Marx. In all probability, the key to this transition lies in the fact that this particular configuration of categories, this dependence of the categories of historiography on actual history, is itself so much a question of categories, a conceptual process, that the traditional superficial distinction between essence and mere fact - 'worthless existence', as Hegel once termed it - becomes quite irrelevant. You may regard this also as a very concrete illustration of the thesis that the separation of philosophy from disciplines with a substantive subject matter cannot be sustained for reasons intrinsic to philosophy, for reasons connected with the nature and structure of categories. And this of course brings you onto the terrain of a philosophical turn which I believe will have far-reaching consequences.

You will remember that last time I tried to explain the concept of mediation with particular reference to the mediated relations between the universal and the particular in history. I did so with the aid of a brief discussion of the aetiology of the French Revolution. I should now like to add something, a matter of fundamental importance, that I would ask you to take note of as a methodological or principled conclusion from the ideas we have been discussing - on the assumption that this entire line of thought does have some persuasive force in your eyes. What we have seen is that the historical construction of an event actually requires and presupposes the totality of elements, both their distinctiveness and their unity. My discussion of the French Revolution may well have been far too abstract and schematic. But if you follow my train of thought for a moment you will realize that, once you take all the relevant factors into account, the philosophy of history merges with the writing of history. In other words, you can really only do philosophy of history seriously if you enter into the subject matter of history itself with all the nuances and distinctions that we struggled with last time. I recollect that I gave a course of lectures on the philosophy of history some years ago and felt very dissatisfied with it, even while I was giving it. Only later did I understand the cause of my dissatisfaction, and that it arose from the problem I have just described to you. Needless to say, it is quite impossible to tackle any genuine historical topic, even in a very limited way, in the course of these lectures - quite apart from the fact that I am no historian and would be able to make only very limited
comment on historical subjects. But what I can do, and what I have tried to do, is to disentangle these various concrete factors in order to show you how intertwined they are. I have tried to show you how the philosophy of history, that is, the interpretation of historical events and the philosophical understanding of these events, not only presupposes historiography proper, but also moves in the direction of history-writing in the process of explicating them. I should add that I make no claim to this discovery; you will find this theory already anticipated in Hegel. I have described the relevant aspects, which I refer to as the ‘narrative’ [epischt] aspects in part 3 of my little book on Hegel.\(^2\) As you might expect, there are also passages in Marx where he explicitly calls for the transition from the philosophy of history to historiography proper.\(^3\) Thus it is important to realize that the philosophy of history does not fall outside the scope of historical research, but that the constellation of historical events, both as a whole and in detail, should regard itself as the philosophy of history proper. But the converse is also true. By this I mean that philosophy should have the tendency to become history just as readily as history should become philosophy. I would like to emphasize the importance of this in our day, that is, in a situation in which (as I am driving at. I know full well that what I am saying is at odds with such topics as the relations between classicism, romanticism and modernism,\(^4\) and they are intended to make the methodological point that we must try to overcome the sterile dichotomy between history and its philosophical interpretation. Those of you who have an inkling of what the word ‘science’ [Wissenschaft] meant to Hegel—and indeed to Fichte and Schelling before him—will understand what I am driving at. I know full well that what I am saying is at odds both with positivist epistemology and with current trends in the positivistic knowledge industry, but I am firmly convinced that this is the only viable approach. This means, then, that a history of literature that is not also philosophical history, in other words, a study that traces the development of literature in terms of its own conceptual nature, would be entirely nugatory. In this connection, I would refer you to Walter Benjamin’s Origins of the German Tragic Drama, and especially its ‘Epistemological Preface’, which develops a similar argument, though from a very different point of view.

Having noted this by way of a preface, I would like to remind you that the abstract theorization of history from above is problematic because it fails to address the specific configurations of historical processes. I believe that I have given the idea of analysing history from above its due, that is, the abstraction, the course of history in general, but it is a remarkable fact that if, as an observer of history, you simply go along with the flow of events, this ends up by committing you to giving your approval to whichever universal tendency happens to be gaining the upper hand. If I may again cite Benjamin in this context, you will turn out to be writing history from the point of view of the victors.\(^5\) Perhaps I can put it like this: when Hegel asserts that history is rational, we must not hypostasize the concept of rationality; we must not speak of rationality in itself. Rationality always has a terminus ad quem, or, to use a less high-falutin phrase but also in Latin, it has a cui bono. This means that history can be called rational only if we know for whom it is rational. If rationality, a concept based on an understanding of the self-preservation of the individual, ceases to have a human subject for whom it exists, it will lapse into irrationality. The developments we witness today consist in no small degree of such a reversal of rationality into irrationality arising from the loss of this ‘for someone’. To put the situation in a more down-to-earth fashion, this means that the question whether history is in fact rational is a question about how it treats the individuals who have been caught up in the flow of events. We can really talk about the rationality of history only if it succeeds increasingly in satisfying the needs and interests of individuals, whether it be within general historical phases or at least in its general trend. Hegel disagrees with this in principle when he states that the theatre of history is not the theatre of happiness.\(^6\) In so doing, Hegel hypostasizes rationality and falls into the trap of thinking of rationality as the logic of things independently of their terminus ad quem in human beings, the very thing he had expressly called for with his realist interpretation of the concept of reason. The rationality, of the universal, then, if it is to be rational at all, cannot be an abstractly self-standing concept, but must consist in the relation of the universal to the particular. Now, as a logician, Hegel is very well aware of this and is even responsible for the extreme statement, as I am sure many of you know, that the universal is only universal in so far as it is the particular—and that the reverse is likewise true.\(^7\)

Thus in a certain sense Hegel’s approach is one-sided because he writes his philosophical history from the standpoint of the victor, because he justifies or vindicates the universal as it asserts itself. In so doing, he ends up adopting a class standpoint that obscures the implications of his own principle. Despite the dialectic of universal and particular for which he made such a powerful case, his own theory of history ends up leaning towards the universal. The particular is not given the credit ‘in particular’ that Hegel ascribes to it ‘in
general'. If nevertheless we speak of idealism in Hegel, we do not mean just his metaphysical assumptions such as the absolute subject or absolute identity, but rather the fact that the universal, which is always a concept, an idea, contrasted with the particular, ends up lording it over the particular. For all the talk of a dialectic between universal and particular, it is the universal that is declared the true reality. We see here a contradiction, a non-dialectical contradiction, in Hegel's philosophy. On the one hand, he calls for the dialectic of universal and particular and actually carries this through quite magnificently in many respects. But then he fails to take the particular quite so seriously and constantly threatens to go over to the side of the universal — if I may put it that way — so that the consciousness of non-identity which characterizes the particular is stripped of its own substantiality and survives only as suffering, as a consciousness of pain. Instead of concluding that what we have is a state of non-identity which characterizes the particular is stripped of its own substantiality and survives only as suffering, as a consciousness of pain. Instead of concluding that what we have is a state of non-reconciliation, he behaves a little like a senior church official or a judge, at any rate like some high-up bureaucrat or other, who sees only the limited outlook of the lower orders who are unable to recognize the higher meaning in all of this. He is not deterred in this by the consideration that it is unreasonable to ask the victim, the individual who has to put up with the consequences, to find comfort in the circumstance that the irreconcilable principle of the way the world should govern his own private fate. I should perhaps draw your attention to a methodological point here. Unlike the young Marx in his criticism of The Philosophy of Right — and I too have of course chiefly had The Philosophy of Right in mind here — the critical point I am making now is intrinsic to Hegel's own argument. That is to say, I am not proposing any yardstick other than to demand that he really follows through with the implications of the dialectic of universal and particular that he has himself proposed. In short, in the belief that he has rightly claimed that this dialectic is the only appropriate method, I wish to judge him according to his own criteria.

Having fired off this broadside at Hegel — military figures of speech tend to spring to mind when speaking of The Philosophy of Right — I should now like to add a few words in defence of Hegel. I am sorry if you find it confusing for me to set about obscuring a distinction that I have only just clarified, but it cannot be my task to make difficult and complex matters appear simpler than they are merely from a desire to present everything to you in an easily digestible form. The task of thought is to attempt to present this complexity to you in as precise a way as possible, even when the matter in hand is extremely difficult and complex. To put it in aesthetic terms, my aim is to present what is vague in a conceptually clear shape. The point I wish to make is that Hegel's mistake or his inconsistency — and my hope is that by now you will have grasped where the mistake lies — has a certain justification. Perhaps you will recollect that, as I have suggested several times, the Hegelian programme paradoxically has a positivist side, in the sense that he tries to 'fit in', that he would like to adopt himself to the world as it is, and that he assumes the identity of what exists with the spirit, the whole of idealism in fact. But what this amounts to in the first instance — and I would ask you to set aside these admittedly gigantic assumptions for the moment, and the more gigantic they are, the more it is to be recommended that they be set aside — is that he quite straightforwardly wishes to be guided by things as they are, by what he sees before him. Now what makes the problem so complicated is that the reality is — and this is hopefully not too stale a conclusion to be drawn from our discussion of the French Revolution — that the supremacy of the universal, the preponderance of the universal that is then deified by Hegel, does in fact, as the actual historical power, emerge as the stronger. As long as Hegel simply theorizes the course of the world as it is by asserting that the universal takes precedence over the particular, he is, to put it quite crudely, a realist: this is the way the world is. He proceeds therefore in the opposite direction to that taken by nominalism. Nominalism believes that the universal is no more than a conclusion arising from the countless particularities which are then brought together in a single concept. And Hegel was incredibly sensitive to this, to what he calls the course of the world [der Weltlauf] (I have borrowed his term here). If anything about him was realistic it was precisely his responsiveness to this dominance of the universal in the realm of realities, the so-called facts. The only delusion lies in the way that he interprets this primacy of the universal, this actual primacy of the concept, as if it meant the world itself were concept, spirit, and therefore 'good'. Admittedly, he is in tune here with the main current of Western philosophy in which, ever since Plato, the universal, the necessary, unity and the good are all identified with one another.

And here I have reached the point where it becomes clear that, even though they are highly innovative, Hegel's philosophy of history and his construction of dialectics really belong to traditional theory; they remain imprisoned in a Platonic framework. Once reason — and this is the counter-position I am attempting to present to you in these lectures — once reason has lost its relation to the individuals who are concerned with self-preservation, it degenerates into unreason. And this reversal takes place objectively in Hegel, but it is not a change that the Hegelian dialectic has made explicit. Moreover, this is an idealist tendency that goes far beyond Hegel himself. The
identification with the universal enters deeply into the fibre of Marxism notwithstanding the much cruder epistemological positions of Marx and the Marxists. For there you find something like the belief that, when ultimately the universal takes over and the concept is victorious, individuals will indeed come into their own - and this factor will ensure that all the suffering and the wasted individuality of history will somehow be made good. This is an issue that to the best of my knowledge was first commented on critically by Ivan Turgenev in the nineteenth century. Turgenev maintained that even the prospect of a completely classless society could not console him for the fate of all those who had suffered to no purpose and had fallen by the wayside.9 I have already said that when the concept of reason becomes abstract, when it becomes separated from individual interests craving fulfilment, it turns into unreason. However, you should try not to think of this change as pointing to the decadence of philosophy, of the philosophy of history, because here too there is ‘nought without cause’, and it is a process with deep underlying causes. In all probability we shall only be armed intellectually, philosophically, to withstand this tendency if we think of this not as a corrigeable error but as a necessity. For the fact is that a genuine reality underlies Hegel’s defence of that absolute reason that comes to understand itself. We might say that his hypostasization is the hypostasization of mankind as a species. It is the species that maintains itself as a whole as against the claims of individuals who are concerned with preserving themselves. For the principle of self-preservation is itself irrational and particular if it is restricted to individuals, to the particular individual rationality of individuals. The great bourgeois thinkers from Hobbes to Kant have always taken care to point this out - I mention these two names in particular because it shows you very clearly the beginning and the end point of this idea. It is therefore part of the logic of the self-preservation of the individual that it should be extended to embrace the conception of the self-preservation of the species. But that is also the problem. It is not a problem I would claim to be able to solve for you, but I should at least like to make you aware of it, since it seems to me to be a matter of extraordinary difficulty and gravity. It consists in this: because the self-preserving reason of the individual is converted into the self-preservation of the species, there is an intrinsic temptation for this universality to emancipate itself from the individuals it comprises. Kant himself had noted in his ‘Theory of Right’ that the universal freedom of all should have restrictions placed on it in so far as it called for the freedom of each individual from every other.10 Thus, the idea of species-reason, that is, the form of reason that comes to prevail universally, already con-

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the world spirit is (and it has never been as powerful as it is today, when we have all been reduced to the status of its agents), the more powerful the world spirit is, the more we are justified in doubting whether the world spirit really is the world spirit, rather than its opposite. This leads us to conclude that the primacy of the totality in history represents anything but the victory of the Idea. We can formulate it like that or, alternatively, we might say—as I have already indicated—that the world spirit exists as the universal that comes to prevail; but that it is no world spirit, that it is not spirit, but that for the most part it is the negativity that Hegel had shifted from the universal to its victims, to what he refers to as 'worthless existence', to mere individuality. We can find evidence in the great philosophies of spirit to support our belief in the dubious nature of the concept of spirit at the very point where it becomes so inflated that it identifies itself with the totality, where it lays claim to the totality. The evidence is so powerful that I would like to commend it to you. Far from encouraging, requiring and stimulating spirit to become a real force in the world, this philosophy of absolute spirit displays an almost universal tendency to discourage everything one might think of as spirit in a concrete sense, namely the ability of individuals to reflect, to understand and to criticize. This tendency started as far back as Kant, in whose writings the idea was first postulated. This disparaging view of the individual consciousness can be found in countless passages in Kant, for example, where he defends the categorical imperative against individual critical voices. You will also have seen the same tendency at work in Hegel's diatribes against reformers and 'intellectuals' [Räsonenre]. You will find it in all the passages where he makes short work a priori of all criticism, that is, every concrete expression of what could be thought of as spirit, in the name of an allegedly higher conception of spirit—without its even occurring to him for a moment that this allegedly higher conception of spirit still has to prove its worth before the tribunal of the actual, living spirit of mankind. Furthermore, you will also find in Hegel that appalling academic rancour towards anything clever and witty [das Geistreiche]—in other words, towards those who know how to write. Later on, during the decline of German universities, this became the veritable signature of the spirit of so-called science, the so-called human sciences. So when we hear what Hegel had to say about certain representatives of the Enlightenment who, like Diderot, for example, were just too clever, it is altogether too painful to read. We are thus contemplating a philosophy that on the one hand elevates itself to the plane of the absolute, while on the other shows signs of nerves as soon as it encounters a clever and witty thinker. Such a philosophy renders itself highly suspect. It may be that a well-informed Hegelian (incidentally, I think of myself as being fairly well informed about Hegel) will riposte that the spirit that Hegel was talking about and the spirit that Diderot really had are two very different things. But I would reply to any such well-informed person that the two things are not so different as all that. For if all links are broken between the living, critical spirit of the individual whose mind penetrates reality and the absolute spirit which is said to be in the process of realizing itself, between spirit as imagination, as a constructive and perspicacious faculty, and spirit as the world spirit that is coming to prevail objectively in the world—then spirit will rightly come under suspicion of turning into the ideology of its own absence. It will be comparable to that bourgeois tendency (or indeed that of class society as such) to elevate women into an object of worship, to speak of women as the Eternal Feminine that draws us onward or, as does Schiller, as creatures who 'plait and weave' in God's name, but at the same time to treat women in reality as minors and to hold them in permanent subjection. And this analogy between the role of spirit and that of women is not as arbitrary and formal as may appear at first sight.

The transfiguration of spirit, however—and I am trying to be as fair-minded as possible—the transfiguration of spirit about which I have now told you enough compromising things, this transfiguration of the totality, was only possible because the human race in fact can only survive in and through the totality. The only reason why the optimism of the philosophy of absolute spirit is not a mere mockery is because the essence of all the self-preserving acts that culminate in this supreme concept of reason as absolute self-preservation is after all the means by which humanity has managed to survive and still continues to do so. And it has succeeded in doing so despite all the suffering, the terrible grinding of the machinery and the sacrifices of what Marx would have called the forces and means of production. The infinite weak point of every critical position (and I would like to tell you that I include my own here) is that, when confronted with such criticism, Hegel simply has the more powerful argument. This is because there is no other world than the one in which we live, or at least we have no reliable knowledge of any alternative despite all our radar screens and giant radio telescopes. So that we shall always be told: everything you are, everything you have, you owe, we owe to this odious totality, even though we cannot deny that it is an odious and abhorrent totality. I believe that you can only understand the violence inherent in this view of history as a self-realizing totality if you understand that its truth, its almost irresistible truth, lies in the
fact that life and with it the possibility of happiness, and indeed even the possibility of a differently constituted world, would be inconceivable without all the things that can be urged by way of objection to it - its failings towards the individual, and all its senseless suffering and cruelty. And I would say that if you wish to go beyond seeing the theory of history as absolute spirit as more than a complementary ideology, more than a piece of justification of the kind that I believe I have been able to show you without any whitewashing, then you will very definitely have to include this factor that I have just been outlining to you. But I should like to say a few more words on this subject next time.

I have tried to show you something of the negative aspects of the universal as it asserts itself, both as an actual historical process and, if I may put it like this, in terms of its logical structure. I then went on - I say this so that you can see more or less where we are in these discussions - to show you what might be called the legal title underlying the affirmative construction of history as we find it both in Hegel's *Logic* and *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, on the one hand, and in his *Philosophy of History*, on the other. In the process I have emphasized that the 'course of the world' - to use Hegel's own expression once again' - does in fact possess a positive side, since it reproduces the life of the totality as a species. It achieves this by joining mankind together in societies, that is, in a totality. I have already talked enough about the lethal entanglement involved in this totality, and you will rightly ask me to comment on the relation between these two aspects. For it is strange that, on the one hand, the totality should oppress everything that is beneath it and, potentially at least, threaten it with destruction, while, on the other hand, it is a cohesive force to which society owes its survival. In this connection let me add that you will find that Marx too approves of this affirmation of the coming together of mankind as well as the idea that mankind reproduces itself notwithstanding its sacrifices and sufferings. And if we may look for an element of idealism in Marx, an idealist element in the precise philosophical meaning of the word, this would certainly be the place to find the truly affirmative strand in his thought. It is a strand, moreover, that fits with his predominantly optimistic view of history. The
form this Hegelian theme takes in Marx is transformed almost out of all recognition, but retains extraordinary power. It is the highly obscure and difficult theory of the so-called law of value. This is the summation of all the social acts taking place through exchange. It is through this process that society maintains itself and, according to Marx, continues to reproduce itself and expand despite all the catastrophes that may eventuate. I now believe that you are in a position to appreciate the difficulty of this question, which we can describe as the central question of any theory of the philosophy of history. But you can only do so if you take a further dialectical step beyond what I have already told you. Because if we look at the situation with the eyes of common sense, and indeed in accordance with what I have told you so far, it appears as though society is riddled with conflict and hence is irrational through and through, but that it nevertheless contrives to survive, though quite how, no one knows. It is very much in the spirit of the famous formula of the invisible hand, the empirical maxim which summed up the English approach to history until the process of integration made it impossible to encapsulate society in a single concept.

In my view, the crucial contribution to a theory of history is to be found in the idea that mankind preserves itself not despite all the irrationalities and conflicts, but by virtue of them. This idea, incidentally, was espoused at least twice before Hegel by the great bourgeois philosophers themselves. We find it first in Hobbes, in whose writings integration and the social contract are brought into being by the plight of individuals who are unable to survive in its absence. It emerges more in Kant, in his essay on the philosophy of history that I mentioned to you at the start of these lectures and that you ought all to read if you really wish to understand the concrete context, the philosophical horizon, of the problems I am explaining to you. I'll give you the title of Kant's essay once again; it is the 'Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose'. So what I wish to say is that society, the totality, does not simply survive despite conflict, but because of it. You will best be able to understand this perhaps if you reflect that in the developed bourgeois society all life is dominated by the principle of exchange and, at the same time, by the necessity – which is imposed on the many individuals – of securing for oneself as large a portion as possible of the social product in the course of this struggle of all against all. But, and this is something that was understood quite clearly by the old liberal theory of Adam Smith and David Ricardo, thanks to this antagonism, thanks to this conflict of interests, the machinery of society does in fact succeed in maintaining itself. This is to be understood in the sense that use values are produced not to satisfy human needs but for profit. I do not wish to involve myself in lengthy explanations of Marxist theory and so will just say that by use values I mean the satisfaction of needs, either natural needs or, as is almost universally the case, needs as mediated historically. The only reason why goods are produced is so that the producers, by which I mean those who control the means of production, should be able as a class to profit from them as much as possible. This of course is what sets up the principle of conflict: between those who pocket the proceeds and those from whom the profit is made in the final analysis, and who therefore miss out on it. But the life of human beings is reproduced only by going through this process which contains the conflict, the class relationship, within itself. Down to the present day life has succeeded in perpetuating itself only because of this division in society, because a number of people in control confront others who have been separated from the means of production. And given this reality, the needs of human beings, the satisfaction of human beings, is never more than a sideshow and in great measure no more than ideology. If it is said that everything exists only for human beings, it sounds hollow because in reality production is for profit and people are planned in as consumers from the outset. In short, it sounds hollow because of this built-in conflict.

If it is now asserted that this fact and this entire argument is all wrong and superfluous, that life would go on without it, the Hegels and, to some extent, as far as the construction of the past is concerned, even the Marxes and Engels will retort: the possibility, the world as we might imagine it, that is all very fine, but this is the reality... Without that reality, that is to say, the reality of a class society that stands as the very principle of bourgeois society, there would have been neither the huge population increase that we have seen, nor the growth in transport, nor would there ever have been anything like enough by way of food supplies for the population. It will not have escaped your attention that the starting-point of a critique of this entire way of seeing is the idea (one that Hegel pursued with especial rigour right on into the heart of his Logic) that from the outset reality is given precedence over possibility. And of course, it is here that we see that unquestioned parti pris for the prevailing universal of which I have already spoken at some length. To recapitulate, then, the fact is that mankind has survived not just in spite of but because of conflict, and this fact has such weighty consequences for the theory of history because Hegel has inferred from it with a very great semblance of justice, a semblance of justice that cannot be dismissed out of hand, that categorically, in terms of the idea, when looked at from above, life can be reproduced only by virtue of
conflict. And this has resulted in what might be termed the theodicy of conflict. Thus it may be claimed that Hegel's Logic amounts to the assertion that the world spirit or the absolute is the quintessence of all finite, ephemeral forms of conflict, of all negativities; the positive is the quintessence of all negativities. If that be so, then this thesis which at first sight may seem utterly arrogant and preposterous may be seen to have its foundation in the fact that the world has survived precisely because of this negativity, in other words, because society has been essentially conflict-ridden down to this very day. We can trace this tradition of conflict back to the most abstract ideas of unity, totality and even reason, and this is something I shall return to. This is why it is so vital for us to understand it. And this may enable you to see why the idealist form of dialectics was not so completely unworldly as all that, but that within the general process of idealization it also expressed something real that the theory of history cannot afford to ignore. At the same time, the moment this realistic element is accepted it becomes an affirmation that simply reinforces the negative, destructive side of society.

Now it is an open question – and one that I shall make no attempt to answer today – whether or not the human race could only have been perpetuated by means of conflict, whether conflict was historically an absolute necessity. In other words, does it make any sense at all to conceive of a course of history that does not involve this conflict? The most powerful evidence that things could not have been otherwise is to be seen in mankind's commerce with physical nature. For nature began by inserting humanity into a situation of lack, where people had too little, and it was only with the aid of those particular forms of organization that it was possible to cope with this situation. They could not have done so without the relations of domination that forced people to come to terms with shortages and to make them good. This was the factor that made conflict inevitable. Marx and Engels (and especially Engels, who devoted a lot of attention to this matter) gave the problem a highly idealist turn by providing a positive answer to the question of what we can only call the metaphysical necessity, the absolute necessity of conflict in the course of history. This takes a specific form in Marx and Engels, in particular in the argument they advanced very emphatically that domination, social domination, was a function of the economy, in other words, of the life process, the reproduction of life itself, and not the other way around. It will surprise you to hear that I have picked out this argument among all others to call idealist, but I believe that a very little reflection will show you just how idealist it is. For if history derives its antagonistic character from the economy from the outset, that is to say, from the need for life to preserve itself, then, at least in retrospect, social conflict is in a sense as legitimate as historical negativity is in Hegel's metaphysical logic. If, on the other hand, economic conditions and economic conflicts were themselves the product of a fundamental form of domination, then their necessity would be extraneous to the historical totality, the life process of society. They would be mere accidents, things that could easily be dismissed as inessential in principle.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, it is hardly possible to reconstruct the primitive conditions that form the object of this dispute. If there are any ethnologists and anthropologists among you, you will know how your disciplines have brought an infinitely complex body of knowledge to bear on these questions, to the point indeed where simple answers have to be ruled out. For example, I may remind you of all the research that has led scholars to derive the original structures of society neither from power relations nor from economic conditions, but instead from magical and religious practices. Admittedly, we must add that such explanations leave the question of the relationship between those practices and the nature of society open, and so far as I can see, unanswered. The chief sources of these controversies, by the way, are Engels's Anti-Dühring and his The Origin of the Family. You can also find a lot of important material in Marx, in the great preface to the Critique of Political Economy, which is one of the – what should I call it? – chief theoretical sources for dialectical materialism. What moved them to grapple with this prehistorical problem which must always remain something of a puzzle was certainly not to provide a realistic picture of primitive society – and, in general, the question of how things were in the beginning is a matter of indifference when seeking a solution to the pressing social problems of the present. It is merely one of the shibboleths of the traditional philosophy of history that I would invite you to think about critically. The fact is that people tend to regard what is older and pristine as somehow better because it comes from the inner nature of man, whereas any casual glance at the wretched existence of primitive peoples who have survived but who still live in Stone Age conditions ought to persuade us to abandon every such idealization of primeval society once and for all. But, as I have said, the interest of Marx and Engels in this question, which may appear somewhat pointless to you, was really quite different. The reason why they placed such enormous weight on the idea that the origins of conflict are to be found in the economy and in the historically necessary structure of human relations of production, rather than in power relations, was that otherwise their own point of view might have led them to believe that,
in analogy to those mythical and legendary conditions of primitive society, it would only have been necessary to alter the existing power relations to bring about a rational society, without taking economic conditions into account. Thus the interest in such questions is not in the nature of origins, despite what the title of Engels's book might lead us to suppose, but in highly topical political issues. This becomes clear if you look closely at the debates between a strictly economics-based communism as taught by Marx and Engels and anarchism, which at that time was an extremely important competitor (if I can put it in such vulgar terms). Anarchism was highly influential, particularly in its impact on the masses and in many different countries such as Spain and Italy, and has remained influential right down to the threshold of our own age. So whoever regards power relations as primary and who therefore wished to alter those relations would be driven automatically to the anarchist side in this debate, whereas the socialists wanted to bring about changes in the economy. The changes they wished to introduce all lay in the direction taken by the economy itself, that is to say, in the direction of increasing rationalization, planning and the concentration of the economy.

I should like to take this opportunity to tell you that if you are seriously interested in socialist writings on the philosophy of history you will not be able to comprehend them properly if you treat them as a kind of contemplative theorizing about history, understandable as this would be, looking at them from our own situation. In this respect they differ from the reflections on the philosophy of history that I have been presenting you with. There is a structural distinction here whose importance cannot be overestimated. The driving motif of the socialist way of thinking about history was the idea that the revolution is just around the corner, that it can break out at any moment and that therefore everything, the entire construction of history included, should be interpreted retrospectively in terms of the requirements of the impending revolutionary situation. And since these thinkers were convinced, and rightly so now, of the profound historical impotence of anarchism, they pursued the traces of anarchist thinking back into the dim and distant past, and they did so with a relentless rigor that makes one shudder, all the more so since we now know how this aspect of socialism later developed. At all events, we cannot simply dismiss the idea that history begins with a catastrophe of some kind, thanks to which this element of domination made its entrance, and this idea is not so very different from the view contemporary psychologists have of primal events that are to be reconstructed on the basis of unconscious memories. If in fact history turns out to be a permanent catastrophe, then we cannot simply reject the conjecture that something terrible must have happened to mankind right at the start, or at the time when mankind was becoming itself, and that this terrible event is like those that have been handed down to us in the myths about original sin and similar stories in which the origins of mankind and the growth of reason are associated with some disaster from the remote past. However, I leave such conjectures to your imagination. At all events, these are the themes that I have been trying to explore today — themes that put any aspiring social critique into such a weak position. Its position is weak not only because existing society can confront any criticism with its own power and glory, but also because it can be pointed out that there could be no possibility even of something different and better, that is, of a rationally organized society, without a means-ends rationality with its domination of nature. And it is precisely that means-ends rationality whose world-historical consequence has been all those disasters whose memory has been repressed or eradicated to a simply unimaginable degree by the victorious powers of history. Only an actually achieved identity would lead to the reconciliation of opposing interests — and not simply the comforting thought that the quintessence of all conflicts would, by making life possible, permit something like reconciliation among all mankind, namely their continued existence. And never can reconciliation be the merely asserted reconciliation brought about by the violence towards everything subsumed under it. To sum it up in a rather bolder way, an achieved identity, in other words, the elimination of conflict, the reconciliation of all those who are opposed to one another because their interests are irreconcilable, an achieved identity does not mean the identity of all as subsumed beneath a totality, a concept, an integrated society. A truly achieved identity would have to be the consciousness of non-identity, or, more accurately perhaps, it would have to be the creation of a reconciled non-identity, much as we find in the utopia conceived by Hölderlin, though to a degree that has been exaggerated by the current state of research in Hölderlin studies.

This is perhaps the point at which I might usefully say something about the twin concepts of conformism and nonconformism. This pair of concepts is based on our extraordinarily difficult relation to a course of the world to which we owe everything and that yet threatens to bury us all. I believe that in the present intellectual climate in Germany the concept of nonconformism is subject to a degree of defamation. It should be defended against cheap criticism. I regard myself as especially obligated to engage in this defence because many years ago, in a rather different situation, I published a piece in my *Minima Moralia*, which I would not wish to disown...
and still stand by today, in which I gave a fairly detailed account of
the conformism of the nonconformists. It does me no credit—though
it probably does no credit to anyone else either—that it was this
passage from _Minima Moralia_ that was singled out for praise. It is
easy to draw a parallel with all those people whose only knowledge
of Marx is that he once wrote somewhere that he was no Marxist.
However that may be, in the present context, conformism would
be either the assertion—not the explicit assertion, but the assertion
implied in the objective spirit of the age, in its language, its mental
household—that the reconciliation that has not been achieved really
has been achieved or, on the other hand, to deny the possibility of
that reconciliation at all. These two ideas—that we already find
ourselves living in a utopia, and that no utopia is possible or even
desirable and that it should not exist—these two incompatible ideas
actually coexist peacefully together. The two together really express
the idea that we have been discussing in this lecture, namely that, on
the one hand, society only survives because of the conflicts it contains
—which is then expressed in the affirmative doctrine that all is right
with the world. On the other hand, despite this, people experience
the present unreconciled conditions, and this comes to be expressed
as a denial of the possibility of reconciliation in general. Needless to
say, if you say of an unreconciled situation that reconciliation has
taken place, this torpedoes the possibility of a true reconciliation in
the future, since it undermines the very people who wish to bring
about the very state of affairs that is supposed to exist, and makes
them look like fools or rogues. The alleged conformism of the non-
conformists, that is to say, the way countless nonconformists seem to
display the same stereotyped thinking as you heard described yester-
day in the lecture given by my friend Hans-Magnus Enzensberger,
who subjected this phenomenon to very incisive and legitimate criti-
cism, criticism that I would wish in no way to soften or qualify—this
nonconformist conformism is in great measure only a reaction to the
prevailing conformism. By this I mean the general situation which is
characterized by compartmentalism, rigid categorization and stereo-
types coming from above. It is in general a situation that necessarily
rubs off on those who resist it. The overwhelming power of rigid
categories, the static, rigid categories of the universal that confront
the critical mind, forces the critics to take on something of their
rigidity—even if only so as to describe them in the course of asserting
their own position. This is to say nothing of the fact that we all live
in bourgeois society and therefore—even if we are not conscious of
the fact and do not realize just how deeply it has penetrated into the
darkest recesses of our souls even when we disagree—we remain the
children of the condition that we oppose, and carry endless baggage
around with us which we then reproduce, all unbeknown to our-
selves. In this sense the nonconformists who are so criticized and
derided today and who of course think it a sin to be pinned down
to a fixed label or concept—in actual fact we can speak only of
conformism; nonconformism is a _contradictio in adjecto_—would
be justified in invoking the famous Brechtian plea for forbearance
on behalf of nonconformism. From what we might call a kind of
perverse gratitude, the prevailing conformism confuses the grinding
reproduction of life, which after all keeps us all alive, with the pos-
sibility of shaping life in a way that would genuinely be achievable
today, given the advanced state of the forces of production and of
human rationality. And this confusion is what marks the gap between
conformism and nonconformism. Thus it is not a matter of the formal
fact of agreement or disagreement with a given state of society. What
is crucial is this substantive factor: are you prepared constantly to let
your experience be guided by the concrete possibilities available in
the present, in every respect, or are you not; that is to say, have you
capitulated in favour of worshipping whatever happens to be the
case? In comparison with this issue it is hard to make significant dis-
tinctions at the level of substance, to separate the sheep from the
goats and to say this is conformist and that is nonconformist. I may
mention the case of Max Stirner in this context. Subjectively, and in
terms of his situation in the immediate social conflicts of his day, he
was initially a nonconformist. His own theory, however, the theodicy
of absolute individuality, was conformist. This can be contrasted
with works of art that refuse to take up any so-called concrete posi-
tion with regard to current social questions, works that are not what
we can call ‘committed’ (to take up Enzensberger’s argument), and
from which it is not possible to deduce any immediate forms of
action. Such works therefore cannot be described as nonconformist,
but from the way they conduct themselves with regard to existing
reality they must be described as nonconformist. Such a person is
Samuel Beckett, of whom Enzensberger also made mention in his
lecture yesterday. Conformism and its opposite, nonconformism,
belong to the categories of consciousness or of attitude, subjective
categories that are falsified the moment they are isolated, torn from
the totality, taken abstractly, independently of the historical moment
and the function and constellation of individual motifs in a specific
situation. I believe that in general this is something we can learn from
dialectics, namely that there is no category, no concept, no theory
even, however true, that is immune to the danger of becoming false
and even ideological in the constellation that it enters into in practice.
Normally, I am very critical of the entire concept of ideology. But if it has any truth it lies in the suspicion that, precisely because spirit is in general dependent on the course of the world and its constellations, no isolated instance of spirit, no embodiment of spirit that sets out to oppose the course of the world, can be true or false in and for itself – or, rather, independently of its relation to that reality.

Last time, during my discussion of the dialectics of the universal and the particular, I took the opportunity to say a few words about the concept of conformism, more especially about the currently fashionable ways of dealing with it. In the light of our basic theme, the antithesis of society and the individual, the universal and the particular, it will have become clear to you just how difficult it is to pin down the idea of conformism to fixed categories. If you analyse the conformist elements in Hegel – there is no great problem involved in this – if you read the Philosophy of Right and take note of the conformist elements in it, you will soon see that his sympathies always lean towards the universal, and that the individual is fobbed off with the assurance that the universal, the absolute, the Idea, maintains itself by destroying him – an assertion that does nothing to restore his peace of mind. It reminds him of the consolation offered by the church to a man contemplating his own death, but thanks to secularization is incomparably feeble and less persuasive than the promises given by the church in times gone by when a dying man could be promised eternal salvation, whereas now the idea of eternal salvation is no more than a shape of consciousness. This shape of consciousness is of course essential and does provide the individual with a salvation of sorts, but you learn nothing of its substantive meaning from Hegel, while the individual is in fact supposed to be pleased if he or she dissolves into nothing ad majorem dei gloriam. Incidentally, categories generally become diluted to the point of absurdity in the course of secularization and this strengthens the tendency to rebel
against the entire process. On the other hand, it is true in our day, as also in the 1920s, that conformism has insisted on the importance of the individual, a concept that had been inflated during the nineteenth century at the expense of all others. Now, in a situation such as existed then, in which socialism appeared to be an imminent possibility and in which the tendency of the communist state in Russia to repress the individual had just begun to make itself felt, the concept of the individual began to play a significant role as a reaction to socialism, in other words, in defence of existing society. This was the idea of the precious, immortal individual which was now in jeopardy, but which had played a similar role at other times, namely, during periods of the untrammelled, unrestrained ascendency of the individual, such as the Romantic age in which Hegel had lived. In such times too the individual had assumed a conformist function. What I wanted to show you, and the real reason why I have introduced the concept of conformism, is not only to immunize you against a kind of formalistic thinking that asserts that, all right then, there is a conformism from a spirit of opposition as well as a conformism of the conformists — it's all as broad as it's long. That is an indescribably superficial way of thinking and my hope is that I will have put you off it for ever. But even more importantly, I should like to show you that categories may be subject to radically different interpretations within the dialectics of the universal and particular. This means that it is not possible to tell in advance what is conformist or nonconformist, that these concepts always call for analysis and, in fact, they presuppose the nuanced analysis of particular historical situations. On the specific point of the celebrated and also much denounced conformism of the opposition, it is perfectly possible, particularly when discussing intellectual, artistic products with an oppositional slant, to make quite precise distinctions and not blindly accept statements at face value in the spirit of a tick mentality. If one can muster the energy and patience needed to make the necessary distinctions oneself without capitulating and making concessions to the dominant 'healthy' attitudes, then one can quite easily evade the allegedly so dangerous conformism of the opposition. I myself fondly imagine that I have been able to provide a small model of how this is to be achieved in my essay 'The Ageing of the New Music'. I have tried to show there how a process of self-reflection can make it possible to resist the formation of clichés from within an oppositional intellectual movement. My hope is that this attempt will not have been entirely without its effect.

I should like to make one last point about conformism. It too is one of the concepts that are falsified as soon as they are released from their context, or taken abstractly, as Hegel and Marx would have said. Such concepts only acquire their substantial meaning within the social matrix in which they appear. I should even like to venture the still broader generalization, one of some importance for a theory of history — in so far as it is at all possible to establish 'general principles' in a dialectical philosophy — that there is no category, no valid concept that might not be rendered invalid at the moment when it is cut off from the concrete context to which it really belongs. This applies with particular force to the concept of ratio, which is of such pivotal importance for the theory of history — and I believe that it will do us no harm to cudgel our brains a little on this subject before we proceed further. I have already told you that the simplest way to construct something like a universal history is to create the history of a progressive rationality. Now it is extremely easy to hold this ratio, in other words, the unfolding of reason, responsible for the perennial catastrophes of history. We can indeed say with only minor exaggeration that all, and I mean all, the so-called Romantic intellectual tendencies do just that. But my own view is that it is also important not to hypostasize reason and its history (something that Max Weber tended to do). That is to say, it is important not to split reason off from the things reason is useful for, that it is there for, and in which it is embedded. I explained to you in one of the recent lectures that the element of domination and thus the conflict inherent in reason was itself intrinsic to the process of history; that the concept of reason necessarily contains matter alien to reason, matter that has to be subjugated. I argued that the concept of reason only has meaning if there exists outside it material on which it can act — by abstracting, arranging or summarizing, etc. My intention (and I think it is important to clarify this) was not to talk you into a kind of idealist philosophizing; I did not mean the reason in which all this is embedded to be thought of as the origin, the absolute origin of the material it dominates and on which it works. It would be quite contrary to what I have been trying to tell you if you were to go away believing that there is a dialectic of ratio or, God forbid, enlightenment, in the sense of a dialectic of pure forms of consciousness, independently of the material to which it relates. What I would say — and I have hinted at this already, but I should like to repeat it quite explicitly — is that precisely the abstract nature of ratio, that is, its setting aside of concrete subject matter, points to social processes in which everything depends on who is equal with whom, or rather unequal, in the social hierarchy. That is to say, abstract reason ignores these specific concrete aspects of society. Specific class relations, for example, cannot be explained by an appeal to ratio, although they reproduce themselves in it. Instead,
reason contains this amalgam of abstract thought and material that has to be subjugated, and this fact is itself merely the reflection of an attitude of thought, of reason, to reality, which in its turn (and this too we must reiterate) does not remain external to reason. On the contrary, as Durkheim was the first to have pointed out, in an inspired, but also highly contentious way, reason becomes embedded in the forms of consciousness including its most abstract forms, such as the categories of pure logic and even the so-called intuitive forms of time and space. However, I leave open the question of whether there is not a dialectic at work here in the sense that, for hierarchical social conditions to be deposited in subjective forms, there must always be an element of constitutive subjectivity which ensures that people experience things in one way rather than another. That is a complex matter that I really wish to mention only in passing and certainly do not want to resolve here. Thus we may speak of the irrationality of ratio in the present historical phase; we may point out that the prodigious achievements of science benefit only a small group of people or that science seems to be moving towards the destruction of the human race. We may accuse reason of all sorts of other irrationalities. Indeed, I would not defend reason against these accusations; I would certainly not deny that, as the process of rationalization advances, it claims any number of victims. But we should not let things get out of proportion; we must be clear in our own minds that the responsibility for the threats that the advancing sciences unleash on mankind lies not with reason or science, but with the way in which reason is entwined with very real social conditions. Within these social conditions reason is directed at purposes that are irrational because of the irrational state of society as a whole. Thus while reason contains such a destructive element, thanks to its unreflecting persistence as stolid domination, the blame for this must not be laid exclusively at the door of the isolated category of ratio, but must be ascribed to the totality. It can really only be grasped in the relationship between the processes of rationalization – chief among them scientific and technical inventions – and the external purposes imposed on them from which they cannot escape. For even though this advancing ratio impinges on and even modifies the existing relations of domination, it is always tied into them.

Having said this, I should now like us to turn our attention to the problem of the subjective experience of the negativity of history, since this will be one of the principal themes with which we shall be concerned. I should like to read out to you a few sentences from Hegel's Philosophy of Right that I would like to explain to you and that have some bearing on our discussions. They are to be found in the Preface: 'That right and ethics, and the actual world of right and the ethical, are grasped by means of thoughts and give themselves the form of rationality – namely universality and determinacy – by means of thoughts, is what constitutes the law; and it is this which is justifiably regarded as the main enemy by that feeling which reserves the right to do as it pleases, by that conscience which identifies right with subjective conviction. The form of right as a duty and a law is felt by it to be a dead, cold letter and a shackle; for it does not recognize itself in the law and thereby recognize its own freedom in it, because the law is the reason of the thing [Sache] and reason does not allow feeling to warm itself in the glow of its own particularity [Particularität].'

Now, ladies and gentlemen, these statements carry conviction; they sound like statements that have something in them, and whenever people feel that they are hearing something that is backed up by the power of what exists, they generally react in a highly suggestible manner. In this instance, however, these statements are those of a demagogue. I should like to demonstrate this to you and to draw your attention to a few details. To begin with, then, it is claimed that conscience identifies right with subjective conviction. If Hegel has Kant in mind here, as we must assume, he ought to know, as someone steeped in the history of philosophy and Kant especially, that Kantian ethics and the Kantian conscience not only make no mention of the feeling that he is so scathing about here, but that Kant is just as hostile to this so-called ethical feeling as Hegel himself. In this respect he differs from earlier moralists such as Hutcheson and Shaftesbury, for whom the idea of ethical feeling was seen in a far more positive light. This has a significance which goes well beyond questions of dogma. The fact is that what he criticizes here as subjective conviction constantly recurs in individuals – and this is why I wish to note it in Kant – and is perfectly rational in itself. Thus however isolated an individual may be, if he criticizes a historical trend which he feels powerless to change, this cannot simply be dismissed as the grumbling of the disaffected or the irrational protest of someone who feels pangs of emotion. His protest, if it has any substance at all, will contain an element of reason. Thus when individuals protested about the Third Reich, it was not just from a sense of moral outrage. If the protester was politically conscious, and I believe I may even claim this of myself and my initial memories of Hitlerism, then he must have been aware that the policies being introduced were catastrophic and that the National Socialists were launched on an adventurist path that could
only end in disaster. The crucial factor here is that the awareness that Hegel tacitly and dogmatically ascribes to a collective consciousness can also be present in an individual. By thinking, the individual shares in the objective nature of thought, or can do so. To put it in a Hegelian manner, he shares in the objectivity of spirit, unless the objectivity of his own thought is determined merely by impulses and is completely unbalanced in consequence. Hegel simply ignores the element of objectivity, of universality, that lies concealed in the particular, in individuality, and that enables it to determine itself as thought, as a thinking monad. He thus fails to recognize an aspect of his own dialectic of universal and particular that he of all people should have emphasized more strongly. This is the idea that the figure of the universal in which the particular possesses the universal to a substantial degree is in actual fact the process of thought in which the particular is raised to the level of the universal. This thought is located nowhere but in the individual. Only individuals can think; blind collectives quite certainly cannot — and the contrast has become even more pronounced nowadays when collective reactions are being so blatantly manipulated.

You can see from this just how fuzzy Hegel's critique is. Linked with this is his avoidance of the main issue when at one point he denounces the sentiment of thinking oneself superior, where in reality what is at stake has nothing to do with feelings but addresses the question of thinking at the only point where it matters, namely as the thinking of the individual. We might say that there are historical situations in which the interest of the totality, in other words, the objectivity of spirit, can only be found in individuals, namely those who consciously and by design offer resistance to the trend. In contrast, what can be called the semblance of objectivity, the general consensus, is so much the mere reflex of social mechanisms that it actually lacks the objectivity commonly ascribed to it, and is really no more than subjective illusion. I believe that, particularly in a situation like the present, we have to drive the dialectic forward to this conclusion.

However, Hegel himself says at one point (if you think back to the passage I quoted) that when he looks at 'the law' 'with subjective conviction' he 'justifiably' regards its universality 'as the main enemy'. This 'justifiably' contains his whole position. Typically for Hegel, he would not say that the individual's resistance — we would add: the thinking individual's resistance — is purely a matter of chance; he would probably say that what the individual thinks is limited when compared to the objective process as a whole because he does not properly realize how everything is interconnected. My own view is that this 'justifiably' has to be taken much more seriously than even Hegel believes. It is characteristic of Hegel's thinking that he really wants to have it all ways; that he really wants to include everything, even things that simply cannot be reconciled. By this I mean that he adopts the standpoint of the universal; he tends always to claim, ideologically and in a conformist spirit, that the universal is in the right. But equally, almost as an afterthought, he would also like to be credited with wanting fair play for the individual. And he does this with a throwaway remark, in this case the single adverb 'justifiably', merely in order that the individual should get his just deserts, simply so that it does not look as if anyone is being left out. Incidentally, this comment applies with equal force to the entire Hegelian macro-structure since the whole point of his philosophy is that it not only teaches absolute identity, but also believes that non-identity — in other words, the very thing that cannot be included in identity should somehow be incorporated into the concept of identity in the course of its elaboration. In this way, he could almost be said to be protecting himself at his weakest and most elementary point. I shall return to this particular problem at a later date. At the moment, I just want to take an even closer look at this 'justifiably'. Thus if, as I have suggested to you, the individual conscience regards right, rational right or, as Hegel calls it, 'the actual world of right and the ethical' as the enemy, then a philosophy that teaches the positive doctrine of the reconciliation of the particular and the universal should focus on this question instead of skating over it. The idea of absolute reconciliation [Geschlichtetheit], the idea that spirit should always be at home with itself and should rediscover itself, as Hegel phrases it,9 and at the same time the emphatic admission that the individual mind is simply not at home with itself in its confrontation with objective institutions and the objective historical trend — there is a conflict here that he cannot simply ignore. The reason that he cannot ignore it is that this state of not being at home with itself is a kind of metathesis, a kind of participation in the very rationality that is thought of as the achievement of the act of identification. It would be easier for an opponent of Hegel, it would be easier for Kant to react in this way, since Kant rigorously maintained a dualistic attitude towards empirical subjects, and hence would say: very well, individual conscience and the course of the world are absolutely incompatible. But then he would add: so much the worse for the course of the world. However, if, like Hegel, I say that the course of the world and individual conscience are each mediated by the other and that therefore the individual consciousness must discover itself in the course of the world, while simultaneously teaching that rightly and 'justifiably'
it cannot discover itself in the universal – then in effect it reverts to dualism, to Kantian dualism, and even hypostasizes this as a kind of positivism. To cite the English proverb, he adds insult to injury. Thus not only is an injustice done to the individual by both the course of the world and the institutions, but if the individual recognizes what is happening and protests, instead of joining in and identifying with the process, he finds himself derided as stupid, narrow-minded, sentimental and God knows what else. People continue to wag their philosophical finger at him until he gives in. Anyone who, like Hegel, insists on mediation should refrain from introducing a *chorismos*, a separation, at a crucial juncture; he should refrain from representing the *chorismos* of reason and unreason, chance and necessity, as a positive. The absolute is treated by Hegel, and the entire philosophy of history that talks about the world spirit, as spirit, as a spiritual principle. But if this concept of spirit is not to degenerate into something vacuous it cannot be allowed to break every link with the living spirit, the spirit of individuals. For living individuals objectify and universalize themselves in it, while even Hegel, as my earlier quotation shows, demands that they be 'at home with themselves'.

Hegel perceives the need for the separation and regards it as a dialectical necessity which he ought to criticize or supersede; but instead he tends to trivialize it and treat it as mere accident, simply to counter the resistance and the rights of the critical mind. And the downgrading of this separation *sub specie individuationis* corresponds to the theodicy of separation *sub specie aeterni* – that is to say, to the doctrine that, as the totality of life, this separation is the desired reconciliation. However, whenever we ask this reconciliation to deliver, to show what is reconciled and how, we are only given the assurance that this is not what was meant. Reconciliation was the totality, and if you expect more from it, if you would like to achieve it for your own consciousness (and not even for you as a person), then you are simply small-minded, a petty philosopher of reflection [*Reflexionsphilosophy*] who has not yet reached the pinnacle of absolute idealism. . . . And this simply will not do. This kind of thinking sins against its own virtue, against the bourgeois virtue that one should pay the debts that one incurs – intellectual debts in this case – whereas Hegel tries to wriggle out of it at this crucial point. Incidentally, I do not believe that I need to explain to you just how much I admire Hegel's philosophy, despite such faults. But you can see here how even such a mighty edifice as the Hegelian dialectic not only demeans itself, but is forced to demean itself before the course of the world to which it has been harnessed. Karl Kraus's verse

‘What has the world done to us?’ applies not just to us as individuals, to each of us, but it also applies to what we imagine has raised us above ourselves, namely our philosophy. Following this Hegelian argument, and having said to you that what you can find in Hegel is this suggestive power that everything has behind it, everything that exists; the entire force, I would even say, the entire machinery of history that everything has behind it – faced with all this, where can we obtain the courage as citizens to prevent us from knuckling under? Particularly if it is the case, as I explained to you in an earlier lecture,¹¹ that this life reproduces itself not despite conflict, but because of it. I believe that the answer to this is that the critical lever, the intrinsic critical lever, is to be found in the category of *objective possibility*. To a certain degree we must concede that Hegel is in the right, even though I have been critical of specific arguments, of course without wishing to trivialize them. In particular, he is right to assert that an abstract ideal that has nothing to do with the course of the world, that is to say, an ideal whose conditions of realization have no basis in the world as it is, is impotent and worthless. And you all know how an ideal of that sort has had such an extreme, and I may say extremely dubious, influence on Hegel's socialist disciples. But what we *can* say is that universal reason, which Hegel insisted on in opposition to all particularity, did actually bring about the possibility of reproducing the lives of all mankind at a more adequate, more human level. This happened quite straightforwardly, in the first instance, thanks to the growth in the forces of production, that is, by virtue of the increasing opportunities. These opportunities are so tangible and so concrete that they provide us with a legitimate platform from which to criticize the actual course of the world. This advance is evident not just in the context of a so-called welfare society, which after all is very limited numerically even now, when compared to humanity as a whole, but on a global scale. I should add, very speculatively and perhaps rashly, that this possibility of making a leap forward, of doing things differently, always existed, even in periods when productivity was far less developed, an opportunity that was missed again and again. This is something I shall perhaps return to later on. The point I want to make here is that this entire view of history contains a single strand, and this applies both to the Hegelian and the Marxian doctrine. Emancipation from this single-stranded view will only come when we refuse to accept the dictum that it has only now become a real possibility. It is important to realize that in all probability the opportunity we see today of a sensible organization of mankind was also possible in less complicated times, when there were far fewer people and social
conditions were incomparably more modest. The assertion that it did not happen, that it was impossible, is one of the propositions that owes its plausibility to the fact that it was uttered by the victors, and so its importance should not be exaggerated. Hence I would say that the critical yardstick that allows reason, and indeed compels and obliges reason, to oppose the superior strength of the course of the world is always the fact that in every situation there is a concrete possibility of doing things differently. This possibility is present and sufficiently developed and does not need to be inflated into an abstract utopia that can be instantly scotched by the automatic retort that it will not work, it will never work. What you can see here is one of the most disastrous consequences of an idealist theory of history. By identifying reality and spirit, you conflate possibility and reality. Not only is reality identified with spirit, but spirit, mind, is identified with reality; the tension between the two is eliminated, thus quashing the function of spirit as a critical authority. Thus in idealist thought, with its emphasis on identity, the tendency is to equate reality and possibility, and to do away with possibility as the subjective element of tension that corresponds precisely on the subjective side to non-identical being on the objective one. It is this act of elision that makes it possible to denigrate possibility as such. Nowadays, when Hegel's philosophy has long since been forgotten, this tendency has been secularized - or, as I would prefer to say, vulgarized. It has become common prejudice to claim that utopia is not permitted and that therefore it is not possible. It follows that the spell under which most people live is not the spell of the materialism that is said to be so awful. The real spell that has taken root in this kind of thinking is that of a vulgar idealism that has long since forgotten its own assumptions.

I imagine that quite a few of you, having heard me talk so much in these lectures about the concept of the objective historical trend, the world spirit, the way in which this objective process comes to prevail and the negative nature of the universal - that quite a few of you will have an urgent question on the tip of your tongue: isn't all this a mystification of history? I would find it very easy to understand if you were to ask this question. After all, surely history is made, as has been remarked, by human beings; all historical events are tied to the human beings who bring them about. On the other hand, these events work themselves out at the expense of human beings, human beings are their victims, history stretches its hand out over all human beings. I have intentionally phrased this question in a slightly blunt and primitive way. But there is no doubt that it deserves an answer in a course of lectures on the theory of history, and of course this answer should take its proper place in the context of what I have been saying. In fact, looking at it in architectonic terms, we might say that we have reached the precise point in our discussion when it would be appropriate to attempt an answer. I should like to begin by reminding you of something I have tried to impress upon you, namely the coercive nature of history. It is not just that we are constantly exposed to its blind, overpowering events and also its larger tendencies. Nor is it just the fact that, in so far as we act as social beings, as socialized beings, we act as character masks (to use Marx's term).¹ By character masks I mean that, while we imagine that we act as ourselves, in reality we act to a great extent as the agents of our own functions.
When a businessman calculates his options and takes his decisions, he is guided not by his character, but by calculations, his balance sheet, his budget and his plan for the next business cycle in which the objective elements of the situation are concentrated. And other things being equal, the same may be said of almost all the functions that human beings have to carry out these days. Even the most powerful government minister will generally find himself limited to converting open files into closed ones. It is regularly the case—you can see this in any examination in the modest situation in universities where the interest in making sure that the files are in order, that the co-examiner has not forgotten to sign the examination form and niceties of that sort—that the interest in such matters takes precedence over the candidate's performance. Moreover, it does so to a degree that would shock examination candidates if they were to witness it, although it might also make them smile, and this might help to relieve them a little of their pre-examination anxieties. But I do not wish to talk about all this today, that is to say, about the way in which objective social necessities come to assert themselves. I want rather to discuss a specific factor that really focuses our attention on the role or place of human beings in the history that they allegedly make. What I have to say about this is that, even in the realm in which according to convention human beings are really more or less in control, that is to say, in which they are not determined by their functions but enjoy a certain measure of freedom, they continue to be determined by the universal. So much so that even the most specific aspects of their individuality are performed by the universal, and this includes even those elements that diverge from the universal. Let me add right away: this influence is in general negative.

In other words, individuals and even the category of the individual—which as you will recollect is a relatively recent development, dating back only to the beginning of the Renaissance in Europe—even individuals and the category of the individual, then, are the products of history. Given the nature of history, I would also ask you to reflect for a moment that this implies that the individual is also a transitory phenomenon. Please note that by individual here I do not mean the biological division into individual beings, i.e., the fact that human beings do not come into the world like coral colonies but as single beings or at best as twins, or less well as triplets or quadruplets with slighter chances of survival. What I mean is that individuality is a reflexive concept, that is to say, we can only speak of individuality where individual subjects become conscious of their individuality and singularity, in contrast to the totality, and only define themselves as individuals, as particular beings in the consciousness of this opposition. In this particular sense, we can say that the individual is a product and, as I said, may be a transitory phenomenon. Of course, you should be aware that the natural form of individuation, that is to say, the physical separation of individual people from each other, does in a sense enter into this reflexive concept because the biological fact of individuality requires that just as people have come into the world singly, so they should perpetuate themselves as individuals. So it is true that the notion of individual self-preservation, which is the central feature of individuation and also of the development of individual character, does extend back into the realm of biology. In contrast, animals do not possess this self-awareness and a fixed self as an internal authority has not become crystallized. The fact that animals do not have this self-awareness suffices to explain why individuality can be considered a reflexive category and thus the product of history. The process of socialization to which human beings are subjected by history, the process of inclusion in society as a whole, is one through which the universal realizes itself in history and so can be described as a historical process. Now the fact of individuation is not merely a matter of a conscious attitude towards the universal on the part of human beings. It does not resemble extreme situations in which, for example, a recruit submits to a hostile force, namely orders, drill, or being ground down, by adopting the slogan: 'Man, you had better keep your head down', an attitude that enables him to survive as an individual separate from coercion at the hands of the universal. It is rather the case, and I believe this is fundamental to an understanding of the attitude of the individual human subject caught up in the historical process, that the historical coercion which moulds human beings enters into the very core of their psyche and their subjectivity is in a sense shaped by this socialization process. The sphere of psychology in which we imagine that we are ourselves is also the sphere in which in a certain, obscure sense we are furthest from being ourselves. This is because we are preformed by that being-for-others to the very core of our being. This being-for-others is what is most successful in breaking whatever part of the existence of the individual that has not submitted to that identity coercion. By this I mean that the more individuals identify with the universal—not consciously, but in their unconscious and preconscious reactions—the more they can be said to distance themselves in a sense from the universal by the fact that their identification with it is blind and defenseless because they are acting unconsciously, as a form of adaptation. It has frequently been maintained—with justice, I would say—that the realm specific to psychology is the realm of irrationality. This is true of psychology as knowledge as well as of the objects with
which psychology concerns itself. I believe that we see here the explanation of this irrationality. That is to say, at those points where human beings strive to internalize the universal, the very thing that should harmonize with their reason, they almost always act irrationally. For this universal is directed against their conscious interests in the sense in which I have already discussed at some length and which I shall perhaps be able to explain further during this lecture. This is because the identification with the universal cannot be achieved in any other way, through reason, for instance, which human beings nevertheless stand in need of if they are to survive in an irrational universe. For this reason they can achieve their own socialization only in a way that is irrational, or even anti-rational in principle, or as we could say in clinical terms: neurotic, or as a consequence of repression or regression or by means of all those modes of self-mutilation that psychology enumerates. The distinction between psychology and reason has in addition to its subjective explanation, for example, in the individual resolution of the Oedipus complex, an objective, historical explanation, though of course the entire Oedipus complex could not be understood without the family and with it the authority of the father as a social phenomenon.

The irrationality of psychology assigns the irrationality of the course of the world to individuals against their own reason. This is the source of the peculiarity that is so characteristic of our own situation but which presumably already featured in Hegel's proposition of identity. What I have in mind here is the constant illusion that reconciliation is a reality: in other words, the suggestion that, despite all the horror and negativity of which I have tried to give you a not wholly implausible picture, it always looks as if human beings and the course of the world that is imposed on them are truly similar in nature, are genuinely identical; it looks as if the world were so constructed as to be worthy of human beings and as if we had no right to complain about the course of the world that has made people what they are. This is because what the course of the world has made of people is largely to ensure their affirmation of itself. It has modified or shaped their social character to the point where they are willing to sell their souls to the world, even where it is at its most irrational and where it exacts senseless sacrifices from them. People are forced, nowadays especially, to turn the realities that they have been foisted on them into their own business simply in order to survive. And then Hegel comes along and glorifies the world spirit by asserting that it is identical with what human beings are, adding only that people are ignorant of this fact - and in this respect he is absolutely right. The only problem is that this alleged positive knowledge is in reality a negative. By this I mean that people simply do not know what the world has done to them because, if they did know, they would be different from what they are and could not be turned into whatever it is that the course of the world has made of them. Incidentally, such concepts as the objectivity of despair or the objectivity of happiness can be measured against such things. That is to say, their objectivity is of the kind that might have broken through the illusion of identity that has been created by a painful process of identification that is consistently and necessarily faulty and unsuccessful, and cast it off. For this identity is completely misconceived. We may say that the measure of its failure is one we can see everywhere today. It takes the form of that infantility among adults that surfaces at its most extreme where the adults are at their most grown up. That is to say, it manifests itself when they have rid themselves of the last trace of their childhood dreams and have completely surrendered to the business of self-preservation that has lost its ultimate purpose and become a fetish. At that point, the reason that has kicked over the traces, that has run wild and insists only on its formal fulfilment without following its rational purpose, merges with illusion and, psychologically at least, deteriorates into damaged goods.

In a somewhat cynical passage in the Philosophy of History, Hegel remarks that as a general rule the course of the world ends up with people sowing their wild oats (his use of this idiomatic phrase suggests that he is distancing himself a little from this attitude), and in so doing, and in the process of socialization (although he does not call it that), people find their proper place and their proper situation in life. This should be contrasted with a statement by a very significant figure who did not conform to the course of the world even though he occupied a prominent position in it, more specifically in the world of art. I am thinking here of Gustav Mahler, who struggled for years to do away with lax conformism, by which I mean the wrong sort of socialization, in the world of music, a struggle which was probably to blame in part for his premature death. Mahler said (and his answer does seem to me to amount to a critique of Hegel) that the wild oats that we sow are really the best thing about us. It is my belief that when you too find yourselves facing the need to sow your wild oats, you should reflect on what I have been saying here. If you find that you can slow down the process a little that might be far from the worst thing that could happen to you. But the disaster consists as a rule in the fact that people - today at any rate, in contrast to the still happy, individualist times of the late nineteenth century - that people are all rushing to sow their wild oats; or, as I once expressed it in Minima Moralia, most people today kick with
the pricks instead of against them. 4 But when you make a remark like this you only prove that you have become a grumpy old man who is naturally suspect to the serene young people of today. Even so, I should still like to point out to you that this false identification of an unreconciled universal with the particular is necessary in an ironic and negative sense. We are not dealing here with arbitrary subjective processes that can be avoided as long as you have a modicum of insight, self-confidence and critical spirit. A necessity rules here and you can count yourself lucky if you can keep your head above water long enough to recognize it and give it a name. But no one should imagine that he is immune to it or that a fortunate intellectual disposition can make him independent of such mechanisms. Psychologically, it is scarcely possible to make good the narcissistic loss, that is to say, the constant injuries offered to the narcissistically driven instincts whose violence cannot be exaggerated; it exceeds everything that the imagination can grasp, and I would say that this is true of every human being, without exception, in the world in which we live. Why that is so is something I cannot explain here. These lectures do not deal with social psychology, and I am speaking today about the phenomena of social psychology only in order to show you their place in the framework of history, and not so as to provide you with knowledge of social psychology — that would be quite impossible here. But if people really were to become fully aware that their own selves — that is to say, the point where they believe that they belong entirely to themselves — that their own selves belong not to them but that they are, right down to and including their idiosyncrasies and peculiarities, what might be called the negative imprint of the universal, that would involve such a fearful loss of self-esteem as one tends to call it in bourgeois circles that in all probability they would be unable to bear it.

When I say that people's peculiarities are the negative imprint of the universal what I have in mind are, for example, the widely ridiculed stereotypes of the miser, that is to say, the kind of character structure deduced and criticized by Freud. 5 This structure is nothing but the mutilation, the deviation from the norm that arises because people are forced to develop certain character traits in the course of socialization. Given the striving for profit imposed by the universal, this leads everyone who consistently obeys that instinct to develop the deformations of pathological avarice. These can be seen in the novels of Balzac, for example, whose inexhaustible and precise imagination depicts them with all their nuances. This is just one aspect that I propose to you as a model. You will not find it hard to think of others. So what I am talking about today are these problematic identifications with the universal from a psychological point of view, that is to say, about what human beings actually mean for history in a specific sense, in their inner composition, and what the historical universal actually means for them. Without these problematic identifications with the law that governs them objectively, that is to say, without the primacy of self-preservation and the forms in which this is reflected, the human subject would probably be unable to survive in this world. Whoever wished to exist immediately, absolutely immediately, without the psychological hardenings and stigmata through which we are transformed by the unreconciled universal, would be an entirely defenceless person, and probably a feeble human being without a self who would be completely helpless and powerless in the face of the world, an easy prey. The deepest reason for this is that, owing to the socialization process, that is to say, owing to our adaptation to the social and historical universal, we are forced to renounce our instincts — every day, at every moment, in a myriad of ways. We do so on the tacit assumption (one that was criticized as early as the ancient hedonists of the Aristippian, Cyrenaic school) that, if we renounce momentary, immediate satisfactions, we shall prosper in the long run, that we shall eventually receive in full what we sacrifice now. In general, postponement is the basic model of social denial. The motto 'Jam tomorrow, never jam today' is the basic model according to which social and historical denial comes to prevail, from the most intimate matters to the construction of entire societies which exact sacrifices from people on that pretext that everything will be just dandy in three or four generations, even though the people directly affected have no real reason to believe this. These promises — promises that are implicit in the social contract itself, that is to say, in the exchange relationship — that we shall one day be compensated for our present sacrifices, or shall really gain greater security, these promises are doomed to disappointment over and over again. There are periods, the present is one such, in which the disappointment is not so much in evidence, and where certain needs are satisfied relatively easily; at other times this is less true. Even in our own age, I would say, without being able to analyse it in detail here, that this fulfilment of the social promise in the future for what we sacrifice in the present by performing our social roles calls for a psychological surplus value that is squeezed out of us in addition to the ordinary, economic one. This psychological surplus value is the difference between the expectation of happiness in the long term that is always being held out to us and the actual satisfaction that we generally receive. At bottom of course, everyone knows what I am talking about here — perhaps 'knows' is not the right word...
everyone is aware of it subconsciously. People manage to come to
terms with this phenomenon, with the realization that their own
rationality is irrational, and that they do not obtain what their rati­
onal behaviour promises, only by making an irrational response. It is
to accept the irrational course of the world, to identify with it and
to make it their own. You can see this every day, in discussions, for
example, where people simply echo what others say and produce
100,000 arguments to prove that things can’t be any different, won’t
be any different and shouldn’t be any different. It is as if they are
inwardly prepared to take the side of whoever will prevent them from
embarking on the course of action that would be best for them. This
fact too is well known to analytical psychology, admittedly from a
very limited, that is, an abstract, subjective point of view, but never­
theless a stringent one. Anna Freud, Sigmund Freud’s daughter, has
made a special study of these questions and has introduced the
concept of identification with the aggressor or with one’s own enemy.7
Incidentally, this should not be taken too personally as referring to
one’s own enemies, but should be expanded to one’s identification
with the course of the world just as it happens to be. This sets up a
catastrophic vicious circle in which human beings have an objective
interest in changing the world and in which this change is quite
impossible without their participation. However, these mechanisms
of identification have stamped themselves on people’s characters to
such a degree that they are quite incapable of the spontaneity and
the conscious actions that would be required to bring about the
necessary changes. This is because, by identifying with the course
of the world, they do so in an unhappy, neurotically damaged way,
which effectively leads them to reinforce the world as it is. And that,
I would say, is the truth about the situation of human beings in
history.
This has two consequences for the theory of history and I should
like to summarize them for you briefly. On the one hand, the position
is that the course of the world which is hostile to human beings
asserts itself against them but with their approval — in pivotal situa­
tions it even prevails with their conscious, self-destructive acquies­
cence. To explain this in slightly more concrete terms, I shall say only
that, as you know, at its lowest and in terms of its potential today,
democracy is a system that would like to give mankind the form it
deserves; it is a social form in which people are the subjects and not
the objects of society. Accordingly, it is the socio-political form
that expresses the self-determination of mankind. Nevertheless, it is alien
to the masses and in critical situations it becomes the object of hatred.
It is alien because as long as it is purely formal it appears further
removed from people and more abstract than forms that at least
appear to be immediately familiar and close by. The success of race
theory, which is based on something as close as so-called blood rela­
tionships and, ultimately, the family, has exploited these elements by
contrasting them with remote, objective mechanisms, even though it
is to these that human beings are in truth connected. Its immensely
profound appeal was based on the illusion of closeness that is echoed
in such formulae as the term ‘national community’ [Volksgemein­
schaft] and which went to the innermost core of the human uncon­
scious. By speaking of the merely formal character of democracy, I
have already suggested that in the world in which we live the possi­
bilities that might be open to mankind are denied them in reality —
instead they have to make do with the illusion of alterity. However,
so as at least to point to a particular socio-psychological mechanism
by way of illustration, there is a tendency — one that ought to be
carefully analysed since it seems to be a constant factor — for situa­
tions where possibilities of improvement are visible but are denied to
provoke the fury of those who are kept down. Where this happens
this fury is directed not against evil, but against the imperfections
of the good which find themselves ridiculed as a swindle simply because
people choose to identify with the inexorable course of the world as
it is. An instance is the fury unleashed against so-called bleeding-heart
humanitarians by powerful populist forces proclaiming their yearning
for the return of the death penalty. Given our current relatively peace­
ful domestic situation, this is a particularly frightening example of
the mechanism I have in mind.
On the other hand, since the achievement of a proper identity
cannot succeed because of the objective course of the world and
because people’s interests cannot be reconciled, people are necessarily
crippled by this unconscious act of identification with the world. To
an increasing extent, they find that they lose the inner, spiritual
freedom which would enable them to detach themselves from the
course of the world; they find themselves unable to rise above it as
free, autonomous and critical beings. I can illustrate this tendency by
referring you to an expression originally introduced to psychology
by Carl Gustav Jung8 but which I took the liberty of applying some
years ago in sociology.9 This is the idea of ‘concretism’. This concept
contains the idea of the displacement of the libido to what is imme­
diately present to people’s minds. Because they identify with the
institutions, commodities, things and relations immediately familiar
to them, they are incapable of perceiving their dependence upon
processes at some distance from them, the actual objective processes.
By way of conclusion, the inference I should like to draw from what
I have been telling you today is that, to a degree that is difficult to grasp, psychology has an immensely important role to play. This remains true even though objectively, and compared to the objective necessity of history, it is only a secondary, supplementary phenomenon. For were this not so, people would simply not put up with the situation as I have described it. Psychology has become the cement of the world as it exists; it holds together the very conditions that would be seen through rationally, if this irrational cement did not exist. This probably also explains why the most effective form of ideology today, namely the culture industry, is concerned less to transmit particular ideologies, propositions and attitudes than to reinforce and reproduce in an unending chain those same mechanisms that enable people to identify with the things with which they are not identical. Thus what I mean by this cement is the way in which human psychology has embedded the world in human beings in the form, moreover, of a perverse, deceitful consciousness; it is a deformed consciousness that knows only how to yield. It is independent of specific theoretical or political ideas, which for the most part it never even begins to formulate. Nevertheless, this consciousness is the only form in which ideology really survives today. Thus the form taken by ideology and by the false identity of subject and object in a world of radical discord is one in which a conscious-unconscious state is produced in people both objectively, and with their own connivance and the aid of their own instincts. This state of mind blinds them to the unreconciled nature of life and leads them to accept and adopt as their own the very conditions that they feel to be their exact antitheses. And this, ladies and gentlemen, may perhaps explain to you why, in a theory of history or a theory of society that is basically objective in nature, such a subjective science as psychology (which as you will know is commonly traduced in Russia) is able to make such a crucial contribution. Its task is to analyse the cement, the ideology, that exercises such immense influence over human beings, and is thereby able to reproduce the entire global situation. We may conclude, then, and this brings me back to my starting-point, that, at the very moment when people believe they are most themselves and belong to themselves, they are not only the prey [Beute] of ideology. We might even go so far as to say that they themselves have turned into ideology.

Since it is my undoubtedly laudable intention in these lectures to give you not just an introduction to the introduction, but also as much as possible of the relevant subject matter, I have decided to modify my argument a little. I should like therefore to confine my comments to giving you a few of what are in my opinion the pivotal categories needed for the construction of a theory of history. I shall then move from the concept of history to that of freedom so that I can discuss the concept of freedom in the second half of the semester. This means that there will be a little less time, and perhaps no time at all, to focus on a number of purely philosophical questions concerning dialectical structure which I had thought important. But it also means that I shall carry out a little more faithfully the promise that I had made in announcing this course of lectures. One of the countless causes of disappointment experienced in universities stems from the discovery that a lecture course with a highly promising title frequently yields far less in practice than one had been led to believe. If I cannot do away with this problem, I should at least like to show you that I am conscious of it.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have had a lot to say about the unity of the historical process, about the idea of the course of history as a totality, and I followed this up with some remarks on what I have called the negativity of the course of the world. I should like now to transfer this theme to the construction of history. This idea, this motif, which I have explained to you in philosophical terms — in earlier days people would have said ‘in speculative terms’ — can be
found in Hegel, and indeed in the entire thinking of the Hegelian era, under the rubric of universal history. During the period of the so-called ascendancy of the bourgeoisie, this concept of universal history, by which I mean that of a continuous history of mankind, was generally conceived as an upward development, albeit not without setbacks. This idea formed something like the general climate of thought at the time — and, incidentally, you would do well to bear in mind when working on Hegel that what you find in Germany at this period is not so much the achievements of individual writers as the expression of an objective spirit as it developed in the course of living communication. This then found its most coherent expression in Hegel's thought. Under the influence of Dilthey's history of ideas, we still see these things in far too individualistic a way. 1 I just say this in passing when working on Hegel that what you find in Germany at this period was then interrupted by non-musical, as it were exotic, factors, namely social developments. The result was that following Bach's death a new style emerged that can be regarded as the negation of his music. We then see a musical tradition of quite a different kind, one that incorporates Bach's achievements only tentatively and with difficulty. Incidentally, this demolition of the Bachian tradition after Bach was an event that probably had extremely grave consequences — but it is not my concern here to give you a history of the philosophy of music. At all events, you can see here how a detailed knowledge makes it extremely difficult to produce a speculative account of universal history. It is interesting to consider Spengler in this context. Spengler had vigorously combated the idea of universal history, since he even denied the continuity of time, which he replaced with a concept of simultaneity. That is to say, he treated the chronological succession of so-called cultures synchronically, thus effectively denying chronological sequence. Spengler is regarded by historical positivists as a wildly speculative metaphysician because he demolished the unity of history by his insistence on the specificities of individual cultures. Nevertheless, because of his denial of historical continuity we must situate him likewise in the positivist tendency. This places him incidentally in the tradition he stems from and which goes back via Nietzsche to Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer too should be included among the thinkers who, in sharp contrast to what he thought of as the optimistic purveyors of universal history, effectively came around to a denial of history, to a conception of history as no

Nowadays, this idea of universal history is highly controversial and problematic. However, if what I have said to you about the unity of history in general, about the unfolding of a unified, historical process, has any plausibility, there is a lot that can be said in its favour. And it is my belief that, if you wish to say anything at all about the theory of history in general, you must enter into a discussion of the construction of universal history. This idea is under attack from two quarters. It is criticized by positivists who constantly point out that there is no such thing as a unified, continuous process of history, and they have good reason to do so. They point out, for example, that the immense rupture in Western history during the long centuries of the barbarian migrations, followed by the tentative discovery of the classical tradition, is the most dramatic illustration of this. But you can trace this element of rupture, this demonstration that it is not possible to speak of a unified progress of history, into its most minute ramifications. I need mention only one sphere of activity, one that has just occurred to me and that concerns a branch of knowledge with which I am conversant, namely music. The situation in music is that a particular development, the compromise between medieval polyphony and the newly discovered homophonic music, culminated in Bach. It was then interrupted by non-musical, as it were exotic, factors, namely social developments. The result was that following Bach's death a new style emerged that can be regarded as the negation of his music. We then see a musical tradition of quite a different kind, one that incorporates Bach's achievements only tentatively and with difficulty. Incidentally, this demolition of the Bachian tradition after Bach was an event that probably had extremely grave consequences — but it is not my concern here to give you a history of the philosophy of music. At all events, you can see here how a detailed knowledge makes it extremely difficult to produce a speculative account of universal history. It is interesting to consider Spengler in this context. Spengler had vigorously combated the idea of universal history, since he even denied the continuity of time, which he replaced with a concept of simultaneity. That is to say, he treated the chronological succession of so-called cultures synchronically, thus effectively denying chronological sequence. Spengler is regarded by historical positivists as a wildly speculative metaphysician because he demolished the unity of history by his insistence on the specificities of individual cultures. Nevertheless, because of his denial of historical continuity we must situate him likewise in the positivist tendency. This places him incidentally in the tradition he stems from and which goes back via Nietzsche to Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer too should be included among the thinkers who, in sharp contrast to what he thought of as the optimistic purveyors of universal history, effectively came around to a denial of history, to a conception of history as no
more than the dreary repetition of eternal sameness or perhaps even as the history of decline. When I say that Spengler's theory of history comes close to positivism, for all his opposition to positivism, in a strange way this nevertheless chimes in with Spengler's own attitude. His own habits of mind were strongly positivistic and he always gave precedence to the inexorable facts over attitudes, will power or the idea, or whatever else one is disposed to call it. As long as you do not have too great a knowledge of historical detail — and this is a factor that must for once be included in the philosophical discussion — you not only have the benefit of a greater distance which enables you to gain a better overview, but, by the same token, you are blinder to facts that make things awkward for philosophical theory. In such a situation one's own intellectual superiority thrives on one's own deficiency, on the fact that one knows too little. It is all very well to try and demonstrate one's ingenuity in devising a profound interpretation of history when one has only a passing acquaintance with the details of the case. Philosophically, too, this is an aspect of the dialectic between universal and particular that we should not lose sight of. It provides the justification, the element of truth, in the positivists' constant sniping at philosophical interpretations of history. We may say that in general philosophy, and indeed intellect as such, is more naive and, we might even say, more infantile than its otherwise inferior positivist adversary. At the same time, it must not allow itself to be persuaded to part with the advantage that lies in this greater distancing, but must instead face up to the task of directing its constructive energies towards the details of history; and it must go on to mobilize the forces required to construct the totality in the details themselves. For if those forces remain unable to engage with the details of history, they are all too likely to remain vapid, vacuous and lacking in authority.

I believe, for example, that Benjamin's historical studies, or indeed my own, if I may be allowed to talk out of school for once and speak of my own efforts, both have their roots in this situation. That is to say, they arise from the wish to hold fast to the speculative element without which (as I have explained in an earlier lecture) historical knowledge that aspires to being more than superficial is hardly possible. On the other hand, both of us strove to immerse ourselves in historical detail in order to avoid that specious mastery that arises from not being too familiar with the facts. Something of this desire can be seen in Benjamin's so-called defence of induction and also in my own tendency to immerse myself in highly specific individual texts or other intellectual products, instead of seeking out broader contexts, and then to look for the broader interconnections in those specific texts or products. You too, if you eventually end up in productive work of this sort, will perhaps experience the tension of which I am speaking and to the philosophical significance of which I am alerting you. I should like to offer you one further illustration of this, in an example taken from Hegel. In this sphere we find him combining the profoundest insights with a kind of inferiority, an almost childish reluctance to get to grips with the matter in hand. The specious mastery that results from this amounts to what we associate with the term idealism: the naivety, the schoolmastery naivety with which history is judged en bloc, or constructed en bloc. There is a theory in his Philosophy of History — and many of you who are busy preparing yourselves for the so-called Philosopichicum will already have heard of this theory. It can be found in the Lectures on the Philosophy of History, that is to say, one of Hegel's supposedly easier books, and it asserts that in the oriental world — by which he chiefly meant China — only one man was free; in the world of the Greeks, which of course was a slave-owning society, a few men were free, and only in the modern world, or what he rather disastrously calls the Christian-Germanic world, is everyone free, potentially at least. It is very easy to demonstrate the arrogance and folly of this thesis. I need only remind you of the simple fact that has long been familiar to us all that even oriental societies governed by an extreme form of absolutism never had such a pure, absolute single monarch at their head. In reality they were largely feudal societies, so that they contained no single free person but a class system, admittedly one that was hierarchically organized. But this fact is simply ignored in Hegel's theory, since he plays fast and loose with the facts for the sake of the brilliant symmetry of the argument (which with its logical progression: one, a few, all ... was brilliant at least for his age which had rather more modest aspirations). This cavalier treatment of the facts can also be seen in Balzac, a near contemporary of Hegel's, who sometimes dealt with social reality in a similar fashion. This remarkable attitude of 'so much the worse for the facts' was undoubtedly one of the factors leading to the emergence of positivism, but, on the other hand, it contains a power of the imagination without which the intellectual advances that were so characteristic of the age could not have been made. But, equally, it goes without saying that in the modern world the idea of the freedom of all has not become literally true, because in the meantime the critical analysis of society has demonstrated in countless ways that the formal liberty of all individuals in bourgeois society must be contrasted with their actual unfreedom in reality. In this sense, it is quite easy for any student of history in his very first term to criticize Hegel's theory. If he is content
with this, he can go back home with a massive prejudice against philosophy and without ever feeling the need to come to grips with those windbags.

Well, I have been playing the devil's advocate here, but I have to tell you that in reality the matter is not as simple as all that. You need only to reflect briefly to convince yourselves how much truth is contained in Hegel's seemingly absurd - masterfully absurd - theory. As you are aware, the idea of freedom is the cornerstone of Hegel's philosophy of history since that philosophy understands history as progress in the consciousness of freedom. But the idea of freedom is tied to the individual. Initially, the concept of freedom has its meaning only in so far as we understand it individual freedom, the freedom of the individual to act spontaneously, autonomously, on his own responsibility, and to decide for himself - as long as he does not offend against the freedom of others, the freedom of his fellow human beings. This latter doctrine was formulated in exemplary fashion by Kant in his philosophy of right. Thus underlying the doctrine of freedom in whose name Hegel developed that three-stage theory of the development of history is the individual himself. In fact, when he speaks of 'one', 'some' and 'all', this idea of freedom does refer directly to the freedom of individuals, and even the number of individual human beings. If you take Hegel's thesis literally, it leaves itself open to all the objections that I have been almost too embarrassed to explain to you because they are so commonplace and so obvious. However, if for a moment you look at Hegel's intended meaning in a slightly less literal spirit, from a greater distance and from the standpoint of the individual, you would perceive how much rationality, how much plausibility enters into this seemingly rash idea - and I do not think that one would need to do too much violence to the text to rescue Hegel in this way. In the East, in oriental society - and I believe, to the text to rescue Hegel in this way. In the East, in oriental society as a whole, the category of the individual, the category of individuation, does not stand at the centre in the same way as it does in Western thought. I think that one can say this without exposing oneself to the accusation of colonial, Eurocentric impertinence. The difficulties in communication, in mutual understanding between East and West are to be found essentially in the fact that we - and I believe that this 'we' has a scope that includes the most heterogeneous political and philosophical concepts - that we measure all the concepts of the universal, of the not-I, by their relation to the I. In contrast - and this extends to the very heart of oriental beliefs - the tendency in the East is to mitigate the suffering of the individual by identifying him with a totality that he is not, by identifying him with a not-I, rather than to judge existing reality against the yardstick of individuality.

Thus if you examine this Hegelian argument from the standpoint of the principium individuationis, the assumption that in China there was only one individual because only one person was the emperor does indeed sound nonsensical. However, it is by no means nonsensical to assert that in the oriental world the concept of the individual was not of central importance. Hegel may even have been aware - and the most recent historical developments seem to have proved him right - that this absence of individuation was itself a historical stage. By this I mean that in order to be able to endure the suffering imposed on him by barbaric rule the individual simply had no alternative but the unconditional identification with the not-I, and ultimately with nothing at all, the void. In contrast, the category of the individual is itself the product of history and only assumed a formative role at a much later stage. In antiquity - and here too Hegel had a genuine insight - the category of the individual remained a privilege simply because Greek and Roman society owed their reproduction to the slave system, to slavery. Only relatively few people in antiquity, then, if anyone at all, had the opportunity to develop into individuals. I should add at once that this is also the reality in our own Western society. There is something hollow and fatuous about telling people who are entirely ruled by the wants and deprivations of everyday life, an elderly cleaning lady, for example, that they should develop their individuality. That is not so much humane and universally human as universally cynical in my view. Nevertheless, there is a crucial distinction here. The conditions of formal equality mean that even this famous elderly cleaning lady receives something like a licence to be an individual, a right to individuality, however little she is able to avail herself of it and convert it into a reality. In antiquity, in contrast, the idea of such a right did not exist. In this respect, Christianity, with its doctrine of the absolute value of the individual soul as immortal and created in the image of God, did indeed bring about a world-historical change of incalculable proportions, and Hegel was right to emphasize this.

It can be said that in antiquity the idea of individuality was essentially privileged. This means that, where individuality was able to develop, it was somewhat restricted, particular, one might even say barbaric. This circumstance had a negative effect upon the notion of individuality as something of universal human validity in the Middle Stoa, particularly in thinkers such as Posidonius and Panaitius, turning it into something very pallid and chimerical. On the other hand, there is a period of antiquity in which we can genuinely speak of an individualistic society. This was the entire period following Alexander the Great that we are accustomed to referring to as the
Hellenistic age. During this epoch individuality did not so much form the substance of society as a kind of incidental accompaniment. For even where it developed it was more of a private intermezzo, a protected reserve for individuals, than something that determined the inner nature of society, as was true of the new society later on. In this connection, it is no mere chance that one of the most famous Hellenistic maxims for the individual should have been: *ladei biosas*, in other words, 'Live in obscurity'. In other words, wherever individuality emerges it really remains separate from society, which is more or less left to its own devices, that is to say, the great political potentates, first Alexander and the Diadochi, and then the Romans. The consequence is that individuality remains a particular even where its social impact is concerned. And Jacob Burckhardt, who had great sensitivity in matters of this sort, and to whom we owe the deepest insights on such questions, has come up with the very perceptive comment – this is in *The Greeks and Greek Civilization* – that, in this so-called individualistic Hellenistic society, the individual became atrophied, thanks to the separation of the individual from the political and social reality. He is speaking only of Greece in the period following Epicurus, that is to say, of the true age of individualism in Greek society, but his conclusion is that in this age no record of great individuals – whatever that might mean – has come down to us. The concept of the individual becomes radical in the modern world, the bourgeois world, only when the form of the economy, that is to say, the way in which the lives of human beings are reproduced, is determined by initiative, by labour, a sense of responsibility, the autonomy of individual human beings standing in a relationship based on exchange. ‘Radical’ here means that for centuries, right down to the threshold of our own age, the individual has proved to be the figure through which the universal, that is to say, the reproduction of the human world, is mediated. Modern history begins with the discovery of the individual, and this has a quite different three-dimensionality from the manifestation of individuality in antiquity. We see it in Descartes, for example, or in Montaigne’s essays, or in its first truly great expression, in Shakespeare. In this sense we can say that in the history of modern, i.e., bourgeois, society the category of the individual is socialized: in the first instance, so that formally at least it becomes the *decisive* form of the social process. We need of course to make this idea dialectical if we do not wish to talk nonsense. In this instance, because the bourgeois concept of individuality contained the call for its socialization, that is to say, its adaptation to social norms, and because that has been the case ever since the concept of individuality became dominant, it has had its shadow side, namely the *crisis* of individuality. Today, when the category of the individual seems to be in complete decline, this crisis has assumed extreme forms.

You can see, then, the value of reading a writer such as Hegel as I have generally suggested, that is to say, not just with the requisite precision, but also by making certain allowances. If we read him in that way, then even assertions that are as provocative as those I have focused on, because they are provocative, turn out to have far more truth and to be far more productive than might appear to a theory that is inclined to throw the baby out with the bathwater and to consign Hegel’s entire theory of history to the rubbish heap of obsolete thought simply because of one absurd statement. To this degree, then, theories of universal history do have their validity, as I have tried to show you with the aid of this arbitrarily chosen example of the concept of the individual – although admittedly it is not quite as arbitrary as it may seem, since the individual is a crucial phenomenon of history. After all, we might just as well assert that history is the history of the rise and fall of the individual as make a similar claim under some other heading. However, the fact that we might make use of a whole series of other definitions – Hegel’s idea of freedom or Marx’s thesis of the struggle between the forces of production and the relations of production are obvious examples – this fact shows that history is a *constellation* that can really be grasped only with the help of an elaborate philosophical theory, and not by reducing it to individual concepts or pairs of concepts. However, the theory of history as universal history is open to objections of quite a different sort. These objections may be based on theological or socio-critical assumptions, and you can see them in their most extreme form in the theses on the philosophy of history of Walter Benjamin to which he gave the title ‘On the Concept of History’. These come from his very last period and can in a sense be regarded as his testament. They may well be the last text that he completed. You can read about it in our edition of his writings. I would be grateful, in fact, if you all were to do this if at all possible, so that in my next lecture I can assume that you are all familiar with these theses. At all events, I should like to anticipate that, by pointing out that the element of consent, of apologia, that is to say, the element that justifies history from the standpoint of the victor and defends everything that has happened on the grounds of its necessity – this element of consent is connected with the construction of a theory of universal history because the assumption of such a continuous *unity* in history seems to point to the idea that history has a positive meaning. In this respect it
LECTURE 9

resembles the element of victory which is proclaimed in the name of the principle that has been the unifying factor in history down to the present day. It would be the task of philosophy to determine whether that unifying factor really is the positive, meaningful principle it appears to be. But let me continue with this discussion next time.

LECTURE 10

10 December 1964

‘NEGATIVE’ UNIVERSAL HISTORY

Ladies and gentlemen, last time I tried to show you that theories of universal history such as Hegel’s have a lot more to be said in their favour than we are inclined to think at first sight, even though from a positivist standpoint they may seem to be guilty of arbitrariness or naivety. I should now like to go on to explore a number of what I like to think of as far more valid objections to the construction of universal history. I believe that I pointed out in an earlier lecture that these objections are to be found in Benjamin’s essay ‘On the Concept of History’, an essay which still appears in the Benjamin edition under the title of ‘Theses on the Philosophy of History’. Benjamin himself had evidently fixed on ‘On the Concept of History’ as the definitive title, although in his letters he always spoke of the ‘Theses on the Philosophy of History’. I believe that it would be a good idea for me simply to read out to you the relevant thesis, and at the same time to alert you to the fact that Benjamin is attempting here to formulate a materialist conception of history, albeit one that is shot through with theological ideas that are presented in terms of a highly negative dialectic. It is not possible for me to explore this amalgam of materialism and theology at this moment, although I am fully aware that by failing to do so I run the risk that the very things I wish to emphasize may seem, shall we say, somewhat arbitrary to you, and their utterly compelling logic will fail to make itself fully apparent. But when all is said and done, I have to make sure that I stick to the topic of these lectures so as not to stray too far from what you have every right to expect from them. Thesis XVII states: ‘Historicism rightly
culminates in universal history. It may be that materialist historiography differs in method more clearly from universal history than from any other kind.\textsuperscript{12} I should note in passing that there is something faintly naïve, or even usurpatory, about the expression ‘materialist historiography’, since the predominant, official form of materialist historiography, that is to say, the historical writings of Marx and Engels and their successors, is very much within the tradition of universal history that descends from Hegel. In fact it makes a virtue of it. This means that Benjamin is attempting to enlist the authority of a materialist conception of history for an approach, his own, that is just as heretical when looked at from the position of Marxist practice as it is critical of traditional historicism. ‘Universal history’ (i.e., historicism) ‘has no theoretical armoury.’ Well, that is not something that can be said of Marxism. Despite Benjamin’s strong sympathy for Marxism, particularly in his late phase, it is astonishing to see just how undeveloped his knowledge of Marxist theory is. Instead he worked out a version of Marxism that it would be unfair to juxtapose to Marx’s own theory. By the same token, however, he did himself no favours by thinking of himself as an orthodox Marxist. But these are dogmatic quibbles that we need not go into here. The only point worth making in this connection is to note that it is an absolute travesty to attempt, as we find in the Eastern bloc countries, to claim Benjamin in support of beliefs which for the most part fly in the face of ideas that have been elevated there to the status of dogma.\textsuperscript{3} Benjamin continues: ‘Its procedure is additive: it musters a mass of data to fill the homogeneous, empty time.’ Of course, as I hope I have shown you, no such claim can be made for a universalizing philosophy of history in the broadest sense, such as Hegel’s. But now we have reached the nub of the question, the really interesting bit: ‘Materialist historiography, on the other hand, is based on a constructive principle. Thinking involves not only the movement of thoughts’ – we might say the movement of the time-continuum – ‘but their arrest as well. Where thinking suddenly comes to a stop in a constellation saturated with tensions, it gives that constellation a shock, by which thinking is crystallized as a monad. The historical materialist’, Benjamin says, ‘approaches a historical object only where it confronts him as a monad.’ I may perhaps remind you of what I said last time about my own belief that, especially in philosophical speculations about history, it was far more important to immerse oneself in particular phenomena than to elaborate universal structures. I am sure that you will take note of the affinity between my own way of thinking and that of the principle stated here by Benjamin. ‘In this structure’ the Benjaminian materialist ‘recognizes the sign of a messianic arrest of happening, or (to put it differently) a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past.’ Of course, you might say that here we have a universalizing motif, since in these theses what Benjamin perceives is the uninterrupted history of oppression – although, on the other hand, this unifying aspect is perceived only as something negative, and as something that he persistently disputes in the thesis that I am reading to you here. ‘He takes cognizance of it’ – of this chance – ‘in order to blast a specific era out of the homogeneous course of history; thus, he blasts a specific life out of the lifework. As a result of this method, the lifework’ – let us say the artist’s or thinker’s lifework – ‘is both preserved and sublated in the work’ – that is, in the individual, specific work – ‘the era in the lifework, and the entire course of history in the era. The nourishing fruit of what is historically understood contains time in its interior as a precious but tasteless seed.’

What we have here, I would like to add, is nothing less than a theory that makes its appearance in Benjamin in a dogmatic form, but one whose validity can be demonstrated very cogently. His idea is that, contrary to what traditional philosophy believed, facts do not simply disperse in the course of time, unlike immutable, eternal ideas. The truth is that, while the traditional view inserts facts into the flow of time, they really possess a nucleus of time in themselves, they crystallize time in themselves. What we can legitimately call ideas is this nucleus of time within the individual crystallized phenomena, something that can only be decoded by interpretation.\textsuperscript{4} In accordance with this, we might say that history is discontinuous in the sense that it represents life perennially disrupted. However, because history constantly repeats this process of disruption, and because it clings to the resulting fragments instead of its deceptive surface unity, the philosophical interpretation of history, in other words, the construction of history, acquires a view of the totality that the totality fails to provide at first sight. At the same time, history detects in these fragments the trace of possible developments, of something hopeful that stands in precise opposition to what the totality appears to show. In Hegel this discontinuity is hinted at in his theory of the spirits of the peoples [Volksgeist] that succeed one another in turn, a theory I shall return to. We may say – and here Benjamin may be justified in claiming to be a materialist – that the awareness of discontinuity goes hand in hand with the growing doubts about the possibility of understanding history as the unified unfolding of the idea. In general, the continuous structure of history is based on the assumption that a particular idea runs through history in its entirety and that the various facts gradually come closer to it. The more this way of
thinking is resisted, together with its tendency towards idealization, the less will historians be tempted to think of history as a continuum, a continuum in which the idealism, the affirmative element, lies in the belief that things are getting better all the time. Put in general terms, the consciousness of discontinuity is simply that of the prevailing non-identity. This non-identity is the opposition between whatever is held down and the universal domination that is condemned to identity. And if history is looked at materialistically, as the history not of victories but of defeats, we will become incomparably more conscious of this non-identity than was true of idealism.

The task of a dialectical philosophy of history, then, is to keep both these conceptions in mind – that of discontinuity and that of universal history. This means that we should not think in alternatives: we should not say history is continuity or history is discontinuity. We must say instead that history is highly continuous in discontinuity, in what I once referred to as the permanence of catastrophe. In Benjamin himself I have discovered a sentence that comes very close to this when he speaks of ‘the angel of history’, the Angelus Novus, ‘who seems about to move away from something he stares at. His eyes are wide, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how the angel of history must look. His face is turned toward the past. Where a chain of events appears before us, he sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it at his feet.’ In this image, a magnificent one, incidentally, which grandly encompasses history as a whole in a way that is easily compatible with the monadological viewpoint, Benjamin finds an authentic expression for the union of the continuity and discontinuity of history. It is similar to at least one aspect of Hegel’s theory, and in fact the resemblance is much more than casual, even though we may suppose that Benjamin’s knowledge of Hegel was not very detailed. The resemblance is to be found in Hegel’s doctrine that identity is not simply identity, but the identity of identity and non-identity, in other words, of concept and thing, since for Hegel the concept is the identity. Admittedly – and this ‘admittedly’ which sounds like a minor reservation actually embraces a world of difference – the opposite situation obtains in Benjamin; and if I may add without immodesty, the same thing may be said of my own theory. The position is not that an identity rules which also contains non-identity, but non-identity is a non-identity of the identical and the non-identical. Thus non-identity includes what gives history its unity, what enables it to accommodate itself to the concept as well as what doesn’t. For the very things that subjugate and submit, these very acts of subjugation and submission in which identity is torn apart, forge the identity of history of which we speak and which we must describe as negative identity. Simply to erase universal history from our thinking about history – and in this respect I disagree with what Benjamin says explicitly, although the opposite is objectively implied in his writings – would be to blind oneself to the course of history, the ‘storm’ of history of which he speaks. We would blind ourselves just as effectively as by doing the opposite, namely by subsuming the facts of history into its overall course (which is what I have shown Hegel to have done) without emphasizing the non-identical side of history, since to do this confirms the course of history by the way in which it ignores individual fates.

Thus the task is both to construct and to deny universal history or, to use yet another Hegelian term, one used to refer to public opinion in the Philosophy of Right, universal history is to be respected as well as despised. The domination of nature – which incidentally is mentioned in one of Benjamin’s theses – weds the discontinuous, hopelessly splintered elements and phases of history together into a unity while at the same time its own pressure senselessly tears them asunder once more. I would remind you of the quotation from Sickingen that I mentioned to you at the start of these lectures: ‘Nought without cause’. We might say that in its development hitherto history is constructed like a gigantic process involving the exchange of cause and effect. It is as if the principle of exchange were not only the determining factor in the countless myriad of actions that constitute the life of human beings, but as if the macrostructure, the macro-cosmic nature of history, were itself just one great exchange relationship in which penance follows the act of taking so that in this sense history never escapes from the bonds of myth. This was a presentiment, incidentally, that was not alien to the early philosophers. Look, for example, at some of the documents of the early Greek philosophers, of the pre-Socratics. If you take the famous saying of Anaximander and also certain statements of Heraclitus, and look at them from the standpoint of the philosophy of history, and not just of ontology, as is the fashion nowadays, you will get something of a sudden insight into the exchange structure of history. We might even define the need to escape from this process of exchanging like for like as the telos of history, namely as the goal of liberating history from everything that history has been up to now. If you read the newspapers and are able to imagine what is involved in the events in the Congo, you can reflect on the balance of horror between the atrocities committed by the natives and those committed by the forces of civilization by way of revenge. This will give you a direct insight into a contemporary instance of this situation. Not even
the sanitized reports that have reached us can conceal the reality entirely. The cheers that greeted the liberation of Stanleyville by the [Belgian] paras are just as revolting as the mendacious claims by the Eastern camp that liberating Stanleyville from the natives and their atrocities was manifestly an instance of European imperialism. This too ignores the facts by failing to see the dialectic of history here, this wretched exchange relation. The two positions are equally repugnant and despicable. I would say that if you have a free relation towards history — and I venture to say that in the sense in which I have tried to explain it to you, the philosophy of history is this freedom towards history — that would enable you mentally to rise above these two possibilities, above partisanship in this restricted sense. The definitive threat to organized humanity by other organized human beings that we can see approaching in our time coincides with absolute continuity because the history of the mastery of nature really does culminate in such conflicts, just as it goes hand in hand with absolute discontinuity, in other words, with the fact that here the thread of history threatens to break — and to break once and for all.

In a society that has become societalized through and through, this discontinuity becomes evident in a far more specific sense. It is not necessary here to raise the spectre of the ultimate catastrophe — over-precipitately, I should like to add. There is a certain hubris, an intellectual hubris, in evoking the possibility of a total catastrophe which we can barely imagine, only to leap in just when intellectual solutions seem exhausted and propose some universal formula, even a negative one. On the one hand, total nuclear meltdown satisfies a need that is not so very different from that of an abstract utopia. But when we say that history is the union of continuity and discontinuity, and not either one of the two, we can see something of the sort in our own day. For, on the one hand, we can see how the power of totalitarian societies is growing in a way that cannot be misinterpreted, even if it does not always coincide with political control. On the other hand, we simultaneously perceive — through the fog of these totalitarian systems — something like a collapse of crucial historical forces into irreconcilable particularities. My late friend Franz Neumann advanced an argument of this kind in his book Behemoth, a book that I would like to commend to you as a significant source for the philosophy of history. His principal thesis there is that the National Socialist state appears to be the very model of the absolute unification of society among current dominant regimes. In reality, however, despite its leader-principle and everything that goes with it, the unity that had developed more or less anonymously in a liberal society permeated by monopolies now disintegrates into the rule of rival cliques or power bases that cannot really be brought together under a common denominator, a common unified state structure. It would be my view that this tendency for society to break down into a number of competing, overpowerful groups will continue for the foreseeable future. They have long since passed the point where they can be synthesized into a higher concept and nor is there any possibility of a reconciliation in sight. When people nowadays speak of ‘rule by interest groups’, to use the term coined by Eschenburg in the very important book in which he has analysed this phenomenon, they may well mean what I have in mind here. And perhaps I may add a further point. The term ‘pluralism’ is acquiring increasing currency in our own time. It is presumably the ideology describing the centrifugal tendencies of a society that threatens to disintegrate into unreconciled groups under the pressure of its own principles. This is then represented as if it were a state of reconciliation in which people lived together in harmony while in reality society is full of power struggles. As a minor by-product of these lectures I would like to recommend that you adopt an extremely wary attitude towards the concept of pluralism which, like the similar concept of ‘social partners’, is preached at us on every street corner. To transfigure and ideologize the elements of discontinuity or of social antagonisms in this way is part of the general ideological trend. In the same way, it is very characteristic of our age that the very factors that threaten to blow up our entire world are represented as the peaceful coexistence of human beings who have become reconciled and have outgrown their conflicts. This is a tendency which barely conceals the fact that mankind is beginning to despair of finding a solution to its disagreements. But all that is really by the by.

I would like to add that under the rule of the one principle, namely the world spirit, in the negative sense that I have explained to you, the elements that elude the world spirit, that is to say, the elements that I have been trying to explain to you — the individual elements, the individual group phenomena into which the great historical process fragments, begin themselves to take on something of a contaminated, doom-laden aspect. It would be altogether too primitive — and I would explicitly like to warn you against any simplistic acceptance of what I have said up to now, since it would be all too easy for some of you to believe that this is what I had intended — it would be simplistic if you were to assume that, in what I have called the historical process or the world spirit that gives shape to the totality and draws it into itself, it is the particular that is in the right, and has the right of human destiny on its side, while the totality is in the wrong. If you reflect for a moment on what I said at some length...
previously, namely that the totality preserves itself and prevails through conflict, that is to say, through the enduring persistence of particularity, you will be able to dispel an illusion about particularity. It remains true that historical particulars are constantly the victims of the general course of history. As against this, the overall course of history is only possible because the particulars necessarily harden out and become inflexible, whether they will or no. In this sense, we can say that the particular deserves the totality in which it finds itself. This too is an idea that I have tried to explain to you from a different angle, namely from the idea that the social totality comes to prevail through the actions of individual human beings. I should now like to focus on this a little more closely. The situation is that where the non-identical still takes the form of what are more or less natural categories, which incidentally are not at all natural in actual fact – they are merely relics from older historical epochs – these non-identical elements that have not yet been absorbed into the historical process go rancid and become poisonous. They go rancid much as the universal principle does when confronted with them. This too we may test against the recent events in Africa – if indeed we can pluck up the courage to do so, something that is not altogether easy. It is really the case that, under the rule of the totality, even the particular that opposes it nevertheless collaborates in weaving the web of disaster. It does so not just by lapsing into particularity, but by degenerating into something poisonous and bad. That is to say, these natives who are running wild in Africa for the last time are not one whit better than the paras, than the barbaric paratroops who are struggling to make them see reason, i.e., to accept the benefits of a progressive civilization, in a manner that is familiar to all of you. This is a dialectic that we should all fix in our minds. We might go even further and say that whatever fails to fit in with the dominant principle finds itself reduced to the level of mere chance. The great historical trend sucks the marrow out of everything oppositional and recalcitrant, and what gets left behind is something insignificant, lacking in substance and thus a random affair.

I believe that in this context we should dwell on the idea of chance for just a moment. Chance plays a part in history because we always have to ask ourselves about the role of chance events in history. For example, during the recent world war one had the feeling as an outside observer that there were countless moments when the fact that Hitler was losing seemed to be attributable to chance. However, it then appeared that it was only through these chance events that the great trend, by which I mean the greater industrial potential of the Western world, succeeded in prevailing against Hitler's bid to conquer the world. If I may return to the concept of the 'spell' that holds sway over history and that I have attempted to explain to you, I would say that chance is the form taken by freedom under a spell. As long as the spell of history lasts, whatever is immune to this spell is mutilated and defeated; it is stripped of meaning, blind and therefore a matter of chance. All the non-identical phenomena that are expelled as a result of the domination of the identity principle are nevertheless mediated by the power of that principle. What persists are the stale remnants left over once the process of identification has taken its share. And even these stale remnants are left mutilated, scarred by the power of the principle of identity. The spell cast by the identity principle, by the world spirit, to formulate it even more emphatically, perverts whatever is different – and even the smallest quantity would be incompatible with the spell if it were still pure. This other then becomes something evil and pernicious. Because it is a random thing, this non-identical remnant then becomes so abstract that in its abstractness it converges with the law of identification. This is the truth implicit in Hegel's doctrine of the unity of chance and necessity, a doctrine which he intended positively, as praise of the world spirit, though to be sure he did not really intend to say what I am suggesting here. Chance coincides with necessity only where both are equally bereft of meaning, equally external and equally unreconciled. The replacement of the traditional laws of causality by statistics whose core, even in its own terminology, is the principle of chance can provide us with proof of the convergence of chance and a victorious necessity. But what chance and necessity have, lethally, in common is what metaphysics refers to as fate. Fate has its place; it is a negative concept. I believe that this is the dividing line separating thought from all mythologizing notions of fate, such as Heidegger's in his Hölderlin interpretations. Fate has its place in the sphere in which the thinking of rulers holds sway, as well as in the realm of those who fall outside that sphere and for those who, having been abandoned by reason, acquire an irrationality that barely differs from the irrationality of the necessity insisted upon by the subject. The scraps of a subjugated nature that have been spewed out by the process of domination are just as deformed as those that are ground down by the machinery. Only true understanding would be superior to the two. It would stand in for a state of the world – true understanding, which of course would not amount to actual reconciliation, because knowledge alone is not the same thing as reconciliation – but true understanding would stand in for a state of the world in which everything that exists would cease to exist merely for others. This is because it would no longer remain content with its own
existence-for-itself, its separation and particularity. Thus reflection on difference would help towards reconciliation, what Horkheimer once called ‘happy reflection’. This is what would help, rather than extirpation and the elimination of the totality.

Hegel, on whom we have to some extent been basing these remarks, was surely aware of this. Despite his praise of totality he always insisted on its abstract nature. In so doing, he wished to remind us of what is left out of the totality. The grandiose nature of Hegel’s project, both its reprehensible and conciliatory aspects, lies in his attempt to include the non-identical in identity (as I tried to show in the quotation that I gave you a few moments ago). Thanks to this attempt, the non-identical itself is taken possession of by the spell while, on the other hand, it becomes the factor that enables the abstract spell to be attenuated. I believe that we should now move on to make a closer examination of how this attempt to gain recognition for concrete reality in history looks in detail under the spell of the totality, under the spell of the principle of identification. We shall find that the Hegelian philosophy itself has provided us with a paradigm in the shape of the concept with which it sought to grasp the process of history, the concept namely of the spirit of the peoples [Volksgeist], who are supposed to succeed each other in turn and in which according to his theory the world spirit actualizes itself. We shall see, I fear I have to tell you, that this magnificent project to spell out his conception of history ends up in its very opposite, namely in a reinforcement, a theoretical reinforcement of the acts of suppression that characterize history. Next time, then, I shall talk about the concept of the spirits of the peoples and the philosophy of the history of the nation.

Adorno’s notes for this lecture:

Transition to the spirit of the people [Volksgeist] as Hegel’s attempt to individualize the overall trajectory of history.¹ [Insertion Iia]

[Insertion Iia:] ‘This actual and organic spirit of a people actualizes and reveals itself through the relationship between the particular national spirits and in world history as the universal world spirit.’² NB the word ‘universal’ that precisely marks the regression to extensional logic, with its additive approach.

‘The principles of the spirits of peoples [Volksgeister] are in general of a limited nature and their deeds and destinies are the manifest [erscheimende] dialectic of these spirits [from which] the universal spirit produces itself and exercises its right – which is the highest right of all – over finite spirits in world history as the world’s court of judgement.’³

[Addendum:] Like Spengler, Hegel speaks somewhere of the natural death of the spirits of peoples as of individuals⁴ – he hypostasizes pseudo-concreteness, boils it down into individuality. This gives it an archaic flavour. – The individual consciousness reduced to something accidental. [End of addendum]

NB the fact that the spirits of peoples are necessarily destined to decline and fall.

But if each spirit of the people is limited and hence doomed, it is the form of each national spirit that is to be preserved, and absorbed into a higher one.
and that Engels presented in connection with Saint-Simon, even though these are not directly attributed to him; see *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Works, vol. 2, pp. 109–13.

9 Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969, p. 226: ‘O my brothers, am I then cruel? But I say: That which is falling should also be pushed! Everything of today – it is falling, it is decaying: who would support it? But I – want to push it too!’


11 Adorno used the English expression [Trans.]

12 See Gerhart Baumert, with the assistance of Edith Hunninger, *Deutsche Familien nach dem Kriege*, Darmstadt, 1954 (Gemeindestudie, Monographie 5). In his introduction to the study, Adorno wrote: ‘This monograph is a contribution to sociological knowledge in the sense that it does not conceal the disintegration of traditional social institutions and attitudes, but allows them to emerge without any ideological superstructure. There can be no question of claiming that the current threat to the institution of the family has somehow been lifted in the long term by the solidarity displayed in the recent emergency. It should only be mentioned that the divorce figures have in fact gone down following their sharp rise, but still stand far above their prewar level. The same thing holds good for the numbers of “incomplete” families. What is striking is the increase in marriages between young men and older women. A socio-psychological interpretation of this finding could shed light on profound structural changes in society’ (GS, vol. 20.2, p. 630).


14 The passages Adorno has in mind come from *The German Ideology*: ‘When the reality is described, a self-sufficient philosophy loses its medium of existence. At the best its place can only be taken by a summing-up of the most general results, abstractions which are derived from the observation of the historical development of men. These abstractions in themselves, divorced from real history, have no value whatsoever. They can only serve to facilitate the arrangement of historical material, to indicate the sequence of its separate strata.’ *The German Ideology*, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Collected Works, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1976, vol. 5, p. 37. A textual variant is even more pointed: ‘We know only a single science, the science of history. One can look at history from two sides and divide it into the history of nature and the history of men. The two sides are, however, inseparable: the history of nature and the history of men are dependent on each other so long as men exist.’ *Ibid.*, p. 28. On the transition of philosophy to history anticipated by Marx but disavowed by history, a transition which forms the starting-point of *Negative Dialectics*, see Adorno’s remarks in the lectures of 1957 on the philosophy of history: ‘Hegel’s concept of mediation, of becoming, when you extract it from its terminological shell, means nothing other than history. Marx expressed this in the extreme statement that philosophy passes over into history. Of course, to maintain that history as we have experienced it hitherto, actual history which has been a slaughterhouse of unending suffering, could be the site of truth calls for a greater degree of confidence than is possible at present. What is meant by Marx’s statement is that the self-understanding of history, history raised to the level of self-knowledge, is identical with what philosophy traditionally claims to be; it is that in a higher sense historiography and philosophy merge into one’ (Vo 1959ff.).

15 ‘God governs the world, the actual working of his government – the carrying out of his plan – is the History of the World. This plan philosophy strives to comprehend; for only that which has been developed as the result of it, possesses bona fide reality. That which does not accord with it, is negative, worthless existence [faule Existenz].’ (Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, p. 36.)

**Lecture 5 The Totality on the Road to Self-Realization**


3 See also note 14 above (lecture 4), pp. 276–7.


5 See, above all, Thesis VII of ‘On the Concept of History’, in which the question is raised ‘with whom does historicism actually sympathize? The answer is inevitable: with the victor. All rulers are the heirs of prior conquerors. Hence, empathizing with the victor invariably benefits the current rulers. The historical materialist knows what this means. Whoever has emerged victorious participates to this day in the triumphal procession in which current rulers step over those who are lying

6 See the Introduction to the Philosophy of History, p. 26f. where Hegel writes: 'He is happy who finds his condition suited to his special character, will, and fancy, and so enjoys himself in that condition. The history of the World is not the theatre of happiness. Periods of happiness are blank pages in it, for they are periods of harmony — periods when the antithesis is in abeyance.' For a critique of Hegel's negative comments on happiness, see Negative Dialectics, p. 352f.

7 See especially the chapter on the Concept from part II of The Science of Logic, trans. A. V. Miller, London: George Allen & Unwin; New York: Humanities Press, 1969, p. 612: 'Determinateness in the form of universality is linked with the universal to form a simple determination; this determinate universal is the self-related determinateness; it is the determinate determinateness or absolute negativity posited for itself. But the self-related determinateness is individuality. Just as universality is immediately in and for itself already particularity, so too particularity is immediately in and for itself also individuality; this individuality is, in the first instance, to be regarded as the third moment of the Notion in so far as we hold on to its opposition to the two other moments, but it is also to be considered as the absolute return of the Notion into itself, and at the same time as the posited loss of itself.'

8 See the section entitled 'Virtue and the Course of the World', in Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit, pp. 401–12.

9 Adorno probably has in mind the passage he quoted in a letter to Horkheimer in 1949. 'I found a passage from Turgenev's Fathers and Sons quoted in an essay that may be of interest to you. Bazarov declares "that he finds the idea of progress unbearable if it is based on the terrible torments of previous generations who did not suspect that they were in a sense the 'guinea pigs' of history so that one day, in the distant future, a new generation might be better off"' (quoted in Max Horkheimer, Gesammelte Schriften, vol. 18, Briefwechsel 1949–73, ed. Gunzeln Schmid Noerr, p. 51f, note 4). However, the cited passage is not to be found in Turgenev's novel (see Väter und Söhne, ed. Klaus Dornacher, Berlin, 1983).

10 See the definition of justice in the 'Metaphysical Elements of the Theory of Right': 'Right is therefore the sum total of those conditions within which the will of one person can be reconciled with the will of another in accordance with a universal law of freedom.' Immanuel Kant, The Metaphysics of Morals, in Kant, Political Writings, p. 133. See also Adorno, Problems of Moral Philosophy, p. 122.

11 See above, note 15 (lecture 4), p. 277. Cf. also the introduction to Negative Dialectics: 'The matters of true philosophical interest at this point in history are those in which Hegel, agreeing with tradition, declared his lack of interest. They are to be found in whatever lacks a concept, individuality and particularity — things which ever since Plato used to be dismissed as ephemeral and insignificant, and which Hegel labelled "worthless existence".' Negative Dialectics, p. 8.

12 This applies above all to the Critique of Practical Reason, in which Kant defines the categorical imperative, this 'basic law' of moral philosophy, as a 'fact of reason'. Cf. also Adorno's lectures on the Problems of Moral Philosophy of 1963, in which he writes that what the general thrust of Kant's moral philosophy 'amounts to is the reduction to the purely subjective principle of reason in order simultaneously to salvage the absolute, unimpeachable objectivity of the moral law. This makes it possible to say that the supreme principle of morality, namely the categorical imperative, is in fact nothing other than subjective reason as an absolutely objectively valid thing. The extreme opposite of this is the sceptical approach, which denies the existence of any such objectively valid principle. And this distinction between the sceptical method and scepticism as a philosophy is enough to enable you to see something of Kant's moral position. Unlike the Sceptics and the Sophists his concern with the subjects and human beings is not a strategy to enable him to dispute the universal necessity and the binding nature of moral laws, but precisely to reinstate them.' Problems of Moral Philosophy, p. 31.

13 Adorno explained this passage at greater length in his Hegel studies: His 'aversion to ornate and emphatic formulations is in harmony with this; he has unkind things to say about the "witty phrases" of the spirit alienated from itself, of mere culture. Germans had long reacted this way to Voltaire and Diderot. There lurks in Hegel the academic resentment of a linguistic self-reflection that would distance itself all too much from mediocre complicity.' Hegel: Three Studies, p. 118. The quotation about 'witty phrases' is to be found on p. 347 of the Phenomenology.

14 See the final chorus in Goethe's Faust, part 2, 'The Eternal Feminine / draws us on.'


Lecture 6 Conflict and Survival

1 See p. 43 above.

2 According to bourgeois economists, the law of value is the 'law' which governs the exchange of goods of equal value in the capitalist system of production. Marx exposed the 'anarchy' of production associated with the fetishistic form of the capitalist economy. At the same time, he analysed the crises that beset that economy, enabling the law of value
to achieve fulfilment, a law that can only be termed such with a dose of irony. In the fetishism chapter of Capital, Marx states that, 'in the midst of all the accidental and fluctuating exchange-relations between the products, the labour-time socially necessary for their production forcibly asserts itself like an over-riding law of nature. The law of gravity thus asserts itself when a house falls about our ears.' Marx, Capital, vol. 1, p. 75. For the current state of the discussion, see Hans-Georg Backhaus, Dialektik der Wertform: Untersuchungen zur marxischen Ökonomiekritik, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1997. For his part, Adorno too believed that the law of value was the chief structural law governing society, even though it features in his writings mainly in metaphorical form; see, especially, Negative Dialectics, pp. 262, 300, 345n.; and also The Jargon of Authenticity, p. 85.

In the lecture lists for Frankfurt University in the summer semester 1933, Horkheimer and Adorno announced a joint course on the political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes. At that time Adorno was no longer permitted to carry out his duties as a Dozent and Horkheimer had already emigrated. In consequence, Hobbes is referred to only sporadically in Adorno's writings (see Negative Dialectics, pp. 217, 318, 321, The Jargon of Authenticity, p. 78, and also GS, vol. 8, pp. 36, 459).


See the preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Works, vol. 1, p. 327f.

This was the section entitled 'Fish in Water'; see Minima Moralia, p. 23f.

Cf. Engels's letter of 5 August 1890 to Conrad Schmidt: 'The materialist conception of history has a lot of dangerous friends nowadays, who use it as an excuse for not studying history. Just as Marx, commenting on the French “Marxists” of the late seventies used to say: “All I know is that I am not a Marxist.”' Marx and Engels, Selected Correspondence, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973, p. 393.

In the winter semester of 1964/5, Hans-Magnus Enzensberger had given the guest lectures on poetics in Frankfurt University. His lectures were devoted to the topic: 'Do writers have a role to play?' They have not appeared in print.


For an account and critique of Stirner's philosophy, see the dissertation by Kurt Adolf Mautz (1911-2000), one of the earliest of Adorno's students. This was entitled Die Philosophie Max Stirners im Gegensatz zum Hegelschen Idealismus, and it could still be published in Berlin as late as 1936. See also a book on Stirner that Hans G. Helms was able to present in the Institute for Social Research in the 1960s in Adorno's presence while it was still in preparation: Hans G. Helms, Die Ideologie der anonymen Gesellschaft: Max Stirners 'Einziger' und der Fortschritt des demokratischen Selbstbewusstseins vom Vormärz bis zur Bundesrepublik, Cologne, 1966.


**Lecture 7 Spirit and the Course of the World**

1 This was originally a radio talk that was given in 1954. It can now be found in Essays on Music, ed. Richard Leppert, this essay trans. Robert Hulloet-Kentor and Frederic Will, pp. 181-202.

2 This effect is not so visible in subsequent musical composition, not even in the so-called Darmstadt School, as in the theoretical research of Heinz-Klaus Metzger; cf. his Musik wozu: Literatur zu Noten, ed. Rainer Riemh, Frankfurt am Main, 1980, esp. pp. 61-128.

3 See p. 13ff., above.

4 See p. 45ff., above.

5 The attitude of thought to objectivity' is a Hegelian expression; see Hegel: Three Studies, p. 54.

6 On Durkheim's attempt 'to give a sociological explanation of space, time and a series of categories, and above all, the forms of logical classification', see Adorno's Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason', p. 168.

7 G. W. F. Hegel, Elements of the Philosophy of Right, p. 17. For an interpretation of this quotation, see also Negative Dialectics, p. 310.

8 These names must have been inserted by the editor since they are missing in the original transcript and so were presumably inaudible on the tape.

9 See, for example, the Lectures on the History of Philosophy, where he writes about Socrates: 'Infinite subjectivity, the freedom of self-awareness was born in Socrates. I must be absolutely present, at home with myself in all my thoughts. In our own day, this freedom is an infinite and absolute requirement.' Hegel, Werke, vol. 18, Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie I, p. 442.

10 Hegel says of his own philosophy of history: 'Our mode of treating the subject is, in this aspect, a theodicy – a justification of the ways of God – which Leibniz attempted metaphysically, in his method, i.e., in indefinite abstract categories – so that the ill that is found in the World may be comprehended, and the thinking Spirit reconciled with the fact of the existence of evil. Indeed, nowhere is such a harmonizing view more
pressingly demanded than in Universal History; and it can be attained only by recognizing the positive existence, in which that negative element is a subordinate and vanished nullity. On the one hand, the ultimate design of the world must be perceived; and on the other hand, the fact that this design has been actually realized in it, and that evil has not been able to assert a competing position.\footnote{Hegel, \textit{The Philosophy of History}, p. 156.}

A \textit{Reflexionsphilosoph} is one who thinks in the categories of the understanding, i.e., of scientific thought, and has not yet attained the higher reaches of speculative philosophy [\textit{Trans.}].

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textbf{\Luk\'acs's late essay \textit{Merlin}}
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\item ‘How do I find the secret again? / It has been stolen from me. / What has the world done to us!/ I turn around, the lilac blooms again.’ (\textit{Karl Kraus, Schriften}, ed. Christian Wagenknecht, vol. 9: \textit{Gedichte}, Frankfurt am Main, 1989, p. 289 (‘Flieder’). Adorno often quoted this verse; see for example, \textit{Negative Dialectics}, p. 297; \textit{Prisms}, p. 152; \textit{GS}, vol. 17, p. 326, or \textit{GS}, vol. 18, p. 380.
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\item See p. 56f., above.
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\section*{Lecture 8 Psychology}

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\item The crucial passages are to be found in vol. 1 of \textit{Capital}, viz. ‘It is only because his money constantly functions as capital that the economic guise [\textit{Charaktermaske}] of a capitalist attaches to a man’ (Karl Marx, \textit{Capital}, vol. 1, p. 566); and ‘The practical agents of capitalistic production and their pettifogging ideologists are as unable to think of the means of production as separate from the social mask [\textit{Charaktermaske}] they wear today, as a slave-owner to think of the worker himself as distinct from his character as a slave’ (ibid., p. 608). Adorno regarded this concept as a central category of social theory: ‘The task of a theory of society would be to advance from the immediate evidence [of antagonisms] to the knowledge of its basis in society: why human beings are still wedded to their roles. The Marxian concept of the character mask points to a solution since it not only anticipates that category, but has inferred it socially’ (\textit{GS}, vol. 8, p. 13).
\item There is a similar passage in \textit{Negative Dialectics}: ‘Hegel joins in the beer-hall wisdom that it is necessary to sow one's wild oaks. This idea that coming to terms with the world is only natural is an aspect of the general notion of the world spirit as a spell’ (\textit{Negative Dialectics}, p. 348 – translation altered). Adorno's source for this quotation was Lukács's late essay \textit{The Meaning of Contemporary Realism} (London: Merlin Press, 1963) and also Adorno's essay on Lukács, ‘Reconciliation under duress’ \textit{(Aesthetics and Politics}, London: NLB, 1977, p. 176): ‘Lukács quotes a cynical sentence by Hegel which sums up the social meaning of this process as it was seen in the traditional bourgeois novel of education [\textit{Erziehungsroman}]: “For the end of such apprenticeship consists in this: the subject sows his wild oaks, educates himself with his wishes and opinions into harmony with subsisting relationships and their rationality, enters the concatenation of the world and works out for himself an appropriate attitude to it.” Even in the German edition no source was given for this quotation and hence nothing to indicate that it came not from the \textit{Philosophy of History}, but from the \textit{Aesthetics}, trans. T. M. Knox, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975, vol. 1, p. 593, slightly adapted.
\item The source of this remark is not known.
\item \textit{Minima Moralia}, p. 109.
\item What is meant is not that Freud paid particular attention to avarice as a phenomenon. In fact, there are only occasional references to it; see, for example, ‘Character and Anal Erotism’ (1908), Standard Edition, vol. 9, p. 169; Penguin Freud Library, vol. 7, p. 203. Instead Adorno is focusing on the concept of mutilation as an aspect of the central complex of symptoms resulting from socially nonconformist behaviour, a subject to which the theory and practice of psychoanalysis are devoted.
\item Aristippus (c. 435 to after 366 BC) was a follower of Socrates and founder of the Cyrenaic school, which was named after Cyrene, his place of birth, a Greek colony in what today is Libya. For his life and teaching, see Diogenes Laertius II, 65–104; he is known in Germany above all from Christoph Martin Wieland's late, fragmentary novel \textit{Aristippus and some of his Contemporaries} (first appeared in 1800–1; on this see Jan Philipp Reemtsma, \textit{Das Buch vom Ich}, Zurich, 1993).
\item The source of this idea has not been found, but see \textit{GS}, vol. 9.2, p. 375: ‘Incidentally, the term “concretism” derives from C. G. Jung and it was I who introduced it to social psychology. I would not wish to equate it automatically with the idea of the authoritarian personality.’
\item See, for example, \textit{Critical Models}, pp. 74, 267 and 273.
\end{enumerate}

\section*{Lecture 9 The Critique of Universal History}

\begin{enumerate}
\item There is more by way of criticism of Dilthey in the shorthand record of the ‘Introduction to the Philosophy of History’ of 1957. Adorno maintains there ‘that his [Dilthey's] philosophy no longer has the self-confidence to embark on speculative journeys. Instead, following the analogy of the natural sciences, something like a static conception of truth, a static object, is assumed. This static object is history in which man constantly rediscovers himself, but in a definitely unchanging way. It might be said that strictly speaking we cannot speak of a philosophy of history at all in the sense of a knowable, transparent movement of
subject and object. What we really see here is a kind of edifying observa-
tion of history in which we constantly rediscover ourselves, but we do
not perceive anything like a definite historical figure who really amounts
to anything or has any particular tendency. The substratum of history turns
out to be merely the blind, aimless surge of life itself. Wherever there is life,
there is something like insight into history, but the stubbornness of the object is
entirely absent. There is something remarkably affirmative and over-reverential
towards culture about Dilthey’ (Vo 2004f.).

2 See, for example, the passage on Herder and Jacobi in Faith and
Knowledge: ‘Herder’s way of doing philosophy is only a slight modific­
ation of this typical pattern. The Absolute cannot be tolerated in the
form that it has for rational cognition, but only in a game with concep­
tions of reflection, or in sporadic invocations which bring philosophy directly
to an end, just as it seems to be about to begin it – even as Kant ends
with the Idea as practical faith. Or else the rational can only be toler­
ated as beautiful feeling (Empfindung), as instinct, as individuality. But
Herder’s philosophizing has the advantage of being somewhat more
objective. Jacobi calls Herder’s philosophy Spinozistic froth, a preaching
that confuses Reason and language alike. But the froth and the semio­
izing arise precisely from Herder’s putting a reflective concept in the
place of rational thought. This veils the rational, just as the expres­
sion of feeling, subjectivity of instinct, etc. – which Jacobi puts in the place
of rational thinking – does.’ Faith and Knowledge, trans. Walter Cerf
and H. S. Harris, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977,
p. 118.

3 Wendell L. Wilkie (1892–1944) was an American politician who stood
as the Republican candidate against Franklin D. Roosevelt in the presiden­
tial elections of 1944, in which he was defeated. The title of his book,
One World (New York, 1943), became a well-known political slogan.

4 See p. 29, above.

5 According to Adorno, Benjamin’s intention, as described in his preface
to The Origin of German Tragic Drama, ‘was to cause inductive rea­
soning. His maxim that the smallest cell of visualized reality outweighs
the rest of the world is an early testimony to the self-confidence of the
current state of experience; it is all the more authentic because it was
formulated outside the domain of the so-called great philosophical
issues which an altered form of dialectics calls on us to mistrust’ (Neg­
ative Dialectics, p. 303; translation changed). In an earlier piece, his
introduction to Benjamin’s Schriften of 1955, he remarks: ‘Paradoxi­
cally, Benjamin’s speculative method converges with the empirical
method. In his preface to his book on tragedy, Benjamin undertook a
metaphysical rescue of nominalism; he does not draw conclusions from
above to below, but rather, in an eccentric fashion, “inductively”.’
Notes to Literature, vol. 2, p. 222.

6 The Philosophicum is an examination in philosophy designed either for
beginners or for mature students transferring to philosophy or wishing
to obtain an extra qualification, often for teaching purposes [Trans.]

7 See The Philosophy of History: ‘The History of the World is the disci­
pline of the uncontrolled natural will, bringing it into obedience to a
Universal principle and conferring subjective freedom. The East knew
and to the present day knows only that One is free; the Greek and
Roman world that Some are free; the German World knows that All
are free. The first political form therefore which we observe in History,
is Despotism, the second Democracy and Aristocracy, the third
Monarchy.’ The Philosophy of History, p. 104.

8 Attributed to Hegel by Walter Benjamin, The Origin of German Tragic
Drama, p. 46, but no source in Hegel has been discovered.

9 See p. 3, above.

10 Immanuel Kant, The Moral Law: Groundwork of the Metaphysics of
Moral, pp. 99–100; see also Adorno, Problems of Moral Philosophy,
p. 122 and note 3.

11 Panaetius (c. 185–109 BC) was a disciple of Diogenes the Babylonian
and Antipater of Tarsus. In 129 he succeeded Antipater as head of the
Sca, and he held that position until his death. Cicero made use of one
of his writings in De Officiis. Posidonius (c. 135–50/51 BC) studied
philosophy under Panaetius and then settled in Rhodes. ‘In the history
of ancient thought he can be compared to no one but Aristotle’ (The
erable influence on Lucretius, Cicero, Seneca, Plinius the Elder and Virgil
[Trans.]

12 See Epicurus, Fragment 551 Us. On the fragment that is transmitted by
Plutarch (On the principle of Ladei biosas, see 1.1128A), see also
Eduard Zeller, Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen
Entwicklung, part 3, section 1: Die nacharistotelische Philosophie, part
1, Hildesheim and elsewhere, 1990, p. 473, as well as Friedrich Ueber­
weg, Grundriß der Geschichte der Philosophie, part 1: Die Philosophie

13 Burckhardt discusses the individual in Hellenistic society in the last part
of vol. 4 of his posthumously published The Greeks and Greek Civiliza­
tion, more particularly in connection with the decline of the polis
and the correlated retreat of people from public life to private. See, e.g.,
Jacob Burckhardt, Gesammelte Werke, vol. 8: Griechische Kulturgeschichte, 4
vols, ed. Jacob Oeri, Basel, 1957, p. 480ff. In Minima Moralia Adorno cites the relevant passage: ‘It is not the least merit of
Jacob Burckhardt’s history of Greek civilization to have connected the
drying-up of Hellenistic individuality not only with the objective decline
of the polis, but precisely with the cult of the individual: “But following
the deaths of Demosthenes and Phocion, the city is surprisingly deple­
ted of political personalities, and not only of them: Epicurus, born as early
as 342 of an Attic cleruch [colonial] family on Samos, is the last
Athenian of any kind to have world-historical importance." The situation in which the individual was vanishing was at the same time one of unbridled individualism, where "all was possible": "Above all, individuals are now worshipped instead of gods." That the setting-free of the individual by the undermining of the polis did not strengthen his resistance, but eliminated him and individuality itself, in the consummation of dictatorial states, provides a model of one of the central contradictions which drove society from the nineteenth century to Fascism. *Minima Moralia*, p. 149. On Burckhardt's treatment of the theme, see also Karl Löwith, *Sämtliche Schriften*, vol. 7: Jacob Burckhardt, Stuttgart, 1984, p. 184ff.

14 The name of Descartes was added by the editor. The transcript contains only omission marks at this point. Needless to say, many other names suggest themselves.

15 On this point, see *Negative Dialectics*, 'And yet it is at the outset of the self-emancipating modern subject's self-reflection, in Hamlet, that we find the divergence of insight and action paradigmatically laid down. The more the subject turns into a being-for-itself, the greater the distance it places between itself and the unbroken accord with a given order, the less will its action and its consciousness be one.' *Negative Dialectics*, p. 228.


Lecture 10 "Negative" Universal History

1 Adorno is mistaken here. In the *Letters*, i.e., the correspondence with Benjamin, the Theses are scarcely mentioned, and where they are referred to it is without any title whatever; see Benjamin, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 1, p. 122ff. On the question of the title, see Rolf Tiedemann, *Dialektik im Stillstand: Versuche zum Spätwerk Walter Benjamin's*, Frankfurt am Main, 1983, p. 135, note 7. In the English-language editions of Benjamin's writings, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' is the title given in *Illuminations* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970). In the *Selected Writings*, vol. 4, the essay appears with the title 'On the Concept of History'. Harry Zohn is credited with the translation of both versions, but the more recent one has been extensively revised. (Trans.)

2 *Selected Writings*, vol. 4, p. 396.

3 In 1964, when Adorno gave these lectures, the Eastern bloc countries, including the GDR, had taken absolutely no notice of Benjamin at all, apart from a lone essay in *Sinn und Form* by Hans Heinz Holz in 1956. Adorno was probably thinking of a number of articles in West German newspapers and periodicals which already foreshadowed the attacks on his and his pupils' editions and interpretations of Benjamin first in West Germany, but subsequently in the GDR as well.

4 On this point, see the paragraph 'Persistence as Truth', in the introduction to *Against Epistemology*, p. 171f. This idea is not so much one borrowed from Benjamin as a core idea of Adorno's own philosophy. According to the shorthand record of the lectures on the 'Introduction to the Philosophy of History' of the summer semester 1957, Adorno also named other advocates of this idea:

He reminded his listeners of Hegel's thesis that the truth is a process, that it contains a nucleus of time, that it is not truth *in* time, but time itself is a constituent element of truth. Nietzsche is one of the very few thinkers to have articulated what was at stake in the context of his own immediate experience rather than in that of speculative logic (*Twilight of the Idols*).

In that book he maintains that one of the great preconceived ideas of the Christian and idealist tradition or the Judeo-Christian tradition is the claim that whatever has come into being is not true, since the only thing that can be true is what lies outside time. . . . The two great antipodes of Greek philosophy, Parmenides and Heraclitus, agreed that what was needed was to define truth in a manner that ensured that history was an integral part of it. This idea is contested by the traditional view. What is characteristic of this latter is the rigid opposition of validity and genesis. When Nietzsche disputed the claim that what had arisen historically cannot be true, he impugned that tradition. Later on, this distinction between validity and genesis became a universal maxim throughout phenomenology and it went from there into the existentialist philosophy of our own day. (Vo 1991, 1994f.)

The concept of the *nucleus of time* that Adorno constantly claims for his own is one which he does indeed owe to Benjamin. Benjamin's use of it can be found in one of the notes for the *Arcades Project*: 'Resolute rejection of the concept of "timeless truth" is in order. Nevertheless, truth is not -- as Marxism would have it -- a merely contingent function of knowing, but is bound to a nucleus of time lying hidden within the knower and the known alike.' Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, p. 463.

5 Adorno also took from Benjamin this idea of history as a succession of victories and defeats. See, especially, *Thesis VII*, 'On the Concept of History', p. 391f.

6 This was the formula Adorno used in his account of Benjamin himself. 'Sorrow -- not the state of being sad -- was the defining characteristic of his nature, in the form of a Jewish awareness of the permanence of threat and catastrophe as much as in the antiquarian inclination that cast a spell even on the contemporary and turned it into something long past' (*Notes to Literature*, vol. 2, p. 231). At this point, however, it is perhaps more likely that he had in mind a sentence from *Dialectic of Enlightenment*: 'The repetition of nature which they [symbols] signify always manifests itself in later times as the permanence of social compulsion, which the symbols represent. The dread objectified in a fixed
image becomes a sign of the consolidated power of the privileged' (Dialectic of Enlightenment, p. 16). Adorno may also have been thinking of the talk he had given on Wagner not long before in which he said of Götterdammerung: 'The absolute, the redemption from myth, albeit in the form of catastrophe, is only possible as a reprise. Myth is catastrophe in permanence. Whatever abolishes it also implements it, and death, the end of the bad infinity, is also an absolute regression' (GS, vol. 16, p. 561).


8 ‘The analysis of the beginning would thus yield the notion of the union of being and nothing – or, in a more reflected form, the union of differentiatedness and non-differentiatedness, or the identity of identity and non-identity.’ Hegel’s Science of Logic, trans. A. V. Miller, London: George Allen & Unwin; New York: Humanities Press, 1976, p. 74. Adorno refers to this passage in the introduction to Negative Dialectics: ‘The foundation and result of Hegel’s content-based philosophizing was the primacy of the subject or – in the famous phrase from the Introduction to his Logic – the “identity of identity and non-identity”. He held the determinate particular to be definable by the mind because its immanent definition was to be nothing but mind. Without this supposition, according to Hegel, philosophy would be incapable of knowing anything substantial or essential. Unless the idealistically acquired concept of dialectics harbours experiences that, contrary to Hegel’s emphasis, are independent of the apparatus of idealism, philosophy must inevitably do without substantive insight, confine itself to the methodology of science and virtually cross itself out’ (Negative Dialectics, p. 71; translation altered).

9 ‘The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise and has got caught in its wings; it is so strong that the angel can no longer close them. This storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows toward the sky. What we call progress is this storm.’ Walter Benjamin, Thesis VII, ‘On the Concept of History’, p. 392.

10 ‘Public opinion deserves to be respected as well as despised – despised for its concrete consciousness and expression, and respected for its essential basis, which appears in that concrete consciousness only in a more or less obscure manner.’ G. W. F. Hegel, Elements of the Philosophy of Right, p. 355.


12 See p. 27, above.

13 The idea that history up to now cannot escape the clutches of myth was of essential importance to Adorno’s philosophy of history. See also Rolf Tiedemann, ‘Gegenwärtige Vorwelt: Zu Adornos Begriff des Mythischen’, in Frankfurter Adorno Blätter V, Munich, 1998, p. 9ff., and Frankfurter Adorno Blätter VIII, Munich, 2002.

14 See Fr. 1 of Anaximander of Miletus: ‘The beginning and origin of existing things is the boundlessly indeterminate. But whereof existing things are become, therein they also pass away according to their guilt; for they render each other just punishment and penance according to the ordinance of time’ (Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz, Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, 6th edn, vol. 1, p. 89; quoted here from Metaphysics, p. 166) [Trans.].


16 Belgium granted independence to the Congo (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) in 1960. This was followed by the chaotic civil war to which Adorno refers here: 1961, the murder of Patrice Lumumba; 1963, intervention; 1964, precipitate withdrawal of UN troops; November 1964, Belgian paratroops intervene in the civil war on behalf of Moise Tshombe by flying into Stanleyville where white mercenaries were already active.

17 See Franz Neumann, Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism, New York, 1944. Cf. also Adorno’s text written to commemorate Neumann: ‘The idea underlying Behemoth is of symbolic importance for everything he wrote. It is original in the highest degree in its blunt opposition to all superficial interpretations of a monolithic fascism. In harmony with the views of Otto Kirchheimer and Arkadij Gurland, Neumann demonstrates that the National Socialist state was pluralistic in reality, despite its show of total uniformity. Political will established itself by means of the unplanned competition of the most powerful social cliques. Neumann was perhaps the first to perceive that the slogan of integration, which had been one of the keystones of fascist ideology ever since Pareto, was really a cover for its opposite, namely the disintegration of society into divergent groups. The dictatorship brought all these groups together under one roof in a superficial and abstract way without their being able to find a spontaneous modus vivendi in ordinary social life. They therefore threaten to destabilize the very state they worship. We owe to him the insight that, while the Nazis boasted that they would put an end to destruction and that they would build things up, they prove to be highly destructive in their turn, not simply as regards everything human, and not simply in the foreign-policy consequences of their actions, but intrinsically destructive. In short, under fascism we find destroyed the very things that they claimed they had set out to save. At a time when their slogans about constructive and positive forces threaten to seduce new waves of recruits, Neumann’s theory that the would-be monolithic state characteristic of
authoritarian governments is no more than a threadbare cloak for the underlying antagonistic forces is topical in the extreme. Society, incapable of reproducing itself any longer at will, breaks apart into diffuse barbarian factions, the very antithesis of the reconciled plurality that alone would represent a condition worthy of human beings. He has foreseen where the irrationalism that the National Socialists claim as their Weltanschauung would finally lead’ (GS, vol. 20.2, p. 702).

Cf. Theodor Eschenburg, Herrschaft der Verbänden, Stuttgart, 1955. Adorno says of this book elsewhere: ‘The greatest contribution to the understanding of non-parliamentary interest groups has been the book by Theodor Eschenburg, Herrschaft der Verbänden? . . . It has not only led to a principled discussion of the subject but has also triggered a flood of literature informing us about the organization, structure, membership, and programmes of the more important interest groups, as well as the membership of their officials in the first and second Bundestag and in the public service. . . . Eschenburg demonstrates the influence of important associations on political decision-making. Up to now, however, there have been no empirical analyses of the internal workings of these associations, their tendencies to form oligarchies, to perpetuate themselves, or of the scope and methods they use in their efforts to bring influence to bear on the parties, the government and the civil service, in short, of their actual political power. The reasons for this deficiency are obvious: in Germany as in the world as a whole, sociologists are hampered in their search for primary material wherever they run up against sensitive social issues’ (GS, vol. 8, p. 511).

See p. 68, above. In Negative Dialectics, Adorno elucidates the concept of the spell which we are under: ‘The spell is the subjective form of the world spirit, the internal reinforcement of its primacy over the external process of life’ (Negative Dialectics, p. 344).

The crisis of causality is a constant motif of Adorno's thinking. It is a theme to which - together with Horkheimer - he devoted his senior seminar over two semesters in 1958/9. Causality is given its most penetrating treatment in the chapter on freedom in Negative Dialectics, p. 263ff.; see also Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason', pp. 91 and 140ff.; Problems of Moral Philosophy, p. 44f. and passim.

What Adorno objected to in Heidegger's interpretations of Hölderlin was that he 'neutralizes' his work 'into something in league with fate', by 'eliminating Hölderlin's genuine relationship to reality, critical and utopian' (Notes to Literature, vol. 2, p. 115).

See p. 92f., above.

Lecture 11  The Nation and the Spirit of the People in Hegel

1 Adorno provided his definitive criticism of Hegel's national spirit in Negative Dialectics, p. 338ff.

2 Cf. the passage in §33 of the Philosophy of Right: 'But the ethical substance is likewise (c) the state as freedom, which is equally universal and objective in the free self-sufficiency of the particular will; this actual and organic spirit (α) of a people (β) actualizes and reveals itself through the relationship between the particular national spirits (γ) and in world history as the universal world spirit whose right is supreme' (G. W. F. Hegel, Elements of the Philosophy of Right, p. 62ff.).

3 See §340 of the Philosophy of Right: 'The principles of the spirits of nations [Volksgesetze] are in general of a limited nature because of that particularity in which they have their objective actuality and self-consciousness as existent individuals, and their deeds and destinies in their mutual relations are the manifest [erscheinende] dialectic of the finitude of these spirits. It is through this dialectic that the universal spirit, the spirit of the world, produces itself in its freedom from all limits, and it is this spirit which exercises its right - which is the highest right of all - over finite spirits in world history as the world's court of judgement [Weltgericht]' (ibid., p. 371). Earlier, probably in 1786, Friedrich Schiller had written in his poem 'Resignation', which contained the lines: "I love my children with equal love!", explained the unseen genius. / "Two flowers", he cried, "Hark ye, oh children of man. / Two flowers bloom for the wise finders, / They are called Hope and Pleasure. / Whoever plucks the one / should not desire its sister. / Let him enjoy who cannot believe. This doctrine / will live as long as the world. / Whoever can believe, let him do without. / The history of the world is / the world's court of judgement." Friedrich Schiller, Werke und Briefe, vol. 1, p. 170ff.

4 Adorno probably has in mind a passage from the chapter on 'Ethical Action' in The Phenomenology of Spirit: 'While only household gods, in the former case, gave way before and were absorbed in the national spirit, here the living individual embodiments of the national spirit fall by their own individuality and disappear in one universal community, whose bare universality is soulless and dead, and whose living activity is found in the particular individual qua individual. The ethical form and embodiment of the life of spirit has passed away, and another mode appears in its place' (The Phenomenology of Spirit, p. 498).

5 Adorno used the English word.

6 On Vico, see note 10, p. 292, below.

7 This refers to a restaurant, 'Veltliner Keller', in Schlüsslengasse in Zurich (see p. 109, above), but it is not known to what event Adorno might be referring.

8 This is where Adorno's notes end. Insertion 12a does in fact continue, but the material in it was not used in this lecture, as is indicated by the date at the end.

9 Faust, Part One, trans. David Luke, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 41, lines 1339f. 'I am the spirit of perpetual negation; / And rightly so, for all things that exist / Deserve to perish and would not be missed - / Much better it would be if nothing were