claim that reason conceived as a 'lawmaking power' converts freedom into 'a "special sort of causality"' (ND 255 / GS 6: 252).¹⁴ Kant is trying to convey the efficaciousness of practical reason. It can determine the will and thereby produce an effect in the world. Kant's position makes appeal to consciousness or reason as possessing causal power of some kind. The obvious strangeness of that idea has prompted alternative models of action which attempt to avoid the language and logic of causality altogether.¹⁵ Certainly – as we shall see further on – Adorno is concerned by the dualism implicit in this theory of action. His primary criticism, though, is the relationship of subject (agent) to object (others, nature) to which the model of freedom as causality is committed. As causality reason, the highest exercise of freedom, is not conceived as the power to act and react. In principle, the idea of the exercise of reason as efficient causality need not suggest coercion (violence done to the non-agent). It is simply the intentional action of the agent. Adorno's claim, though, is that the Kantian conception rigidifies the relationship of the agent towards the world and narrows its self-understanding of what kind of action is available to it to the resources of its own rationality. This turns out to be the business of imposing form on a world which is not made in the form of reason the agent assumes (i.e. the thing-in-itself, our pathological character). And the autonomy of reason grants the agent this relationship to the object, Adorno argues, as affecting objects but not being affected by them: it is not response, but the power to make objects what the subject's reason deems them to be. He writes:

Freed from the compulsion of identity (*Identitätszwang*), thinking might perhaps dispense with causality, which is made in the image of that compulsion. Causality hypostatizes the form, as binding upon a content which on its own would not assume that form... (ND 234 / GS 6: 232)¹⁶

Adorno establishes the charge that transcendental practical philosophy is in some respect a violence against experience by reading Kant's notion of *Zwang* in a particular and obviously contentious way. Kant conceives *Zwang* as a freely adopted constraint which the rational being places on the urgings of his/her sensuous being. In the second *Critique* he writes:

As *submission* to a law, that is, as a command (indicating constraint [*Zwang*] for the sensuously affected subject), it therefore contains in it no pleasure but instead, so far, displeasure in the action. On the other hand, however, since this constraint is exercised only by the lawgiving of his own reason, it also contains something elevating'.¹⁷

It is elevating in that the subject can now 'cognize himself' as 'free'. Kant, as we have just seen, admits that the experience of *Zwang* is not always an agreeable one regardless of the freedom of choice through which the rational agent came to adopt this constraint. It is always – it seems – aimed against the agent's pathological inclinations and tendencies toward self-love. Appropriately, the source of this *Zwang*, Kant claims, is 'intellectual'.¹⁸ Viewed in one way Kant's proposal appears commonsensical: when an individual determines a course of action that individual now has a

reason to self-deny attractive opportunities which may be diversions from that course. Yet what Kant is proposing does not disallow the presence of a peculiar misery in the adoption of a self-constraint, of going against what one might want to do and feeling necessitation to undertake, as he writes, ‘what one does not altogether like to do’.¹⁹ Clearly, acting in this way is not equivalent to acting against one’s will, as in situations of coercion. At the same time, one must go against some part of one’s will in order to be autonomous. Within this Kantian conception of moral motivations the authority of reason is to win in the end over the authority of sensuousness.

It is noteworthy that Kant elsewhere expresses the tension between *Zwang* and freedom in a way that might even serve to bring into question the value of *Zwang*. In the first *Critique* he describes the discipline of pure reason as *Zwang*, contrasting it with culture as a space of self-realization. He writes:

The *compulsion* (*Zwang*) through which the constant propensity to stray from certain rules is eliminated and finally eradicated is called *discipline*. It is different from *culture*, which would merely produce a *skill* without first canceling out another one that is already present. In the formation of a talent, therefore, which already has by itself a tendency to expression, discipline will make a negative contribution, but culture a positive.²⁰

While it would be wrong to interpret *Zwang* here as connoting the fettering experience of coercion it does appear, nevertheless, to indicate a negatively restrictive experience. Whereas ‘culture’, which follows no necessary course, permits the development of our abilities, discipline produces rigour in our knowledge and protects

us from error. Discipline as *Zwang* sits uneasily with the variety of freedom that is exemplified in working outside rules. It therefore involves what Kant, in the second *Critique*, refers laconically to as ‘some sacrifice (*Aufopferung*)’.²¹

It is this range of thoughts, in which *Zwang* signifies a kind of imposition on an object that is in some sense unwilling, that underpins Adorno’s reading of Kant’s notion of *Zwang* generally. The world, including the whole human being, is formed after the image of order or lawlikeness that is the particular definition of reason in Kant’s philosophy. Freedom, which is not the experience of action without planning (or discipline) becomes instead the unilateral power of the agent to be the cause of its objects. Adorno writes:

The Kantian freedom means the same as pure practical reason, the producer of its own objects; this, we are told [by Kant], has to do ‘not with objects or their cognition, but with its own faculty to make those objects real (in line with their cognition)’. (ND 255-6 / GS 6: 252-3)²²

Adorno interprets Kant’s claim here to imply that the supposed causality at work in these acts of construction is rather straightforwardly a process of domination. He continues: ‘The absolute volitional autonomy implied therein would be the same as absolute rule of one’s inner nature’ (ND 256 / GS 6: 253).²³ In essence, the role of reason is to suppress the impulse for action and instead create motivations for action out of reason. This suppression creates a particular type of human being by selecting as that which elevates us that part of our capacities that can conform to lawlikeness: pure reason.

Adorno explores not only the relationship between *Zwang* as causality and freedom but between the very notion of freedom as causality and the terms of the Kantian division of reality. Kant presents us with two spaces within which to place the totality of the agent's motivations and actions, namely within the world of appearance – the phenomenal world – or that of freedom – the noumenal world. Adorno argues that Kant's notion of freedom as causality cannot be placed within either option without collapsing that notion. The option of noumenality is to be excluded, Adorno argues – expressing a familiar worry – because a noumenal agent could not be intelligibly conceived as having purchase on the phenomenal world. This means that a theory of noumenal causality must be rejected in principle. It leaves the agent outside a space in which action is possible. If this notion is nevertheless to be maintained it generates only what Adorno sees as subjectification: 'The semblance of a noumenal objectivity of practical reason establishes its complete subjectification; it is no longer clear how its intervention across the ontological abyss may reach anything that is at all' (ND 237 / GS 6: 235).²⁴ This conception of the noumenality of autonomous practical reason, Adorno argues, actually depracticalizes the agent. Reason is explicable in independence of objects, but what can reason be about if it needs no reference to objects – to complex states of affairs – to which it might react and respond? We can find some support for Adorno's worry by turning to a distinction Kant himself makes in the second *Critique* between choices grounded in autonomous reason and those grounded in heteronomy. The former, it seems, are straightforwardly apparent, whereas the latter – perhaps in the manner of phronetic practical reason – require experience. Kant writes:

What is to be done in accordance with the principle of the autonomy of choice is seen quite easily and without hesitation by the most common understanding; what is to be done on the presupposition of heteronomy of choice is difficult to see and requires knowledge of the world.²⁵

The effective practicality of the agent is understood purely in terms of formal reason. The very idea, according to Adorno's interpretation, is paradoxical: it is 'that absolutely sovereign reason which is to have the capacity to work empirically irrespective of experience and irrespective of the leap between action and deed' (ND 236 / GS 6: 235).²⁶

The notion of phenomenal causality is also problematic, though for quite different reasons. Kant does not want, of course, the causality of the autonomous agent to be phenomenal as this would place the agent wholly within the space of empirical causality. But Adorno holds that this commitment is implicit in Kant's understanding of how the agent acts. For Adorno, as we have seen, Kant's theory of autonomy entails action in the world, by an agent in the world against the objects of the world. In this regard Kant follows, without realizing it, the growing conception of human beings as rational by measure of their capacity to master nature. There is nothing in this conception which elevates the subject outside the world of appearances. Adorno concludes: 'what the aporetic construction of freedom rests upon is not the noumenal but the phenomenal... it is naked compulsion, exerted in space and time' (ND 255 / GS 6: 252-3).²⁷

The unity and heteronomy of reason. The idealists take the claim that reason is unified as a corollary of its autonomy. Were it without unity there would be separate rationalities, a conclusion which could be reached only by ignoring the analogous roles played by reason in its separate domains. Adorno criticizes this notion as it effectively insists that reason can be conceived in separation from the realities with which it is engaged. Autonomous reason, Adorno charges, is construed as a unity only by rendering it into a meaningless abstraction, ‘purified of all externality’ (*von allem Äußeren Getrenntes*).²⁸ The parts of the world to which philosophical reason directs itself – materiality – do not exert any influence on the operating principle of that reason. Adorno reports Kant’s claim for that unity as follows:

The terminologically suggested difference between pure theoretical and pure practical doctrine; the difference between a formally logical and a transcendently logical doctrine; finally the difference of the doctrine of ideas in the narrow sense – these are not differences within reason in itself. They are solely differences concerning its application, said either to have nothing to do with objects or to refer to the possibility of objects pure and simple, or – like practical reason – to create its objects, the free acts, out of itself. (ND 234 / GS 6: 233)²⁹

The very definition of unity in this sense, however, is unsustainable. How could it explain even the different applications of the same reason; that is, what would induce the exercise of practical reason in one context but not in another? If there is a distinction between theoretical reason, practical reason and even reason in its teleological employments (the third *Critique*) that distinction must, Adorno claims, refer to its regions of application and the experience the agent is attempting to

negotiate. In this case, however, ‘the subdivision of reason by objects makes it depend, contrary to the doctrine of autonomy, on the extrarational it is supposed not to be’ (ND 235 / GS 6: 234).³⁰ In other words, the unity of reason, of different functions of reason, must always point towards the world itself in order to make sense of the different interests it possesses (normative or theoretical). This disrupts the claim to unity, though, in that it reveals, according to Adorno, ‘reason’s inner dependence upon what is not identical with it’ (ND 235 / GS 6: 234)³¹, i.e. the objects it attempts to order and form. He also refers to the material with which reason is engaged as ‘a condition of its [reason’s] own possibility’ (ND 243 / GS 6: 241). This clearly erodes the basis of the claims for reason’s absolute autonomy. The extrarational as a condition of reason’s application would, Adorno argues, ‘make it [reason] heteronomous’ (ND 243 / GS 6: 241).

That flamboyant conclusion does not specify whether reason’s formal processes are affected by the objects to which it is applied. Of course, Adorno believes objects affect reason in that way: he is a consistent critic of formalism. But if Kant does not – and the reading is immanent – then it is possible to maintain that it is one and the same reason even in its diverse applications. There are various options available in interpreting what Kant actually intends by the notion of reason’s unity. Pauline Kleingeld notes:

it seems that Kant defends three incompatible claims regarding the unity of reason. It would seem that he cannot consistently hold at the same time that (1) theoretical and practical reason are one and the same reason, applied differently, (2) that he still needs to show that they are, and (3) that they are united.³²

It is the material of claim (1) that Adorno had taken as his text for unity of reason. In the conclusion of her analysis, to cite its first part, Kleingeld writes:

Kant's three claims about the unity of reason are consistent. The claim that theoretical and practical reason are one and the same faculty, merely applied differently, should be seen as a regulative principle based on reason's own interest in systematicity, and not as a claim to knowledge.³³

Adorno's line of argument diverges from Kleingeld's minimalist account. Adorno holds that Kant is committed to prioritizing the principles of autonomy and unity of reason over the capacity of the world to inform the activities of reason. And he also wants to claim, in contrast to Kleingeld, that reason for Kant is an act of constructivism directed towards the world: it is therefore tied to knowledge. In other words, the interest in systematicity is at the same time, in Adorno's interpretation, an interest in knowledge purely from within reason's own competence.

Reason as ontology. That last charge leads us to Adorno's claim that, on the basis of the autonomy and unity of reason, Kant grants the rational agent implicit total possession of objectivity. Reason is inscribed in the subject alone, not in its actions, as these must refer to states-of-affairs outside the subject. The special capacity of the agent to judge or act autonomously is intelligible in independence from the empirical, historical contexts in which those judgments or actions are undertaken. Reason for Kant, Adorno maintains, is (a1) (my numeration) 'the pure form of subjectivity' (ND 234 / GS 6: 233). (It is difficult to know what part exactly of Kant's philosophy is

being referred to by Adorno in that proposition.) But according to Adorno there is a further dimension to Kant’s notion of reason: namely, anything which can be true falls within the system of reason. Here reason is, as Adorno puts it, (b1) ‘the totality of objective validities, the archetype of all objectivity’ (ND 234 / GS 6: 233).³⁴ The coexistence of these two characteristics – reason’s ‘double-edged character’ (*Doppelschlächtigkeit*) (GS 6: 234) – Adorno argues, collapses objectivity into the subject: the subject, taking on an ontological role, is reason and anticipates all possible validities. That there might be objectivity in ‘anything opposed to the subject’ is excluded in principle (ND 234 / GS 6: 234). This places pressure, Adorno believes, on the very notion of ‘the objectivity of truth’ (ND 234 / GS 6: 234) since truth, in this model, is grounded in subjectivity alone.

This dual structure of reason, Adorno argues, also manifests itself in Kant’s concept of the rational will. The will is said to be (a2) pure subject: only as subject, not as object, can it be thought of as spontaneous, not passive and reactive. Adorno also attempts to map the basic intention of (b1) onto the will. He suggests (b2) that the will takes on the role of creating objectivity. He has in mind Kant’s notion that the will of the practical agent makes its own objects. He writes: ‘Only the will’s a priori ontical nature, which is extant like a quality, permits us, without being absurd, to make the judgment that the will creates its objects, the actions’ (ND 235 / GS 6: 234).³⁵ As we can see in the table below (fig. 1) the correlation between the objective orientation of theoretical and practical reason is not quite as neat as Adorno’s discussion might suggest.

(fig. 1) Reason’s *Doppelschlächtigkeit*

	Subjective	objective
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theoretical reason	(a1) pure form	(b1) totality of objective validities
practical will	(b1) spontaneity	(b2) creates its own objects

In these two distinguishable deployments of reason the agent becomes both the efficient – it is free of the influence of heteronomy – and formal cause of the objects: what is important in objects is that they can be referred back to the capacities of the agent. Their materiality, whether in the image of the thing-in-itself or in impulses which are not caused by the agent are, Adorno claims, ‘banned as heteronomous’ (ND 235 / GS 6: 234). Because the object is understood through the actions of the agent the ‘*differentia specifica* of act and object (*Gegenstand*)’ (ND 238 / GS 6: 236) is written out of what we need to account for when we think about objectivity.

Nature in Reason

Adorno’s efforts to develop an account of reason’s autonomy are framed by the conclusions reached in his analysis of Kant. What that account of autonomy must eschew is any notion of reason as fully explicable as a causal or instrumental orientation towards the world; the role of materiality – the extrarational – needs to be accommodated in explaining the exercise of reason; the rational agent must be conceived as located in the world. In order to provide a theory which contains these elements Adorno believes that we must include, among the conditions of reason’s autonomy, what Kant had designated as heteronomy: i.e. nature. The challenge this presents is clear: the autonomy of reason can no longer be defended as a thesis about reason’s separation from nature, yet reason cannot be, either, wholly subject to nature. Reason will instead be explained, as we shall see, as a ‘dialectical’ phenomenon in that it is both ‘a moment of nature and yet something else’ (ND 289 / GS 6: 285).³⁶ And even its character as ‘something else’ is to be understood as a natural process.

Adorno introduces this dialectical concept through a speculative story in which (what look quite like) conventional ideas about the evolutionary development of human reason are fused with Freudian concepts about the role of the instincts in the development of the human being. The intellectual sphere that this theorization occupies is elusive. While Adorno believes that his descriptions of the development of reason objectively capture the phenomenon under consideration his method is certainly not one of science. Furthermore, Adorno may marshal a considerable number of Freudian concepts, but he does not take Freud's account of the drives/instincts – material that is central to his own theory – as a final description of the human psyche (see ND 273 / GS 6: 269). Indeed, Adorno freely adjusts some of Freud's conclusions, particularly when they, as Adorno sees it, fall short in recognizing the particular ways in which the drives are socialized (see ND 349 / GS 6: 342). But Freud, nevertheless, is for Adorno a radical thinker whose theory amounts to no bourgeois ideology. Adorno believes that Freud's drive theory does not assume the ultimacy of individuality. In this regard he is to be strongly differentiated from the neo-Freudians – Karen Horney in particular – whom Adorno accuses of 'talking incessantly about the influence of society upon individuals', without appreciating 'that not only the individual but the very category of individuality is a product of society'.³⁷ Devoid of that insight psychoanalysis becomes 'social conformism'.³⁸

Adorno regards freedom and reason as aspects of the one psychic phenomenon: the ability to think and act without reflex is at the same time a capacity to initiate in contrast to being caused to respond: 'If passive reactions were all there is', he writes, 'there could be no thinking' (ND 217 / GS 6: 216).³⁹ The emergence of

freedom/reason is explained by Adorno within the biological drive for self-preservation. Somehow the very capacity for reason, as a capacity to think, has ‘genetically evolved from the force of human drives’ (ND 230 / GS 6: 229).⁴⁰ He claims that ‘self-preservation in its history calls for more than conditioned reflexes, and thus it prepares for what it would eventually transcend’ (ND 217 / GS 6: 216).⁴¹ Conditioned reflexes, presumably, produce merely uniform responses to the same environmental challenges.

Adorno, arguably, can find room within Freud’s theory for a developmental account of reason, even though Freud himself does not offer a theory of the development of human cognitive capacities. Notwithstanding, some broad indications in his work on the drives/instincts might seem to allow space within which such a theory could be envisaged. In ‘The Instincts and their Vicissitudes’ he identifies instinctual stimuli (*Triebreize*) as demands which cannot be met in the way that the demands of external stimuli are met, namely, by ‘muscular movement’. The demands of these instincts or drives can be addressed only by the organism’s adjustment of some feature of the outer world ‘to afford satisfaction to the internal source of stimulation’.⁴² In order to achieve that adjustment it seems that the organism itself must change. The need to satisfy the instinctual stimulus creates a dynamic for the development of the organism. Freud writes:

We may therefore well conclude that instincts and not external stimuli are the true motive forces behind the advances that have led the nervous system, with its unlimited capacities, to its present high level of development. There is naturally nothing to prevent our supposing that the instincts themselves are, at least in part,

precipitates of the effects of external stimulation, which in the course of phylogenesis have brought about modifications in the living substance.⁴³

Adorno argues that there is a connection between the emergence of reason and that of self. Non-reflective creatures – those that operate on conditioned responses – display unified responses to whatever threatens them. The nature of this ‘unity’ is unclear. But Adorno proposes that the evolved capacities of the reflective creature – over the purely reflexive – ‘presumably emulates the biological individual’s prescription of the form of his reflexes; the reflexes scarcely would be without any unity’ (ND 217 / GS 6: 216).⁴⁴ The unity of the creature is reproduced in new form in human beings gaining a reflective (freedom/reason) capacity. As human beings – if, in fact, Adorno means human beings – moved from pure passivity and receptivity, in which self-preservative instincts were simply activated, towards reason and freedom in which some kind of space exists between threat and action – notwithstanding the persistence of a certain conditioned reflexivity – the original unity of the instinctive ‘compulsive’ creature carried over into the unity of the will that is characteristic of creatures like us. The ‘reflective faculty’ takes possession of the challenges of self-preservation and this ‘opens up the difference that has evolved between the self and the reflexes’ (ND 217 / GS 6: 216-217).⁴⁵ As Adorno recognizes, it is the ego or self that Freud identifies with the primal drive for self-preservation (‘the self of self-preservation’ [ND 217 / GS 6: 217]). But this acknowledgement raises a puzzling issue in Adorno’s appropriation of Freud’s position. Freud distinguishes between ‘the *ego*, or *self-preservative*, instincts and the sexual instincts’.⁴⁶ He also describes the sublimation of the pleasure principle as ‘the influence of the ego’s instincts of self-preservation’.⁴⁷ So how then can we hold, as Adorno effectively does, that it is a primal act of self-preservation that

explains the emergence of the self? Self-preservation presupposes the self. The position articulated appears to be, after all, a synthesis of conventional claims about the development of human cognitive capacities and Freudian drive theory.

Adorno does not hold that the emergent self stands, ultimately, 'beyond nature' (ND 220 / GS 6: 219). Subjects are, he writes, 'fused with their own physical nature (*Körperlichkeit*)' (ND 221 / GS 6: 220). This contention rests on the idea that reason is inseparable from self-preservation. Exploiting this suggestive account of reason's distinctive natural qualities Adorno rejects the two central planks of the notion of the autonomy of reason in the idealist sense, proposing:

- (i) reason is not independent of self-preservation (it thus has interests that are not typical of its supposed autonomy);
- (ii) it is not a power that is independent of nature (independent of instincts does not mean dualistically other than them).

This quasi-Freudian model is not merely descriptive, then: it provides a critical standpoint from which to tackle the very idea of reason as standing outside nature. The mistake is to believe, as Adorno puts it, that reason 'as the psychological force split off and contrasted with nature' is 'nature's otherness' (ND 289 / GS 6: 285).⁴⁸ But this is not just a philosophical mistake. It is a belief which has come to influence the self-understanding of individuals in modernity. As beings capable of rational autonomy they are directed by the ego. The implications of this self-understanding are manifest in how human beings act: as ego creatures they act out of self-preservation, though they understand themselves to be acting purely rationally. This is a profound misconception, Adorno argues: 'if the nature in reason itself is forgotten, reason

will be self-preservation running wild and will regress to nature' (ND 289 / GS 6: 285).⁴⁹ Self-preservation as the interest of the ego will be the exclusive drive of the organism.

It may seem surprising that Adorno should make that charge of a regression to nature when he himself urges a reconsideration of the natural basis of reason. What he has in mind, though, is that the purely reflexive actions of natural self-preservation are automatic responses. In this regard they make no differentiations between encountered objects. Ironically, reason's indifference to nature recapitulates the original indifference of the reflexes. Adorno writes that as reason 'became autonomous and developed into an apparatus, thinking also became the prey of reification and congealed into a high-handed method'.⁵⁰ It has this character because it refuses to define itself as differentiated in its activities or judgments by what it encounters. Hence his remark: 'Detached from the object, autonomy is fictitious' (ND 223 / GS 6: 222).

How does this materialist perspective enable us to maintain some recognizable sense of the thesis of reason's autonomy? What that thesis means is that human beings have the capacity in some sense to control reflexive responses. Adorno tries to show – necessitated, perhaps, by the conceptual material to which he is committed – that it is only the ego itself that can take a view of our self-preserved instincts, instincts that rest, in the first instance with the ego. It is a process of a 'self-reflection in thinking (*Selbstbesinnung*)' (ND 233 / GS 6: 232) that must nevertheless also be an act of self-preservation. In construing reason as capable of taking a view of itself once it perceives its instinctive interests Adorno aligns his critical position with that of the

therapeutic practice of psychoanalysis. In this context reflection brings about a change in the individual's conception of him/herself. Alfred Tauber provides a salient account of the rationality of the therapeutic process:

Freud argued, on the one hand, humans are subject to unconscious activities (framed within a biological conception), and thus subject to a form of natural determinism. On the other hand, the rational faculty of the ego permits, given proper support and articulation, the means of both understanding the deterministic forces of the unconscious as well as freeing the ego from their authority. Psychoanalysis thus depends on an implicit notion of autonomy, whereby the interpretative faculty would free the analysand from the tyranny of the unconscious in order to pursue the potential of human creativity and freedom.⁵¹

Similarly, Adorno holds that the ego can come to a view of its own tendencies: those which seem to impel it towards acts of violence against itself, acts that are legitimated by the imperatives of historical forms of self-preservation. He writes: 'The ego principle is implanted in them by society, and society rewards that principle although it curbs it' (ND 297 / GS 6: 292).⁵² The experience of this curtailment or constraint is what prompts therapeutic reflection. Adorno suggests that in psychoanalysis the 'theory of the ego as a totality of defense mechanisms and rationalizations is directed against the individual as ideology, against the... *hubris* of the self-controlled individual...' (ND 352 / GS 6: 345).⁵³ The very reality the ideological ego – the self of unreflecting self-preservation – can be brought into question by the ego itself. It seems to involve a moment in which the ego attempts to understand that the drive for self-preservation – which also constitutes it – is a threat (both to itself and others with

whom it is affectively related). The individual as ego persists in its current form by denying itself the prospect of that knowledge. As Adorno puts it: 'For the sake of self-preservation the ego must to deny itself self-consciousness always at the same time suspend the achievement of knowledge, which is itself to be completed by the ego for the sake of self-preservation'.⁵⁴ What Adorno is insisting here is that the ego's fear of its own destruction deflects it from knowledge, yet it is only through that knowledge that self-preservation can be secured.

This unusual theory perhaps helps to explain a controversial feature of Adorno's conception of how reason ought to be used under the conditions of current history. He tasks reason with the negative role of ensuring that we do not act out of the habitual norms that he associates with the identity thinking that culminated in the catastrophic events of the twentieth century. The socialized ego has understood its own health to be preserved solely by acting within, and perpetuating, those norms. Gaining awareness of the habituated norms of the socialized ego does not guarantee that one is no longer subject to them. For that reason a constant vigilance against the compulsion of those norms is what, ultimately, Adorno thinks of as rational autonomy today.⁵⁵ By contrast, a theory of autonomy which represents human beings as operating in a space above the drive for self-preservation – Kant's pre-eminently – misunderstands the interests of reason. In imagining itself to be pure it divests itself of self-reflection.

It is worth noting, before concluding, that Adorno's criticism of the idealist conception of the autonomy of reason actually conserves the terms of idealism itself. The freedom/nature dualism of that towering conception is not abandoned: it is dialectically reconstructed. Reason is both freedom and nature. Adorno's effort to

convince us of that seems to be precariously conjectural. Its broad purpose, though, is clear enough. It is designed to address the limitations of the idealist conceptualization of reason's autonomy. As self-reflection reason is not instrumentally orientated, but is involved in the business of self-understanding, and that self-understanding obliges us to take ourselves seriously as instinctual beings whose apparently most rational actions turn out to be marked by self-preservative interests.

Notes

¹ As Dieter Henrich expresses it: the practical autonomy of reason involves both that reason 'must contain principles of action which state *what* the will wills' and have 'the power to affect actions which take place solely because they are rational'. Dieter Henrich, *The Unity of Reason: Essays on Kant's Philosophy*, ed. Richard L. Velkley (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 94-5.

² F.W. J. Schelling, 'Introduction to the Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature', in Brian O'Connor and Georg Mohr, eds., *German Idealism: an Anthology and Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. 371 / F. W. J. Schelling, 'Einleitung zu dem Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie', *Sämmtliche Werke* 3, p. 277.

³ Schelling, 'Introduction to the Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature', p. 368 / Schelling, 'Einleitung zu dem Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie', pp. 272-3: 'Wenn es nun Aufgabe der Transscendentalphilosophie ist, das Reelle dem Ideellen unterzuordnen, so ist es dagegen Aufgabe der Naturphilosophie, das Ideelle aus dem Reellen zu erklären: beide Wissenschaften sind also Eine, nur durch die entgegengesetzten Richtungen ihrer Aufgaben sich unterscheidende Wissenschaft; da ferner beide Richtungen nicht nur gleich möglich, sondern gleich nothwendig sind, so kommt auch beiden im System des Wissens gleiche Nothwendigkeit zu'.

⁴ G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature: Part Two of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2nd edn., 2004), § 249, p. 20 / G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke* 9, § 249, p. 31: 'Die Natur ist als ein *System von Stufen* zu betrachten, deren eine aus der andern notwendig hervorgeht und die nächste Wahrheit derjenigen ist, aus welcher sie resultiert, aber nicht so, daß die eine aus der andern *natürlich* erzeugt würde, sondern in der inneren, den Grund der Natur ausmachenden Idee'.

⁵ Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: Athlone, 1997), p. 75 / Theodor W. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie. Gesammelte Schriften* 7 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970), p. 117: 'Hegels objektiver Idealismus wird in der Ästhetik zur krassen, nahezu unreflektierten Parteinahme für subjektiven Geist'.

⁶ ND: Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (London: Routledge, 1973) / GS 6: Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6 (1973).

⁷ Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: NLB, 1974), §107, p. 167 / Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflexionen aus dem beschädigten Leben, Gesammelte Schriften* 4 (1973), §107, pp. 190-1: 'Das Tauschverhältnis, dem sie durchs bürgerliche Zeitalter hindurch partiell sich widersetzte, hat sie ganz aufgesogen; die letzte Unmittelbarkeit fällt der Ferne aller Kontrahenten von allen zum Opfer. Liebe erkaltet am Wert, den das Ich sich selber zuschreibt'.

⁸ Theodor W. Adorno, *History and Freedom: Lectures 1964-65*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: Polity, 2006), p. 45 / Theodor W. Adorno, *Zur Lehre von der Geschichte und von der*

Freiheit, Nachgelassene Schriften IV 13 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2001), p. 69: ‘Im Begriff der Vormacht der Vernunft, in dem Begriff also, daß die Vernunft etwas sei, welches ein Unvernünftiges zu bändigen, zu unterdrücken, zu regeln, zu beherrschen habe, anstatt es versöhnt in sich aufzunehmen’.

⁹ Theodor W. Adorno and Walter Benjamin, *The Complete Correspondence 1928–1940*, ed. Henri Lonitz, trans. Nicholas Walker, (Cambridge / Malden MA: Polity Press, 2nd edn, 2006), Letter 117, 29.02.1940, p. 321. Theodor W. Adorno/Walter Benjamin, *Briefwechsel 1928–1940*, ed. Henri Lonitz (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1994), p. 417: ‘Denn alle Verdinglichung ist ein Vergessen: Objekte werden dinghaft im Augenblick, wo sie festgehalten sind, ohne in allen ihren Stücken aktuell gegenwärtig zu sein: wo etwas von ihnen vergessen ist’.

¹⁰ Theodor W. Adorno, *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 9 / Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften* 10.2, p. 464: ‘Die Autonomie der Vernunft entschwindet; das an ihr, was sich nicht erschöpft im Nachdenken eines Vorgegebenen, dem sie sich anmißt’.

¹¹ ‘Ohne Zwangsmoment indessen könnte Denken überhaupt nicht sein.’

¹² For a fuller discussion of Adorno’s reading of Hegel see Brian O’Connor, ‘Adorno’s Reconception of the Dialectic’, in Stephen Houlgate and Michael Baur, eds., *The Blackwell Companion to Hegel* (Oxford / Malden, Mass: Blackwells, 2011).

¹³ ‘Das Hegelsche war nicht in sich wahrhaft ein Werdendes, sondern implizit in jeder Einzelbestimmung bereits vorgedacht. Solche Sicherung verurteilt es zur Unwahrheit’.

¹⁴ ‘Darum muß er Freiheit von Anbeginn als ‘besondere Art von Causalität’ vorstellen. Indem er sie setzt, nimmt er sie zurück’.

¹⁵ Influential cases being, as Rowland Stout shows, Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* and G. E. M. Anscombe, *Intention*. See Rowland Stout, ‘Two Ways to Understand Causality in Agency’, in Anton Leist, ed., *Action in Context* (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007).

¹⁶ ‘Des Identitätszwangs ledig, entriete Denken vielleicht der Kausalität, die jenem Zwang nachgebildet ist. Sie hypostasiert die Form als verbindlich für einen Inhalt, der von sich aus diese Form nicht hergibt...’

¹⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 69; Kant, AA V: 80-81: ‘Es enthält also, als *Unterwerfung* unter ein Gesetz, d.i. als Gebot (welches für das sinnlich-affizierte Subjekt Zwang ankündigt), keine Lust, sondern, so fern, vielmehr Unlust an der Handlung in sich. Dagegen aber, da dieser Zwang bloß durch Gesetzgebung der *eigenen* Vernunft ausgeübt wird, enthält es auch *Erhebung*...’

¹⁸ Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 30; AA V: 32.

¹⁹ Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 71; AA V: 84: ‘Selbstzwang, d.i. innere Nötigung zu dem, was man nicht ganz gern tut’.

²⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), A709-10/B737-8; ‘Man nennet den *Zwang*, wodurch der beständige Hang, von gewissen Regeln abzuweichen, eingeschränkt, und endlich vertilget wird, die *Disziplin*. Sie ist von der *Kultur* unterschieden, welche bloß eine *Fertigkeit* verschaffen soll, ohne eine andere, schon vorhandene, dagegen aufzuheben. Zu der Bildung eines Talents, welches schon vor sich selbst einen Antrieb zur Äußerung hat, wird also die Disziplin einen negativen, die Kultur aber und Doktrin einen positiven Beitrag leisten’.

²¹ Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 71; AA V: 83.

²² ‘Gegebenheit indessen ist, worauf das Wort anspielt, das Gegenteil von Freiheit, nackter Zwang, ausgeübt in Raum und Zeit. Freiheit heißt bei Kant soviel wie die reine praktische Vernunft, die ihre

Gegenstände sich selber produziert; diese habe zu tun “nicht mit Gegenständen, sie zu erkennen, sondern mit ihrem eigenen Vermögen, jene (der Erkenntniß derselben gemäß) wirklich zu machen”’.

²³ ‘Die darin implizierte absolute Autonomie des Willens wäre soviel wie absolute Herrschaft über die innere Natur’.

²⁴ ‘Den Schein der ansichseienden Objektivität praktischer Vernunft stiftet ihre vollendete Subjektivierung; nicht länger erhellt, wie sie, über den ontologischen Abgrund hinweg, eingreifend Seiendes irgend erreichen soll’.

²⁵ Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 33; AA V: 36: ‘Was nach dem Prinzip der Autonomie der Willkür zu tun sei, ist für den gemeinsten Verstand ganz leicht und ohne Bedenken einzusehen; was unter Voraussetzung der Heteronomie derselben zu tun sei, schwer, und erfordert Weltkenntnis’.

²⁶ ‘erst als entgegenständliche wird sie zu jenem absolut Souveränen, das in der Empirie ohne Rücksicht auf diese, und auf den Sprung zwischen Handeln und Tun, soll wirken können’.

²⁷ ‘Tatsächlich basiert die aporetische Konstruktion der Freiheit nicht auf dem Noumenalen sondern auf dem Phänomenalen... Gegebenheit indessen ist, worauf das Wort anspielt, das Gegenteil von Freiheit, nackter Zwang, ausgeübt in Raum und Zeit’.

²⁸ Theodor W. Adorno, *Kant’s ‘Critique of Pure Reason’*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: Polity Press / Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 186; Adorno, *Kants ‘Kritik der reinen Vernunft’*, *Nachgelassene Schriften* IV 4 (1995), p. 283.

²⁹ ‘Der terminologisch suggerierte Unterschied zwischen der reinen theoretischen und der reinen praktischen, ebenso der zwischen einer formal- und transzendentallogischen und schließlich der der Ideenlehre im engeren Sinn sind nicht Differenzen innerhalb der Vernunft an sich, sondern einzig solche hinsichtlich ihres Gebrauchs, der entweder überhaupt nichts mit Gegenständen zu tun habe, oder auf die Möglichkeit von Gegenständen schlechthin sich beziehe, oder, wie die praktische Vernunft, seine Gegenstände, die freien Handlungen, aus sich heraus schaffe’.

³⁰ ‘die Unterteilung der Vernunft nach ihren Objekten mache sie, wider die Lehre von der Autonomie, abhängig von dem, was sie nicht sein soll, vom Außervernünftigen’.

³¹ ‘die inwendige Verwiesenheit der Vernunft auf ihr Nichtidentisches...’

³² Pauline Kleingeld, ‘Kant on the Unity of Theoretical and Practical Reason’, *The Review of Metaphysics* 52/2 (1998), p. 312.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 338.

³⁴ ‘Inbegriff objektiver Gültigkeit, Urbild aller Objektivität’.

³⁵ ‘Nur dank seiner a priori ontischen Natur, der eines gleichwie eine Eigenschaft Vorhandenen, kann von ihm ohne Widersinn geurteilt werden, daß er seine Objekte, die Handlungen, schaffe’.

³⁶ ‘ein anderes als Natur und doch ein Moment von dieser...’

³⁷ [Translation BO’C] Theodor W. Adorno, ‘Die revidierte Psychoanalyse’, *Gesammelte Schriften* 8, p. 27: ‘Während sie unablässig über den Einfluß der Gesellschaft aufs Individuum reden, vergessen sie, daß nicht nur das Individuum, sondern schon die Kategorie der Individualität ein Produkt der Gesellschaft ist’.

³⁸ Adorno, ‘Die revidierte Psychoanalyse’, p. 29.

³⁹ ‘Bleibe es bei den passiven Reaktionen, so bleibe es, nach der Terminologie der älteren Philosophie, bei der Rezeptivität: kein Denken wäre möglich’.

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- ⁴⁰ ‘Vernunft [hat] genetisch aus der Triebenergie als deren Differenzierung sich entwickelt...’
- ⁴¹ ‘Selbsterhaltung ihrerseits verlangt, in ihrer Geschichte, mehr als den bedingten Reflex und bereitet damit vor, was sie schließlich überschritte’.
- ⁴² Sigmund Freud, ‘The Instincts and their Vicissitudes’, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* 14, ed. James Strachey and Anna Freud, with Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), p. 120; Sigmund Freud, ‘Triebe und Triebchicksale’, *Gesammelte Werke* X, ed. Anna Freud (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1999), p. 213: ‘daß sie der inneren Reizquelle die Befriedigung bietet...’
- ⁴³ Freud, ‘The Instincts and their Vicissitudes’, p. 120; Freud, ‘Triebe und Triebchicksale’, pp. 213-214: ‘Wir dürfen also wohl schließen, daß sie, die Triebe, und nicht die äußeren Reize, die eigentlichen Motoren der Fortschritte sind, welche das so unendlich leistungsfähige Nervensystem auf seine gegenwärtige Entwicklungshöhe gebracht haben. Natürlich steht nichts der Annahme im Wege, daß die Triebe selbst, wenigstens zum Teil, Niederschläge äußerer Reizwirkungen sind, welche im Laufe der Phylogenese auf die lebende Substanz verändernd einwirkten’.
- ⁴⁴ ‘Dabei lehnt sie vermutlich an das biologische Individuum sich an, das seinen Reflexen die Form vorschreibt...’
- ⁴⁵ ‘Sie kräftigt sich als das Selbst der Selbsterhaltung; ihm öffnet sich Freiheit als seine gewordene Differenz von den Reflexen’.
- ⁴⁶ Freud, ‘The Instincts and their Vicissitudes’, p. 124; Freud, ‘Triebe und Triebchicksale’, p. 217: ‘der *Ich-* oder *Selbsterhaltungstriebe* und die der *Sexualtriebe*...’
- ⁴⁷ Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* 18 (1955), p. 10; Freud, *Jenseits des Lustprinzips*, *Gesammelte Werke* XIII, p. 6: ‘Unter dem Einflusse der Selbsterhaltungstriebe des Ichs wird es vom Realitätsprinzip abgelöst’.
- ⁴⁸ ‘Naturhaft ist sie als die zu Zwecken der Selbsterhaltung abgezweigte psychische Kraft; einmal aber abgespalten und der Natur kontrastiert, wird sie auch zu deren Anderem’.
- ⁴⁹ ‘Je hemmungsloser jedoch die Vernunft in jener Dialektik sich zum absoluten Gegensatz der Natur macht und an diese in sich selbst vergißt, desto mehr regrediert sie, verwilderte Selbsterhaltung, auf Natur...’
- ⁵⁰ Adorno, *Critical Models*, p. 127 / Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften* 10.2, p. 599: ‘Aber Denken ist gleichzeitig mit seiner Verselbständigung zur Apparatur Beute von Verdinglichung geworden, zur selbstherrlichen Methode geronnen’.
- ⁵¹ Alfred I. Tauber, ‘Freud’s dreams of reason: the Kantian structure of psychoanalysis’, *History of the Human Sciences* 22/4 (2009), p. 2.
- ⁵² ‘das Ichprinzip ist ihnen von der Gesellschaft eingepflanzt, und sie honoriert es, obwohl sie es eindämmt’.
- ⁵³ ‘Die Theorie des Ichs als eines Inbegriffs von Abwehrmechanismen und Rationalisierungen zielt gegen die gleiche Hybris des seiner selbst mächtigen Individuums, gegen das Individuum als Ideologie, welche radikalere Theorien von der Vormacht des Objektiven demolierten’.
- ⁵⁴ [Translation BO’C] Theodor W. Adorno, ‘Zum Verhältnis von Soziologie und Psychologie’, *Gesammelte Schriften* 8, p. 71: ‘Die Erkenntnisleistung, die vom Ich um der Selbsterhaltung willen vollzogen wird, muß das Ich um der Selbsterhaltung willen immer wieder zugleich auch sistieren, das Selbstbewußtsein sich versagen’.

⁵⁵ For further discussion of Adorno's notion of autonomy as a resistance to the norms that socialize us see J. G. Finlayson, J. G. 'Adorno on the Ethical and the Ineffable', *European Journal of Philosophy* 10 (2002), pp. 1-25, and Brian O'Connor, *Adorno* (Oxford / New York: Routledge, 2013), chapter 5.