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## AESTHETIC VIOLENCE: THE CONCEPT OF THE UGLY IN ADORNO'S *AESTHETIC THEORY*

Peter Uwe Hohendahl

**A**lthough Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* explicitly emphasizes the importance of the ugly in art, the critical response has been modest.<sup>1</sup> Since the concept of the beautiful is given a central place in Adorno's theory, commentators have focused their attention on the link between classical aesthetic theory and the theory of the modern artwork, which stands at the center of Adorno's endeavor.<sup>2</sup> In this account, the important issue is Adorno's attempt to reconnect the theory of modern art with Kant's and Hegel's reflections on art.<sup>3</sup> This line of argument is, of course, supported by Adorno's extensive treatment of the "Natuschöne," which nineteenth-century aesthetic theory, in the wake of Hegel, had eliminated from its agenda. From this perspective, Adorno's treatment of the ugly in art fades into the background. Its significance becomes limited to its oppositional function in modern art. As important as this function is for Adorno, it by no means exhausts the meaning of the ugly. Adorno's presentation of the material has possibly made it more difficult to recognize the larger meaning of the category for his theory, since the section devoted to the ugly seems to be less worked out than other parts of the posthumous work. I think it unlikely that the author would have published the section in its present form, because its various and heterogeneous elements have not been fully synthesized. Differently put, the section's dialectical nature has to be reconstructed by looking at other parts of the text. As we will see, the concept of the ugly functions on different *levels*, which connect with different sections of *Aesthetic Theory*. The task of my essay will be not only to separate the multiple strands of Adorno's treatment

of the ugly but also to consider the significance of the whole complex in Adorno's thought. The fact that Adorno discusses the ugly before he turns to the beautiful must be taken seriously—as an index of the importance that he gave to the ugly.

The obvious level, especially in *Aesthetic Theory*, is the role assigned to the ugly in German aesthetics, beginning with Schiller and Friedrich von Schlegel and culminating in Karl Rosenkranz's *Ästhetik des Häßlichen* (1853), to which Adorno explicitly refers. In the architecture of *Aesthetic Theory* this element plays an important role insofar as it underscores a larger theme in Adorno's thought that is concerned with the connection between classical aesthetics with its emphasis on the autonomy of the artwork and the theory of modernism and the avant-garde.<sup>4</sup> In this context the category of the ugly receives increasing attention during the course of the nineteenth century but remains in a secondary position as the negative of the beautiful. Yet it is precisely this order that Adorno means to challenge. Within the academic tradition that he invokes, this is a difficult task, because nineteenth-century aesthetics resisted the foregrounding of the ugly as a threat to the autonomy of art, and Adorno is not prepared to relinquish aesthetic autonomy. He must argue therefore that the ugly is compatible with the autonomy of art. For this purpose, Adorno introduces a second line of argument, namely the relevance of the ugly for modern art, and for the avant-garde in particular. In the context of modernist aesthetics the reversal between the beautiful and the ugly becomes necessary for a defense of the artwork against the impact of the culture industry and its commercialization of the beautiful. Adorno mentions "Jugendstil" as a primary example for this process. The autonomy of the artwork depends on its oppositional force, a quality that is enhanced by the ugly. It is precisely the violation of the traditional aesthetic code that separates the advanced artwork from the threat of the culture industry.

The two strands mentioned above, however, do not exhaust the significance of the ugly in Adorno's thought. In fact, they do not get to the root of Adorno's interest in the ugly. The third, and I believe most important, aspect is the link to the primitive and archaic. It is this nexus that raises the most fundamental and far-reaching questions, questions about the origins of art, its relation to myth and religion, and its changing function in human history. The relevance of

these questions is, of course, by no means limited to *Aesthetic Theory*; rather, they also play an important role in *The Philosophy of Modern Music* and *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Thomas Mann's *Dr. Faustus*, a work for which the young Adorno served as a musical consultant, would be another site for the examination of these fundamental problems, for Mann was especially interested in the connection between the primitive and the avant-garde artwork.

In *Aesthetic Theory* Adorno introduces this complex configuration in various parts of the text, but most prominently in the section on the ugly. What is more difficult to recognize is the intrinsic connection with the other strands of the argument. In the text that Adorno left us they appear as heterogeneous elements, each of them having its own distinct function. Neither the connections nor the broader context are worked out with the same rigor that we find in other sections of *Aesthetic Theory*. For this reason our analysis has to examine the elements as well as the not fully articulated whole.

While the section on the ugly in *Aesthetic Theory* opens with a reference to the German aesthetic tradition, thereby placing Adorno's treatment of the concept in the context of German idealism and its philosophy of art, in Adorno's work the problem of aesthetic violence through the ugly goes back to the 1930s, especially to *The Philosophy of Modern Music*.<sup>5</sup> Adorno's interpretation of Schoenberg and Stravinsky (in the second part, written later) discusses the ugly as a specific element of post-Romantic music, a moment that characterizes the modernist artwork as a radical opposition to the conventions of romantic music. The ugly appears first and foremost as a formal moment, the result of techniques that refuse the final return from dissonance to consonance. In the case of Schoenberg, there is no question about the legitimacy of this radical move. As Adorno argues, the emancipation of the dissonance in the work of Schoenberg follows the historical logic of the material. Adorno speaks of the necessity of art with respect to its immanent development: "Under the coercion of its own objective consequences music has critically invalidated the idea of the polished work and disrupted the collective continuity of its effect."<sup>6</sup> Not only does the rejection of the traditional masterpiece deserve attention but also the loss of the collective grounding of art. This loss isolates the advanced artwork as a radical subjective expression

of the individual artist, a process that increases the distance between advanced music and the general public. To the general public the radical work that strictly follows the logic (*Zwang*) of the material appears ugly. Yet for Adorno it is not the misapprehension of the audience that brings about the foregrounding of the ugly; rather, it is the work itself that violates traditional compositional solutions (*Harmonik*) and its corresponding aesthetic values (the beautiful). Hence Adorno can invoke “a prohibitive Canon” (*Philosophy of Modern Music*, 34) (“Kanon des Verbotenen” [*Gesammelte Schriften*, 12:37]) as the guiding principle for the modern artist, the refusal to return to older solutions of technical problems. In this argument the opposition between the beautiful and the ugly receives new meaning. While the idealist philosophy of art insisted on the priority of the beautiful and treated the ugly as a negative second term, the transition to modern music unhinges this opposition from its conventional place and reverses the priority. Together with the rounded artwork, the beautiful as the aesthetic ideal has to be given up, since its preservation would be false. For Adorno the notion of the correct (i.e. the historically appropriate technical solution) has replaced the appreciation of the beautiful. Therefore in a note he stresses the contingency of specific accords, for example the “octave doublings” (*Philosophy of Modern Music*, 35) (“Oktavverdopplungen”). They can be correct or incorrect depending on the “state of material” (*ibid.*) (“Stand des Materials”). The state of material must be the primary concern of the composer—without regard to conventional aesthetic values.

The concept of the ugly becomes part of the discussion of modern music by way of the negation of the convention (style) and its connection with the concept of the beautiful. Yet this process contains more than the exhaustion of the beautiful; it raises the ugly as a new aesthetic quality linked to the advanced technique that presses the state of material. In this context the concept of the ugly has a purely formal character based on the immanent analysis of the history of modern music. In strictly technical terms—that is, in the correct or incorrect use of techniques—the category could be replaced with the term “radical dissonance.” As Adorno explains with reference to Schoenberg’s atonal works, “The first atonal works are case studies in the sense of psychoanalytical dream case studies” (*Philosophy of Modern Music*, 39).<sup>7</sup> This character cancels the notion of aesthetic appreciation,

which moderate modernism still wants to preserve. In other words, Adorno underscores the impossibility of an assessment based on given aesthetic concepts—unless their meaning can be detached from the tradition, allowing the ugly to become a positive term. However, we have to note that this reversal is consonant with the notion of progress in modern art, and specifically in modern music. Adorno does not mean to support a conscious return to older forms, to folklore or non-European art forms. His trajectory of modern music is tied to the development of European music and in particular to the fate of German music. This sets him apart, as we will see, from simultaneous trends in art criticism where the concept of the primitive plays a crucial role.

In Adorno's critique of Stravinsky in the second part of *The Philosophy of Modern Music*, this difference becomes quite clear. Based on the concept of immanent progress in music, he makes Stravinsky responsible for a turn in contemporary music toward a restoration of the tonal system. "In Stravinsky, the desire of the adolescent is ever stubbornly at work; it is the struggle of the youth to become a valid, proven classicist" (*Philosophy of Modern Music*, 137).<sup>8</sup> According to Adorno, the price that Stravinsky has to pay for this desire is a lack of rigor and consistency that becomes equivalent with regression. Yet the hidden classicism of Stravinsky, who appears to be part of the vanguard, is only one element that Adorno finds problematic. Of equal if not greater concern is Stravinsky's ambivalence toward the idea of culture, specifically his interest in folklore and the primitive. Stravinsky's rebellion against tradition invokes the barbaric and suspends the rules of musical culture. For Adorno, both tendencies, the lack of rigor and the flirtation with the primitive or folkloristic, demonstrate Stravinsky's compromise, his lack of persistence vis-à-vis the logic of the advanced musical material. "This tendency leads from commercial art—which readied the soul for sale as a commercial good—to the negation of the soul in protest against the character of consumer goods: to music's declaration of loyalty to its physical basis, to its reduction to the phenomenon, which assumes objective meaning in that it renounces, of its own accord, any claim to meaning" (*Philosophy of Modern Music*, 142).<sup>9</sup> Stravinsky's compromise brings him close to the very culture industry that he means to reject. In this respect Adorno's critique of Stravinsky is similar to his indictment of

Wagner: A compromised rebellion results in technical regression, which thereby becomes part of a commercialized culture.<sup>10</sup>

Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps* in particular provokes Adorno's polemic, since this work, while musically the most advanced, openly embraces the fashionable cult of the primitive. "This [*Sacre du Printemps*] belongs to the years when wild men came to be called primitives, to the sphere of Frazer and Lévy-Bruhl, and further of Freud's *Totem and Taboo*" (*Philosophy of Modern Music*, 146).<sup>11</sup> Adorno refuses to acknowledge the attempt to celebrate the cultic sacrifice of primitive societies that the anthropologists have reconstructed, since for him it is nothing but an "anti-humanistic sacrifice to the collective" (*Philosophy of Modern Music*, 145) ("antihumanistisches Opfer ans Kollektiv" *Gesammelte Schriften*, 12:129). While Adorno does not suggest that Stravinsky seriously wants to reenact a mythic sacrifice, he opposes the uncritical celebration of a primitive past determined by the subjugation of the individual. The seemingly detached presentation of the sacrifice on the stage remains, at least in Adorno's eyes, a regressive move: "When the avant-garde embraced African sculpture, the reactionary telos of the movement was totally concealed: this reaching out for primitive history seemed, rather, to serve the liberation of strangled art rather than its regimentation" (*Philosophy of Modern Music*, 146).<sup>12</sup> Adorno is aware that Stravinsky's critique of modern culture owes its impulse to the very liberalism it undermines, but this subversion, he argues, ultimately affirms fascist violence.

The aesthetic celebration of the mythic sacrifice in Stravinsky's music consciously violates the traditional aesthetic code in two ways. On the one hand, it openly shows the barbaric act; on the other, it breaks away from a romantic musical sensibility and embraces the primitive, also in musical terms. Yet this confluence of theatrical content and music does not achieve what Adorno demands, that is, musical progress. Rather, Stravinsky produces a compromised avant-garde in which the subversion of established culture encourages the rise of social and political barbarism. This means that Adorno rejects a form of the ugly that is incompatible with his concept of artistic progress. While *The Philosophy of Modern Music* acknowledges the legitimacy of the ugly in Schoenberg's music, in the case of Stravinsky the verdict is negative because the ugly is linked to a form of regressive primitivism. There can be little doubt that Adorno's harsh

critique was influenced by the increasing threat of the Third Reich in the late 1930s. It becomes urgent for Adorno to carefully distinguish the aesthetic revolution of the European avant-garde and the political revolution of European fascism. The rather abrupt rejection of turn-of-the-century primitivism, for instance in the negative reference to African sculpture (*Negerplastik*), contains an unresolved tension between the aesthetic and the sociopolitical, a tension to which Adorno returns in *Aesthetic Theory*.

Adorno's critique of Stravinsky insists on the difference between the early European avant-garde around 1900 in Paris and its reassessment in the late 1930s. Now the cult of the primitive appears in a different light because the barbarism of the Nazis has become the literal application, the negation of high culture. Adorno's humanistic defense of a progressive, future-oriented concept of history represses those moments that would question the concept of progress itself. However, in the final analysis, the discussion about primitive culture around 1900 was a discussion about the liberal concept of progress. This is evident in the two works Adorno mentions, namely Freud's *Totem und Tabu* and Carl Einstein's study *Negerplastik*. Both challenge the notion of progress on which the liberal conception of history was built.

At this point, the analysis of Adorno's thought requires a detour, namely a closer examination of Einstein's work. For the writer and art critic Einstein a serious reappraisal of African art was needed for two reasons. First, the contemporary interest in so-called primitive cultures (including African cultures) throws light on the aesthetic ideas of the European avant-garde. There are, Einstein suggests, significant parallels between the spatial configuration of Cubism and traditional African sculptures. Second, these parallels are reason enough to question the conventional evaluation of African art as undeveloped and aesthetically unsophisticated. In other words, a serious and rigorous understanding of African art must challenge the conceptual apparatus of European art history. The critic has to remove layers of prejudices based on a Eurocentric conception of aesthetic development. "From the very beginning the negro is seen as the inferior part who has to be ruthlessly categorized; and what he has to offer is a priori judged as flawed. Fairly vague hypotheses of evolution were carelessly



applied to him; for some critics he must submit to such procedures in order to fulfill a false concept of the primitive."<sup>13</sup> A methodologically rigorous engagement therefore requires a preliminary rejection of evolutionary theories and a distinct framework for the analysis of the material. In his methodological reflections Einstein underscores the dubious character of the term "primitive."<sup>14</sup> While it may serve as a positive term in a discourse that focuses on the elements of advanced civilizations, it also reinforces the contrast between European and African culture, thereby undercutting the very possibility of a meaningful comparative interpretation. While Einstein means to examine so-called primitive art, he does not want to emphasize its primitivism as a mere aesthetic stimulus for late European civilizations, the kind of stimulus Adorno criticized in his polemic against Stravinsky.

What are the requirements for this task? It will be necessary to distinguish between those elements that Einstein explicitly mentions and those that are part of his project but remain invisible in his argument. Although Einstein acknowledges the impact of modern art on the new assessment of African art, he warns against premature comparisons and calls for a distinct approach to African sculptures. At the same time, he has to concede that there is little empirical knowledge about African art history, neither in terms of geographical regions (tribe culture) nor in terms of historical development. Therefore he is left with the idea of a stylistic approach ("stilkritischer Aufbau"), an idea he rejects because of its problematic concept of development from simple to more complex forms. This leaves the critic with a highly heterogeneous collection of objects without a grasp of the totality. In this situation, Einstein decides in favor of a strictly phenomenological approach—a comparative analysis of the objects without regard to their background and their historical origin. According to Einstein, their striking features demonstrate the typical moment of African art.

It is worth noting that Einstein's method is as much the result of a lack of positive knowledge as an a priori preference for a formalist approach. One cannot argue therefore that Einstein rejects the concept of history and progress. What he rejects is the application of European history to non-European cultures. Einstein's warning against evolutionary thinking is meant to stop empty speculation in a field with very few secure markers. Given the lack of historical concreteness

and depth, Einstein's formalist method searches for similarities and contrasts. He contrasts the African sculpture with the development of sculpture in Europe by setting up the opposition "plastisch"—"male-risch," and examines similarities between African and modern European art under the category "cubic conception of space" ("kubische Raumschauung" (Einstein, *Werke*, 1:254–61). Above all, however, he emphasizes the religious nature of African sculpture, namely the fact that the figures are cult objects. Nonetheless, he does not draw the conclusion that, because of their religious nature, the sculptures are part of an earlier phase of culture, which European post-Renaissance art had left behind. In Einstein's study African culture stands apart, except in formal terms, namely in the configuration of space.

What does this mean for the assessment of the "primitive"? For Einstein it is important to remove from the evaluation of African sculpture the reproach of aesthetic deficiency, especially the lack of formal beauty. The formal qualities of the figures, he insists, have to be understood and evaluated in the context of African cult practices: "We will avoid the mistake of misunderstanding the art of the African people based on unconscious memories of some European art forms, because we approach African art in formal terms as an enclosed realm."<sup>15</sup> Einstein underscores the formal reasons for the particularity of African art. In other words, he treats the formal and the cultural aspect as codetermining the figure. The African artist is faced with a formal task that is different from that of the European artist and therefore, as Einstein suggests, also arrives at a different solution. Einstein emphasizes the cubic, three-dimensional character of the figures, but not as the result of a movement that suggests three-dimensionality; instead, three-dimensionality is instantly and completely realized in the form of the figure and can be comprehended as such by the viewer ("totale Form, . . . die in einem Sehtakt den Beschauer bestimmt" [Einstein, *Werke*, 1:256]). This formal structure is not to be confused with a naturalist rendering of the body. In his discussion of the representation of the body, Einstein makes this quite clear: "Frequently African sculptures are criticized for their so-called proportional flaws; but one has to understand that the optical discontinuity of space is transformed into purified form, i.e. into an order (since we are dealing with plastic form) in which the different parts are individually valued."<sup>16</sup> What appears to the untrained European

eye as deformed and therefore ugly and barbaric reveals its formal consistency to a viewer who recognizes the cubic quality of the sculpture and the logic of its form. Proportions do not follow the requirements of a realistic representation; instead, "it depends to what extent the significant depth quotients, by which I mean the plastic resultant, are expected to express depth."<sup>17</sup> Einstein's analysis underscores the totality of the form rather than the aspect of representation. While he does not deny that the sculpture is meant to represent the God, he takes the religious meaning more or less for granted.

This conscious disregard in the discussion of the cubic form draws attention to the unacknowledged tension of Einstein's approach. On the one hand, he means to establish the unique cultural context of African art by stressing the religious quality (cult practices); on the other, he wants to isolate the formal structure. While the religious emphasis would encourage the moment of representation (the God), the formal emphasis allows the comparison with European art. Unlike Adorno, Einstein sees a legitimate affinity between African art and European Cubism. Cubism, he suggests, rediscovered spatial principles that African art had already established. In Einstein's mind, the comparison legitimizes both sides. The truth of modern European art supports the value of African art, while the authenticity of African art (rooted in religion) underscores the legitimacy of the European avant-garde. In Einstein's approach the problem of primitivism disappears, since the designation of African art as "primitive" is based on a European misconception. By introducing a separate logic for African art, Einstein can validate the influence of African art that Adorno acknowledges with suspicion. Yet, we have to note that his African logic remains rather static and, as Einstein concedes, without historical depth. Therefore he contrasts European development with African being—in *Negerplastik* with a preference for the African side. At the same time, he remains attached to the concept of historical development when he discusses European art, as his later work *Die Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts* (1926) makes quite clear. This raises the question, then, of how the impact of non-European art on European modernism around 1900 can be accounted for. The embrace of the barbaric, which for Adorno remains potentially a moment of regression, is for Einstein primarily a shift in the framework, a merging of two cultures, or, more precisely, a merging of formal structures.

Compared with Einstein's extensive analysis of African sculptures, Adorno's brief remarks about the problematic character of "primitivism" seem insufficient. Especially his concept of artistic progress, derived from his interpretation of the new Vienna School, seems to confirm the dominance of the European development, possibly even a linear conception of history. Yet Adorno's question is different from Einstein's concerns. While the latter responds critically to cultural thought patterns, Adorno looks at the return of the repressed. For him the celebration of the primitive marks a problematic critique of modern European culture because it simply refuses to deal with the accumulated burden of human history. This will be, of course, the central theme of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, written a few years later. Still, Einstein's study *Negerplastik* was a challenge that Adorno refused to take seriously when he wrote the second part of *The Philosophy of Modern Music*, presumably because of his concern with the fate of European history. One can see the traces of this rejection even in *Aesthetic Theory*. In different parts of the text he returns to the question of archaic art, when he examines the question of the origin of art.

A brief recapitulation of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is inevitable in order to explicate the relevance of the archaic and primitive in Adorno's thought. Ostensibly the text addresses the failure of the Enlightenment, the failure of progress in human history. More specifically, Horkheimer and Adorno argue that the overcoming of myth has remained incomplete. The result is a new kind of barbarism introduced and propagated by totalitarian regimes. At the philosophical level, the violence of the totalitarian state corresponds to the return of the mythic, which Adorno addresses in the Odysseus excursus. At the center of this discussion stands the concept of the sacrifice. The need to sacrifice a preselected member of the collective for the good of the same collective is described by Adorno as "a state of archaic deficiency, in which it is hardly possible to make any distinction between human sacrifice and cannibalism."<sup>18</sup> For Adorno magic thought, which legitimizes and rationalizes human sacrifice, is irrational in its support of nonfreedom. As Adorno writes, "The magic collective interpretation of sacrifice, which wholly denies its rationality, is its rationalization: but the neat enlightened assumption that, like ideology today, it could once have been the truth, is too naïve"

(*Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 52). The concept of progress, central to the enlightenment, is always already compromised by myth, since reason rationalized the very structures it means to overcome. What stays in place, Adorno argues, is the pattern of exchange. Even the rational critique of sacrifice in the name of self-preservation holds on to the notion of exchange. The civilizing process itself, by means of rationality, is the source of mythic irrationality: "This very denial, the nucleus of all civilizing rationality, is the germ cell of a proliferating mythic irrationality" (*Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 54). As Adorno points out, Odysseus's cunning, his superior rationality, can defeat the older mythic forces, but remains tied to the fundamental structure. He gains control over nature by subjecting himself to the laws of nature—it is self-preservation through adaptation.

The victory of the Enlightenment is based on the elimination of the irrational forces of myth. The price to be paid for this victory was the need to dominate nature and, even more important, human self-destruction, which means that mythic structures have not been truly overcome. "In the enlightened world mythology has entered into the profane. In its blank purity, the reality which has been cleansed of demons and their conceptual descendants assumes the numinous character which the ancient world attributed to demons" (*Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 28). The return of mythic terror challenges the idea of progress that the Enlightenment defined as its goal; moreover, it challenges the notions of linear history and stages of evolution. Thus Horkheimer and Adorno's understanding of the dialectical process of history places the emphasis on the copresence of the old and the new, an alignment that defies the idea of progress. The ancient terror, they suggest, has not disappeared; it has only taken on a new form. In *Dialectic of Enlightenment* the relevance of their insight for aesthetic production, an aspect that would especially interest Adorno, is not closely examined, but the presence of the archaic or primitive in the modern world is acknowledged as a fundamental problem that cannot be brushed aside as a mere fashionable phenomenon. Therefore Adorno's brief treatment of the question in his critique of Stravinsky proves unsatisfactory.

Although Adorno's last work has been rightly defined as a theory of the modern work of art, there are a number of competing concerns

that are either closely related to the central theme or surface only here and there. One of them is the origin of art and the nature of archaic art. A lengthy excursus is dedicated to questions of origin, which the editors offer as part of the *Paralipomena*.<sup>19</sup> It has the form of a critical assessment of the existing literature on this topic. By and large, Adorno remains unimpressed by the work that has been done in this field, since he is dissatisfied with the prevailing methods. Briefly put, Adorno is equally suspicious of an ontological approach (Heidegger) and the results of positivistic research. Still, he is also not satisfied with Croce's verdict that the question of the origin of art is aesthetically irrelevant, for he maintains, against Croce, that art cannot be categorized as "an invariant form of consciousness" (*Aesthetic Theory*, 326). Hence, the search for the origin of art is defined as the search for historical beginnings, more precisely for the moment when art separates itself from the oldest known cultic practices. Ultimately, Adorno is less interested in the distinction between the camp that underscores the naturalistic representation in the oldest works (Arnold Hauser, for example) and scholars who stress the symbolic meaning. When he speaks in his own voice, he foregrounds the beginnings of subjectivity as a crucial step for the production of art: "Although expression is seemingly an aspect of subjectivity, in it—externalization—there dwells just as much that is not the self, that probably is the collective. In that the subject, awakening to expression, seeks collective sanction, expression is already evidence of a fissure" (*Aesthetic Theory*, 328).<sup>20</sup> Adorno focuses neither on representation nor on symbolic meaning; instead, he insists on the moment of expression as a decisive element. Here we have to note that he defines expression as always already mediated by the Non-Ego, namely the collective. Therefore, as Adorno concludes, it is impossible to grasp the original unity of art. "Wesenseinheit" (*Gesammelte Schriften*, 7:484), as the philosophical point of departure, already presupposes a distinction within the work, on the one hand (material and form), and the social collective, on the other.

Following the direction of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno's own understanding of early art emphasizes the moment of mimesis as the oldest, pre-aesthetic approach in which, as part of the magic practice, subject and object are not yet distinguished. In the earliest known artworks, however, this state is already surpassed, for instance in works

such as the cave paintings. These paintings, according to Adorno, are characterized by “striking traces of autonomous elaboration” (*Aesthetic Theory*, 329)—i.e. by aesthetic qualities—without losing the magic quality of early mimesis. It is this second aspect that also marks later art as something that has not quite caught up with the process of civilization. Returning to the central theme of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno writes, “But aesthetic comportment is not altogether rudimentary. An irrevocable necessity of art and preserved by it, aesthetic comportment contains what has been belligerently excised from civilization and repressed, as well as the human suffering under the loss, a suffering already expressed in the earliest forms of mimesis” (*Aesthetic Theory*, 330).<sup>21</sup> While the original separation of mimetic impulse and aesthetic production can only be determined after it happened, the artwork, including the advanced work, cannot completely detach itself from the magic element. For Adorno, who looks back at the origins of art from the perspective of the modern work of art, these traces of mimesis are a significant moment, a form of regression in the eyes of scientific rationalization; yet it is a form of regression that remains essential for humanity as long as the concept of reason is tied to human self-destruction.

In one of the fragments of the *Paralipomena* Adorno attempts to define the relationship between aesthetic and pre-aesthetic moments in the artwork. He suggests that ancient art (*vergangene Kunst*) is not coincidental with its cultic function, but it cannot be described as the opposite; “Rather, art tore itself free from cult objects by a leap in which the cultic element was both transformed and preserved, and this structure is reproduced on an expanding scale at every level of its history” (*Aesthetic Theory*, 286).<sup>22</sup> Put differently, the history of art preserves the cultic element in all its phases, including European modernism. It is not accidental that a closely related fragment examines the nature of the cultic or mimetic moment. Looking at modern art, in particular at the works of Picasso, Adorno notes the “marks of the frightening” (*Aesthetic Theory*, 287) (“Male des Schreckhaften” [*Gesammelte Schriften*, 7:426]), i.e. the shock produced in the viewer by the deformation of the represented object. Unlike Einstein, Adorno does not interpret the deformation in Cubism as an exclusively formal problem. Rather, he insists on the presence of older elements, a historically legitimate return of the horror in cultic figures. This means

that, in Adorno's late thought, the ugly is not a purely formal question; rather, it is closely linked to the larger issue of the origin of art and the significance of the cultic element. As long as one looks at Adorno's understanding of the ugly exclusively or primarily in the context of the history of aesthetics, one will miss this crucial link. The organization of *Aesthetic Theory* suggests such an approach, since the question of the ugly is discussed in the traditional proximity to the beautiful. However, this proximity is deceptive, for Adorno, notwithstanding his high regard for Kant and Hegel, remains hostile to the idea of classicism.<sup>23</sup> Hence he insists not only on the historical priority of the ugly but also on its continued relevance in modern art.

As a critic of modern art (with an emphasis on music) Adorno realizes that the conventional definition of the ugly as a negation of the beautiful does little to explain the powerful presence of the ugly in modern art, because a formal definition can at best acknowledge the phenomena but not assess their origin and legitimacy. Yet it is precisely the legitimacy of the ugly that is at the center of his analysis. It determines both the content and the form of the artwork. The representations of social misery in naturalist plays and novels violates the conventional aesthetic code; even more explicitly the "Widerwärtige und Abstoßende" make their appearance in avant-garde poetry (i.e. in Baudelaire and Benn). Adorno comments: "The repressed who sides with the revolution is, according to the standards of the beautiful life in an ugly society, uncouth and distorted by resentment, and he bears all the stigmas of degradation under the burden of unfree—moreover, manual—labor" (*Aesthetic Theory*, 48).<sup>24</sup> It is the task of modern art to be on the side of those social phenomena that have been treated as taboo. Yet we have to note that Adorno does not speak out in favor of the aestheticization of the ugly; in fact, he explicitly problematizes the use of humor in Poetic Realism as a means to tone down and integrate the abject. The critical function of the modern artwork, specifically its opposition to the social status quo, is supported and enhanced by the presentation of the ugly.

For two reasons, however, Adorno's advocacy of the ugly should not be confused with a naive commitment to naturalism. First of all, Adorno resolutely rejects the poetic celebration of human suffering; second, he underscores the formal demands of the artwork. The transformation of the ugly into form results in the cruel. By opening



itself to the cruel, the artwork resists its own tendency to strive for formal reconciliation. Adorno notes: "The subjective domination of the act of forming is not imposed on irrelevant materials but is read out of them; the cruelty of forming is mimesis of myth, with which it struggles" (*Aesthetic Theory*, 50).<sup>25</sup> The radical formal experiment, which makes visible the cruel, repeats the moment of cruelty in myth, but it does not stop there. At the same time, Adorno suggests, the cruel contains a moment of critical self-reflection. Art "despairs over the claim to power that it fulfills in being reconciled" (*Aesthetic Theory*, 50).<sup>26</sup>

While the representation of the ugly in the artwork as a form of social criticism is an important point in Adorno's inquiry; it by no means exhausts the significance of the ugly. Adorno's brief discussion of the cruel points to another, deeper level of his argument, namely the banished but ultimately not overcome power of myth in the modern world. This is the place where the central theme of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* merges with the analysis of the origin of art in *Aesthetic Theory*. Adorno's resistance to the idea of formal reconciliation in German classicism, insofar as it denies or minimizes human suffering, leads him to the archaic and primitive where the aesthetic reconciliation has not yet occurred. Although he strongly emphasizes, as we have seen, the "Sprung" between magic practices and art, he equally stresses the importance of the mythic ground. This, however, means that the ugly is prior to the beautiful: "If one originated in the other, it is beauty that originated in the ugly, and not the reverse" (*Aesthetic Theory*, 50).<sup>27</sup> This seemingly formal shift (the beautiful becomes the negation of the ugly) opens up a dimension of art that traditional aesthetic theory could not accommodate within its system. Following the strategy of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno's own theory embraces the ugly in both the archaic and the modern work because they share, although in very different ways, the impact of mythic structures; that is to say, they are participating in as well as negating the power of myth. In the reversal suggested by Adorno, the beautiful takes on a new meaning. It becomes part of the historical process of a problematic human history. "In this principle [of order] the antithesis to the archaic is implicit as the play of forces of the beautiful single whole; the qualitative leap of art is a smallest transition. By virtue of this dialectic the image of the beautiful is metamorphosed into the movement of enlightenment as a whole" (*Aesthetic*

*Theory*, 52).<sup>28</sup> Briefly put, the concept of the beautiful is historically marked as the transition from the archaic and primitive to a later cultural stage. While this transition, according to Adorno, contains in itself a moment of progress, a stronger articulation of the aesthetic, it cannot completely escape the bond with the archaic. “The affinity of all beauty with death has its nexus in the idea of pure form that art imposes on the diversity of the living and that is extinguished in it” (*Aesthetic Theory*, 52).<sup>29</sup> Where art succeeds to bring about aesthetic reconciliation, it does so at a high price, namely the death of the non-aesthetic material. This brings us to a somewhat unexpected conclusion: The rigorous defense of the autonomy of art, a central theme of *Aesthetic Theory*, finds its limit in the concept of the ugly, which is a label for the primitive and archaic. Although the ugly is grounded in the archaic, i.e. in the sphere of nonfreedom, it also articulates the force of life against the death of the aesthetic form.

As a formal treatment of an aesthetic category, Adorno’s section on the ugly comes across as heterogeneous and incomplete. The author appears to be unable to make up his mind what exactly he wants to examine. The frequent shift in emphasis from the philosophical tradition to modern art, the role of the archaic, and the relationship between myth and art confuses a reader who is expecting the development of a linear argument. Obviously *Aesthetic Theory* refuses to honor this expectation and places the emphasis on the unfolding of the conceptual material. One has to find the right key in order to open the section. Although Adorno seems to call attention to the importance of the philosophical tradition by making it the point of departure for his discussion, it turns out not to be the key that opens the door to his deeper concerns. Instead, the significance of the ugly for the articulation of the modern artwork points us in the right direction. The subversive force of the advanced work of art violates conventional aesthetic norms by foregrounding the ugly and rejects the false reconciliation of the beautiful. The critical function of the ugly in modern art, however, is closely connected with Adorno’s concept of history in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. The dialectic of progress and regression resurfaces in *Aesthetic Theory* as the dialectic of the modern and the archaic. For this reason, the difference between magical practices

and early art is of great importance for Adorno. This means that behind the question of the ugly lies the larger issue of the primitive and its meaning in modern, enlightened society. Of course, Adorno was not the first theorist to discover this problem. Nietzsche and Freud had offered decisive insights with which Adorno was familiar. As we have seen, in *The Philosophy of Modern Music* his response to Freud was brief and insufficient; the implicit engagement with Nietzsche in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, on the other hand, was more serious. But it is not the question of influence that is of interest for the present discussion. Instead, the final section will focus on Adorno's place within the theoretical constellation of modernism.

When Freud, in his essay "Animism, Magic, and the Omnipotence of Thought," mentions in passing that there is an area in modern culture that has remained close to the stage of animism, namely art, the proximity to Adorno is hard to overlook. Freud writes, "Only in art does it still happen that a man who is consumed by desires performs something resembling the accomplishment of those desires and that what he does in play produces emotional effects—thanks to artistic illusion—just as though it were something real."<sup>30</sup> More specifically, Freud suggests that art was originally not a purely aesthetic phenomenon but served other purposes, among them magic functions. At the same time, one must note that this observation—which Adorno must have known—is part of a larger argument concerning the place of animism and magic in human development. Consequently, for Freud the proximity (if not the identity) of art and magic, and not the difference, is the significant insight. The essay develops an evolutionary model in which Freud calls attention to and then emphasizes the parallel between individual development and the evolution of the species. Primitive thought, i.e. animism, corresponds to narcissism in the same manner as the religious phase (the creation of gods) corresponds to the stage of "object attachment" outside the ego. In Freud's model there is no attempt to give a complete explanation of art or the aesthetic. The example he cites, namely the paintings in French caves, emphasizes an early stage of art when magic and aesthetic operated side by side. He assumes that the magic functions are today for the most part extinct ("zum großen Teil erloschen," [*Studienausgabe*, 9:378]). Still, it is important to note that Freud writes

“zum großen Teil” and does not thereby exclude the continued effect of older practices in art. In the area of art, the borderline between the primitive and the more developed form appears to be less clearly marked, which leaves art in an ambiguous position vis-à-vis the developmental scheme that Freud uses. Still, Freud leaves no doubt about the process of enlightenment and its goal. Human maturity is reached in the scientific, postreligious stage when all thoughts of omnipotence, which motivated primitive cultures to develop elaborate animistic thought structures, have been relinquished. For Freud, full enlightenment is not the equivalent of domination of nature but the resigned insight that human beings have, individually as well as collectively, only limited power. While Freud holds on to an evolutionary scheme to map human history, he also questions it by drawing attention to psychic pathology. In his comparison between neurotics and primitives, he alludes to the insight that the narratives of the Enlightenment (which Freud shared) must be regarded as failures, or, in a different reading, he points to the impossibility of the Enlightenment.

The overlap between Freud and Adorno is considerable. Both theorists underscore the ambiguity of art in the history of human culture. Both point to the proximity of magic and art, but they place the emphasis differently. Where Freud highlights the proximity of art and magic as a defining moment of primitive culture but thinks of modern art as mostly free of such elements, Adorno, as we have seen, emphasizes the initial difference, thereby focusing on the specificity of the aesthetic as a vital moment of its origin, but he allows for a greater presence of the magic in the modern artwork. In other words, by remaining attached to the primitive, the advanced artwork resists the process of Enlightenment. Of course, there is considerably more legitimacy to this resistance in Adorno's thought than in Freud's theory. Still, Adorno recognizes the ambiguity of the modern artwork, its tendency to return to the logic of mimesis. For Adorno there is no longer a clear-cut distinction between modern and primitive culture, which Freud takes over from the anthropologists of his time (i.e. James George Frazer and E. B. Tyler), nor is there a firm belief in science. The radical critique of historical progress in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* would have shocked even the Freud of “Das Unbehagen in der Kultur.”

In this regard Nietzsche's critique of the Enlightenment resonates more strongly with Adorno's thought. Moreover, Nietzsche's emphatic reevaluation of the function of art in the process of culture results in a new approach to the primitive and, by the same token, to a different understanding of science. In *The Birth of Tragedy* the contrast between Apollo and Dionysus, between measured form and the eruptive forces of the primitive, creates a space for the rejuvenation of art in Nietzsche's own time, a renewal that Nietzsche hoped Wagner's opera would bring about. For the young Nietzsche, this is not merely an aesthetic question; it concerns the future of culture, since rationalism, embodied by Socrates and the dominant aspect of Western civilization, has damaged and diminished the forces of life. By examining Greek tragedy, Nietzsche rediscovers those elements of early culture that the philologists of his time, saturated with the ideals of modern classicism, were prone to overlook or failed to take seriously. In order to celebrate Greek culture as a culture of reconciliation (*Versöhnung*), he must draw attention to its darker side, namely the Dionysian orgies. Dionysian culture is portrayed as the opposite of Dorian culture, and Nietzsche comments, "That repulsive witches' brew of sensuality and cruelty was powerless here; the only reminder of it . . . is to be found in the strange mixture and duality in the affects of the Dionysiac enthusiasts."<sup>31</sup> While Nietzsche acknowledges that the orgiastic cult of Dionysus came from the East, he also emphasizes the intrinsic quality of the darker side; it is the part that Apollonian Greek culture had repressed. Nietzsche's archaeology of Greek culture results in two discoveries. On the one hand, he uncovers the pre-Olympian world, in other words, the barbaric and cruel; on the other, he defines the world of the Olympian gods as an illusionary aesthetic reality. By turning these layers of culture into principles (*Prinzipien*), Nietzsche can conceive of Greek tragedy as the mysterious marriage ("geheimnisvolles Ehebündnis," [*Werke in drei Bänden*, 1:35]), the true synthesis of Greek culture. This shift from an archaeological to a systematic perspective will later enable Nietzsche to put forth Wagner's opera as the new cultural synthesis, a rebirth of ancient tragedy.

The recognition of the barbaric and ugly in archaic culture leads Nietzsche to a differentiation between literary genres. While the epos fulfills the requirements of the Apollonian and tragedy represents a

synthesis of the Dionysian and the Apollonian, poetry articulates the Dionysian element most succinctly. The poet “has become entirely at one with the primordial unity . . . and he produces a copy of this primordial unity as music” (*Birth of Tragedy*, 30).<sup>32</sup> As Nietzsche reminds us, no aesthetic production can access the “Ur-Eine” without mediation. The suffering is transformed into music, but this very process occurs under the impact of the Apollonian principle. The ultimate goal is therefore not the immediate articulation of suffering but the appearance of redemption. The rediscovery of the barbaric and ugly in *The Birth of Tragedy* should not be confused therefore with its unmitigated celebration. Rather, the purpose is the recognition of archaic horror as a vital and necessary element of culture that finds its appropriate expression in art. For the early Nietzsche, the aesthetic justification of life stands at the center of his project. Still, this project includes the continued efficacy of the archaic.

Nietzsche makes the loss of myth and the rise of Socratic rationalism responsible for the decline of Greek culture and therefore calls for a rebirth of myth. Toward the end of the essay, the Dionysian principle and myth seem to merge, although Nietzsche initially distinguished them. Greek myth comprises the narrative of the ancient Greek people. It is, in other words, already one step removed from the Dionysian principle. This means that the myth of tragedy “participates fully in the aim of all art, which is to effect a metaphysical transfiguration” (*Birth of Tragedy*, 113).<sup>33</sup> In other words, in Nietzsche’s schema, myth and art are on the side of the transfiguration of unbearable suffering. In *Dialectic of Enlightenment* Adorno and Horkheimer, as we have seen, differ sharply from this analysis. Myth denotes the realm of *Unfreiheit* that characterizes archaic and barbaric, and its return in totalitarian political systems does not hold a Nietzschean promise of aesthetic reconciliation. While Nietzsche’s critique of the Enlightenment moves in the same direction as Adorno and Horkheimer, it finds its goal in aesthetic reconciliation, which means an indirect legitimation of human suffering. The refusal of aesthetic reconciliation under the sign of the beautiful is one of the central considerations of Adorno’s aesthetic theory. For this reason, he underscores not only the primacy of the ugly over the beautiful but also the crucial importance of the ugly and horrible in modern art. He emphasizes the negative moment as a force of opposition that classical

philosophy of art keeps in a secondary position. This attitude throws also a different light on his critique of Stravinsky. His attack on the celebration of the primitive is possibly also directed at the sublation of pain and horror in *The Birth of Tragedy*, since Nietzsche's understanding of music keeps it in the realm of aesthetic illusion.

To be sure, Nietzsche's commitment to Schopenhauer's metaphysics, which supported his early assessment of music, later vanished. Already in *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, his approach to music is driven by different concerns. Fragment 217 of the first volume analyzes the development of modern music in a manner that is rather close to the perspective of *The Philosophy of Modern Music*. Nietzsche describes the advent of modern music, by which he probably understood late-Romantic music including Wagner, as a process of intellectualization. Where older music emphasized the sensual, the new music underscores the abstract intellectual quality, which means that the listener has to focus on the meaning. But the increase in expressive power, Nietzsche suggests, corresponds to a loss in sensual refinement. The new music is not only louder but also "gröber." The point Nietzsche wants to make is that both the structure and the reception of music have transcended the realm of the beautiful. Nietzsche notes, "Then, the ugly side of the world, the side originally hostile to the senses, has now been conquered for music; its sphere of power especially in the domain of the sublime, dreadful and mysterious has therewith increased astonishingly."<sup>34</sup> The process of intellectualization legitimizes the ugly, which classical music had either forbidden or kept on the margins, as a moment of musical expression. Nietzsche's response to this development is highly ambivalent. While he appreciates the increase in symbolic meaning, he also deplores the loss of sensuality and the rise of the ugly. Anticipating Adorno's concept of the culture industry, he comments on the split between advanced and popular music. In popular music the ugly makes its appearance without symbolic meaning. He points to "the enormous majority growing every year more and more incapable of comprehending the meaningful even in the form of the sensually ugly and therefore learning to seize with greater and greater contentment the ugly and disgusting in itself, that is to say the basely sensual, in music" (*Human, All Too Human*, 101).<sup>35</sup> The distinction between the meaningful ugly in high art and the ugly in the low forms

of mere sensuality allows Nietzsche to deal with the prohibitions of traditional music aesthetic against the ugly and the repulsive (*Ekelhafte*). It is important to note that the increase of the ugly is not treated as part of the return of the primitive; rather, it is the result of the new music's striving for symbolic meaning. In other words, it is conceived as an internal process in the history of nineteenth-century music. In his analysis of Schoenberg's music, Adorno arrives at a similar position. The greater importance of the ugly in modern music is the result of unresolved dissonances; briefly put, it is the result of the internal logic of the composition. There is no need to invoke the Dionysian to explain the embrace of radical dissonance.

As we have seen, in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* Adorno revised his position when he recognized the need to examine the archaic and primitive more carefully. The concept of myth, broadly defined, became the vehicle for this exploration. Myth, Adorno and Horkheimer argued, was not only the opposite of the Enlightenment (as the embodiment of oppression) but also part of the Enlightenment as a form of reason. Their intertwinement marks the fatal flaw of history. Hence a Nietzschean celebration of the Dionysian is completely missing in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. This aspect does not change in *Aesthetic Theory*. The stronger recognition of the ugly as a defining element of both archaic and modern art is not related to Nietzsche's Dionysian primitivism; rather, it draws attention to the critical function of the work of art. While the early artworks struggle to reveal their distinct aesthetic character against the realm of the magic, the modern work demonstrates its critical opposition to classical reconciliation by way of its refusal of the harmony of beauty. Whereas the later Nietzsche wavers between the celebration of classicism (Mozart) and the acknowledgment of decadent European modernism (Wagner), Adorno tends to equate classicism with false aesthetic solutions. In *Aesthetic Theory* he acknowledges the archaic and primitive as a crucial element of early art, but the perspective is the opposite of that of the early Nietzsche. Adorno focuses attention on the difference between art and magic. In short, he underscores the process of civilization, in which art partakes while it resists the notion of a rational evolution (science). Artworks need the moment of "Verzauberung" that science must resolutely refuse.



## Notes

1. See Siegfried J. Schmidt, "Der philosophische Begriff des Schönen und des Häßlichen in Adornos *Ästhetischer Theorie*"; Thomas Huhn, "Diligence and Industry: Adorno and the Ugly."

2. See Christoph Menke-Eggers, *The Sovereignty of Art: Aesthetic Negativity in Adorno and Derrida*; David Roberts, *Art and Enlightenment: Aesthetic Theory after Adorno*.

3. See Günter Oesterle, "Entwurf einer Monographie des Häßlichen"; I. M. Bernstein, *The Fate of Art: Aesthetic Alienation from Kant to Derrida and Adorno*.

4. See Albrecht Wellmer, *The Persistence of Modernity: Essays on Aesthetics, Ethics, and Postmodernism*.

5. See Robert Hullot-Kentor, "The Philosophy of Dissonance: Adorno and Schönberg."

6. Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music*; references to subsequent citations are given in parentheses. The German text is from Adorno's *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 12: "Musik hat unterm Zwang der eigenen sachlichen Konsequenz die Idee des runden Werkes kritisch aufgelöst und den kollektiven Wirkungszusammenhang durchschnitten" (36).

7. "Die ersten atonalen Werke sind Protokolle im Sinn von psychoanalytischen Traumprotokollen" (*Gesammelte Schriften*, 12:44).

8. "In Strawinsky bleibt hartnäckig der Wunsch des Halbwüchsigen am Werk, ein geltender, bewahrter Klassiker zu werden" (*Gesammelte Schriften*, 12:128).

9. "Die Tendenz führt vom Kunstgewerbe, das die Seele als Ware zurichtet, zur Negation der Seele im Protest gegen den Warencharakter: zur Vereidigung der Musik auf die Physis, zu ihrer Reduktion auf die Erscheinung, die objektive Bedeutung annehme, indem sie auf Bedeuten von sich aus verzichtet" (*Gesammelte Schriften*, 12:132).

10. See Andreas Huyssen, "Adorno in Reverse: From Hollywood to Richard Wagner."

11. "Es [*Sacre du Printemps*] gehört den Jahren an, da man die Wilden Primitive zu nennen begann, der Sphäre von Frazer und Lévy-Bruhl, auch von "Totem und Tabu" (*Gesammelte Schriften*, 12:136).

12. "Als die Avantgarde zur Negerplastik sich bekannte, war das reaktionäre Telos der Bewegung ganz verborgen: der Griff nach der Urgeschichte schien eher der Entfesselung der eingeschnürten Kunst als ihrer Reglementierung zu dienen" (*Gesammelte Schriften*, 12:136).

13. "Der Neger jedoch gilt von Beginn an als der inferiore Teil, der rücksichtslos zu bearbeiten ist, und das von ihm Gebotene wird a priori als ein Manko verurteilt. Leichtfertig deutete man recht vage Evolutionshypothesen auf ihn zurecht; er mußte dem einen sich ausliefern, um einen Fehlbegriff von Primitivität abzugeben" (Einstein, *Werke*, 1:245).

14. For a general discussion of primitivism, see Robert Goldwater,

*Primitivism in Modern Art*; Colin Rhodes, *Primitivism and Modern Art*; also David Pan, *Primitive Renaissance: Rethinking German Expressionism*.

15. "Den Fehler, die Kunst der Neger an einem unbewußten Erinnern irgendwelcher europäischer Kunstform zu schanden zu machen, werden wir vermeiden, da die afrikanische Kunst aus formalen Gründen als umrissener Bezirk vor uns steht" (*Werke*, 1:254).

16. "Häufig tadelt man an den Negerskulpturen die sogenannten Proportionsfehler; man begreife, die optische Diskontinuität des Raumes wird in Formklärung übersetzt, in eine Ordnung der, da es um Plastizität geht, nach ihrem plastischen Ausdruck verschieden gewerteten Teile" (*Werke*, 1:258).

17. ". . . sind davon abhängig, wie sehr von entscheidenden Tiefenquotienten aus, worunter ich die plastische Resultante verstehe, Tiefe ausgedrückt werden soll" (*Werke*, 1:259–60).

18. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

19. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 325–31. The original German text of *Ästhetische Theorie* is quoted from *Gesammelte Schriften*, 7:480–90.

20. "Während Ausdruck scheinbar zur Subjektivität rechnet, wohnt ihm, der Entäußerung, ebenso das Nichtich, wohl das Kollektiv inne. Indem das zum Ausdruck erwachende Subjekt dessen Sanktion sucht, ist der Ausdruck bereits Zeugnis eines Risses" (*Gesammelte Schriften*, 7:485–86).

21. "Aber die ästhetische Verhaltensweise ist nicht durchaus rudimentär. In ihr, die in der Kunst konserviert wird und deren Kunst unabdingbar bedarf, versammelt sich, was seit undenklichen Zeiten von Zivilisationen gewalttätig weggeschnitten, unterdrückt wurde samt dem Leiden der Menschen unter dem ihnen Abgezwungenen, das wohl schon in den primären Gestalten von Mimesis sich äußert" (*Gesammelte Schriften*, 7:487).

22. "Sie [art] hat von den Kultobjekten sich losgerissen durch einen Sprung, in dem das kultische Moment verwandelt zugleich bewahrt wird, und diese Struktur reproduziert sich erweitert auf allen Stufen ihrer Geschichte" (*Gesammelte Schriften*, 7:426).

23. See Peter Uwe Hohendahl, *Prismatic Thought: Theodor W. Adorno*, 75–104.

24. "Das Unterdrückte, das den Umsturz will, ist nach den Normen des schönen Lebens in der häßlichen Gesellschaft derb, von Ressentiment verzerrt, trägt alle Male der Erniedrigung unter der Last der unfreien, zumal körperlichen Arbeit" (*Gesammelte Schriften*, 7:78).

25. "Die subjektive Herrschaft des Formens ergeht nicht indifferenten Stoffen, sondern wird aus ihnen herausgelesen, Grausamkeit des Formens ist Mimesis an den Mythos, mit dem sie umspringt" (*Gesammelte Schriften*, 7:80).

26. "verzweifelt an dem Machtanspruch, den sie als versöhnte vollstreckt" (*Gesammelte Schriften*, 7:81).

27. "Wenn überhaupt, ist das Schöne eher im Häßlichen entsprungen als umgekehrt" (*Gesammelte Schriften*, 7:81).

28. "Die Antithesis zum Archaischen ist in diesem [the principle of order] impliziert, das Kräftespiel des Schönen eines; der qualitative Sprung der Kunst ist

ein kleinster Übergang. Kraft solcher Dialektik verwandelt sich das Bild des Schönen in der Gesamtbewegung von Aufklärung" (*Gesammelte Schriften*, 7:83).

29. "Die Affinität aller Schönheit zu ihm hat ihren Ort in der Idee der reinen Form, die Kunst der Mannigfaltigkeit des Lebendigen auferlegt, das in ihr erlischt" (*Gesammelte Schriften*, 7:84).

30. Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition*, vol. 13, here 90; subsequently cited as *Standard Edition* in the text. The German quotations are taken from Freud, *Studienausgabe*, vol. 9, here 378; subsequently cited as *Studienausgabe* in the text. "In der Kunst allein kommt es noch vor, daß ein von Wünschen verzehrter Mensch etwas der Befriedigung ähnliches macht und daß dieses Spielen—dank der künstlerischen Illusion—Affektwirkungen hervorruft, als wäre es etwas Reales" (*Studienausgabe*, 9:378).

31. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, 21; subsequently cited as *Birth of Tragedy* in the text. Quotations from the original German text are taken from *Werke in drei Bänden*, 2nd edition, vol. 1; subsequently cited as *Werke in drei Bänden* in the text. "Jener scheußliche Hexentrunk aus Wollust und Grausamheit war hier ohne Kraft: nur die wundersame Mischung und Doppelheit in den Affekten der dionysischen Schwärmer erinnert an ihn" (*Werke in drei Bänden*, 1:27).

32. "gänzlich mit dem Ur-Einen, seinem Schmerz und Widerspruch, eins geworden . . . produziert das Abbild dieses Ur-Einen als Musik" (*Werke in drei Bänden*, 1:37).

33. "nimmt auch vollen Anteil an dieser metaphysischen Verklärungsabsicht der Kunst überhaupt" (*Werke in drei Bänden*, 1:130).

34. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, 100. "Sodann ist die häßliche, den Sinnen ursprünglich feindselige Seite der Welt für die Musik erobert worden; ihr Machtbereich namentlich zum Ausdruck des Erhabenen, Furchtbaren, Geheimnisvollen hat sich damit erstaunlich erweitert" (*Werke in drei Bänden*, 1:575).

35. "die ungeheure Überzahl, welche alljährlich immer unfähiger wird, das Bedeutende auch in der Form der sinnlichen Häßlichkeit zu verstehen und deshalb nach dem an sich Häßlichen und Ekelhaften, das heißt dem niedrig Sinnlichen in der Musik mit immer mehr Behagen greifen lernt" (*Werke in drei Bänden*, 1:575).

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