MAX HORKHEIMER, THEODOR W. ADORNO, . . . AND C. S.

LEWIS? TWO REVOLUTIONARY PHILOSOPHICAL,

MORAL, AND CULTURAL CRITIQUES

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by

Denny Robert Kuhn

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APPROVAL SHEET

MAX HORKHEIMER, THEODOR W. ADORNO, . . . AND C. S.

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MORAL, AND CULTURAL CRITIQUES

Denny Robert Kuhn

Read and Approved by:

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Theodore J. Cabal (Chair)

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Kenneth T. Magnuson

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Andrew T. Walker

Date_____

To my wife, Hillarie Joy Kuhn, our two daughters, Sophia Joy and Abigail Joyce Kuhn,

all of whom shared in the great sacrifice of completing this project,

and to

my long-time friend and mentor, Dr. Stephen M. Ashby,

who was the first to teach and show me the importance of being a Christian philosopher.

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PREFACE

I would like to acknowledge some very special people whose influence, assistance, and support were indispensable in the development and completion of this project. First, and foremost, my wife, Hillarie, and our two daughters, Sophia and Abigail, whom I love deeply, and who have endured so much along this journey. Hillarie has been an unbelievable source of love, reassurance, and strength, especially during the rough patches. I am incredibly grateful to have her by my side as my wife, help-mate, and best friend. Our girls have grown accustomed to Daddy working on his "big paper," and I am so thankful for their love and support each and every day. I praise the Lord for his countless blessings upon my family as we have persevered through this great trial.

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Denny Kuhn

Noble, Oklahoma

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The old adage *You shouldn't judge a book by its cover* could not be more

apropos when used of two of the most significant philosophical, moral, and cultural

critiques of the twentieth century: C. S. Lewis (1898-1964) and *The Abolition of Man*[1]

and the joint work of Max Horkheimer (1895-1973) and Theodor W. Adorno (1903-69)

in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.[2] At first glance, these two books appear

unimpressive in stature. However, each work attempts a philosophically rigorous and

substantive account of the precarious state of affairs for humanity in their time. Released

in the same year (1944), both books were written during, and greatly influenced by, the

horrors of WWII, the tragedies of the Great War still fresh in the authors' minds. And

yet, intriguingly, there appears to be no reciprocal influence (or even an awareness of the

other) in either direction between the authors. Notwithstanding, the authors explore

many common themes including the following: the history of Western civilization, the

nature of reason and rationality, human nature, the subject-object relation, the question of

ethical normativity, the human struggle against and conquest of nature, the increasing

detachment of science from practical life, the encroaching dominance of industry and

technology in the form of a growing technocracy, and the resulting loss of personal

liberty and dignity through increasing forms of dehumanization in mass culture and

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[1] C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man: Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools*, Riddell Memorial Lectures, 15th Series (London: Oxford University Press, 1944; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001). Hereafter cited as *Abolition*.

[2] Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, Cultural Memory in the Present, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Amsterdam: Querido, 1947; repr., Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002). Hereafter *Dialectic*.

society. In this regard, both works belong to the prominent corpus of twentieth-century conservative and radical critiques of the excesses of Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*) thought—a distorted view of rationality, a groundless system of morality, and a dehumanizing approach to culture—or Enlightenment rationalism.

This dissertation argues, by way of critical comparative analysis, that Lewis, given his Christian theological and philosophical foundations, provides the more cogent and coherent evaluation of the problems for Western civilization due to the excesses of Enlightenment rationalism than the critical theorists Adorno and Horkheimer. The argument in defense of this thesis begins with a critical summary and analysis of the main lines of thought contained in Lewis' *Abolition* and Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic*, each treated separately. The goal is to provide the reader with a careful exposition and explication of the two works, drawing on current scholarship in addition to providing new insights where possible. Next, I provide a critique of the two works based on three central themes: *rationality*, *morality*, and *culture*. I give special attention to the many fascinating similarities between Lewis and Adorno and Horkheimer, while also concentrating on the key differences in their overall theories, evaluations, and conclusions. The primary goal is to demonstrate the superiority of Lewis' philosophical arguments, his greater prophetic and poetic vision, and the truth of the Christian worldview over against the atheistic, neo-Marxist alternative propounded by Adorno and Horkheimer.

Background and Provenance

It would help to begin with a brief discussion of the historical background to the authors and the provenance of their two works. Despite the great confidence in modern man's critical powers, as well as enormous strides in scientific and technological progress, those living within the first half of the twentieth century found themselves surrounded by forms of human bondage and barbarism: the collapse of the Weimar

Republic, the rise of Hitler and Nazism, the horrific persecution of Jews throughout Europe, the battles of WWII, the expansions of state power into various versions of totalitarianism, the growth of abusive socio-economic as well as technocratic powers, increasing control of individuals and society through efforts of social conditioning and social engineering, and so forth. Consequently, the authors share many somber themes and deep concerns regarding the uncertain success or failure of Western civilization, which seemed to waffle upon a precipice. In fact, many commentators and critics of the two books have described each as offering an alarming, dystopic vision of the future, especially in light of the major social upheavals and human atrocities of the 30s and 40s. Yet, it is in this historical context that Lewis and Adorno and Horkheimer write their major philosophical, moral, and cultural critiques.

C. S. Lewis and *The Abolition of Man*

Lewis was born in Belfast, Ireland, of devout Christian parents. He later moved to Oxford to pursue university studies in which he greatly excelled. He eventually was awarded a teaching and tutoring post at Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1925, where he briefly taught philosophy and later English. Having abandoned his Christian upbringing in his earlier years, he professed to be an avowed atheist. However, in time Lewis became intellectually dissatisfied with his atheism, and thus became more open to considering and experimenting with other modes of thought. Eventually, after many twists and turns along the way of his spiritual journey, Lewis converted first to theism in 1929 and later to Christianity in 1931.[3]

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[3] Lewis sums up this (philosophical) journey succinctly: "On the intellectual side my own progress had been from 'popular realism' to Philosophical Idealism; from Idealism to Pantheism; from Pantheism to Theism; and from Theism to Christianity." C. S. Lewis, *The Pilgrim's Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity, Reason and Romanticism* (London: J. M. Dent, 1933; repr., with preface, London: Geoffrey Bles, 1943; repr., with illustrations by Michael Hague, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 200. Lewis describes his journey and eventual conversion in greater detail in his autobiographical work *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1955; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 1966). Also, see C. S. Lewis to his brother Warren Lewis, October 1931, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 2, *Books, Broadcasts, and the War, 1931-1949*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 7-8. In addition, numerous biographers of Lewis have written on the

After his conversion to Christianity, his writing career began to finally take shape, and he would later garner great literary fame, which has lasted to the present. His first published book of moral philosophy appeared in 1933, his allegorical work *The Pilgrim's Regress*, in which he contrasts Christianity with various extreme philosophies of life. But, Lewis is more well-known for his delectable children's fantasy novels, the Narnian Chronicles; his theological and philosophical analysis of the issues of pain and suffering in his treatise on *The Problem of Pain*; his satirical theological musings in *The Screwtape Letters*; and his celebrated BBC broadcast talks, which were eventually published as the classic *Mere Christianity*.[4] Given the close proximity of a number of these works to his writing of *Abolition*, they are gleaned along with several of his essays for important insights into his views reflected in the book.

As the first president of the Oxford Socratic Club, and due to his regular participation in this forum, Lewis was accustomed to engaging some of the leading philosophers of his day on a variety of issues.[5] One of the reoccurring topics was the debate over the objectivity or subjectivity of moral values. Walter Hooper explains, "By now enough had been said both at the Socratic meetings and elsewhere to indicate that a

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subject, including: George Sayer, *Jack: A Life of C. S. Lewis*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1994); David C. Downing, *The Most Reluctant Convert* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002); Roger Lancelyn Green and Walter Hooper, *C. S. Lewis: A Biography* (London: Collins, 1974); Bruce L., Edwards, ed., *C. S. Lewis: Life, Works, and Legacy*, 4 vols. (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007); and Alan Jacobs, *The Narnian: The Life and Imagination of C. S. Lewis* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005). For further reading on the life and writings of Lewis, see Robert MacSwain and Michael Ward, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Colin Duriez, *The C. S. Lewis Encyclopedia: A Complete Guide to His Life, Thought, and Writings* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000; repr., Edison, NJ: Inspirational, 2003).

[4] See all of the following by C. S. Lewis: *The Problem of Pain* (London: The Centenary Press, 1940; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001); *The Screwtape Letters* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1942; repr. with additional letter and additional preface as *The Screwtape Letters and Screwtape Proposes a Toast*, 1961; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001); and *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1952; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001).

[5] For a detailed account of Lewis' involvement in the Oxford Socratic Club, see Walter Hooper, "Oxford's Bonny Fighter," in *C. S. Lewis at the Breakfast Table and Other Reminiscences*, ed. James T. Como (New York: Macmillan, 1979; repr., New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992). In the context of this forum, Lewis interacted with many notable philosophers, including William Stevenson, C. E. M. Joad, H. H. Price, J. D. Bernal, H. D. Lewis, Conrad Lorenz, and, quite famously, G. E. M. Anscombe, among many others.

number of theologians and philosophers were seriously questioning whether there were

any such thing as an objective moral law, a clear right and wrong about anything."[6]

Moreover, according to Lewis' former pupil and later biographer, George Sayer, Lewis

> spent a good deal of time in 1942 studying the ethics of other religions and
> philosophical systems. At about this time, he also learned from some of his students
> of the existence of school textbooks that taught that all literary and moral values are
> subjective. By coincidence, he had recently been sent a copy of *The Control of
> Language* by two schoolmasters, Alec King and Martin Ketley, which horrified him.
> Such a view seemed to him to destroy all human stability and to dehumanize man as
> a rational being. He therefore jumped at the opportunity to campaign against this
> view when he was invited to give three lectures at Durham University.[7]

Thus, according to Hooper, when Lewis accepted the invitation "to give the annual

Riddell Memorial Lectures at the University of Durham on 24 February 1943, he chose

as his subject a defense of the moral law."[8] And so, Lewis delivered three lectures (on

three separate days) in the Physics Lecture Theatre, of King's College, Newcastle, at the

time a constituent college of the University of Durham. The titles of his three lectures

were: "Men without Chests," "The Way," and "The Abolition of Man," which would

later become the chapter titles of the published book.[9]

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[6] Hooper, "Oxford's Bonny Fighter," 143.

[7] Sayer, *Jack*, 300-301.

[8] Hooper, "Oxford's Bonny Fighter," 143.

[9] Lewis' lectures were on February 24, 25, and 26. This is consistent with the gap in Lewis' letter writing between February 23 and February 27, both of which represent letters written from Magdalen College. Thus, Lewis was gone from Oxford during the dates of February 24-26, during which he traveled with his brother Warren Lewis to the city of Durham, and then northward to the village of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where he delivered the lectures at King's College, part of the University of Durham. See C. S. Lewis, *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 1, *Family Letters 1905-1931*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004). Regrettably, discrepant accounts exist of the actual year of the book's publication. Hooper, in an editorial note, says the book was published by Oxford University Press on January 6, 1943. Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 1:545. But, this would mean the publication of the book preceded the delivery of the Riddell Memorial Lectures, and yet many scholars claim the book was a result of the lectures and published later that same year. Malcolm Guite writes, "The book consists of the three Riddell Memorial Lectures that were delivered by Lewis at the University of Durham in February 1942 at the height of the Second World War. . . . The lectures were themselves published as *The Abolition of Man* in January 1943." Malcolm Guite, "*The Abolition of Man*: From Literary Criticism to Prophetic Resistance," in *C. S. Lewis at Poet's Corner*, ed. Michael Ward and Peter S. Williams, foreword by Vernon White (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2016), 152. However, Michael Ward is surely correct in claiming the book's release was January 1944. A quick online viewing of images of the first edition of the book confirms this date. See Michael Ward, *The Abolition of Man: C. S. Lewis's Classic Essay on Objective Morality* (LogosLight, 2017), 1n1.

Although the book is *thin* in stature, it is *thick* in substance. In a certain sense, this short treatise was a long work in progress. For Lewis had been steadily developing and refining his ideas that would appear in the book for a number of years in other short papers, essays, and lectures going back to as early as 1922.[10] John G. West, Jr. provides the following helpful summary of the development of *Abolition* in relation to some of Lewis' other writings at the time. He writes,

> The main ideas in *The Abolition of Man* can be found throughout Lewis's other writings and lectures, especially those that date from the 1940s. In fact, Lewis's first talk on the BBC ("The Law of Human Nature," broadcast August 1941) dealt with natural law. The talk was published in 1942 in the collection titled *Broadcast Talks*, and it ultimately became the first chapter of *Mere Christianity*. Some time later, Lewis apparently worked on a speech covering much the same ground as the Riddell lectures, but for another audience; his text was published after his death as the essay "On Ethics." And on February 8, 1943 (only a couple of weeks before the Riddell lectures), Lewis presented a talk at the Oxford Socratic Club titled "If We Have Christ's Ethics, Does the Rest of the Christian Faith Matter?" which previewed part of the Riddell lectures by showing how Christianity's ethical teachings share considerable common ground with the moral teachings of other religious and philosophical traditions. During the summer of 1943, Lewis published

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[10] For example, James Patrick explains,

> When in 1922 he tried, unsuccessfully, for a fellowship at Magdalen College, the essay he submitted was titled "The Hegemony of Moral Value," and posed the existence of natural law as the resolution of the argument between utilitarians and idealists. Titled "The Practical Hegemony of the Moral Value," it became the penultimate lecture in the course in moral philosophy Lewis taught as substitute for E. F. Carritt in 1924.

James Patrick, "The Heart's Desire and the Landlord's Rules: C. S. Lewis as a Moral Philosopher," in *The Pilgrim's Guide: C. S. Lewis and the Art of Witness*, ed. David Mills, 70-85 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 70. Curiously, Hooper seems to suggest that Lewis did not write this essay until 1924. According to Hooper, during 1924, Lewis wrote a number of papers on ethics including "The Hegemony of Moral Values." Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 1:623n7. However, in Lewis' diary entry for July 6, 1922, he describes how he "began a 'dissertation' on the hegemony of the moral value." C. S. Lewis, *All My Road Before Me: The Diary of C. S. Lewis 1922-1927*, ed. Walter Hooper (San Diego: Harcourt, 1991), 64. Apparently, Lewis began the work as part of an application for a Magdalen Fellowship, which he did not receive. Moreover, he continued to work on this paper for a few years for other fellowship opportunities only to be passed up each time. He comments on his progress on writing his "dissertation" on August 17 and 30, and September 1, all in 1922 (87, 96, 98). Then, there are possible further references to it in his entries for March 29 and April 6-11 of 1924 (225, 229). On January 8, 1924, he refers to the work as "my old 'Hegemony of Moral Values.'" Later, on March 6, 1924, Lewis gives an account of how he read a paper by this title to the Oxford University Philosophical Society in Manchester College (298). Cf. C. S. Lewis to Albert Lewis, March 9[?], 1924, in C. S. Lewis, *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 1, *Family Letters 1905-1931*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 624-25. The last time he mentions the paper is on May 12, 1924, for which he describes how he is working on a "new version of my 'Hegemony' paper which I am sending to *Mind* and altering the ending." Lewis, *All My Road*, 322. Hooper writes: "For several years prior to his appointment at Magdalen, he had been at work on a paper entitled 'Hegemony of Moral Values.' It was sent to *Mind* but never published, and, as far as I can discover, is no longer extant." In preface to C. S. Lewis, *Selected Literary Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (1969; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), xivn1.

"The Poison of Subjectivism," an essay that is largely a synopsis of *The Abolition of Man*.[11]

West continues with one important further connection:

However, perhaps Lewis's most intriguing treatment of the ideas expressed in *The Abolition of Man* came in the novel *That Hideous Strength*. There Lewis depicted in fictional form the dire social consequences that follow from a Nietzschean science allied with the tools of government bureaucrats. In many respects, *That Hideous Strength* and *The Abolition of Man* are parallel books that ought to be read together.[12]

Much more is said in the pages to follow about these works mentioned by West, as well as other works by Lewis as they are relevant to the examination of his ideas and arguments in *Abolition*.

Lewis achieved enormous acclaim as a writer, but he later bemoans the fact that, despite its being one of his personal favorites, most people were not even familiar with his book *Abolition*.[13] It seems people simply found (and continue to find) the book

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[11] John G. West, Jr., *The C. S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia*, ed. Jeffrey D. Schultz and John G. West, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), s.v. "The Abolition of Man." Cf. Hooper's editorial note to C. S. Lewis, "On Ethics," in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper, 44-56 (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 47n1. Lewis' *Broadcast Talks* (London: Geoffrey Bles, The Centenary Press, 1942) was published in the U.S. as *The Case for Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1943), and reprinted as bks. 1 and 2 of *Mere Christianity*. For Lewis' talk at the Oxford Socratic Club, titled "If We Have Christ's Ethics, Does the Rest of the Christian Faith Matter?," see discussion in Hooper , "Oxford's Bonny Fighter," 143-44. Finally, see C. S. Lewis, "The Poison of Subjectivism," in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper, 72-81 (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

[12] West, "The Abolition of Man." Lewis opens the book with the poetic line from David Lyndsay's *Ane Dialog*, describing the Tower of Babel, and hence the source of the title of this book: "The shadow of that hyddeous strength sax myle and more it is of length." C. S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength: A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups* (London: John Lane the Bodley Head, 1945; repr., New York: Scribner, 2003). In the preface to *That Hideous Strength*, he describes the book this way: "This is a 'tall story' about devilry, though it has behind it a serious 'point' which I have tried to make in my *Abolition of Man*." John Bremer refers to *That Hideous Strength* as the "*mythological counterpart* to the philosophical *Abolition of Man*." John Bremer, "A Brief Biography," in *The C. S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia*, ed. Jeffrey D. Schultz and John G. West, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 52; emphasis added. Interestingly, George Orwell wrote in a review of *That Hideous Strength*, "Plenty of people in our age do entertain the monstrous dreams of power that Mr. Lewis attributes to his characters, and we are within sight of the time when such dreams will be realizable." George Orwell, "The Scientist Takes Over," review of *That Hideous Strength*, by C. S. Lewis, *Manchester Evening News*, August 16, 1945, http://lewisiana.nl/orwell/.

For further insightful and detailed discussion of the context surrounding the writing of *Abolition*, see Michael Travers, "*The Abolition of Man*: C. S. Lewis's Philosophy of History," in *C. S. Lewis: Life, Works, and Legacy*, vol. 3, *Apologist, Philosopher, & Theologian*, ed. Bruce L. Edwards, 107-31 (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007). Moreover, for explications of the book's main themes, see Peter Kreeft, *C. S. Lewis for the Third Millennium: Six Essays on* The Abolition of Man (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994).

[13] Lewis writes, "And I'm so pleased about the *Abolition of Man*, for it is almost my favorite

too difficult of a read compared with his more popular-level writings. In *Abolition*,

Lewis makes numerous references to literary works not recognizable by the general

public; he grapples with complex philosophical ideas and concepts related to areas of

metaphysics, theology, epistemology, anthropology, ethics, aesthetics, and literary

criticism; and he incorporates various Greek and Latin expressions unfamiliar to most

throughout the text. In fact, George Sayer explains, "None of the few reviewers of the

first edition seem to have realized its importance." Yet, he further explains, "Now,

however, it is generally seen as his most important pamphlet and the best existing defense

of objective values and the natural law."[14] Like Sayer, many scholars have heaped praise

upon the book, highlighting in laudatory terms its tremendous importance and influence

for Western society. Walter Hooper, for example, describes it as "a book which is, in my

opinion, an all but indispensable introduction to the entire *corpus* of Lewisiana" as well

as "possibly the most lucid and able defense of the moral law ever written."[15] Bruce L.

Edwards describes the work as Lewis' "most sustained critique of the direction of

western thought."[16] Gilbert Meilaender comments, "Perhaps the most significant of

Lewis's treatments of ethical theory is the deceptively slight treatise in moral education

titled *The Abolition of Man*."[17] What these scholars recognize and appreciate goes

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among my books but in general has been almost totally ignored by the public." C. S. Lewis to Mary Willis Shelburne, February 20, 1955, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 3, *Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy 1950-1963*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 567. James M. Houston provides further confirmation of Lewis' testimony of his partiality to this book: "I asked Lewis on one occasion, of all the books he had written, what did he consider the most important Christian message he had given? With no hesitation, his reply was, 'the three lectures I gave at Newcastle on *The Abolition of Man*, in 1942-43, together with my recent novel, *Till We Have Faces*' (1956)." James M. Houston, "C. S. Lewis' Concern for the Future of Humanity," *Knowing & Doing* (Spring 2006), http://www.cslewisinstitute.org/CS_Lewiss_Concern_for_the_Future_of_Humanity_page1.

[14] Sayer, *Jack*, 301.

[15] Hooper, editor's note to Lewis, "On Ethics," 47n1; Hooper, "Oxford's Bonny Fighter," 143.

[16] Bruce L. Edwards, "Deconstruction and Rehabilitation: C. S. Lewis' Defense of Western Textuality," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 29, no. 2 (1986): 207, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCO*host*.

[17] Gilbert Meilaender, in Schultz and West, *C. S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Ethics and Morality."

beyond Lewis the gifted popular writer to Lewis the serious moral philosopher, ethicist, and arch defender of the tradition of natural law theory in Western civilization. M. D. Aeschliman describes Lewis as "the moralist who has done more to illuminate and promote Natural Law thinking than anyone else in the 20th century."[18]

Lewis describes himself accordingly: "I am myself a Christian, and even a dogmatic Christian untinged with Modernist reservations and committed to supernaturalism in its full rigor."[19] Throughout his writings, Lewis expresses a deep commitment to traditional Christianity and, inversely, an aversion to modernism, writing of the "horrible ferocity and grimness of modern thought."[20] This was a consistent theme throughout Lewis' literary career, as David C. Downing states, "[T]wo words that nearly always connote something wrong-headed or distasteful in his books are 'modern' and 'humanistic.'"[21] Speaking of his more progressive-minded detractors, Lewis writes, "It is certainly not 'liberal-minded' religious people who like my books in England. On the contrary it is precisely among them that I find (next to Marxists) my most hostile critics."[22] Whether religious or Marxist, his critics had embraced the very thing Lewis

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[18] M. D. Aeschliman, in Schultz and West, *C. S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Tao." For a further example of the influence of Lewis' *Abolition* on Roman Catholic social and ethical thought, see Cardinal Ratzinger's (later Pope Benedict XVI) "Fisher Lecture," delivered at Cambridge University, January 25, 1988; "Cardinal Ratzinger in Cambridge," *Briefing* 88, vol. 18, no. 3 (February 5, 1988); reprinted in the *Canadian CSL Journal* no. 63 (Summer 1988), 4-5. Also, see Stephen F. Hayward, review of *The Abolition of Man*, by C. S. Lewis, *National Review* 67, no. 21 (November 19, 2015): 74-75, *MasterFILE Premier*, EBSCO*host*. For a similar, yet Protestant, specifically Southern Baptist perspective, consider the early praise of William O. Carver, review of *The Abolition of Man*, by C. S. Lewis, *Review & Expositor* 44, no. 3 (July 1947): 375-77, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCO*host*.

[19] Lewis, "On Ethics," 44.

[20] C. S. Lewis to Warren Lewis, February 18, 1940, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 2, *Books, Broadcasts, and the War, 1931-1949*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 350.

[21] David C. Downing, "From Pillar to Postmodernism: C. S. Lewis and Current Critical Discourse," *Christianity & Literature* 46, no. 2 (1997): 169, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCO*host*. Also, for further reading on Lewis and modernism, see Margaret Barbara Hiley, "Aspects of Modernism in the Works of C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien and Charles Williams" (PhD diss., University of Glasgow, 2006), http://theses.gla.ac.uk/1814/.

[22] C. S. Lewis to Mr. Talbot, April 18, 1946, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 2, *Books, Broadcasts, and the War, 1931-1949*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 707.

adamantly resisted: the modernization of religion, society, and culture. By contrast,

Lewis thought of himself as "spokesman for Old Western Culture."[23]

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

Adorno and Horkheimer began their careers as secular Jews and avid Marxists

firmly committed to dialectical materialism and the goal of a social revolution of the

proletariat.[24] In time, however, they began to modify their views due to the rise of

fascism in Germany and elsewhere in the 1930s. They eventually became founding

members of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research (ISR), or the *Institut für*

Sozialforschung, also called the Frankfurt School, where they elaborated a revised

version of what in philosophy is called *critical theory*.[25]

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[23] C. S. Lewis, "*De Descriptione Temporum*," in *Selected Literary Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (1969; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 12. In 1954, Lewis delivered this famous inaugural address at Magdalene College, Cambridge, where he was made the Chair of Medieval and Renaissance English Language, a post created especially for Lewis upon his departure from Magdalen College, Oxford, where he had served as professor and tutor for nearly twenty years. See Stephen Logan, "Old Western Man for Our Times," *Renascence* 51, no. 1 (1998): 63-86, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

[24] For further reading on the life and writings of Adorno and Horkheimer, see Simon Jarvis, ed., *Adorno: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1998); Nigel Gibson and Andrew Rubin, eds., *Adorno: A Critical Reader* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2002); Tom Huhn, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Adorno* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Gerard Delanty, ed., *Theodor W. Adorno*, 4 vols. (London: SAGE Publications, 2004); Martin Jay, *Adorno* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984); James Schmidt, ed., *Theodor Adorno* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007); Stefan Müller-Doohm, *Adorno: A Biography*, trans. Rodney Livingstone. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005; Detlev Claussen, *Theodor Adorno: One Last Genius*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Zvi Rosen, *Max Horkheimer* (Munich, Germany: C. H. Beck, 1995); and John Abromeit, *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[25] Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle explain,

> In 1930, Max Horkheimer became the director of the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, and under his leadership the so-called Frankfurt School took shape around an ambitious intellectual (and political) program of philosophical criticism. Horkheimer's own philosophical work was based on a rigorous critique of positivism and a pervasive commitment to examining the historical and social conditions under which modern industrial society has emerged. In 1933, the institute moved to Paris and later to Columbia University, just before the Nazi occupation of France.

Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle, eds., *Critical Theory Since 1965* (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1986), 686. Adorno later served as director of the *Institute* from 1956-69. See Horkheimer's inaugural address as director of the Institute, in Max Horkheimer, "The Present Situation of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute for Social Research," in *Between Philosophy and Social Science: Selected Early Writings*, 1-14, trans. G. Frederick Hunter, Matthew S. Kramer, and John Torpey, Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought, ed. Thomas McCarthy (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995). For

Horkheimer distinguishes between "traditional" theory and "critical" theory.[26] The former emphasizes the independence of the human mind, or critical apparatus, from the world it observes and its application of conceptual systems in the purely objective pursuit of facts and knowledge. This type of theorizing seeks to utilize science and technology for the manipulation of nature for human purposes. Critical theory, by contrast, engages in socio-economic criticism with the aim of the transformation of society as a whole, and the liberation of humanity from oppressive social structures and economic conditions. The newly revised critical theory, however, became concerned with the problem of social domination in the various forms that it took, and its advocates were increasingly disillusioned by the inability of traditional Marxist theory to account for the persistence of this domination. Jürgen Habermas, pupil of Adorno, second generation member of the Frankfurt School, and present day critical theorist, explains, "Critical Theory was initially developed in Horkheimer's circle to think through political disappointments at the absence of revolution in the West, . . . It was supposed to explain mistaken Marxist prognoses, but without breaking Marxist intentions."[27] Yet, both the

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further reading on the historical development and founding of the Frankfurt School and critical theory, see Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950*, Weimar and Now: German Cultural Criticism (1973; repr., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin and the Frankfurt Institute* (Hassocks, UK: Harvester Press, 1977); Zoltán Tarr, *The Frankfurt School: The Critical Theories of Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno* (New York: Schocken Books, 1985); Judith Marcus and Zoltán Tarr, eds., *Foundations of the Frankfurt School of Social Research* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1984); and Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994).

[26] Max Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory," in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1968; repr., New York: Continuum, 1995). Whereas scholars differ in their use of capitalization for the expression, some writing *Critical Theory* while others *critical theory*, this paper will use the latter throughout, except in quotations where the former is used. For further reading on critical theory, see David Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory: From Horkheimer to Habermas* (London: Hutchinson, 1980); John O'Neill, John, ed., *On Critical Theory* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989); Fred Rush, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); David Rasmussen, ed., *Handbook of Critical Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996); Seyla Benhabib, *Critique, Norm and Utopia: A Study of the Foundations of Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986); and Stephen Eric Bronner and Douglas MacKay Kellner, eds., *Critical Theory and Society: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

[27] Jürgen Habermas, "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Horkheimer and Adorno," in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*: *Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), 116.

oppressive regimes of Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia caused many dedicated

Marxists to become pessimistic regarding any possibility of human emancipation from

these growing forces of social control via state intervention. Centralized planning and

socialized ownership of the means of production had not ushered in the longed for utopia,

but instead had only resulted in totalitarianism and fascism. Adorno and Horkheimer,

both German Jews, experienced this first hand as they were forced to emigrate to the U.

S. during the rise of Nazism. Hence, they began to advocate for a major shift in emphasis

from practice (or praxis), in the form of political activism and radical revolutionary

measures, to a more theoretical critique of society and culture.[28]

Consequently, a new theory was needed to account for the continued control of

people within society by those in power. And, in fact, Horkheimer believed "he had

discovered a *dialectic* at work within all the advanced industrial nations which mandated

the diminution of 'free subjectivity' under the crushing burden of new forms of

technological control."[29] This dialectic between rationalization and authoritarianism,

characteristic of bourgeois capitalism, he called the "dialectic of enlightenment," and the

target for critique was called "instrumental reason." The Enlightenment, and modernism

in general, represented as the attempt to rationalize the world of nature and human nature

according to the concepts of modern science with its corresponding ideology of

positivism, was now seen as the primary instrument of oppression used by those in power

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[28] The members of the Frankfurt School believed that

only a radical change in theory and practice can cure the ills of modern society, especially unbridled technology. Every one-sided doctrine is to be subjected to criticism, including Marxism: an emancipating proletarian revolution is not inevitable, and thought or theory is relatively, though not wholly, independent of social and economic forces. But since theory and its concepts are a product of social processes, critical theory must trace their origins, and not, like empiricism and positivism, accept them and thereby indirectly endorse the processes themselves.

M. J. Inwood, *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. Ted Honderich (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), s.v. "Frankfurt School."

[29] Brian J. Shaw, "Reason, Nostalgia, and Eschatology in the Critical Theory of Max Horkheimer," *Journal of Politics* 47, no. 1 (1985): 168, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

to subjugate the masses. Hence, modern rationality was deemed defective and

oppressive.[30] Moreover, Albrecht Wellmer explains,

> A goal of the project was to "transform" this critique through a collaboration
> between philosophers, economists, and psychoanalysts into a critical theory of
> society that would be adequate for the social and historical constellation that existed
> after the great war. In 1933 the institute was closed by the Nazis, but Horkheimer
> succeeded in hiding its funds from the Nazis and reestablished the institute in New
> York.[31]

It was during their exile in America that Adorno and Horkheimer produced their

groundbreaking work, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, considered the foundational text

expounding their new critical theory.[32] Commenting on their purpose for writing the

book, the authors write, "What we had set out to do was nothing less than to explain why

humanity, instead of entering a truly human state, is sinking into a new kind of

barbarism."[33] This barbarism represented the state of the world and the condition of

humanity in the first half of the twentieth century. By all appearances, instead of

progressively leading mankind upward and onward to emancipation from

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[30] Y. Sherratt explains, "From the earlier Marxist belief that the source of repression resided in social and economic factors, the Frankfurt School moved to argue that the source of societal repression lay in inadequate forms of *reason* . . . 'objectifying,' 'reifying,' 'instrumental,' and 'rigid,' designed for survival not human emancipation or indeed enlightened understanding of any kind." Y. Sherratt, "Adorno and Horkheimer's Concept of 'Enlightenment,'" *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 8, no. 3 (2000): 526, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*; emphasis original.

[31] Albrecht Wellmer, "On Critical Theory," *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 81, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 705, *MasterFILE Premier*, EBSCO*host*. Also, see Thomas Wheatland, "The Frankfurt School's Invitation from Columbia University," *German Politics & Society* 22, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 1-32, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*; and Thomas Wheatland, *The Frankfurt School in Exile* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

[32] For example, Jeffrey Herf refers to "the Frankfurt school's canonical text" and "the canonical text of critical theory." Jeffrey Herf, "*Dialectic of Enlightenment* Reconsidered," *New German Critique* no. 117 (2012): 81, 83, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*. Slavoj Žižek writes, "With Western Marxism, it was, of course, Adorno's and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, as well as Horkheimer's numerous essays on the 'critique of instrumental reason,' which accomplished this fateful shift from concrete socio-political analysis to philosophico-anthropological generalization." Slavoj Žižek, "From History and Class Consciousness to *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* . . . and Back," *New German Critique* no. 81 (2000): 112-13, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*. For a detailed discussion of the historical development of *Dialectic*, see the following: the editor's afterword to the work, Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, "The Position of 'Dialectic of Enlightenment' in the Development of Critical Theory," in *Dialectic*, 217-47; James Schmidt, "Language, Mythology, and Enlightenment: Historical Notes on Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*," *Social Research* 65, no. 4 (1998): 807-38, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

[33] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xiv.

authoritarianism and liberation to a truly human way of life, the Enlightenment had been an abject failure.

The original text of *Dialectic* was completed in 1944 (in a mimeographic edition), but the work was not published until 1947. This publication was circulated for over twenty years until a newer edition was published in 1969.[34] An English version was not available until 1972.[35] In their preface material, Adorno and Horkheimer describe how closely they worked together in the writing of *Dialectic*. They disclose, "No one who was not involved in the writing could easily understand to what extent we both feel responsible for every sentence. We dictated long stretches together; the *Dialectic* derives its vital energy from the tension between the two intellectual temperaments which came together in writing it."[36] Given the closeness in thought and development of their work, and for the sake of convenience in continually making comparisons and contrasts with Lewis, henceforth I have chosen to adopt the convention of referring to *Adorno-Horkheimer*, as a unity of authorship. Of course, differences between them exist and are noted in the paper where relevant. For example, they acknowledge having different

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[34] Interestingly, the American edition of *Abolition* was published the same year (1947) as Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic*, which was written in America (in Los Angeles, California). They started their work as early as 1942. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xiii. It is noteworthy that they refer to their book as a "fragment," an "introduction" to their theoretical project as a whole. In fact, the original title of the book was *Philosophical Fragments*, which was relegated to the book's subtitle. This is significant because it reveals that they viewed the work as being incomplete. Indeed, an appendix to the book includes further fragmentary material related to but not included in the book's essays (see their "Notes and Sketches," 173-214). In their later writings, they further expand on many of the book's major themes. On reissuing the book in the 1969 edition, they remark that "not a few of the ideas in it are timely now and have largely determined our later theoretical writings" (xi).

They note that between the publication of the 1944 and the 1947 editions of the book, no significant changes were made to the original text, but that the last thesis (VII) was added after the war (xix). Since the original publication, the book has amassed a total of three prefaces: the original (1944/1947), an Italian edition (1962/1966), and the 1969 edition. These prefaces are significant for many of the central ideas, concepts, and themes are succinctly summarized within them, providing a kind of key to unlocking the work as a whole.

[35] See Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972; repr. New York: Continuum, 1991). However, Jephcott's translation (2002) is the one used throughout this dissertation.

[36] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xi. The book was dedicated to Friedrich Pollock, with whom "we built up the *Institut für Sozialforschung* once again, with the idea of taking further the concepts formulated in *Dialectic*" (xii).

"intellectual temperaments," and this clearly translates into a significant distinction in their writing styles. Horkheimer is much more lucid while Adorno is at times very opaque, making it fairly apparent who contributed what to each chapter of their collaborative efforts.[37] Moreover, this professional and literary collaboration, not to mention their endearing friendship, would continue throughout their teaching and writing careers, as they worked closely together on a number of works, especially through the 40s and 50s, further developing what was only fragmentary in *Dialectic*.

Adorno-Horkheimer disappointedly admit, "The book . . . found readers only gradually."[38] Reactions to the work have been, of course, mixed depending on whether or not one is sympathetic to their cause. However, many, both friend and foe alike, comment on the authors' as well as the book's pessimistic outlook. For example, Habermas refers to the *Dialectic* as "their blackest, most nihilistic book."[39] The writers' pessimism, their difficult writing style in places, the translation of their German thought forms into English, as well as their highly complex theoretical analysis all help to explain the book's poor reception by the general public. Nevertheless, regarding their later assessment of the work, Adorno-Horkheimer write,

> We do not stand by everything we said in the book in its original form. That would be incompatible with a theory which attributes a temporal core to truth instead of contrasting truth as something invariable to the movement of history. The book was written at a time when the end of the National Socialist terror was in sight.

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[37] Gerhard Richter writes on the difficulties of translating Adorno's German into English: "Adorno's German, and the thought that it enacts, is rigorously and infamously resistant to translation. His writing is both strange and foreign—*fremd*—even in its 'original' German." Gerhard Richter, "Who's Afraid of the Ivory Tower? A Conversation with Theodor W. Adorno," *Monatshefte* 94, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 10, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

[38] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xi. Their disappointment sounds similar to Lewis' on the general reception of *Abolition*.

[39] Jürgen Habermas, "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Re-reading *Dialectic of Enlightenment*," trans. Thomas Y. Levin, *New German Critique* 26 (Spring/Summer 1982): 13, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*. In this regard, a major influence on Horkheimer was the writings of German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), who was notorious for his philosophy of pessimism. See Max Horkheimer, "Schopenhauer Today," in *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, 63-83, trans. Matthew J. O'Donnell et al., Radical Thinkers (New York: Seabury Press, 1974; repr., New York: Verso, 2013), Kindle.

In not a few places, however, the formulation is no longer adequate to the reality of today. All the same, even at that time we did not underestimate the implications of the transition to the administered world.[40]

Moreover, on the changes in the world since the writing of *Dialectic*, they note how continued political division and conflicts reveal that the "horror has been prolonged."[41] For this reason, they argue the critical theory model they developed is still needed for engaging in negative critique of society and culture.

Furthermore, Adorno-Horkheimer comment: "That what matters today is to preserve and disseminate freedom, rather than to accelerate, however indirectly, the advance toward the administered world, we have also argued in our later writings."[42] Thus, this paper draws upon their numerous essays and books, written prior to and after *Dialectic*, especially as these writings assist in clarifying, showing the further development of, and even illustrating changes in their ideas and arguments presented in not only fragmentary but also germ form in *Dialectic*. In fact, one recommendation is to begin with the earlier essays of Horkheimer, for example, those contained in his *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, or his book *Eclipse of Reason*. These essays present in a more digestible form some of the fundamental concepts and themes taken up in *Dialectic*. Another helpful work is a collection of Horkheimer's essays titled *Critical Theory*, some written before *Dialectic* and some after. This work is essential to showing the evolution of Horkheimer's thought, including even some surprising developments in his ideas and attitude towards traditional religious views late in life. Adorno has also published several books on a variety of topics similar to *Dialectic*, such as works on metaphysics, epistemology, ethical theory, and notably aesthetics, for example, his *Aesthetic Theory*. A great introduction to Adorno is his aphoristically written *Minima Moralia*, which also

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[40] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xi.

[41] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xi.

[42] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xii.

contains further insights into themes from *Dialectic*. For an advanced, complex

presentation, analysis, and application of critical theory as a method of determinate

negation applied to a variety of twentieth-century philosophical positions, see Adorno's

Negative Dialectics.[43]

The Need for a Critical Comparative Analysis

Quite captivatingly, the authors approach the past, present, and future

unfolding of the human drama from two radically different points of view on the

ideological spectrum—on the one hand, traditional Christianity, and on the other,

atheistic neo-Marxism. This makes a comparative critical analysis of their visions for

humanity all the more intriguing, especially given the many areas of remarkable

agreement as well as anticipated (and sharp) disagreement. For both analyses, the fate of

Western civilization rests on a knife edge, while their diagnoses, prognoses, and

prescribed solutions could not be more drastically different in their overall assessments.

Literature Review

Considering the fascinating historical background and context of their writings,

including many tantalizing convergences and departures, it is astonishing that few

scholars have closely examined the uncanny parallelism between these two watersheds of

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[43] See the following from Max Horkheimer: *Dawn and Decline: Notes 1926-1931 and 1950-1969*, trans. Michael Shaw (New York: Seabury Press, 1978); *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. Matthew J. O'Donnell et al., Radical Thinkers (New York: Seabury Press, 1974; repr., New York: Verso, 2013), Kindle; *Eclipse of Reason* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947; repr., New York: Continuum, 1996); and *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell et al. (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1968; repr., New York: Continuum, 1995); the original German collection *Gesammelte Schriften*, Herausgegeben von Alfred Smith und Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, 19 Bände (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1985-1996); and personal correspondence, *A Life in Letters: Selected Correspondence*, ed. and trans. Evelyn M. Jacobson and Manfred R. Jacobson, Texts and Contexts, ed. Sandra L. (Gilman. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008). Also, from Theodor W. Adorno: *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E. N. F. Jephcott, Radical Thinkers (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1951; repr., London: Verso, 2006); *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1966; repr., New York: Continuum, 1995); *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. and ed. Robert Hullot-Kentor, Bloomsbury Revelations (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970; repr., New York: Bloomsbury, 2013); and the original German collection *Gesammelte Schriften*, Herausgegeben von Rolf Tiedemann, 23 Bände (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970-1996).

twentieth-century criticism. In spite of all the splendid treatments of these works *separately*, not many writers have discussed them *together*. This is truly astounding considering the vast amount of secondary literature available on the authors and their writings.

Given the radical, leftist ideology of the Frankfurt School, it appears the staunchly conservative, traditional Lewis has not been on the radar of the devotees of the two patron saints of critical theory, Adorno-Horkheimer. Unfortunately, I have yet to find any scholars or commentators sympathetic to the Frankfurt School making explicit ties to Lewis in their published works. Among Lewis scholarship, it has also been rather slim pickings, with an occasional comment on the connection in passing.[44] Most recently, Alister McGrath makes a brief contribution concerning the link in his superb intellectual biography of Lewis.[45] Also, philosopher and theologian, Norbert Feinendegen, in his published doctoral dissertation (in German) draws some comparisons between the two works as a small part of his much larger assessment of Lewis' overall critique of modernism.[46] Additionally, Sanford Schwartz briefly mentions this relationship *in a footnote* of one of his stimulating studies of Lewis' science fiction trilogy.[47] One reviewer, commenting on Schwartz's enticing remarks, exclaims, "This

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[44] Speaking of specifically *literary* critical theory (postmodernism, deconstructionism, poststructuralism, etc.), Downing writes, "In general, readers of C. S. Lewis have not shown much interest in critical theory, and readers of critical theory have not shown much interest in Lewis." Downing, "Pillar to Postmodernism,"169.

[45] See Alister E. McGrath, *The Intellectual World of C. S. Lewis* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), chap. 3, titled "A Gleam of Divine Truth: The Concept of Myth in Lewis's Thought, " 55-81. McGrath devotes two short paragraphs to discussing the work of Adorno-Horkheimer in *Dialectic* on the concept of myth as part of a much broader discussion of Lewis' views on the subject (71-73).

[46] See Norbert Feinendegen, *Denk-Weg zu Christus: C. S. Lewis als kritischer Denker der Moderne* (PhD diss., University of Bonn, 2008); Norbert Feinendegen, *Denk-Weg zu Christus: C. S. Lewis als kritischer Denker der Moderne*, Ratio Fidei, bd. 37 (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 2008). The suggested English translation of Feinendegen's title is *Thinking as a Road to Christ: C. S. Lewis as a Critical Thinker of Modernity*.

[47] In part, Sanford Schwartz's writes,

Lewis's dissections of the end-game of modern thought bears a striking resemblance to that of Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947), written at the same moment and from a very different point on the ideological spectrum. The kinship is based not on any

brilliant observation and the fascinating lines of thought that run from it might have deserved a chapter to themselves."[48] This dissertation attempts to write that chapter and more.

Methodology

This dissertation provides a critical explication and examination, first and foremost, of the primary texts of Lewis' *Abolition* and Adorno-Horkheimer's *Dialectic*. Although the *Dialectic* was originally published in German, I use what is considered the best English translation of the book. The exploration of these two texts involves a focused, intensive study of each chapter of each book, while providing a distillation of the authors' key ideas and the main lines of their respective arguments.

In addition to meticulously probing these two works, I draw extensively upon the whole corpus of the authors' writings, where doing so seems germane to the issues at hand, with the goal of further explaining the central ideas of the two primary texts. While treating the latter as a springboard for reading these authors together, I make heavy use of their other writings for the purpose of further critical comparative analysis. This includes an investigation of their many published books, essays, and collections of letters, as well as both personal and professional correspondence.

Furthermore, this research is informed by the wide array of secondary literature written on Lewis and Adorno-Horkheimer, including books, published and

immediate influence but on the longstanding similarity between conservative and radical critiques of the Enlightenment. As intellectuals from all camps struggled to comprehend the current crisis of European society, some came to regard the rise of totalitarian terror not as a defection from the Enlightenment but as the ultimate development of its distinctive type of rationality. In this respect, both Lewis and Horkheimer/Adorno should be situated along the spectrum that includes Mann (*Doktor Faustus*, 1947), Orwell (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 1949), Camus (*The Rebel*, 1951), and a variety of philosophers, social scientists, and historians who sought to explain the moral collapse of modern civilization and to restore, revise, or replace the rationalist heritage of the Enlightenment.

Sanford Schwartz, *C. S. Lewis on the Final Frontier: Science and the Supernatural in the Space Trilogy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 192-93n28.

[48] See Malcolm Guite, "C. S. Lewis: On Both Sides of the Wardrobe," *Religious Studies Review* 37, no. 2 (2011): 88, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCO*host*.

unpublished dissertations and theses, peer-reviewed journal articles, reviews, periodicals, speeches, interviews, online sources, and other research materials that appear to make a significant contribution to the scholarly discussion of the issues. This field of literature is vast, and so great care is taken to narrow the scope of inquiry to the appropriate sources, which illuminate the authors' essential theories and concepts as well as reveal new connections, points of contact, and other considerations along the way.

Finally, I consult several resources related to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century currents of thought and historical events. These provide the needed background and contextual information necessary for a clearer understanding of the various influences on the authors and their works. This investigation opens new vistas for fresh exploration of the intellectual climate, religious *zeitgeist*, and political and social landscape within which the authors were developing their major philosophical, moral, and cultural critiques.[49]

Personal Interest

The life and writings of C. S. Lewis have had an enormous impact on my intellectual and spiritual development over the years. I am greatly indebted to Lewis for the present shape of my Christian *Weltanschauung*. Similarly, a great number of Christian philosophers and theologians over time have attested to the tremendous influence the reading of Lewis has had on their own pilgrimage as well.

My first encounter with Lewis was not his fiction but his apologetic works.

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[49] Moreover, some inspiration for the approach taken in this dissertation comes from the work of Hiley, who in her own thesis on Lewis encourages "reading the works of Lewis against those of his modernist contemporaries." In her abstract, she explains, "In recent years, the works of the Oxford Inklings C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Charles Williams have increasingly found academic acknowledgment. However, no real attempt has yet been made to evaluate their writings in terms of the literature of the twentieth century. The present thesis aims to remedy this omission by reading the works of the Inklings against those of their modernist contemporaries." "Aspects of Modernism," 1. Likewise, the present dissertation seeks to read Lewis *against* Adorno-Horkheimer. Another brilliant treatment that deserves mention for a model of critical comparative analysis is Byran Lee Wagoner, "The Subject of Emancipation: Critique, Reason and Religion in the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Paul Tillich" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2012), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

While attending college at a secular university, pursuing studies in philosophy and religion no less, I experienced the pressures of learning to articulate and defend a traditional Christian perspective in an environment that, if not hostile, was either mildly opposed to or wholly indifferent to biblical Christianity. Like so many believers, I found great solace in Lewis' cogent reasoning, the beauty of his prose, and his awe-inspiring imaginative appeal. Throughout the years, I would routinely go back to him for intellectual nourishment as well as pure enjoyment. It was only later that I was introduced to Lewis' fictional writings. And now, I confess that I have entered through the wardrobe and become a permanent citizen of the enchanted land of Lewisiana, a true Narnian at heart, with loyalty and allegiance to the True King.[50]

Furthermore, Lewis has been one of the key inspirations for my desire to teach and write professionally. I am enamored with the study of philosophy, especially its integration with theology, apologetics, and ethics. This has been the focus of not only my academic pursuits but also my vocation as college instructor, and hence a committed, life-long learner. One of my personal and professional goals has been to bring together both my admiration for Lewis and my aspiration for scholarship. Given the wealth of Lewisiana literature, it is extremely difficult to find a topic on Lewis that some scholar has not already thoroughly plowed, harvested, and devoured. Accordingly, when I stumbled upon the intriguing connections between Lewis' *Abolition* and Adorno-Horkheimer's *Dialectic*, it seemed like a golden opportunity to make a unique philosophical contribution to the field of Lewis scholarship. Hence, the idea for this dissertation was conceived and at last is born.

Finally, some might find it odd, to say the least, to compare the urbane writing

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[50] In Lewis' The Chronicles of Narnia series, Aslan the Great Lion explains to the children Edmund and Lucy Pevensie that in their world "I have another name. You must learn to know me by that name. This was the very reason why you were brought to Narnia, that by knowing me here for a little, you may know me better there." C. S. Lewis, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1952; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 247.

of critical theorists like Adorno-Horkheimer to a Christian writer popularly known for his children's books about a talking lion. Of course, Lewis was an atheist thinker for the early years of his life, and many, including Lewis himself, have written about his intellectual conversion to Christianity. Moreover, plentiful scholarly treatments are available on Lewis the popular theologian, apologist, moralist, fantasist, satirist, literary critic, essayist, poet, epistolist, science-fiction writer, and more. But, not as readily acknowledged by all, Lewis has also greatly inspired and influenced the generation of philosophers after him. He has had an enormous impact on the philosophical enterprise in general, both for Christians who have only gradually discovered and expounded upon his more theoretical ideas as well as non-Christians who have been forced to respond to his many rational arguments. Lewis offers some of the most brilliant philosophical insights, while addressing many of the leading philosophical issues and concerns of his time (and yet, he remains timeless). For this reason, among many others, more should be written about Lewis the *philosopher*. With extraordinary precision and logical analysis, coupled with an incredible literary erudition and imaginative capacity, Lewis delivered scathing critiques of many major movements he believed were inculcating dangerous and destructive ways of thinking (or not thinking) in society. He thought of himself as being born out of time, as belonging to the "Old West," a living, breathing dinosaur, a relic of the past, one committed to walking down the ancient path of wisdom, knowledge, and virtue. What is more, he set out to defend these "antiquated," "old-fashioned," and "stagnant" modes of thought and life against the modern innovations that were becoming so increasingly fashionable in his day. Downing, writes, "England's perilous stand in 1940 before a seemingly invincible Germany felt familiar to him, and he later relished his role as torchbearer for 'we few' against the armies of progressivism, collectivism, and modernism in general."[51] Indeed, Lewis set his torch to writing his philosophical *tour de*

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[51] Downing, *Most Reluctant Convert*, 51.

force—The Abolition of Man.

Brief Outline of the Following Chapters

The following is a brief description (or roadmap) of the following six chapters of the dissertation. Chapter 2 closely examines the main ideas of Lewis' *Abolition*. The goal is simply to indicate and explicate the key concepts and arguments of the book, chapter by chapter, verse by verse. This is primarily a descriptive endeavor for the purpose of clearly articulating Lewis' views as *he* presents them. This examination provides the needed grist for the mill for the critical comparative analysis of Lewis and Adorno-Horkheimer's differing perspectives on the issues in the chapters to follow.

Likewise, chapter 3 emulates the same strategy described above, but shifts the focus to an examination of the main ideas of Adorno-Horkheimer's *Dialectic*. Once again, the goal is to indicate and explicate the key concepts and arguments of the book as they are developed throughout its principal chapter divisions. This primarily descriptive study seeks to clarify Adorno-Horkheimer's views as *they* offer them. Thus, their main lines of argumentation are presented in preparation for the further critical analysis to come.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 represent the heart of the dissertation. The thorough investigation of both Lewis' *Abolition* and Adorno-Horkheimer's *Dialectic* lays the proper groundwork for the more intensive, critical comparative analysis of these two works. Each of the chapters 4 through 6 narrows the scope of the discussion to one of the following central themes for purposes of comparison and contrast: *rationality*, *morality*, and *culture*. Here the general strategy for each chapter includes the following: (1) a critical examination of the areas of agreement between the authors, (2) a critical examination of the areas of major disagreement between the authors, (3) a critical comparative analysis of the competing assessments of the problems associated with the excesses of Enlightenment rationalism, (4) a critical comparative analysis of the

competing diagnoses, prognoses, and proffered solutions of the writers, and finally, (5) a case is made for the greater insight and better argument in Lewis' critique compared with the fundamental errors and shortcomings of the critical theorists.

More specifically, chapter 4 shows how, although perceptive of the ironic mythological employments of reason by those who thought the Enlightenment had championed the triumph of reason over myth, Adorno-Horkheimer go too far in their critique of Enlightenment rationality, resulting in a self-defeating view of human rationality altogether. This has the unfortunate result of making their critique groundless and even self-destructive. Lewis, by contrast, articulates and defends a more balanced epistemology that both recognizes and avoids the extremes of Enlightenment rationalism, thus making for a superior critique.

Chapter 5 argues that Adorno-Horkheimer fail to provide an objective basis for ethical normativity. They rightly critique the Enlightenment project for its reduction of reason to "instrumental reason," which restricts all human judgments to statements of fact about material realities, absent of any moral qualities. However, Adorno-Horkheimer fail to replace what the Enlightenment project abandoned with an alternative basis for making objective moral judgments. This presents an insuperable difficulty in their attempts to offer a valid moral critique of the barbarism, for example, of the Nazi persecution of the Jews. Lewis, on the other hand, makes a superb and powerful case for natural law as the basis of objective moral values and moral judgments, necessary for any justified moral critique.

In chapter 6, the results of the argumentation of the previous two chapters culminate in an evaluation of what Adorno-Horkheimer term the *culture industry*. Here there is more surprising agreement between the authors than can be found in the previous chapters. The authors express a shared concern about the use of propaganda, political and economic power, science, technology, and industry to manipulate and control the masses, with the fearful prospects of social conditioning and the engineering of a new

humanity. Yet, despite some areas of agreement, Adorno-Horkheimer's cultural criticism is surpassed by Lewis' greater insights into the religious needs of society and culture, and ultimately what is truly needed for mankind to break through the dialectic of enlightenment.

Chapter 7, the concluding chapter, begins with a brief summary of the work accomplished in the preceding chapters. I identify various areas for further fruitful exploration that lay outside of the scope of the dissertation. This is followed by a discussion of the significance of both *Abolition* and *Dialectic* for the past, present, and future. Finally, I conclude with a brief defense of Lewis the twentieth-century philosopher.

CHAPTER 2

C. S. LEWIS AND *THE ABOLITION OF MAN*

Introduction

  This chapter closely examines the central ideas, themes, and concerns

presented in Lewis' *The Abolition of Man*.[1] The primary goal is to indicate, coordinate,

and explicate the key concepts and arguments of the book. This is chiefly a descriptive

endeavor for the purpose of clearly articulating Lewis' views as he presented them. The

examination overall provides the needed material for the critical comparative analysis in

the later chapters to follow. Lewis advises his critics and interpreters to "find out what

the author actually wrote and what the hard words meant and what the allusions were to,

and you have done far more for me than a hundred new interpretations or assessments

could ever do."[2] It is in this spirit and with this intention that the rest of this chapter is

written.

"Men without Chests"

  Lewis begins his first chapter with a line taken from the old English Christmas

carol titled "Unto us is born a Son." The line goes, "So he sent the word to slay, And

slew the little childer."[3] The verse refers to the tragic account, recorded in the Gospel of

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  [1] C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man: Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools*, Riddell Memorial Lectures, 15th Series (London: Oxford University Press, 1944; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001). Hereafter cited as *Abolition*.

  [2] Lewis, *An Experiment in Criticism* (1961; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 121.

  [3] The fuller lyric from this carol sings: "This did Herod sore affray / And grievously bewilder / So he sent the word to slay / And slew the little childer." Ian Bradley, ed., *The Penguin Book of Carols* (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 365-67.

Matthew, chapter 2, when King Herod ordered the killing of all the male children of Bethlehem under the age of two. This is both a curious and intriguing way to commence a discussion of the modern state of education! Alan Jacobs comments: "Surely it must have been a kind of macabre joke on Lewis's part to preface a critique of *textbooks* with these lines? But no: Herod could but kill the body; our teachers (he thinks) are killing our children's souls, and this is the more grievous sin."[4] Thus, Lewis attempts to grab his readers' attention with this unsettling association, which speaks to the gravity of the situation he intends to explore in the rest of the chapter (and the book as a whole).

The Dangerous Philosophy
of *The Green Book*

Lewis begins by introducing a book he had reviewed that was supposed to be a textbook on English grammar for "boys and girls in the upper forms of schools."[5] He explains how he became greatly alarmed by what he discerned to be a dangerous philosophy embedded, knowingly or unknowingly, within the text. In his effort to avoid impugning the character or motives of the book's authors, Lewis refers to Gaius and Titius and *The Green Book*.[6] The real authors are Alec King and Martin Ketley, and the book *The Control of Language: A Critical Approach to Reading and Writing*.[7]

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[4] Alan Jacobs, *The Narnian: The Life and Imagination of C. S. Lewis* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 174.

[5] Lewis, *Abolition*, 1. This would be the equivalent of high school level students.

[6] John G. West, Jr. explains, "Lewis probably called this volume 'The Green Book' because its cover is green; the reason he referred to its authors by the names of Gaius and Titius is more obscure. There are several figures from antiquity with those names, but it seems likely that Lewis chose the names because they were used in ancient literature for illustrative purposes, much like 'Smith and Jones' are employed in English today." John G. West, Jr., *The C. S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia*, ed. Jeffrey D. Schultz and John G. West, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), s.v. "The Abolition of Man." Also, Bruce Edwards' comments: "Lewis possessed an uncanny ability to uncover the hidden assumptions and veiled agendas submerged in otherwise innocent texts. He knew that seemingly innocuous theories of art and literature, tucked away in obscure undergraduate texts and freshman anthologies, tend to influence society in dramatic ways over time." Bruce L. Edwards, "Deconstruction and Rehabilitation: C. S. Lewis' Defense of Western Textuality," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 29, no. 2 (1986): 206, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCO*host*.

[7] Alec King and Martin Ketley, *The Control of Language: A Critical Approach to Reading and Writing* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1939).

Without pillorying the original authors or their intentions, Lewis explains that he thinks the general tendency of the work engenders a particular way of thinking (or not thinking) that was detrimental to those who acquired it.[8] He summarizes this tendency as the belief in two propositions: (1) "that all sentences containing a predicate of value are statements about the emotional state of the speaker," (2) "that all such statements are unimportant."[9] This entails that all statements of value are *merely* or *only* subjective expressions of the speaker's feelings and not objective statements about reality. For Lewis, this subjectivist viewpoint is not only gravely mistaken but also extremely dangerous and destructive for those who embrace it.[10]

Sublime, pretty, or *whatever*? Lewis provides an example from *The Green Book* to illustrate how its authors reinforce this particular philosophical position. The example recounts an event of Samuel Coleridge overhearing a conversation of two tourists while visiting a waterfall.[11] The first tourist called the natural wonder "sublime" while the second called it "pretty." Coleridge approved of the first judgment but disapproved of the latter. Gaius and Titius comment that, according to Lewis, "When the

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[8] Lewis, *Abolition*, 1. Contrast Lewis' modest censure here with J. R. Lucas' description of Lewis' approach: "Although very well written, *The Abolition of Man* is not very courteously written. Gaius and Titius, the authors of the *Green Book*, and later another author, Orbilius, are held up to contempt and ridicule. The whole argument is external to the enemy opposed. No attempt is made to understand their position, to get inside their skin, to see things as they see them, and consequently be able to show them why they are wrong." J. R. Lucas, "Restoration of Man: A Lecture Given in Durham on Thursday, 22 October 1992, to Mark the Fiftieth Anniversary of C. S. Lewis's *The Abolition of Man*," accessed May 2, 2020, http://users.ox.ac. uk/~jrlucas/lewis.html (originally published in *Theology* [November-December 1995]: 445-56). However, as the pages to follow will show, Lucas' criticism is unfair as Lewis actually did exactly what Lucas suggested he should have done.

[9] Lewis, *Abolition*, 4.

[10] Cf. C. S. Lewis, "The Poison of Subjectivism," in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

[11] Lewis is referring to Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), English poet and philosopher. According to Arend Smilde, "Lewis appears to be referring to a passage in Dorothy Wordsworth's *Recollections of a Tour in Scotland, A.D. 1803* (published in 1874, edited by J. C. Shairp), and he relies on the *Green Book* for the way he cites it. Dorothy was the sister of William Wordsworth (1770-1850, English poet) and was making the tour with him and Coleridge." Arend Smilde, "Quotations and Allusions in C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*," accessed May 2, 2020, http://lewisiana.nl/abolquotes/.

man said *This is sublime*, he appeared to be making a remark about the waterfall . . .

Actually . . . he was not making a remark about the waterfall, but a remark about his own

feelings. What he was saying was really I have feelings associated in my mind with the

word '*Sublime*,' or shortly, *I have sublime feelings*."[12] Moreover, says Lewis, they

continue: "This confusion is continually present in language as we use it. We appear to

be saying something very important about something: and actually we are only saying

something about our own feelings."[13]

Lewis draws out a number of problematic implications of the teaching of Gaius

and Titius based on this "momentous little paragraph."[14] But, before examining these

problems, he first draws the reader's attention to what he thinks is a glaring example of a

pons asinorum.[15] The confusion, which Lewis charitably describes as a "mere

inadvertence" on the part of Gaius and Titius, ironically involves an amateurish mistake

in the use of language (ironically, the very subject of *The Green Book*). More

specifically, the error involves drawing the conclusion that the statement *This is sublime*

has the same meaning as the statement *I have sublime feelings*. Clearly, the former is

offered as a description of an object beyond the subject, whereas the latter is intended as

a description of the subject's feelings. Setting aside the more crucial question (to be

taken up shortly) as to whether or not the quality of *sublimity* belongs to the object or is a

projection of the subject's emotions, Lewis explains that the emotions are, in fact, the

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[12] Lewis, *Abolition*, 2.

[13] Lewis, *Abolition*, 2-3.

[14] Lewis, *Abolition*, 3.

[15] *Pons asinorum* ("asses' bridge" or the "Bridge of Asses") was originally a medieval expression used to refer to Euclid's fifth proposition in book one of his *Elements* of geometry, which states that the base angles of an isosceles triangle are equal. In logic, it refers to a test used to determine the middle element of a syllogism. Generally speaking, the expression refers to a point in a theory, problem, or formula the difficulty of which serves as a critical test of the ability or understanding of students, thus distinguishing the brighter ones from the foolish or inexperienced ones (the "asses") ill equipped to proceed any further in their studies. See *New World Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Pons Asinorum," accessed May 2, 2020, http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Bridge_of_Asses.

"correlatives, and therefore almost the opposites, of the qualities projected. The feelings which make a man call an object sublime are not sublime feelings but feelings of veneration."[16] Accordingly, a more accurate description of one's feelings in this case would be not *I have sublime feelings* but *I have humble feelings*. In the presence of an object thought or felt to be sublime, the emotional reaction produced is one of humility or feelings of lowliness. Thus, according to Lewis' *reductio ad absurdum* argument, Gaius and Titius' account has the following illogical and counterintuitive result: "*You are contemptible* means *I have contemptible feelings*: in fact that *Your feelings are contemptible* means *My feelings are contemptible*."[17]

Inculcating a particular habit of mind. Returning to the central issue at hand, Lewis explains how Gaius and Titius' approach inculcates in their pupils a general tendency that they will extend "to all predicates of value."[18] Whether or not this is Gaius and Titius' intention or desire, Lewis is concerned "with the effect their book will certainly have on the schoolboy's mind."[19] He further clarifies what he *does* and *does not*

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[16] Lewis, *Abolition*, 3.

[17] Lewis, *Abolition*, 4. Cf. Lewis on the use of emotional language:

> One of the most important and effective uses of language is the emotional. It is also, of course, wholly legitimate. We do not talk only in order to reason or to inform. We have to make love and quarrel, to propitiate and pardon, to rebuke, console, intercede, and arouse. . . . The real objection lies not against the language of emotion as such, but against language which, being in reality emotional, masquerades—whether by plain hypocrisy or subtler self-deceit—as being something else.

He further writes,

> We must obviously not call any utterance "emotional" language because it in fact arouses, even because it must arouse, emotion. "It is not cancer after all," "The Germans have surrendered," "I love you"—may all be true statements about matter of fact. And of course it is the facts, not the language, that arouse the emotion. . . . Statements about crime are not criminal language; nor are statements about emotions necessarily emotional language. Nor, in my opinion, are value-judgements ("this is good," "this is bad") emotional language. Approval and disapproval do not seem to me to be emotions.

C. S. Lewis, *Studies in Words*, 2nd ed. (1967; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 314-15.

[18] Lewis, *Abolition*, 5.

[19] Lewis, *Abolition*, 5.

mean by this *effect*:

> I do not mean, of course, that he will make any conscious inference from what he reads to a general philosophical theory that all values are subjective and trivial. The very power of Gaius and Titius depends on the fact that they are dealing with a boy: a boy who thinks he is "doing" his "English prep" and has no notion that ethics, theology, and politics are all at stake. It is not a theory they put into his mind, but an assumption, which ten years hence, its origin forgotten and its presence unconscious, will condition him to take one side in a controversy which he has never recognized as a controversy at all. The authors themselves, I suspect, hardly know what they are doing to the boy, and he cannot know what is being done to him.[20]

In sum, unbeknownst to the student, he/she will likely absorb a general philosophical theory and a particular habit of mind from reading *The Green Book*. Given the student's youth, inexperience, and the fact that the work is ostensibly a textbook on English grammar, the impressionable student is not expecting to be indoctrinated in theories about ethics and value theory. Nevertheless, the educational method adopted by Gaius and Titius has the effect of cutting certain ruts or grooves into the student's mind, certain fundamental presuppositions that will have a lasting influence on the student's outlook and orientation to the world.

Modernist (Mis)Education

Lewis expresses great concern about the various "practical results" of this modernist approach to education. To illustrate, he points to another example that Gaius and Titius use to discourage a particular form of writing in their students. Gaius and Titius criticize the writing style of an advertisement for a "pleasure cruise" for its descriptive language that appeals to the reader's sense of adventure by incorporating references to "places that have striking associations with history or legend."[21] Lewis agrees that the advertisement is poorly written, and that a good teacher of English composition would compare this piece side by side with selections from better writers in

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[20] Lewis, *Abolition*, 5.

[21] Lewis, *Abolition*, 6.

order to highlight the differences in their quality of writing. In this case, the better written piece would be whichever one does a superior job communicating the intended emotions associated with the passages in question. According to Lewis, this would be a "lesson worth teaching," as well as a real "lesson in literature."[22] Instead, Gaius and Titius focus on *debunking* the various claims and allusions made in the advertisement, presumably attempting to disabuse the reader of any deceptive hopes of having any real adventures at all like what the advertisement describes. Lewis grants that their conclusions may indeed be true, but his educational concern here is that Gaius and Titius do not make it clear that this same process of debunking can be applied to examples of good literature just as well as bad ones.[23] Moreover, Gaius and Titius fail to provide their readers with the actual tools of discovery that would enable them to appropriately and effectively criticize any work of literature along these lines. Thus, the pupil will learn nothing about literature, instead, Lewis says,

> What he will learn quickly enough, and perhaps indelibly, is the belief that all emotions aroused by local association are in themselves contrary to reason and contemptible. . . . Gaius and Titius, while teaching him nothing about letters, have cut out of his soul, long before he is old enough to choose, the possibility of having certain experiences which thinkers of more authority than they have held to be generous, fruitful, and humane.[24]

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[22] Lewis, *Abolition*, 7. Lewis offers suggestions for this comparative approach, drawing from the works of Samuel Johnson and William Wordsworth. For further insights into Lewis' views on education, see C. S. Lewis, "The Idea of an 'English School,'" in *Image and Imagination: Essays and Reviews*, ed. Walter Hooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); C. S. Lewis, "Our English Syllabus," in *Image and Imagination: Essays and Reviews*, ed. Walter Hooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). Also, see Mark Pike, "Education in *The Abolition of Man*," in *Contemporary Perspectives on C. S. Lewis' Abolition of Man: History, Philosophy, Education, and Science*, ed. Gayne John Anacker and Timothy M. Mosteller (London: Bloomsbury, 2017); Steven R. Loomis and Jacob P. Rodriguez, *C. S. Lewis: A Philosophy of Education*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009; Nicolas R. Pertler, "C. S. Lewis and the Premodern Rhetorical Tradition: *The Abolition of Man* as Rhetoric and Philosophy of Education" (PhD diss., Duquesne University, 2014), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

[23] Lewis now adds to his list of good examples: Charles Lamb (1775-1834), English essayist and poet; Virgil (70-19 BC), Roman poet; Thomas Browne (1605-82), English polymath; and William de la Mare (died c. 1290), English philosopher and theologian. Elsewhere, Lewis expresses a similar concern regarding the teaching of a modernist hermeneutic of suspicion among the young. See Lewis, *Experiment in Criticism*, 93.

[24] Lewis, *Abolition*, 8-9.

Jacobs describes Gaius and Titius' intent this way: "[T]hey see the prime task of a teacher to be *disenchantment*: unweaving the spell of value-laden language so that children control it rather than being controlled by it."[25] This interpretation is apropos, especially considering *The Green Book*'s real title—*The Control of Language*. Furthermore, the control of language in this way is symptomatic of a modernist view of rationality, which casts suspicion on qualitative, emotional, and value-laden language in general, in preference for a more quantitative, rationalistic, or scientific account of phenomena. The modernist refuses to be duped or taken in by mere subjective appearances, emotions, and values, in a word, propaganda, and so the schoolboy is "encouraged to reject the lure of the 'Western Ocean' on the very dangerous ground that in so doing he will prove himself a knowing fellow who can't be bubbled out of his cash."[26]

Throughout his criticism, Lewis is cautious not to challenge Gaius and Titius' motives, granting that they "do not fully realize what they are doing and do not intend the far-reaching consequences it will actually have."[27] Of course, the writers might be fully aware of what they are doing and have the explicit intention of producing what Lewis

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[25] Jacobs, *Narnian*, 175; emphasis added.

[26] Lewis, *Abolition*, 9. Throughout this chapter, Lewis focuses primarily on Gaius and Titius and their *Green Book*. At this point, he offers a parallel example in another work, whose author he refers to by yet another pseudonym, Orbilius. West explains, "The second English text Lewis attacked in this chapter is cited as being authored by 'Orbilius.' The real title and author of this second work is *The Reading and Writing of English* (1936) by E. G. Biaggini. Lewis's identification of Biaginni as 'Orbilius' is likely a reference to Orbilius Pupillus, an infamous grammarian known for inflicting beatings on the Roman poet Horace while teaching him Homer's *Odyssey*." West, "The Abolition of Man." Lewis acknowledges the superiority of Orbilius over Gaius and Titius. Lewis, *Abolition*., 103-4n7. Nevertheless, Orbilius engages in the "same operation" using the "same general anesthetic" and falls into the "same trap" as Gaius and Titius (10). More specifically, Orbilius seeks to debunk the use of anthropomorphic language by some writers in referring to animals (in this case, of horses as "willing servants" of their masters). Orbilius simply sets out to refute these anthropomorphisms; he does not address why the piece being examined is badly written, or how it compares with others that are well-written. According to Lewis, the consequence is that the students reading Orbilius will lose out on some of the natural, ordinate affections towards "their ponies and dogs," will receive "some incentive to cruelty or neglect" of such animals, and will gain "some pleasure in their own knowingness," a prideful sense of self-satisfaction that they are beyond being duped by such silly writing (11). Sadly, Lewis claims, "Another little portion of the human heritage has been quietly taken from them before they were old enough to understand" (11).

[27] Lewis, *Abolition*, 11.

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calls variously "the trousered ape," the "urban blockhead," or—*"men without chests."*
These writers "may really hold that the ordinary human feelings about the past or animals
or large waterfalls are contrary to reason and contemptible and ought to be eradicated.
They may be intending to make a clean sweep of traditional values and start with a new
set."[28] If so, this represents a *philosophical* rather than a *literary* position. Thus, the
reader of *The Green Book* will be disappointed to learn he has gotten "the work of
amateur philosophers where he expected the work of professional grammarians."[29]

In the end, Lewis still gives Gaius and Titius the benefit of the doubt that,
rather than disseminating their philosophical views in a dishonest and deceptive manner,
they probably "slipped into it" for a variety of reasons. First, the work of real literary
criticism is a difficult endeavor, and it is much easier to do the kind of debunking Gaius
and Titius have done. Lewis explains, "To 'debunk' the emotion, on the basis of a
commonplace rationalism, is within almost anyone's capacity."[30] Second, Lewis says
Gaius and Titius have simply misunderstood the greater educational need of their time.
He explains,

> They see the world around them swayed by emotional propaganda—they have
> learned from tradition that youth is sentimental—and they conclude that the best
> thing they can do is to fortify the minds of young people against emotion. My own
> experience as a teacher tells an opposite tale. For every one pupil who needs to be
> guarded from a weak excess of sensibility there are three who need to be awakened
> from the slumber of cold vulgarity. The task of the modern educator is not to cut
> down jungles but to irrigate deserts. The right defense against false sentiments is to
> inculcate just sentiments. By starving the sensibility of our pupils we only make
> them easier prey to the propagandist when he comes. For famished nature will be
> avenged and a hard heart is no infallible protection against a soft head.[31]

A third, "profounder" reason is that Gaius and Titius may hold to the

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[28] Lewis, *Abolition*, 12.

[29] Lewis, *Abolition*, 12..

[30] Lewis, *Abolition*, 13.

[31] Lewis, *Abolition*, 13-14. See Peter J. Schakel, "Irrigating Deserts with Moral Imagination," *Christian Refection: A Series in Faith and Ethics* 11 (2004): 21-29. The Center for Christian Ethics at Baylor University, http://www.baylor.edu/ifl/Christianreflection/InklingsarticleSchakel.pdf.

conviction that it is the responsibility of good educators to "build some sentiments while destroying others."[32] However, Lewis points out that it is their debunking procedure that will have a more lasting impact on their pupils. Even worse, this process of debunking turns out to be like the proverbial snake eating its own tale, a self-defeating procedure in the end.

Ancient vs. Modern Education

According to Lewis, Gaius and Titius face an "educational predicament" that is "different from that of all their predecessors."[33] He makes clear that their modern educational approach runs against the grain of the great teachers of old: "Until quite modern times all teachers and even all men believed the universe to be such that certain emotional reactions on our part could be either congruous or incongruous to it—believed, in fact, that objects did not merely receive, but could *merit*, our approval or disapproval, our reverence or our contempt."[34] This accounts for Coleridge's approval of the appellation *sublime* and disapproval of *pretty*, in describing the waterfall. The former response was a better fit than the latter to the nature of the waterfall, and he could assume the tourists agreed certain expressions or responses were either more or less adequate to their corresponding objects. Additionally, that they indeed were descriptions about the objects and not about the tourists' emotions, which must be the case if there is to be any agreement or disagreement over the responses whatsoever. As Lewis illustrates, "To disagree with *This is pretty* if those words simply described the lady's feelings, would be absurd; if she had said *I feel sick* Coleridge would hardly have replied *No; I feel quite well*."[35]

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[32] Lewis, *Abolition*, 14.

[33] Lewis, *Abolition*, 14.

[34] Lewis, *Abolition*, 14-15; emphasis original.

[35] Lewis, *Abolition*, 15.

Regarding the ancient educational method, along with Coleridge, Shelley,[36] and Traherne,[37] Lewis draws poignant examples from the works of Plato,[38] Aristotle,[39] and Augustine[40] in the West; Hindu[41] and Chinese[42] philosophy in the East; and Jewish[43] teaching from the Middle East. These numerous and culturally varied examples illustrate the ancient (pre-modern) view that an objective order of reality exists, which can be known and understood by the human mind, and which requires certain appropriate

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[36] Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), English Romantic poet. Shelley, comparing the human sensibility to an Aeolian lyre, explains the difference between the two in that the former has a power of "internal adjustment" whereby it can "accommodate its chords to the motions of that which strikes them." Lewis, *Abolition*, 15-16; quoting Shelley, *A Defense of Poetry* (1840), Part 1.

[37] Thomas Traherne (1636-74), English poet, clergyman, and theologian. Lewis quotes Traherne: "Can you be righteous unless you be just in rendering to things their due esteem? All things were made to be yours and you were made to prize them according to their value." Lewis, *Abolition*, 16; quoting Traherne, *Centuries of Meditations* (1908), 1.12.

[38] According to Plato, Lewis says one must be trained to "feel the right responses," and the pupil "must be trained to feel pleasure, liking, disgust, and hatred at those things which really are pleasant, likable, disgusting and hateful." Lewis, *Abolition*, 16; citing Plato, *Laws* 2.653 and *The Republic* 3.402a.

[39] Lewis states, "Aristotle says that the aim of education is to make the pupil like and dislike what he ought," to be "trained in 'ordinate affections' or 'just sentiments.'" Lewis, *Abolition*, 16; quoting Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.1104b; 1.1095b.

[40] Lewis describes Augustine's definition of virtue as *ordo amoris* as "the condition of the affections in which every object is accorded that kind of degree of love which is appropriate to it." Lewis, *Abolition* 16; referring to Augustine, *The City of God* 15.22.

[41] Lewis writes, "In early Hinduism that conduct in men which can be called good consists in conformity to, or almost participation in, the *Rta*—that great ritual or pattern of nature and supernature which is revealed alike in the cosmic order, the moral virtues, and the ceremonial of the temple. Righteousness, correctness, order, the *Rta*, is constantly identified with *satya* or truth, correspondence to reality. . . . [T]he Indian Masters say that the gods themselves are born of the *Rta* and obey it." Lewis, *Abolition*, 17; citing an entry on "Righteousness [Hindu]," from the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. 10, ed. John Alexander Selbie, Louis Herbert Gray, and James Hastings (Edinburgh, UK: T. & T. Clark, 1908-27).

[42] Lewis explains, "The Chinese also speak of a great thing (the greatest thing) called the *Tao*. It is the reality beyond all predicates, the abyss that was before the Creator Himself. It is the Nature, it is the Way, the Road. It is the Way in which the universe goes on, the Way in which things everlastingly emerge, stilly and tranquilly, into space and time. It is also the Way which every man should tread in imitation of that cosmic and supercosmic progression, conforming all activities to that great exemplar. 'In ritual,' says the *Analects*, 'it is harmony with Nature that is prized.'" Lewis, *Abolition*, 18; quoting Confucius, *The Analects of Confucius*, trans. Arthur Waley (London: Allen and Unwin, 1938), 1.12.

[43] Lewis relates, "The ancient Jews likewise praise the Law as being 'true.'" Lewis, *Abolition*, 18; citing Psalm 119:151. Lewis in a note elaborates on the Hebrew *emeth* for "truth," clarifying that the Hebrew term meant more than *correspondence*, but emphasizes concepts such as reliability, trustworthiness, faithfulness, and permanence (104-5n19; emphasis original). Cf. C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1958; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002), 58-63.

emotional responses on our part as well.[44]

Introducing the *Tao*. Throughout the rest of the book, Lewis refers to this common conception of objective reality shared by the ancient teachers and sages as the *Tao*, which he defines as "the doctrine of objective value, the belief that certain attitudes are really true, and others really false, to the kind of thing the universe is and the kind of things we are."[45] This is also known as the doctrine of *natural law*, and has roots in

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[44] Elsewhere, Lewis uses the expression "stock response" to convey his meaning. For example, in his essay "Christianity and Culture," he explains,

> Every virtue is a *habitus*—i.e., a *good* stock response. Dr. Richards very candidly recognizes this when he speaks of people "hag-ridden by their vices *or their virtues*.". . . But we want to be so ridden. I do not want a sensitivity which will show me how different each temptation to lust or cowardice is from the last, how unique, how unamenable to general rules. A stock response is precisely what I need to acquire. Moral theologians, I believe, tell us to fly at sight from temptations to faith or chastity. If that is not (in Dr. Richards' words) a "stock," "stereotyped," "conventional" response, I do not know what is.

C. S. Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 24-25; emphasis original. Lewis refers to the work of Ivor Armstrong Richards (1893-1979), the British linguist and literary critic, and his books *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923) and *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924). Speaking of his references to Richards in *Abolition*, Lewis writes, "As for his being the precursor of my *Green Book* villains, yes. But as in him it is all above-board, a theory advanced for adult consideration and argued for, there is no crime in it, only error. The Green Book smuggled it in without argument in a book on a slightly different subject, for children, without probably being even aware that it was controversial. Richards walks up to our mental front door and rings the bell." C. S. Lewis to Dorothy L. Sayers, November 7, 1947, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 2, *Books, Broadcasts, and the War, 1931-1949*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 810-11.

[45] Lewis, *Abolition*, 18. This is the equivalent of what Lewis refers to in bk. 1 of *Mere Christianity* variously as: "The Law of Nature," "the Law of Human Nature," "the Law of Right and Wrong," "the Law of fair play or decent behavior or morality," and "the Rule of Decent Behavior." C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1952; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001). Nevertheless, some critics have taken issue with Lewis' use of the term *Tao* for referring to this universal standard of morality or doctrine of objective value. For example, Kathryn Lindskoog and Gracia Fay Ellwood write,

> In *Abolition* he uses "the Tao" as shorthand for Natural Law or First Principle. This word choice is perhaps unfortunate. It is hard to believe that Lewis read, received (to use his own language) and savored the *Tao Te Ching*, Taoism's scripture, and concluded that "Tao" is the most accurate and succinct term for the moral law. Although the Tao is finally ineffable, according to the *Tao Te Ching*, it is best described as "the Flow," "the way things change," "the Life" or "the Source." To follow the Tao is indeed to live morally, for it requires respecting the lowly and avoiding oppression and pride. However, the Tao ultimately accepts the status quo, whether good or evil. Lewis might have done better to stay with the term moral law, Natural Law or, if he preferred Chinese thought, "the Will of Heaven."

Kathryn Lindskoog and Gracia Fay Ellwood, "C. S. Lewis: Natural Law, the Law in Our Hearts," *The Christian Century* 101, no. 35 (November 14, 1984): 1060, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCO*host*. In fact, Lewis does not show a familiarity with Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*, nor does Lewis cite this work anywhere in *Abolition*. Indeed, he confesses, "As for the Chinese, all I know is the *Analects* translated by Waley." C. S. Lewis to Dom Bede Griffiths, September 27, 1948, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 2, *Books, Broadcasts, and the War, 1931-1949*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York:

Jewish, Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic, Christian, and Oriental philosophical and religious systems. On this conception of the *Tao*, certain qualities in things demand certain responses on our part, whether we like, desire, or make them or not, irrespective of our personal opinions, emotions, or attitudes. Accordingly, Lewis explains,

> And because our approvals and disapprovals are thus recognitions of objective value or responses to an objective order, therefore emotional states can be in harmony with reason (when we feel liking for what ought to be approved) or out of harmony with reason (when we perceive that liking is due but cannot feel it). No emotion is, in itself, a judgment; in that sense all emotions and sentiments are alogical. But they can be reasonable or unreasonable as they conform to Reason or fail to conform. The heart never takes the place of the head: but it can, and should, obey it.[46]

By contrast, the teachings and "the world of" *The Green Book* exclude the possibility for this kind of discernment between what is reasonable or unreasonable regarding the connections between one's emotions and reality. For such judgments depend upon an external, objective standard. But, the philosophy of Gaius and Titius

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HarperCollins, 2004), 881. Cf. Lao Tsu, *Tao Te Ching*, trans. Gia-fu Feng and Jane English, with introduction by Jacob Needleman (New York: Vintage Books, 1989).

Jean Bethke Elshtain offers the following analysis of Lewis' choice of the term *Tao* for referring to Natural Law: "Of course, this assimilation of faith traditions is controversial but defensible in context, I would suggest. There are times when we want to clarify distinctions and differences; other times when we want to make the strongest case we can that a core or cluster of shared recognitions persists. Writing this particular essay (*Abolition*), Lewis took the latter tack." Jean Bethke Elshtain, "*The Abolition of Man*: C. S. Lewis's Prescience Concerning Things to Come," in *C. S. Lewis as Philosopher: Truth, Goodness and Beauty*, ed. David Baggett, Gary R. Habermas, and Jerry L. Walls (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 89n10. For a similar take, see Gabriele Greggersen, "C. S. Lewis and the Rejection of the Tao," *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 42, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 122, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*. Furthermore, according to Arend Smilde, Lewis may have derived the idea for using the Chinese term from "Charles Gore's book *The Philosophy of the Good Life* (1930), which he read in January 1940." Smilde, "Quotations and Allusions in C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*"; cf. Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 2:321, 324. In this connection, see Adam Barkman, *C. S. Lewis & Philosophy as a Way of Life: A Comprehensive Historical Examination of His Philosophical Thoughts* (Allentown, PA: Zossima, 2009), 174-75. Finally, Lewis reveals another clue for his choice of the expression *Tao* in preference to an English alternative, in his *A Preface to Paradise Lost*. Here he quotes the work of Christopher Dawson: "The same conception of a universal order is also of fundamental importance in the religious development of India and Persia. It appears in the Rigveda . . . under the name of Rta or Rita. It is usually translated as Order or Right, but *it is difficult to find any equivalent for it in modern English since it is at once cosmic, ritual and moral*." C. S. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (1942; repr., London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 73; emphasis added; citing Christopher Dawson, *Progress and Religion: An Historical Inquiry* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1929), chap. 6; repr., with foreword by Christina Scott, introduction by Mary Douglas, The Works of Christopher Dawson, ed. Christina Scott and Don J. Briel (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001).

[46] Lewis, *Abolition*, 19.

denies such a standard exists; all value judgments are reducible to the subjective emotions of the individual. Moreover, Lewis writes, "Now the emotion, thus considered by itself, cannot be either in agreement or disagreement with Reason. It is irrational not as a paralogism is irrational, but as a physical event is irrational: it does not rise even to the dignity of error."[47] Thus, he further explains, "On this view, the world of facts, without one trace of value, and the world of feelings, without one trace of truth or falsehood, justice or injustice, confront one another, and no *rapprochement* is possible."[48] The unfortunate result is an absolute separation between, on the one hand, mind and emotion, and reality on the other.

Propagation vs. propaganda. Lewis elaborates further on the "educational predicament," or the "educational problem," for the modern educator. The problem is different depending on whether the educator stands *within* or *without* the *Tao*. If one adheres to the *Tao*, then the goal of the educator is to "train in the pupil those responses which are in themselves appropriate, whether anyone is making them or not, and in making which the very nature of man consists."[49] However, the view taken by Gaius and Titius sets up an unbridgeable chasm between appearance and reality, which logically

[47] Lewis, *Abolition*, 20. A *paralogism* refers to a piece of illogical or fallacious reasoning that appears on the surface to be logical or valid. Lewis at times unfortunately uses the term "irrational" when what he really means is *non-rational*. This created a great deal of confusion in his famous debate with G. E. M. Anscombe over his argument against naturalism in his book *Miracles*, causing him to later revise chap. 3 of the book to clarify the distinction of terms. See C. S. Lewis, *Miracles: A Preliminary Study* (New York: Macmillan, 1947; repr., with revision of chap. 3, London: Collins-Fontana Books, 1960; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001). Likewise, the better term to use here would be non-rational instead of irrational. Notice in the above, Lewis uses the term "alogical," along with the related distinction between "reasonable" and "unreasonable." Clearly by "irrational" Lewis has in mind the idea of non-rational or alogical. Hence, he says the "irrational" example does not even "rise to the level of error." For further discussion on Lewis' debate with Anscombe, see: Walter Hooper, "Oxford's Bonny Fighter," in *C. S. Lewis at the Breakfast Table and Other Reminiscences*, ed. James T. Como (New York: Macmillan, 1979; repr., New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992); Richard L. Purtill, *Lord of the Elves and Eldils: Fantasy and Philosophy in C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2006), especially Appendix C, "Did C. S. Lewis Lose His Faith?," 227-52; and Victor Reppert, *C. S. Lewis's Dangerous Idea: In Defense of the Argument from Reason* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 11-28 and 45-71.

[48] Lewis, *Abolition*, 20.

[49] Lewis, *Abolition*, 21.

results in an epistemological skepticism and moral nihilism. From the standpoint of one operating outside of the *Tao*, modern educators, to maintain consistency, can only regard "all sentiments as equally non-rational, as mere mists between us and the real objects. As a result, they must either decide to remove all sentiments, as far as possible, from the pupil's mind; or else encourage some sentiments for reasons that have nothing to do with their intrinsic 'justness' or 'ordinacy.'"[50] But, any reasons offered for acceptance of the newly selected sentiments are undermined by the modern educator's process of debunking sentiments *qua* sentiments as *nothing but* expressions of subjective emotional responses.[51]

Lewis explains how the education of old "was a kind of propagation—men transmitting manhood to men; the new is merely propaganda."[52] The modern educator's attempt to eradicate false emotions comes at the price of disabling the student's ability to make objective value-judgments. The logic goes: Values are nothing but sentiment. Sentiments are merely subjective expressions of emotion. Therefore, values are only subjective emotional expressions. The result is that it becomes impossible to make true judgments about what kinds of behavior are reasonable or unreasonable, right or wrong.[53]

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[50] Lewis, *Abolition*, 21. Notice his use of the term "non-rational" (see above discussion).

[51] Lewis offers a further example of a just sentiment in the account of the Roman father who told his son it was a sweet (*dulce*) and seemly (*decorum*) thing to die for his country. Lewis, *Abolition*, 21-22. Yet, Lewis explains that it appears Gaius and Titius have chosen the route of debunking sentiment altogether. Lewis states, "Propaganda is their abomination: not because their own philosophy gives a ground for condemning it (or anything else) but because they are better than their principles" (23).

[52] Lewis, *Abolition*, 23.

[53] David Mills says of Lewis, "In *The Abolition of Man*, he argued that the danger to our language comes not first from political and economic causes but from a philosophical error, the rejection of the *Tao*, rejected as much by artists, intellectuals, and political leaders in England as the Nazis they were fighting." David Mills, "To See Truly through a Glass Darkly: C. S. Lewis, George Orwell, and the Corruption of Language," in *The Pilgrim's Guide: C. S. Lewis and the Art of Witness*, ed. David Mills (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 116. Mills notes how Lewis, in *Abolition* and in *That Hideous Strength*, anticipated many of Orwell's concerns about the corruption of language. See C. S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength: A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups* (London: John Lane the Bodley Head, 1945; repr., New York: Scribner, 2003). Moreover, Mills writes that "we must have an objective standard—the *Tao* and the revelation—to object to propaganda. If there is no right and wrong, those who want to use words as weapons to gain power over others have every right to do so, or, more accurately, since rights themselves reflect a moral order, the rest of us have no right to object." Mills, "To See Truly through a Glass Darkly," 130.

Ironically, this makes the student vulnerable and susceptible to the very things Gaius and Titius sought to protect the student from: false ideologies, empty rhetoric, and emotional propaganda.

Modernism + Moral Subjectivism
= "Men without Chests"

Drawing upon the ancient tripartite division of the human soul, Lewis argues that the regrettable consequence of this process of inculcating subjectivity is what he terms "Men without Chests." The belief in subjectivism causes the chest (the heart, or the will) of man to atrophy, and so the defining element of human nature is eradicated, or abolished. He explains,

> Without the aid of trained emotions the intellect is powerless against the animal organism. . . . We were told it long ago by Plato. As the king governs by his executive, so Reason in man must rule the mere appetites by means of the "spirited element." The head rules the belly through the chest—the seat, as Alanus tells us, of Magnanimity, of emotions organized by trained habit into stable sentiments. The Chest—Magnanimity—Sentiment—these are the indispensable liaison officers between cerebral man and visceral man. It may even be said that it is by this middle element that man is man: for by his intellect he is mere spirit and by his appetite mere animal.[54]

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[54] Lewis, *Abolition*, 24-25. Alanus ab Insulis, or Alain de Lille (c. 1125-1203), French scholar and poet. Lewis refers to his poem *De Planctu Naturae Prosa* ("Nature's Complaint" or "The Plaint of Kind"), which is a satire on human vice. On the triadic division of human nature, compare Lewis:

> Ethically . . . the triad is Reason, Emotion, and Appetite. Reason, seated in the head, governs the Appetites, seated in the abdomen or beneath it, by the aid of the more fully human and civilized emotions which were located in the thorax; such things as shame, honor, pity, self-respect, affection. This ethical triad was accepted for millennia. . . . On the psychological level the individual triad depends on the doctrine of the triple soul. But the word *anima* had a larger and less exclusively religious range of meaning than *soul*; "life" would sometimes be a better translation. There is vegetable soul, common to all plants, which gives only life; sensitive soul, which gives life and sensation; and rational soul, by which we think. Man of course has all three: when things are going right inside him, his rational governs his vegetable through his sensitive.

C. S. Lewis, *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, ed. by Walter Hooper (1966; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 58-59; emphasis original. Furthermore, Lewis writes, "In this densely populated universe a very peculiar position was allotted to Man. . . . Christians had always held that a man was a composite creature, *animal rationale*, and that it lay in his own choice to be governed by his reason or his animality. But that choice could produce order or disorder only within the limits assigned to him by the hierarchy of being. He could become a saint but not an angel: a swinish man but not a pig." C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama*, The Oxford History of English Literature, vol. 3 (1954; repr., London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 12. Finally, Lewis' allegorical work, *The Pilgrim's Regress*, is also helpful for understanding this division of human nature and its extremes, which he characterizes in this book by North and South. Although written in 1933, the preface (or afterword depending on the edition) was written a decade later in 1943, the same year as *Abolition*.

Lewis further notes the irony of this tragi-comic situation for modern man. Many of the modern *intelligentsia*, like Gaius and Titius, go to great efforts to debunk the sentiments associated with traditional values; yet, at the same time, "we continue to clamor for those very qualities we are rendering impossible."[55] Lewis explains, "In a sort of ghastly simplicity we remove the organ and demand the function. We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful."[56] In the end, the modernist approach proves to be untenable. In practice, it requires or depends upon the very virtues and values it seeks to debunk.

"The Way"

In his first chapter, Lewis offers his diagnosis of the modern predicament, which can be succinctly summarized as follows: Modernism has embarked upon a new socio-cultural experiment of redefining human nature, and in so doing has sought an alternative to objective values as a basis for human understanding. Moreover, this experiment has a dehumanizing effect, producing a society of what Lewis calls "Men without Chests." Consequently, Lewis opens his second chapter by sounding the alarm for Western civilization: "The practical result of education in the spirit of *The Green Book* must be the destruction of the society which accepts it."[57] In this second chapter, Lewis provides his prognosis for society by setting forth a masterful defense of the natural law tradition within philosophy. This includes a robust defense of what he has

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Here Lewis writes, "We were made to be neither cerebral men nor visceral men, but Men. Not beasts nor angels but Men—things at once rational and animal." C. S. Lewis, *The Pilgrim's Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity, Reason and Romanticism* (London: J. M. Dent, 1933; repr., with preface, London: Geoffrey Bles, 1943; repr., with illustrations by Michael Hague, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 207.

[55] Lewis, *Abolition*, 26.

[56] Lewis, *Abolition*, 26.

[57] Lewis, *Abolition*, 27.

already referred to as the *Tao*. He explains that the doctrine of objective value is not exclusively Christian but has been on universal display throughout human civilization, including a variety of religious and philosophical traditions.[58]

Some Theoretical Difficulties

Lewis is extraordinarily practical, but he is no pragmatist regarding the nature of truth and value. In noting the very impractical and ultimately devastating results of moral subjectivism for society, he clarifies that this alone is not a sufficient refutation of the theory: "The true doctrine might be a doctrine which if we accept we die."[59] Thus, he goes on to tackle further "theoretical difficulties" with the theory of moral subjectivism, as embraced by Gaius and Titius in *The Green Book*, which he believes are far more detrimental to their view than its practical difficulties.

A problem of consistency. The first theoretical problem he identifies is a lack of consistency in their view. In spite of their rejection of traditional values, Gaius and Titius clearly hold to at least *some* values they do indeed believe to be objective. For example, in the very writing of *The Green Book*, it is evident Gaius and Titius believe they have a responsibility as educators to "produce certain states of mind in the rising generation." This is because either they think these states of mind intrinsically good or

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[58] This reveals another sticking point for some Christian critics of Lewis. He appears to treat Christianity as being on par with other religious and philosophical traditions. However, consider that Lewis was very fond of Justin Martyr's statement: "Whatever things have been well said by all men belong to us Christians." Justin Martyr, *Apology* 2.13. This sums up Lewis' view of the relationship between Christianity and other traditions. See C. S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (1964; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 49. Moreover, Lewis explains, "If you are a Christian you do not have to believe that all the other religions are simply wrong all through. . . . But, of course, being a Christian does mean thinking that where Christianity differs from other religions, Christianity is right and they are wrong." Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 35. Elsewhere, he writes, "What is common to Zarathustra, Jeremiah, Socrates, Gautama, Christ and Marcus Aurelius, is something pretty substantial." C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (London: The Centenary Press, 1940; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 57. Then, in a footnote, he clarifies, "I mention the Incarnate God among human teachers to emphasize the fact that the *principal* difference between Him and them lies not in ethical teaching (which is here my concern) but in Person and Office" (57n1; emphasis original).

[59] Lewis, *Abolition*, 27.

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think they are "the means to some state of society which they regard as desirable."[60]

Lewis further explains,

> The important point is not the precise nature of their end, but the fact that they have an end at all. They must have, or their book (being purely practical in intention) is written to no purpose. And this end must have real value in their eyes. To abstain from calling it good and to use, instead, such predicates as "necessary" or "progressive" or "efficient" would be a subterfuge. They could be forced by argument to answer the questions "necessary for what?," "progressing towards what?," "effecting what?"; in the last resort they would have to admit that some state of affairs was in their opinion good for its own sake.[61]

If this state of affairs is truly "good for its own sake" (intrinsically or essentially good), then it must possess more than mere practical value, and it cannot be merely a description of the emotional states of Gaius and Titius either. In the end, their purpose for writing *The Green Book* must be aimed at some end which has their approval, indeed an approval they intend their readers' to share because they believe it is "in some way valid or correct."[62]

Additionally, Lewis reveals how Gaius and Titius are firmly committed to and strongly advocate for a whole host of values in *The Green Book*. In fact, they "will be found to hold, with complete uncritical dogmatism, the whole system of values which happened to be in vogue among moderately educated young men of the professional classes during the period between the two wars."[63] In other words, their skepticism regarding values is superficial and really aimed at a particular set of values, *traditional* ones, while suspending their skeptical approach when it comes to their embrace of various modern values. According to Lewis, this tactic is a very common one, which he describes as the following:

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[60] Lewis, *Abolition*, 28.

[61] Lewis, *Abolition*, 28.

[62] Lewis, *Abolition*, 29.

[63] Lewis, *Abolition*, 29. In a note, Lewis gives a list of examples of statements from Gaius and Titius, from *The Green Book*, which clearly express their Approvals and Disapprovals of various ideas, values, attitudes, sentiments, etc. This list reveals their "(perhaps unconscious) philosophy" as well as an assumed (if unstated) objective standard of judgment (105-6n1).

A great many of those who "debunk" traditional or (as they would say) "sentimental" values have in the background values of their own which they believe to be immune from the debunking process. They claim to be cutting away the parasitic growth of emotion, religious sanction, and inherited taboos, in order that "real" or "basic" values may emerge.[64]

However, this selective debunking process, initiated by what Lewis calls the "Innovator in values," is ultimately self-defeating. To prove this to be the case, Lewis takes the case of death for a good cause as his *experimentum crucis*. The Innovator in values seeks to reduce *dulce et decorum* and *greater love hath no man*, believed by the Innovator to be "irrational sentiments," to a more basic ground of value. But, where will he find such a ground? Lewis critically examines a number of possible candidates for such a ground, while exposing the failure of attempts to find an alternative basis for morality in anything other than the *Tao*.

Self-preservation or preservation of society? One attempt is to find a basis for morality in what is needed for self-preservation or the preservation of the community, society, or the human species. What this amounts to, according to Lewis, is the moral claim that *the death of some men is useful to other men*. "But on what ground are some men being asked to die for the benefit of others?," he queries. Even granting the truth of the moral claim, one can still press the question: "Why should *I* be one of those who take the risk?" The burden the Innovator must bear is how to explain "in terms of pure reasoning" alone, without any appeals to the rejected "sentiments" of values or virtues of pride, honor, shame, or love, why one has a moral obligation to sacrifice their life for the benefit of others. Why should altruism be preferred over selfishness, especially when what is at stake is one's own life? Gaius and Titius cannot defend the position that altruism is the more "rational" or "intelligent" option. For on their view of reason (which Lewis here describes as "the connecting by inference of propositions, ultimately derived from sense data, with further propositions"), neither the willingness nor the refusal to

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[64] Lewis, *Abolition*, 29.

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sacrifice one's life for another's is any more or less rational based on appeals to mere descriptive facts about human behavior alone.[65] Lewis explains the fundamental problem with this rationalistic approach:

> From propositions about fact alone no *practical* conclusion can ever be drawn. *This will preserve society* cannot lead to *do this* except by the mediation of *society ought to be preserved. This will cost you your life* cannot lead directly to *do not do this*: it can lead to it only through a felt desire or an acknowledged duty of self-preservation. The Innovator is trying to get a conclusion in the imperative mood out of premises in the indicative mood: and though he continues trying to all eternity he cannot succeed, for the thing is impossible.[66]

Here Lewis appeals to something akin to the naturalistic fallacy of G. E. Moore (sometimes called Hume's Law or the "is-ought" fallacy), which essentially states that one cannot validly derive from premises that are purely *descriptive* (i.e., in the indicative mood) a conclusion that is *prescriptive* (i.e., in the imperative mood).[67] In this case, any attempt to ground morality in the fact that the preservation of humanity depends upon belief in certain moral values presupposes an unstated, normative value regarding the preservation of the individual or society—that either *ought to be preserved*. This normative position is not reached via rational demonstration from facts about human nature alone, but is smuggled into, knowingly or unknowingly, the argument from the beginning as an unstated premise, thus committing a *petitio principii*.

Consequently, Lewis says a choice must be made:

> We must therefore either extend the word Reason to include what our ancestors called Practical Reason and confess that judgements such as *society ought to be preserved* . . . are not mere sentiments but are rationality itself; or else we must give up at once, and for ever, the attempt to find a core of "rational" value behind all the sentiments we have debunked.[68]

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[65] Lewis, *Abolition*, 31.

[66] Lewis, *Abolition*, 31-32; emphasis original.

[67] Lewis' appeal to the naturalistic fallacy is discussed further in chap. 5 below. See G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903; repr., Pantianos Classics, 2016); David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature*, ed. Ernest C. Mossner (New York: Penguin, 1984).

[68] Lewis, *Abolition*, 32; emphasis original.

Of course, the former represents Lewis' view but is the one excluded by the Innovator, for this would require a return to "the Way," or the *Tao*. Thus, it is the latter option the Innovator will have to take up and defend in order to provide an alternative basis for morality, one even more "basic" and "realistic" than human rationality.[69]

Biological instinct or moral imperative? The next theory seeks to establish the goal of the preservation of society as a given of biological instinct, rather than something which hangs on "the precarious thread of human Reason." By instinct, Lewis means "an unreflective or spontaneous impulse widely felt by the members of a given species."[70] The Innovator has a new motive for conveniently avoiding any need to argue on behalf of this theory since the position is not established by rational argumentation but is biologically based. The Innovator simply points to the fact that human beings have an instinctive urge for the preservation of our species. This instinct, drive, or impulse for survival is felt universally among human beings, and so seems to provide a more solid basis for our moral experience. What is more, this new basis serves to debunk or eradicate certain moral beliefs not in conformity to it. For example, "We have no instinctive urge to keep promises or to respect individual life: this is why scruples of justice and humanity—in fact the Tao—can be properly swept away when they conflict with our real end, the preservation of the species."[71]

However, the attempt to ground moral value on instinct also fails to escape the problem of the is-ought distinction described above. When the Innovator claims that we

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[69] Lewis, *Abolition*, 32.

[70] Lewis, *Abolition*, 34.

[71] Lewis, *Abolition*, 33. This innovation in ethical thinking also provides a convenient avenue for the scrapping of traditional views of human sexuality in favor of a new sexual morality that does away with the old taboos. Whereas the old taboos may have been useful for a time to help preserve the species, the introduction of contraceptives now means we can abandon many of the taboos, and "sexual desire, being instinctive, is to be gratified whenever it does not conflict with the preservation of the species. It looks, in fact, as if an ethics based on instinct will give the Innovator all he wants and nothing that he does not want" (33).

must obey instinct, we have to consider what the Innovator means exactly. By *must*, the

Innovator surely does not mean we simply cannot do otherwise (this kind of necessity

would preclude all moral exhortation, including the kind presented within *The Greek*

Book) or doing so will make us happy or feel satisfied (remember the *experimentum*

crucis is that of facing death, which would remove every possible satisfaction in this

world, even any satisfaction possibly received from the desire for the good of posterity).

Thus, Lewis argues, "It looks very much as if the Innovator would have to say not that

we must obey Instinct, nor that it will satisfy us to do so, but that we *ought* to obey it."[72]

But, why *ought* we to obey instinct? Whence this moral obligation? Lewis explains,

> From the statement about psychological fact "I have an impulse to do so and so" we
> cannot by any ingenuity derive the practical principle "I ought to obey this
> impulse." Even if it were true that men had a spontaneous, unreflective impulse to
> sacrifice their own lives for the preservation of their fellows, it remains a quite
> separate question whether this is an impulse they should control or one they should
> indulge.[73]

Whether or not it would be morally *right* or a *duty* to act upon a given impulse would

require a separate, external moral standard, beyond impulse, for one to make this moral

judgment.

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[72] Lewis, *Abolition*, 34-35. In a footnote to this statement, Lewis comments:

The most determined effort which I know to construct a theory of value on the basis of "satisfaction
of impulses" is that of Dr. I. A. Richards [*Principles of Literary Criticism*, 1924]. The old objection
to defining Value as Satisfaction is the universal value judgment that "it is better to be Socrates
dissatisfied than a pig satisfied." To meet this Dr. Richards endeavors to show that our impulses can
be arranged in a hierarchy and some satisfactions preferred to others without an appeal to any
criterion other than satisfaction. He does this by the doctrine that some impulses are more
"important" than others—an *important* impulse being one whose frustration involves the frustration
of other impulses. A good systematization (i.e., the good life) consists in satisfying as many impulses
as possible; which entails satisfying the "important" at the expense of the "unimportant" (106-7n2;
emphasis original).

Lewis goes on to briefly discuss two objections to Richards' argument. First, he says, "Without
a theory of immortality it leaves no room for the value of noble death" (107). Of course, the dead man will
get no satisfaction for any of his impulses. Second, he raises the question, "Is the value of a systematization
to be judged by the presence of satisfactions or the absence of dissatisfactions?" (108). He then introduces a
few scenarios in which the calculations could go in a variety of directions. Without a sound philosophical
basis for grounding any particular preference for a systematization of satisfactions and dissatisfactions,
Lewis concludes, "Dr. Richards's system gives no support to his (and our) actual preference for civil life
over savage and human over animal—or even for life over death" (109).

[73] Lewis, *Abolition*, 35.

Moreover, the voices of instinct are as cacophonous as the voices of people. Clearly not all of our instincts are in harmony but are often in conflict with one another. The Innovator claims that the instinct to preserve the species casts the deciding vote and should be obeyed at the expense of all the other instincts. But, what gives this particular instinct this special precedence? It is not sufficient that the instinct makes the claim for itself. Of course it would, and so would any other! This would be simply a case of special pleading. Lewis explains, "If we did not bring to the examination of our instincts a knowledge of their comparative dignity we could never learn it from them. And that knowledge cannot itself be instinctive: the judge cannot be one of the parties judged; or, if he is, the decision is worthless and there is no ground for placing the preservation of the species above self-preservation or sexual appetite."[74] The only way by which one could reasonably judge one instinct to be preferred over the others is by petitioning a higher court of appeal. Furthermore, it is useless to call a particular instinct "basic," "fundamental," "primal," or the "deepest," for such terms either beg the question by concealing a value judgment that has been applied *to* rather than derived *from* the instinct, or such words merely represent a reporting of the instinct's "felt intensity, the frequency of its operation and its wide distribution." But, all such observations or descriptions of one's experience of the instinct would lack any normative force.[75]

Finally, Lewis calls into question the claim that an instinct for the preservation of the species exists at all. He says he is unable to attest to having such an instinct himself.[76] Also, he doubts whether this "unreflective impulse to do anything at all about

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[74] Lewis, *Abolition*, 36.

[75] Lewis, *Abolition*, 37. In a note, Lewis assesses the pragmatic understanding of goodness or value defined in terms of mere fact, existence, or success. The context of Lewis' comments on this point are part of a critical analysis of the views of C. H. Waddington, *Science and Ethics* (1942). Lewis discusses the view that "Good = 'whatever Nature happens to be doing,'" and explains how this would require a consideration of what Nature *as a whole* is doing. Sadly Nature as a whole is "working steadily and irreversibly towards the final extinction of all life in every part of the universe . . . [and such a view of ethics] would leave murder and suicide our only duties" (110-11n3).

[76] Cf. Lewis: "For it is part of our spiritual law never to put survival first: not even the survival

the species" or even the idea of "posterity" ever occurs in anyone save those educated in

a particular way to reflect on such matters.[77] At most, we have a protective instinct to

preserve and provide for the livelihood of our children and grandchildren, but even this

natural impulse dissipates and finally vanishes altogether in the attempt to imagine future

generations. Whether parents ought to extend this regard beyond their children to their

future progeny cannot be determined by an appeal to instinct as a source of value. For

clearly maternal instinct (or mother love) surpasses any after the fact reflections and

choices regarding rational planning for the future. The Innovator seeks to elevate the

more dubious instinct for the preservation of the species at the expense of the more

obvious instinct for motherly love or paternal affection, which of course is rooted in the

Tao. Ironically, it is only for those who accept the *Tao* that this extension of the parental

instinct to concern for future generations might be justified.

Back to the *Tao*, or Natural Law

Thus far, the Innovator has sought to establish an alternative basis for a system

of values, turning to mere statements of fact or appealing to biological instinct. But,

Lewis claims, "None of the principles he requires are to be found there: but they are all to

be found somewhere else," that is in the *Tao*.[78] He proclaims,

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of our species. We must resolutely train ourselves to feel that the survival of Man on this Earth, much more of our own nation or culture or class, is not worth having unless it can be had by honorable and merciful means. . . . Nothing is more likely to destroy a species or a nation than a determination to survive at all costs. Those who care for something else more than civilization are the only people by whom civilization is at all likely to be preserved." C. S. Lewis, "On Living in an Atomic Age," in *Present Concerns: A Compelling Collection of Timely, Journalistic Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Fount, 1986; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002), 79-80.

[77] Lewis, *Abolition*, 37.

[78] Lewis, *Abolition*, 37. Once again, Lewis provides numerous examples from the *Tao* to illustrate his point. Each of these examples reflects a concern for the welfare of our fellow man, which could then be extended to the regard for the preservation of the species or posterity. He quotes Confucius as saying, "All within the four seas are his brothers." Confucius, *Analects* 12.5. The Stoic writes *Humani nihil a me alienum puto*, a shortening of a line from Terence which begins *Homos sum*, and in full is translated, "I am a man: nothing human is alien to me." Terence, *Heauton Timorumenos* [*The Self-Tormentor*] 1.1.25. Jesus states the Golden Rule: "Do as you would be done by" (Matt. 7:12). Finally, John Locke declares, "Humanity is to be preserved." John Locke, *Treatises of Civil Government*, 2.3.

All the practical principles behind the Innovator's case for posterity, or society, or the species, are there from time immemorial in the *Tao*. But they are nowhere else. Unless you accept these without question as being to the world of action what axioms are to the world of theory, you can have no practical principles whatever. You cannot reach them as conclusions: they are premises.[79]

Moreover, he argues, if one draws the conclusion that, lacking a prior reason to justify them, these principles are to be classified as sentiments, then one must abandon the distinction between "real" or "rational" value and sentimental value altogether for it would follow that all value would be sentimental. Yet, one may instead regard the principles as being rational, as axiomatic or self-evident in that they "neither demand nor admit proof."[80] In other words, they are "First Principles." If so, "then you must allow that Reason can be practical, that an *ought* must not be dismissed because it cannot produce some *is* as its credential. If nothing is self-evident, nothing can be proved. Similarly if nothing is obligatory for its own sake, nothing is obligatory at all."[81] Accordingly, all of the practical principles needed to establish a person's duty to others (society or the human race) have their source within the *Tao*.[82] These principles function as self-evident premises in our moral thinking, not conclusions of a rational argument derived from more basic premises. This is the difference between seeing these principles as *discoveries* as opposed to *deliverances* of human reason; the former are truths one simply "sees" based upon a kind of moral insight or intuition.[83] They are not reasoned *to*

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[79] Lewis, *Abolition*, 40. Cf. Lewis: "The ultimate ethical injunctions have always been premises, never conclusions. . . . Unless the ethical is assumed from the outset, no argument will bring you to it." C. S. Lewis, "On Ethics," in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper, 44-56 (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 55-56.

[80] Lewis, *Abolition*, 40.

[81] Lewis, *Abolition*, 40; emphasis original.

[82] Cf. Lewis' definition of duty, "On Ethics," 48: "An act of duty is an act of obedience to the moral law." Accordingly, the very concept of duty presupposes an existing, objective moral law.

[83] Elsewhere, Lewis distinguishes between *reason* and *conscience*, and their respective powers of *rational intuition* and *moral intuition*, both dependent upon axiomatic, self-evident principles or truths without which rationality and morality would be impossible. This distinction is explored further in chap. 5 below. See C. S. Lewis, "Why I Am Not a Pacifist," in *The Weight of Glory: And Other Addresses*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: Macmillan, 1949; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001).

but *from*; they are axiomatic. Therefore, all attempts to derive such principles from a source other than the *Tao* inevitably result in failure.

Robbing Peter to pay Paul. At this point, Lewis summarizes a number of related problems for the Innovator of values as follows:

> The Innovator attacks traditional values (the *Tao*) in defense of what he at first supposes to be (in some special sense) 'rational' or 'biological' values. But as we have seen, all the values which he uses in attacking the *Tao*, and even claims to be substituting for it, are themselves derived from the *Tao*. If he had really started from scratch, from right outside the human tradition of value, no jugglery could have advanced him an inch towards the conception that a man should die for the community or work for posterity. If the *Tao* falls, all his own conceptions of value fall with it. Not one of them can claim any authority other than that of the *Tao*. Only by such shreds of the *Tao* as he has inherited is he enabled even to attack it. The question therefore arises what title he has to select bits of it for acceptance and to reject others. For if the bits he rejects have no authority, neither have those he retains: if what he retains is valid, what he rejects is equally valid too.[84]

At least three critical points are noteworthy here. First, the Innovator's attempt to undermine traditional values ironically requires him to draw upon these same values in attacking their source. Second, the Innovator's so-called "rational" or "biological" values turn out not to be "new values" after all but only distorted remnants of the *Tao*. Finally, Lewis raises an important question regarding the Innovator's selection of values for acceptance or rejection. Upon what basis, and on what authority, does the Innovator, who has rejected the intrinsic authority of the *Tao*, choose what parts retain validity while denying validity to others that are rejected? It would seem the Innovator's choice in the end is arbitrary, inconsistent, and self-defeating.

To further illustrate the above problems, Lewis explains how the Innovator "is really deriving our duty to posterity from the *Tao*; our duty to do good to all men is an axiom of Practical Reason, and our duty to do good to our descendants is a clear deduction from it."[85] Historically, the duty to children and descendants has been coupled

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[84] Lewis, *Abolition*, 41.

[85] Lewis, *Abolition*, 42.

with the duty to parents and ancestors. The Innovator seeks to accentuate the former at

the expense of the latter. Or consider the Innovator who views mankind through the lens

of economic value, and thus believes that the ultimate end is to ensure people are fed and

clothed, what some might call economic or social justice. Lewis says concern for the

feeding and clothing of others is, of course, contained within the *Tao*, but so are other

duties of justice and good faith that serve as limiting principles in determining to what

extent and by what means people are to be fed and clothed. Unfortunately, it is these

latter principles that the Innovator is prepared to debunk. But, once again, upon what

objective basis and authority does the Innovator prioritize economic value over other

competing values?

> What is his warrant? He may be a Jingoist, a Racialist, an extreme nationalist, who
> maintains that the advancement of his own people is the object to which all else
> ought to yield. But no kind of factual observation and no appeal to instinct will give
> him a ground for this option. Once more, he is in fact deriving it from the *Tao*: a
> duty to our own kin, because they are our own kin, is a part of traditional morality.
> But side by side with it in the *Tao*, and limiting it, lie the inflexible demands of
> justice, and the rule that, in the long run, all men are our brothers.[86]

> Accordingly, Lewis sums up his position:

> This thing which I have called for convenience the *Tao*, and which others may call
> Natural Law or Traditional Morality or the First Principles of Practical Reason or
> the First Platitudes, is not one among a series of possible systems of value. It is the
> sole source of all value judgements. If it is rejected, all value is rejected. If any
> value is retained, it is retained. The effort to refute it and raise a new system of
> value in its place is self-contradictory. There has never been, and never will be, a
> radically new judgement of value in the history of the world. What purport to be
> new systems or (as they now call them) "ideologies," all consist of fragments from
> the *Tao* itself, arbitrarily wrenched from their context in the whole and then swollen
> to madness in their isolation, yet still owing to the *Tao* and to it alone such validity
> as they possess.[87]

In truth, those who seek to establish alternative value systems are only arbitrarily

selecting bits and pieces of the *Tao* at the expense of others, with no rational basis for

their choice. Such systems are by their very nature fragmented, and, removed from their

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[86] Lewis, *Abolition*, 42-43.

[87] Lewis, *Abolition*, 43-44.

proper context, the fragments become exaggerated, distorted, and elevated to a particular priority or moral status that is unwarranted.[88] He describes the effort overall as a futile "rebellion of the branches against the tree: if the rebels could succeed they would find that they had destroyed themselves. The human mind has no more power of inventing a new value than of imagining a new primary color, or, indeed, of creating a new sun and a new sky for it to move in."[89]

      Moral progress or stagnation? Lewis anticipates an objection to his argument in the accusation that his position allows no room for moral progress. If an objective, unchanging code of morality has been once and for all established for mankind, then are we not forever in bondage to a moral stagnation of the past, unfree to make moral improvements in the present or future given changes to humanity and human society? Moreover, considering the various expressions of the Tao throughout time, from a vast array of religions, philosophies, and cultures, surely these contain contradictions and even absurdities in their competing moral claims. So, how can one legitimately speak of obeying the Tao, as if any single, homogeneous expression of it exists?

      In response, Lewis acknowledges that some work must be done, which includes: "Some criticism, some removal of contradictions, even some real development."[90] However, he makes an important distinction between two general types of criticism. He distinguishes between "alteration from within and alteration from without: between the organic and the surgical."[91] In fact, the *Tao* permits development

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[88] For example, Lewis states, "If justice is a superstition, then so is my duty to my country or my race. If the pursuit of scientific knowledge is a real value, then so is conjugal fidelity." Lewis, *Abolition*, 44.

[89] Lewis, *Abolition*, 44. Cf. Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 73.

[90] Lewis, *Abolition*, 45.

[91] Lewis, *Abolition*, 45. To clarify this distinction, Lewis uses an example of the difference between a theorist about language and a great poet in how each might approach his "native tongue." On the one hand, the linguist may choose to approach his native tongue from the outside, "regarding its genius as a thing that has no claim on him and advocating wholesale alterations of its idiom and spelling in the

and alteration from *within*. For Lewis, this development or improvement refers to "progress in our *perceptions* of value."[92] Any improvement, development, or alteration made is not actually made upon the *Tao* itself but rather to our faulty *perceptions* of the *Tao*. The *Tao* is intrinsically perfect, complete, and unchanging, but our perceptions of it over time admit of error, distortion, and misinterpretation. Thus, he speaks of the "difference between a real moral advance and a mere innovation."[93] An example of the former would be the development from the negatively stated Confucian "Do not do to others what you would not like them to do to you" to the positively stated Christian "Do as you would be done by." This is real moral advance or progress. By contrast, Lewis says, "The morality of Nietzsche is a mere innovation."[94] Lewis explains the profound difference:

> The first is an advance because no one who did not admit the validity of the old maxim could see reason for accepting the new one, and anyone who accepted the old would at once recognize the new as an extension of the same principle. . . . But the Nietzschean ethic can be accepted only if we are ready to scrap traditional morals as a mere error and then to put ourselves in a position where we can find no ground for any value judgements at all.[95]

Thus, in some sense the changes made from within are logical or natural extensions of principles that have already been accepted, whereas those made from without represent attempts to cut something new from whole cloth, to start utterly from scratch.[96] Consider

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interests of commercial convenience or scientific accuracy." By contrast, "a great poet, who has 'loved, and been well nurtured in, his mother tongue,' may also make great alterations in it, but his changes of the language are made in the spirt of the language itself: he works from within. The language which suffers, has also inspired the changes." Lewis, *Abolition*, 45.

[92] Lewis, *Abolition*, 44; emphasis added.

[93] Lewis, *Abolition*, 45-46.

[94] Lewis, *Abolition*, 46.

[95] He further says, "It is the difference between a man who says to us: 'You like your vegetables moderately fresh; why not grow your own and have them perfectly fresh?' and a man who says, 'Throw away that loaf and try eating bricks and centipedes instead.'" Lewis, *Abolition*, 46.

[96] Cf. Lewis on change and progress: "For change is not progress unless the core remains unchanged. A small oak grows into a big oak: if it became a beech, that would not be growth, but mere change. . . . In other words, wherever there is real progress in knowledge, there is some knowledge that is not superseded. Indeed, the very possibility of progress demands that there should be an unchanging element." C. S. Lewis, "Dogma and the Universe," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed.

the various Confucian expressions Lewis uses thus far. First, in opening this chapter, "It is upon the Trunk that a gentleman works." Second, opening the book as a whole, "The Master said, He who sets to work on a different strand destroys the whole fabric." And, lastly, once again from this chapter, "With those who follow a different Way it is useless to take counsel."[97] In each case, the central idea is that work is to be done from within the *Tao*, and only this kind of work is viable and valid. Since the "trunk" or "fabric" or "Way" is intrinsically rational and moral, to depart from the *Tao* means to exchange this source for what is inherently nonrational and nonmoral.

Lewis begins to speak in somewhat esoteric terms when further describing what this work from within amounts to in actual practice. He describes those who "understand the spirit of the *Tao*" and how those "led by that spirit can modify it in directions which that spirit itself demands. Only they can know what those directions are. The outsider knows nothing about the matter."[98] Nevertheless, his point is clear that only those who are operating from within have a sufficient understanding and experience for improvisation, whereas outsiders simply lack the requisite qualifications for doing so. The Innovator as outsider has no solid ground upon which to stand to make the desired innovations without engaging in special pleading and various inconsistencies.[99] Thus, according to Lewis,

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Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 45. Likewise, moral progress must always be understood in terms of a society's moral status relative to the *Tao*. Far from being undermined by the *Tao*, the very notion of moral progress necessarily depends upon the *Tao*.

[97] Lewis, *Abolition*, 47. These three expressions are taken from Confucius' *Analects* 1.2, 2.16, and 15.39, respectively. Regarding the first expression, the full statement in the *Analects* is the following: "It is upon the Trunk that a gentleman works. When that is firmly set up, the Way grows." In other words, to "work" upon the trunk means to nurture it, to cultivate it, preparing it for the growth of "the Way," or the *Tao*.

[98] Lewis, *Abolition*, 47.

[99] Lewis explains, "So far from being able to harmonize discrepancies in its letter by penetration to its spirit, he merely snatches at some one precept, on which the accidents of time and space happen to have riveted his attention, and then rides it to death—for no reason that he can give." Lewis, *Abolition*, 47. Lewis refers to Aristotle's claim that it is useless for the corrupt man, as opposed to the well brought up man, to study ethics (referring to Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1095b; 1140b; 1151a). What seems to be of importance is the insider has real insight the outsider lacks.

From within the *Tao* itself comes the only authority to modify the *Tao*. . . . An open mind, in questions that are not ultimate, is useful. But an open mind about the ultimate foundations either of Theoretical or of Practical Reason is idiocy. If a man's mind is open on these things, let his mouth at least be shut. He can say nothing to the purpose. Outside the *Tao* there is no ground for criticizing either the *Tao* or anything else.[100]

A smuggled argument for theism? Another challenge Lewis expects from his more skeptically inclined readers' is that he has simply smuggled in, cloaked in philosophical language, "an indirect argument for Theism."[101] And although elsewhere Lewis makes a rigorous moral argument for theism, here he emphasizes this is not the intention of this work.[102] He leaves open the issue of whether or not the position he is defending implies a supernatural origin of the *Tao*. Once again, he makes it abundantly clear elsewhere that he believes the *Tao*, or the moral law, is grounded in the very nature of God. For now, he sets aside the complex theological question in order to draw one's attention to the more direct and immediate awareness of the *Tao*.[103] This should not be

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[100] Lewis, *Abolition*, 47. Lewis acknowledges the difficulty of making these sorts of internal modifications in particular instances. It is not always easily cut and dry to determine "where the legitimate internal criticism ends and the fatal external kind begins" (48). But, it is clear the moral reformer (as opposed to the Innovator) shows a commitment to the *Tao* and is willing to be corrected by it, rather than seeking to undermine it or challenging the *Tao* to prove its own validity and authority. Lewis explains the insolent fallaciousness involved in the latter approach: "If you persist in that kind of trial you will destroy all values, and so destroy the bases of your own criticism as well as the thing criticized. You must not hold a pistol to the head of the *Tao*" (48-49).

[101] Lewis, *Abolition*, 49.

[102] Cf. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, especially bk. 1, chaps. 1-5.

[103] Lewis explains in a letter, "I abstained from all this in the *Abolition* because I was there trying to write ethics, not theology." C. S. Lewis to Clyde S. Kilby, January 11, 1961, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 3, *Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy 1950-1963*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 1227. We find an interesting parallel to this distinction between writing ethics and writing theology in Lewis' discussion of Chalcidius and Boethius in the *Discarded Image*, 49-60, 75-91, respectively. Lewis explains, "For the rest, I think Chalcidius is a Christian, writing philosophically. What he accepted as matters of faith were excluded, as matters of faith, from his thesis. Biblical writers might therefore appear in his work as eminent authors to be taken into account like any other eminent authors, but not treated as the 'oracles of God.' That would have been contrary to the rules of his art" (51). He makes a similar assessment of Boethius and why his book, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, focused more on philosophical rather than religious consolations: "[H]e congratulates himself on having reached conclusions acceptable to Christianity from purely philosophical premises—as the rules of art demanded" (77-78). Furthermore, Lewis' answer as to why Boethius chose to limit himself in such a way also helps explain why Lewis had no problems drawing upon a concept like the *Tao* to express his views. He writes,

But why, we may ask, did a Christian author impose upon himself this limitation? Partly, no doubt, because he knew where his true talent lay. But we can suggest another, and probably no less conscious, motive. The distinction between Christian and Pagan can hardly, at that moment, have been more vividly present to his emotions than that between Roman and barbarian; especially since

problematic, Lewis thinks, since before any of us knew how our minds were made, "we accepted this mental furniture as a datum, even as a master."[104] Thus, in the spirit of Socrates, Lewis is simply asking his modern readers to be willing to follow the evidence wherever it leads.[105]

"Better to Reign in Hell . . ."

Lewis now responds to the following riposte from an imagined modernist opponent: "But many things in nature which were once our masters have become our servants. Why not this? Why must our conquest of nature stop short, in stupid reverence, before this final and toughest bit of 'nature' which has hitherto been called the conscience of man?"[106] Hence, Lewis issues a serious warning concerning one possible

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the barbarian was also a heretic. Catholic Christendom and that high Pagan past to which he felt so deep a loyalty were united in his outlook by their common contrast to Theodoric and his huge, fair-skinned, beer-drinking, boasting thanes. This was no time for stressing whatever divided him from Virgil, Seneca, Plato, and the old Republican heroes. He would have been robbed of half his comfort if he had chosen a theme which forced him to point out where the great ancient masters had been wrong; he preferred one that enabled him to feel how nearly they had been right, to think of them not as "they" but as "we" (78-79).

Similarly, the unifying aspects of the traditional principles of the *Tao* among the varying religious and philosophical traditions made for a common cause against the anti-traditional views of modernism and progressivism.

Elsewhere, Lewis is careful to distinguish between natural and supernatural ends: "It would have been out of place here to say what I believe about Man's supernatural end or to explain why I think the natural end should be pursued although, in isolation from the supernatural, it cannot be fully realized." Lewis, "Our English Syllabus," 23n*a*. That said, he also writes, "[T]he Tao (as such) says nothing about the object to which it would be the right response. . . . But from the degree of respect which the Tao demands for ancestors, parents, elders, & teachers, it is quite clear what the Tao *would* prescribe towards an object such as God." C. S. Lewis to Sheldon Vanauken, December 23, 1950, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 3, *Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy 1950-1963*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 76; emphasis original. For further discussion, see Judith Wolfe, "Theology in *The Abolition of Man*," in *Contemporary Perspectives on C. S. Lewis' Abolition of Man: History, Philosophy, Education, and Science*, ed. Gayne John Anacker and Timothy M. Mosteller (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).

[104] Lewis, *Abolition*, 50.

[105] Earlier Lewis employs the Greek expression ἐν δέ φάει καί 'ὄλεσσον, which translates as "Kill us in broad daylight!" and is drawn from Homer, *Iliad* 17. Lewis, *Abolition*, 27. Smilde explains, "The idea of accepting death rather than evading manifest truth is related, as a more dramatic variant, to what Lewis elsewhere commended as a Socratic principle—'Follow the argument wherever it leads.'" Smilde, "Quotations and Allusions in C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*." Cf. Plato, *Phaedo* 95b.

[106] Lewis, *Abolition*, 50. Somewhat surprisingly, this is the first instance in the book where Lewis explicitly refers to the *conscience*. I say *surprisingly* because one might expect, given Lewis' extensive discussion of the *Tao*, moral sentiments and sensibilities, etc., that he would have made an appeal much earlier to the very faculty most people would associate with our moral sense.

reaction to his argument as a whole: some might accept defeat and still choose to reject

the teaching of the *Tao* altogether. He continues in the voice of his invented interlocutor:

> You say we shall have no values at all if we step outside of the *Tao*. Very well: we shall probably find that we can get on quite comfortably without them. Let us regard all ideas of what we *ought* to do simply as an interesting psychological survival: let us step right out of all that and start doing what we like. Let us decide for ourselves what man is to be and make him into that: not on any ground of imagined value, but because we want him to be such. Having mastered our environment, let us now master ourselves and choose our own destiny.[107]

In this case, the recourse would be to abandon objective value claims and systems

altogether in preference for acting upon sheer will or desire for choosing what man will

like and be like. This move would of course enable the Innovator to escape the charge of

self-contradiction since the Innovator would no longer be attempting to discover the

"real" basis of values or confusedly propping up parts of the *Tao* at the expense of others.

He would now be the creator of values. What we have here is the apogee of moral

innovation: the "rejection of the concept of value altogether."[108] In the final chapter of

the book Lewis explains the disastrous consequences of this new mindset.

"The Abolition of Man"

Lewis opens his final chapter with an eerie quotation from John Bunyan's

Pilgrim's Progress: "It came burning hot into my mind, whatever he said and however he

flattered, when he got me home to his house, he would sell me for a slave."[109] This

disconcerting sentiment sets the tone for what Lewis portends to be the future

enslavement and eventual destruction of humanity should it proceed on the modernist

trajectory of abandoning the *Tao*.

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[107] Lewis, *Abolition*, 51.

[108] Lewis, *Abolition*, 51.

[109] Lewis, *Abolition*, 53. Lewis cites this same quotation in his essay "The Humanitarian Theory of Punishment" where he expresses concerns similar to those in this final chapter of *Abolition*. See C. S. Lewis, "The Humanitarian Theory of Punishment," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 294; John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, ed. James Blanton Wharey and Roger Sharrock, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), pt. 1, 70.

Man's Conquest of Nature

Lewis begins with a discussion of applied science and an examination of an expression frequently used in connection with scientific progress: "Man's conquest of Nature." Commenting on how he once heard someone communicate to a friend that "Man has Nature whacked," he further explains how the context of this statement provided the words with a "certain tragic beauty," especially due to the fact that the speaker was at the time dying of tuberculosis. The dying man went on to say, "No matter . . . I know I'm one of the casualties. Of course there are casualties on the winning as well as on the losing side. But that doesn't alter the fact that it is winning."[110] By sharing this account, Lewis preemptively answers a number of his detractors, who might charge him with taking a low view of the scientific enterprise and its great successes, especially in the area of medicine.[111] At the same time, he raises the central question of this chapter: "In what sense is Man the possessor of increasing power over Nature?"[112]

Lewis provides three "typical examples" of how humans have gained and utilized their power and control of Nature for certain human ends: "the aeroplane, the wireless, and the contraceptive."[113] On the surface, it would appear the accessibility to such technologies within "a civilized community, in peace-time" by "anyone who can pay for them" demonstrates the power individuals are capable of exercising over nature. But, Lewis explains,

> Any or all of the three things . . . can be withheld from some men by other men—by those who sell, or those who allow the sale, or those who own the sources of

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[110] Lewis, *Abolition*, 53.

[111] For example, see J. B. S. Haldane, "'Auld Hornie,' F. R. S.," *Modern Quarterly*, N. S., vol. 1, no. 4 (Autumn 1946). Haldane criticizes Lewis' science-fiction trilogy for attacking science. Although not published at the time, Lewis wrote a response to Haldane in C. S. Lewis, "A Reply to Professor Haldane," in *Of Other Worlds: Essays and Stories*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1966; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002). In this essay, Lewis retorts he is not attacking science itself or scientists but the corruption of real science in the form of what he calls *scientism* (76-77). Lewis' critique of scientism is discussed further in chap. 4 below.

[112] Lewis, *Abolition*, 53-54.

[113] Lewis, *Abolition*, 54.

production, or those who make the goods. What we call Man's power is, in reality, a power possessed by some men which they may, or may not, allow other men to profit by. Again, as regards the powers manifested in the aeroplane or the wireless, Man is as much the patient or subject as the possessor, since he is the target both for bombs and for propaganda. And as regards contraceptives, there is a paradoxical, negative sense in which all possible future generations are the patients or subjects of a power wielded by those already alive. By contraception simply, they are denied existence; by contraception used as a means of selective breeding, they are, without their concurring voice, made to be what one generation, for its own reasons, may choose to prefer. From this point of view, what we call Man's power over Nature turns out to be a power exercised by some men over other men with Nature as its instrument.[114]

Thus, Lewis argues the reality has been an increasingly limited power for the individual that is correlative with an enormous abdication of power to certain select groups of individuals who use or manipulate nature as an instrument for exerting power or control over others.

Lewis proceeds to show how "Man's conquest of Nature," despite its claims to progress, has actually led to the regress of humanity. Each step in the domination of nature has enabled the control of some men over others, who are weakened in the process. As such, his primary concern is with "what the thing called 'Man's power over Nature' must always and essentially be."[115] To clarify the problematic essence of this endeavor, he speaks of the importance of including the concept of *time* in one's calculation, a factor the social critics have not quite learned sufficiently from the work of the physicists. One must not only consider this or that individual human being in the present but go on to imagine the entire human race "extended in time from the date of its

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[114] Lewis, *Abolition*, 54-55. As will be seen in later chapters, Lewis expresses several concerns here that Adorno-Horkheimer also share, though they would not completely agree with Lewis' assessment of the problems and the needed solution(s). Generally speaking, Adorno-Horkheimer would agree with Lewis regarding the harmful effects on human beings resulting from disparities of power, resources, and wealth within society. However, as neo-Marxists they view the matter primarily in socio-economic terms, whereas Lewis frames the issue more so in theologico-ethical terms.

[115] Lewis, *Abolition*, 55. In somewhat of an aside, Lewis also describes one possible way of seeking to rectify the situation, one with which Adorno-Horkheimer would probably agree (given certain qualifications), involving a sort of communistic redistribution of wealth and the public ownership of all means of production and scientific research. "But," he explains, "unless we have a world state this will mean the power of one nation over others. And even within the world state or the nation it will mean (in principle) the power of majorities over minorities, and (in the concrete) of a government over the people" (55-56). Hence, in this logically concise assessment, Lewis shows how such a proposal would lead us straight to a form of totalitarianism: government *over the people*, not *by the people*.

emergence to that of its extinction."[116] With this in mind, Lewis explains, "This modifies

the picture which is sometimes painted of a progressive emancipation from tradition and

a progressive control of natural processes resulting in a continual increase of human

power."[117] In fact, the minimization of power, and one could add influence, commences

and works in two directions, in relation to our predecessors as well as our successors.

Our predecessors increasingly lose influence over their progeny as they are cut off from

their inheritance—tradition and heritage, be it religious, cultural, environmental, or

otherwise. Moreover, as each generation exercises more power over its successors, what

looks like an emancipation from traditional and religious oppression really becomes

another kind of tyranny—a tyranny over *human* nature. This tyranny manifests itself

through forms of eugenics and scientific education (more accurately, propaganda).

Humanity is no longer free to develop and interact organically with its inheritance from

the past, to operate as an insider with the proper understanding an experience to modify

or make alterations to its development from within. Instead, severed from its past social,

political, and religious history, norms, and values, humanity is left to the determination of

those possessing the power to mold human nature into whatever shape or form they

please. Consequently, as each successive generation shrinks in size, approaching the

point of extinction, human nature becomes weaker in the process; the power diminishes

as those in the grip of power diminish: "The last men, far from being the heirs of power,

will be of all men most subject to the dead hand of the great planners and conditioners

and will themselves exercise least power upon the future."[118]

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[116] Lewis, *Abolition*, 56.

[117] Lewis, *Abolition*, 56.

[118] Lewis, *Abolition*, 58.

Nature's Conquest of Man

The grim picture Lewis paints is a complete reversal of the one hoped for by the naively optimistic modernist or progressivist. Along this trajectory, human nature is not advancing, progressing, or flourishing; quite the contrary, it is slowly and gradually dying, physically, morally, and spiritually. Lewis presages what this will look like for humanity in the distant future:

> The real picture is that of one dominant age—let us suppose the hundredth century A.D.—which resists all previous ages most successfully and dominates all subsequent ages most irresistibly, and thus is the real master of the human species. But then within this master generation . . . the power will be exercised by a minority even smaller still. Man's conquest of Nature, if the dreams of some scientific planners are realized, means the rule of a few hundreds of men over billions upon billions of men. There neither is nor can be any simple increase of power on Man's side. Each new power won *by* man is a power *over* man as well. Each advance leaves him weaker as well as stronger.[119]

Although Lewis projects this process far into the future, in truth he believes the "final stage" may be closer to the present. Either way, the final stage in the conquest over nature "is come when Man by eugenics, by pre-natal conditioning, and by an education and propaganda based on a perfect applied psychology, has obtained full control over himself. *Human* nature will be the last part of Nature to surrender to Man. The battle will be won."[120]

Social conditioning/engineering of humanity. But, won by whom, Lewis asks? He answers: the group of men who acquire power "to make other men what *they* please."[121] These power-wielders over society are diversely referred to as the Controllers or Conditioners, and as the "man-molders of the new age . . . armed with the powers of an omnicompetent state and an irresistible scientific technique."[122] Of course, in one sense,

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[119] Lewis, *Abolition*, 58; emphasis original.

[120] Lewis, *Abolition*, 59; emphasis original.

[121] Lewis, *Abolition*, 59; emphasis original.

[122] Lewis, *Abolition*, 60.

every generation has exercised a degree of power over its successor, shaping and influencing humanity's development throughout time.[123] However, in this case, the situation is novel in that, not only is the power exercised by the Controllers over the controlled incomparably greater, but, even more significant, the Controllers have stepped outside of the *Tao*. Lewis explains,

> Values are now mere natural phenomena. Judgements of value are to be produced in the pupil as part of the conditioning. Whatever *Tao* there is will be the product, not the motive, of education. The conditioners have been emancipated from all that. It is one more part of Nature which they have conquered. . . . They know how to *produce* conscience and decide what kind of conscience they will produce. They themselves are outside, above.[124]

The new morality represents the production of an artificial *Tao* and conscience. The Controllers are motivated primarily by their desires, and, as "motivators, the creators of motives," they in turn seek to inculcate their values based on these desires into the culture through mass propaganda.[125] Lewis envisions a process whereby the Controllers initially are motivated themselves by some carry-overs from the *Tao*, for example, a sense of a "duty" to humanity to do it "good."[126] But, in time the realization sets in that

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[123] Lucas comments,

> Lewis was particularly afraid of genetic engineering, and in this, again, he was prescient. We might take issue with him on some points. Not all genetic counselling and therapy need be manipulative. And some measure of control is not the same as complete control. We always have had some measure of control over future generations . . . . What frightened Lewis, and ought to frighten us, is the possibility that, by genetic engineering or social conditioning, we could program people to behave exactly as we pleased. For then they would not be people, beings other than ourselves with a mind of their own, but merely artefacts—things we could use, but not persons we could communicate with, share with, identify with, or care about. Lucas, "Restoration of Man."

For further reading on Lewis and bioethical issues see: Marin LaBar, "A World is Not Made to Last Forever: The Bioethics of C. S. Lewis," *JASA* 35 (June 1983): 104-7, http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1983/JASA6-83LaBar.html; Peter S. Williams, "*The Abolition of Man*: Reflections on Reductionism with Special Reference to Eugenics," *C. S. Lewis Society of California*, accessed May 2, 2020, http://www.lewissociety.org/abolition/; and Stephen A. Phillips, "Human Germline Genetic Enhancement and C. S. Lewis's *The Abolition of Man*," *Ethics & Medicine: An International Journal of Bioethics* 28, no. 2 (Summer 2012): 115-23, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

[124] Lewis, *Abolition*, 61; emphasis original. Consider Lewis' earlier distinction between education as *propagation* vs. *propaganda*.

[125] Lewis, *Abolition*, 61-62.

[126] However, elsewhere Lewis warns, "Where benevolent planning, armed with political or economic power, can become wicked is when it tramples on people's rights for the sake of their good." Lewis to Mrs. Halmbacher, January 1951, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 3, *Narnia,*

the very concepts of *duty* and *good* are no longer binding upon them as such concepts are a result of processes now under their control. These concepts are emptied of their older contents and filled with something entirely new: "Duty itself is up for trial: it cannot also be the judge. And 'good' fares no better. They know quite well how to produce a dozen different conceptions of good in us. The question is which, if any, they should produce. No conception of good can help them to decide."[127]

Lewis claims, anticipating his critics, that it is too simplistic to accuse him of describing these Controllers as "bad men." The situation is actually worse—the Controllers have ceased to be *men* in the "old sense" of the term. They have "sacrificed their own share in traditional humanity in order to devote themselves to the task of deciding what 'Humanity' shall henceforth mean." Evaluative terms like "good" and "bad" can no longer be applied to them since it is from them that "the content of these words is henceforward to be derived."[128] This reveals the radical, revolutionary character of the conquest Lewis has been describing thus far. The Controllers and their new subjects have now suffered a horrible fate: "They are not men at all. Stepping outside of the *Tao*, they have stepped into the void. . . . They are not men: they are artefacts. Man's final conquest has proved to be the abolition of Man."[129]

The fatal impulse. What then in the end motivates the Conditioners to act at all? Having abandoned the *Tao*, only one, non-question-begging motive remains for

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Cambridge, and Joy 1950-1963, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 92.

[127] Lewis, *Abolition*, 62-63. Some might charge Lewis with committing the slippery slope fallacy. However, commenting on famous people who denied the natural law, Lindskoog and Ellwood write, "One of those famous people is B. F. Skinner, who answers in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* that the abolition of the inner person and traditional morality is necessary so that science can prevent the abolition of the human race. Lewis had already exclaimed in *Abolition* . . . 'But why should the species be preserved?' Skinner does not provide an answer, but embraces Lewis's devious scientific 'Controllers' who aim to change and dehumanize the human race to fulfill their purposes more efficiently." Lindskoog and Ellwood, "C. S. Lewis: Natural Law, the Law in Our Hearts," 1061.

[128] Lewis, *Abolition*, 63.

[129] Lewis, *Abolition*, 64.

explaining the activities and choices of the Conditioners: the *sic volo*, *sic jubeo* impulse.

Lewis explains,

> Everything except the *sic volo*, *sic jubeo* has been explained away. But what never claimed objectivity cannot be destroyed by subjectivism. The impulse to scratch when I itch or to pull to pieces when I am inquisitive is immune from the solvent which is fatal to my justice, or honor, or care for posterity. When all that says "it is good" has been debunked, what says "I want" remains. . . . The Conditioners, therefore, must come to be motivated simply by their own pleasure. . . . My point is that those who stand outside all judgements of value cannot have any ground for preferring one of their own impulses to another except the emotional strength of that impulse.[130]

The desire for pleasure motivating those in power is itself the product of nature. Thus, ironically, the Conditioners have become subject to the forces of *mere nature* in the end. Moreover, one will not find any hope in the chance the Conditioners will be motivated by more benevolent impulses for their conditioned subjects, for this would require "re-entering the *Tao*" to make the judgment that "Benevolence is good." Instead, Lewis writes,

> By logic of their position they must just take their impulses as they come, from chance. And Chance here means Nature. It is from heredity, digestion, the weather, and the association of ideas, that the motives of the Conditioners will spring. Their *extreme rationalism*, by "seeing through" all "rational" motives, leaves them creatures of wholly irrational behavior.[131]

Consequently, Lewis summarizes the dreadful situation: "Nature, untrammeled by values, rules the Conditioners and, through them, all humanity. Man's conquest of Nature turns out, in the moment of its consummation, to be Nature's conquest of Man."[132]

Horrifically, man's attempt to harness the powers of nature in the name of progress, in

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[130] Lewis, *Abolition*, 65-66. *Sic volo, sic iubeo* is taken from Juvenal, *Satire* 6. The full saying is *Sic volo, sic iubeo; sit pro ratione voluntas*: "This I will, this I command: let [my] will take Reason's place."

[131] Lewis, *Abolition*, 67; emphasis added. Once again, the behavior or impulses Lewis describes would be more correctly called *nonrational* rather than *irrational*. Also, what Lewis terms "extreme rationalism," ironically results from Enlightenment rationalism's attempt to reduce all things ("seeing through") to forms of rationalization.

[132] Lewis, *Abolition*, 67-68. Lewis also describes in poetic form the reversal of man's conquest of nature only to then be conquered by her in the end. See C. S. Lewis, "Pan's Purge," in *Poems*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1964; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 1977).

defiance of the boundaries set by natural law, actually leads to nature's subjugation of humanity in the end.

The Magician's Bargain

Lewis extends his analysis to the term *Nature*, a word with a variety of meanings, and thus one that should be considered in light of its opposites.[133] He explains,

> Nature seems to be the spatial and temporal, as distinct from what is less fully so or not so at all. She seems to be the world of quantity, as against the world of quality; of objects as against consciousness; of the bound, as against the wholly or partially autonomous; of that which knows no values as against that which both has and perceives value; of efficient causes (or, in some modern systems, of no causality at all) as against final causes.[134]

Accordingly, people have traditionally maintained a dualistic distinction between the world of quantity (i.e., nature) and the world of quality (i.e., nature's opposites: the civil, human, spiritual, supernatural). However, Lewis describes an analytical process by which the world of quality becomes swallowed up by the world of quantity, or reduced to "mere Nature." He explains,

> Now I take it that when we understand a thing analytically and then dominate and use it for our own convenience, we reduce it to the level of "Nature" in the sense that we suspend our judgements of value about it, ignore its final cause (if any), and treat it in terms of quantity. This repression of elements in what would otherwise be our total reaction to it is sometimes very noticeable and painful: something has to be overcome before we can cut up a dead man or a live animal in a dissecting room. These objects *resist* the movement of the mind whereby we thrust them into the world of mere Nature.[135]

Thus, nature is stripped of any intrinsic value or purpose (quality) and is reduced to what can be scientifically measured and calculated (quantity). Any surviving remnants of our former response to the qualitative aspects of nature must be repressed, or overcome in order to dominate and use nature for our human ends. The result is a disenchantment of

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[133] Lewis, *Abolition*, 68-69.

[134] Lewis, *Abolition*, 69.

[135] Lewis, *Abolition*, 69-70; emphasis original. Cf. Lewis on reductionism and nature in Lewis, *English Literature*, 3-4. This is discussed further in chap. 4 below.

nature, making it a mere object for human manipulation. The reductionistic process

depends upon the successful demythologization of nature for the growth of our analytical

knowledge of and increased power over nature.[136] But, for Lewis, the reduction of nature

to its mere quantitative elements comes at a great cost: the very reality of the natural

world is called into question. Speaking of the "greatest of modern scientists," he says,

"The great minds know very well that the object, so treated, is an artificial abstraction,

that something of its reality has been lost."[137] In other words, what remains of this

process is not the "real world" minus its mythical attributions, but a mere abstraction of

the human mind. "Nature" is what conforms to the human mind as the object of its

domination; what is not assimilated to the human mind is not accounted as real at all. In

addition, the more successful this domination of nature, the more things are treated as

mere objects of nature, and the more ground is given up to nature. As Lewis explains,

"Every conquest over Nature increases her domain. The stars do not become Nature till

we can weigh and measure them: the soul does not become Nature till we can

psychoanalyze her. The wresting of powers *from* Nature is also the surrendering of

things *to* Nature."[138]

Lewis' main concern, however, is the extension of this domination of nature to

human nature. He argues, "as soon as we take the final step of reducing our own species

to the level of mere Nature, the whole process is stultified, for this time the being who

stood to gain and the being who has been sacrificed are one and the same. This is one of

the many instances where to carry a principle to what seems its logical conclusion

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[136] On the eradication of the mythical elements within nature, Lewis writes, "We do not look at trees either as Dryads or as beautiful objects while we cut them into beams: . . . . The stars lost their divinity as astronomy developed, and the Dying God has no place in chemical agriculture. To many, no doubt, this process is simply the gradual discovery that the real world is different from what we expected, and the old opposition to Galileo or to 'body-snatchers' is simply obscurantism." Lewis, *Abolition*, 70.

[137] Lewis, *Abolition*, 70-71.

[138] Lewis, *Abolition*, 71; emphasis original.

produces absurdity."[139] Lewis refers to this transaction as "the magician's bargain," in which the human soul is exchanged or sacrificed for the promise of power. However, by bartering away the soul in this exchange, any power received does not belong to humanity in the end: "We shall in fact be the slaves and the puppets of that to which we have given our souls."[140]

Thus, Lewis warns the final stage of the disenchantment of nature involves the complete objectification of human nature, in which man treats "himself as a mere 'natural object' and his own judgments of value as raw material for scientific manipulation to alter at will." Lewis' primary objection to such a move "is that if man chooses to treat himself as raw material, raw material he will be: not raw material to be manipulated, as he fondly imagined, by himself, but by mere appetite, that is, mere Nature, in the person of his de-humanized Conditioners."[141] In the end, it will not be the individual human subject who has the control to remake him/herself into whatever he/she pleases. Instead, any and all remaking will be according to the mere appetite of the Conditioners, that is mere nature.

Apart from suicide, Lewis sees only two options left before us: "Either we are rational spirit obliged for ever to obey the absolute values of the *Tao*, or else we are mere nature to be kneaded and cut into new shapes for the pleasures of masters who must, by hypothesis, have no motive but their own 'natural' impulses."[142] For Lewis, the solution requires a return to traditional morality. He explains, "Only the *Tao* provides a common

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[139] Lewis, *Abolition*, 71-72. Lewis compares this absurdity to an account of a famous Irishman who discovered that a particular kind of stove cut his fuel costs by half. Based on this mathematical calculation, he determined having two of the same stove would therefore enable him to heat his home at zero cost!

[140] Lewis, *Abolition*, 72. Cf. Mark 8:36-37 (ESV): "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul?"

[141] Lewis, *Abolition*, 72-73.

[142] Lewis, *Abolition*, 73; cf. 67.

human law of action which can over-arch rulers and ruled alike. A dogmatic belief in objective value is necessary to the very idea of a rule which is not tyranny or an obedience which is not slavery."[143] Otherwise, apart from the *Tao*, the mere goal of human survival can only lead to humanity's self-destruction.[144] Thus, the *Tao* is foundational to the preservation of humanity and the prevention of the reduction of man to a mere abstraction. He writes,

> In the *Tao* itself, as long as we remain within it, we find the concrete reality in which to participate is to be truly human: the real common will and common reason of humanity, alive, and growing like a tree, branching out, as the situation varies, into ever new beauties and dignities of application. While we speak from within the *Tao* we can speak of Man having power over himself in a sense truly analogous to an individual's self-control. But the moment we step outside and regard the *Tao* as a mere subjective product, this possibility has disappeared. What is now common to all men is a mere abstract universal, an H.C.F., and Man's conquest of himself means simply the rule of the Conditioners over the conditioned human material, the world of post-humanity which, some knowingly and some unknowingly, nearly all men in all nations are at present laboring to produce.[145]

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[143] Lewis, *Abolition*, 73. Compare Lewis on "common human law" to his discussion of "common man" or "common men" elsewhere: "Our Courts, I agree, 'have traditionally represented the common man and the common man's view of morality.' . . . It is true that we must extend the term 'common man' to cover Locke, Grotius, Hooker, Poynet, Aquinas, Justinian, the Stoics, and Aristotle, but I have no objection to that; in one most important, and to me glorious, sense they were all common men. But that whole tradition is tied up with ideas of free-will, responsibility, rights, and the law of nature." C. S. Lewis, "On Punishment: A Reply to Criticism," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 299. As well, in a footnote, Lewis references *Abolition*, and especially the book's appendix, as support for his notion of "common men."

[144] Moreover, Lewis does not think this temptation to remake humanity is unique to one particular ideological, social, or political movement. Whether Democrat, Communist, Fascist, or Nazi, the "process which, if not checked, will abolish Man" operates the same: "Traditional values are to be 'debunked' and mankind to be cut out into some fresh shape at the will (which must, by hypothesis, be an arbitrary will) of some few lucky people in one lucky generation which has learned how to do it." Lewis, *Abolition*, 73-74. Significantly, Lewis also discusses the affect this has on human language. He writes,

> The belief that we can invent "ideologies" at pleasure, and the consequent treatment of mankind as mere ὕλη, specimens, preparations, begins to affect our very language. Once we killed bad men: now we liquidate unsocial elements. Virtue has become *integration* and diligence *dynamism*, and boys likely to be worthy of a commission are "potential officer material." Most wonderful of all, the virtues of thrift and temperance, and even of ordinary intelligence, are *sales-resistance* (74; emphasis original).

[145] Lewis, *Abolition*, 74-75. H.C.F. stands for Highest Common Factor. Notice within the *Tao* there is room for continued growth and adaptation of human nature to new situations and contexts as they develop over time. Moreover, it is by remaining within the concrete reality of the *Tao* that humanity's concreteness is preserved and man is prevented from becoming reduced to a pure abstraction—an empty, formal universal with no concrete material content, only raw material to be manipulated at will.

The Magician's Twin

Once again, Lewis expects his detractors to accuse him of attacking science, but he denies the charge adding that "real Natural Philosophers" would understand his defense of value entails a defense of "the value of knowledge, which must die like every other when its roots in the *Tao* are cut."[146] Even more, he suggests science might produce the cure. But, in order to highlight how science might contribute to the solution, he first addresses the problematic familial relationship between magic and science.

Magic and science. Lewis discusses the historically entangled relationship between magic and science, with which many are unfamiliar. In the popular mind, the apparent success of science in contrast with the failure of the magician has clouded the historical origins of science. Although certain modern writers about the sixteenth century make it seem like "Magic were a medieval survival and Science the new thing that came in to sweep it away," the fact is "the high noon of magic" was in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, not the Middle Ages.[147]

Moreover, he continues, "The serious magical endeavor and the serious scientific endeavor are twins. . . . They were born of the same impulse."[148] Indeed, science eventually outpaced magic, but this only blurs their relationship. He further explains the family resemblance:

> For the wise men of old the cardinal problem had been how to conform the soul to reality, and the solution had been knowledge, self-discipline, and virtue. For magic and applied science alike the problem is how to subdue reality to the wishes of men: the solution is a technique; and both, in the practice of this technique, are ready to do things hitherto regarded as disgusting and impious—such as digging up and mutilating the dead.[149]

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[146] Lewis, *Abolition*, 75-76.

[147] Lewis, *Abolition*, 76.

[148] Lewis, *Abolition*, 76.

[149] Lewis, *Abolition*, 77. Cf. Lewis to Douglas Bush, March 28, 1941, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 2, *Books, Broadcasts, and the War, 1931-1949*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 475. To further illustrate his point, Lewis compares the mindset of Francis Bacon with Christopher Marlowe's character, Dr. Faustus. In both, Lewis argues, knowledge was not pursued

Lewis acknowledges the founders of modern science were greater lovers of truth than of power, and that the good rather than the bad elements are to be credited for science's increased efficacy. However, he says overtime the presence of the bad elements can impact "the direction the efficacy takes."[150] Regarding the origins of the modern scientific movement, he stops short of saying its defects were congenital, "tainted from its birth." But, he does think "it was born in an unhealthy neighborhood and at an inauspicious hour. Its triumphs may have been too rapid and purchased at too high a price: reconsideration, and something like repentance, may be required."[151]

A regenerate science? Speaking of repentance, Lewis considers how science might be regenerated and actually underwrite the cure for the modern predicament. He raises the possibility of a new *natural philosophy*, one which is "continually conscious that the 'natural object' produced by analysis and abstraction is not reality but only a view, and always correcting the abstraction."[152] Though he admits he is not sure what exactly he has in mind, he describes in general outline this new approach to science. This new natural philosophy, or regenerate science, would operate with greater safeguards in its treatment of natural objects, but especially human subjects. It would recognize the limited nature of its explanations and not seek to explain away what fails to fall under its scientific purview. The safeguards would be provided by the *Tao* recognized in human conscience, whose authority would likewise be respected and not reduced to *merely* or

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for its own sake but as a means of extending "Man's power to the performance of all things possible. [Bacon] rejects magic because it does not work; but his goal is that of the magician. In Paracelsus the characters of magician and scientist are combined." Lewis, *Abolition*, 78. Marlowe's Faust legend would later be given a modern adaptation and retold in Thomas Mann's final novel, *Doctor Faustus: The Life of the German Composer Adrian Leverkühn, as Told by a Friend*, which was started in 1943 and published in 1947. The book was informed by the events of WWII. Interestingly enough Mann was a close friend of Adorno-Horkheimer. Compare Lewis on Bacon, magicians, and their shared pursuit of knowledge for the sake of power in Lewis, *English Literature*, 13-14.

[150] Lewis, *Abolition*, 78.

[151] Lewis, *Abolition*, 78.

[152] Lewis, *Abolition*, 78-79.

only instinct. In exercising a legitimate control over nature, science would regard the

parts as well as the whole. Moreover, it would maintain the *Thou* (subject) and *It* (object)

distinction, thus avoiding the sacrifice of human life for gains in knowledge and power.

In sum, Lewis says, "it would conquer Nature without being at the same time conquered

by her and buy knowledge at a lower cost than that of life."[153] Nevertheless, Lewis

admits what he is asking for may be an impossibility. He writes,

> Perhaps, in the nature of things, analytical understanding must always be a
> basilisk which kills what it sees and only sees by killing. But if the scientists
> themselves cannot arrest this process before it reaches the common Reason and kills
> that too, then someone else must arrest it. What I most fear is the reply that I am
> "only one more" obscurantist, that this barrier, like all previous barriers set up
> against the advance of science, can be safely passed. Such a reply springs from the
> fatal serialism of the modern imagination—the image of infinite unilinear
> progression which so haunts our minds.[154]

Tragically and ironically, the ultimate barrier to *real* scientific advancement and human

progress may turn out to be the failure of the modern imagination and its false *ideal* (or

idol) of progress.

Finally, Lewis closes this chapter with words, both brilliant and beautiful, that

reveal the necessity of recognizing natural limits on explanation as rationalization. Such

limits are essential for the possibility of knowledge, morality, and the very survival of

humanity. Genuine insight into reality must eventually arrive at and be guided by first

principles, otherwise blindness ensues. And so, he concludes thus:

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[153] Lewis, *Abolition*, 79. Lewis refers to Buber's "*Thou*-situation," drawing on Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (1937). Compare Lewis in his "A Reply to Professor Haldane," where he expresses his concern for the "abolition of persons" in the tendency of "the growing exaltation of the collective and the growing indifference to persons" (83-84).

[154] Lewis, *Abolition*, 80. Notice Lewis distinguishes between two senses of reason here. The first is the sense of "analytical understanding," which he compares to the Greek mythical reptile, a serpent king, the basilisk, that causes death by merely looking or gazing at its victims. The second sense is "the common Reason" of man, which apparently lacks the destructive tendency of the former. Also, for further discussion in Lewis on the image (or myth) of progress, see C. S. Lewis, "*De Descriptione Temporum*," in *Selected Literary Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (1969; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); "*De Futilitate*," in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); "The Funeral of a Great Myth," in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); and "The World's Last Night," in *The World's Last Night: And Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1960; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002), especially pp. 101-4.

But you cannot go on "explaining away" for ever: you will find that you have explained explanation itself away. You cannot go on "seeing through" things for ever. The whole point of seeing through something is to see something through it. It is good that the window should be transparent, because the street or garden beyond it is opaque. How if you saw through the garden too? It is no use trying to "see through" first principles. If you see through everything, then everything is transparent. But a wholly transparent world is an invisible world. To "see through" all things is the same as not to see.[155]

Illustrations of the Tao

In the appendix to the book, Lewis provides copious illustrations of the *Tao* or natural law in the form of an outline. He makes clear that the list is not intended to be exhaustive or complete. He also does not offer any explanation as to his particular selections for inclusion or exclusion in the list. He simply states the illustrations included "are collected from such sources as come readily to the hand of one who is not a professional historian."[156] No doubt Lewis drew many of his examples from their primary sources. Although for a significant number of examples, he cites the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (or *ERE*) as a source of his information.[157] The religious or philosophical traditions behind his examples include, using Lewis' headings, and in the order the headings first appear in the list: Ancient Egyptian, Ancient Jewish, Old Norse, Babylonian, Hindu (or Ancient Indian), Ancient Chinese, Roman (including Stoic), English, Christian, Redskin, Anglo-Saxon, Ancient Greek (or simply Greek), and Australian Aborigines.[158]

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[155] Lewis, *Abolition*, 81. On the end of Shakespeare's *Richard III*, Lewis explains, "Richard in his agony tries to turn to self-love. But he has been 'seeing through' all emotions so long that he 'sees through' even this. It becomes a mere tautology: 'Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I." C. S. Lewis, "Two Ways with the Self," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 194.

[156] Lewis, *Abolition*, 83.

[157] Other secondary sources Lewis uses for his citations include: H. R. Hall, *The Ancient History of the Near East* (1913); Paul-Alexandre Janet, *Histoire de la Science Politique*, vol. 1 (1872). As early as September 1933, Lewis had read Janet's *Histoire*. See C. S. Lewis to Arthur Greeves, September 1, 1933, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 2, *Books, Broadcasts, and the War, 1931-1949*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 120.

[158] More specifically, he cites the following works: (1) Egyptian: *Book of the Dead*, (2) Jewish: Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, (3) Old Norse: *Völospá, Hávamál, Sigdrifumál, Hárbarthsljóth*, (4) Babylonian: *Hymn to Samas*, (5) Hindu: *Laws of Manu, Bhagavad gita*, (6) Chinese: *Analects*, (7) Roman:

Furthermore, he makes it clear he does not intend the list to be considered a collection of *independent* testimonies to the *Tao*. This latter point seems to be very important, especially considering the two further qualifications or clarifications he makes about the list as it relates to the *Tao*. First, he states, "I am not trying to *prove* its validity by the argument from common consent. Its validity cannot be deduced. For those who do not perceive its rationality, even universal consent could not prove it."[159] Second, Lewis explains,

> The idea of collecting *independent* testimonies presupposes that "civilizations" have arisen in the world independently of one another; or even that humanity has had several independent emergences on this planet. The biology and anthropology involved in such an assumption are extremely doubtful. It is by no means certain that there has ever (in the sense required) been more than one civilization in all history. It is at least arguable that every civilization we find has been derived from another civilization and, in the last resort, from a single center—"carried" like an infectious disease or like the Apostolical succession.[160]

Finally, Lewis groups his illustrations under eight general categories. He does not offer any explanation for these categories, the titles of the categories, the order of the categories, or the particular organization (divisions and subdivisions) of the categories. His eight categories include: The Law of General Beneficence (Negative and Positive); The Law of Special Beneficence; Duties to Parents, Elders, and Ancestors; Duties to Children and Posterity; The Law of Justice (Sexual Justice, Honesty, and Justice in Court); The Law of Good Faith and Veracity; The Law of Mercy; and The Law of Magnanimity.

Cicero, *De Officiis* [*On Duties*], *De Legibus* [*On Laws*]; Juvenal, *Satires*; Terence, *Heauton Timorumenos*; Justinian, *Institutions*; Virgil, *Aeneid*, (8) English: John Locke, *Treatises of Civil Government*; Thomas Hooker, *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, (9) Christian: Gospel of Matthew, Gospel of John, I Timothy, Titus, (10) Anglo-Saxon: *Beowulf*, *Maldon*, (11) Greek: Epictetus, *Discourses of Epictetus*; Homer, *Iliad*; Plato, *Crito*, *Phaedo*; Chilon of Sparta (one of the Seven Sages of Greece); Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. It is noteworthy that of the variety of sources Lewis uses some are conspicuously absent from his list, including Buddhist, Islamic, and atheistic philosophical sources, all of which lack a natural law tradition.

[159] Lewis, *Abolition*, 83; emphasis original.

[160] Lewis, *Abolition*, 83-84; emphasis original.

Conclusion

The goal of this chapter of the dissertation was to provide a clear presentation and explanation of Lewis' main ideas and arguments in this landmark work of philosophical, moral, and cultural criticism. This investigation entailed making connections between *Abolition*, his other writings, and a variety of secondary sources in order to further illuminate his meaning. The next chapter takes a similar strategy in closely examining the thought of Adorno-Horkheimer, from their seminal text of the Frankfurt School and critical theory, the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

CHAPTER 3

MAX HORKHEIMER, THEODOR W. ADORNO, AND
DIALECTIC OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Introduction

This chapter seeks to indicate, coordinate, and explicate the central themes, concepts, and arguments of Adorno-Horkheimer's book *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. As with the previous chapter, the goal is to outline the major ideas of this book in terms as close as possible to the authors' original meaning and intentions, as expressed in the English translation of their work. Since the *Dialectic* is much longer than Lewis' *Abolition*, the following presentation focuses primarily on the contents of the work necessary for a comparative critical analysis in the subsequent chapters.[1]

The Concept of Enlightenment[2]

Adorno-Horkheimer succinctly state the major thesis of their book in their preface as follows: "Myth is already enlightenment, and enlightenment reverts to mythology."[3] On their account, a dialectical process of enlightenment rationality can be identified in the history of Western civilization, which has resulted in the collapse or "regression" of reason into a force of sheer domination. Accordingly, Enlightenment

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[1] C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man: Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools*, Riddell Memorial Lectures, 15th Series (London: Oxford University Press, 1944; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001). Hereafter cited as *Abolition*. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, Cultural Memory in the Present, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Amsterdam: Querido, 1947; repr., Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002). Hereafter *Dialectic*.

[2] The 1944 original title for their first chapter was "The Dialectic of Enlightenment," which was later changed to "The Concept of Enlightenment."

[3] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xviii.

rationalism, despite its many promises of scientific and technological progress, has morphed into another superstition or myth akin to what it had originally sought to eradicate.

Enlightenment thought paved the way for a mythical view of reality in the form of a positivist philosophy and science (*Wissenschaft*), which involved the disintegration of the world into isolated facts. The result was a *disenchantment* of nature and a consequent estrangement of man from his natural environment. Instead of fulfilling the promise of human progress, enlightenment reason produced further domination and destruction, of nature in general and human nature specifically.[4] According to Adorno-Horkheimer, however, this process did not start with the historical period known as the *Enlightenment* (roughly the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries). Rather, *enlightenment* represents a process of rationalization that extends as far back as the beginnings of Western civilization, and as far forward as the intellectual and cultural milieu of the early twentieth century.

Enlightenment Aims at Liberation from Myth to Mastery of Nature

Adorno-Horkheimer write,

> Enlightenment, understood in the widest sense as the advance of thought, has always aimed at liberating human beings from fear and installing them as masters. Yet the wholly enlightened earth is radiant with triumphant calamity. Enlightenment's program was the disenchantment of the world. It wanted to dispel myths, to overthrow fantasy with knowledge.[5]

Thus, the authors begin the first essay of their major collaboration.[6] The liberation

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[4] Y. Sherratt explains, "The significant point about Adorno and Horkheimer's conceptualization of enlightenment is that it is made with a specific intention in mind. In their word, they wish to 'enlighten the enlightenment about itself.' In fact their aim is neither historical understanding nor even straightforward philosophical definition but the specific one of *critical theorizing*." Y. Sherratt, "Adorno and Horkheimer's Concept of 'Enlightenment,'" *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 8, no. 3 (2000): 524, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*; quoting Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xi-xvii; emphasis original.

[5] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 1.

[6] In their preface, they state of this essay, "The first essay, the theoretical basis of those which

Enlightenment sought as its goal was to come through "the disenchantment of the world."[7] This would be achieved by opposing myth and fantasy with knowledge. Francis Bacon provided the model in opposing mere belief and dogmatic tradition with experimental philosophy and science, with the purpose of improving upon the human condition brought about by, in his words, "the happy match between the mind of man and the nature of things." Knowledge would be obtained through a "systematic enquiry into nature," which would establish "man as the master of nature."[8]

However, for Adorno-Horkheimer, Bacon's vision was a "patriarchal one," especially as it was further developed after him in modern science. According to this vision, "the mind, conquering superstition, is to rule over disenchanted nature." Knowledge is identified with unlimited power, a power wielded by human masters who seek to dominate or enslave nature. Moreover, "Technology is the essence of this knowledge." Scientific knowledge coupled with technology produces "mere instruments," not only for the mastery of nature but also the control of humanity.[9] The result is the reduction of rationality to *instrumental rationality*, or reason to *instrumental*

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follow, seeks to gain greater understanding of the intertwinement of rationality and social reality, as well as of the intertwinement, inseparable from the former, of nature and the mastery of nature. The critique of enlightenment given in this section is intended to prepare a positive concept of enlightenment which liberates it from its entanglement in blind domination." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xviii. Thus, on their view, their negative critique of enlightenment anticipates the development of a "positive concept of enlightenment."

[7] For Max Weber on the "disenchantment of the world" see Max Weber, "Wissenschaft als Beruf," in *Gesammetlte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* (1922; repr., Tubingen: J. C. B Mohr-Paul Siebeck, 1968); or see the English translation Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958).

[8] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 1. In this regard, they quote Bacon: "Therefore, no doubt, the sovereignty of man lieth hid in knowledge; . . . now we govern nature in opinions, but we are thrall unto her in necessity: but if we would be led by her in invention, we should command her by action." Francis Bacon, "In Praise of Knowledge," in *Francis Bacon*, ed. Arthur Johnston (London: B. T. Batsford, 1965), 15. Also, see Bacon, *The New Organon*, ed. Lisa Hardine and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[9] They refer to the radio, dive bomber, and remote control as examples of these *instruments* used to control humanity in the present. Cf. Lewis, *Abolition*, 54-55 on ""the aeroplane, the wireless, and the contraceptive." See Max Horkheimer, *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. Matthew J. O'Donnell et al., Radical Thinkers (New York: Seabury Press, 1974; repr., New York: Verso, 2013), Kindle.

reason. Adorno-Horkheimer write of this self-inflicted wound, "Ruthless toward itself, the Enlightenment has eradicated the last remnant of its own self-awareness. Only thought which does violence to itself is hard enough to shatter myths." The equation of power and knowledge does not permit mystery, including the mystery of the rational essence. Thus, knowledge is not valued for its own sake but only for instrumental purposes.[10]

Extirpation of Animism (or Anthropomorphism)

The success of the Enlightenment project requires the liberation of humanity from superstitious beliefs and practices: "The disenchantment of the world means the extirpation of animism." However, this process of extirpation knows no limits. Once nature is emptied of gods and spirits, this purging eventually extends even to human words, language, and meaning. Modern science replaces the concept with the formula, causality with rules and probability. As concepts and categories such as *substance*, *quality*, *activity*, *suffering*, *being* and *existence* fail to pass scientific scrutiny, they are "left behind as *idola theatri* of the old metaphysics," and their pre-history in the form of myths. Beginning with the pre-Socratic cosmologies and their rationalizations of nature, the mythological gods and animistic powers are intellectualized into abstractions, categories, forms, or universals of the Platonic and Aristotelian metaphysics. In turn, these are further reduced to the non-entities of superstition. With no more illusions of immanent powers or hidden properties to fear, nature is reduced to matter to be quantified, and "anything which does not conform to the standard of calculability and utility must be viewed with suspicion." But, Adorno-Horkheimer warn, once this process begins, "there is no holding it back."[11] Enlightenment's "principle of corrosive

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[10] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 2.

[11] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 3.

rationality" eventually extends to its own ideas of human rights, values, and even the individual self. In this way, "Enlightenment is totalitarian."[12]

Adorno-Horkheimer explain, "Enlightenment has always regarded anthropomorphism, the projection of subjective properties onto nature, as the basis of myth."[13] Whereas myth is in its essence anthropomorphic, a form of subjectivism, Enlightenment thinking seeks to establish an objective, systematic unity of what exists in nature based on human reason.[14] But, even in the latter case, the result is a reductionism:

> The multiplicity of forms is reduced to position and arrangement, history to fact, things to matter. . . . Formal logic was the high school of unification. It offered Enlightenment thinkers a schema for making the world calculable. The mythologizing equation of Forms with numbers in Plato's last writings expresses the longing of all demythologizing: number became enlightenment's canon.[15]

This is not only the model for the Enlightenment's scientific thinking but its political and economic thinking as well. In sum: "For the Enlightenment, anything which cannot be resolved into numbers, and ultimately into one, is illusion. . . . All gods and qualities must be destroyed."[16]

Paradoxically, Enlightenment has both an antagonism to and yet an affinity for myth. The myths discarded by the Enlightenment were actually produced by enlightenment thinking embedded within ancient mythical accounts of the world and its processes. These primitive attempts at reporting, naming, and explaining the world through narration were used to control the processes of nature through magic. This represents an incipient form of demythologization already present as a theoretical

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[12] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 4.

[13] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 4.

[14] They refer to both empiricist and rationalist examples of this ideal of unity, including Bacon's *una scientia universalis* and Leibniz's *mathesis universalis*. See Bacon, *De Augmentis Scientiarum* (1623); Leibniz, *Mathesis Universalis* (1695).

[15] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 4.

[16] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 5. Cf. Lewis, *Abolition*, 70-71 on the demythologization of the natural world.

element within myth. Accordingly, the world becomes divided into the *logos* of man and "the mass of things and creatures in the external world. The single distinction between man's own existence and reality swallows up all others. Without regard for differences, the world is made subject to man."[17]

Demythologization coincides with the "awakening of the subject." However, this is at a great cost. The price is its "recognition of power as the principle of all relationships."[18] Accordingly, myth becomes enlightenment, but this objectifying power over nature is at the cost of man's estrangement from nature through its domination as a mere object, thing, instrument for manipulation. This newly discovered subject-object relationship leads to a type of identity thinking in which nature is reduced to mere mental quantifications, what can be measured, calculated, and classified. All qualities are consigned to subjective projections. But, this also means "the all-powerful self becomes a mere having, an abstract identity," a mere abstraction.[19]

Enlightenment Self-Destructs:
Falling Under the Spell of Myth

Ironically, the Enlightenment process, with its increased domination of nature through science and technology becomes self-destructive in the end. This tendency is attested to in the gradual steps of demythologization itself. They declare,

> Mythology itself set in motion the endless process of enlightenment by which, with
> ineluctable necessity, every definite theoretical view is subjected to the annihilating

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[17] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 5. They cite Genesis 1:26 alongside quotations from the Olympian religion to illustrate the idea of the world being given over to the dominion of man. Cf. Lewis, *Abolition*, 69-70 on the distinction between "the world of quantity" and "the world of quality," and the reduction of the latter to the former.

[18] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 5. This includes man's relationship to God. Unifying reason begins to level the distinction between God and man given that man's reasoning and ordering power over nature reveals man's likeness to God in human mastery over nature. Man in a sense is deified.

[19] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 6. Cf. Lewis, *Abolition*, 74-75 on the reduction of the world of nature and eventually man himself to the level of an abstraction. In this regard, like Lewis, Adorno-Horkheimer emphasize the close relationship between magic and science. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 7. This connection is discussed further in chap. 4 below.

criticism that it is only a belief, until even the concepts of mind, truth, and, indeed, enlightenment itself have been reduced to animistic magic.[20]

Moreover, they proclaim, this self-destructive tendency "predominates . . . in every rationalistic system of Western philosophy" due to the intertwinement of enlightenment and myth. [21] Thus, ironically, "Just as myths already entail enlightenment, with every step enlightenment entangles itself more deeply in mythology. Receiving all its subject matter from myths, in order to destroy them, it falls as judge under the spell of myth."[22]

Mythical fear of the unknown. This intertwinement of enlightenment and myth grows out of the fear of the unknown. Both mythical and scientific explanations of the world represent attempts to explain or account for the unknown in order to eradicate this fear through mastery over nature. Out of this process, the concept grew as "a product of dialectical thinking, in which each thing is what it is only by becoming what it is not."[23] The goal of emancipation from fear of the unknown directs "the path of

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[20] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 7.

[21] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 8.

[22] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 8. They go on to describe the deleterious role of Enlightenment's instrument: *abstraction as liquidation*. Based on Enlightenment reasoning, all existing things are universally mediated through the reasoning subject. Enlightenment through mediation seeks to make all things the same or unified. Hence, the leveling rule is abstraction. Abstraction presupposes the distance between subject and object (9). As the subject ordered, subordinated, and subjugated the world, at the conceptual level, truth became defined in terms of and also dependent upon classifying thought. This classifying knowledge, however, is not "the knowledge which really apprehends the object" (10). The increased distance placed between the subject and the object results in, like myth, a continual anthropomorphizing of the object through subjective projection. Consequently, the problem of the subject-object relation is intensified.

All along Adorno-Horkheimer describe these stages of the subject's development in relation to nature (the world of objects) in terms of an anthropological history of religions approach (e.g., the views of Ludwig Feuerbach [1804-72], who influenced Karl Marx [1818-1883] and Friedrich Engels[1820-1895]). This approach is also reminiscent of the *religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, or "history of religions school," which developed out of nineteenth-century higher criticism. For Adorno-Horkheimer, this anthropological development involves a kind of evolution of religions from preanimistic to animistic, primeval religions to the religions of Indra and Zeus, and so on. The earlier, primitive view does not see the divine as wholly transcendent and in contradistinction to the material world, but part of the complex concatenation of nature, in which the unknown and known are linked (i.e., the principle of *mana*). Moreover, this is coupled with a fear of the unknown and the unfamiliar. With each movement through each anthropological stage, there is a greater concentration of power and abstraction which develops, thus eliminating the unknown in the process. Consequently, each attempt to *explain* comes at the cost of an *explaining away*—or *liquidation*.

[23] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 11.

demythologization, of enlightenment." Indeed, they claim, "Enlightenment is mythical fear radicalized."[24]

This radical fear of the unknown extends to a fear of the outside, a fear of difference, a fear of others. Escaping this fear means confining everything to the circle of existence, the eternally same, the inescapable cycle of nature. One of the ways this is accomplished is through the control of language, reducing all meaningful communication or linguistic expression to scientific language, which symbolizes power over nature. Yet, science's power through the operation of its immanent reason only enforces the particular interest of the power-wielders and reinforces the existing order, or status quo.

The fatal error. Enlightenment's fatal error was its prejudgment that "Nature . . . is what can be registered mathematically. . . . In the preemptive identification of the thoroughly mathematized world with truth, ... It equates thought with mathematics."[25] The identification of thought with mathematics gives rise to the reification of thought, turning it into a thing, a tool, by which it becomes "an autonomous, automatic process, aping the machine it has itself produced, so that it can finally be replaced by the machine."[26] Thought reduced to a necessary and objective mathematical procedure mimetically makes the world resemble itself. This means anything not accounted for in mathematical thought terms is considered irrelevant and meaningless, including all metaphysical and theological speculations. Only the *actual* is of any real concern.[27]

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[24] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 11.

[25] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 18.

[26] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 19.

[27] Hence, they write, "The mastery of nature draws the circle in which the critique of pure reason holds thought spellbound." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 19. This is an obvious allusion (and slight) to Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. J. M. D. Meiklejohn. Great Books in Philosophy (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1990). Also, see Theodor Adorno, *Kant's* Critique of Pure Reason, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1995; repr., Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001).

This leads to an ironic twist of fate in the Enlightenment's historical development, which comes, once again, at a huge cost: "world domination over nature turns against the thinking subject itself . . . . Both subject and object are nullified."[28] The world becomes the mere subjective measure of the subject's mind with its mathematical and logical formulations. This seeming "triumph of subjectivity" is "bought with the obedient subordination of reason to what is immediately at hand."[29] Enlightenment rationality instills a deceptive sense of a clear, positivist, and objective vision of reality, presumably based upon the "facts" of nature. But, this turns out to be only the subject's self-projected "untruth," the formalization and mathematization of nature adapted to human patterns of thought.[30] Thus, instead of promoting progress, Enlightenment regresses "to the mythology it has never been able to escape."[31]

The result of the "objectification of mind" is the estrangement of human beings from the objects they dominate as well as estrangement in all human relationships. Individuals are shrunken down to mere points of conventional and operational activity. Subjects are reduced to objects, mere things. They write, "Animism had endowed things with souls; industrialism makes souls into things."[32]

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[28] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 20.

[29] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 20. Accordingly, "The actual is validated, knowledge confines itself to repeating it, thought makes itself mere tautology."

[30] Or as they put it more concisely in their preface, "False clarity is only another name for myth." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xvii. Brian J. Shaw offers a helpful summary of their argument at this point: "Thus, for Horkheimer, reason and enlightenment return to the myth from which they initially emerged. Since reason is itself myth, in turning against myth it had to destroy itself. Enlightenment begins at the attempt to subject the world to the demands of the conscious subject. It ends in the surrender of the subject to the world of his own creation." Brian J. Shaw, "Reason, Nostalgia, and Eschatology in the Critical Theory of Max Horkheimer," *Journal of Politics* 47, no. 1 (1985): 174, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

[31] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 20.

[32] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 21. They proceed to explain how this leads to the commodification of life in all its aspects by an economic apparatus that seeks to control human beings and their behavior through the fetishizing of commodities and increasing standardization processes used in mass production, all in conformity to a schemata enforced by the collective who are ultimately controlled by the powers of industry. They explore these issues in greater detail in their essay, "The Culture Industry" (see below).

From self-preservation to instrumental reason. Since "Enlightenment's

mythic terror springs from a horror of myth," Enlightenment seeks to eradicate all traces

of myth wherever they can be found, including everything which "has no place in the

functional context of self-preservation."[33] Indeed, self-preservation is the "true maxim of

Western civilization."[34] The mythical traces to be eradicated were extended to aspects of

body and soul, such that the self, "sublimated into a transcendental or logical subject,

formed the reference point of reason, the legislating authority of action."[35] Hence, self-

preservation becomes paramount.

Moreover, in the structure of the bourgeois economy all work is mediated by

the principle of self-preservation. Yet, the bourgeois division of labor only alienates

individuals, who must conform to the "technical apparatus."[36] Even worse, the thinking

of the individual, now reduced to the "transcendental subject of knowledge, . . . is itself

seemingly abolished and replaced by the operations of the automatic mechanisms of

order."[37] In other words, reason becomes instrumentalized. Substantial reason is

abolished and replaced by instrumental reason. Whereas the stated goal is human

progress and the betterment of society, human rationality, hollowed of its substantive

purpose, becomes purely instrumental or functional, with no external regulating standards

(or values).[38]

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[33] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 22.

[34] They claim, "Spinoza's proposition: 'the endeavor of preserving oneself is the first and only basis of virtue,' contains the true maxim of all Western civilization." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 22. They cite Baruch Spinoza (1632-77) from his *Ethics* (1677). See Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. A. Boyle (London: Everyman, 1948), pt. 4, prop. 22, coroll.

[35] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 22.

[36] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 23.

[37] They explain, "Positivism, which finally did not shrink from laying hands on the idlest fancy of all, thought itself, eliminated the last intervening agency between individual action and the social norm. The technical process, to which the subject has been reified after the eradication of that process from consciousness, is as free from the ambiguous meanings of mythical thought as from meaning altogether, since reason itself has become merely an aid to the all-encompassing economic apparatus." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 23.

[38] James Schmidt writes, "Here, in brief, is the central theme of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*:

Consequently, and ironically, they write, "But nature as true self-preservation is thereby unleashed . . . by the process which promised to extirpate it."[39] Civilization views "purely natural existence" as the ultimate threat to be overcome. The development of civilization included a progressive movement through mimetic, mythical, and metaphysical stages, eliminating the forms of behavior associated with each. A return to any of these previous stages would mean a terrible reversion back to "mere nature from which it had extricated itself."[40] Thus, the controlling minority seeks to ensure the continuation of society by "subordinating" the whole of life to the goal of preservation. This is accomplished through the bourgeois commodity economy. But, this involves the automation of self-preservation, resulting in the abdication of individual reason and choice to the controllers of production. In a powerful bit of prose, they again express this entwinement of enlightenment and myth:

> Human beings have always had to choose between their subjugation to nature and its subjugation to the self. With the spread of the bourgeois commodity economy the dark horizon of myth is illuminated by the sun of calculating reason, beneath whose icy rays the seeds of the new barbarism are germinating. Under the compulsion of power, human labor has always led away from myth and, under power, has always fallen back under its spell.[41]

**Homer and the Dialectic of
Enlightenment: Progress and Regress**

To illustrate the "intertwinement of myth, power, and labor," Adorno-Horkheimer turn to Homer's *Odyssey*, bk. 22, specifically the adventure of Odysseus and the Sirens, for a "prescient allegory of the dialectic of enlightenment."[42] In this account,

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instrumental reason reduces truth to 'success' and, in the process, robs reason of all substantive content." James Schmidt, "Language, Mythology, and Enlightenment: Historical Notes on Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*," *Social Research* 65, no. 4 (1998): 821, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

[39] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 23.

[40] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 24.

[41] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 25.

[42] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 27. For a helpful discussion of Adorno-Horkheimer's

the song of the Sirens entices their listening subjects to become lost in the past with an irresistible promise of pleasure. But, this means death for all who succumb to the temptation. Ultimately, the Sirens' "promise of a happy homecoming is the deception by which the past entraps a humanity filled with longing."[43] But, no one can escape the overpowering lure of the Sirens' song without inflicting injury upon the self. This represents a parallel to the development of the self as subject in its extrication from the powers of nature. Moreover, this shows how the fear of death and destruction of the self "is twinned with a promise of joy which has threatened civilization at every moment." For the "way of civilization" is obedience and work, which makes the promise of joy or fulfillment a "mere illusion."[44]

However, Odysseus, the prototypical bourgeois hero, makes a decision that evades both death and happiness for himself as well as his comrades. First, he chooses for his comrades by plugging their ears with wax and ordering them to row with all their might. For Adorno-Horkheimer, this illustrates how survival depends on not listening "to the temptation of the irrecoverable."[45] Odysseus, the landowner, is capable of choosing for himself. He has his comrades bind him to the ship's mast, and so he is able to listen

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treatment of the wanderings of Odysseus, see Katie Fleming, "Odysseus and Enlightenment: Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialektik der Aufklärung*," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 19, no. 2 (June 2012): 107-28, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*; Robert Hullot-Kentor, "Notes on *Dialectic of Enlightenment*: Translating the Odysseus Essays," *New German Critique* no. 56 (Summer 1992): 101-8, *MasterFILE Premier*, EBSCO*host*. Intriguingly, Lewis also provides his own allegorical account of the "dialectic of enlightenment" in C. S. Lewis, *The Pilgrim's Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity, Reason and Romanticism* (London: J. M. Dent, 1933; repr., with preface, London: Geoffrey Bles, 1943; repr., with illustrations by Michael Hague, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

[43] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 26.

[44] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 26. Throughout this discussion, and elsewhere in *Dialectic*, Adorno-Horkheimer make repeated references to *longing* (German *Sehnsuct*) in connection with the theme of *homecoming*. These concepts are central to the life and thought of Lewis, both in terms of his pre-Christian and Christian (dialectical) understanding and experience. In fact, Lewis opposes to the dialectic of enlightenment a "dialectic of desire" or "lived dialectic," based on his experience of *Sehnsucht*, longing, or what he simply calls *Joy* (see chap. 6 below). See C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1955; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 1966); also, *Pilgrim's Regress*, especially the preface (or afterword) to this work.

[45] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 26.

without surrendering to the powerful lure of the Sirens. Accordingly, Odysseus'

comrades are incapable of hearing the song, and so they "know only of the danger of the

song, not of its beauty." They leave Odysseus bound to the mast for the sake of both his

life and their own. But, in so doing they

> reproduce the life of the oppressor as a part of their own, while he cannot step
> outside his social role. The bonds by which he has irrevocably fettered himself to
> praxis at the same time keep the Sirens at a distance from praxis: their lure is
> neutralized as a mere object of contemplation, as art. . . . In this way the enjoyment
> of art and manual work diverge as the primeval world is left behind.[46]

Adorno-Horkheimer believe Homer's epic correctly depicts the correlation between

"cultural heritage and enforced work," and that both result from "the inescapable

compulsion toward the social control of nature."[47]

The account of Odysseus and his comrades illustrates a fundamental principle

of Enlightenment progress: "The servant is subjugated in body and soul, the master

regresses." Adorno-Horkheimer see this as the inevitable cost of every system of

domination with its ideal of progress.[48] With the growing "technical facilitation of

existence," humanity regresses to "more primitive anthropological stages" as continued

domination requires greater repression of instincts.[49] As a consequence, they explain,

"Adaptation to the power of progress furthers the progress of power, constantly renewing

the degenerations which prove successful progress, not failed progress, to be its own

antithesis. The curse of irresistible progress is irresistible regression."[50] Regression takes

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[46] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 27.

[47] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 27.

[48] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 27. Dana Villa offers a helpful summary of their argument thus far. Dana Villa writes, "Originating in the primordial struggle for self-preservation, reason separates itself from the mythic powers of a primitive, animistic world. It is this painful, identity-forming struggle against an overwhelming nature that creates, from the very beginning, an internal link between reason and domination, reason and power." Dana Villa, "Genealogies of Total Domination: Arendt, Adorno, and Auschwitz," *New German Critique* no. 100 (2007): 5, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

[49] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 27-28.

[50] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 28.

place both in the sensuous world, the impoverishment of bodily experience, as well as the intellectual one, the impoverishment of the mind. Paradoxically then, Enlightenment becomes "the vehicle of both progress and regression."[51]

Glimmer of Hope?

Adorno-Horkheimer appear to hold out a glimmer of hope despite Enlightenment's regressive character. The central problem seems to be the intertwinement of power as domination with reason and rationality. But, the praxis of domination reveals its own limitations, and these limitations involve a "moment of rationality in domination," which reveals itself as heterogeneous from as well as critical of domination.[52] Somewhere along the way "from mythology to logistics," thought lost its element of self-reflection (*Selbstbesinnung*).[53] But, hints of the possibility of the liberation of thought are embedded in the contradictory nature of the link between reason and power. For example, they explain, "The absurdity of a state of affairs in which the power of the system over human beings increases with every step they take away from the power of nature denounces the reason of the reasonable society as obsolete."[54] Ironically, Enlightenment's attempt to master nature, a mastery not possible without mind, reveals both mind's estrangement from and enslavement to nature.

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[51] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 27.

[52] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 29.

[53] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 29.

[54] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 30-31. Cf. Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947; repr., New York: Continuum, 1996); Max Horkheimer, "The End of Reason," in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, ed. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt, 26-48 (New York: Continuum, 1995). Adorno-Horkheimer further explain that Enlightenment's "split between subject and object, which it will not allow to be bridged, becomes the index of the untruth both of itself and of truth. The proscribing of superstition has always signified not only the progress of domination but its exposure." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 31. This assessment represents a helpful example of an application of their method of *determinate negation* or *negative dialectic*, at the heart of their critical theory. Negative critique of the inconsistencies or internal contradictions of Enlightenment rationality exposes its *untruth*, thus making an opening or wedge (an absence or empty space) for *truth* in the process, although this positive truth is never affirmed. See Theodor Adorno: *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1966; repr., New York: Continuum, 1995); Theodor Adorno, *Lectures on Negative Dialectics: Fragments of a Lecture Course 1965-1966*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008).

Thus, it would appear thought still has the potential to become emancipatory. But, emancipatory thought must resist the urge of identity thinking, the reification of thought, its reduction to an instrument of power. Adorno-Horkheimer seem to reveal the emancipatory first step as follows: "By modestly confessing itself to be power and thus being taken back into nature, mind rids itself of the very claim to mastery which had enslaved it to nature."[55] Civilization advances through this dialectic of mastery and the prospect of its alleviation, a prospect whose fulfillment depends on the mind's concept. Thus, the concept acts as a double-edged sword of sorts. Through science it creates distance between human beings and nature. But, through "the self-reflection of thought," unfettered from "the blind economic tendency," thought through its concept is enabled to measure this distance and the injustice it perpetuates. This self-reflective moment represents a "remembrance of nature within the subject," as well as the recognition that "enlightenment is opposed in principle to power."[56]

Thus, Adorno-Horkheimer come full circle, as they begin and end this first essay with a critical reflection on Bacon's utopian vision for humanity:

> Today, when Bacon's utopia . . . has been fulfilled on a telluric scale, the essence of the compulsion which he ascribed to unmastered nature is becoming apparent. It was power itself. Knowledge, in which, for Bacon, "the sovereignty of man" unquestionably lay hidden, can now devote itself to dissolving that power. But in face of this possibility enlightenment, in the service of the present, is turning itself into an outright deception of the masses.[57]

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[55] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 31.

[56] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 32. Thought is sacrificed when reified, and prevents enlightenment from being truly realized by refusing to overturn the status quo. When enlightenment functions as a mere instrument or means for perpetuating this compliance, it becomes destructive. Accordingly, they explain what is needed is "to abolish the false absolute, the principle of blind power. The spirit of such unyielding theory would be able to turn back from its goal even the spirit of pitiless progress" (33). This last comment reveals Adorno-Horkheimer's opposition to any claims which posit an absolute, albeit Hegel's Absolute idealism (despite their indebtedness to Hegel, especially for their method of determinate negation) or scientific positivism, especially in the forms of a crude materialism or naturalism. Any positing of an absolute reality impedes the realization of enlightenment, and as such must be opposed, *negated*, abolished by an "unyielding" critical theory. On their view, absolute claims are really only masked claims to power. See Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

[57] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 33-34.

Excursus I:
Odysseus or Myth and Enlightenment

In their next essay, the first of two excurses, Adorno-Horkheimer expound how

Homer's *Odyssey*, introduced in the previous essay, "as a whole bears witness to the

dialectic of enlightenment."[58]

Homer's Enlightenment: Odysseus the
Awakening Subject

Adorno-Horkheimer proceed by digging through the various strata of the

Homeric epic uncovering its many links to myth. Although the adventures are drawn

from popular myth and tradition, the "Homeric spirit" supervenes by organizing the

myths as well as contradicting them. In this same spirit, the hero Odysseus "turns out to

be the prototype of the bourgeois individual, whose concept originates in the unwavering

self-assertion of which the protagonist driven to wander the earth is the primeval

model."[59] Moreover, in the Homeric epic "the venerable cosmos of the Homeric world, a

world charged with meaning, reveals itself as an achievement of classifying reason,

which destroys myth by virtue of the same rational order which is used to reflect it."[60]

This distinction between epic and myth, while retaining mythical elements within the

myth, is fundamental to understanding the intertwinement of enlightenment and myth.

Thus, in Homer we discover that enlightenment began taking shape long before the

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[58] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 35. In their preface, they explain how the writing of the excurses (this essay and the next) is intended as a further working out of specific subjects in relation to the two main theses of their first essay, i.e., "Myth is already enlightenment, and enlightenment reverts to mythology" (xviii). Thus, the first excursus "traces the dialectic of myth and enlightenment in the *Odyssey*, as one of the earliest representative documents of bourgeois Western civilization" (xviii). Again, see Katie Fleming, "Odysseus and Enlightenment" and Robert Hullot-Kentor, "Notes on *Dialectic of Enlightenment*" for superb treatments of Homer's *Odyssey* in Adorno-Horkheimer.

[59] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 35. Of course, Adorno-Horkheimer themselves were forced to emigrate from Nazi Germany to the U.S. during WWII. This theme of "wandering," or the "wandering Jew," and the "yearning for a homeland" shows up in various places throughout their writings (see below).

[60] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 35-36.

Enlightenment.[61] In fact, they declare, "no work bears more eloquent witness to the intertwinement of enlightenment and myth than that of Homer, the basic text of European civilization."[62]

Despite the presence of myths in Homer, his reporting of the myths, including the unity he imposes upon them, actually "traces the path of the subject's flight from the mythical powers."[63] In this way, the gradual liberation and awakening of the subject's mind from myth represents an enlightenment of thought. This ancient coming of age story involves man's growing realization of "the plain untruth of the myths," coupled with a corresponding demythologization and disenchantment of the world of nature.[64]

Odysseus' adventures are survival stories, in which he confronts dangerous

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[61] They turn to the early writings of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) for further support of their view that the element of bourgeois enlightenment is present in Homer. They maintain, "Like few others since Hegel, Nietzsche recognized the dialectic of enlightenment. He formulated the ambivalent relationship of enlightenment to power." Nietzsche understood the "twofold character of enlightenment," making it possible to trace back the fundamental concept of enlightenment well beyond the Enlightenment even "to the beginning of recorded history." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 36.

[62] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 37. They further state, "In Homer, epic and myth, form and subject matter do not simply diverge; they conduct an argument. The aesthetic dualism of the work gives evidence of the historical-philosophical tendency" (37). In his early years, Lewis was an avid reader of Homer, as well as epic and myth in general. Unlike the awakening of Odysseus' mind as subject through the extrication of myth, Lewis claims his own mind was awakened through the engagement of myth. These connections are discussed further in chap. 6 below.

[63] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 37.

[64] They provide a basic summary of this development:

The hero's peregrinations from Troy to Ithaca trace the path of the self through myths, a self infinitely weak in comparison to the force of nature and still in the process of formation as self-consciousness. The primeval world is secularized as the space he measures out; the old demons populate only the distant margins and islands of the civilized Mediterranean, retreating into the forms of rock and cave from which they had originally sprung in the face of primal dread. The adventures bestow names on each of these places, and the names give rise to a rational overview of space. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 38.

Noteworthy is a comparison of the above with Lewis' own spiritual peregrinations through which at one point he, like Homer, began to resist myth, to repress it, in attempting to adopt a purely rationalistic view of reality. In *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis refers to this view as "The New Look," in a chapter by that title (197-211). After his conversion to Christianity, Lewis wrote *Pilgrim's Regress*, a semi-autobiographical depiction of his own intellectual and spiritual wanderings through the character of John and his own dialectic of enlightenment and myth. Lewis, in fact, provides a map (*Mappa Mundi*) of John's adventures, including the names of the places he encounters in his travels, the names representing the extremes of a rationalistic North and an emotionalistic South.

temptations that seek to deflect "self from the path of its logic." The key to his survival

and success comes from the knowledge he achieves through the "experience of diversity,

distraction, [and] disintegration." The constant exposure to danger and possible death

enables him to gain "the hardness and the strength to live."[65] Odysseus discovers through

these encounters that his survival, the key to winning "his estrangement from nature,"

comes through varying degrees of precarious self-abandonment to nature, in testing his

strength against it. Through this dialectical process, the enlightened subject slowly

emerges.[66]

**Odysseus' Cunning, Sacrifice, and
Self-Renunciation**

Essential to Odysseus' survival is his use of *cunning*. For example, this is

illustrated in his exchange of gifts for hospitality along his journeys. Adorno-

Horkheimer explain, "In Homer the gift which accompanies hospitality falls midway

between exchange and sacrifice." This gift to one's host "anticipates the principle of

equivalence: the host receives really or symbolically the equivalent value of the service

he has performed, while the guest takes away provisions which, in principle, are intended

to enable him to reach home."[67]

More importantly, the exchange between the two parties represents "the

secularization of sacrifice."[68] This involves the use of deception for the purpose of self-

preservation: "The moment of fraud in sacrifice is the prototype of Odyssean cunning."

This gets at the very essence of sacrifice; sacrifices are ultimately planned by humans in

order to deceive the deity, which in turn diminishes the deity's power by subjecting it to

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[65] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 38.

[66] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 38-39.

[67] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 39.

[68] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 40.

human ends. Accordingly, Adorno-Horkheimer claim, "Cunning originates in the cult."[69]

Hence, they establish a link between deception, cunning, and rationality in relation to

cultic sacrifice. Odysseus exposes the fraudulent nature of sacrifice in terms of its

supposed efficacy, representative character, deification and immortality of the sacrificial

victim, its claim to the restoration of a lost past, and, finally, its claim to reconciliation.[70]

The irrationality and rationality of sacrifice. Consequently, one would

think enlightenment reason would lead to the utter eradication of the principle of

sacrifice. However, the principle, despite its irrationality, also has its own rationality that

enables it to survive through its transformation and internalization within the subject.

Thus, like Enlightenment, sacrifice has a twofold character: it is at once irrational and

rational. As the self seeks to free itself "from dissolution in blind nature," it abdicates to

the claims of nature through acts of self-sacrifice for the purpose of self-preservation.

But, Adorno-Horkheimer explain, "Bargaining one's way out of sacrifice by means of

self-preserving rationality is a form of exchange no less than was sacrifice itself."[71]

Self-mastery through practices of self-denial is not only foundational to the

subject-object distinction but also "practically always involves the annihilation of the

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[69] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 40. In a note, they refer to "the illusion of the magical mastery of nature" as constituting "the essence of myth" (260n6). Cf. Lewis, *Abolition*, 76-78.

[70] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 40-41. They write, "Cunning is nothing other than the subjective continuation of the objective untruth of sacrifice, which it supersedes." Furthermore, they claim, "Demythologization always takes the form of the irresistible revelation of the futility and the superfluity of sacrifices" (42).

[71] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 42. Cf. Lewis, *Abolition*, 71-73 on the "magician's bargain." Interestingly, Adorno-Horkheimer also comment, "That much is true of the famous story in Nordic mythology according to which Odin was hung from a tree as a sacrifice to himself, and of Klages's thesis that every sacrifice is a sacrifice of the god to the god, as is still apparent in Christology, the monotheistic disguise of myth" (Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 42). Early on, Lewis was an avid reader of Norse mythology. On Lewis' preconversion view of religion as mythology, and the connection between the mythical sacrifice of Jesus and that of Odin, see Lewis to Arthur Greeves, October 12, 1916, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 1, *Family Letters 1905-1931*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 230-31. "Klages's thesis" is a reference to the work of Ludwig Klages, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* (Leipzig, 1932). In addition to Klages, Adorno-Horkheimer show their indebtedness to Werner Hegemann for their views on religion, sacrifice, and myth, while commenting: "The conception of Christianity as a pagan sacrificial religion is fundamental to Werner Hegemann's *Geretteter Christus* (Potsdam 1928)." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 261n11.

subject in whose service that mastery is maintained." The goal of self-preservation paradoxically requires the mastering, suppressing, and disintegration of the self in terms of its natural existence. Odysseus' efforts at saving his own skin entailed calculated acts of self-renunciation, and thus an internalization of mythic sacrifice. This internal development of the individual subject as distinct from external nature progressively involves a mastery over nature, which resorts to the use of violence.[72]

Adorno-Horkheimer argue this same form of "antireason," the attempt to escape sacrifice through self-sacrifice, persists within "totalitarian capitalism."[73] The totalitarian economic system of capitalism both determines the needs of its subjects through forms of domination, while at the same time making it impossible to satisfy those needs. In fact, the history of civilization is "the history of the introversion of sacrifice" or "the history of renunciation." More of the life of the self is always given away than what is preserved. This is seen, for example, in the story of Odysseus where as a sacrificial victim he is forced to constantly suppress his impulses. "Nevertheless," they write, "he is sacrificed, also, for the abolition of sacrifice." Odysseus' self-sacrificial actions represent a society no longer based on renunciation, domination, and violence, but a self-mastery "for the sake of reconciliation."[74]

The formula. Adorno-Horkheimer explain, "The formula for Odysseus's cunning is that the detached, instrumental mind, by submissively embracing nature,

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[72] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 42. According to Joel Whitebook, "For Horkheimer and Adorno, the mastery of inner nature, no less than the mastery of outer nature, consists in forms of *violence*. Toward the outside, the autocratic ego imposes its rigid unification on the diversity of external nature. Toward the inside, it attempts to impose that same violent synthesis on the manifold of inner nature, that is, on the polymorphous diffuses of the id." Joel Whitebook, "The *Urgeschichte* of Subjectivity Reconsidered," *New German Critique* no. 81 (2000): 128, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*; emphasis original.

[73] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 43.

[74] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 43. Thus, for Adorno-Horkheimer, the true goal of enlightenment is not domination or renunciation but *reconciliation*. This is an important theme in connection with their notions of "longing" and "homeland."

renders to nature what is hers and thereby cheats her."[75] The mythical powers are

compelled by fate to endless repetition in order to avoid their own demise. This

inevitability "is defined by the equivalence between the curse, the abominable act which

expiates it, and the guilt arising from that act, which reproduces the curse." Hence, the

story of Odysseus represents the account of the self as "rational universality against the

inevitability of fate."[76] The subject's rationality takes the form of an exception, a

loophole, making it possible for the subject to satisfy the demands of the law, while also

extricating itself from "the legal terms encompassing and threatening it." Odysseus

makes this exception possible through cunning. For example, recall the account of the

Sirens:

> Technically enlightened, Odysseus acknowledges the archaic supremacy of the song by having himself bound. By yielding to the song of pleasure he thwarts both it and death. The bound listener is drawn to the Sirens like any other. But he has taken the precaution not to succumb to them even while he succumbs. Despite the power of his desire, which reflects the power of the demigoddesses themselves, he cannot go to them, just as his companions at the oars, their ears stopped with wax, are deaf not only to the demigoddesses but to the desperate cries of their commander.[77]

The mythical law depends upon the impossibility of fulfilling the statutes of the mythical

powers. However, once the statutes are actually fulfilled, the myths become upended.

They are exposed as false by the rational subject; they are demythologized.[78]

Yearning for the Homeland

        Adorno-Horkheimer proceed to examine further examples of Odysseus'

tireless efforts of self-preservation through his use of cunning in Homer's accounts of

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[75] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 45.

[76] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 46.

[77] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 47.

[78] For Odysseus, cunning is a means of exchange. In his exchange with the mythical powers, the terms of the contract are satisfied by one party, while the other party is still cheated in the process. In this way, elements of the bourgeois economic system can be found in the ancient practice of exchange. Hence, "The lone voyager armed with cunning is already *homo oeconomicus*, whom all reasonable people will one day resemble." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 48.

Odysseus and the Lotus-eaters, Polyphemus the Cyclops, Circe, and Hades.[79] Further discussion of these accounts is beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, in sum, each of these adventures reveals Odysseus' continued awakening as subject, his growing mastery over nature and its powers, the dialectical struggle of enlightenment and myth, and further parallels to the oppressive power of the bourgeois economic system. Moreover, for Adorno-Horkheimer, there is a common thread woven throughout these accounts: "It is a yearning for the homeland which sets in motion the adventures by which subjectivity, the prehistory of which is narrated in the *Odyssey*, escapes the primeval world."[80]

In the Homeric epic, "the concept of homeland is opposed to myth." The epic preserves a cultural memory of an "historical age in which nomadism gave way to settlement, the precondition of any homeland." It is at the stage of settlement that a "fixed order of property" develops, which results in human alienation. This alienation produces "all homesickness and longing" for "a lost primal state." Yet, paradoxically, the very concept of homeland depends and is based upon "settlement and fixed property," and so it is to these things "that all longing and homesickness are directed."[81]

Nevertheless, Adorno-Horkheimer embrace Novalis' definition of all philosophy as homesickness, but with an important qualification: that the longing described is "not dissipated in the phantasm of a lost original state, but homeland, and nature itself, are pictured as something that have had first to be wrested from myth." Thus, on their view, homeland represents the state of having escaped from myth.[82]

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[79] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 49, 50-54, 54-59, 59-60, respectively.

[80] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 60.

[81] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 60-61.

[82] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 61. Novalis is the pseudonym for Georg Philipp Friedrich Freiherr von Hardenberg (1772-1801), early German Romantic poet, author, mystic, and philosopher. Novalis wrote, "*Philosophie ist eigentlich Heimweh—Trieb überall zu Hause zu sein*"— commonly translated into English as "Philosophy is really homesickness: the urge to be at home everywhere." David W. Wood writes, "In many ways, this celebrated entry epitomizes not only Novalis's

Civilization as Vengeance, Yet a
Semblance of Freedom

Not only is myth the opposite of homeland and an obstacle to reconciliation, but so is enlightenment power and domination, which produces civilization. Adorno-Horkheimer describe the domination of civilization over the primeval world as a form of vengeance.[83] In this account, civilization and the primeval world it seeks to overcome appear as twins in the perpetration of violence. But, where civilization transcends the primeval world is "in the self-reflection which causes violence to pause at the moment of narrating such deeds." They believe this helps to account for Odysseus' role as narrator of these events.[84]

An example of this self-reflecting narration, which reveals a "semblance of freedom," is found in Homer's account of the punishment of the faithless maidservants.[85] Homer describes an episode in which the son of the island's king exacts severe punishment of the faithless maidservants accused of harlotry. Immediately following a description of the hanging of these maidservants, Homer reports, "'For a little while their feet kicked out, but not for very long.'"[86] Adorno-Horkheimer observe: "The exactitude of the description, which already exhibits the coldness of anatomy and vivisection, keeps a record, as in a novel, of the twitching of the subjugated women, who, under the aegis of justice and law, are thrust down into the realm from which Odysseus the judge has escaped."[87] On Adorno-Horkheimer's account, Homer's words are intended to provide

own philosophy, but the philosophy of romanticism in general." David W. Wood, *Novalis: Notes for a Romantic Encyclopaedia, Das Allgemeine Brouillon*, trans. and ed. David W. Wood, SUNY series, Intersections: Philosophy and Critical Theory, ed. Rodolphe Gasché (New York: State University of New York Press, 2007), 259n377.

[83] According to Adorno-Horkheimer, this vengeance is represented in its most terrible and horrifying form in Homer's "account of the mutilation of the goatherd Melanthios." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 61. See Homer, *Odyssey* 22.458-88.

[84] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 61.

[85] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 61. See Homer, *Odyssey* 22.458-70.

[86] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 61.

[87] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 61-62.

comfort for himself and his listeners (or readers) by certifying that "the kicking did not

last long—a moment, and all was over." Yet, the narrator's pause here also exposes his

real lack of composure by bringing the reporting of the event to "a standstill." As such,

his "report is prevented from forgetting the victims of the execution and lays bare the

unspeakably endless torment of the single second in which the maids fought against

death."[88]

They conclude this account, along with this their second essay, with the

following shadowy remarks:

> But in the report of the infamous deed, hope lies in the fact that it is long past. Over
> the raveled skein of prehistory, barbarism, and culture, Homer passes the soothing
> hand of remembrance, bringing the solace of "once upon a time." Only as the novel
> is the epic transmuted into fairy tale.[89]

Excursus II:
Juliette or Enlightenment and Morality

Adorno-Horkheimer open their second excursus[90] with a critical examination

of Enlightenment reason, rationality, and thought based on the watershed work of

Immanuel Kant, especially his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), which introduced the

Copernican turn in epistemology. Then, on from Kant, they proceed to show how

Enlightenment rationalism inevitably takes us down the dark, slippery slope to the works

of French philosopher Marquis de Sade (1740-1814) and German philosopher Friedrich

Nietzsche (1844-1900)—in other words, to moral nihilism.

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[88] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 62. One cannot help but consider that Adorno-Horkheimer probably also have in mind here the Jewish victims of Nazi persecution.

[89] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 62.

[90] From their preface, they declare how this second excursus "is concerned with Kant, Sade, and Nietzsche, whose works represent the implacable consummation of the enlightenment. This section shows how the subjugation of everything natural to the sovereign subject culminates in the domination of what is blindly objective and natural. This tendency levels all the antitheses of bourgeois thought, especially that between moral rigor and absolute amorality." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xviii.

Reason, Rationality, and Thought—
Systematized

They begin with what amounts to an epitomizing statement of the

Enlightenment's view of the emancipation or liberation of humanity: "Enlightenment, in

Kant's words, is 'the human being's emergence from self-incurred minority. Minority is

inability to make use of one's own understanding without direction from another.'

'Understanding without direction from another' is understanding guided by reason."[91]

According to Kantian epistemology, once freed from all external authority, the mind

actively organizes "its individual cognitions into a system in accordance with its own

internal logic." Accordingly, reason is narrowed in its focus to the understanding and its

application with the goal of producing a unifying system of thought.[92] This system

provides reason's rules or instructions for "a hierarchical ordering of concepts."

Accordingly, the "'systematization' of knowledge lies in 'the connection of its parts in

conformity with a single principle.'"[93] They explain further the implications this has for

thought in general:

> Thinking, as understood by the Enlightenment, is the process of establishing a
> unified, scientific order and of deriving factual knowledge from principles, whether
> these principles are interpreted as arbitrarily posited axioms, innate ideas, or the
> highest abstractions. The laws of logic establish the most universal relationships
> within the order and define them. Unity lies in self-consistency. The principle of
> contradiction is the system *in nuce*. Knowledge consists in subsumption under
> principles. It is one with judgment, by which perceptions are incorporated into the
> system. Any thinking not guided by the system is directionless or authoritarian.[94]

Based on the above, the only contribution of reason to this process is

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[91] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 63; quoting Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?," *Practical Philosophy*, trans. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 17.

[92] They quote Kant as saying, "'Reason has . . . as its sole object the understanding and its effective application.'" And again, reason posits "'a certain collective unity as the goal of the activities of the understanding.'" Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 63; quoting Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1973), 533.

[93] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 63; quoting Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 534.

[94] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 63.

systematic unity, or *schematization*. Enlightenment rejects any attribution of a

"substantial objective" or "rational insight" to reason as "delusion, falsehood,

'rationalization.'" On Enlightenment's account, "Reason is 'a faculty of deducing the

particular from the universal.'"[95] And for Kant, the "schematism of pure understanding"

guarantees the general and the particular remain consistent or harmonious.

Consequently, when the subjective judgment of the reason discovers intelligibility in any

matter, this intelligibility is actually the imprint of the mind on the matter. Kant's

schematism accounts for the conformity of impressions to their corresponding objects,

providing unity for both thought and the system. Moreover, Adorno-Horkheimer explain,

"To establish this unity is the conscious task of science."[96] Facts are both predicted by

and must confirm the system, thus maintaining a harmony between the system and

nature. These same facts "form part of praxis; they everywhere characterize the contact

of the individual subject with nature as social object."[97] Consequently, any thinking that

does not maintain this harmony between the system and perception "conflicts with real

praxis." Thus, the goal of enlightenment is a system of knowledge which accommodates

the facts and enables the subject to more effectively master nature. Furthermore, the

principles of the system are those of self-preservation.[98] Hence, the true nature of Kant's

schematism is revealed, which is mastery or domination of external nature. This

domination extends to all of nature, including animals as well as human beings, and

eventually takes the form of manipulation and administration in science and industrial

society. Since all sensory impressions are pre-censored by the rational schema, each

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[95] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 64; quoting Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 534.

[96] They further write, quoting Kant, this time from his *Critique of Judgment* (1790), "'This harmony of nature with our cognitive faculty is presupposed *a priori* by the Judgment.' It is the 'guiding thread' of organized experience." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 64; quoting Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J. H. Bernard (London: Macmillan, 1892), 24, 25.

[97] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 64.

[98] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 65.

subject "sees the world as made *a priori* of the stuff from which he himself constructs it."[99]

Hence, science and the pursuit of scientific knowledge become the further domination of nature for the goal of preserving the rational schema, or what amounts to self-preservation. Science itself, they attempt to clarify, is not the problem. Science is only a tool, an instrument, lacking self-awareness. The problem is the Enlightenment scientist's equation of "truth with the scientific system."[100] Although Kant made and sought to justify this identification of truth and science, ironically, his analysis included various concepts that "have no meaning for science, since they are not simply instructions for performing manipulations according to certain rules." This is why today the Kantian philosophy is reduced to mere mythology to be extirpated from current scientific understanding. Even worse, in equating the scientific system with truth, "thought sets the seal on its own insignificance." This is because science is a "technical operation, as far removed from reflection on its own objectives as is any other form of labor under the pressure of the system."[101] Thought, in the end, possesses only instrumental value.

Enlightened Morality:
The Slippery Slide to De Sade

Having outlined Kant's views and the implications for modern science and rationality, Adorno-Horkheimer unpack the disastrous ramifications of the Enlightenment project for morality (*Sittlichkeit*). They submit, "The moral teachings of the

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[99] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 65.

[100] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 65. Elsewhere, they refer to this equation as the philosophical position called *scientism*. For more from Adorno-Horkheimer on *scientism* (or *scientivism*), see the following: Max Horkheimer in "Art and Mass Culture," in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1968; repr., New York: Continuum, 1995), 284; Max Horkheimer "The Latest Attack on Metaphysics," in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1968; repr., New York: Continuum, 1995). Horkheimer states, "in the new scientivism . . . man becomes completely dumb and only science speaks out." Horkheimer, "The Latest Attack," 186.

[101] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 66.

Enlightenment bear witness to the hopelessness of attempting to replace enfeebled

religion by an intellectual motive for enduring within society when material interest no

longer suffices."[102] Kant had sought to elevate "moral forces as facts." For example, he

attempted "to derive the duty of mutual respect from a law of reason." However, this

move, typical of bourgeois thought, represents the mistake of trying to "ground the

respect without which civilization cannot exist on something other than material

interest."[103] As a result, this move fails to provide a sufficient motive for action since the

Kantian "duty for duty's sake" cannot compete with profit. Kant's attempt to ground

morality, such as his "great moral forces, reciprocal love and respect," in reason alone

was a failure. Scientific reason makes of these moral forces only "neutral drives and

forms of behavior, no less than immoral ones."[104] Human actions and desires are reduced

to the position of geometrical configurations and mathematical measurements, which, of

course, are morally neutral.[105]

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[102] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 66-67. Cf. C. S. Lewis, "Religion: Reality or Substitute?," in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

[103] Notice they appear to recognize the need for a ground of morality, which they identify with material interest. Although not crude materialists themselves, their philosophical orientation overall is one that has been described as a commitment to a "materialist stance." See J. C. Berendzen, "Postmetaphysical Thinking or Refusal of Thought? Max Horkheimer's Materialism as Philosophical Stance," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 16, no. 5 (2008): 695-718, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*; Deborah Cook, "Adorno's Critical Materialism," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 32:6 (2006): 719-37.

[104] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 67. They also say this result is inevitable when the moral forces are "no longer directed at that hidden possibility but at reconciliation with power." Reference to "that hidden possibility" hearkens back to an earlier remark regarding "the secret utopia harbored within the concept of reason" (66).

[105] They make an application to the present crisis:

Freed from supervision by one's own class, which had obliged the nineteenth-century businessman to maintain Kantian respect and reciprocal love, fascism, which by its iron discipline relieves its peoples of the burden of moral feelings, no longer needs to observe any discipline. Contrary to the categorical imperative, and all the more deeply in accord with pure reason, it treats human beings as things, centers of modes of behavior. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 67.

The concern with the relief of "the burden of moral feelings" parallels Lewis in *Abolition*. Although Lewis opposes the reduction of morality to feelings, he strongly advocates for the proper formation of moral sentiments. Cf. Horkheimer on what "offends right feeling," in Max Horkheimer, "The Arrest of Eichmann," in *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. Matthew J. O'Donnell et al., Radical Thinkers (New York: Seabury Press, 1974; repr., New York: Verso, 2013), 122, Kindle.

Thus, Adorno-Horkheimer proclaim,

> From Kant's *Critique* to Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, the hand of philosophy had traced the writing on the wall; one individual put that writing into practice, in all its details. The work of the Marquis de Sade exhibits "understanding without direction from another"—that is to say, the bourgeois subject freed from all tutelage.[106]

Henceforth, they demonstrate how Enlightenment rationalism leads one directly to the nihilistic ideas and behaviors discussed and depicted in the works of Sade and Nietzsche. The central driving force, motive, or principle that propels this degenerating slide to Sade is self-preservation, "the constitutive principle of science."[107] The Enlightenment spirit, with its basis in self-preservation, is compliant with the methods used by the rulers over the ruled. Instrumental reason may be used for violence or for mediation, peace or war, tolerance or repression. Reason, as such, lacks any material content of its own, and thus like an empty vessel it may be filled with whatever contents happen to be poured into it. On this account, "Reason is the organ of calculation, of planning; it is neutral with regard to ends; its element is coordination."[108] To illustrate, they draw a parallel between the precise coordination of modern sports teams and the sexual teams in Sade's *Juliette*. In this way, the same rational organization, lacking any substantive goals, is equally prefigured in the "special architectonic structure of the Kantian system" as in "the gymnasts' pyramids in Sade's orgies."[109]

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[106] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 68. Notoriously, Sade, while imprisoned and his writing instruments confiscated, continued to write on bed linen with red wine, on his own garments in blood, and, finally, *on the walls of his prison cell* with his own excrement. Adorno-Horkheimer proceed to make a litany of references to the works of Sade and Nietzsche. All citations to follow will refer to the following works: Marquis de Sade, *Marquis de Sade Collection: 120 Days of Sodom, The Philosophy of the Bedroom* (Anna Ruggieri, 2016), Kindle; Marquis de Sade, *Juliette*, trans. Austryn Wainhouse (New York: Grove Press, 1968), Kindle; Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, trans. with introduction by H. L. Mencken (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1924), Kindle; Friedrich, Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, ed. T. N. R. Rogers (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2003), Kindle; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Joyful Wisdom* (Cleveland, OH: Jovian Press, 2016), Kindle.

[107] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 68.

[108] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 69.

[109] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 69.

But, why this troubling result? They explain,

> In the modern period enlightenment has released the ideas of harmony and perfection from their hypostatization in a religious Beyond and made them available as criteria for human endeavor within the form of the system. . . . [T]he established bourgeois order entirely functionalized reason. It became a purposiveness without purpose, which for that very reason could be harnessed to any end.[110]

Hence, Adorno-Horkheimer identify the central problem: "As reason posits no substantial goals, all affects are equally remote to it. They are merely natural."[111] Enlightenment reason exchanged substantive reason for instrumental reason. Without any substantial goals, reason acts like a chemical agent, dissolving all things into autonomous human reason. The subject, in the process, is "turned into a single, unrestricted, empty authority." Accordingly, they write, "Pure reason became unreason, a procedure as immune to errors as it was devoid of content."[112]

Adorno-Horkheimer claim the Enlightenment of the modern age is more radical than earlier stages of enlightenment and demythologization. Earlier

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[110] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 69. Or put another way, in the words of the character of the Prince in Sade, "'Take away its god from the people you wish to subjugate and you will demoralize it. As long as it has no other god than yours, you will always be its master.'" Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 69.; quoting Sade, *Juliette*, 971. Ironically, Lewis would be in agreement with Sade on this note (see chap. 5 below)! On Lewis' account, the abolition of God leads to the abolition of morality, and thus to the "abolition of man." Again, ironically, Adorno-Horkheimer seem to acknowledge this connection in their use of Sade to expose the demoralization resulting from Enlightenment rationality. However, unlike Lewis, they reject all calls for a return to theism or metaphysical or moral realism as a solution.

[111] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 70. Lewis distinguishes between different senses of "natural," making a crucial distinction between the "merely natural" and "natural" in the sense of *natural* law, or the *Tao* (see chap. 5 below).

[112] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 70. Cf. David Hume (1711-76), *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1777), on reason as a universal solvent: "If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, *Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number?* No. *Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?* No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion." David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, 2nd ed., ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (1777; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1902), 76; emphasis original, Kindle.

Adorno-Horkheimer further note: "Enlightened reason no more possesses the means of measuring one drive within itself against others than of ordering the universe into spheres. It rightly exposes the notion of hierarchy in nature as a reflection of medieval society, and later attempts to demonstrate a new order of values bear the unmistakable taint of mendacity. The irrationalism which is evident in such futile reconstructions is far from opposing industrial reason." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 70. Cf. Lewis, *Abolition*, 44: "The human mind has no more power of inventing a new value than of imagining a new primary color, or, indeed, of creating a new sun and a new sky for it to move in."

advancements represented the movement wherein the older mythologies were continually replaced by successive enlightened ones, the dispelling of the mythological. But, as a consequence, this meant the tabooing of any ties to the mythological past, including those necessary for the preservation of the bourgeois order itself. This is because the very essence of Enlightenment is its "antiauthoritarian tendency." But, this radical principle of emancipation only works against itself in the end, becoming its own antithesis, the opposition to reason as an authority.[113]

Thus, from "civic virtue and charity" to "authority and hierarchy," philosophy has always propped up, without good reasons, as virtuous what enlightenment reason in turn exposed as lies, as perversions of itself. Yet, in doing so, it also "had no arguments, since pristine truth has no advantage over distortion, or rationalization over reason, unless it can demonstrate a practical one as well."[114] Thus, the formalization and systemization of reason eventually reduces even theory, thought, and meaning to repressive superfluities. Enlightenment, therefore, nullifies itself as one more repressive order in the process, along with both its theoretical and its practical reason.

"Dare to Do!": Sade's Critique of
Practical Reason

According to Adorno-Horkheimer, Kant, in his moral philosophy, epitomized in his *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), "set limits to his enlightened critique in order to rescue the possibility of reason." By contrast, Sade, like the later Nietzsche, represents "an intransigent critique of practical reason," driving the antiauthoritarian principle to its logical though radically destructive extremes.[115] Kant's attempt to purify the moral law

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[113] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 73. Quite incredibly, given their opposition to moral absolutism and appeals to authority (to be discussed further in chap. 5 below), they are critical of "the antiauthoritarian principle," even acknowledging that "its abolition of all absolute ties allows power to decree and manipulate any ties which suit its purposes." Their statement is almost Lewis' argument *in nuce*!

[114] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 73.

[115] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 74. See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*,

within the self of any heteronomous elements had the unintended result that respect

would be reduced to "no more than a psychological fact of nature, as the starry sky above

the self was a physical one."[116]

From sacrifice to sacrament to sacrilege. Sade acknowledges the existence

of such facts of nature, for example, as exemplified in his character of Justine, portrayed

as Juliette's "virtuous sister" and "martyr to the moral law."[117] By sharp contrast, Sade's

character of Juliette represents the embodiment of Enlightenment morality. Juliette, an

alternative fact of nature, "draws the conclusion the bourgeoisie sought to avoid." She

rejects Catholicism as "the latest mythology," and along with it civilization with its moral

claims. She redirects her energies from devotion to sacrament to dedication to sacrilege.

Yet, she is not a fanatic; she "merely attends to the business of sacrilege in the efficient,

enlightened way." She revives a number of primeval forms of behavior long tabooed by

civilization, stigmatized as bestial and relegated to underground life. In so doing, "She

compensates the value judgment against them—which, like all value judgments, was

unfounded—by its opposite."[118]

Furthermore, they describe her scientific approach as it relates to her attitude

towards religion:

> Juliette's *credo* is science. She abominates any veneration which cannot be
> shown to be rational: belief in God and his dead son, obedience to the Ten
> Commandments, preference of the good to the wicked, salvation to sin. She is
> attracted by those reactions which have been proscribed by the legends of
> civilization. She manipulates semantics and logical syntax like the most up-to-date

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trans. Lewis White Beck, The Library of Liberal Arts (Indianapolis: Liberal Arts Press, 1956).

[116] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 74. They further write, "'A fact of reason,' he called it . . . . But facts count for nothing where they do not exist" (74). Their reference to "starry sky above" recalls Kant's famous line: "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and more steadily we reflect on them: *the starry heavens* above me and the moral law within me." Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 166; emphasis added.

[117] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 74.

[118] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 74.

positivist, but . . . she does not direct her linguistic criticism primarily against thought and philosophy but, as a daughter of the militant Enlightenment, against religion. "A dead God!" she says of Christ. "Nothing is more comical than this nonsensical combination of words from the Catholic dictionary: God, which means eternal; death, which means not eternal. Idiotic Christians, what do you intend to do with your dead God?" The conversion of what is condemned without scientific proof into something to be striven for, and of what is respected without proof into an object of revulsion, the transvaluation of values, the "courage to do the forbidden," . . . is her specific passion.[119]

Thus, from Kant's *Sapere aude*, "Dare to know," we arrive at Juliette's "Dare . . . to do."

Moreover, this daring of the strong will not be hindered by the complaints of the weak. For, Adorno-Horkheimer write, "Nietzsche proclaims the quintessence of her doctrine. 'Let the weaklings and failures go to ruin: the *first* principle of our philanthropy. . . . What is more damaging than any vice? The pity of active people for the unsuccessful and the weak—Christianity.'"[120]

The facts of nature only know of human inequality not equality. The rejection of any objective order to nature as mythical means the reduction of nature to mere material to be manipulated. Accordingly for Nietzsche, "there is no law 'which we not only recognize but recognize over us.'"[121] The only law of life the understanding recognizes, in keeping with the struggle for self-preservation, is the law of the strong over the weak. Again, in keeping with Nietzsche's doctrine,

> it is the weak who are guilty, . . . since they use cunning to circumvent the natural law. "It is the diseased who imperil mankind . . . the predestined failures and victims who undermine the social structure, who poison our faith in life and our fellow men." They have spread throughout the world the Christianity which Nietzsche hates and abominates no less than Sade.[122]

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[119] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 76; quoting Sade, *Juliette*, 560. Also, on the line "courage to do the forbidden," see Nietzsche, preface to *Antichrist*, para. 2.

[120] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 76; quoting Nietzsche, *Antichrist*, sec. 2; emphasis original.

[121] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 78; quoting Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nachlass*, *Werke*, vol. 11, 214. The *Nachlass* refer to Nietzsche's unpublished writings. Again, they quote Nietzsche: "'To expect that strength will not manifest itself as strength,' . . . 'as the desire to overcome, to appropriate, to have enemies, obstacles, and triumphs, is every bit as absurd as to expect that weakness will manifest itself as strength.'" Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 78; Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, 27.

[122] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 78; quoting Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, 96.

Thus, Enlightened reason proffers its own version of a natural law theory, based on conformity to nature as it in fact *is*. In a shocking reversal, it is not the strong but the weak within society who rebel against the law of nature by trying to usurp power from those who naturally possess it.[123]

The transvaluation of values. The new theory of the natural order based on the law of the stronger requires a new theory of values. Remorse is deemed "contrary to reason." Pity is deemed "outright sin." Yielding to such emotions is considered a perversion of the law of nature by showing favor to the weak over the strong. Through this inversion, virtue is transvalued into vice, as an interference "'with the inequality required by the laws of nature.'"[124] In addition, acts of kindness and good deeds are equally condemned, while domination and suppression are elevated to the status of virtue. This represents Nietzsche's notorious doctrine of the *transvaluation of values*.[125] What is more, Juliette "applies this principle in earnest. . . . After the destruction of all ideologies she elevates as her own morality what Christianity, in its ideology if not always in its practice, held to be abominable."[126]

Since the formalization of reason is devoid of any substantive goals, the goals it advocates for are void of any "necessity and objectivity." Accordingly, not only are remorse, pity, kindness, and good deeds transmuted into sin and vice, but their opposites "become merely operations." They are reduced to "mere activity, into the means—in

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[123] What is more, this is "the secret creed of all ruling classes." In the present context, German fascism has elevated this "cult of strength to a world-historical doctrine," thus taking "it to its absurd conclusion." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 78.

[124] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 79; quoting Sade, *Juliette*, 177.

[125] According to Nietzsche, "'All good things have at one time been considered evil; every original sin has, at some point, turned into an original virtue.'" Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 81; quoting Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, 89. Also, see Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power: An Attempted Transvaluation of All Values* (New York: The Big Nest, 2019), Kindle.

[126] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 81.

short, into industry."[127] As a result, even pleasure and love are ultimately annulled by the formalization of reason and its mimicry of mechanized production within industry. Adorno-Horkheimer write, "Pleasure itself shows traces of the outdated, the irrelevant, like the metaphysics which forbade it"[128] Since "every pleasure betrays idolization: it is self-abandonment to an Other," even pleasure cannot escape the Enlightenment process of extirpation due to its mythical nature.[129] Likewise, the bourgeois form of love as devotion to another person "is being finally revoked as a value judgment conditioned by sexuality."[130] People's attitude towards sexuality becomes rationalized and calculating on the pattern of "Juliette's enlightened circle." Not even love can withstand the scrutiny of enlightened reason. It is dismissed as "an unscientific concept."[131]

This Enlightenment trajectory leads to a failure of civilization, which in turn eventually leads to barbarism. Adorno-Horkheimer write, "the will to destroy is totalitarian, and totalitarianism springs from that will alone."[132] Accordingly, the weak within society, all those who possess "the signs of powerlessness," become the targets for those in power. Power over the powerless, especially in the form of inflicted torments on the victim, produces pleasure as well as a "hardening within the individual which can only be fully lived out through the collective."[133] This leads to the making of pacts between pleasure and cruelty. Love and tenderness are exchanged for sadistic pleasure and power. In the end, civilization regresses or reverts "back to the terrors of nature."[134]

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[127] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 81.

[128] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 82.

[129] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 83.

[130] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 83.

[131] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 85.

[132] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 87-88.

[133] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 88.

[134] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 89.

Legacy of the *Chronique Schandaleuse*

   Adorno-Horkheimer credit both Sade and Nietzsche with exposing the problems for Enlightenment thought through their own exercise in determinate negation, exposing the contradictions inherent in and produced by enlightenment rationality. In the dialectic of enlightenment, "Sickness becomes the symptom of recovery."[135] Enlightenment rationalism suffers from an internal contradiction, one which Sade and Nietzsche both helped to perpetuate but also clarify in their writings.[136] Adorno-Horkheimer further comment,

> For the *chronique scandaleuse* of Justine and Juliette . . . prefigured in the style of the eighteenth century the sensational literature of the nineteenth and the mass literature of the twentieth is the Homeric epic after it has discarded its last mythological veil: the story of thought as an instrument of power. In taking fright at the image in its own mirror, that thought opens to view what lies beyond it.[137]

Thus, Adorno-Horkheimer commend these "dark writers of the bourgeoisie" for not seeking "to avert the consequences of the Enlightenment with harmonistic doctrines" as many Enlightenment apologists had done.[138] Speaking of the legacy of both Sade and Nietzsche, Adorno-Horkheimer conclude,

> In a different way to logical positivism, they both took science at its word. In pursuing the implications of reason still more resolutely than the positivists their secret purpose was to lay bare the utopia which is contained in every great philosophy, as it is in Kant's concept of reason: the utopia of a humanity which, itself no longer distorted, no longer needs distortion. In proclaiming the identity of power and reason, their pitiless doctrines are more compassionate than those of the moral lackeys of the bourgeoisie.[139]

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  [135] Cf. Jesus' teaching: "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick." Matt. 9:12 (ESV); cf. Mark 2:17; Luke 3:31. With this Gospel tradition in mind, Lewis writes, "When you know you are sick, you will listen to the doctor." C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1952; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 31-32.

  [136] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 89.

  [137] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 92.

  [138] On the contrary, Adorno-Horkheimer write, "They did not pretend that formalistic reason had a closer affinity to morality than to immorality. While the light-bringing writers protected the indissoluble alliance of reason and atrocity, bourgeois society and power, by denying that alliance, the bearers of darker messages pitilessly expressed the shocking truth." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 92.

  [139] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 93.

The Culture Industry:
Enlightenment as Mass Deception

In this next essay, Adorno-Horkheimer show that not only does enlightenment reason fail its own aims by reverting to rather than purging myth from the social consciousness, but the goal of human progress also becomes a failure as it increasingly lapses into forms of objectifying and dehumanizing regression.[140] Just as nature was dissected and quantified, human beings are counted as mere statistics and commodities as part of what Adorno-Horkheimer term the "Culture Industry."[141]

Infection of Sameness

Adorno-Horkheimer reject assessments of the present cultural crisis that appeal to the "the loss of support from objective religion and the disintegration of the last precapitalist residues." Instead, they offer a different prognosis: "Culture today is infecting everything with sameness."[142] Whether film, radio, magazines, politics, the architecture of buildings, or town-planning projects, in the culture industry, everyone has a specific role to play. This extends to both work and leisure, reaching into every aspect

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[140] Sherratt explains, "Adorno and Horkheimer's concept of enlightenment captures a normative standard internal to enlightenment which allows us to criticize enlightenment with reference to its own standards." Sherratt, "Concept of 'Enlightenment,'" 528. That is, in failing to meet its own aims, enlightenment reverts to myth, its opposite associated with ignorance and delusion (rather than knowledge). Sherratt goes on to discuss additional "traits of myth" identified in Adorno-Horkheimer, including immaturity, domination and barbarism (531). Sherrat further explains, for Adorno-Horkheimer, "culture, politics, science and even everyday life had also reverted to myth. And they were adamant that these instances of myth in twentieth-century Europe were not anomalous but arose from the very foundations of enlightenment itself" (544). Thus, critical theory emphasizes the need for cultural critique to expose these dehumanizing elements.

[141] From their preface, Adorno-Horkheimer write of this essay:

The section "The Culture Industry" shows the regression of enlightenment to ideology which is graphically expressed in film and radio. Here, enlightenment consists primarily in the calculation of effects and in the technology of production and dissemination; the specific content of the ideology is exhausted in the idolization of the existing order and of the power by which the technology is controlled. In the discussion of this contradiction the culture industry is taken more seriously than it might itself wish to be. But because its appeal to its own commercial character, its confession of its diminished truth, has long since become an excuse with which it evades responsibility for its lies, our analysis is directed at the claim objectively contained in its products to be aesthetic formations and thus representations of truth. It demonstrates the dire state of society by the invalidity of that claim. Still more than the others, the section on the culture industry is fragmentary." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xviii-xix.

[142] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 94.

of human life. They explain, "The conspicuous unity of macrocosm and microcosm confronts human beings with a model of their culture: the false identity of universal and particular. All mass culture under the monopoly is identical."[143] The culture industry is so pervasive that the ones in charge of it no longer even try to hide it. This is especially evident in film and radio, where, no longer under the pretense of being art, they admittedly "are nothing but business." They even unabashedly call themselves "industries."[144]

The apologists seek to explain the culture industry in terms of technology and supply and demand. By contrast, Adorno-Horkheimer argue that a cycle of "manipulation" and "retroactive need" is perpetuated by those whose economic position in society is strengthened as technology gains power over society. Accordingly, they claim, "Technical rationality today is the rationality of domination. It is the compulsive character of a society alienated from itself."[145] The technology of the culture industry takes the form of standardization and mass production, which serves to erase the distinction between work and society. Technology itself is not to blame, but rather "its function within the economy today." All human needs are regulated by the "central control" of the economic system, and what does not come under its control is repressed in human consciousness.[146] Although it may be the case the public approves of the system of the culture industry, the public mentality is itself a part of the system and so cannot be

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[143] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 95.

[144] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 95.

[145] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 95.

[146] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 95. They note as examples the use of technologies such as the telephone and the radio, especially the move from the former to the latter, making "everyone equally into listeners, in order to expose them in authoritarian fashion to the same programs put out by different stations" (95-96). A contemporary update of their argument would of course include modern technologies, such as: television, computers, the internet, cell phones; as well as the following uses of digital technology: social media (i.e., Facebook, Twitter), satellite television and radio, streaming services, and more. Cf. Theodor Adorno, "Television as Ideology," in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1963/1969; repr., New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

appealed to in order to justify it. It is merely a pretext to claim one is just giving the

public what they desire, when the truth is their desires have been manipulated to want

what they want. A better explanation is to be found "in terms of the specific interests of

the technical apparatus and its personnel . . . as a part of the economic mechanism of

selection."[147]

Furthermore, we must add the role of the "executive powers," who censor all

that they produce so that their product conforms to "to their tables, to their concept of the

consumer, or, above all, to themselves."[148] The culture monopolies, however, are

ultimately subservient to the "the most powerful sectors of industry: steel, petroleum,

electricity, chemicals." These sectors represent the "true wielders of power," the top of

the food chain upon whom the lower levels of the culture industry are dependent for their

survival.[149]

Cultural Schematism

A cultural schematic is evident in the "relentless unity of the culture industry."

Whether in politics, film, or advertising, the litany of options presented to the public "do

not so much reflect real differences as assist in the classification, organization, and

identification of consumers. Something is provided for everyone so that no one can

escape."[150] This is evident in the different price points of products or their "hierarchy of

serial qualities," all of which are used by those in power only to better quantify the

public. However, in reality "the mechanically differentiated products are ultimately all

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[147] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 96.

[148] In this way, "the objective social tendency of this age is incarnated in the obscure subjective intentions of board chairmen." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 96. Today, this recalls the so-called Masters of the Universe: the CEOs of Apple, Facebook, Amazon, Twitter, and Google. Again, Lewis speaks of the Controllers or Conditioners, the "man-molders of the new age . . . armed with the powers of an omnicompetent state and an irresistible scientific technique," who seek to "cut out all posterity in what shape they please." Lewis, *Abolition*, 60.

[149] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 96.

[150] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 97.

the same." The purported "advantages and disadvantages" of the variety of models and makes of cars and the different production companies really only serve "to perpetuate the appearance of competition and choice."[151] Thus, the culture industry fosters an ever-increasing uniformity that engulfs both the production and even the leisure time of the consumer. Everyone is in a sense groomed to "behave spontaneously according to a 'level' determined by indices" and in turn to "select the category of mass product manufactured for their type." Both in research organizations and political propaganda, the public, as citizen and consumer, are divided up into statistical categories based upon their income level. Thus, the culture industry regulates everything and everyone according to a predetermined schematic.[152]

Adorno-Horkheimer liken this cultural schematism to the Kantian schematism with one key difference: at least the latter expected the active contribution of its subjects.[153] However, the culture industry denies this active contribution by the subject. They explain,

> Although the operations of the mechanism appear to be planned by those who supply the data, the culture industry, the planning is in fact imposed on the industry by the inertia of a society irrational despite all its rationalization. . . . For the consumer there is nothing left to classify, since the classification has already been preempted by the schematism of production.[154]

In terms of mass art, such as "hit songs, stars, and soap operas," they see this schematic effect in the conformity to and cyclical recurrence of types, along with the interchangeable nature of the "specific content of productions," which is "derived from those types."[155] As a result, not only are all things made identical, they are also utterly

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[151] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 97.

[152] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 97. Cf. Theodor Adorno, "The Schema of Mass Culture," in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J. M. Bernstein, 2nd ed., Routledge Classics, vol. 20 (New York: Routledge, 2001).

[153] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 98.

[154] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 98.

[155] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 98.

predictable. Like the Kantian schematism, all the elements of production, both whole and parts, all the way down to the specific details, serve one and the same purpose: "To confirm the schema by acting as its constituents is their sole *raison d'être*."[156] Of course, unruly or rebellious details, real differences, are leveled. Everything is subordinated to the cultural schematism: "The whole world is passed through the filter of the culture industry."[157]

This cultural schematism also extends to the control of language. It possesses its own "explicit and implicit, exoteric and esoteric catalog of what is forbidden and what is tolerated," which brings even areas thought to be free under its control. Adorno-Horkheimer explain, "Every phenomenon is by now so thoroughly imprinted by the schema that nothing can occur that does not bear in advance the trace of the jargon, that is not seen at first glance to be approved."[158] More and more, this "stylization" and "compulsion of the technically conditioned idiom," or "idiom of naturalness," adopted by the "stars and directors" as a "second nature," is also adopted by the general populace.[159] The increasing standardization of this idiom throughout the culture industry puts a check on all forms of resistance to it. Thus, they write, "the style of the culture industry, which has no resistant material to overcome, is at the same time the negation of style."[160]

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[156] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 98.

[157] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 99. According to Adorno-Horkheimer, production seeks to reproduce the familiar experiences of "the world of everyday perception." The goal is to make life indistinguishable from that of film. This sounds a lot like contemporary so-called "reality" shows. Interestingly, they speak of the greater realization of this goal with the "introduction of the sound film" (99). Imagine what they would have thought of the current HD, 4K, 3-D and 4-D film, and virtual reality technologies! Certainly, they would have concluded that such technologies contribute greatly to the "withering of imagination and spontaneity in the consumer of culture today" (100). They further explain, "The power of industrial society is imprinted on people once and for all. . . . Each single manifestation of the culture industry inescapably reproduces human beings as what the whole has made them" (100).

[158] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 101.

[159] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 102.

[160] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 102. By contrast, they refer to the "great artists" of the past, not those who merely embodied the accepted style in their works, but those "who adopted style as a rigor to set against the chaotic expression of suffering, as a negative truth" (103). They refer to artists such as Mozart, Schönberg, and Picasso, the Expressionists and Dadaists, all as examples of great artists who "have been mistrustful of style" (103).

Adorno-Horkheimer proceed to explain how in all works of art "style is a promise." They explain, "it is only in its struggle with tradition, a struggle precipitated in style, that art can find expression for suffering.[161] This ability of the work of art, through its moment, to transcend reality in this way cannot be severed from style, but neither does it establish a false harmony of "form and content, inner and outer, individual and society." The harmony is achieved "in those traits in which the discrepancy emerges, in the necessary failure of the passionate striving for identity." It is through this failure that great works of art always negated themselves. By contrast, inferior works of art rely on their "similarity to others, the surrogate of identity." The culture industry enforces this imitation as an absolute requirement for success, which reduces all art to nothing but style or "obedience to the social hierarchy."[162] The result is an aesthetic barbarism.

Since this style originated in the liberal sphere with its "modern culture combines," it is in this economic arena that people can survive as long as they remain compliant and become incorporated into the system.[163] Moreover, Adorno-Horkheimer write, "Whereas the mechanism of supply and demand is today disintegrating in material production, in the superstructure it acts as a control on behalf of the rulers."[164] This rule encompasses all consumers who are the workers and salaried employees of the economic system. Accordingly, they put up no resistance to the capitalist system of production and what it offers them. Adorno-Horkheimer explain, "Under the ideological truce between them, the conformism of the consumers, like the shamelessness of the producers they sustain, can have a good conscience. Both content themselves with the reproduction of sameness."[165]

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[161] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 103.

[162] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 103-4.

[163] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 104.

[164] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 106.

[165] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 106. This perpetuation of unending sameness also

Culture and the Entertainment Business

The essence of the culture industry is its form of entertainment, which is its medium for the control of consumers.[166] The tendencies of the culture industry are embodied in the public through forms of social conditioning. This process depends upon "the survival of the market in the industry." Adorno-Horkheimer explain,

> Entertainment is the prolongation of work under late capitalism. It is sought by those who want to escape the mechanized labor process so that they can cope with it again. At the same time, however, mechanization has such power over leisure and its happiness, determines so thoroughly the fabrication of entertainment commodities, that the off-duty worker can experience nothing but after-images of the work process itself. . . . The only escape from the work process in factory and office is through adaptation to it in leisure time. . . . This is the incurable sickness of all entertainment.[167]

However, they further describe how the culture industry's promises are false promises, thus endlessly cheating its customers. These false promises include sexual pleasure, beauty, laughter, and fun.[168] These unfulfilled promises are masked through entertainment, especially in the form of amusement, in order to stifle any resistance on the part of the consumer, thus making them "eternal consumers, the culture industry's object."[169] Accordingly, the people are given over to amusement; not pure amusement, described as "relaxed abandon to colorful associations and merry nonsense," but "amusement in its marketable form."[170] Pure or unbridled amusement is suppressed as naïve by the industry's ethics and taste. Hence, they state, "The culture industry is

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means, of course, "the exclusion of the new" (106). In fact, the only thing that is new "is that the irreconcilable elements of culture, art, and amusement have been subjected equally to the concept of purpose and thus brought under a single false denomination: the totality of the culture industry" (108).

[166] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 108.

[167] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 109.

[168] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 111-12. Contemptuously, they explain, "There is laughter because there is nothing to laugh about. . . . Fun is a medicinal bath which the entertainment industry never ceases to prescribe. It makes laughter the instrument for cheating happiness."

[169] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 113.

[170] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 114.

corrupt, not as a sink of iniquity but as the cathedral of higher gratification."[171]

Amusement has a numbing or even deadening effect on the mind of the amused. This perpetuates powerlessness, a form of escapism, not from "bad reality but from the last thought of resisting that reality." This is what makes the rhetorical question "What do people want?" so utterly shameless because the question "appeals to the very people as thinking subjects whose subjectivity it specifically seeks to annul."[172]

Nevertheless, as the culture industry has fewer things it can promise, coupled with a lack of a "meaningful explanation of life," the ideology it propagates becomes increasingly empty. Abstractions, such as the ideals of harmony, benevolence, and truth are seen as mere publicity devices. People become cynical and impatient with such appeals to values: "Value judgments are perceived either as advertisements or as mere chatter."[173] But, Adorno-Horkheimer explain how this

> noncommittal vagueness of the resulting ideology does not make it more
> transparent, or weaker. Its very vagueness, the quasiscientific reluctance to be
> pinned down to anything which cannot be verified, functions as an instrument of
> control. Ideology becomes the emphatic and systematic proclamation of what is. . .
> . Thus the omnipresent and impenetrable world of appearances is set up as the
> ideal.[174]

Even more, the culture industry ensures everyone is provided for. Everyone is incorporated into the system in some capacity, through belonging to "churches, clubs, professional associations, and other relationships," all of which are used as a means of social control. Survival within society for each individual depends upon not weighing "too little in the scales of this apparatus. Otherwise he will fall behind in life and finally

[171] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 114. Cf. Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (New York: Viking Press, 1985).

[172] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 116.

[173] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 118. Cf. Lewis on advertisements, value judgments, and *The Green Book* in Lewis, *Abolition*, 6-7.

[174] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 118.

go under."[175] Social stratification in terms of the standard of living is determined by degrees of adherence to the system. All who fail to make it in the system are deemed marked men, outsiders. Accordingly, they write, "The culture industry . . . reflects society's positive and negative provision for those it administers as direct human solidarity in the world of honest folk. No one is forgotten."[176] Thus, everyone has a place in the fully administered society of the culture industry, while at the same time resistant elements are carefully regulated. In a certain sense, this is the nature of culture and its civilizing process. But, the culture industry takes this to an unprecedented level: "Culture has always contributed to the subduing of revolutionary as well as of barbaric instincts. Industrial culture does something more. It inculcates the conditions on which implacable life is allowed to be lived at all."[177]

In actual fact, the success of the culture industry actually leads to "the abolition of the individual" in the process.[178] As the standardized mode of production reduces the individualization of products to a mere illusion (everything is really the same), likewise individuals are tolerated only to the extent that "their wholehearted identity with the universal is beyond question." Again, self-preservation depends upon compliance with the system. But, individuality is lost in the process, subsumed into mass culture. While it is true the advancement of bourgeois society included the promotion of the development of the individual, the fact is "all such progress of individuation has been at the expense of the individuality in whose name it took place."[179]

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[175] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 120.

[176] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 121. Cf. Theodor Adorno, "Culture and Administration," in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J. M. Bernstein, 2nd ed., Routledge Classics, vol. 20 (New York: Routledge, 2001).

[177] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 123.

[178] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 124.

[179] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 125.

The Cult of Cheapness

Adorno-Horkheimer proceed to describe how, in the culture industry, the products of film, radio, even chewing gum, are made so cheaply available to the public in such a way that both the culture system and those who run it are propped up, making them richer still. Again, "Something is served up for everyone." This they refer to as the "cult of cheapness."[180]

They further describe the effects of the cult of cheapness on a variety of aspects of society from art to education to civil discourse. The cheapness of mass-produced articles is "changing the commodity character of art itself." While art has always been a commodity, what is new is "the fact that art now dutifully admits to being a commodity, abjures its autonomy and proudly takes its place among consumer goods."[181] The power of the consumer market also results in the replacement of use value by exchange value: "Everything has value only in so far as it can be exchanged, not in so far as it is something in itself."[182]

This cheapening of culture also has deleterious effects on education. Since everyone must be provided for, this means making education easily available for all of society's members. But, this means the leveling of academic advantages and thus the lowering of educational standards. They explain, "The abolition of educational privilege by disposing of culture at bargain prices does not admit the masses to the preserves from which they were formerly excluded but, under the existing social conditions, contributes to the decay of education and the progress of barbaric incoherence."[183] Moreover, as the members of society are increasingly ill-educated, this results in a diminishment of respect and criticism: "the latter gives way to mechanical expertise, the former to the forgetful

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[180] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 126.

[181] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 127.

[182] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 128.

[183] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 130.

cult of celebrities. For consumers, nothing is expensive anymore."[184] Again, everything

is made cheap and easily accessible. In fact, culture is reduced to the level of the cheap

and easy advertisement.[185]

Moreover, the wielders of power also exercise their control through the high

costs of advertising, which flows back to the combines under their control, thus strictly

controlling who can participate in the system. Further control of language and style is

made possible through "advertising techniques," creating a propagandizing effect,

making it even easier to manipulate the masses inundated with marketing and advertising

slogans.[186] This extensive control of language also results in the cheapening of language.

As consumers model the language of the culture industry in their own speech, they

perpetuate culture as advertising themselves. In the process, "words change from

substantial carriers of meaning to signs devoid of qualities." Language is reduced to

communication, which is further reduced to mere designation.[187] Finally, the culture

industry's appropriation of language through advertising techniques results in a coldness

in human discourse and a loss of linguistic meaning.[188]

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[184] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 130. Interestingly, they write that "if the technology had its way the film would already be delivered to the apartment on the model of the radio." Again, this was 1944, and television was still in its beginnings. Imagine what they would have thought of not only today's transmitting of major broadcast networks but also the online streaming of Netflix, Amazon Prime, YouTube, and other services directly to a person's home television, personal computer, or cell phone device!

[185] They explain,

Culture is a paradoxical commodity. It is so completely subject to the law of exchange that it is no longer exchanged; it is so blindly equated with use that it can no longer be used. For this reason it merges with the advertisement. . . . Advertising is its elixir of life. But because its product ceaselessly reduces the pleasure it promises as a commodity to that mere promise, it finally coincides with the advertisement it needs on account of its own inability to please. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 131.

[186] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 132. They state, "Advertising becomes simply the art with which Goebbels presciently equated it, *l'art pour l'art*, advertising for advertising's sake, the pure representation of social power."

[187] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 133-34.

[188] They explain, "The blind and rapidly spreading repetition of designated words links advertising to the totalitarian slogan. . . . Countless people use words and expressions which they either have ceased to understand at all or use only according to their behavioral functions, just as trademarks adhere all the more compulsively to their objects the less their linguistic meaning is apprehended."

Like Enlightenment, the culture industry is totalitarian. Yet, all the while, the masses "are free to dance and amuse themselves."[189] They are even made free to choose the ideology of the culture industry. However, Adorno-Horkheimer demur, "freedom to choose an ideology, which always reflects economic coercion, everywhere proves to be freedom to be the same."[190] They conclude this fourth essay in a quite despairing tone:

> The most intimate reactions of human beings have become so entirely reified, even to themselves, that the idea of anything peculiar to them survives only in extreme abstraction: personality means hardly more than dazzling white teeth and freedom from body odor and emotions. That is the triumph of advertising in the culture industry: the compulsive imitation by consumers of cultural commodities which, at the same time, they recognize as false.[191]

Elements of Anti-Semitism:
Limits of Enlightenment

In their final essay, Adorno-Horkheimer point to the rise of anti-Semitism and National Socialism as the culmination of the barbaric darkness that had fallen over humanity due to the limits of enlightenment.[192] Thus, from Homer to Kant, to the rise of

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Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 135.

[189] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 135.

[190] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 135-36.

[191] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 136. In the original edition of their work (1944/47), after a paragraph break, this chapter ends with the remarks: "(to be continued)." Indeed, they went on to continue their critique of the culture industry in the following: Theodor Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J. M. Bernstein, 2nd ed., Routledge Classics, vol. 20 (New York: Routledge, 2001), especially "The Schema of Mass Culture" (61-97), "The Culture Industry Reconsidered" (98-106), and "Culture and Administration" (107-31); Theodor Adorno, *Prisms*, ed. Thomas McCarthy, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber, Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), especially "Cultural Criticism and Society," 17-34. Also, see Deborah Cook, *The Culture Industry Revisited: Theodor Adorno on Mass Culture* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996).

Adorno offers a helpful summary of their critique of the culture industry when he writes:

> The total effect of the culture industry is one of anti-enlightenment, in which . . . enlightenment, that is the progressive technical domination of nature, becomes mass deception and is turned into a means for fettering consciousness. It impedes the development of autonomous, independent individuals who judge and decide consciously for themselves. . . . If the masses have been unjustly reviled from above as masses, the culture industry is not among the least responsible for making them into masses and then despising them, while obstructing the emancipation for which human beings are as ripe as the productive forces of the epoch permit. "Culture Industry Reconsidered," 106.

[192] In their preface, Adorno-Horkheimer write of their final essay, "The section titled 'Elements of Anti-Semitism' deals with the reversion of enlightened civilization to barbarism in reality. The not merely theoretical but practical tendency toward self-destruction has been inherent in rationality

Hitler and the Nazis, Adorno-Horkheimer describe a trajectory of human rationality as one colossal disappointment.[193] For them, Auschwitz represents humanity's wretched failure, especially and the inevitable result of Enlightenment rationalism and the oppressive culture it produced in the twentieth century.

The Chosen People

They begin by introducing the concept of anti-Semitism and the hatred for the Jewish people. The fascist thesis regards the Jews as "the antirace, the negative principle as such; on their extermination the world's happiness depends."[194] The fascists have made the Jewish people a target for the "destructive urge which the wrong social order spontaneously produces. They are branded as absolute evil by absolute evil. In this sense they are indeed the chosen people." Moreover, in the image of the Jew the fascists project their own lust for "exclusive ownership, appropriation, unlimited power, and at any price." As a consequence, Adorno-Horkheimer state, "The Jew, burdened with his tormentors' guilt, mocked as their lord, they nail to the cross, endlessly repeating a sacrifice in whose power they are unable to believe."[195] The particular mode of life and appearance of the Jew represents a failure to adapt to the existing universal, the prevailing order of life. Thus, we finally come full circle. The dialectical intertwinement

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from the first, not only in the present phase when it is emerging nakedly. For this reason a philosophical prehistory of anti-Semitism is sketched. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xix.

[193] Peter Uwe Hohendahl explains, "What the authors of this path-breaking study had to say about Kant was mostly negative and hostile. . . . [T]he authors want to demonstrate that the sage of Konigsberg was very much part of a development that ultimately resulted in the triumph of Fascism in Europe." Peter Uwe Hohendahl, "Nature and the Autonomy of Art: Adorno as a Reader of Kant," *Philosophical Forum* 43, no. 3 (2012): 247, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*. However, Hohendahl also notes how in Adorno's postwar writings he provides a more positive assessment of Kant, and, though not a dogmatic return to Kant, he critically appropriates numerous elements (with modifications) from his epistemology, moral philosophy, and aesthetics, reviving an interest in Kantian philosophy. See Adorno, *Kant's* Critique of Pure Reason, as well as Theodor Adorno, *Problems of Moral Philosophy*, ed. Thomas Schröder, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000).

[194] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 137.

[195] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 137-38.

of enlightenment and power, "has been brought home to the Jews."[196]

Adorno-Horkheimer note how the driving force of anti-Semitism has always been "the urge . . . to make everyone the same." As such, anti-Semitism is just one manifestation of a type of mentality, whether individual or social, representing a "primeval-historical entrapment," a malady that can become "so deeply embedded in civilization" that the individual "cannot mitigate it through understanding." This is because rationality itself, having been tainted by power, and thus subject to the same malady, is immune to any plausible rational appeals and counterarguments.[197]

In due time, the blinded subject is unleashed in the form of anti-Semitic behavior. The blindness of anti-Semitism is due to its lack of intention. It is like a "release valve," in which the subject's rage is vented on those who stand out from the collective as powerless and vulnerable. Of course, no one is born an anti-Semite, and, in fact, the victims as well as the instigators are actually interchangeable depending on the constellation of power. Most are even ignorant of the reason for hating the Jews. But, the ones who do hate them, the fascists, motivated by a hate without reason, "construct a grandiose ideology . . . with fatuous talk of saving the family, the fatherland, humanity" in order to justify their malice. Eventually, however, this weak rationalization turns into an overwhelming impulse to blind, purposeless, violent action.[198]

And so, the Enlightenment promise becomes a failure. For the Enlightenment project, "The purpose of human rights was to promise happiness even where power was

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[196] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 138. They explain,

The harmonious society to which the liberal Jews declared their allegiance has finally been granted to them in the form of the national community. They believed that only anti-Semitism disfigured this order, which in reality cannot exist without disfiguring human beings. The persecution of the Jews, like any persecution, cannot be separated from that order. Its essence, however it may hide itself at times, is the violence which today is openly revealed (138-39).

[197] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 139.

[198] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 140.

lacking."[199] However, the "cheated masses" see through this promise as a lie, given the division of classes and their corresponding inequities. Consequently, they must continually repress any idea of happiness as illusory, a vain hope. But, this also leads to people reenacting this suppression of "their own longing" wherever this promise of happiness might appear to be realized among others in society. Accordingly, Adorno-Horkheimer describe how the "destructive fury of the civilized, who can never fully complete the painful process of civilization," is unleashed on the *other*, particularly the Jew.[200]

Jewish Scapegoat

The fact is the "present society . . . is scandalized by the Jew." For a society "in which no longer is politics merely business but business is the whole of politics," the Jew, "with his obsolete shopkeeper's mannerisms," is viewed as a "materialist, a haggler, who should make way for the pioneering spirit of those who have elevated business to an absolute."[201] Moreover, since the "specific economic purpose" of bourgeois anti-Semitism is the concealment of domination in production, in which the master profits at the expense of the workers, the Jew becomes the scapegoat for the economic injustice that exists within the bourgeois economy.

The Jews participated heavily in the circulation sphere over time, an economic sphere later accused of being a source of exploitation. Accordingly, the Jews took on "the hatred so long directed at that sphere."[202] Despite the many great achievements of various prominent Jews, the Jews were never fully admitted into European society. Their presence was that of a protected class or group, dependent upon their protectors, be they

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[199] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 141.

[200] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 141.

[201] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 141-42.

[202] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 143.

emperors, rulers, or the state apparatus. These protectors, themselves wealthy patrons of the Jews, used them as economic intermediaries and thus protected them "against the masses who had to foot the bill for progress."[203]

Furthermore, "The Jews were the colonizers of progress." Their role as merchants aided in disseminating Roman civilization throughout Gentile Europe. Accordingly, the Jews "became, in keeping with their patriarchal religion, representatives of urban, civic, and finally industrial conditions." But, these cultural achievements, coupled with their role as "bearers of capitalist modes of existence," made them primary targets of the hatred of those who were disadvantaged by this economic system. The sufferers included, for example, craftsmen and farmers undermined by capitalist modes of production.[204]

Thus, Adorno-Horkheimer describe the tragic irony of the Jewish fate: "They who propagated individualism, abstract law, the concept of the person, have been debased to a *species*. They who were never allowed untroubled ownership of the civic right which should have granted them human dignity are again called 'the Jews' without distinction."[205]

Religious Roots of Anti-Semitism

Although accusing the Jews of unbelief is no longer sufficient to incite the masses against them, religious hostility, linked to the historical persecution of the Jews, remains an important factor in modern anti-Semitism. This is so even though "Nationalist anti-Semitism seeks to disregard religion. It claims to be concerned with purity of race and nation. Its exponents notice that people have long ceased to trouble

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[203] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 143.

[204] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 143.

[205] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 143-44. See Anson Rabinbach, "Why Were the Jews Sacrificed?: The Place of Anti-Semitism in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*," *New German Critique* no. 81 (Fall 2000): 49-64, *MasterFILE Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

themselves about eternal salvation." Yet, its religious tradition is simply "incorporated as cultural heritage," and so fascism benefits from both the public disinterest in matters of personal salvation and the culturalization of religion. The peoples' unchanneled spiritual longing "is guided into racial-nationalist rebellion. . . . In this way religion as an institution is partly meshed directly into the system and partly transposed into the pomp of mass culture and parades." As an appalling result, "Among the 'German Christians,' all that remained of the religion of love was anti-Semitism."[206]

Adorno-Horkheimer specifically target the historic role of Christianity in the rise of anti-Semitism. They compare and contrast Christianity and Judaism in terms of their conception of God, God's relation to both nature and human nature, and the function of sacrifice in the two religions. Whereas Judaism represented crucial steps of enlightened progress from primitive, pagan mythical and magical beliefs and practices, Christianity is a regression due to its reversion back to forms of ideology, idolatry, and magical rituals (i.e., the Eucharist and the doctrine of transubstantiation). Furthermore, the church's promise of salvation to believers is fundamentally fraudulent, a false guarantee or assurance. The horrific historical consequence of this regression is that believers, who "with bad conscience convinced themselves of Christianity as a secure possession, were obliged to confirm their eternal salvation by the worldly ruin of those who refused to make the murky sacrifice of reason. That is the religious origin of anti-Semitism."[207]

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[206] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 144-45. In an editor's note, Noerr explains that Adorno-Horkheimer's phrase "German Christians" refers to the Protestant movement *Deutsche Christen*, which sought to align themselves with the principles of National Socialism and Nazi ideology. Of course, it is important to note not all Germans who professed to be Christian supported the Nazis. Indeed, many like Dietrich Bonhoeffer and other members of the Confessing Church (*Bekennende Kirche*) risked and lost their lives opposing the Nazis.

[207] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 147. The connections Adorno-Horkheimer make between Judaism, Christianity, and the origins of anti-Semitism are discussed further in chap. 6 below.

Appeal to Idiosyncrasy

They write, "The stock reply of all anti-Semites is the appeal to idiosyncrasy."[208] Idiosyncrasy is tied to what is peculiar; the universal is whatever is capable of fitting "into the context of social utility." Thus, the former is deemed unnatural while the latter is considered natural. The natural is whatever is absorbed by the conceptual order, the cultural schema. What is not assimilated, however, "is felt as intrusive and arouses a compulsive aversion."[209]

Whereas mimesis is the process that seeks to adapt to otherness, the civilizing process succeeds by eliminating the unassimilated, the unnatural. Civilization replaces "mimetic behavior proper" with rational praxis, or work. Accordingly, "Uncontrolled mimesis is proscribed," hardening the individual ego against mimetic behavior. Moreover, Adorno-Horkheimer state, "The transition from reflecting mimesis to controlled reflection completes its formation."[210] The repetitive nature of science, the mathematical formula, and the automating mental processes of technology, are all offered as forms of regression and sublimated mimicry. In each case, the individual is made to become increasingly hardened against nature rather than adapting to it.[211] Eventually, the "pitiless ban on regression" becomes totalizing, and even the "mere existence of the other is a provocation."[212]

Somewhat ironically, they further explain how fascism is driven by a deep

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[208] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 147. They explain how the emancipation of society from anti-Semitism depends on the content of that idiosyncrasy being "raised to the level of a concept" and becoming "aware of its own senselessness" (148).

[209] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 148.

[210] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 148. For a discussion of the concept of mimesis in Adorno-Horkheimer, see Steven Helmling, "'Immanent Critique' and 'Dialectical Mimesis' in Adorno and Horkheimer's 'Dialectic of Enlightenment,'" *Boundary 2* 32, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 97-117, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

[211] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 149.

[212] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 150.

desire for the mimetic behavior, the idiosyncratic, it seeks to destroy.[213] Consequently, the fascist mechanism of domination needs the Jews as an outlet, as a sacrifice for the dominant order. The Jew is peculiar, different, "antithetical and alien."[214] As the dominant order becomes increasingly estranged from nature, it reverts to "mere nature." This reversion takes the form of projection onto the Jews of its own "subliminal craving . . . to revert to mimetic sacrificial practices." Once rationalized through projection onto the Jews, the primeval urge "can be acted out in reality."[215] Paradoxically, Adorno-Horkheimer state, "Civilization is the triumph of society over nature—a triumph which transforms everything into mere nature."[216] Hence, the persecution of the Jews represents both the triumph and failure of civilization.

Anti-Semitism and false projection. Adorno-Horkheimer offer a psychoanalytic explanation of anti-Semitism in what is called *pathic* or *false projection*. False projection "is the reverse of genuine mimesis and has deep affinities to the repressed."[217] They proceed with an extended explanation of this psychological phenomenon as, in part, an explanation of the mentality of the fascist or anti-Semite.[218]

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[213] They describe how, "The psychic energy harnessed by political anti-Semitism is this rationalized idiosyncrasy. All the gesticulations devised by the *Führer* and his followers are pretexts for giving way to the mimetic temptation. . . . They detest the Jews and imitate them constantly." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 151.

[214] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 152.

[215] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 153.

[216] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 153.

[217] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 153.

[218] They write, "If mimesis makes itself resemble its surroundings, false projection makes its surroundings resemble itself." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 153. As a result, they explain, "Impulses which are not acknowledged by the subject and yet are his, are attributed to the object: the prospective victim" (154). Moreover, this comes about due to the subject's lack of reflection on the object as well as a lack of self-reflection. Hence, they further explain,

> Instead of the voice of conscience, it hears voices; instead of inwardly examining itself in order to draw up a protocol of its own lust for power, it attributes to others the Protocol of the Elders of Zion. . . . In the sickness of the individual, humanity's sharpened intellectual apparatus is turned once more against humanity, regressing to the blind instrument of hostility it was in animal prehistory, and as which, for the species, it has never ceased to operate in relation to the rest of nature (156).

Pathic projection is rooted in the development of enlightenment thought and its bifurcation of subject and object. They explain, "Objectifying thought, like its pathological counterpart, has the arbitrariness of a subjective purpose extraneous to the matter itself and, in forgetting the matter, does to it in thought the violence which later will be done in practice."[219]

The fascist crisis is a "special case of paranoid delusion," which grew out of the increased objectification of thinking, producing what they refer to as the "unconditional realism of civilized humanity, which culminates in fascism." This type of thinking "depopulates nature" and eventually does the same for nations.[220] Both a half-educated social consciousness and an increasingly commodified culture contribute to this reification of consciousness. As a result, "the self-reflection of the mind, which counteracts paranoia is disabled."[221] The disabling of self-reflection within society finally results in a totalitarian phase of government in which "the system of delusion, as the *ultima ratio*" is imposed "on the majority of the administered, who have already been softened up by big politics and the culture industry."[222]

Furthermore, and very importantly, the erasure of reflective consciousness also leads to the *liquidation of conscience*. They explain,

> Conscience consisted in the self's devotion to something substantial outside itself, in the ability to make the true concerns of others one's own. This ability involves reflection as an interpenetration of receptivity and imagination. Because the abolition of the independent economic subject by big industry . . . is irresistibly eroding the basis of moral decisions, reflection, too, must wither. The soul, as the possibility of guilt aware of itself, decays. Conscience is deprived of objects, since

It is noteworthy that they refer here to "the voice of conscience," seemingly treating it as normative. But, what is this voice of conscience on their view, and what accounts for its normativity? These questions are explored in chap. 5 below.

[219] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 159.

[220] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 159.

[221] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 163.

[222] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 163.

individuals' responsibility for themselves and their dependents is replaced—although still under the old moral title—by their mere performance for the apparatus.[223]

Thus, pathic, paranoid individual subjects, robbed of individuality by being absorbed into mass culture by the culture industry, their reflective consciousness disabled, and their conscience eroded, finally seek to eradicate all idiosyncrasy wherever and in whatever form it may appear.

Chosen by chance. It is really an historical accident that the Jews become the targets of the powerful minority. In the end, it is by chance that the dominating power, motivated by a "despairing self-preservation" selects the Jew as the target for projecting "the guilt for its terror."[224] The intertwinement of enlightenment and power and its failure to emancipate the human mind would inevitably have led to violence and victimization of some people group. But, historically it happened to be the Jews who took on the image of the defeated.[225]

At this point, Adorno-Horkheimer reintroduce the antidote to enlightenment barbarism and anti-Semitism—*reconciliation*. Moreover, they present a vision of reconciliation that is worth quoting at length:

> Reconciliation is Judaism's highest concept, and expectation its whole meaning. The paranoid reaction stems from the incapacity for expectation. The anti-Semites are realizing their negative absolute through power, by transforming the world into the hell they have always taken it to be. A radical change would depend on whether the ruled, in face of absolute madness, could master themselves and hold the madness back. Only the liberation of thought from power, the abolition of violence, could realize the idea which has been unrealized until now: that the Jew is a human

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[223] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 164.

[224] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 164.

[225] They explain how it is the Jews who possessed the particular

characteristics which must make totalitarian rule their mortal enemy: happiness without power, reward without work, a homeland without frontiers, religion without myth. These features are outlawed by the ruling powers because they are secretly coveted by the ruled. The former can survive only as long as the latter turn what they yearn for into an object of hate. They do so through pathic projection, since even hatred leads to union with the object—in destruction. It is the negative of reconciliation. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 165.

being. This would be a step away from the anti-Semitic society, which drives both Jews and others into sickness, and toward the human one. Such a step would fulfill the fascist lie by contradicting it: the Jewish question would indeed prove the turning-point of history. By conquering the sickness of the mind which flourishes on the rich soil of self-assertion unhampered by reflection, humanity would cease to be the universal antirace and become the species which, as nature, is more than mere nature, in that it is aware of its own image. The individual and social emancipation from domination is the countermovement to false projection, and no longer would Jews seek, by resembling it, to appease the evil senselessly visited on them as on all the persecuted, whether animals or human beings.[226]

Needless to say, Adorno-Horkheimer are not optimistic such reconciliation will be achieved given the power of the economic system and the culture industry's control over human consciousness. Such power and control perpetuate a major impediment to reconciliation—*stereotyped thinking*, and "Today only that thinking is left."[227] In the modern world, stereotyped thinking takes the form of people voting between totalities in the form of ticket voting. They explain, "The anti-Semitic psychology has largely been replaced by mere acceptance of the whole fascist ticket."[228] Anti-Semitism has moved from being a psychological impulse to becoming a plank in the party platform.[229]

Negative Hope: Breaking through the Limits of Enlightenment?

Finally, Adorno-Horkheimer conclude this essay with a glimmer of hope for enlightenment and the possibility of reconciliation. Consistent with their paradoxical

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[226] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 165.

[227] Section VII, 165-72, the basis for the following discussion, was not contained in the original 1944 edition of the text but was added later after the war. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 273n[165].

[228] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 166.

[229] And thus, "When the masses accept the reactionary ticket containing the clause against the Jews, they are obeying social mechanisms in which individual people's experiences of Jews play no part." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 166. This is due to the effects of mass production on social consciousness in which "stereotypes replace intellectual categories." Judgment is exchanged for "blind subsumption" (167). Interestingly, they explain, "In the age of the 'three hundred basic words' the ability to exercise judgment, and therefore to distinguish between true and false, is vanishing" (167). Could a more fitting statement be made to describe contemporary culture with its soundbites, "tweets," and social media posts? All the while, Adorno-Horkheimer continue, the powerful through the economic process and the culture industry further liquidate the individual subject, making both the total administration of society and the persecution of the Jew even easier to achieve: "The disregard for the subject makes things easy for the administration. Ethnic groups are transported to different latitudes; individuals labeled 'Jew' are dispatched to the gas chambers" (167).

style, they find a loophole of sorts located within what is also the present source of despair—the *voting ticket*. They explain,

> The tendency according to which anti-Semitism now exists only as one item on an interchangeable ticket gives irrefutable reason to hope for its end. The Jews are being murdered at a time when the leaders could replace the anti-Semitic plank in their platform just as easily as their followers can be transplanted from one location of wholly rationalized production to another.[230]

The fascist ticket is so vacuous, so mendacious in what it offers that the masses are capable of viewing it as a "substitute for something better only by desperate efforts" on their part. And here Adorno-Horkheimer find a wedge for truth, a negative truth at least, with which they conclude their essay:

> While it admits no truth by which it might be measured, its absurdity is so monstrous as to bring truth negatively within reach, so that it can be kept apart from those deprived of judgment only by their total abstention from thought. Enlightenment itself, having mastered itself and assumed its own power, could break through the limits of enlightenment.[231]

So, what do Adorno-Horkheimer offer as a proposed solution for this tragic picture they have painted for their readers? They seem to hold out a tenuous hope for their method of determinate negation based on human self-reflection and criticism of the oppressive forces of society. Enlightenment could break through its own dialectic of enlightenment and myth. This is central to their project of critical theory.

Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to provide a clear presentation and explanation of some of the main ideas and arguments in Adorno-Horkheimer's major work of philosophical, moral, and cultural criticism. This also involved making connections between *Dialectic*, their other writings, and various secondary sources for further elucidation of Adorno-Horkheimer's thought. Thus, the previous chapter and the present

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[230] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 171-72.

[231] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 172.

one have provided the groundwork for the more rigorous evaluation and critical comparative analysis to come in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 4

ON RATIONALITY

Introduction

"To see through all things is the same as not to see."[1]

"Blindness encompasses everything because it comprehends nothing."[2]

In the preceding two chapters, the aim was to provide a careful examination of the main ideas and arguments of Lewis' *The Abolition of Man* and Adorno-Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. In this chapter, and the two to follow, the goal is twofold: first, to provide a comparative critical analysis of these two works along the lines of three major themes: rationality, morality, and culture; and second, to show that Lewis, given his Christian theological and philosophical foundations, provides the more cogent and coherent evaluation of the problems for Western civilization due to the excesses of Enlightenment rationalism. Although the primary focus is on the authors' views offered in *Abolition* and *Dialectic*, this investigation also draws upon many of their other writings, as well as the secondary literature, for further illumination of these two significant texts of twentieth-century criticism.

Generally speaking, this chapter explores the authors' views on reason and rationality as part of their philosophical critique of Enlightenment rationalism. More specifically, it probes five key areas: (1) the problematic mythical nature of

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[1] C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man: Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools*, Riddell Memorial Lectures, 15th Series (London: Oxford University Press, 1944; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 81. Hereafter cited as *Abolition*.

[2] Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, Cultural Memory in the Present, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Amsterdam: Querido, 1947; repr., Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 141. Hereafter *Dialectic*.

Enlightenment reason and rationality, (2) the insurmountable problem of aporetic reason in *Dialectic*, (3) the nature and limits of human reason, and (4) the dialectical relationship between reason and imagination.

The Myth of Enlightenment

This section provides a critical discussion of the origins, nature, and excesses of Enlightenment rationalism, essentially explaining how and why, according to Lewis and Adorno-Horkheimer, the Enlightenment project has failed to liberate and emancipate humanity. I explore their views related to the following five themes: enchantment and disenchantment, positivism and instrumental reason, reductionism and the subject-object distinction, and, finally, some examples of how Enlightenment indeed reverts to myth.

From Enchantment to Disenchantment: The Abolition of Myth

Of course, it is Max Weber who famously wrote of the "disenchantment of the world" in his essay "Science as Vocation."[3] More recently, Peter Gay writes on the disenchanting effects of Enlightenment. Gay writes, "The Enlightenment may be summed up in two words: criticism and power." Interestingly, he refers to "the central argument" of his work by the phrase "the dialectic of the Enlightenment."[4] According to

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[3] Max Weber, "Wissenschaft als Beruf," in *Gesammetlte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* (1922; repr., Tubingen: Mohr 1968); or see the English translation Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958).

[4] Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: The Rise of Paganism* (New York: Knopf, 1966; repr., New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), xi. Commenting on his subtitle for the book: "I see the philosophes' rebellion succeeding in both of its aims: theirs was a paganism directed against their Christian inheritance and dependent upon the paganism of classical antiquity, but it was also a *modern* paganism, emancipated from classical thought as much as from Christian dogma. The ancients taught the philosophes the uses of criticism, but it was modern philosophers who taught them the possibilities of power" (xi; emphasis original). The implications of Gay's comments (though he would probably disagree) would be that the philosophes' divorce of criticism from the ancient principles of the *Tao* resulted in a power vacuum filled by the modern quest for power.

Moreover, given the use of the definite article in the title of his work, Gay is committed to the view that "there were many philosophes in the eighteenth century, but there was only *one* Enlightenment" (3; emphasis added). However, many argue it is more accurate to speak of the *Enlightenments* (plural) rather than *the* Enlightenment (singular). See W. Andrew Hoffecker, "Enlightenments and Awakenings:

Gay, the Enlightenment pursued a "a vastly ambitious program, a program of secularism, humanity, cosmopolitanism, and freedom, above all, freedom in its many forms—freedom from arbitrary power, freedom of speech, freedom of trade, . . . freedom, in a word, of moral man to make his own way in the world."[5] Moreover, once again sounding very similar to Adorno-Horkheimer, Gay further claims, "In fact, the historical writings of the Enlightenment were part of a comprehensive effort . . . to secure rational control of the world, reliable knowledge of the past, and freedom from the pervasive domination of myth."[6]

Both Lewis and the critical theorists describe the Enlightenment as the growth and dominance of a materialistic or naturalistic metaphysic coupled with a scientistic or positivistic epistemology. These metaphysical and epistemological developments (along with others moral and cultural) go hand in hand with the disenchantment of the world, which included the eradication of anything associated with magic, superstition, the supernatural, miracle, or, in a word, *myth*.[7] As Gay explains, "In proclaiming the omnipotence of criticism, the philosophes called, at the same time, for a disenchanted universe, an end to myth."[8] Such a move was considered the key to human emancipation (or *freedom from*) and liberation (or *freedom to*). Gay further explains disenchantment meant "*All things are equally subject to criticism*."[9] Given the philosophes' confidence

The Beginning of Modern Culture Wars," in *Revolutions in Worldview: Understanding the Flow of Western Thought*, ed. W. Andrew Hoffecker (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2007).

[5] Gay, *Enlightenment*, 3.

[6] Gay, *Enlightenment*, 36.

[7] Jong-Tae Lee writes, "The German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) famously contended that the movement of Western history could be understood as a progressive elimination of magic (*Zauber*) from the world—thus his term 'the disenchantment of the world' (*die Entzauberung der Welt*)." Jong-Tae Lee, "'Into the Region of Awe': C. S. Lewis, Wonder and the Re-enchantment of the World" (PhD diss., Graduate Theological Union, 2015), 1, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

[8] Gay, *Enlightenment*, 145-46. Furthermore, Gay explains, "To be disenchanted is not to give way to jaded, supercilious skepticism, but to shift canons of proof and direction of worship. What is at work in the incredulity of the philosophes is . . . an expansion of the natural. The disenchanted universe of the Enlightenment is a natural universe" (148).

[9] Gay, *Enlightenment*, 150; emphasis original.

in scientific empiricism and the scientific method, they believed this alone could provide human liberation or emancipation through the criticism of myth, superstition, religion, falsehood and a whole hosts of ills that plagued mankind. Gay writes, "In short, the philosophes saw the Renaissance as the first act of a great drama in which the Enlightenment itself was the last—the great drama of the disenchantment of the European mind."[10] Moreover, disenchantment meant substituting secularization for the sacralization of the world, causing many to write of "the *spiritual* crisis of modernity."[11]

Positivism and Instrumental Reason

One of the results of the disenchantment of the world is the rise of positivism, a position which Lewis and the critical theorists ardently oppose.[12] Positivism restricts knowledge of reality to "facts" or what can be rationalized, quantified, and calculated by the human mind according to its rational schema. Adorno-Horkheimer argue, "In the belief that without strict limitation to the observation of facts and the calculation of probabilities the cognitive mind would be overreceptive to charlatanism and superstition, that system is preparing arid ground for the greedy acceptance of charlatanism and superstition."[13] In an uncanny parallel of language, Lewis expresses the same concern, when he writes, "Gaius and Titius may have honestly misunderstood the pressing educational need of the moment. They see the world around them swayed by emotional

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[10] Gay, *Enlightenment*, 279. Gay refers to the "disenchanted *secular* method of the Enlightenment" (335; emphasis added).

[11] Lee, "Into the Region of Awe," i.

[12] Positivism was founded by Auguste Comte (1798-1857), French philosopher, founder of the modern discipline of sociology. Comte's views were later developed into logical positivism (or logical empiricism), eventually known as neo-Positivism, by German philosopher, physicist, and founder of the Vienna Circle, Moritz Schlick (1882-1936). Other prominent advocates of neo-Positivism included English philosopher A. J. Ayer (1910-89) and Rudolph Carnap (1891-1970), German-American philosopher, member of the Vienna Circle. See Auguste Comte, *The Course in Positive Philosophy* (1830-42) and *A General View of Positivism* (1848); Mortiz Schlick, *General Theory of Knowledge* (1918; 2nd ed., 1925); A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic* (1936) and *The Problem of Knowledge* (1956); and Rudolph Carnap, *The Logical Structure of the World* (1928) and *The Logical Syntax of Language* (1934).

[13] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xv-xvi.

propaganda—they have learned from tradition that youth is sentimental—and they conclude that the best thing they can do is to fortify the minds of young people against emotion."[14]

Yet, despite its emphasis on reason over against emotion, positivism reduces objective or substantive reason to subjective or instrumental reason.[15] Adorno-Horkheimer claim this seeming "triumph of subjectivity" is "bought with the obedient subordination of reason to what is immediately at hand."[16] This is the opposite of what it is to "grasp existing things as such," instead of merely recording "their abstract spatial-temporal relationships, by which they can then be seized." The thinking of existing things "as mediated conceptual moments which are only fulfilled by revealing their social, historical, and human meaning—this whole aspiration of knowledge is abandoned."[17] For Adorno-Horkheimer, knowledge is not acquired through the subordination of reason to what is immediately at hand but through "the determining negation of whatever is directly at hand."[18] By contrast, on positivism, truth (*Wahrheit*) is reduced to what can be defined in terms of rational calculation and classification. But,

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[14] Lewis, *Abolition*, 13.

[15] Adorno-Horkheimer refer to this form of reason using a variety of terms, including the following: the "objectification of mind," "dominant reason," "reification of thought," "instrumentalization of thought," "objectified thought," "subjective reason," "antireason," "industrial reason," "spurious reason," "self-estranged reason," "purposive-rationality" (*Zweckrationalität*), and others. In his foreword (written in 1967) to *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, Horkheimer introduces the fundamental distinction between substantive and instrumental rationality. He writes, "'Reason' for a long period meant the activity of understanding and assimilating the eternal ideas which were to function as goals for men. Today, on the contrary, it is not only the business but the essential work of reason to find means for the goals one adopts at any given time." Max Horkheimer, *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. Matthew J. O'Donnell et al., Radical Thinkers (New York: Seabury Press, 1974; repr., New York: Verso, 2013), foreword, para. 1, Kindle. Notice Horkheimer seems to acknowledge the problems associated with Enlightenment reason developed after reason was severed from the understanding of eternal ideas (as ends), which reduces reason to the role of establishing means to ends, or a *means-ends rationality*. Lewis also discusses this problem as a reduction of reason from *intellectus* and *ratio* to merely *ratio* (to be discussed further below).

[16] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 20.

[17] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 20.

[18] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 20.

this classifying knowledge is not "the knowledge which really apprehends the object."[19]

The inevitable result of positivism with its reduction of human knowledge to a calculating reason is the stripping down of the world of objects to what can be rationalized by the human mind, or made to fit the rational schema. Therefore, whatever is not, at least in principle, explicable in terms of human understanding is said to not exist. One by one, the qualities of objects are reduced to measurable quantities, and these quantifications are even further reduced to nothing more than formal mathematical abstractions—thus the loss of concrete existence, and a resulting *antirealism*, or the rejection of a theory-independent reality.[20] This leads to the increased domination and subjugation of nature for human ends as well. According to John Hughes, the method of positivism "leads to "a 'secularization' of the world by abolishing all qualities and substantive teleology," all for the primary goal of self-preservation, or preservation of the subject over against the object.[21]

Hughes points out the intriguing connection between Adorno-Horkheimer's *Dialectic* and theology, which reveals a parallel with Lewis, although Hughes does not mention the latter lay theologian. Nevertheless, Hughes writes, "At the most basic level, theology and the Frankfurt school share a common enemy in positivism, and the critique that Adorno, Horkheimer, and others offer can be helpful to theology in questioning the hegemony of scientific knowledge which excludes theology."[22] Likewise, Adorno-Horkheimer and Lewis make for interesting bedfellows in their shared critique of positivism.

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[19] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 10.

[20] For a great introduction to the differences between metaphysical realism and antirealism, see J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), chap. 16, "The Realism-Antirealism Debate," 326-45.

[21] John Hughes, "Unspeakable Utopia: Art and the Return to the Theological in the Marxism of Adorno and Horkheimer," *Cross Currents* 53, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 482, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

[22] Hughes, "Unspeakable Utopia," 481.

Reductionism: Subject Is Object Is
Subject Is Object Is . . .

What is more, this positivistic process of reduction does not stop with the world of objects but is eventually extended to the rationalizing subject. Adorno-Horkheimer write, "Abstraction, the instrument of enlightenment, stands in the same relationship to its objects as fate, whose concept it eradicates: as liquidation."[23] Hence, the leveling rule of reason is abstraction, which results in the liquidation of the world of objects. But, on positivism the subject is just one more object of nature. Not only then is nature reduced to mere appearances, but the subject of the appearances is erased in the process as well. Both the perceiver and the perceived are lost; the subject-object (or knower-known) distinction vanishes. Accordingly, the disenchantment of the world, taking the forms of increased secularization and demythologization in its critique of reason, leads to the destruction of reason itself. As Hughes explains, "Rational scepticism can no longer be held at the door to preserve the status quo, as Kant had done. The onslaught of demythologization is relentless . . . . Reason itself cannot escape this demythologizing; the Enlightenment's quest for demystification becomes self-destructive, exposing its own nature as just another myth."[24]

Interestingly, Lewis, in multiple places, describes a problematic Enlightenment process similar to Adorno-Horkheimer, one which he agrees has a long history and involves the gradual and eventual subjectivising of the subject due to the deterioration of

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[23] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 9. The concept of liquidation is also a prominent theme in Lewis' writings. In *Abolition*, recall Lewis states, "Once we killed bad men: now we *liquidate* unsocial elements" (74; emphasis added). Elsewhere, he claims, "The first symptom is in language. When to 'kill' becomes to '*liquidate*' the process has begun. The pseudo-scientific word disinfects the thing of blood and tears, or pity and shame, and mercy itself can be regarded as a sort of untidiness." C. S. Lewis, "A Reply to Professor Haldane," in *Of Other Worlds: Essays and Stories*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1966; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002), 84; emphasis added. In *That Hideous Strength*, chap. 2, we find the character Lord Feverstone (a member of "The Progressive Element") arguing for the "*liquidation* of backward races" (40; emphasis added). Also, chap. 4 (pp. 72-91) of the book is titled "The Liquidation of Anachronisms." C. S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength: A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups* (London: John Lane the Bodley Head, 1945; repr., New York: Scribner, 2003).

[24] Hughes, "Unspeakable Utopia," 482.

the subject-object distinction. In *Abolition*, he describes this as the tragic reversal of man's conquest of nature into nature's conquest of man. Moreover, this results from the adoption of a "nothing but" philosophy. The world is *nothing but* appearances, the appearances are *nothing but* subjective qualities of the human mind, the human mind is *nothing but* the brain, the brain is *nothing but* a by-product of natural causes, the natural causes are *nothing but* the by-products of necessary and chance processes of nature. Since these processes are inherently nonrational, the reasoning subject is finally reduced to *nothing but* a complex bundle of nonrational processes of nature, which of course is only a subjective appearance.[25]

In his *English Literature*, Lewis describes a substitution of one conception of the universe ("genial or animistic") for another ("mechanical") in which the world of the former is *emptied* of its contents. The emptying process begins with indwelling spirits and continues all the way down to various qualia including "colors, smells, and tastes," anything that does not fit the rational schema of classification. Everything the mind touches ("rich like Midas") becomes material for scientific calculation and objectification, and thus "dead and cold." The result is not a full-fledged materialism but a dualistic division between mind and matter. In time, this process ensures "the loss of the old mythical imagination," which is replaced by "the personified abstraction."[26]

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[25] See Lewis, *Miracles: A Preliminary Study* (New York: Macmillan, 1947; repr., with revision of chap. 3, London: Collins-Fontana Books, 1960; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001), especially chaps. 2-5.

[26] C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama*, The Oxford History of English Literature, vol. 3 (1954; repr., London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 3-4.

Quite paradoxically, although Adorno-Horkheimer were committed materialists, they seem to hold in tension something like the dualistic conception Lewis describes here, rejecting both a dogmatic materialism and a dogmatic idealism in their view of the subject-object relation. Lewis understood this dualistic tension very well based upon his own experience. He once shared this conception in his pre-conversion years. In his first published work, *Spirits in Bondage: A Cycle of Lyrics*, originally written under the pseudonym Clive Hamilton, he recites several poems representing a cosmic conflict between spirit and material existence, in which spirit (or mind) is presented as good and matter (nature) is evil. Many of these poetic depictions grew out of his horrific combat experiences while fighting in trench warfare during WWI. See C. S. Lewis, *Spirits in Bondage: A Cycle of Lyrics*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: William Hienemann, 1919; repr., San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984). For further discussion of this period of Lewis' life relating to his philosophical development, see Adam James Barkman, "The Philosophical Christianity of C. S. Lewis: Its Sources, Content and Formation" (PhD diss., Free University

Thus, Lewis describes a reductionism based on a process of abstraction very similar to Adorno-Horkheimer. However, unlike Adorno-Horkheimer, Lewis considers the loss of the "mythical imagination" to be a *real loss*, the impetus for the reduction of the conception of the universe to nothing but an abstraction.

In his essay "The Empty Universe," Lewis elaborates further on the emptying process. Even more, he describes it as part and parcel of a "movement of thought which has been going on since the beginning of philosophy."[27] This is similar to Adorno-Horkheimer's assessment that enlightenment reason did not begin with the historical period known as the Enlightenment, but rather its genealogical roots run deep in the history of the human subject's development.[28] Here the emptying process is a "single one-way progression," as items are taken from the world and transferred from the object's side (objective) to the subject's side (subjective) of the account. As such, they are given a new classification made to fit the new systemization of knowledge. They are "classified as our sensations, thoughts, images or emotions," all mental phenomena belonging to the subject. But, this is at the expense of the object as it is continually stripped of its properties or qualities, even "solidity itself as solidity was originally imagined," leaving one to wonder what can actually be known of the object at all. Ironically, what is supposed to be an "advance of knowledge" steadily reduces the object to something unknowable, even nonexistent.[29]

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of Amsterdam, 2009), http://dare.ubvu.vu.nl/bitstream/handle/1871/13270/8622.pdf?sequence=5; later published as Adam Barkman, *C. S. Lewis & Philosophy as a Way of Life: A Comprehensive Historical Examination of His Philosophical Thoughts* (Allentown, PA: Zossima, 2009).

[27] Lewis, "The Empty Universe," in *Present Concerns: A Compelling Collection of Timely, Journalistic Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Fount, 1986; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002), 81.

[28] See Joel Whitebook, "The *Urgeschichte* of Subjectivity Reconsidered," *New German Critique* no. 81 (2000): 125-41, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*; emphasis original.

[29] Lewis, "Empty Universe," 81-82. Cf. Lewis: "It is a disastrous discovery . . . that we exist. I mean, it is disastrous when instead of merely attending to a rose we are forced to think of ourselves looking at the rose, with a certain type of mind and a certain type of eyes. It is disastrous because, if you are not very careful, the color of the rose gets attributed to our optic nerves and its scent to our noses, and in the end there is no rose left." C. S. Lewis, "'Bulverism' or, The Foundation of 20th Century Thought," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,

Yet, the situation worsens. As the subject is "gorged, inflated, at the expense" of the object, instead of actual growth the subject is diminished in the process. As soul, self, or mind is demythologized, the subject too is transferred over to the subjective side of the account! Lewis writes,

> Animism, apparently, begins at home. We, who have personified all other things, turn out to be ourselves mere personifications. Man is indeed akin to the gods: that is, he is no less phantasmal than they. . . . There never was a Subjective account into which we could transfer the items which the Object had lost. There is no "consciousness" to contain, as images or private experiences, all the lost gods, colors, and concepts. *Consciousness* is "not the sort of noun that can be used that way."[30]

Notice with the abolishing of the subject comes the elimination of any subjective account of the world. Consciousness has been eliminated as another myth to be expunged. Lewis further explains, "And thus we arrive at a result uncommonly like zero. While we were reducing the world to almost nothing we deceived ourselves with the fancy that all its lost qualities were being kept safe (if in a somewhat humbled condition) as 'things in our own mind.' Apparently we had no mind of the sort required. The Subject is as empty as the Object."[31]

Another description of this emptying process deserves mentioning. This one comes from Lewis' later work titled *The Discarded Image*. Here, Lewis describes the process variously as emptying or *internalization*. He writes, "To understand this process fully would be to grasp that great movement of internalization, and that consequent

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2002), 271.

[30] Lewis, "Empty Universe," 81-82; emphasis original. Cf. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 2-5 on "the extirpation of animism."

[31] Lewis, "Empty Universe," 83. Leslie P. Fairfield explains, "For the modern analytical mind ends by analyzing and dismissing mind itself. By insisting on strict 'objectivity,' by treating human beings merely as objects to be analyzed scientifically, the . . . scientist concludes that mind is only a by-product of matter. . . . The schizoid mentality of modernity ends in self-erasure. And Nature absorbs mind back into herself." Leslie P. Fairfield, "Fragmentation and Hope: The Healing of the Modern Schisms in *That Hideous Strength*," in *The Pilgrim's Guide: C. S. Lewis and the Art of Witness*, ed. David Mills (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 153. Cf. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 20-21 on the extirpation of the subject.

aggrandizement of man and desiccation of the outer universe."[32] As in his earlier essay,

Lewis describes an enlarging of the subject at the expense of the object. Once again,

although the process begins by an emptying of the world, it eventually leads to the

emptying of the self. He states, "[T]he subject himself is discounted as merely

subjective; we only think that we think. Having eaten up everything else, he eats himself

up too. And where we 'go from that' is a dark question."[33] Also, like Adorno-

Horkheimer, Lewis acknowledges that this process makes up a large part of the

"psychological history of the West."[34]

And thus we arrive at the crucial point of Lewis' *reductio ad absurdum*

arguments. Any method of describing the universe that when followed out to its logical

conclusion leads to the elimination of the self as a thinking subject cannot be seriously

entertained as a correct or reasonable account. Such an account becomes self-refuting in

the end. At the very least, it utterly undermines any rational basis for holding it. In

another essay, "The Poison of Subjectivism," Lewis concisely summarizes the problem:

> After studying his environment man has begun to study himself. Up to that
> point, he had assumed his own reason and through it seen all other things. Now, his
> own reason has become the object: it is as if we took out our eyes to look at them.
> Thus studied, his own reason appears to him as the epiphenomenon which
> accompanies chemical or electrical events in a cortex which is itself the by-product
> of a blind evolutionary process. His own logic, hitherto the king whom events in all
> possible worlds must obey, becomes merely subjective. There is no reason for
> supposing that it yields truth.[35]

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[32] C. S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (1964; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 42.

[33] Lewis, *Discarded Image*, 215.

[34] Lewis, *Discarded Image*, 42. Furthermore, he describes this history as the "great process of Internalization" (215). Prior to the emptying process, the universe was thought or imagined to be teeming with life, will, energy, and intelligence, a world full of life and activity made up of objects amenable to human reason but not utterly reducible to it. Of course, Lewis was not calling for a return to the medieval model of the universe. See his "Epilogue," *Discarded Image*, 216-23. But, he argues some such model is needed that will preserve the subject-object distinction as well as the possibility of truth and knowledge.

[35] Lewis, "The Poison of Subjectivism," in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 72. On man's beginning to study himself, compare Lewis describing the mind of man and science in the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries: "Science was not the business of Man because Man had not yet become the business of science." C. S. Lewis, "*De Descriptione Temporum*," in *Selected Literary Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (1969; repr., Cambridge:

This is reminiscent of Lewis' concluding words of *Abolition* where he describes the problem of seeing through all things being "the same as not to see."[36] When the focus of scientific investigation was directed outward to the world, man took for granted the reliability and trustworthiness of his own cognitive and sensory faculties. But, once reason itself became the object of investigation, like all other objects, it too was explained away in the process; it was "seen through" as one more myth to be dispelled. Reason seen through in this way resulted in the loss of sight; there was nothing left to see.[37]

Again, from *Abolition*, Lewis explains,

> The price of conquest is to treat a thing as mere Nature. Every conquest over Nature increases her domain. . . . But as soon as we take the final step of reducing our own species to the level of mere Nature, the whole process is stultified, for this time the being who stood to gain and the being who has been sacrificed are one and the same. This is one of the many instances where to carry a principle to what seems its logical conclusion produces absurdity.[38]

Thus, the Enlightenment's promise of emancipation and liberation turns out to be a myth, even worse a self-defeating absurdity in the end. The staggeringly ironic and tragic result is not self-preservation but the sacrificial surrendering of self to Nature—the liquidation or abolition of man.

Cambridge University Press, 1979), 7.

[36] Lewis, *Abolition*, 81.

[37] Lewis, like Adorno-Horkheimer, draws out the practical implications of this philosophical movement, which he describes as a "fatal slip which has led us to nihilism." Lewis, "Empty Universe," 85. Recall that Adorno-Horkheimer trace the genealogy of enlightenment reason through Kant to Sadean and Nietzschean nihilism. Lewis similarly writes,

> Now the trouble about this conclusion is not that it is unwelcome to our emotions. It is not unwelcome to them at all times or in all people. This philosophy, like every other, has its pleasures. And it will, I fancy, prove very congenial to government. The old "liberty-talk" was very much mixed up with the idea that, as inside the ruler, so inside the subject, there was a whole world, to him the center of all worlds, capacious of endless suffering and delight. But now, of course, he has no "inside," except the sort you can find by cutting him open. If I had to burn a man alive, I think I should find this doctrine comfortable. Lewis, "Empty Universe," 83.

[38] Lewis, *Abolition*, 71-72; emphasis original. Cf. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 43: "the history of civilization is the history of the introversion of sacrifice. In other words: the history of renunciation." Here we see how this leads to *self*-renunciation in the extreme.

Modern Myths

As part of their thesis, Adorno-Horkheimer describe at length how "Enlightenment reverts to myth." This is another important theme that Lewis and the critical theorists share. Ironically, Enlightenment thinking, despite its goal of emancipation from myth, actually produces its own forms of mythical thinking, including the myth of the Enlightenment itself, the so-called Age of Reason, to be contrasted with the unenlightened Dark Ages steeped in superstition and myth. Thus, Lewis and the critical theorists turn the tables per se on the Enlightenment by exposing its own mythical tendencies.

The myth of Enlightenment. In actuality, Gay explains, "the Enlightenment was not an Age of Reason but a revolt against Rationalism." He further writes,

> This revolt took two closely related forms: it rejected the assertion that reason is the sole, or even the dominant, spring of action; and it denied that all mysteries in the world can be penetrated by inquiry. The claim for the omnicompetence of criticism was in no way a claim for the omnipotence of reason. It was a political demand for the right to question everything, rather than the assertion that all could be known or mastered by rationality.[39]

Adorno-Horkheimer appear to share the Enlightenment view of the omnicompetence of criticism (hence their emphasis on determinate negation) and the rejection of the omnipotence of reason. Yet, they are ambivalent regarding Enlightenment and enlightened thought. For example, Hughes writes,

> Whereas most commentators saw totalitarianism and anti-Semitism as a departure from Liberal Enlightened reason, Adorno and Horkheimer argued that the truth is more dialectical: while they still affirmed that "social freedom is inseparable from enlightened thought," they also concluded that the recent descent of modernity into mythology and destruction was not just an aberration but implicit in the very logic of Enlightenment itself.[40]

In this case, Hughes further explains, the mythology involved is the Enlightenment's self-assertion of the existence of a subject who is "mythically separated from nature" and

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[39] Gay, *Enlightenment*, 141.

[40] Hughes, "Unspeakable Utopia," 480-81; quoting Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xvi.

dominates her. Enlightenment rationalism "cannot simply be opposed to the mythologies from which it claimed to bring emancipation" because the view itself makes assertions about reality and the self that cannot be demonstrated to be true by appeals to reason, making such assertions the equivalent of myth. Still, Adorno-Horkheimer do not abandon the Enlightenment for irrationalism, but instead argue for what amounts to a demythologizing of Enlightenment thought through greater self-reflection and self-criticism.[41]

Lewis warns of "the false groupings which our *ex post facto* judgments of 'enlightenment' and 'superstition' urge us to impose on the past."[42] He agrees with Adorno-Horkheimer that what passes as enlightened versus mythical is not as neatly disentangled as some might think. Enlightenment thinking is actually enmeshed with a good deal of superstition of its own. For example, he claims that what drives modern views of reason and rationality is what he calls the modern myth of "Evolutionism" or "Developmentalism," which began in peoples' imaginations rather than being based upon scientific evidence.[43]

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[41] Hughes, "Unspeakable Utopia," 481.

[42] Lewis, *English Literature*, 13.

[43] Lewis distinguishes between the Darwinian theory of biological evolution and the myth of "spontaneous progress" or "universal evolutionism," the myth originating earlier than the theorem. For example, he declares, "For the two great imaginative expressions of the myth, as distinct from the theorem—Keat's *Hyperion* and Wagner's *Ring*—are pre-Darwinian." Lewis, "*De Descriptione Temporum*," 10-11. His references are to John Keats (1795-1821), English Romantic poet, and his *Hyperion* (1820), as well as the German composer Richard Wagner (1813-83) and his *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*The Ring of the Nibelung*), composed in 1874.

For further reading from Lewis on Evolutionism or Developmentalism, see the following: "*De Futilitate*," in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); "The Funeral of a Great Myth," in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); "Is Theology Poetry?," in *The Weight of Glory: And Other Addresses*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: Macmillan, 1949; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001); "Epilogue" to *The Discarded Image*, 216-23; "The World's Last Night," in *The World's Last Night: And Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1960; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002), especially pages 101-4; and "Evolutionary Hymn," in *Poems*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1964; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 1977).

In the second book of his science-fiction trilogy, *Perelandra*, Lewis refers to "the great myth of our century" and the "mythopœic power" of such imaginative, mental pictures of reality. C. S. Lewis, *Perelandra*, (London: John Lane the Bodley Head, 1944; repr., New York: Scribner, 2003), 140. In *Miracles*, he describes the role of modern myth in the twentieth century as a form of "picture-thinking"

The myth of scientism. Another myth (one that grows out of the belief in evolutionism) represents not only a grave philosophical error but a perversion of genuine scientific theory and practice as well. Contrary to the attacks of some of Lewis' critics, Lewis was an ardent supporter of science *properly understood and applied*. What he attacks in *Abolition* and elsewhere is not science, the scientific method, or scientists but a particular philosophical perspective or ideology—*scientism*: "the belief that the supreme moral end of humankind is the perpetuation of our own species, and that this is to be pursued even if, in the process of being fitted for survival, our species has to be stripped of all those things for which we value it."[44] Unfortunately, Lewis at times refers to *science* or *applied science* when his target is really scientism, which makes it seem as if he is anti-science. But, a more than superficial reading of Lewis clearly shows this is not the case.

In *Abolition* and elsewhere, Lewis explicitly states he does not seek to disparage science or to deny its many benefits for human society. But, scientism, on the other hand, he argues is degenerate science and is detrimental to society along the same lines as positivism.[45] In defense of Lewis against the charge of being anti-science, M. D. Aeschliman states that, in fact, Lewis "received the kind of philosophical education at Oxford that enabled him to resist the two opposed temptations of 'science deified' and 'science defied.'"[46] He expresses Lewis' view of science as follows,

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(47-51, 82-85). Finally, for further reading on how modern forms of rationality have their own mythologies that drive them, see Mary Midgley, *The Myths We Live By* (London: Routledge, 2003), Kindle.

[44] Lewis, "Reply to Professor Haldane," 77. Lewis writes, "*That Hideous Strength* he has almost completely misunderstood. The 'good' scientist is put in precisely to show that 'scientists' as such are not the target." Furthermore, Lewis adds that "the hero [Ransom]. . . is made to say that the sciences are 'good and innocent in themselves,' . . . though evil 'scientism' is creeping into them" (78; cf. *That Hideous Strength*, 200). Elsewhere, he further clarifies, "I think T.H.S. [*That Hideous Strength*] is about a triple conflict: Grace against Nature and Nature against Anti-Nature (modern industrialism, scientism, & totalitarian politics)." C. S. Lewis to William L. Kinter, July 30, 1954, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 3, *Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy 1950-1963*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 498.

[45] Cf. Lewis, *Abolition*, 53-54.

[46] M. D. Aeschliman, *The C. S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia*, ed. Jeffrey D. Schultz and John

Lewis knew that science was one of the great products and capacities of the human mind, but he insisted that it was a subset of reason and not simply equivalent to it. Scientific reason, if accurate, was valid, but it was not the only valid kind of reasoning: noncontradiction, validity, truth, value, meaning, purpose, obligation were necessary presuppositions of the scientific method but not themselves scientific phenomena.[47]

Furthermore, recall how both Lewis and the critical theorists reveal the close associations between magic and science. In *Abolition*, Lewis describes science and magic as twins "born of the same impulse." In addition, the "process whereby man surrenders object after object, and finally himself, to Nature in return for power," he calls a "magician's bargain." Moreover, separated from the "'wisdom' of earlier ages," both magic and applied science seek to subjugate nature to man's desires and ends, which leads to the implementation of technique to the performance of despicable deeds.[48] Similarly, Adorno-Horkheimer also emphasize this kinship between magic and science. In science, they explain, the multiplicity of things and what affinities they may share are reduced to "the single relationship between the subject who confers meaning and the

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G. West, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), s.v. "Science." Aeschliman draws this distinction from Richard Olson, *Science Deified and Science Defied*, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). Aeschliman describes *Abolition* as "an extended treatise against the deification of science." Aeschliman, "Science." Also, see Michael Aeschliman, *The Restitution of Man: C. S. Lewis and the Case against Scientism*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Thomas C. Peters, "The War of Worldviews: H. G. Wells and Scientism versus C. S. Lewis and Christianity," in *The Pilgrim's Guide: C. S. Lewis and the Art of Witness*, ed. David Mills (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

[47] Aeschliman, "Science." Considering Aeschliman's list of the presuppositions of the scientific method, it is interesting to compare another defense of science and scientific reasoning in Lewis' work of spiritual satire, *The Screwtape Letters*. Screwtape expresses his concerns regarding the dangers of science for his diabolical cause, given that the pursuit of *real* science leads one to thinking about universals. Thus, the only science he can recommend is "economics and sociology," ironically, the primary areas of scientific interest for Adorno-Horkheimer. See C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1942; repr., with additional letter and additional preface as *The Screwtape Letters and Screwtape Proposes a Toast*, 1961; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 4.

[48] Lewis, *Abolition*, 71-73, 76-78. Cf. Lewis, *English Literature*, 12-14. For a fictional depiction of this connection between science and magic in Lewis' Narnia Chronicles, see the character of Uncle Andrew in C. S. Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew*, illus. Pauline Baynes (London: The Bodley Head, 1955; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 1994). For further reading on Lewis' views on science vs. scientism, see John G. West, Jr., ed., *The Magician's Twin: C. S. Lewis on Science, Scientism, and Society* (Seattle, WA: Discovery Institute Press, 2012); David Ussery, "Science in *The Abolition of Man*: Can Science Rescue Itself?," in *Contemporary Perspectives on C. S. Lewis' Abolition of Man: History, Philosophy, Education, and Science*, ed. Gayne John Anacker and Timothy M. Mosteller (London: Bloomsbury, 2017); and Henry F. Schaefer, III, "C. S. Lewis and Scientism," *C. S. Lewis Society of California*, accessed May 2, 2020, http://www.lewissociety.org/scientism/.

meaningless object, between rational significance and its accidental bearer."[49] This

parallels the magical thinking of the priestly magician or medicine man. Moreover, both

science and magic are chiefly concerned with ends or goals. Whereas magic pursues

these ends through mimesis, science does so by creating a greater distance between the

subject and the object. Nevertheless, they both aim at exerting control over the world to

accomplish their mutual ends. And yet, science is capable of a form of world domination

never dreamed of by the magician. Moreover, the distancing of the subject from the

world as object means a greater autonomy of thought (as opposed to mimesis) by the

subject in relation to objects. This further historical development of the ego "was a

prerequisite for the replacement of the localized practices of the medicine man by all-

embracing industrial technology."[50]

One can find numerous parallels between Lewis and Adorno-Horkheimer in

their assessment of science and scientism throughout their works. However, arguably

Lewis offers a more balanced assessment overall. For one, Adorno-Horkheimer fail to

make a sufficient distinction between science and scientism. In many places they speak

as if the corrosive effects of Enlightenment rationality are so pervasive that science can

no longer be legitimately or reliably pursued untainted by ideology.[51] They tend to

accentuate the abuses of scientific theory and practice, which result in forms of tyranny

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[49] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 7.

[50] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 7.

[51] For example, they write, "While attentive cultivation and investigation of the scientific
heritage—especially when positivist new brooms have swept it away as useless lumber—does represent
one moment of knowledge, in the present collapse of bourgeois civilization not only the operations but *the
purpose of science have become dubious*." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xiv; emphasis added.
Furthermore, they explain,

> If the only obstacles were those arising from the oblivious instrumentalization of science,
> thought about social questions could at least attach itself to tendencies opposed to official science.
> Those tendencies, too, however, are *caught up in the general process of production*. They have
> *changed no less than the ideology they attacked*. They *suffer the fate* which has always been reserved
> for triumphant thought. If it voluntarily leaves behind its critical element to become a *mere means in
> the service of an existing order*, it involuntarily tends to transform the positive cause it has espoused
> into something negative and destructive (xv; emphasis added).

and exploitation, but at the expense of a proper endorsement of the fruits of science, again, properly understood and applied. By contrast, Lewis does not share such pessimistic conclusions regarding science. He even holds out for the possibility that "from Science herself the cure might come."[52] Science and human rationality might be regenerated and actually applied to the due service of nature and humanity. Lewis envisions the possibility of a "new Natural Philosophy," one that would maintain a clear subject-object distinction, not reducing the objects of reality to the mere rational abstractions of the human mind, but allowing for the subject's abstractions to be continually corrected by the object.[53] In other words, this is simply to acknowledge the subject's analysis does not exhaust the nature of the object. This speaks to the natural limitations of this regenerate science in its investigation of the world of objects and its claims to truth. Room is thus left for explanation of these objects without explaining them away.[54] Accordingly, humans would retain their *Thou* status rather than being reduced to mere *its* or objects of nature. Human conquest of nature in the pursuit of knowledge could still be attained apart from the high cost of human nature in the process.

Finally, for Lewis, science is both limited by and a subset of religion, not superior or opposed to it. In *Mere Christianity*, Lewis' classic introduction to and defense of the Christian religion, he briefly addresses the relationship between religion and science. Here he stresses that science is both "useful and necessary." At the same

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[52] Lewis, *Abolition*, 76.

[53] Lewis, *Abolition*, 78-79.

[54] This analysis is consistent with Lewis' writing elsewhere concerning the "provisional" nature of "scientific" theories versus scientific "statements of fact." See Lewis, *Discarded Image*, 14-16. Here Lewis also speaks of the importance of "saving the appearances" and "Occam's razor" as two necessary procedures of science in constructing a model of the universe. Also, in discussing the differences in medieval versus modern models of the universe, and the change from old to new models over time, "respecting each and idolizing none," Lewis uses language that anticipates Thomas Kuhn's "paradigm shifts." See Lewis, "Epilogue," *Discarded Image*, 216-23; Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1962). On this connection, see Michael Ward, "Science and Religion in the Writings of C. S. Lewis," *Science & Christian Belief* 25, no. 1 (2013): 3-16, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*. Cf. Lewis, *English Literature*, 1-14.

time, he seeks to set the record straight on what the "job of science" actually involves. Science is limited to experimentation and observation of natural phenomena by means of the methods and instruments of science. Accordingly, science reaches a natural boundary when it comes to questions concerning why nature exists and what might exist, if anything, beyond it. This line of questioning is simply outside the scope of science. Lewis does not argue that science has nothing to contribute to the discussion, but only that the statements concerning anything beyond nature are not strictly scientific statements, and, therefore, the matters involved cannot be settled on a purely scientific basis.[55]

Not only then are religion and science not in any real conflict, the two go hand in hand.[56] Ward explains Lewis' understanding of the relationship between science and religion as follows,

> Science, in Lewis's lexicon, is a noble pursuit and part of the religious life, properly understood. If religion (and specifically the Christian religion) is true, then it "must be cosmic," encompassing everything, including science. Science therefore cannot be non-religious, though it might become irreligious, either through degenerating into scientism or through other possible corruptions.[57]

Moreover, for Lewis, the proper religious view for providing the needed check to our scientific paradigms is Christianity: "Christian theology can fit in science, art, morality, and the sub-Christian religions. The scientific point of view cannot fit in any of these things, not even science itself."[58]

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[55] Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1952; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 22-23.

[56] Lewis writes, "Theology offers you a working arrangement, which leaves the scientist free to continue his experiments and the Christian to continue his prayers." Lewis, *Miracles*, 170.

[57] Ward, "Science and Religion," 4-5.

[58] Lewis, "Is Theology Poetry?," 140. For more from Lewis on the relationship between Christianity and "the current scientific attitude," see C. S. Lewis, "Christian Apologetics," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 92.

A Critical Error: The Island of Aporia

Adorno-Horkheimer's critique of Enlightenment thought reveals a number of serious flaws with modern reason and its slide into instrumental rationality. The central thrust of their argument is that Enlightenment rationality becomes self-destructive by reverting to the very thing it sought to eradicate—*myth*. However, ironically Adorno-Horkheimer's critique of rationality ultimately self-destructs, thus undermining their whole critical project. This represents an irony in the history of philosophy that ranks with similar failures such as logical positivism's verification principle (which makes the irony more staggering considering Adorno-Horkheimer's vigorous critique of positivism).

Habermasian Criticism

Jürgen Habermas was Adorno's former research assistant, as well as part of the second generation of critical theorists. Today, he represents one of the leading spokesmen for critical theory in contemporary philosophy. Nonetheless, in his essay "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Re-reading *Dialectic of Enlightenment*," he argues that Adorno-Horkheimer's critique is self-defeating, which he summarizes as follows: "Reason, once instrumentalized, has become assimilated to power and has thereby given up its critical power . . . this is the final unmasking of a critique of ideology applied to itself."[59] This egregious error involves a kind of castration of reason

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[59] Jürgen Habermas further explains the problem thus:

Now reason itself has fallen prey to the ill-fated confusion of power and validity claims. . . . [T]he purposive-rationality, which had become total, eliminates the difference between that which claims validity and that which only serves the interests of self-preservation. . . . This critique of ideology describes the self-destruction of the critical faculty, however, in a paradoxical manner, because in performing the analysis it must make use of the same critique which it has declared false.

Jürgen Habermas, "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Re-reading *Dialectic of Enlightenment*," trans. Thomas Y. Levin, *New German Critique* 26 (Spring/Summer 1982): 22, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*. Habermas's further critique of Adorno-Horkheimer is found in Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action,* vol. 1, *Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston, 1984), 366–99. Also, for another helpful distillation of these issues, see David Rasmussen, "Critical theory: Horkheimer, Adorno, Habermas," in *Continental Philosophy in the 20th Century*, Routledge History of Philosophy, vol. 8, ed. Richard Kearney (New York: Routledge, 1994), 254-89.

reminiscent of Lewis' quip, "We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful."[60]

Recall Habermas refers to the *Dialectic* as Adorno-Horkheimer's "blackest, most nihilistic book," in which they sought to "conceptualize the self-destructive process of Enlightenment."[61] However, Habermas argues that, in actual fact, it is Adorno-Horkheimer's critique that becomes self-destructive, caught in an aporia of their own making. Adorno-Horkheimer describe the aporetic nature of enlightenment reason noting, "The aporia which faced us in our work thus proved to be the first matter we had to investigate: the self-destruction of enlightenment."[62] That said, they also discuss the *petitio* at the heart of their critique of enlightenment:

> We have no doubt—and herein lies our *petitio principii*—that freedom in society is inseparable from enlightenment thinking. We believe we have perceived with equal clarity, however, that the very concept of that thinking, no less than the concrete historical forms, the institutions of society with which it is intertwined, already contain the germ of the regression which is taking place everywhere today. If enlightenment does not assimilate reflection on this regressive moment, it seals its own fate.[63]

Based on statements like these, Habermas argues Adorno-Horkheimer's critical project self-implodes. More fully, he explains why this is so:

> Horkheimer and Adorno therefore consider the basis of critique of ideology destroyed; and yet they want to hold on to the basic premise of Enlightenment. So they take that which Enlightenment did to myth and turn it back onto the process of Enlightenment itself. Critique becomes total: it turns against reason as the foundation of its own analysis. The fact that the suspicion of ideology becomes total means that it opposes . . . rationality as such, thereby extending critique to the very *foundations* of an immanent critique of ideology.[64]

According to Habermas, along with Nietzsche, Foucault, and others, Adorno-Horkheimer are guilty of engaging, more specifically, in a *performative contradiction*. Regarding

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[60] Lewis, *Abolition*, 26.

[61] Habermas, "Entwinement," 13.

[62] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xvi.

[63] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xvi.

[64] Habermas, "Entwinement," 21-22; emphasis original.

Adorno-Horkheimer's critique of ideology and the critical faculty, he explains how "in performing the analysis it must make use of the same critique which it has declared false. It denounces the totalitarian development of Enlightenment with its own means—a performative contradiction of which Adorno was well aware."[65] Thus, while Adorno-Horkheimer undermine the validity of human rationality, they attempt to reason to this conclusion and persuade others do the same. But, if their reasoning is correct, then reason is *tainted*, and its deliverances cannot be trusted, including the conclusions of their own critique.[66]

Bulverism

Decades before Habermas' scathing critique of Adorno-Horkheimer's *Dialectic*, Lewis preempted this critical strategy, even inventing a term to describe any and all ideologies that seek to explain away the results of the reasoning process by attributing the process to other causes or motivations. He coined the label "Bulverism" for this fallacy in an essay by the same title.[67] Furthermore, Lewis' characterization of

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[65] Habermas, "Entwinement," 22.

[66] Peter Uwe Hohendahl characterizes Habermas' criticism as follows: "Habermas holds that Horkheimer and Adorno, under the impact of Nietzsche's theory of power, end up in an aporia similar to that of Nietzsche. Thus their own version of Critical Theory loses its critical edge because it follows a self-contradictory strategy." Peter Uwe Hohendahl, *Reappraisals: Shifting Alignments in Postwar Critical Theory* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 116, Kindle. For further reading on the side of the defenders of Adorno-Horkheimer against Habermas' charge of aporia and performative contradiction, see: Pierre-François Noppen, "Reflective Rationality and the Claim of Dialectic of Enlightenment," *European Journal of Philosophy* 23, no. 2 (June 2015): 293-320, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*; Fotini Vaki, "Adorno *contra* Habermas: The Claims of Critical Theory as Immanent Critique," *Historical Materialism* 13, no. 4 (December 2005): 79-120, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*; and Martin Morris, "On the Logic of the Performative Contradiction: Habermas and the Radical Critique of Reason," *The Review of Politics* 58, no. 4 (1996): 735-60, http://www. jstor.org/stable/1408619.

[67] Lewis, "Bulverism," 272-74. This fallacy is akin to a family of logical fallacies that include the genetic fallacy, *ad fontes* fallacy, among others. On the curious origin of the name of *Bulverism*, Lewis explains:

> I call it Bulverism. Some day I am going to write the biography of its imaginary inventor, Ezekiel Bulver, whose destiny was determined at the age of five when he heard his mother say to his father—who had been maintaining that two sides of a triangle were together greater than the third—"Oh you say that *because you are a man*." "At that moment," E. Bulver assures us, "there flashed across my opening mind the great truth that refutation is no necessary part of argument. Assume that your opponent is wrong, and then explain his error, and the world will be at your feet. Attempt to prove that he is wrong or (worse still) try to find out whether he is wrong or right, and the national dynamism of our age will thrust you to the wall." That is how Bulver became one of the makers of

this fallacy quite appropriately applies to Adorno-Horkheimer's totalizing critique of

rationality in *Dialectic*.

Tainted at the source. Lewis writes, "We have recently 'discovered that we

exist' in two new senses. The Freudians have discovered that we exist as bundles of

complexes. The Marxians have discovered that we exist as members of some economic

class."[68] It is noteworthy that Lewis develops this idea in the context of critiquing forms

of reductionism in Marxist and Freudian ideologies, especially given the influence of

both Marx and Freud on Adorno-Horkheimer's views. He goes on to say that according

to the Freudians, peoples' thoughts are "psychologically tainted at the source" and that

the Marxists tell you peoples' thoughts are "'ideologically tainted' at the source."[69] The

term *tainted* aptly describes Adorno-Horkheimer's views of Enlightenment rationality,

although Lewis' description is much more modest compared with Adorno-Horkheimer's

critique.[70] Consequently, if Lewis' argument is successful in undercutting ideologies that

accuse reason of being tainted, *a fortiori* it delivers a devastating blow to Adorno-

Horkheimer's much more radical, totalizing critique of reason.

Considering both Freudian and Marxian indictments of tainted thoughts, Lewis

says this raises two important questions that ought to be asked of the person making such

a charge: "The first is, Are *all* thoughts thus tainted at the source, or only some? The

second is, Does the taint invalidate the tainted thought—in the sense of making it

untrue—or not?"[71] He explains the implications of the possible responses to these

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the Twentieth Century (273; emphasis original).

[68] Lewis, "Bulverism," 271.

[69] Lewis, "Bulverism," 271-72.

[70] In fact, Adorno-Horkheimer use the same if not similar language at times. Cf. Adorno
speaking of a "rationality *tainted* with irrationality" in Theodor Adorno: *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B.
Ashton, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1966; repr., New York: Continuum, 1995), 383; emphasis
added.

[71] Lewis, "Bulverism," 272; emphasis original.

questions:

> If they say that *all thoughts* are thus tainted, then, of course, we must remind them that Freudianism and Marxism are as much systems of thought as Christian theology or philosophical idealism. The Freudian and the Marxian are in the same boat with all the rest of us, and cannot criticize us from the outside. They have sawn off the branch they were sitting on. If, on the other hand, they say that the taint need not invalidate their thinking, then neither need it invalidate ours. In which case they have saved their own branch, but also saved ours along with it.[72]

Thus, either answer dooms the accuser's accusation, emasculating it as a form of criticism. On the one hand, to accuse all thoughts of being tainted invalidates the accuser's position as much as the one they accuse. On the other hand, if they permit their own position to be exempt from the taint, then neither their thinking nor their opponent's is invalidated. Either way their argument is self-abortive. The only recourse they have is to hold out that some thoughts are tainted while others are not. But, this raises the crucial problem of determining which thoughts are free from corruption. It was a common strategy then, as it is now, to seek to question a person's ideas by speculating about their motives, biases, wishes, etc. If one can demonstrate that their opponent wishes or desires the conclusion of their argument to be true, then this presumably calls into question the truth of their conclusion. However, as Lewis explains,

> It is no earthly use saying that those are tainted which agree with the secret wishes of the thinker. *Some* of the things I should like to believe must in fact be true; it is impossible to arrange a universe which contradicts everyone's wishes, in every respect, at every moment. . . . It is the same with all thinking and all systems of thought. If you try to find out which are tainted by speculating about the wishes of the thinkers, you are merely making a fool of yourself.[73]

According to Lewis, one must *first* assess the opponent's arguments for logical validity or invalidity. Only *then* can one "go on and discover the psychological causes of

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[72] Lewis, "Bulverism," 272; emphasis original. On Lewis' use of the classic metaphor of "sawing off the branch one is sitting on," compare his statement "The trunk to whose root the reformer would lay the axe is the only support of the particular branch he wishes to retain." Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 75. In other words, this is the antithesis of Confucius' advice that "it is upon the Trunk that a gentleman works. When that is firmly set up, the Way grows." Confucius, *Analects* 1.2; cf. Lewis, *Abolition*, 27. Instead of cultivating the trunk so that its branches grow, the reformer seeks to cut it down in the attempt to destroy your branch while preserving their own.

[73] Lewis, "Bulverism," 273; emphasis original.

the error."[74] This approach sharply contrasts with the modern method. He writes, "In other words, you must show *that* a man is wrong before you start explaining *why* he is wrong. The modern method is to assume without discussion *that* he is wrong and then distract his attention from this (the only real issue) by busily explaining how he became so silly."[75]

For Lewis, this is a serious matter for the very validity of human reason and rationality is at stake. Bulverism effectively discredits the reasoning process, undermining all possibility of a valid critical judgment. At the same time, whoever wields this sword inevitably falls on it too. This is important to understand in order to restore human reason to its privileged position and crush the Bulverizing tendency of modern forms of criticism (like Adorno-Horkheimer's). Lewis explains,

> Until Bulverism is crushed, reason can play no effective part in human affairs. Each side snatches it early as a weapon against the other; but between the two reason itself is discredited. And why should reason not be discredited? . . . The forces discrediting reason, themselves depend on reasoning. You must reason even to Bulverize. You are trying to *prove* that all *proofs* are invalid. If you fail, you fail. If you succeed, then you fail even more—for the proof that all proofs are invalid must be invalid itself.[76]

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[74] Lewis, "Bulverism," 273. In *Miracles*, Lewis discusses the two senses of the word *because* in terms of the relation of Cause and Effect and the relation of Ground and Consequent (Cause-Effect relation vs. Ground-Consequent relation). He explains, "The mere existence of causes for a belief is popularly treated as raising a presumption that it is groundless, and the most popular way of discrediting a person's opinions is to explain them causally. . . . The implication is that if causes fully account for a belief, then, since causes work inevitably, the belief would have had to arise whether it had grounds or not." Lewis, *Miracles*, 24. Further on, he writes, "It is a matter of daily experience that rational thoughts induce and enable us to alter the course of Nature. . . . On the other hand, Nature is quite powerless to produce rational thought: not that she never modifies our thinking but that the moment she does so, it ceases (for that very reason) to be rational. For, as we have seen, a train of thought loses all rational credentials as soon as it can be shown to be wholly the result of non-rational causes" (38-39). Thus, there is an unsymmetrical relation between reason and nature (40).

[75] Lewis, "Bulverism," 273; emphasis original.

[76] Lewis, "Bulverism," 274; emphasis original. Elsewhere, concerning "Scepticism about Reason," Lewis writes, "Practicality, combined with vague notions of what Freud, or Einstein, said, has produced a general, and quite *unalarmed*, belief that reasoning proves nothing and that all thought is conditioned by irrational processes." C. S. Lewis, "Modern Man and his Categories of Thought," in *Present Concerns: A Compelling Collection of Timely, Journalistic Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Fount, 1986; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002), 65; emphasis original. Indeed, the island of *Aporia* could have been a region on Lewis' *Mappa Mundi* in his *Pilgrim's Regress*. See C. S. Lewis, *The Pilgrim's Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity, Reason and Romanticism* (London: J. M. Dent, 1933; repr., with preface, London: Geoffrey Bles, 1943; repr., with illustrations by Michael Hague, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

Therefore, any view which seeks to expose human reason as tainted or discredited, whether in part or whole, cannot itself be immune from its own critique. For the criticism itself is a product of reasoning. Likewise, Adorno-Horkheimer's argument attempts to Bulverize by providing reasons for doubting the deliberations of our rational faculties due to the reification of thought and the instrumentalization of reason. Whether their critique of rationality succeeds or fails, it ultimately fails, since "the proof that all proofs are invalid must be invalid itself." Besides, Adorno-Horkheimer have not left themselves any untainted ground upon which to stand to launch their critique of rationality. Either Adorno-Horkheimer reason that reason is defunct, or they reason that their own reason is exempt from the defunct reason. Either way, they depend upon reasoning in the end, and this shows they cannot escape reason as a first principle.

Totally tainted critique. Even worse, the problem could not be more devastating for the critical theorists. Recall Habermas' criticism of Adorno-Horkheimer; their critique is a "totalizing critique." They vigorously argue that Enlightenment rationalism, with its increasing tendencies towards reification, inevitably produces a defunct rationality, one that is not merely tainted but utterly spoiled. For example, they proclaim, "Blindness encompasses everything because it comprehends nothing."[77] They describe the defects of reason in a way that seems to make it entirely corrupt and thus unreliable and untrustworthy. Consequently, Adorno-Horkheimer's own critical

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[77] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 141. Some have defended Adorno-Horkheimer by arguing that such statements are examples of exaggeration or hyperbole. See Alexander Garcia Düttmann, "Thinking as Gesture: A Note on *Dialectic of Enlightenment*," *New German Critique* no. 81 (Fall 2000): 143-52, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*; Noppen, "Reflective Rationality." However, consider the following examples in which Adorno-Horkheimer describe reason in a way that seems to completely undercut its deliverances. Referring to the "form of the mentality, both social and individual, which manifests itself in anti-Semitism, *the primeval-historical entrapment from which it is a desperate attempt to escape*," they write that if "*a malady so deeply embedded in civilization* is not properly accounted for by knowledge, the individual, too, though he may be as well intentioned as the victim himself, *cannot mitigate it through understanding*. The *plausibly rational, economic, and political explanations and counterarguments*—however correct their individual observations—*cannot appease it, since rationality itself, through its link to power, is submerged in the same malady*." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 139; emphasis added; cf. 160-61.

theorizing is not immune to "the decay of the substantive reason," which they claim was brought about by the excesses of Enlightenment rationalism.[78]

Habermas argues that their critique of rationality does not just narrowly expose an inconsistency in the Enlightenment's use of terms or concepts, or a fallacy in some central argument in support of Enlightenment rationalism, rather it extends to the "foundation of its own analysis" and "the very *foundations* of an immanent critique of ideology." Fittingly, Lewis' subtitle of his essay refers to the "*Foundation* of Twentieth Century Thought." Both the earlier Lewis and the later Habermas show how arguments like Adorno-Horkheimer's have an insuperable problem at the very foundation of their critique. However, Lewis could extend this criticism further than Habermas to include not only Adorno-Horkheimer's strategy but any and all Freudian, Marxist, materialist, naturalist, and other theories (even Habermas' contemporary version of critical theory) lacking a transcendent ground of reason and rationality.[79]

According to Lewis, given the magnitude of the problem for Bulverists, the options are either "sheer self-contradicting idiocy or else some tenacious belief in our power of reasoning, held in the teeth of all the evidence that Bulverists can bring for a

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[78] Habermas, "Entwinement," 17. Accordingly, Habermas declares, "*Dialectic of Enlightenment* offers hardly any prospect of escape from the constraints of instrumental rationality" (18).

[79] Furthermore, Lewis makes an application of Bulverism to various errant theological positions as well. Any view that accuses reason of being tainted, contaminated, or corrupted undercuts the view making the accusation. Chad Walsh writes,

> This reliance upon reason sets Lewis apart from a great many schools of Christian thought. Orthodox Protestantism has frequently disparaged reason and contrasted it with faith. The neo-orthodox movement in contemporary European Protestantism tends to set reason and revelation in opposition and view man as a creature who tremblingly accepts a salvation that his reason cannot encompass. Modernist Christianity, though theoretically committed to reason, often becomes so subjective that it dwells on the religious twinges of the individual and bypasses the question whether reason can work its way to any objective religious truth.

Chad Walsh, "C. S. Lewis: Champion of Reason," *The Christian Century* 66, no. 3 (January 19, 1949): 77, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCO*host*. Significantly, most of Adorno-Horkheimer's interaction with religious thinkers does not include "champions of reason" like Lewis, but religious modernists like Paul Tillich. See Bryan Lee Wagoner, "The Subject of Emancipation: Critique, Reason and Religion in the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Paul Tillich" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2012), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

'taint' in this or that human reasoner."[80] For Adorno-Horkheimer, it is not just a taint in this or that individual human reasoner, or isolated social group, or even particular corrupt ideologies like Nazism, but something inherent to human reasoning. And yet, despite their totalizing critique of reason, they persist in their tenacious commitment to the basic premise of Enlightenment thought, faith in the power of reasoning, in spite of their own devastating critique.[81] According to Habermas, Adorno-Horkheimer basically gave up on any hope for resolving the inconsistency in their argument. Speaking specifically of the later Adorno, Habermas writes,

> Adorno's later work, especially his *Negative Dialectics*, reads like an explanation of why we should no longer attempt to resolve this unavoidable *performative contradiction . . . .* In the 25 years since the completion of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* Adorno has remained faithful to his philosophical impulse and has not evaded the paradoxical structure of thinking engaged in totalized critique. The grandeur of this consistency becomes evident in a comparison with Nietzsche whose *Genealogy of Morals* was the great model of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.[82]

Thus, Adorno-Horkheimer remained committed to giving reason a role to play in critique rather than abandoning it altogether. As the title of Adorno's later work *Negative Dialectics* suggests, the only legitimate role left for the critical faculty was that of determinate negation, "that procedure which Horkheimer and Adorno retain as the only valid methodology once reason itself has become unreliable."[83] But, as Habermas

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[80] Lewis, "Bulverism," 274.

[81] Cf. Horkheimer: "Reason can realize its reasonableness only through reflecting on the disease of the world as produced and reproduced by man; in such self-critique, reason will at the same time remain faithful to itself, by preserving and applying for no ulterior motive the principle of truth that we owe to reason alone. . . . The possibility of a self-critique of reason presupposes, first, that the antagonism of reason and nature is in an acute and catastrophic phase, and, second, that at this stage of complete alienation the idea of truth is still accessible." Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947; repr., New York: Continuum, 1996), 177. However, this confidence in reason sounds hollow and naively optimistic, especially considering the pessimistic, aporetic condition of reason Adorno-Horkheimer describe in *Dialectic*.

[82] Habermas, "Entwinement," 22.

[83] Habermas, "Entwinement," 22. Habermas further writes,

> Horkheimer and Adorno . . . no longer desiring to overcome the performative contradiction of a totalizing critique of ideology, they intensified the contradiction instead and left it unresolved. At the level of reflexion achieved by Horkheimer and Adorno, every attempt to set up a theory was bound to lead into an abyss: as a result, they abandoned any theoretical approach and practiced *ad hoc* determinate negation, thereby opposing that fusion of reason and power which fills in all the cracks

observes, "Nietzsche's treatment of the critique of reason renders it so affirmative that even determinate negation . . . loses its sting. Nietzsche's critique consumes the critical impulse itself."[84] Arguably, the same can be said of Adorno-Horkheimer's "totalizing, self-referential critique." Habermas agrees and declares, "if they do not want to give up the goal of an ultimate unmasking and want to *carry on their critique*, then they must preserve at least *one* standard for their explanation of the corruption of *all* reasonable standards."[85] Apart from such a standard, critical theory, as represented in *Dialectic*, becomes groundless and self-refuting. It falls on its own sword. Or, as Lewis might say, it becomes *Bulverized*.

The grounding problem. Unlike Adorno-Horkheimer, Habermas was not content to ignore or suppress the performative contradiction in their watershed work on critical theory. Having reread and reassessed the *Dialectic*, Habermas later developed a revised version of critical theory, which, unlike Adorno-Horkheimer's version, is not so despairing and disparaging of the critical faculty. Habermas writes,

> If a position which philosophy once held occupied with its ultimate principles now leads to a paradox, then to hold this position is not only uncomfortable, but can only be done if one can plausibly demonstrate that there is no way out. Even the retreat from such an aporia must be barred because otherwise there is a way out— that is, *to go back*. In the issue here at hand, however, I believe that this latter alternative is possible.[86]

Habermas sees a way out of the aporia in his theory of *communicative rationality*.[87] Nevertheless, the fundamental problem for both the early and later critical

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See Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, for an extensive example of his practice of determinate negation.

[84] Habermas, "Entwinement," 23.

[85] Habermas, "Entwinement," 28; emphasis original.

[86] Habermas, "Entwinement," 29; emphasis added. Incidentally, Lewis likewise offers the advice "to go back" upon realizing an egregious error in one's argument: "If you are on the wrong road, progress means doing an about turn and walking back to the right road. . . . Going back is the quickest way on." Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 29.

[87] According to Hohendahl, this new development represents "the so-called linguistic turn in

theorists is their failure to provide a transcendent, normative standard for a substantive

reason capable of overcoming the disenchantment of the world resulting from

Enlightenment rationalism. In other words, they have a *grounding* (*Letztbegründungen*)

problem for human reason and rationality. What is needed is a solid ground for the

validity of reason, one capable of adjudicating between tainted and untainted acts of

reasoning, and one free of materialistic, deterministic, and nonrational causation. Critical

theory, in all of its forms, is essentially a developmental, evolutionary, *rationality-from-*

below approach.[88] But, it would seem any such view inevitably stumbles into the same

reifying, totalizing, and hence, *Bulverizing* trap that Lewis describes (i.e., reverts to

destructive forms of mythical thinking, as Adorno-Horkheimer depict). However, Lewis

offers a much more promising solution with his *rationality-from-above* approach, to be

discussed in the following section.

Reason within the Limits of Religion Alone: Lewis on the Nature of Reason and Rationality

Lewis provides a defense of objective reason and rationality in *Abolition*, but

he does not say much about the nature of reason, reason's connection to religion, and,

more specifically, the relationship between reason and Christianity, all of which are taken

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Habermas's writings." Hohendahl, *Reappraisals*, 4. Habermas seeks "to defend the potential of rationality in speech and linguistic communication within societies" based on a "theory of communicative action built on rational consensus through speech acts." Hohendahl, *Reappraisals*, 118. According to Albrecht Wellmer, "Habermas's *Theory of Communicative Action* is the most important document . . . the magnum opus of the new phase of critical theory. . . . It is a version of critical theory beyond the dramatic character of its earlier versions, not only as far as the revolutionary impetus of the early Horkheimer is concerned, but also regarding the apocalyptic darkening of the horizon in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*." Albrecht Wellmer, "On Critical Theory," *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 81, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 709, *MasterFILE Premier*, EBSCO*host*. Wellmer provides a helpful discussion of Habermas' theory of communicative rationality, as well as noting a number of even newer versions of critical theory, including the work of Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, trans. J. Rose (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); Étienne Balibar, "Rights of Man and Rights of the Citizen: The Modern Dialectic of Equality and Freedom," in *Masses, Classes, Ideas: Studies on Politics and Philosophy Before and After Marx*, trans. James Swenson (New York and London: Routledge, 1994); Axel Honneth, *Freedom's Right: The Social Foundations of Democratic Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014); Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); and Slavoj Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes* (New York: Verso, 2008).

[88] In fact, Adorno claims, "Dialectics is a *challenge from below*." Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 303; emphasis added.

for granted in his book. But, to fully grasp and appreciate Lewis' respect for and faith in reason, one must turn to his other writings, which both provide the background to and further extend his argument in *Abolition*. Moreover, as Lewis shows in the latter, the key to moving forward is going backward. Similar to Habermas, Lewis writes that, upon realizing a mistake, "Going back is the quickest way on."[89] Unfortunately for Adorno-Horkheimer, Habermas, and other critical theorists, Lewis' arguments reveal that they fail to go back far enough for a solution. The answer is not to be found in Enlightenment rationality or modern categories of thought, but in certain elements of the pre-modern, ancient, and medieval worldview. Here we find the needed resources, drawing upon the best of Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian thought forms, for the genuine emancipation and liberation of humanity.

Although not often recognized outside of the evangelical Christian community, Lewis is one of the leading champions of reason in the twentieth century. Brian Murphy professes, "For no other modern writer has had so thorough, so complete, so *personal* a belief in Reason itself. The *a priori* validity of Reason is, of course, one of Lewis's principle themes."[90] Lewis surpasses Adorno-Horkheimer in his critique because he can account for a substantive reason in his worldview, making possible a valid critique of Enlightenment rationality as well as other destructive forms of ideology.[91] As previously

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[89] Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 29.

[90] Brian Murphy, "Enchanted Rationalism: The Legacy of C. S. Lewis," *Christianity & Literature* 25, no. 2 (1976): 20, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCO*host*; emphasis original. In stark contrast with Adorno-Horkheimer, Murphy describes how Lewis "argues for the validity of Reason in *The Abolition of Man*, *Miracles*, *Mere Christianity*, and in a fictive form in his space trilogy; it even pops up here and there in the seven children's stories, the Narnia Chronicles" (20). Cf. Walsh, "Champion of Reason."

[91] Compare Alan Jacobs:

Lewis produces an incisive critique of what Marxists call "ideology," that is, the system of beliefs that are so taken for granted in a given culture that hardly anyone even notices that they *are* beliefs— they are treated as unquestioned facts. Lewis was an exceptionally skillful exposer of ideological forces and their titanic influence over us, but he rarely gets credit for this from contemporary intellectuals because it is *their* most treasured beliefs that, more often than not, he is exposing. So instead of praising him for the acuity of his insights, they call him "reactionary" or "Victorian"— precisely the sorts of things that Bulverists and chronological snobs are bound to call him, given their premises.

stated, if Adorno-Horkheimer "want to *carry on their critique*, then they must preserve at least *one* standard for their explanation of the corruption of *all* reasonable standards."[92] Lewis recognizes the necessity and inescapability of some rational foundation for criticism. Moreover, this foundation must be transcendent and thus transhistorical, transcultural, transpolitical, etc., if it is to escape the taint of ideology. More precisely, Lewis understands the need for self-evident principles of reason, the requisite criteria for any normative critique. Still more, according to Lewis, the validity of human reason ultimately depends upon human consciousness ("I am"), reason, and rationality being an extension of an ontological, transcendent consciousness ("I AM"), a self-existent, eternal, divine Reason—the mind of God.[93]

Authority, Reason, and Experience

Lewis concisely summarizes his common-sense epistemology in a single statement: "Authority, reason, experience; on these three, mixed in varying proportions all our knowledge depends."[94] Modernism began with the exaltation of reason and experience and the abandonment of authority, taking for granted the existence of at least some self-evident principles and the reliability of our cognitive and sensory faculties. Of

Alan Jacobs, *The Narnian: The Life and Imagination of C. S. Lewis* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 169; emphasis original. Lewis opposes a view, one he associates with progressivism and the myth of progress, that he calls "chronological snobbery": the "uncritical acceptance of the intellectual climate common to our age and the assumption that whatever has gone out of date is on that account discredited." C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1955; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 1966), 207-8. Intriguingly, Adorno condemns something similar to Lewis' concept, when he writes, "There is a widely accepted habit of thinking these days that, instead of objectively thinking about truth and falsity, shifts the decision onto the age as such and even plays a more remote historical past against a more recent one." Theodor Adorno, "Reason and Revelation," in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1963/1969; repr., New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 135.

[92] Habermas, "Entwinement," 28; emphasis original.

[93] Thus, Lewis provides a cogent account of *reason within the limits of religion alone*, rivaling Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson (La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing, 1934; repr., New York: Harper & Row, 1960).

[94] C. S. Lewis, "Religion: Reality or Substitute?" in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967, repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 41. See Norbert Feinendegen, "Contemplating C. S. Lewis's Epistemology," *VII: An Anglo-American Literary Review* 24 (2007): 29-52.

course, this all changed with the skeptical assaults on reason from Hume and the humbling of reason in the writings of Kant. Subsequently, the Enlightenment tradition eventually severed human reason from any transcendent basis or source. Taking up the mantle of Nietzsche, Adorno-Horkheimer's critique of Enlightenment rationality has the unsettling result of jettisoning reason as tainted, while unreasonably reasoning to the point of self-refutation. Given their critique of reason coupled with their disdain for authority, they ultimately reduce Lewis' epistemological triad to a single element— *experience*. However, on their view, experience is completely historically, socially, and culturally conditioned and thus utterly subjective, paving the way for later developments in postmodernism.[95] By contrast, Lewis argues for the necessity and integration of all three elements of authority, reason, and experience for the very possibility of human knowledge and rationality—and thus any legitimate or viable critique.

On reason. In his work delineating the medieval model of the universe, titled *The Discarded Image*, Lewis carefully distinguishes between the medieval and modern senses of dialectic:

> (1) 'Dialectic' in the modern Marxist sense is here a red herring—Hegelian in origin. It must be completely set aside when we speak of ancient or medieval Dialectic. This means simply the art of disputation. It has nothing to do with the dynamic of history.
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> (2) Dialectic is concerned with proving. In the Middle Ages there are three kinds of proof; from Reason, from Authority, and from Experience. We establish geometrical truth by Reason; a historical truth, by Authority, by *auctours*. We learn by experience that oysters do or do not agree with us.[96]

Whereas Adorno-Horkheimer, drawing on the philosophical traditions of Hegel, Marx,

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[95] James Prothero describes Lewis as "a prophet in the wilderness for the existence of objective rationalism in 20th-century thought. It might be argued that his foretelling of the nihilistic result of subjectivism and the abandonment of a belief in objective reality predicted Post-Modern trends of thought such as Deconstructionism." James Prothero, in Schultz and West, *C. S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Rationalism." Adorno-Horkheimer vehemently opposed many postmodern developments of critical theory, for example, post-structuralism popularized in the 1950s and 60s by French theorists such as Roland Barthes (1915-80), Michel Foucault (1926-84), Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), among others.

[96] Lewis, *Discarded Image*, 189.

and Nietzsche, confine dialectic and human rationality to the dynamic of history and various socio-historical conditions, Lewis draws upon ancient, classical, and medieval sources, especially the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian traditions, for an alternative understanding of reason. The latter view came to flower in the Middle Ages with its triadic epistemological emphasis on reason, experience, and authority. For Lewis this represents a broader, holistic, and more promising form of dialectic.

Before exploring this view further, it is noteworthy that Lewis describes a highly problematic change in the meaning of the word *reason* that began in the eighteenth century. This change involved a narrowing or shrinking of reason, which parallels the reductionism described above relating to the human subject. He writes, "From meaning . . . the whole Rational Soul, both *intellectus* and *ratio*, it shrank to meaning merely 'the power by which man deduces one proposition from another.'"[97] The pre-modern view included both *intellectus* and *ratio*, or higher and lower reason, respectively. On the difference between the two, and the need for both cognitive faculties, Lewis further explains, "We are enjoying *intellectus* when we 'just see' a self-evident truth; we are exercising *ratio* when we proceed step by step to prove a truth which is not self-evident."[98] Accordingly, *intellectus* represents what is *given*, something you "just see," that which one reasons *from*; while *ratio* represents the forms of deductive and inductive reasoning, or the processes by which one reasons *to* a conclusion. But, from the eighteenth century onwards, reason was reduced to *ratio*, while *intellectus* was subject to a demand for justification. For Lewis, this change in the meaning of reason is significant for all knowledge ultimately depends on some things being simply "seen" or understood

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[97] Lewis, *Discarded Image*, 159-60.

[98] Lewis, *Discarded Image*, 157. For Lewis on reason or rational soul, the two faculties *intellectus* and *ratio*, higher and lower reason, respectively, see *Discarded Image*, 156-60. When Lewis speaks of "enjoying *intellectus*" and "exercising *ratio*," he seems to have in mind philosopher Samuel Alexander's (1850-1938) distinction between *enjoyment* and *contemplation* from his *Space, Time and Deity* (1920). Cf. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 217-19.

as self-evident truths. In the absence of self-evident truths, the only alternative is to require that everything be proven true. But, Lewis explains, this "would presumably be impossible; for nothing can be proved if nothing is self-evident."[99] The process of proving would lead to an infinite regress of justification in which nothing could be proven, thus undercutting *ratio* altogether. Hence, all human judgments, any valid critique, finally depend upon the foundation of self-evident, first principles of reason. This is crucial for understanding Lewis' emphasis on the role of reason in *Abolition*, where he appeals to self-evident principles which must be simply "seen."

Not surprisingly, Adorno-Horkheimer, along with other critical theorists, take for granted these principles in their reasoning and argumentation, despite being adamantly *anti-foundationalist* in their epistemology. Yet, they fail to account for these principles as anything more than dialectical (in the modern sense), heuristic devices that have developed over time through the historical process. However, the cutting off of *intellectus* means the reduction of *ratio* to mere instrumental reason, or means-ends rationality. This is a problem both for Enlightenment rationalism and Adorno-Horkheimer given critical theory's lack of a basis for a substantive reason, thus warranting the seemingly intractable charge that critical theory's reason is not substantive or substantial, valid or veridical. Critical theory is incapable of extricating itself from mere speculative theorizing about reality instead of producing what Lewis calls a "genuine" or "real insight" *into* reality. This is apparent in Adorno-Horkheimer's emphasis on determinate negation or negative dialectic. The skeptical result is that what might be called a rationality-from-below approach is seriously undermined or *problematized* (to borrow a term from the critical theory vernacular).

Lewis sees the way out of this epistemological predicament in simply conceding that human reason has the capacity for apprehending, though not proving, self-

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[99] Lewis, *Discarded Image*, 157.

evident truths, including necessary truths, intellectual and moral, theoretical and practical.[100] These truths have a substantive and objective existence independent of the human mind, though they are subjectively "seen" or "grasped" by the human subject. They are discovered and understood, not invented or produced. Furthermore, their discovery provides the needed bridge for the problematic gap in the subject-object relationship. Self-evident truths are not reason themselves but are about the objects apprehended by the rational subject via reason.[101] Thus, Lewis distinguishes *reason* from *truth* and *reality*. He maintains, "truth is always *about* something, but reality is that *about which* truth is."[102] Accordingly, reason is the faculty which apprehends truth about reality, thus producing knowledge. These distinctions are preconditions for rationality, which make possible the forming of critical judgments, such as positive and negative critiques.[103]

Thus, for Lewis there is an *a priori* validity and irreducibility of reason that

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[100] Compare Lewis to the work of Arthur Balfour on "inevitable beliefs" of which he includes the independent existence of persons and things, morals, beauty, among others. See Arthur Balfour, *Theism and Humanism*, Gifford Lectures (1914), pt. 1, sec. 2, Kindle. Lewis was asked to respond to the following question by *The Christian Century* magazine (June 6, 1962): "What books did most to shape your vocational attitude and your philosophy of life?" Lewis provided a top-ten list, which included Balfour's *Theism and Humanism*. See John West, Jr., "Top Ten Books that Influenced C. S. Lewis," C. S. Lewis Web, August 2, 2012, http://www.cslewisweb.com/2012/08/top-ten-books-that-influenced-c-s-lewis/.

[101] Lewis clarifies this point in a letter: "Yes: by *Reason* I meant 'the faculty whereby we recognize or attain necessary truths' or 'the faculty of grasping self-evident truths or logically deducing those which are not self-evident.' I would not call the truths Reason any more than I would call colors Sight, or food Eating." C. S. Lewis to Mary Van Deusen, July 14, 1951, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 3, *Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy 1950-1963*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 129; emphasis original.

[102] C. S. Lewis, "Myth Became Fact," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 66; emphasis original.

[103] In fact, consistent with Lewis' view, negative dialectic (or determinate negation) depends upon the possibility of positive dialectic. For one to justifiably be skeptical of anything, one must first know *something* to be true. In other words, negative criticism depends upon affirming *some* positive propositional content. Consequently, apart from this positive knowledge, Adorno-Horkheimer are in no position to *reasonably* negate any claim. And yet, Adorno-Horkheimer's approach to truth is wholly negative, a kind of *via negativa*. Adriana S. Benzaquén comments, "Only by refusing to write positively may thought guarantee, not truth itself, but the *possibility* of truth." Adriana S. Benzaquén, "Thought and Utopia in the Writings of Adorno, Horkheimer, and Benjamin," *Utopian Studies* 9, no. 2 (1998): 151, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*; emphasis added. On this view, truth is only ever a *possibility*. But, if as a matter of principle, one is precluded from making any positive judgments, how can truth ever be identified or affirmed? It seems this approach only makes for the *impossibility* of truth.

must be acknowledged from the outset before even the possibility of critique. Again, to

"see through all things is the same as not to see." To demand reason prove itself can be

met only one of two ways: by reason or sense experience. However, to use reason to

validate the use of reason is viciously circular, and experience alone is not sufficient to

demonstrate the validity of reason since all beliefs based on experience depend upon

rational inferences.[104] Therefore, Lewis explains,

> All possible knowledge, then, depends on the validity of reasoning. If the
> feeling of certainty which we express by words like *must be* and *therefore* and *since*
> is a real perception of how things outside our minds really "must" be, well and
> good. But if this certainty is merely a feeling *in* our own minds and not a genuine
> insight into realities beyond them—if it merely represents the way our minds
> happen to work—then we can have no knowledge.[105]

Furthermore, Lewis concludes,

> It follows that no account of the universe can be true unless that account leaves
> it possible for our thinking to be a real insight. A theory which explained
> everything else in the whole universe but which made it impossible to believe that
> our thinking was valid, would be utterly out of court. For that theory would itself
> have been reached by thinking, and if thinking is not valid that theory would, of
> course, be itself demolished. It would have destroyed its own credentials. It would
> be an argument which proved that no argument was sound—a proof that there are
> no such things as proofs—which is nonsense.[106]

Accordingly, a theory is needed that supports our reasoning as being what Lewis calls "a

real insight," in other words, a theory which accounts for the possibility of valid and

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[104] Lewis writes: "The difficulty is not peculiar to theologians. Scientists, poets, psychoanalysts, and metaphysicians are all in the same boat—Man's reason is in such deep insolvency to sense." C. S. Lewis, "Horrid Red Things," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 71. Elsewhere, Lewis writes, "It is clear that everything we know, beyond our own immediate sensations, is inferred from those sensations." Lewis, *Miracles*, 20.

[105] Lewis, *Miracles*, 21.

[106] Lewis, *Miracles*, 21-22. Lewis famously developed his argument from reason (in *Miracles* and elsewhere) as an attack on the worldview of metaphysical or scientific naturalism. Thus, for example, he writes, "But Naturalism, even if it is not purely materialistic, seems to me to involve the same difficulty . . . . It discredits our processes of reasoning or at least reduces their credit to such a humble level that it can no longer support Naturalism itself" (22). One could substitute for Lewis' reference to naturalism Adorno-Horkheimer's critical theory, with its "materialistic stance," and arguably the same conclusion follows. For further discussion of Horkheimer's materialistic worldview and its effects on his understanding of human rationality, see J. C. Berendzen, "Postmetaphysical Thinking or Refusal of Thought? Max Horkheimer's Materialism as Philosophical Stance," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 16, no. 5 (2008): 695-718, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

sound acts of thinking.

Lewis goes on to discuss the nature of *thinking*. He explains, "Acts of thinking are no doubt events; but they are a very special sort of events. They are 'about' something other than themselves and can be true or false. Events in general are not 'about' anything and cannot be true or false."[107] That is to say, acts of thinking possess *intentionality*, meaning they *intend*, are *directed at*, are *about* objects beyond themselves. Accordingly, they possess both subjective and objective aspects; they are internal to the subject but outwardly directed toward objects.[108] Both aspects of thought are required for the possibility of a "real insight" into reality, making knowledge possible. Concerning the objects of knowledge, Lewis explains, "An act of knowing must be determined, in a sense, solely by what is known; we must know it to be thus solely because it *is* thus. That is what knowing means."[109] Adorno-Horkheimer would agree. Recall they write that classifying knowledge is not "the knowledge which really apprehends the object**.**" This is the opposite of what it is to "grasp existing things as such" or what they term the *preponderance of the object*.[110] However, despite this emphasis, their negative approach reduces acts of thinking to purely subjective events of the mind, objective reality being unattainable and unknowable. Positive knowledge claims about objects of the world represent examples of the reification of thought or identity thinking, mistaking one's concepts or words for the things themselves.[111] By contrast, Lewis writes,

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[107] Lewis, *Miracles*, 25-26.

[108] As Lewis explains, "Hence acts of inference can, and must, be considered in two different lights. On the one hand they are subjective events, items in somebody's psychological history. On the other hand, they are insights into, or knowings of, something other than themselves." Lewis, *Miracles*, 26.

[109] Lewis, *Miracles*, 26; emphasis original.

[110] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 10. On the preponderance of the object, see Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 183-86.

[111] Cf. Lewis: "Fools concocting a myth, taking the words for things." C. S. Lewis, "The Country of the Blind," in *Poems*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1964; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 1977), 34.

The act of knowing has no doubt various conditions, without which it could not occur: attention, and the states of will and health which this presupposes. But its positive character must be determined by the truth it knows. If it were totally explicable from other sources it would cease to be knowledge. . . . If what seems an act of knowledge is partially explicable from other sources, then the knowing (properly so called) in it is just what they leave over, just what demands, for its explanation, the thing known, as real hearing is what is left after you have discounted the *tinnitus*. Any thing which professes to explain our reasoning fully without introducing an act of knowing thus solely determined by what is known, is really a theory that there is no reasoning.[112]

He acknowledges acts of thinking or knowing are conditioned by a variety of factors.

But, there is a crucial difference between acknowledging the presence of conditions

without which an act of knowing does not occur and claiming that acts of knowing are

completely historically and socially conditioned as Adorno-Horkheimer suggest.[113] Also,

notice how Lewis describes an act of knowledge in similar terms to Adorno-

Horkheimer's account of determinate negation or negative dialectic. Knowledge pertains

to what is left over of the thing known once any subjectively superimposed elements have

been abstracted or eliminated from the knowing process. A genuine act of knowing must

be "solely determined by what is known," meaning the object. Anything short of this is

"really a theory that there is no reasoning," which is exactly what critical theory amounts

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[112] Lewis, *Miracles*, 27.

[113] Cf. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xi, xvii; Max Horkheimer, "On the Problem of Truth," in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, ed. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (New York: Continuum, 1995). They share the view that, as Lewis describes it, "reason must have come into existence by a historical process. And of course, . . . this process was not designed to produce a mental behavior that can find truth. There was no Designer; and indeed, until there were thinkers, there was no truth or falsehood. The type of mental behavior we now call rational thinking or inference must therefore have been 'evolved' by natural selection, by the gradual weeding out of types less fitted to survive." Lewis, *Miracles*, 28. If so, Lewis explains,

> Once, then, our thoughts were not rational. That is, all our thoughts once were, as many of our thoughts still are, merely subjective events, not apprehensions of objective truth. Those which had a cause external to ourselves at all were (like our pains) responses to stimuli. . . . But it is not conceivable that any improvement of response could ever turn them into acts of insight, or even remotely tend to do so. The relation between response and stimulus is utterly different from that between knowledge and the truth known. . . . Such perfection of the non-rational responses, far from amounting to their conversion into valid inferences, might be conceived as a different method of achieving survival—an alternative to reason (28-29).

Recall Adorno-Horkheimer's account of the subjective awakening of Odysseus and his use of cunning reason for survival or self-preservation. Lewis argues such an explanation of the evolutionary development of conscious reason can only account for "how people came to think the way they do. And this of course leaves in the air the quite different question of how they could possibly be justified in so thinking" (32).

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to in the end.

Finally, Lewis exposes the fundamental error of all theories that would attempt to use reason to establish the validity of reason, whether through some historical (Hegelian), genealogical (Nietzschean), or evolutionary (Darwinian) process of phenomenological development, in which rationality comes from what is nonrational. He writes,

> Inference itself is on trial. . . . If the value of our reasoning is in doubt, you cannot try to establish it by reasoning. If, as I said above, a proof that there are no proofs is nonsensical, so is a proof that there are proofs. *Reason is our starting point. There can be no question either of attacking or defending it.* If by treating it as a mere phenomenon you put yourself outside it, there is then no way, except by begging the question, of getting inside again.[114]

Reason is our starting point, Lewis insists. If we do not begin with reason, we can never get to reason. Thus, theories that make validity claims cannot be limited to mere descriptions of physical facts, scientific structures, or socio-historical conditions. This is exactly the position Lewis maintains regarding the self-evident, or first principles of reason in *Abolition*.

On experience. The next major component of Lewis' epistemological triad is the role of *experience*. First, according to Lewis, experience cannot demonstrate the validity of reason, and experience alone is not an adequate basis for knowledge. Contrary to popular opinion, "Seeing is not believing" and "our senses are not infallible."[115] Significantly, Lewis avows, "What we learn from experience depends on the kind of philosophy we bring to experience."[116] Nevertheless, for Lewis, experience plays an indispensable role in the knowing process, especially as it relates to our interaction with

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[114] Lewis, *Miracles*, 32-33; emphasis added.

[115] Lewis, *Miracles*, 1.

[116] Lewis, *Miracles*, 2.

the external world of objects: "Reason knows that she cannot work without materials."[117]

In Lewis' essay, "Bluspels and Flalansferes," he explains how the value of experience for knowledge depends upon what he describes as a "psycho-physical parallelism." He writes, "if there is not, in fact, a kind of psycho-physical parallelism (or more) in the universe—then all our thinking is nonsensical. . . . And so, admittedly, the view I have taken has metaphysical implications. But so has every view."[118] This psycho-physical parallelism is the *sine qua non* of experiential knowledge. Experience, coupled with self-evident truths, enables human beings to make valid judgments about the external world based upon rational inference. Whereas experiential knowledge depends upon both *intellectus* and *ratio* for its judgments, sensory experience provides the empirical content for the cognitive faculties to judge. Accordingly, a parallelism between subject and object is necessary for the possibility of mediated knowledge via one's sensory faculties and the world of experience.

Adorno-Horkheimer are very critical of what they call the "physiological theory of perception," which "holds the world of perception to be a reflection, guided by the intellect, of the data received from real objects by the brain."[119] On their view, this theory should be rejected because it leads to false projection, the "subject recreates the world outside it" by projecting subjective qualities onto it. And yet, they appear to recognize the need for something like Lewis' psycho-physical parallelism, which they describe in terms of the "intermeshing of subject and object." They write,

> If this intermeshing is broken, the self petrifies. If it is confined, positivistically, to registering the given without itself giving, it shrinks to a point, and if, idealistically, it projects the world out of the bottomless origin or its own self, it exhausts itself in monotonous repetition. In both cases it gives up the ghost—in this case the mind or

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[117] Lewis, *Miracles*, 144.

[118] C. S. Lewis, "Bluspels and Flalansferes: A Semantic Nightmare," in *Selected Literary Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (1969; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 265.

[119] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 155.

spirit.[120]

The answer they seek is the mediation between the subject and object, which attempts

reconciliation between the two. They explain,

> Only mediation, in which the insignificant sense datum raises thought to the fullest productivity of which it is capable, and in which, conversely, thought gives itself up without reservation to the overwhelming impression—only mediation can overcome the isolation which ails the whole of nature. Neither the certainty untroubled by thought, nor the preconceptual unity of perception and object, but only their self-reflective antithesis contains the possibility of reconciliation. The antithesis is perceived in the subject, which has the external world within its own consciousness and yet recognizes it as other. Reflection on that antithesis, therefore, the life of reason, takes place as conscious projection.[121]

Notice their rejection of any "preconceptual unity of perception and object,"

which seems similar to Lewis' psycho-physical parallelism. They fear such unity results

in identity thinking; hence, thought and object must remain in an antithetical relationship.

But, how does their proposal of "self-reflective antithesis" escape the problem of false

projection? They offer the explanation that, to avoid the seductive, sensual power of the

false projection of subjective elements onto the object, "Only the self-conscious work of

thought . . . philosophy . . . can escape this hallucinatory power. As, in the course of

cognition, thought identifies the conceptual moments which are immediately posited in

perception and are therefore compelling, it progressively takes them back into the subject

and strips them of their intuitive power."[122] This stripping process, which works to

remove the added "intellectual elements" from the perception of the object is the process

of negation. Without this negation, cognition becomes pathological. "The subject which

naively postulates absolutes, no matter how universally active it may be, is sick, passively

succumbing to the dazzlement of false immediacy."[123] Hence, they argue, the need for

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[120] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 155-56. Cf. Theodor Adorno, "Subject and Object," in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, ed. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (New York: Continuum, 1995).

[121] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 156.

[122] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 160.

[123] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 160.

negative dialectics. But, once again, apart from a substantive reason (*intellectus* and *ratio*), and the possibility of a Lewisian positive dialectic, these goals are not achievable despite how admirable they might be.

On Lewis' view, if thought and thing, perception and object, are *created* or *designed* to function together for the purpose of knowledge, then mediation, reconciliation, genuine or real insight, is made possible. Thus, a certain kind of metaphysic is necessary to account for how a logical parallelism between mind (subject) and matter (object) could exist. Likewise, Lewis' comment that every view has "metaphysical implications" applies just as well to Adorno-Horkheimer' anti-metaphysical posturing.

In *Discarded Image*, Lewis explains,

> No Model [of the universe] yet devised has made a satisfactory unity between our actual experience of sensation or thought or emotion and any available account of the corporeal processes which they are held to involve. . . . [D]esperate remedies have been adopted. Berkeleyan idealists have denied the physical process; extreme Behaviorists, the mental.[124]

Despite the lack of a model that provides a satisfactory account of the subject-object relation, such a relation is necessary, must be presupposed in fact, for any experience of the world to result in knowledge. Otherwise, the human mind and its contents (i.e., sensations, thoughts, emotions) are completely severed from reality. Idealists dissolve the objects of reality into the mental contents of the subject's mind; materialists dissolve subjects into mere objects of nature devoid of subjective conscious experience. Only on a metaphysic that preserves the subject-object distinction, and the logically amenable parallelism between the two, can man's cognitive and sensory faculties be properly suited and thus trusted for the conversion of experiential data into actual knowledge.[125]

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[124] Lewis, *Discarded Image*, 165-66. Cf. Lewis, *Miracles*, especially chap. 3.

[125] What is more, along with the presupposition of this psycho-physical parallelism, experiential knowledge also depends on another fundamental presupposition about the natural world: the principle of the uniformity of nature. It is the belief in this principle that makes probable knowledge based on inductive reasoning possible. Lewis, *Miracles*, 162. Yet, Lewis argues such a principle cannot be proven (by reason or experience) but must be presupposed in order to prove anything else about the world (162-

On authority. Finally, the epistemological package of reason and experience is not complete or sufficient without the necessary role of *authority*. In *Mere Christianity*, Lewis addresses and seeks to alleviate the modernist's fear of authority. He explains,

> Do not be scared by the word authority. Believing things on authority only means believing them because you have been told them by someone you think trustworthy. Ninety-nine per cent of the things you believe are believed on authority. . . . None of us could prove them by pure logic as you prove a thing in mathematics. We believe them simply because people who did see them have left writings that tell us about them: in fact, on authority. A man who jibbed at authority in other things as some people do in religion would have to be content to know nothing all his life.[126]

Granting the indispensable roles of reason and experience in knowledge acquisition, Lewis says virtually all of our knowledge finally rests on authority. This is in stark contrast with Enlightenment rationalism's rebellion against authority, and Adorno-Horkheimer's opposition to appeals to authority as authoritarian. Recall that for Adorno-Horkheimer, drawing on Kant, "Enlightenment . . . is 'the human being's emergence from self-incurred minority. Minority is inability to make use of one's own understanding without direction from another.'"[127] Hence, the key to human freedom is rejection of any external authority. However, as Lewis reminds us, virtually all our

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63). Thus, accepting that the principle of the uniformity of nature is true comes down to a matter of *faith*. And whether or not one is justified in this faith again "depends on the Metaphysic one holds" (167). Moreover, he explains, "If the deepest thing in reality, the Fact which is the source of all other facthood, is a thing in some degree like ourselves—if it is a Rational Spirit and we derive our rational spirituality from It—then indeed our conviction can be trusted" (168). Moreover, he writes,

> The sciences logically require a metaphysic of this sort. Our greatest natural philosopher thinks it is also the metaphysic out of which they originally grew. Professor Whitehead points out that centuries of belief in a God who combined "the personal energy of Jehovah" with "the rationality of a Greek philosopher" first produced that firm expectation of systematic order which rendered possible the birth of modern science. Men became scientific because they expected Law in Nature, and they expected Law in Nature because they believed in a Legislator (168-69; quoting Alfred N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* [1925], chap. 2).

Once again, Lewis argues no real conflict exists between religion and science. In fact, science grew out of a religious worldview or metaphysic with roots in the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian traditions.

[126] Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 62.

[127] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 63; quoting Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?," *Practical Philosophy*, trans. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 17.

knowledge depends upon trusting certain authorities for information we could not obtain in any other way, such as by abstract reasoning or direct personal experience.[128]

In sum, all knowledge depends upon authority, reason, and experience, in varying degrees and proportions, and, one might add, *in that particular order*. In other words, experience without reason is blind, and reason minus authority lacks proper guidance and direction. To emphasize any one of the three elements at the expense of the others results in various ideologies: emphasis on reason alone (idealism or positivism), emphasis on experience alone (empiricism or pragmatism), and emphasis on authority alone (authoritarianism or dogmatism).

*Super*naturalized Epistemology

The Lewisian theory of knowledge represents what could be called a *supernaturalized* epistemology, a rationality-from-above view.[129] Essential to Lewis' understanding of human reason and rationality is his claim that "something beyond Nature operates whenever we reason."[130] For Lewis, "there must be something which exists in its own right; some basic Fact whose existence it would be nonsensical to try to explain because this Fact is itself the ground or starting-point of all explanations."[131] He goes on to declare this Fact to be "the One Self-existent Thing . . . what we call God."[132]

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[128] It is interesting to compare Mark T. Mitchell on the work of philosopher Michael Polanyi (1891-1976), another critic of Enlightenment rationalism, and Lewis on the importance of tradition and authority for knowledge. It would appear Lewis anticipates many of Polanyi's ideas. See Mark T. Mitchell, "The False Dilemma of Modernity," *Modern Age* 47, no. 4 (2005): 311-20, *MasterFILE Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

[129] Cf. W. V. Quine's *naturalized* epistemology. See W. V. Quine, "Epistemology Naturalized," in *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969).

[130] Lewis, *Miracles*, 37-38. According to Lewis, "The validity of rational thought, accepted in an utterly non-naturalistic, *transcendental* (if you will), *supernatural sense*, is *the necessary presupposition of all other theorizing*. There is simply no sense in beginning with a view of the universe and trying to fit the claims of thought in at a later stage. By thinking at all we have claimed that our thoughts are *more than mere natural events*. All other propositions must be fitted in as best they can round that primary claim." C. S. Lewis, "Religion without Dogma?," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 138; emphasis added.

[131] Lewis, *Miracles*, 8-9.

[132] Lewis, *Miracles*, 10.

Lewis believes the validity of human reason is ultimately derived from some other, higher Reason, "a self-existent Reason," which exists eternally and incessantly. But, no human authority can seriously claim to "be that eternal self-existent Reason which neither slumbers nor sleeps."[133] And yet, "if any thought is valid, such a Reason must exist and must be the source of my own imperfect and intermittent rationality."[134] Accordingly, Lewis often distinguishes between *reason* and *Reason*, the former being human and subject to error, while the latter is divine and impervious to error.[135] Lewis, therefore, affirms God is self-existent Reason and the source of the human power of reason. The existence of God, if not the express belief in God, is necessary for the validity of human thought.[136] The implications for Enlightenment rationalism's (as well as Adorno-Horkheimer's) abolition of God as a basis for human reason and rationality are, therefore, enormous. Without self-existent Reason, ontologically speaking, there can be no self-

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[133] Lewis, *Miracles*, 42.

[134] Lewis, *Miracles*, 42.

[135] A great example of this distinction in Lewis' thought is found in a letter written to his friend Dom Bede Griffiths, in which Lewis proclaims: "We have no abiding city even in philosophy: all passes, except the Word." C. S. Lewis to Dom Bede Griffiths, January 8, 1936," in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 2, *Books, Broadcasts, and the War, 1931-1949*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 176. Cf. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isa. 40:8); "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35); "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Pet. 1:25). Moreover, when capitalized as *Word*, the reference is to the Word of God or the *Logos*. Cf. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Hence, John identifies the Word as Jesus Christ. In *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis speaks of the connection between logic and the *Logos* (209). In a later correspondence with Griffiths, Lewis further clarifies,

> All I meant was that no philosophy is perfect: nor can be, since, whatever is true of Reason herself, in the human process of reasoning there is always error and even what is right, in solving one problem, always poses another. . . .

> Reason, no doubt, is always on the side of Christianity: but that amount and what kind of human reasoning which gives an age its dominant intellectual tone, is surely sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other.

Lewis to Dom Bede Griffiths, April 24, 1936, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 2, *Books, Broadcasts, and the War, 1931-1949*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 188, 189. Lewis' firm conviction is that Reason is always on the side of Christianity, a constant refrain throughout his writings. Cf. Lewis, *Screwtape Letters*, 1-2.

[136] Lewis succinctly states his position, "Unless I believe in God, I can't believe in thought; so I can never use thought to disbelieve in God." Lewis, *The Case for Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1943; repr., New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 32.

evident principles of reason, epistemologically speaking. The result is utter skepticism.[137]

Reason is our starting point. Any view which denies reason as a starting point cannot get its theoretical foot off the ground (nor its practical foot, see the next chapter). Lewis argues, "It is only when you are asked to believe in Reason coming from non-reason that you must cry Halt, for, if you don't all thought is discredited."[138] This applies to all those views that treat reason as a Johnny-come-lately in the universe, a by-product of a nonrational process of biological, historical, or sociological development. In contrast to such views, Lewis argues Reason is primary, while nature is secondary, both in significance and order of existence.[139] The reason of God precedes nature and presides over her (contra Adorno-Horkheimer). The uniformity and regularity of nature is due to the reason of God, not some superimposed schema of the human reason (contra Kant). This prior ordering of nature makes her knowable due to the pre-established harmony of a psycho-physical parallelism that exists between the human mind and nature. Finally, acts of knowing for the human mind depend upon the illumination of the divine mind.[140]

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[137] Interestingly, Adorno-Horkheimer discuss how this was the similar conclusion drawn by Nietzsche as a result of his "God is dead" philosophy. Referring to Nietzsche's replacement of God with the "higher self" or "Overman," and Kant's replacement of God with an autonomous principle, they explain, "Both principles aim at independence from external powers, at the unconditional freedom from tutelage which defines the essence of enlightenment." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 90. Thus, enlightenment reason, in its attempt to eradicate myth out of a fear of falsehood, replaced external authority, Reason or the Law, with self-legislation. But, in so doing, "enlightenment itself, indeed, truth in any form, became an idol, and we realize that 'even we knowing ones of today, the godless and antimetaphysical, still take *our* fire from the conflagration kindled by a belief millennia old, the Christian belief, which was also the belief of Plato, that God is truth, that the truth is divine.'" Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 90.; quoting Nietzsche, *Joyful Wisdom* (Cleveland, OH: Jovian Press, 2016), bk. 5, sec. 344, Kindle; emphasis original. Accordingly, Adorno-Horkheimer explain, for Nietzsche it seemed to follow that "science itself, therefore, is open to the same criticism as metaphysics. The denial of God contains an irresolvable contradiction; it negates knowledge itself." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 90. Of course, Adorno-Horkheimer do not accept this final conclusion. However, it is noteworthy their theory of knowledge is reduced to that of determinate negation, which is arguably a result of their atheism.

[138] Lewis, *Miracles*, 42.

[139] In fact, Lewis argues, "It is by inferences that we build up the idea of Nature at all. Reason is given before Nature and on reason our concept of Nature depends." Lewis, *Miracles*, 35-36.

[140] Lewis is drawing upon Augustine's theory of divine illumination and his Logos doctrine as an explanation of how the human mind comes to know truth, especially eternal truths. See Augustine,

Apart from divine illumination, the human mind is wholly subject to nonrational causation. The act of divine illumination emancipates the human mind, liberating it for the possibility of knowledge "determined by the truth known."[141] For when it comes to the act of human reason, it "must claim, to be an act of insight, a knowledge sufficiently free from non-rational causation to be determined (positively) only by the truth it knows. . . . This is the prime reality, on which the attribution of reality to anything else rests."[142] Thus, this represents the theoretical starting point for Lewis' theory of knowledge. He concludes, "Human minds, then, are not the only supernatural entities that exist. . . . Each has come into Nature from Supernature: each has its tap-root in an eternal, self-existent, rational Being, whom we call God. Each is an offshoot, or spearhead, or incursion of that Supernatural reality into Nature."[143]

Confessions 4.15.25, 10.2.2, and 12.25.35; Augustine, *On the Trinity* 12.2.2, 12.15.24. Also, see Ronald Nash, *The Light of the Mind: St. Augustine's Theory of Knowledge* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1969); Ronald Nash, *The Word of God and the Mind of Man* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1992). Divine illumination is an act of grace, specifically a *prevenient* grace that enables the human mind to freely pursue and apprehend truth and knowledge.

[141] Lewis, *Miracles*, 34-35.

[142] Lewis, *Miracles*, 36.

[143] Lewis, *Miracles*, 43. Cf. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 48. For further reading on Lewis' argument from reason against naturalistic, materialistic, and deterministic metaphysical and epistemological theories, see the following by Lewis: *Miracles*, especially chaps. 1-4, 13; "Is Theology Poetry?"; "*De Futilitate*"; "The Funeral of a Great Myth"; "Religion without Dogma?"; and C. S. Lewis, "On Living in an Atomic Age," in *Present Concerns: A Compelling Collection of Timely, Journalistic Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Fount, 1986; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002). Lewis famously debated analytic philosopher G. E. M. Anscombe in 1948 at the Oxford Socratic Club, causing him to later revise chap. 3 of *Miracles* to accommodate her criticisms. For another critical approach to Lewis' argument see John Beversluis, *C. S. Lewis and the Search for Rational Religion*, rev. ed. (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2007). For further discussion of Lewis and Anscombe, see Walter Hooper, "Oxford's Bonny Fighter," in *C. S. Lewis at the Breakfast Table and Other Reminiscences*, ed. James T. Como (New York: Macmillan, 1979; repr., New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992); Victor Reppert, *C. S. Lewis's Dangerous Idea: In Defense of the Argument from Reason* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 45-71. For an assessment of Lewis and Beversluis' criticisms, in addition to Reppert, see Richard L. Purtill, *Lord of the Elves and Eldils: Fantasy and Philosophy in C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2006), especially Appendix C, "Did C. S. Lewis Lose His Faith?," 227-52. Moreover, there have been a number of significant updates to Lewis' argument by prominent contemporary philosophers, including the work of Victor Reppert (cited above). Alvin Plantinga has also developed similar (though much more technically advanced) arguments from reason against a naturalist epistemology. He concludes one significant essay on the subject stating that "we see that naturalist epistemology flourishes best in the garden of supernaturalistic metaphysics. Naturalistic epistemology conjoined with naturalistic metaphysics leads via evolution to skepticism or to violations of canons of rationality; conjoined with theism it does not. The naturalistic epistemology should therefore prefer theism to metaphysical naturalism." Alvin Plantinga, "Is Naturalism Irrational?," in *The Analytical Theist: An Alvin Plantinga Reader*, ed. James Sennett (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998), 96. In a note at the end of this essay, Plantinga further comments:

Positive dialectic, or determinate affirmation. Furthermore, Lewis makes a

similar argument based on the existence of objects of reality as "concrete, individual,

determinate things" or "facts—real, resistant existences" or "*opaque* existences, in the

sense that each contains something which our intelligence cannot completely digest. . . .

Above and beyond that there is in each of them the 'opaque' brute fact of existence, the

fact that it is actually there and is itself."[144] Having acknowledged the real, resistant,

even opaque existence of determinate objects of reality, as well as the limitations of the

human mind in conceptually grasping and digesting these objects, he further explains,

> But if God is the ultimate source of all concrete, individual things and events, then God Himself must be concrete, and individual in the highest degree. Unless the origin of all other things were itself concrete and individual, nothing else could be so; for there is no conceivable means whereby what is abstract or general could itself produce concrete reality. . . . If anything is to exist at all, then the Original Thing must be, not a principle nor a generality, much less an "ideal" or a "value," but an utterly concrete fact.[145]

Hence, not only do determinate, concrete things exist as possible objects of knowledge

making up the external world, but God, as the ultimate source of these objects, must

possess a determinate, concrete character as well. Regarding the determinate character of

God, he further explains,

> The Hebrew writings here observe an admirable balance. Once God says simply I AM, proclaiming the mystery of self-existence. But times without number He says "I am the Lord"—I, the ultimate Fact, have *this* determinate character, and not *that*. And men are exhorted to "know the Lord," to discover and experience this particular character.[146]

For Lewis, "to exist means to be a positive Something . . . . The Thing which has always

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"Victor Reppert reminds me that the argument of this chapter bears a good bit of similarity to arguments to be found in chapters III and XIII of C. S. Lewis's *Miracles*" (96n28). Also, see Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[144] Lewis, *Miracles*, 137-38.

[145] Lewis, *Miracles*, 138-39.

[146] Lewis, *Miracles*, 140; emphasis original. Thus, the answer to the Enlightenment *schema* is found in the Hebrew *Shema*: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deut. 6:4).

existed, namely God, has therefore always had His own positive character."[147] Thus,

Lewis warns of the attempts to think or describe God only in negative terms, "unchecked

by any positive intuition."[148] In order to avoid the error of identity thinking when it

comes to our concepts of nature, one must strip away from our idea of nature any

subjectively added aspects and qualities. Likewise, one must do the same in relation to

the knowledge of God. Lewis explains, "At each step we have to strip off from our idea

of God some human attribute. But the only real reason for stripping off the human

attribute is to make room for putting in some positive divine attribute."[149] Without the

replacement of what is removed (or negated) with something *positive*, the result is

continued negation to a nullity. Lewis explains how the negative, reductionist mistake is

almost an inevitable result for the human understanding when it is "left to itself," in

other words, free from the direction of any external authority, again the repeated refrain

of the Enlightenment. This is so because human reason left to itself lacks the resources

for providing the positive content needed to acquire a correct conception of God.[150]

But, how does one avoid this deleterious result when it comes to the

knowledge of God? What will prevent us from falling into what Lewis terms "the abyss

of abstraction"? Lewis provides the answer in "the Christian statement that only He who

does the will of the Father will ever know the true doctrine is philosophically accurate.

Imagination may help a little: but in the moral life, and (still more) in the devotional life

we touch something concrete which will at once begin to correct the growing emptiness

in our idea of God."[151] Lewis' proposal reveals the limitations of reason when it comes

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[147] Lewis, *Miracles*, 141.

[148] Lewis, *Miracles*, 143. He further writes, "God is basic Fact or Actuality, the source of all other facthood. At all costs therefore He must not be thought of as a featureless generality. If He exists at all, He is the most concrete thing there is" (145).

[149] Lewis, *Miracles*, 143.

[150] Lewis, *Miracles*, 144.

[151] Lewis, *Miracles*, 144. Lewis uses the language of "emptiness" relating to our idea of God

to knowledge acquisition. By obedience to divine *authority*, which one comes to apprehend and understand with the aid of *reason*, the further proof of the doctrine of God comes from self-reflection upon our *experience*. And we would know this if only we would listen to reason, for Lewis says, "The materials for correcting our abstract conception of God cannot be supplied by Reason: she will be the first to tell you to go and try experience—'Oh, taste and see!'"[152] Thus, it is the concrete reality of God encountered in the moral and devotional life that is essential to confirming the truth about God.

All in all, Lewis readily admits reason alone is not sufficient for knowledge but must be "mixed in varying proportions" with experience and authority for the possibility of knowledge. He also avoids the opposite intellectual vices of what has been termed *strong rationalism* (in *Abolition*, "extreme rationalism") on the one hand, and *fideism*, on the other. Some scholars describe Lewis' view of rationality as a form of *critical rationalism*, which provides a welcome contrast to critical theory.[153] The critical rationalist embraces reason as a genuine source of truth and knowledge, while at the same time admitting reason's limitations. This view acknowledges the complexity of human nature by conceding that not only rational but also emotional and volitional elements can affect the human reasoning process at times causing it to err. A persistent theme throughout Lewis' writing, especially in *Abolition*, is that the human will is caught up in the struggle between these rational and emotional elements, which can act as barriers or

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similar to his earlier discussion of the emptying of our ideas of nature. In each case, our ideas are emptied of objective content and replaced with the subjective contents of our own minds.

[152] Lewis, *Miracles*, 144-45. Cf. "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!" (Ps. 34:8).

[153] Lewis, *Abolition*, 67. On the distinction between strong rationalism, fideism, and critical rationalism, see Reppert, *C. S. Lewis's Dangerous Idea*, chap. 2, "Assessing Apologetic Arguments," 29-44; Michael Peterson et al., *Reason & Religious Belief: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), chap. 3, "Faith and Reason: How Are They Related?," 39-57.

obstacles to overcome in the pursuit of truth.[154]

Reason and Imagination

One cannot fully appreciate Lewis' take on reason without also learning of his view of the imagination. Without an understanding of the important relationship between reason and imagination in Lewis, his emphasis on reason in *Abolition* might seem like an overemphasis. To be sure, Lewis considered himself a rationalist, but a closer examination of his writings reveals a rich, dynamic, more holistic approach overall. Thus, the following supplements the above discussion on the nature and limitations of human reason with an examination of Lewis on the essential role of the imagination.

A Baptized Imagination

Commenting on the views of Weber, Lee writes,

> In the "enchanted" ages, all things were viewed as being permeated with—or, under the sway of—some magical, spiritual, or supernatural forces. With the process of "rationalization and intellectualization," however, things have changed: in a "disenchanted" world, all things are seen as resulting from natural processes that can be rationally understood and technically controlled. All things, in principle, can be *mastered* by humans.[155]

Or more concisely, he states, "To put it in a nutshell, disenchantment means that *the world is no longer seen as a meaningful cosmos*. Instead, moderns live in a meaningless universe."[156] Of course, moderns do not live this out in practice. Although they have rejected a universal, objective meaning for the universe, in place of this they have projected their own subjective meaning onto reality to fill the self-created void. Absent a Master Plan, the universe is subject to the self-proclaimed masters of the universe. This was in fact Weber's response to the disenchantment of the world—*resignation*.

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[154] See Lewis, *Pilgrim's Regress*. Also, see discussion in Andrew Wheat, "The Road Before Him: Allegory, Reason, and Romanticism in C. S. Lewis' *The Pilgrim's Regress*," *Renascence* 51, no. 1 (1998): 21-40, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

[155] Lee, "Into the Region of Awe," 4-5; emphasis original.

[156] Lee, "Into the Region of Awe," 5; emphasis original.

However, according to Lee, Lewis proposed an alternative to the Weberian embrace of a disenchanted world,

> Lewis believed that our response to disenchantment should begin with questioning the very assumptions of modern rationality, which results in and from disenchantment. For Lewis, every attempt to re-enchant the world, short of (re)envisioning the world as "enchanted" in a substantial sense, must ultimately fail because it is actually trapped within the parameters set by the very disenchantment. In fact, such an attempt is not so much a response to disenchantment as the very consequence of it. It is only when we are able to see the world as having an inherent meaning, as a meaningful "cosmos," that our attempts to recover meaning in our lives can succeed.[157]

In his analysis, Lee draws attention to Lewis' use of the metaphor of *sight* or *seeing*. Disenchantment fundamentally involves a change of sight or vision. Thus, the work of re-enchantment involves a re-envisioning of the world, to see it once again as enchanted or filled to the brim with substantial meaning and significance. But, this involves the imagination in addition to reason. For Lewis, reason supplies the self-evident principles for our thinking as well as plays the critical role of challenging the false assumptions of modernity, as he demonstrates in *Abolition*. But, reason itself, whether *intellectus* or *ratio*, does not provide us with the visionary, material content, the images necessary for seeing the world as imbued with meaning.[158] For this different though related kind of sight or seeing, the human imagination plays an indispensable role.

For Lewis, the antidote to disenchantment is not to be found in reason alone. What is needed is a rediscovery of the substantial meaning of the world, and for a human mind that has been disenchanted this requires a re-enchantment of the imagination. This was a key component along the way in Lewis' own spiritual journey and eventual

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[157] Lee, "Into the Region of Awe," 127. Cf. Jacobs, *Narnian*, 188: "At the outset of this book I said that the work of C. S. Lewis is largely a response to—and an attempt to reverse—what the sociologist Max Weber called 'the disenchantment of the world.' And indeed this is true. But one can profitably describe his goals in another way, reversing the terms of the equation."

[158] On the relationship between reason, imagination, and science in Lewis, Ward writes, "In Lewis's view, reason could only operate if it was first supplied with materials to reason about, and it was imagination's task to supply those materials. Therefore, science was necessarily and foundationally imaginative." Ward, "Science and Religion," 5.

conversion to Christianity. In preparation for going to university, Lewis studied under

the tutelage of the rigorous logician, W. T. Kirkpatrick, whom he affectionately called

"the Great Knock." Kirkpatrick was an atheist, steeped in the reading of Arthur

Schopenhauer and James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. Lewis would acquire tremendous

logical and dialectical skill under Kirkpatrick.[159] Lewis describes himself as an atheist in

these early years, one who had embraced a modernist explanation of religion as

anthropology, and thus mythology.[160] During this time, Lewis bought and read a copy of

the Scottish preacher, novelist, and fantasy writer George MacDonald's (1824-1905)

Phantastes, which had an enormous impact on him. Discussing the mythical quality in

MacDonald and the effect it had on his imagination (rather than his intellect or

conscience, which came much later), Lewis writes, "What it actually did to me was to

convert, even to baptize . . . my imagination. . . . The quality which had enchanted me in

his imaginative works turned out to be the quality of the real universe, the divine,

magical, terrifying, and ecstatic reality in which we all live."[161]

The Organs of Truth and Meaning

Lewis' clearest and fullest discussion of the distinction between the faculties of

reason and imagination comes from his essay "Bluspels and Flalansferes." Consider the

following:

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[159] See Lewis' discussion of Kirkpatrick, chap. 9, "The Great Knock," in *Surprised by Joy*, 132-48.

[160] For Lewis on his early atheism, see *Surprised by Joy*. On his early views of religion as mythology, see Lewis to Arthur Greeves, October 12, 1916, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 1, *Family Letters 1905-1931*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 230-31.

[161] C. S. Lewis, *George MacDonald: An Anthology*, ed. and comp. C. S. Lewis (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1946; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001), xxxviii. Cf. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 179-81. See George MacDonald, *Phantastes: A Faerie Romance*, with introduction by C. S. Lewis (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000). Lewis includes *Phantastes* as number one on his top-ten list of books that greatly influenced him. See West, "Top Ten Books." Lewis would go on to say of MacDonald: "I have never concealed the fact that I regarded him as my master; indeed I fancy I have never written a book in which I did not quote from him." Lewis, *George MacDonald*, xxxvii. In fact, Lewis introduces MacDonald as a prominent character, teacher, and guide in C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce: A Dream* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1946; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001), chaps. 9-14.

> We are not talking of truth, but of meaning: meaning which is the antecedent condition both of truth and falsehood, whose antithesis is not error but nonsense. I am a rationalist. For me, reason is the natural organ of truth; but imagination is the organ of meaning. Imagination, producing new metaphors or revivifying old, is not the cause of truth, but its condition.[162]

Again, Lewis clearly identifies himself as a rationalist. But, he recognizes and understands the limitations of reason. Reason enables one to discern between truth and falsehood, to detect errors in statements, or test the validity or invalidity of arguments based on the traditional canons of logic and argumentation. However, beyond this point, reason reaches a limit. Moreover, it requires an antecedent condition for operating at all—and that is *meaning*. Only meaningful statements can be true or false. Nonsensical statements, those lacking meaning, though they may still be uttered, cannot be true or false. Reason, Ward explains, is primary in the sense that "It is human reason, in Lewis's view, that judges between meanings, helping us to differentiate those meanings that are true and illuminating from those that are false and deceptive."[163] Still, reason depends upon and is conditioned by the imagination for the apprehension of meaning. It is no wonder that a worldview which restricts meaning, as everything else, to the purview of reason cannot seem to find any objective meaning in the world. Consequently, meaning is reduced to being a product of reason since its natural organ, the imagination, is eviscerated or weakened due to the excesses of an extreme rationalism. This is the result of disenchantment—a loss of wonder, a lack of imagination.[164]

Just as Lewis is careful to distinguish reason, truth, and reality, and not to make the mistake of identifying them, likewise, he also distinguishes these categories

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[162] Lewis, "Bluspels and Flalansferes," 265. Recall Adorno-Horkheimer say that on Enlightenment rationality, "Reason is the organ of calculation, of planning; it is neutral with regard to ends; its element is coordination." *Dialectic*, 69. In other words, reason is reduced to mere *ratio*. By contrast, Lewis argues reason is the organ of *truth*, which is more than mere rationalization or calculation. Likewise, he also calls reason "the organ of morality." *Discarded Image*, 158. Thus, Lewis seeks to defend the proper roles of theoretical reason (this chap.) and practical reason (next chap.).

[163] Ward, "Science and Religion," 6.

[164] Consider the famous line from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1.5.167) in which Hamlet refers to the limitations of human knowledge: "There are more things in heaven and Earth, Horatio, / Than are dreamt of in your philosophy [or science]."

from the imagination. Furthermore, he differentiates the latter from truth and meaning, which he further sets apart. Reason is the organ of truth; its proper object is truth. Imagination is the organ of meaning; its proper object is meaning. Thus, these two "organs" are distinct faculties of the mind with separate objects of apprehension. Nevertheless, Lewis treats the imagination as a truth-bearing faculty since it serves as an antecedent condition for reason's apprehension of truth. For it is the imagination which makes it possible for one to engage in what Lewis calls "picture-thinking," *imaging* or imagining the truth about reality.[165] Also, the imagination is key to our communication of truth, for the language of the imagination is that of metaphor, whether the production of new metaphors or the re-purposing of old ones, as described above. This also speaks to the dialectical relationship between enlightenment and myth, which for Lewis is largely due to the dialectic of reason and imagination.[166] This dialectical relationship results from an incompatibility between reason and imagination that causes the two to become entangled or entwined. Although the two are *logically compatible*, they are *psychologically incompatible*. They are logically compatible in the sense that the truth discovered by reason and the meaning apprehended by the imagination can be perfectly, logically consistent together. However, to use one's reason is not to, at the same time, engage one's imagination, and vice versa.

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[165] Cf. Adorno-Horkheimer on a dialectic between reason and imagination: "Because imagination is involved in truth, it can always appear to this damaged imagination that truth is fantastic and its illusion the truth." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 160.

[166] For a further discussion of Lewis' views on the relationship between language, imagination, and meaning, whereby he makes an argument for "the romantic doctrine of imagination as a truth-bearing faculty," see the following: C. S. Lewis, "Image and Imagination," in *Image and Imagination: Essays and Reviews*, ed. Walter Hooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); "Bluspels and Flalansferes"; and his preface to *George MacDonald*, xxiii-xxxix. Also, Lewis writes: "Myth in general is not merely misunderstood history (as Euhemerus thought) nor diabolical illusion (as some of the Fathers thought) nor priestly lying (as the philosophers of the Enlightenment thought) but, at its best, a real though unfocused gleam of divine truth falling on human imagination." Lewis, *Miracles*, 218n1; emphasis original. Cf. "Religion without Dogma?," 131-32. For further discussion on Lewis, myth, imagination, and Christianity, see Stratford Caldecott, "Speaking the Truths Only the Imagination May Grasp: Myth and 'Real Life,'" in *The Pilgrim's Guide: C. S. Lewis and the Art of Witness*, ed. David Mills (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Devin Brown, "Reasoning beyond Reason: Imagination as a Theological Source in the Work of C. S. Lewis," *Christianity & Literature* 61, no. 3 (2012): 512-15, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCO*host*.

Inescapability of Myth and Metaphor

Lewis accepts the ancient triadic division of human nature into reason, will, and appetite; head, heart, and belly. And as Aristotle taught in his *Rhetoric*, one must appeal to all three levels to fully persuade someone of the truth of a view: *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*.[167] Consequently, people do not embrace a view based upon purely rational considerations. Recall once again Lewis' discussion about why certain words are preferred over others in our use of language. For example, why the more emotive word *stagnation* instead of *permanence*? Why does the term *primitive* suggest inefficiency? Why does *latest* mean the *greatest*? Lewis explains,

> But I submit that what has imposed this climate of opinion so firmly on the human mind is a new archetypal image. It is the image of old machines being superseded by new and better ones. For in the world of machines the new most often really is better and the primitive really is the clumsy. And this image, potent in all our minds, reigns almost without rival in the minds of the uneducated.[168]

For Lewis, preceding the rational theorem of Darwinian biological evolution is the earlier pre-Darwinian myth of universal evolutionism that first captured modern man's imagination. The belief in "spontaneous progress" bolstered, not by rational or scientific proof but by "imaginative expressions of the myth," and chiefly by a "new archetypal image," found in the birth of machines the new approach to life that they inculcate in those who use them. Although in the technological world the new often does replace and make obsolete the old, the problem is when this image of technological progress is extrapolated to the rest of human life and existence. Everything that becomes old for this reason alone is deemed outdated, outmoded, primitive, barbaric, useless, only to be superseded by the new. This modern vision of scientific and technological progress as it is applied to the whole of life represents a radical development and change from that of our ancient forebears; hence, Lewis describes it as "the greatest change in the history of

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[167] See Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*, trans. H. C. Lawson-Tancred (New York: Penguin, 1991).

[168] Lewis, "*De Descriptione Temporum*," 10-11.

Western Man."[169] It is the dire consequences of this greatest of changes that Lewis

further explores in *Abolition*. This again highlights Lewis' interpretation of the dialect of

enlightenment and myth as one between reason and imagination. Ward explains:

> The more serious effects of the Copernican revolution on human imagination relate
> to what Lewis calls the "mythology which follows in the wake of science." The
> cosmology that a given generation accepts has immense consequences for its
> thoughts and emotions, and in every generation there is this "mythology which
> follows in the wake of science," a mythology that feeds into our understanding of
> ourselves and the way we imaginatively interpret the world and our place in it.[170]

Furthermore, according to Ward,

> Lewis is urging scientists to hold their metaphors and their overall paradigms with a
> due provisionality, reminding them that an image of the cosmos, like an image of
> the divine, can become a graven image, an idol. Religion and science both need a
> degree of humility and ought not to suppose that they can fully capture reality in
> their own terminology.[171]

Given the relationship between truth and meaning, reason and imagination, it is

not possible to completely comprehend reality, nor is it possible, contra the

Enlightenment project, to rid man of mythical accounts of reality. The elimination of one

myth only opens the door to another mythical replacement. Hence, the attempt at a

purely scientific, rationalistic view of reality is simply shortsighted. Scientific language,

for example, fails to capture much of our experience of the world, which can only be

expressed through imaginative language through the use of metaphor, or poetic

language.[172] Quite appropriately, one of Lewis' best expressions of the relationship

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[169] Lewis, "*De Descriptione Temporum*," 11.

[170] Ward, "Science and Religion," 11-12.

[171] Ward, "Science and Religion," 15. In Lewis, *Screwtape Letters*, 31-32, Screwtape writes,

I have great hopes that we shall learn in due time how to emotionalize and mythologize their science
to such an extent that what is, in effect, a belief in us (though not under that name) will creep in
while the human mind remains closed to belief in the Enemy. . . . If once we can produce our perfect
work—the Materialist Magician, the man, not using, but veritably worshipping, what he vaguely
calls "Forces" while denying the existence of "spirits"—then the end of the war will be in sight.

[172] See C. S. Lewis, "The Language of Religion," in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper
(London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995; Lewis, *Miracles*, chap. 10, "Horrid
Red Things," 107-27.

between reason and imagination, indeed a deep yearning for the reconciliation of rationality and myth, is found in his poem titled "Reason."[173] More importantly, Lewis ultimately finds the solution he longs for in the incarnation of Jesus Christ: the *Logos*, the "Eternal Reason," "the Truth" of "God made flesh."

Conclusion

This chapter has examined some of the central themes of Lewis' *Abolition* and Adorno-Horkheimer's *Dialectic*, with a special emphasis on their views of reason and rationality. Both Lewis and the critical theorists seek to expose what they consider to be excesses of Enlightenment rationalism as well as its modern manifestations in the forms of positivism, scientism, and reductionism. Furthermore, they provide reasons for concluding that Enlightenment rationalism erred in its overall approach to human rationality, particularly by not recognizing the various limitations of reason. At the same time, Lewis offers a number of important qualifications to his critique of Enlightenment rationalism, stopping short of the wholesale denigration of reason found in Adorno-Horkheimer. For Lewis, the problem is not human reason per se or something inherent to human rationality that inevitably results in oppressive social structures. Lewis identifies the problem in what he terms "extreme rationalism." The source of this problem is found in Enlightenment rationality's rejection of authority, its lack of a foundation for a substantive reason, and thus a lack of restraint on modern uses of reason. Lewis finds the needed check in the Eternal Reason, the mind of God, as the supernatural source of human reason, and the basis of the self-evident principles of theoretical reason. In addition, as is made clearer in the chapter to follow, Lewis also looks to the self-evident principles of *practical* reason reflected in the *Tao* as a further check on the errors of Enlightenment reason. Finally, Lewis understands that the only viable response to the

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[173] See C. S. Lewis, "Reason," in *Poems*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1964; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 1977).

disenchantment of the world is its re-enchantment, which requires the aid of the imagination to *see* the world as objectively meaningful. Adorno-Horkheimer, by contrast, cannot account for the validity of reason or the vital role of the imagination. Critical theory lacks the imaginative resources for a re-enchantment of the world.

CHAPTER 5

ON MORALITY

Introduction

"In a sort of ghastly simplicity we remove the organ and demand the function. We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful."[1]

"Because it unmasks substantial goals as asserting the power of nature over mind and as curtailing its own self-legislation, reason, as a purely formal entity, is at the service of every natural interest. Becoming simply an organ, thinking reverts to nature."[2]

The previous chapter focused on the need for first principles of *theoretical* reason, as well as a transcendent ground of these principles. Similarly, this chapter seeks to show the same regarding first principles of *practical* reason. In each case, the possibility of a rational or moral critique depends upon a transcendent, normative foundation. Both Lewis' *Abolition* and Adorno-Horkheimer's *Dialectic* reveal the need for these normative standards, by highlighting the dreadful consequences that follow for a society that fails to acknowledge and apply them. Lewis and the critical theorists share a common concern for the moral decay within society. However, despite a number of similarities in their moral critiques, this chapter demonstrates many crucial differences in their views of nature, human nature, the human condition, normative moral standards and judgments, the role of applied science, religion and ethics, and others. Overall, Lewis

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[1] C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man: Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools*, Riddell Memorial Lectures, 15th Series (London: Oxford University Press, 1944; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 26. Hereafter cited as *Abolition*.

[2] Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, Cultural Memory in the Present, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Amsterdam: Querido, 1947; repr., Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 68. Hereafter *Dialectic*.

and the critical theorists make competing diagnoses and prognoses of as well as remedies for man's moral malady. Once again, the goal is to show that Lewis, given his Christian theological and philosophical foundations, provides the more cogent and coherent evaluation of the problems for Western civilization due to the excesses of Enlightenment rationalism.

Generally speaking, this chapter explores the authors' views on morality and ethics as part of their moral critique of Enlightenment rationalism. More specifically, this chapter closely examines the following themes: (1) Enlightenment rationalism's disenchantment of value, (2) the problem of normativity in Adorno-Horkheimer's critical theory, (3) Lewis' defense of natural law theory (the *Tao*), (4) God and morality, and, finally, (5) the *Tao* and Christianity.

The Disenchantment of Value

The Enlightenment's disenchantment of the world not only had effects on reason and rationality, but also on ethical theory and moral practice. The rise in positivism in philosophy and science brought with it not only the loss of objective truth and meaning, but also of *value* as a result. The "emptying" of the world of all its qualities, of everything not quantifiable or calculable by scientific reasoning, was inevitably extended to the realm of moral values. As the story of reality is emptied of its origin in God, its divine purpose and plot, it is also bereft of any real qualitative distinctions between right and wrong, good and evil, virtue and vice, etc. The same reductionism that relegates nature to objects for domination and manipulation likewise downgrades human subjects to objects for social conditioning and engineering. As a result, all value is reduced to instrumental value, especially survival value, or self-preservation, the single maxim of the Enlightenment ethic.[3] Thus, in brief, we have the

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[3] Recall Adorno-Horkheimer's claim of Enlightenment rationalism that "Spinoza's proposition: 'the endeavor of preserving oneself is the first and only basis of virtue,' contains the true maxim of all Western civilization." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 22; quoting Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans.

slippery slope that, according to Adorno-Horkheimer, leads straight from eighteenth-century Enlightenment rationality and morality, as epitomized in Kant, through nineteenth-century nihilism, as exemplified in Nietzsche and Sade, to the twentieth-century state of barbarism, as in Hitler's Germany.

"Understanding without Direction
from *an Other*"

According to Peter Gay, the Enlightenment sought after, "above all, freedom in its many forms . . . *freedom, in a word, of moral man to make his own way in the world*.[4] Similarly, Adorno-Horkheimer point to Immanuel Kant as the apex of Enlightenment thought encapsulated in the expression: "understanding without direction from another."[5] However, the result of this radical freedom is, in a word, *subjectivism*. This is the chief concern Lewis raises in *Abolition* in contrasting "the Way," the *Tao*, which is not man-made, with the only alternative to it, man's attempt to "make his own way in the world," as Gay puts it. Similarly, Jong-Tae Lee explains,

> Another disenchanting assumption of modern rationality which Lewis attacked . . . was that meanings and value arise from human consciousness and are projected by it onto the world. In the disenchanted world, the world ceases to be the locus of meaning and human consciousness becomes the source and arbiter of meaning and value.[6]

Thus, the inevitable result of disenchantment is subjectivism. Consequently, the commitment to a value-less world makes man the creator of values. Once the human

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A. Boyle (London: Everyman, 1948), pt. 4, prop. 22, coroll.

[4] Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: The Rise of Paganism* (New York: Knopf, 1966; repr., New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), 3; emphasis added.

[5] Or "that is to say, the bourgeois subject freed from all tutelage." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 68; quoting Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?," *Practical Philosophy*, trans. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 17.

[6] Jong-Tae Lee, "'Into the Region of Awe': C. S. Lewis, Wonder and the Re-enchantment of the World" (PhD diss., Graduate Theological Union, 2015), 118, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. For further discussion of the dire effects of a disenchanted world on meaning and value, see Wesley A. Kort, *C. S. Lewis Then and Now* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), especially chap. 3, "Reenchantment," 33-52.

mind is severed from any objective reality, it is free to impose its own meaning and value upon the world to fill the void left over from the emptying process. Thus, a central concern of Adorno-Horkheimer in *Dialectic* is the problem of *false projection*. Likewise, a central concern for Lewis in *Abolition* is what he elsewhere terms "the poison of subjectivism."[7] The essential connection between the disenchantment of the world and this resulting subjectivism is crucial for properly understanding these authors' critiques.

False projection. A major concern for Adorno-Horkheimer is the problem of false projection, resulting from the enlightenment drive for self-preservation, and the subjectivism that follows in its wake. False projection presents a totalizing and destructive threat to culture. They explain,

> So calamitous is the mind's tendency to false projection that, as the isolated schema of self-preservation, such projection threatens to dominate everything which goes beyond self-preservation: culture. False projection is the usurper in the realm of freedom as of culture; paranoia is the symptom of the half-educated. For such people, all words become a system of delusion, an attempt mentally to occupy the regions to which their experience does not extend, violently to give meaning to a world which makes them meaningless, but at the same time to denigrate the intellect and the experience from which they are excluded and to burden them with the guilt really borne by the society which has brought about that exclusion.[8]

False projection is the "isolated schema of self-preservation," which again is a result of a relentless subjectivism regarding one's relationship to reality. Everything must be abdicated to the self for the purposes of self-preservation. What cannot be used for this

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[7] See C. S. Lewis, "The Poison of Subjectivism," in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995). Leslie P. Fairfield explains,

> As Lewis argued in *The Abolition of Man*, . . . the modern analytical mind systematically erases all suprapersonal Truth, all virtues and all standards, as illusions of the primitive human imagination, and as unverifiable by the scientific method. . . . Rigorously "objective" thinking roots out all superstitious notions of this kind. . . . But if all "values" are debunked and rejected, individuals have no grounds for action other than raw emotion. The "value" of a value lies only in its emotional intensity. And the more we act solely on the emotional force of our desires, the more we sink back into Nature.

Leslie P. Fairfield, "Fragmentation and Hope: The Healing of the Modern Schisms in *That Hideous Strength*," in *The Pilgrim's Guide: C. S. Lewis and the Art of Witness*, ed. David Mills (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 152-53.

[8] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 161-62.

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sole or primary end is deemed mythical and must be usurped or subsumed by the self.

Education plays a significant role here. Those who are most likely to fall prey to false projection are the "half-educated" who suffer paranoiac symptoms. They become subject to a delusional system of words (again, the importance of language). As only "half-educated" they are not immune from the system which dulls their intellect and their experience of the world, from which they are excluded, and consequently they are prevented from understanding their real plight. As a recourse or panacea to their discontent with the world, many turn to various myths or "obscurantist systems" of thought which actually have the effect of further "cutting off thought," stifling any possibility of breaking free from the delusion perpetrated upon them by society. Similar to Lewis' "Men without Chests," the enlightened man, the modern man, the new man is, for Adorno-Horkheimer, the *paranoiac man*, who is left "to imbue the outside world with an arbitrary meaning, which the lone paranoiac now constructs according to a private schema shared by no one."[9]

For a time, the bourgeois system made it possible for the spread of education and culture, thus "driving paranoia into the dark corners of society and the psyche." But, education has been ineffective in bringing about real emancipation or the "enlightenment

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[9] Adorno-Horkheimer write,

> The obscurantist systems of today bring about what the devil myth of the official religion enabled people to do in the Middle Ages: to imbue the outside world with an arbitrary meaning, which the lone paranoiac now constructs according to a private schema shared by no one, and which only for that reason appears actually mad. Relief is provided by the dire conventicles and panaceas which put on scientific airs while cutting off thought: theosophy, numerology, naturopathy, eurhythmy, teetotalism, Yoga, and countless other sects, competing and interchangeable, all with academies, hierarchies and specialist jargon, the fetishized officialese of science and religion. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 162.

Cf. Theodor Adorno, *The Stars Down to Earth and Other Essays on the Irrational in Culture*, ed. Stephen Crook, 2nd ed., Routledge Classics, vol. 113 (New York: Routledge, 2001). Lewis likewise is critical of such obscurantist systems, but he also makes a rigorous defense of the "discarded image" of the Middle Ages. See C. S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (1964; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Interestingly, Adorno-Horkheimer admit that the belief system of the Middle Ages was an improvement over the present obscurantist systems since its rationalistic bent "left room . . . for culture and mind," making it effective in counteracting paranoia. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 162.

of the mind." As a result, even "education itself became sick." They go on to explain the

predicament as follows,

> The less social reality kept pace with educated consciousness, the more that
> consciousness itself succumbed to a process of reification. Culture was entirely
> commoditized, disseminated as information which did not permeate those who
> acquired it. Thought becomes short-winded, confines itself to apprehending isolated
> facts. Intellectual connections are rejected as an inconvenient and useless exertion.
> The developmental moment in thought, its whole genetic and intensive dimension,
> is forgotten and leveled down to what is immediately present, to the extensive. The
> present order of life allows the self no scope to draw intellectual or spiritual
> conclusions. Thought, stripped down to knowledge, is neutralized, harnessed
> merely to qualifying its practitioner for specific labor markets and heightening the
> commodity value of the personality. In this way the self-reflection of the mind,
> which counteracts paranoia is disabled.[10]

"The poison of subjectivism." Similar to Adorno-Horkheimer, Lewis

describes subjectivism as a kind of false projection. Commenting on the threat of "false

philosophy," Lewis writes: "Correct thinking will not make good men of bad ones; but a

purely theoretical error may remove ordinary checks to evil and deprive good intentions

of their natural support."[11] Subjectivism is, first and foremost, a theoretical error.

Although Lewis does not subscribe to the view that "to know the good is to do the good,"

as in Socrates and Plato's moral philosophy, he does concede that practical errors do

often stem from theoretical ones. Thus, also like Adorno-Horkheimer, Lewis emphasizes

the importance of the theoretical in the face of the overemphasis on the practical (or

praxis). Moreover, it is the modernist theoretical error of subjectivism that has given rise

to "the Power philosophies of the Totalitarian states."[12]

According to Lewis, if moral values are subjective, and thus wholly

determined by individuals or society, then whatever moral views are held at any given

time people could have been conditioned to accept an entirely different set of values.

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[10] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 163.

[11] Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 72.

[12] Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 72.

Lewis writes, "'Perhaps,' thinks the reformer or the educational expert, 'it would be better if we were. Let us improve our morality.'" And it is this seemingly innocent line of thinking from which "comes the disease that will certainly end our species (and, in my view, damn our souls) if it is not crushed; the fatal superstition that men can create values, that a community can choose its 'ideology' as men choose their clothes."[13] Lewis could not be more serious regarding the danger of which he speaks. Subjectivism is poisonous to the human soul and society; it is a "fatal superstition," in fact, another modern or Enlightenment myth, which inevitably results from enlightened thought's severance from an external, authoritative source of objective truth, meaning, and values. Not only will this view bring about the "end our species" in this world, additionally, and more importantly for Lewis, it has ramifications for the world beyond. Indeed, if not crushed, it can "damn our souls."

From Instrumental Rationality to Instrumental Morality

Enlightenment rationalism leads to positivism, which further results in an instrumental (subjective) as opposed to a substantive (objective) view of reason and rationality. Since instrumental reason is utilitarian by its very nature, it should be no surprise that its ethical theory of choice is *utilitarianism*, or *instrumental morality*. This is especially so with the decline in confidence in the moral absolutism of the Kantian ethic with its categorical imperative, largely due to Kant's *Critique of Reason* and despite his *Critique of Practical Reason*. In other words, Kant's attack on substantive, or theoretical reason in the former, causing mistrust in anything metaphysical, led to the

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[13] Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 73. Note the parallel between the "educational expert" and Gaius and Titius, the authors of the *Green Book*, discussed in *Abolition*. Subjectivism reduces moral value to what is merely conventional or a human invention. But, neither Lewis nor Adorno-Horkheimer hold the view that morality is subjective in this way. The key issue is the difference in how the authors seek to ground or account for objective moral values and duties as something other than human conventions, inventions, projections, etc.

demise of enlightened Kantian optimism regarding the latter. Practical reason no longer

represented the capacity for *animal rationale* to comprehend transcendent, universal

moral principles, which would then be applied to the various moral difficulties in life.

Practical reason was reduced to pragmatism in ethics and the use or utility of instrumental

reason to direct means to particular ends, whatever those ends might happen to be at any

given point in time.[14] Moreover, these ends were fundamentally reducible to one—self-

preservation. This can take the form of emphasis on the individual (i.e., self-interest), or

focus on the survival of the human species (i.e., general interest).[15]

Lewis opposes the "ruthless, non-moral utilitarianism" with "the old world of

ethical law," by which Lewis means the *Tao*.[16] Accordingly, Lewis denies the moral

status of utilitarianism; it is a non-moral theory of morality, an ends-justifies-the-means

ethic, with no higher court of appeal for evaluating the moral nature of the proffered

ends. This opens wide the door for the use of ruthless means aimed at equally ruthless

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[14] See Max Horkheimer, *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. Matthew J. O'Donnell et al., Radical Thinkers (New York: Seabury Press, 1974; repr., New York: Verso, 2013), Kindle. Lewis mockingly refers to the "Pragmatometer" and "Pragmatometry" in C. S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength: A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups* (London: John Lane the Bodley Head, 1945; repr., New York: Scribner, 2003), 36. Jean Bethke Elshtain speaks of "rational choice theory" in the social sciences as a kind of contemporary resurgence of positivism in ethics. See Jean Bethke Elshtain, "*The Abolition of Man*: C. S. Lewis's Prescience Concerning Things to Come," in *C. S. Lewis as Philosopher: Truth, Goodness and Beauty*, ed. David Baggett, Gary R. Habermas, and Jerry L. Walls (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008).

[15] In connection with self-preservation and the preservation of the species, Lewis makes clear he is more concerned with what kind of people we are and how we behave than how long the human race continues to exist or its level of happiness or contentment. See C. S. Lewis, "On Punishment: A Reply to Criticism," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 297. Furthermore, he writes,

> [W]e are all at this moment helping to decide whether humanity shall retain all that has hitherto made humanity worth preserving, or whether we must slide down into the sub-humanity imagined by Mr. Aldous Huxley and George Orwell and partially realized in Hitler's Germany. For the extermination of the Jews really would have been "useful" if the racial theories had been correct; there is no foretelling what may come to seem, or even to be, "useful," and "necessity" was always "the tyrant's plea" (299-300).

[16] C. S. Lewis, "Vivisection," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 228. For a discussion of Lewis as a moral philosopher and his engagement with the ethical theories or schools of moral philosophy (e.g., utilitarianism, Kantian idealism, British idealism, G. E. Moore's intuitionism, etc.) "to which he was always reacting and to which he referred in many of his works," see James Patrick, "The Heart's Desire and the Landlord's Rules: C. S. Lewis as a Moral Philosopher," in *The Pilgrim's Guide: C. S. Lewis and the Art of Witness*, ed. David Mills (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 72.

ends. By contrast, the perspective of the *Tao* affords one the normative ground needed

for identifying as well as critically evaluating means and ends based upon their inherent

moral value or worth.[17] But, utilitarianism rejects the *teleology* of natural law theory in

favor of a *teleological* ethical theory, which evaluates the moral value of an action based

not on its merits but solely on its results, its "cash value."[18]

Sadean and Nietzschean Nihilism

Probably no better example of a "ruthless, non-moral utilitarianism" can be

found than in the nihilistic works of Marquis de Sade and Friedrich Nietzsche. Adorno-

Horkheimer point out that, unlike Nietzsche, Sade did not pursue the idea of

enlightenment to the point of self-contradiction. The self-reflection of science, "the work

of the Enlightenment's conscience," was to be left to the work of philosophy.[19] Sade

took a different tact, treating enlightenment as "not so much an intellectual as a social

phenomenon." Sade "carried forward the dissolution of bonds . . . and the critique of

solidarity with society, office, family to the point of proclaiming anarchy. His work lays

bare the mythological nature of the principles on which civilization was based after the

demise of religion: those of the Decalogue, of paternal authority, of property."[20]

Accordingly, in Sade, "Each of the Ten Commandments is declared void before the

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[17] Lewis writes, "It is certainly *not* wrong to try to remove the natural consequences of sin provided the means by which you remove them are not in themselves another sin. (E.g., it is merciful and Christian to remove the natural consequences of fornication by giving the girl a bed in a maternity ward and providing for the child's keep and education, but wrong to remove them by abortion or infanticide." C. S. Lewis to Mrs. Halmbacher, January 1951, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 3, *Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy 1950-1963*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 91; emphasis original.

[18] English philosopher and utilitarian Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) opposed the concepts of natural law and natural rights, famously referring to them as "nonsense upon stilts." See Jeremy Bentham, "Nonsense upon Stilts," in *Rights, Representation, and Reform: Nonsense upon Stilts and Other Writings on the French Revolution*, ed. Philip Schofield, Catherine Pease-Watkin, and Cyprian Blamires, *The Collected Works of Jeremy Bentham*, 22 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 2002).

[19] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 90.

[20] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 90.

tribunal of formal reason. They are revealed without exception as ideologies."[21] Thus, the Law "has been dethroned," and "the love which was supposed to humanize it is unmasked as a reversion to idolatry." This verdict applies to all expressions of love, whether between wife and husband, lover and beloved, even between parents and children. Sade goes as far as to extend this "materialistic disenchantment" . . . "even to exogamy, the foundation of civilization." For no rational grounds exist for opposing incest, "and the hygienic argument formerly used has now been invalidated by advanced science, which ratifies Sade's cold judgment."[22] The family as well becomes a target of Sade's criticism given that the family is "held together not by romantic sexual love but by maternal love."[23] Moreover, for Sade, "'Conjugal ties' must be destroyed for social reasons; children are to be 'absolutely forbidden' knowledge of their fathers, since they are '*uniquement les enfants de la patrie*'; the anarchy and individualism which Sade proclaimed in the struggle against laws culminate in the absolute rule of the generality, the republic."[24] On this note, Adorno-Horkheimer ominously declare, "Just as the deposed god returns as a more repressive idol, the old, undemanding bourgeois state reappears in the violence of the fascist collective. Sade thought through to the end the state socialism whose first steps brought the downfall of Saint-Just and Robespierre."[25] In the end, whether in Sade or Nietzsche, one finds the complete and utter abandonment of the *Tao*, and the horrific results that follow.

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[21] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 91.

[22] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 91. In this context, they cite several references in Sade in which his characters not only express approval but ardently defend the practice of incest. See Marquis de Sade, *Marquis de Sade Collection: 120 Days of Sodom, The Philosophy of the Bedroom* (Anna Ruggieri, 2016), Kindle. All references are to this edition.

[23] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 92.

[24] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 92; quoting Sade, *Philosophy of the Bedroom*, dialog. 5. The French expression "*uniquement les enfants de la patrie*" translates variously as "children of the fatherland," or "motherland," or even "homeland."

[25] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 92. The references are to Louis Antoine Léon de Saint-Just (1767-94) and Maximilien Robespierre (1758-94), both leaders during the French Revolution.

Another Modern Myth: Progress or Regress?

Ironically, many of the horrific results that follow from the rejection of the *Tao* arise in the name of progress, including several problems of applied science. Lewis writes, "the evil dream of Magic arises from finite spirit's longing to get that power without paying that price. The evil reality of lawless applied science (which is Magic's son and heir) is actually reducing large tracts of Nature to disorder and sterility at this very moment."[26] Notice Lewis does not condemn applied science as such but "*lawless* applied science." This is "Magic's son and heir," which produces "disorder and sterility." For Lewis, examples of lawless applied science abound, and throughout his writings he expresses concerns about the atomic bomb,[27] bioethics and genetic engineering,[28] and vivisection.[29]

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[26] C. S. Lewis, *Miracles: A Preliminary Study* (New York: Macmillan, 1947; repr., with revision of chap. 3, London: Collins-Fontana Books, 1960; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 245. Recall in *Abolition* Lewis refers to science as magic's twin.

[27] See C. S. Lewis, "On the Atomic Bomb: Metrical Experiment," in *Poems*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1964; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 1977); C. S. Lewis, "On Living in an Atomic Age," in *Present Concerns: A Compelling Collection of Timely, Journalistic Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Fount, 1986; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002).

[28] Richard John Neuhaus writes of Lewis, "In *The Abolition of Man*, he anticipated with great prescience today's debates in biomedical ethics about reproductive technologies, genetic engineering, and eugenic progress." Richard Neuhaus, "The Idea of Moral Progress," in *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion & Public Life* (August/September 1999): 26, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCO*host*. Also, see Eric Brown's insightful article in which he traces much of the history of Germany, from Nazism to the present, in connection with the debates over bioethics and genetic technologies, including references to the Frankfurt School, critical theory, and Adorno-Horkheimer's *Dialectic*. Eric Brown, "The Dilemmas of German Bioethics," *The New Atlantis: A Journal of Technology & Society* no. 5 (Spring 2004): 37-53, https://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/the-dilemmas-of-german-bioethics.

[29] Vivisection is a key practice of the N.I.C.E. (the National Institute for Co-ordinated Experiments) in Lewis, *That Hideous Strength*, 100. Elsewhere, Lewis writes of the practice:

But the most sinister thing about modern vivisection is this. If a mere sentiment justifies cruelty, why stop at a sentiment for the whole human race? There is also a sentiment for the white man against the black, for a *Herrenvolk* against the non-Aryans, for "civilized" or "progressive" peoples against "savage" or "backward" peoples. Finally, for our own country, party, or class against others. Once the old Christian idea of a total difference in kind between man and beast has been abandoned, then no argument for experiments on animals can be found which is not also an argument for experiments on inferior men. If we cut up beasts simply because they cannot prevent us and because we are backing our own side in the struggle for existence, it is only logical to cut up imbeciles, criminals, enemies, or capitalists for the same reasons. Indeed, experiments on men have already begun. We all hear that Nazi scientists have done them. We all suspect that our own scientists may begin to do so, in secret, at any moment. Lewis, "Vivisection," 227.

Alan Jacobs writes, "Almost all his life Lewis had been an impassioned opponent of vivisection—indeed,

Lewis and Adorno-Horkheimer agree that the modern idea of progress is mythical, another example of an Enlightenment myth. Lewis refers to this myth by the names Evolutionism or Developmentalism (as discussed in previous chapter).[30] The problem seems to boil down to an equivocation on two senses of progress. On the one hand, the previous few centuries had made tremendous strides in scientific and technological progress, in terms of knowledge of nature and its laws and the ability to utilize this knowledge for technical innovations. On the other hand, this has not translated into *moral* progress, the actual betterment of human beings in terms of wisdom, virtue, and the humane treatment of others. In many ways, man's progress in the former has meant, inversely, his regress in the latter.[31] Thus, this movement from progress to regress has exposed the modern myth of progress as a false ideal. Scientific and technological gains do not inevitably lead to moral advances for humanity; in fact, the former can assist the advance of the German army into Poland. And this is because scientific and technological progress are in themselves morally neutral, whereas the improvement or betterment of humanity are fundamentally value-laden concepts. Cut-off from the *Tao*, the instrumentalization of morality empties these concepts of their moral

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his first recorded opposition to the practice may be found in a letter he wrote when he was ten. . . . For him, vivisection is a sign of that instrumentalism, that degeneration into the will to power, that always threatens the practice of science." Alan Jacobs, *The Narnian: The Life and Imagination of C. S. Lewis* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 290-91; reference to C. S. Lewis to Albert Lewis, December [16?], 1909, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 1, *Family Letters 1905-1931*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 12-13. Lewis and Adorno-Horkheimer share a great fondness for animals in their writings. Cf. Lewis, *Abolition*, 9-11; Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 165; Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947; repr., New York: Continuum, 1996), 104-5; Theodor Adorno, *Problems of Moral Philosophy*, ed. Thomas Schröder, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 145. Furthermore, Lewis expresses concern about animal pain and suffering, dedicating a whole chapter to the subject, titled "Animal Pain," in C. S. *The Problem of Pain* (London: The Centenary Press, 1940; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 132-47.

[30] Lewis refers to "the belief that human history is a simple, unilinear movement from worse to better—what is called a belief in Progress—so that any given generation is always in all respects wiser than all previous generations. . . . Believers in progress rightly note that in the world of machines the new model supersedes the old; from this they falsely infer a similar kind of supercession in such things as virtue and wisdom." C. S. Lewis, "Why I Am Not a Pacifist," in *The Weight of Glory: And Other Addresses*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: Macmillan, 1949; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 81-82.

[31] Mark T. Mitchell, "The False Dilemma of Modernity," *Modern Age* 47, no. 4 (2005): 311-12, *MasterFILE Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

content. Although people continue to trade on the same moral terms and concepts in everyday moral discourse, this coinage is stamped with ever new meanings in the process. For example, Lewis writes,

> Everyone is indignant when he hears the Germans define justice as that which is to the interest of the Third Reich. But it is not always remembered that this indignation is perfectly groundless if we ourselves regard morality as a subjective sentiment to be altered at will. Unless there is some objective standard of good, over-arching Germans, Japanese and ourselves alike whether any of us obey it or no, then of course the Germans are as competent to create their ideology as we are to create ours. If "good" and "better" are terms deriving their sole meaning from the ideology of each people, then of course ideologies themselves cannot be better or worse than one another. Unless the measuring rod is independent of the things measured, we can do no measuring. For the same reason it is useless to compare the moral ideas of one age with those of another: progress and decadence are alike meaningless words.[32]

Accordingly, the concept of "justice," like Kant's empty formal category, will be filled with whatever content is poured into it, even the interests of the Third Reich. Each nation is permitted to create its own ideological system including its own set of moral values that serve as means to furthering its own appointed ends, *whatever these might be.* Of course, Adorno-Horkheimer and Lewis share a burning indignation against Nazi ideology and behavior. But, Lewis claims, if no objective basis exists for engaging in moral critique, then expressions of moral outrage are emptied of any moral force and are nothing but sentiments, noncognitive emotive expressions, of the subjects who make them. On such a view, no ideology or behavior is really any better or worse than any other. All evaluative language, such as terms like "good," "better," "worse," "progress," "decadence," become meaningless, in any moral sense. Such words are reduced to having a merely technical meaning; thus one can speak of mechanical but not moral progress.[33] In this regard, Lewis reveals a fundamental anti-modernist principle in his

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[32] Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 73.

[33] Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 76. See David Mills, "To See Truly through a Glass Darkly: C. S. Lewis, George Orwell, and the Corruption of Language," in *The Pilgrim's Guide: C. S. Lewis and the Art of Witness*, ed. David Mills (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); C. S. Lewis, "The Death of Words," in *On Stories and Other Essays on Literature*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1966; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002).

thinking: "Unless the measuring rod is independent of the things measured, we can do no measuring." In order to make objective moral judgments, an independent, objective standard of good ("the measuring rod"), extending universally over humanity, must exist. This is what Lewis calls Real Morality.[34] Lewis ardently advocates for moral realism as necessary for the promotion of real moral progress (and the condemnation of decadence).

Again, Adorno-Horkheimer are also critical of the myth of progress. They describe the irresistible slide of progress into regress, when they write, "Adaptation to the power of progress furthers the progress of power, constantly renewing the degenerations which prove successful progress, not failed progress, to be its own antithesis. The curse of irresistible progress is irresistible regression."[35] Witness the intertwining of the two senses of progress, the technical and the moral. As the former overwhelmingly grows in power over humanity, by humanity's adaptation to it, degeneration and regression results. Again, the measure of the success of technical progress is inversely moral regression. Progress and regress are so inextricably bound (or *spellbound*) together that "the curse of irresistible progress is irresistible regression."[36] Moreover, this regression eventually

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[34] Cf. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1952; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 13:

> Progress means not just changing, but changing for the better. If no set of moral ideas were truer or better than any other, there would be no sense in preferring civilized morality to savage morality, or Christian morality to Nazi morality. . . . The moment you say that one set of moral ideas can be better than another, you are, in fact, measuring them both by a standard, saying that one of them conforms to that standard more nearly than the other. But the standard that measures two things is something different from either. You are, in fact, comparing them both with some Real Morality, admitting that there is such a thing as a real Right, independent of what people think, and that some people's ideas get nearer to that real Right than others. . . . If your moral ideas can be truer, and those of the Nazis less true, there must be something—some Real Morality—for them to be true about.

[35] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 28.

[36] I say "spellbound" because, like Lewis, Adorno-Horkheimer, especially Adorno, regularly use this magical language of "spell" and "breaking the spell" (here also "curse") when referring to the effects of Enlightenment rationalism on humanity. For example, consider Adorno on the meaning of real progress (versus mythical progress):

> Progress means: to step out of *the magic spell*, even out of *the spell of progress*, which is itself nature, in that humanity becomes aware of its own inbred nature and brings to a halt the domination it exacts upon nature and through which domination by nature continues. In this way it could be said that progress occurs where it ends.

Theodor Adorno, "Progress," in *Can One Live After Auschwitz?*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Rodney

takes the form of barbarism. Arguably this is a result of the loss of an objective

"measuring rod." Yet, Adorno-Horkheimer refuse to take a positive, dogmatic position

on an objective standard of morality. They even *dogmatically* refuse to seek a middle

ground between what they consider two extremes: relativism (subjectivism) and

absolutism (objectivism) in morality, instead choosing to negate both as ideological.[37]

On their view, both are hindrances to genuine enlightened progress. Indeed, they are

modernists at heart. Hence, their halt before mythical progress is equally a halt before

any commitment to traditional morality, a backward regression to bondage to the past

instead of a forward movement to future emancipation.

     Lewis responds to the accusation that his call for a return to traditional

morality results in "stagnation," thus preventing progress. On this point, he warns of

being the "victim of metaphor."[38] He explains how terms such as "stagnation" appeal to

an "illegitimate emotional power," and so he suggests replacing the "emotive term

'stagnant'" with the "descriptive term 'permanent.'" Furthermore, he argues that the

concept of progress actually depends upon a *permanent* moral standard. He writes,

> Does a *permanent moral standard* preclude progress? On the contrary, except on
> the supposition of *a changeless standard*, progress is impossible. If good is *a fixed
> point*, it is at least possible that we should get nearer and nearer to it; but if the
> terminus is as mobile as the train, how can the train progress towards it? Our ideas
> of the good may change, but they cannot change either for the better or the worse if
> there is no *absolute and immutable good* to which they can approximate or from
> which they can recede.[39]

Ironically, like the Enlightenment rationality and morality they condemn for resulting in

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Livingstone (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 130; emphasis added.

[37] See Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1966; repr., New York: Continuum, 1995), 35-37; Adorno, *Problems of Moral Philosophy*, 175.

[38] Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 76.

[39] Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 76; emphasis added. On the improvement of our ideas of good, he goes on to discuss the distinction between "a real moral advance with a moral innovation." Here he refers to the real moral advance of going from Stoicism and Confucius to Christian versus the mere innovation of the morality of Nietzsche. Real moral advance (or real progress) is only possible if an objective standard of goodness exists.

barbarism, Adorno-Horkheimer want progress but reject the one thing necessary (*unum necessarium*) for moral progress. On their view, human nature and society continues in a kind of Heraclitean flux of historical, socio-economic, and material forces, for which no absolute standards of morality could be adequate to account for the ever-changing situations and contexts. An absolute, universal standard would have to be so formal and abstract that it could not account for all of the concrete particulars of real lived human existence. But, the result of this approach seems to be the very stagnation they deplore, a perpetuation of the status quo. This is due not just to their lack of but their unyielding refusal to positively affirm a transcendent, objective standard for an effective moral critique of the present state of the world (or any past or future state for that matter).[40]

By contrast, Lewis explains what progress really means,

> We all want progress. But progress means getting nearer to the place where you want to be. And if you have taken a wrong turning, then to go forward does not get you any nearer. If you are on the wrong road, progress means doing an about turn and walking back to the right road; and in that case the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive man. . . . And I think if you look at the present state of the world, it is pretty plain that humanity has been making some big mistake. We are on the wrong road. And if that is so, we must go back. Going back is the quickest way on.[41]

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[40] Speaking of the twentieth-century situation of a science corrupted by scientism with its aim of mere power, Lewis' character Ransom explains how this new state of affairs was "breeding a conviction that the stifling of all deep-set repugnances was the first essential for progress." He then asks, "What should they find incredible, since they believed no longer in a rational universe? What should they regard as too obscene, since they held that all morality was a mere subjective by-product of the physical and economic situations of men?" Lewis, *That Hideous Strength*, 200. Curiously, Adorno-Horkheimer also do not believe in a rational universe, and they view of rationality and morality as by-products of physical, historical, and socio-economic conditions. Yet, they are at once deeply concerned about the stifling (or disabling) of twentieth-century man's sense of repugnance against acts of barbarism and brutality—in fact, the liquidation of conscience, the loss of "the self's devotion to something substantial outside itself." Interestingly, they say the ability to make the concerns of others one's own "involves reflection as an interpenetration of receptivity and imagination." However, they further explain,

> Because the abolition of the independent economic subject by big industry . . . is irresistibly eroding the basis of moral decisions, reflection, too, must wither. The soul, as the possibility of guilt aware of itself, decays. Conscience is deprived of objects, since individuals' responsibility for themselves and their dependents is replaced . . . by their mere performance for the apparatus. The internal conflict of drives, in which the agency of conscience is formed, can no longer be worked through. . . . [T]he individual identifies himself or herself promptly and directly with the stereotyped scales of values. *Dialectic*, 164.

[41] Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 29. Notice Lewis' references here to "road," "way," "wrong road," "right road," and how the way forward is by going back. This language parallels his call for a return to "the Way," the *Tao*. Cf. Lewis' character Jack, who finally returns to the right road after a lengthy regression. C. S. Lewis, *The Pilgrim's Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity, Reason and*

Quite ironically, Lewis the traditionalist turns out to be the "most progressive man."

A Critical Error:
Lack of a Normative Criterion

One of the most serious criticisms of Adorno-Horkheimer's critical theory is their lack of a positive, normative criterion for making objective moral judgments.[42] This deficiency leads to a kind of *moral aporia* in their work similar to the aporetic condition of reason resulting from their totalizing critique (discussed in the previous chapter). Accordingly, not only is the *theoretical reason* Bulverized on their view, but so is the *practical reason*. But, this completely undercuts their attempts at achieving a valid moral criticism. Without a solid foundation for normative moral standards or values, upon what basis do Adorno-Horkheimer oppose the status quo? The result would seem to be a *moral paralysis*. Nonetheless, Adorno-Horkheimer do, in fact, make absolute, objective moral claims throughout their writings. In fact, the whole warp and woof of critical theory is an emphatic moral judgment. As they declare, explaining their purpose for writing *Dialectic*, "What we had set out to do was nothing less than to explain why humanity, instead of entering a truly human state, is sinking into a new kind of barbarism."[43]

"It Is What It Is. . . . What Will Be, Will Be."

According to Horkheimer, "Without thinking about truth and thereby of what it

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Romanticism (London: J. M. Dent, 1933; repr., with preface, London: Geoffrey Bles, 1943; repr., with illustrations by Michael Hague, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

[42] For very helpful treatments of this problem in Adorno-Horkheimer, see David James, "Enlightenment and the Unconditional Good: From Fichte to the Frankfurt School," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 24, no. 1 (February 2016): 26-44, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*; James Gordon Finlayson, "Morality and Critical Theory: On the Normative Problem of Frankfurt School Social Criticism," *Telos* no. 146 (Spring 2009): 7-41, *MasterFILE Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

[43] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xiv. Likewise, Adorno explains, "The guilt of a life which purely as a fact will strangle other life . . . this guilt is irreconcilable with living. . . . This, nothing else, is what compels us to philosophize." Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 364.

guarantees, there can be no knowledge of its opposite, of the abandonment of mankind, for whose sake true philosophy is critical and pessimistic."[44] Here he seems to clearly acknowledge that without the *positive* aspect of truth one cannot have its opposite or the *negative*. But, if this is so, it would seem to follow that determinate negation or negative critique is insufficient in itself; it depends upon some kind of positive ground upon which to stand for engaging in moral criticism. Without some positive moral truth, how can there be knowledge of its opposite, including what makes for the "abandonment of mankind" or the "abolition of man"? And still, Horkheimer also states, "[P]hilosophy does not set up any practical aims. It criticizes the absolute claims of programs without itself proposing one."[45] Notice the moral aporia which results: positive truth is required for making negative judgments, yet such judgments depend upon the very absolute claims he rejects, particularly practical ones. Adorno-Horkheimer frequently speak of holding the Enlightenment accountable for its failure to live up to its own moral principles or values. According to their method of negative dialectic, or determinate negation, they seek to expose the contradiction between what Enlightenment preaches and what it practices. However, merely pointing out the inconsistency of theory and practice does not reveal which side of the contradiction morality is to be found. The fact is the contradiction can be resolved in one of two directions: adjust the practice to be consistent with the theory, or vice versa. Negative dialectics cannot determine which of these two directions should be preferred for this would require making a positive moral judgment, which they refuse to make.

Elsewhere, Horkheimer speaks of the need for "using what ought to be and what could be as the basis for a critical examination of one's own vital situation."[46]

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[44] Max Horkheimer, "Schopenhauer Today," in *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. Matthew J. O'Donnell et al., Radical Thinkers (New York: Seabury Press, 1974; repr., New York: Verso, 2013), 79-80, Kindle.

[45] Horkheimer, "Schopenhauer Today," 80.

[46] Max Horkheimer, "Threats to Freedom," in *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. Matthew

Moreover, he warns, "The greater man's power, the greater the tension between *what is* and *what ought to be*, between the existing situation and reason."[47] Thus, he distinguishes "what is" from "what ought to be," while associating the latter with "reason." But, with the reduction of substantive rationality to instrumental rationality, one can ask, whose reason or rationality?[48] Without a transcendent source of rational and moral oughts, it is inconsistent to speak of what "ought" or "ought not" to be in the world; one can only speak of what "is" or "what could be," which might be in complete conformity with the status quo.

In the previous chapter, we saw how Lewis exposes the problem of a rationality grounded in nonrational causation. Similarly, he also addresses this problem for properly grounding morality. In this case, the problem is compounded since, severed from any transcendent source, morality is reduced to both nonrational and *nonmoral* causation. This is the result of a disenchantment of both reason and value in the universe. Lewis writes, "No one (in real life) pays attention to any moral judgment which can be shown to spring from non-moral and non-rational causes. The Freudian and the Marxist attack traditional morality precisely on this ground—and with wide success. All men

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J. O'Donnell et al., Radical Thinkers (New York: Seabury Press, 1974; repr., New York: Verso, 2013), 139, Kindle.

[47] Max Horkheimer, "The Concept of Man," in *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. Matthew J. O'Donnell et al., Radical Thinkers (New York: Seabury Press, 1974; repr., New York: Verso, 2013), 29, Kindle; emphasis added.

[48] Cf. Eric Brown on the limits of autonomous reason as a basis for morality:

Why should those who are not autonomous in practice—the disabled, the unborn, the lives of those yet to be conceived—be respected as autonomous in theory? And why should we prefer mere human dignity to genetically improved post-human dignity?

Nietzsche famously called Kant the "great delayer," because the conceptual innovations that he introduced seemed to reconcile individual autonomy and respect for others without being constrained by any philosophical or religious idea about the purpose of man. Kant looked to unadulterated reason alone to ground human dignity. But autonomous human beings can put reason to many purposes— including rational arguments for why men are not equal and thus not equally autonomous. Man's reason alone, as Nietzsche knew, cannot inspire reverence for the dignity of one's fellow man. Brown, "The Dilemmas of German Bioethics."

accept the principle."[49] Once again, as appeals to nonrational causes undermine not only

particular rational judgments but also the validity of theoretical reason, by extension,

Lewis explains, "[W]hat discredits particular moral judgments must equally discredit

moral judgment as a whole." Of course, this seriously undermines the critical theorists'

attempts at moral criticism based upon appeals to what ought to be. For Lewis argues, "If

the fact that men have such ideas as *ought* and *ought not* at all can be fully explained by

irrational [nonrational] and non-moral causes, then those ideas are an illusion."[50] And

yet, although not the strictly naturalistic variety, this is the same kind of explanation

Adorno-Horkheimer offer for man's moral faculty of judgment, it is the by-product of

socio-biological and historico-cultural development. But, Lewis demonstrates that any

evolutionary or developmental account is not a sufficient explanation of the validity of

moral judgments. Apart from a transcendent ground, at once fully rational and fully

moral, "I ought" statements are reduced to descriptive statements like "I itch" or "I'm

going to be sick."[51]

Hence, a fundamental flaw exists in the critical theorists' approach. They lack

the requisite positive, substantive basis for engaging in justifiable moral criticism. There

simply is no way things *ought* to be. Moreover, the lack of a transcendent basis for

morality also entails a lack of *hope* for the future, that the future can or will *improve*, be

better than the past or present.[52] Stripped of any valid basis for making prescriptive

moral claims and judgments, critical theory is reduced to the banal claim: "It is what it is.

. . . What will be, will be."

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[49] Lewis, *Miracles*, 55.

[50] Lewis, *Miracles*, 55-56.

[51] Lewis, *Miracles*, 56-57.

[52] Horkheimer writes, "Whoever cares for a human arrangement of the world can look to *no court of appeal*, to *no existing or future power*." Max Horkheimer, "The Authoritarian State," in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, ed. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (New York: Continuum, 1995), 113; emphasis added.

**"The Moral Rights of the Author
Have Been Asserted."**

Thus Horkheimer writes on the copyright page of his book *Critique of Instrumental Reason*.[53] This perfectly illustrates how, alongside their moral denunciations, Adorno-Horkheimer regularly make normative assertions all throughout their writings. Examples could be provided ad nauseam. Indeed, what Lewis charges against the naturalist applies equally to the critical theorists, which is that they do not live out in practice their critical theory in making moral judgments. Lewis says, the fact that they "tell us what we ought to do would really make you believe that they thought some ideas of good (their own, for example) to be somehow preferable to others. For they write with indignation like men proclaiming what is good in itself and denouncing what is evil in itself."[54] Adorno-Horkheimer do the same when they claim to oppose both moral absolutism and relativism, seeking to negate both ethical positions as ideological, yet they turn around and make absolute denunciations of various injustices they universally condemn. As Lewis says of the naturalists, they "know far better than they think they know."[55]

Furthermore, critical theory assumes or presupposes human emancipation or liberation as a normative goal in all of its theorizing. Of course, such language is morally laden through and through. In fact, critical theory as a philosophical theory exists and utterly depends on the commitment to change the world for the *better*, which entails a recognition that the world as it is *is wrong*.   "The whole is false," Adorno exclaims.[56] Despite their staunchness about negative critique, they continually make frequent appeals to positive moral values, principles, and character traits while criticizing the culture

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[53] Horkheimer, *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, copyright page.

[54] Lewis, *Miracles*, 58.

[55] Lewis, *Miracles*, 58.

[56] Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E. N. F. Jephcott, Radical Thinkers (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1951; repr., London: Verso, 2006), 50.

industry, the powers behind it, and even the masses for their complicity in it. Truly, Adorno-Horkheimer are every bit the dogmatic moral absolutists they constantly claim to oppose. One only need read their blistering moral judgments of Hitler and the Nazis for their barbaric ideology and behavior, especially their persecution and genocidal efforts against the Jews. For example, they explain how the fascists have made the Jewish people a target for the "destructive urge which the wrong social order spontaneously produces. They are branded as absolute evil by absolute evil."[57] Again, a litany of examples could be cited.

As it happens, a close examination of their writings reveals that Adorno-Horkheimer actually affirm, for purposes of their moral critique, each of the principles of the *Tao* identified in Lewis' appendix to *Abolition*. In fact, they simply take them for granted as if they were self-evident first principles, not to be argued but proclaimed. This bolsters Lewis' defense of the *Tao* by illustrating how even Adorno-Horkheimer are incapable of engaging in moral critique without relying upon both the negative and positive principles of the *Tao* in the process. One of Lewis' principal points in *Abolition* is that all valid moral criticism depends upon the *Tao*: "Outside the *Tao* there is no ground for criticizing either the *Tao* or anything else."[58] Indeed, Adorno-Horkheimer help to prove his point.

Being careful to heed Lewis' warning about falling "victim to metaphor," it is worth noting that exposure requires light, and in this case the light of truth. Negative exposure simply will not do. Genuine moral critique is only possible in the light of the natural law (the *Tao*). Apart from this general light, Adorno-Horkheimer are without a basis for any accusations of injustice. Similarly, Lewis writes,

The Communist is in the same position. I may well agree with him that exploitation

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[57] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 137.

[58] Lewis, *Abolition*, 47.

is an evil and that those who do the work should reap the reward. But I only believe this because I accept certain traditional notions of justice. When he goes on to attack justice as part of my *bourgeois* ideology, he takes away the very ground on which I can reasonably be asked to accept his new communistic code.[59]

Although Adorno-Horkheimer recognize the need for a reason and a morality freed from utter subjectivity, they fail to account for, they even repudiate, all claims to a transcendent, universal, and objective standard of values.[60] Once again, as Lewis says, "If you are on the wrong road, progress means doing an about turn and walking back to the right road. . . . We are on the wrong road. And if that is so, we must go back. Going back is the quickest way on."[61] To this right road we now turn.

On Natural Law

For Lewis, going "back to the right road" means a return to natural law, "the Way," the *Tao*. Of course, Lewis' *Abolition* is recognized by many as his philosophical *tour de force* for natural law theory. In addition to *Abolition*, Lewis articulates his views

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[59] C. S. Lewis, "On Ethics," in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 53. Cf. Lewis on uses of the term *bourgeois* in C. S. Lewis, *Studies in Words*, 2nd ed. (1967; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 21-22. Elsewhere, Lewis writes,

> My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of *just* and *unjust*? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. . . . Consequently atheism turns out to be too simple. If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning: just as, if there were no light in the universe and therefore no creatures with eyes, we should never know it was dark. *Dark* would be without meaning. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 38-39; emphasis original.

Cf. C. S. Lewis, "The Country of the Blind," in *Poems*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1964; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 1977).

[60] Thus, consider the moral aporia for Adorno. He states, "At this point then we find ourselves really and truly in a contradictory situation. We need to hold fast to moral norms, to self-criticism, to the question of right and wrong, and at the same time to a sense of the fallibility of the authority that has the confidence to undertake such self-criticism." Adorno, *Problems of Moral Philosophy*, 168. Dana Villa describes Adorno-Horkheimer's account of the inability of enlightenment reason to answer the all-important questions about meaning and morality for human existence: "The end result is a world in which we moderns must face up to the reality that no 'facts of value' exist—no cosmically inscribed laws or norms, no final purpose of the universe, history, or man—for our reason to discover." Yet, paradoxically, Villa also explains, "In Horkheimer's view, unless reason is 'objective'—unless it can reveal the world's structure and humanity's true end—then we are simply at sea, morally and politically speaking. A disenchanted rationality leads to barbarism because it cannot provide the criteria necessary to distinguish civilized from barbaric ends." Dana Villa, "Genealogies of Total Domination: Arendt, Adorno, and Auschwitz," *New German Critique* no. 100 (2007): 13-14, 16, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*. These latter statements essentially summarize Lewis' argument from *Abolition*!

[61] Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 29.

on natural law, or what he also simply refers to as the "Moral Law," in a number of other writings, most famously his popular apologetical work *Mere Christianity*, where he refers to the moral law in a variety of ways: "the Law of Right and Wrong," "the Law of Nature," "the Law of Human Nature," "the Law of fair play or decent behavior or morality," and "the Rule of Decent Behavior."[62] Moreover, though he refers to the moral law as "the Law of Nature" since it is known by nature by everyone, he is careful to distinguish this from what are commonly called laws of nature. The former can be freely obeyed or disobeyed, whereas the latter cannot. Whereas laws of nature simply *describe* how nature behaves, the moral law *prescribes* how human beings ought to behave. Thus, the moral law is more accurately called "the Law of *Human* Nature," for it is not shared with animals or vegetables or inorganic things as are the other laws of nature.[63] People are forced to believe in a real "Right and Wrong" that is not a matter of mere taste, preference, or personal opinion. Indeed, the fact that we make excuses for violating the moral law shows how much we really do believe in it.

But, what about all the different cultures with different moralities with no common tradition at all between their ethical standards? Lewis answers, "There have been differences between their moralities, but these have never amounted to anything like a total difference."[64] In his essay "The Poison of Subjectivism," he likewise addresses the same question about the claim of radically different moralities. More emphatically, he exclaims, "The answer is that this is a lie—a good, solid, resounding lie." He points out how anyone spending a few days in the library with the *Encyclopedia of Religion and*

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[62] See especially Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, bk. 1, chaps. 1-5. Books 1 and 2, which contain Lewis' argument from morality for God's existence as well as his articulation of a Christian moral perspective on a variety of issues, were formulated around the same time as the writing of *Abolition*.

[63] Cf. Lewis' linguistic study of the words "Nature," "Natural," and "Natural Law," in his essay "Nature," in Lewis, *Studies in Words*, 24-74.

[64] Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 5.

Ethics will discover "the massive unanimity of the practical reason in man."[65]

Thus, he concludes his first chapter of *Mere Christianity* by proclaiming two indisputable facts: "First, that human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it. Secondly, that they do not in fact behave in that way. . . . These two facts are the foundation of all clear thinking about ourselves and the universe we live in."[66] It is worth noting that Lewis, in this case at least, similar to Adorno-Horkheimer, appeals to concrete, lived experience, rather than to metaphysical or theological speculation, for the clue to the meaning of the universe. However, in the end, contrary to Adorno-Horkheimer, Lewis argues the clue indeed points us to metaphysics and theology for both its meaning and its source.

Some Objections

Lewis anticipates and responds to some major objections to natural law theory. His explanations and rejoinders are found primarily in "The Poison of Subjectivism," "On Ethics," *Abolition*, *Mere Christianity*, and *Miracles*. In each case, the objection takes the form of the attempt to *explain away* the natural law as something immanent rather than transcendent. Lewis' rejoinders amount to a defense of a *morality-from-above* view (moral realism), while the objections invoke a *morality-from-below* approach. Once again, Lewis advocates for a transcendent critique as opposed to an immanent one. Moreover, Lewis' counterarguments are attempts to "save the appearances" of morality

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[65] Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 77. This is the same work he cites in *Abolition* for his copious examples of the *Tao*. Thus, his description of spending days in the library with this book is somewhat autobiographical. For his examples of this moral consensus, he refers to the Babylonian *Hymn to Samos*, the Laws of Manu, the *Book of the Dead*, the *Analects*, the Stoics, the Platonists, Australian aborigines, and Redskins. In these works, he says, "Far from finding a chaos, we find exactly what we should expect if good is indeed something objective and reason the organ whereby it is apprehended—that is, a substantial agreement with considerable local differences of emphasis and, perhaps, no one code that includes everything" (78). Cf. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 6: "If anyone will take the trouble to compare the moral teaching of, say, the ancient Egyptians, Babylonians, Hindus, Chinese, Greeks and Romans, what will really strike him will be how very like they are to each other and to our own. Some of the evidence for this I have put together in the appendix of another book called *The Abolition of Man*."

[66] Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 8. Book 1 of this work is titled "Right and Wrong as a Clue to the Meaning of the Universe."

as we know and experience it in daily life. A brief look at how Lewis responds to these objections elucidates how he might respond to some of Adorno-Horkheimer's criticisms of natural law theory.

Social convention? The first objection Lewis addresses takes the form of the question, "Isn't what you call the Moral Law just a social convention, something that is put into us by education?" Of course, this is a major concern of Gaius and Titius in *The Green Book*, in which they draw the conclusion that moral judgments are reducible to sentiments inculcated into children by parents and teachers within society. The argument is that since moral values are taught by the older to the younger through education, then moral values must originate from a human source. This is similar to Adorno-Horkheimer's approach in that they believe morality develops out of human society as it continually develops or evolves over time.[67] Yet, again, they are inconsistent on this point for they repeatedly make appeals to unchanging, universal standards of right and wrong that transcend as well as endure through time and changing historical circumstances.

Nevertheless, Lewis responds to the social convention objection by showing how it is based on a fundamental misunderstanding. He clarifies that just because something is taught by parents, teachers, or society it does not follow that what is taught is therefore a mere human creation. He points to the truths of mathematics as an example to illustrate his point. Although taught through education, the "multiplication table" is not a human convention, "something human beings have made up for themselves and might have made different if they had liked." Likewise, the truths of morality are taught

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[67] For example, Adorno appears to reduce the voice of conscience to nothing but "internalizations of dominant social norms." See Adorno, *Problems of Moral Philosophy*, 81-82; cf. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 272-75. Likewise, Horkheimer says that "moral awareness, conscience, and the concept of duty" are to be understood as "interiorized force, as external law taken into the psyche itself." Max Horkheimer, "Authority and the Family," in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1968; repr., New York: Continuum, 1995), 58.

by parents and teachers, and other sources.[68] Moreover, the mere sociological fact that we learn moral instruction from others does not undermine the objective nature of the instruction, nor does it establish that society is the *primary source* of the moral law rather than a *secondary source*. Lewis basically argues that the social convention objection is guilty of committing the *genetic fallacy*, which seeks to invalidate a person's belief by explaining how the person came to hold the belief in question. However, the origin of a belief is irrelevant to its truth or falsity. Moreover, as the teaching of mathematics demonstrates, humans can serve as a secondary source of "real truths" that have an objective existence independent of the human mind.

But, why think that the moral law belongs in the same classification as the "real truths" of mathematics? Lewis provides two reasons in support of this classification. First, once again, the differences in moral beliefs throughout societies over time are not great, but in fact, "you can recognize the same law running through them all." But, this is not the case with social conventions (i.e., rules of the road, clothing styles, tastes in food), which differ greatly. Second, in comparing the morality of different people groups, we draw the conclusion some moralities are better or worse than others.[69] Based on the evidence Lewis provides, a high degree of moral consensus on fundamental moral principles exists cross-culturally and throughout human civilization. In the exceptional cases where the differences are stark, like in the difference between Christian morality and Nazi morality, the very judgment of "better" or "worse" depends upon an objective standard of goodness that transcends the parties judged; the "better" morality more closely approximates the standard, while the "worse" morality recedes from it. Like in math, there are real right and wrong answers, and some wrong answers are closer to the truth than others.

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[68] Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 12.

[69] Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 12-13.

Furthermore, it seems the moral law provides "the Way" of breaking through the dialectic of enlightenment since it consists of objective moral truth. Although this truth is taught by human sources, it is not defined by or confined to these sources—including the culture industry. The "real truths" contained in the moral law transcend and thus judge the culture industry for its inequities, injustices, and abuses of power. As such, the moral law represents within man a direct communication with transcendent, supernatural, and suprapersonal truth, creating a fissure or crack in the rigid schema of the culture industry. This allows one to possibly break through the cultural schema by way of moral critique. Of course, this could only be possible if transcendent, objective moral values exist and can be known by the human subject.[70] Otherwise, any moral critique of the system would be merely an appeal to conventional values, the very values produced by the system itself, which would lack any moral authority.

Biological instinct? A second objection Lewis entertains is that the *Tao* is nothing but an instinct or impulse, which has developed and evolved through time as it has been advantageous for self-preservation or the survival of the human species. Lewis refers to this as the "herd instinct." However, he explains that, even if such an instinct exists, this would be different from the moral law. Interestingly, to tell the difference between the two, he appeals to the difference in "feel" between them. He writes,

> We all know what it *feels like* to be prompted by instinct—by mother love, or sexual instinct, or the instinct for food. It means that you *feel* a strong want or desire to act in a certain way. And, of course, we sometimes do *feel* just that sort of desire to help another person: and no doubt that desire is due to the herd instinct. But *feeling* a desire to help is quite different from *feeling* that you ought to help whether you want to or not. Supposing you hear a cry for help from a man in danger. You will probably *feel* two desires—one a desire to give help (due to your herd instinct), the

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[70] Cf. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 23: "There is one thing, and only one, in the whole universe which we know more about than we could learn from external observation. That one thing is Man. We do not merely observe men, we *are* men. In this case we have, so to speak, inside information; we are in the know. And because of that, we know that men find themselves under a moral law, which they did not make, and cannot quite forget even when they try, and which they know they ought to obey" (emphasis original).

other a desire to keep out of danger (due to the instinct for self-preservation). But you will find inside you, in addition to these two impulses, a third thing which *tells you* that you ought to follow the impulse to help, and suppress the impulse to run away. Now this thing that judges between two instincts, that decides which should be encouraged, cannot itself be either of them.[71]

In this case, instead of pointing to mere abstract theorizing, he seeks to expose the failure of the instinct objection by drawing on concrete examples from our lived experience. He knows such an appeal to one's experience will reveal the essential difference between what is merely instinctual and what is truly moral. In a certain sense, instinct comes closer to the truth as an explanation than social convention since the latter is externally-based while the former is something internal. Moreover, everyone knows what it *feels* like to be torn between two strong desires pulling us in opposite directions. Lewis' central point is that in these situations we become aware of something above and higher than our competing instincts, which acts as judge of our instincts, *telling* or directing us to act upon one but to suppress the other. This is the moral law, which cannot be an instinct itself since it supervenes upon our instincts. Again, the measuring rod must be different than the things measured; instinct cannot be its own judge. No single instinct serves as the judge of the others. Moreover, no instinct is inherently good or bad. Lewis explains,

> Strictly speaking, there are no such things as good and bad impulses. Think once again of a piano. It has not got two kinds of notes on it, the "right" notes and the "wrong" ones. Every single note is right at one time and wrong at another. The Moral Law is not any one instinct or any set of instincts: it is something which makes a kind of tune (the tune we call goodness or right conduct) by directing the instincts.[72]

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[71] Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 9-10; emphasis added. He proceeds to discuss two further reasons why the moral law cannot be an instinct. First, if the moral law was an instinct, then whenever two of our instincts come into conflict the stronger instinct should prevail over the weaker one. "But at those moments when we are most conscious of the Moral Law, it usually seems to be *telling* us to side with the weaker of the two impulses. You probably want to be safe much more than you want to help the man who is drowning: but the Moral Law tells you to help him all the same" (10; emphasis added). Additionally, if the moral law was an instinct, then "we ought to be able to point to some one impulse inside us which was always what we call 'good,' always in agreement with the rule of right behavior. But you cannot. There is none of our impulses which the Moral Law may not sometimes tell us to suppress, and none which it may not sometimes tell us to encourage" (10-11).

[72] Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 11.

At times, Adorno-Horkheimer seem to reduce the basis of morality to a spontaneous impulse, an urge, especially Adorno and his concept of the *addendum*.[73] They also often distinguish between good and bad instincts or impulses. For example, they write of how the fascists have made the Jewish people a target for the "destructive *urge* which the wrong social order *spontaneously produces*."[74] In the context of a discussion of psychoanalysis, Horkheimer speaks of "depraved and harmful drives" and "excessive exuberances."[75] It is helpful to compare Adorno on the addendum, impulse, and the instinct for self-preservation with Lewis from his essay "On Ethics." Here he distinguishes between various uses of the word *instinct*, and then he explains what he thinks people really mean when referring to "an instinct to preserve the human race." He writes, "They mean that we have a natural, unreflective, spontaneous impulse to do this, as we have to preserve our own offspring." Nevertheless, again drawing upon experience, he discards this appeal to instinct: "And here we are thrown back on the debatable evidence of introspection. I do not find that I have this impulse, and I do not see evidence that other men have it." Although he acknowledges his own life's preservation is subordinate to the preservation of mankind, he rejects the view that the goal of the preservation of the human species "has been prescribed to me by a powerful, spontaneous impulse."[76] Impulses function as powerful drives, impetuses, producing

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[73] For Adorno and the addendum, with its irrational aspect, see Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 226-30, 365; Adorno, *Problems of Moral Philosophy*, 7-8. For an extended discussion of Adorno's ethical views, Dan Webb, "From Constellations to Autoprohibition: Everything You Wanted to Know about Adorno's Ethics (But Were Afraid to Ask Žižek)" (PhD diss., University of Alberta, Canada, 2010), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global; Michael J. Reno, "Adorno and the Possibility of Practical Reason" (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 2011), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global; and J. M. Bernstein, *Adorno: Disenchantment and Ethics*, Modern European Philosophy, ed. Robert B. Pippin (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[74] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 137-38; emphasis mine.

[75] Max Horkheimer, "The Soul," in *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. Matthew J. O'Donnell et al., Radical Thinkers (New York: Seabury Press, 1974; repr., New York: Verso, 2013), 59, Kindle.

[76] Lewis, "On Ethics," 49. In *Abolition*, Lewis describes instinct as "an unreflective or spontaneous impulse widely felt by the members of a given species" (34).

strong wants or desires within the individual. But, they do not and cannot prescribe moral action. They are not normative in and of themselves.

For sake of argument, Lewis grants the existence of an instinct for self-preservation of the human race. But, he then explains a further problem that results from this concession. In our experience, we discover our instincts come into conflict, and one needs a way of adjudicating this conflict. Why side with an instinct for the preservation of humanity when it comes into conflict with my other instincts (for food, drink, sex, familial affection, etc.), many of which are stronger in force. He asks, "Why do my advisers assume from the very outset, without argument, that this instinct should be given a dictatorship in my soul?"[77] In other words, such a view lacks a normative basis for ordering our instincts into a hierarchy of higher and lower, let alone elevating the single instinct for self-preservation to the rank of first place. Accordingly, Lewis demonstrates how all talk of an instinct for self-preservation misses a very fundamental point. Whereas his critics are proposing in place of the *Tao* the adoption of a moral code as a means to the end of self-preservation, he explains,

> Their starting point is a purely moral maxim *That humanity ought to be preserved*. The introduction of instinct is futile. If you do not arrange our instincts in a hierarchy of comparative dignity, it is idle to tell us to obey instinct, for the instincts are at war. If you do, then you are arranging them in obedience to a moral principle, passing an ethical judgment upon them. If instinct is your only standard, no instinct is to be preferred to another: for each of them will claim to be gratified at the expense of all the rest.[78]

Thus, their starting point is either a pure moral maxim (derived from the *Tao*) or it is an instinct. If the former, then morality is not reducible to an instinct for self-preservation. If the latter, then his critics are arranging instincts into a "hierarchy of comparative dignity," which means they are being compared to a moral principle beyond them, which itself would have to serve as a pure moral maxim (derived from the *Tao*). In either case,

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[77] Lewis, "On Ethics," 50.

[78] Lewis, "On Ethics," 51; emphasis original.

his critics cannot escape the *Tao* in any attempt to make normative judgments of order and value.

Furthermore, it is helpful to compare Lewis with Adorno-Horkheimer on this point. They clearly agree with the moral maxim *That humanity ought to be preserved.* In fact, this maxim undergirds the whole endeavor of critical theory. They also agree with Lewis when they write, "Enlightened reason no more possesses the means of measuring one drive within itself against others than of ordering the universe into spheres."[79] If this is so, then each author draws the same conclusion that Enlightenment reason is powerless against the animal appetite. Enlightenment rationality lacks the normative resources for making comparative moral judgments among competing instincts, and likewise any justification for preferring or opposing any one impulse over another. Hence, once again, enlightenment reverts to myth, including the making of irrational judgments, driven solely by appetite, regarding the nature and goals of human society.[80] Whereas some have the appetite for the "betterment" of humanity, tragically others have the appetite for its "destruction." Neither Enlightenment rationality nor critical theory provides a normative basis for concluding one ought to prefer the former over the latter.

Thus, Lewis, employing both positive and negative criticism, dismantled some of the most common philosophical objections in his time to the affirmation of a transcendent, objectively known and experienced moral law. Moreover, each of the

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[79] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 71. Cf. Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 74.

[80] Hrvoje Cvijanović describes the carnal motives of the Enlightenment:

Traditionally, the Enlightenment is conceptualized as an intellectual effort where the power of Reason was uplifted above the passions and presented as a liberating force from all types of parochialism connected with tradition or authority. However, the argument is that the Enlightenment deceptively presented its goals as the cravings of Reason, while deliberately concealing its carnal foundations. . . . In other words, enlightened reason became a trick to obtain domination, to enslave the others, and to propagate universal happiness as a mask for self-preservation and well-being at the expense of others.

Hrvoje Cvijanović, "Carnal Enlightenment: The Myth of Enlightened Reason and Two Carnal Conceptions of the State," *Politicka Misao: Croatian Political Science Review* 48, no. 1 (2011): 77, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

objections to the *Tao* has the unfortunate result of reducing morality to subjectivism, therefore, completing Lewis' *reductio ad absurdum* argument against them. Even to this day, Lewis' arguments are still recognized as having demolished this philosophical error, making room for moral realism, or objectivism, as the rightful alternative.[81]

Practical Reason, Not Pragmatism

Another objection to natural law theory, not mentioned above, that Lewis addresses is the explanation that morality is simply a matter of what is practical or impractical, convenient or inconvenient.[82] This view reduces morality to pure utility, pragmatic or instrumental value, again an instrumental morality. Lewis and the critical theorists share a vehement opposition to *pragmatism*, both in epistemology as well as ethics. For example, Horkheimer says, "The philosopher is not a practical man."[83] But, for Lewis, it is the *Tao*, or the First Principles of Practical Reason, which alone prevent the instrumentalization of reason from the subjectivist reduction of man's practical reason to mere pragmatism. Means-ends rationality can only lead to an ends-justify-the-means morality. Without the existence of real ends possessing intrinsic worth and value, the

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[81] In this regard, compare J. R. Lucas on Lewis' philosophical contributions to arguments against subjectivism. He writes,

> Lewis was a philosopher, maintaining a philosophical position in large part correct by means of arguments which now I recognize as ones that I myself, along with my contemporaries, only gradually stumbled on and fumblingly formulated as we sought to free ourselves from the pervasive Logical Positivism of our time. It was a great discovery for me in the 1950s that the subjectivist analysis of value judgements could not be correct, . . . and it was only gradually that I was able to express confidently and competently the uneasy feeling I had that the advocates of the new isms were using skeptical arguments against traditional values that would tell equally against their own pet nostrums. Lewis had said it already.

J. R. Lucas, "Restoration of Man: A Lecture Given in Durham on Thursday, 22 October 1992, to Mark the Fiftieth Anniversary of C. S. Lewis's *The Abolition of Man*," accessed May 2, 2020, http://users.ox.ac.uk/~jrlucas/lewis.html (originally published in *Theology* [November-December 1995]: 445-56).

[82] Cf. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 18-20.

[83] Max Horkheimer, "The Arrest of Eichmann," in *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. Matthew J. O'Donnell et al., Radical Thinkers (New York: Seabury Press, 1974; repr., New York: Verso, 2013), 123. Cf. Max Horkheimer, "On the Problem of Truth," in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, ed. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt, (New York: Continuum, 1995); Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason*, 41-55.

only remaining question is what possible means are most effective in attaining whatever ends happen to be desired by those in power.[84] Practical reason as instrumental reason cannot determine whether an end ever *ought* to be desired, and apart from the *Tao* one cannot conclude that any end is *desirable* as distinguished from the fact of its being merely desired.

In contrast to pragmatism, Lewis clarifies, "By practical reason I mean our judgment of good and evil."[85] Lewis affirms the real, objective existence of goodness and likewise its privation which is properly called evil. In addition, he defends the human capacity for making moral judgments between these two categories in our experience. This capacity for practical reason depends upon the existence of the first principles of practical reason, or, in other words, the moral law, the *Tao*.[86]

Moreover, Lewis has demonstrated that the numerous attempts of the modernist moral reformer to overthrow traditional value judgments, searching out something else to "base a new scheme of values," have all failed since they themselves fundamentally depend on some traditional judgment of value. He thus draws the following conclusions:

> (1) The human mind has no more power of inventing a new value than of planting a new sun in the sky or a new primary color in the spectrum.

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[84] Roger Scruton offers the following insight: "Reasoning about means is uncontroversial, since it guarantees nothing that was ever in doubt. Everything depends upon the major premise, which states the goal or desire. How do you justify *that*?" Roger Scruton, *Modern Philosophy: An Introduction and Survey* (London: Reed Consumer Books, 1994; repr., New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 281; emphasis original. Scruton declares, "The utilitarian morality is the morality of *homo economicus*" because it reduces value to exchange value (283).

[85] Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 73. Cf. Lewis: "By this I include not merely the faculty to abstract and calculate, but the apprehension of values, the power to mean by 'good' something more than 'good for me' or even 'good for my species.'" C. S. Lewis, "Religion and Rocketry," in *The World's Last Night: And Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1960; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002), 85.

[86] Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 73. To those astonished he would include morality under the heading of reason, he states, "Until modern times no thinker of the first rank ever doubted that our judgments of value were rational judgments or that what they discovered was objective." By contrast, the modern view "does not believe that value judgments are really judgments at all. They are sentiments, or complexes, or attitudes, produced in a community by the pressure of its environment and its traditions, and differing from one community to another" (73).

(2) Every attempt to do so consists in arbitrarily selecting some one maxim of traditional morality, isolating it from the rest, and erecting it into an *unum necessarium*.[87]

He goes on to provide illustrations of his second proposition including a Futurist Ethic, a Communist Ethic, and Aristocratic Ethic, a Racialist Ethic, all monomaniac systems used at the time to attack or undermine traditional morality. But, he says, "The trunk to whose root the reformer would lay the axe is the only support of the particular branch he wishes to retain."[88] Thus, all the "new" or "scientific" or "modern" moralities "must therefore be dismissed as mere confusion of thought." In the end, we really only have two alternatives: "Either the maxims of traditional morality must be accepted as axioms of practical reason which neither admit nor require argument to support them and not to 'see' which is to have lost human status; or else there are no values at all, what we mistook for values being 'projections' of irrational emotions."[89]

Many have been critical of Lewis' defense of natural law theory, claiming that he fails to provide a sufficient argument for the existence of the first principles of practical reason or the objectivity of value judgments.[90] However, this criticism of Lewis profoundly misunderstands his case. Lewis does not offer an argument or "proof" of objective morality because he does not believe such a proof is even possible to make, any more than one can prove that *Two plus two equals four* or *Red is a primary color*. According to Lewis, the objectivity of values is self-evident, and first principles must be

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[87] Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 74-75. On Lewis' first proposition, compare Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 71. Also, cf. Kant: "Who would want to introduce a new principle of morality and, as it were, be its inventor, as if the world had hitherto been ignorant of what duty is or had been thoroughly wrong about it?" Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Lewis White Beck, The Library of Liberal Arts (Indianapolis: Liberal Arts Press, 1956), 8n5.

[88] Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 75. Cf. Confucius, *Analects* 1.2: "It is upon the Trunk that a gentleman works" (cf. Lewis, *Abolition*, 27).

[89] Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 75. Cf. on irrationality and false projection, Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 162-63; Lewis, "On Ethics," 56.

[90] Even Lucas, otherwise an admirer of Lewis, was critical of his argument on this point, saying, "He gives good arguments against easy subjectivism. He does not prove the objectivity of value judgements up to the hilt, and I would not set a pupil to read him in order to answer the arguments of Mackie and Blackburn." Lucas, "Restoration of Man."

seen not *proven*. For example, he writes, "The ultimate ethical injunctions have always been premisses, never conclusions. Kant was perfectly right on that point at least: the imperative is categorical. Unless the ethical is assumed from the outset, no argument will bring you to it."[91] Thus, Lewis is inviting his readers to *see* these truths rather than attempting to reason to them as conclusions. They are a matter of *intellectus* rather than *ratio*. The narrowing of the meaning of *reason* to solely the function of *ratio* is in part due to the removal of its moral or normative function. Lewis describes the resulting aporia in *Abolition*: "remove the organ, demand the function." Thus, the problems of instrumental reason result from a *de*-moralization of reason.[92]

Adorno-Horkheimer reject claims to self-evident moral principles as "givens." But, this rejection can only result in the pragmatic, purposive, or instrumental rationality (means-ends thinking) and instrumental morality (ends-justify-the-means thinking) they so ardently oppose.[93]

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[91] Lewis, "On Ethics," 55-56. Cf. Lewis, *Miracles*, 54. Also, cf. Gilbert Meilaender, *The C. S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia*, ed. Jeffrey D. Schultz and John G. West, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), s.v. "Ethics and Morality." It is noteworthy that, in this regard, Meilaender describes Lewis' view as being closer to Aristotle than Kant. Of course, Lewis cites Kant approvingly above, but notice he says, "Kant was perfectly right on that point *at least*: the imperative is categorical." Lewis accepts Kant's description of the moral law as categorical, and its principles as "objective, i.e., as valid for the will of every rational being." Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 17. As well, he accepts Kant's view that "the objective reality of the moral law can be proved through no deduction, through no exertion of the theoretical, speculative, or empirically supported reason" (48). But, Lewis does not embrace Kant's emphasis on the autonomous nature of duty or moral obligation or his severance of practical reason from empirical conditions (29). Lewis' more Aristotelian approach to natural law theory, with its emphasis on the embeddedness of goodness in the empirical conditions of nature, avoids many of the charges Adorno-Horkheimer wage against Kant for his excessive abstractions and formalization. Indeed, Lewis writes in the "old" tradition of natural law theorists that extends from Aristotle to Aquinas to Thomas Hooker, and others, and is deeply grounded in a philosophical anthropology. By contrast, the "new" school of natural law theorists of more recent times divorces natural law from human nature and is thus, ironically, more Kantian in its approach to practical reason.

[92] Recall (from chap. 4) Lewis's discussion of self-evident truth and the distinction between *intellectus* and *ratio*. This view has its roots in antiquity in relation to the principles of the *Tao*. Lewis explains, "[N]early all moralists before the eighteenth century regarded Reason as the organ of morality. . . . [N]early all of them believed the fundamental moral maxims were intellectually grasped. If they had been using the strict medieval distinction, they would have made morality an affair not of *ratio* but of *intellectus*." Lewis, *Discarded Image*, 158. Cf. Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Demoralization of Society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values* (New York: Vintage, 1994).

[93] According to Adorno, the "given" is problematic because it "denies all rational transparency and halts the advance of reflection." Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 237. (Or, as Lewis puts it, it cannot be "seen through.") Adorno continues, "to be given is the opposite of freedom: it is naked compulsion" (255). Accordingly, he views "the moral law . . . as not rational because it must be accepted as given and cannot be further analyzed" (261). No wonder he also claims, "There is no moral certainty" (242).

First Canon for Moral Decisions

For Lewis' understanding of the application of the first principles of practical reason in making moral judgments, we turn to his illuminating essay, "Why I Am Not a Pacifist." Here Lewis distinguishes between *reason* and *conscience*, or rational and moral intuition, both dependent upon axiomatic, self-evident principles or truths without which rationality and morality would be impossible. Moreover, reason and conscience must be informed by the facts of experience, and ultimately by a transcendent authority for making valid moral judgments.

Four key elements. Regarding the question of how one decides between what is good or evil, Lewis notes how many people would say conscience decides. Considering this appeal to conscience, he further comments,

> But probably no one thinks now of conscience as a separate faculty, like one of the senses. Indeed, it cannot be so thought of. For an autonomous faculty like a sense cannot be argued with; you cannot argue a man into seeing green if he sees blue. But the conscience can be altered by argument. . . . Conscience, then, means the whole man engaged in a particular subject matter.[94]

A person's being appeared to *bluely* is indubitable; even if the perception of blue is not true to the object of reality. As such, this subjective sensory appearance cannot be argued or altered by argument. However, this is not the same with a person's conscience, which

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[94] Lewis, "Why I Am Not a Pacifist," 64-65. Lewis' definition of conscience again reveals the important difference between his views and Kant's on the place of empirical conditions. Compare his following linguistic analysis of "Conscience" (*synteresis*):

> No lawgiver, inner or outer, gives laws in a vacuum; he always has real or supposed facts in mind, an idea of what is, which influences his rulings about what ought to be. Thus the outer lawgiver ceases to make new statutes against witchcraft when he ceases to believe in it, and does not make vaccination compulsory till he thinks it will prevent smallpox. It is the same with the inner lawgiver. . . . It is indeed extremely difficult to find a *pure* difference of synteresis, one that does not flow from different beliefs about matter of fact. Lewis, *Studies in Words*, 201; emphasis original.

Also, on the sense perception of color, Lewis' comments: "Distant hills look blue. They still look blue even after you have discovered that this particular beauty disappears when you approach them. The fact that they look blue fifteen miles away is just as much a fact as anything else. If we are to be realists, let us have realism all round." C. S. Lewis, "Hedonics," in *Present Concerns: A Compelling Collection of Timely, Journalistic Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Fount, 1986; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002), 54. On perception and theories of perception, see Robert Audi, *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*, 3rd ed., Routledge Contemporary Introductions to Philosophy, ed. Paul K. Moser (New York: Routledge, 2011); William P. Alston, *The Reliability of Sense Perception* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996).

is amendable by reason and argumentation.

Lewis proceeds to distinguish two meanings of conscience: first, "(a) the pressure a man feels upon his will to do what he thinks is right;" and second, "(b) his judgment as to what the content of right and wrong are." Sense (a) is to be treated as infallible and inviolable: "It is the sovereign of the universe. . . . It is not to be argued with, but obeyed, and even to question it is to incur guilt." However, the same cannot be said for sense (b), which is subject to error and may be ill-informed. The fact is people can be and are mistaken about what is right and what is wrong.[95] The issue then is by what means can mistakes be corrected. Lewis turns for an answer to an analogy between reason and conscience. He defines the former similar to the latter as "the whole man judging, only judging this time not about good and evil, but about truth and falsehood." Furthermore, he distinguishes three key elements involved in moral reasoning:

> *Firstly*, there is the reception of facts to reason about. These facts are received either from our own senses, or from the report of other minds; that is, either experience or authority supplies us with our material. But each man's experience is so limited that the second source is the more usual; of every hundred facts upon which to reason, ninety-nine depend on authority. *Secondly*, there is the direct, simple act of the mind perceiving self-evident truth, as when we see that if A and B both equal C, then they equal each other. This act I call intuition. *Thirdly*, there is an art or skill of arranging the facts so as to yield a series of such intuitions which linked together produce a proof of the truth or falsehood of the proposition we are considering.[96]

Having distinguished these three elements, he explains how all correction of reasoning errors pertain to either the first or third, but not the second based on intuition. This element "cannot be corrected if it is wrong, nor supplied if it is lacking." New facts may be provided; simpler proofs developed; but if someone is absolutely unable to see "any

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[95] Lewis, "Why I Am Not a Pacifist," 65. Elsewhere, Lewis acknowledges both our rational thinking and our moral thinking are conditioned by a variety of influences, historical, geographical, economic, and others. Lewis, *Miracles*, 61-62. Furthermore, he explains, "A man's Rational thinking is *just so much* of his share in eternal Reason as the state of his brain allows to become operative. . . . A nation's moral outlook is just so much of its share in eternal Moral Wisdom as its history, economics, etc. lets through. . . . It is conditioned by the apparatus but not originated by it" (62-63; emphasis original).

[96] Lewis, "Why I Am Not a Pacifist," 65-66; emphasis original.

one of the self-evident steps out of which the proof is built, then you can do nothing." If

the inability to see is a real one (and not just the refusal to see or due to intellectual sloth),

then "argument is at an end. You cannot produce rational intuition by argument, because

argument depends upon rational intuition. Proof rests upon the unprovable which has to

be just 'seen.'"[97]

He now explains how these same three elements are found in conscience as

well, and thus what role they serve in our practical reasoning. In addition, he accentuates

a fourth necessary factor—authority. He writes,

> The facts, as before, come from experience and authority. I do not mean "moral
> facts" but those facts about actions without holding which we could not raise moral
> questions at all. . . . Secondly, there are the pure intuitions of utterly simple good
> and evil as such. Third, there is the process of argument by which you arrange the
> intuitions so as to convince a man that a particular act is wrong or right. And
> finally, there is authority as a substitute for argument, telling a man of some wrong
> or right which he would not otherwise have discovered, and rightly accepted if the
> man has good reason to believe the authority wiser and better than himself.[98]

Considering the second element, and just like basic rational intuitions, Lewis says, "basic

moral intuitions are the only element in Conscience which cannot be argued about." If

some moral opinion is arguable, and "does not reveal one of the parties as a moral idiot,"

then it fails to qualify as a basic moral intuition. In contrast with questionable differences

of moral opinion, which might be the subject of reasonable disagreement, the basic moral

intuitions "are the ultimate preferences of the will for love rather than hatred and

happiness rather than misery. . . . [I]n the main these can be said to be the voice of

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[97] Lewis, "Why I Am Not a Pacifist," 66-67. Meilaender clarifies "the distinction between
thinking that the basic moral truths are self-evident and thinking that they are obvious. To say that they are
self-evident is to say that their truth is not grounded in or proven by any other, more fundamental truths. . . .
But this does not necessarily mean that they are obvious or that no one needs to be taught them." Gilbert
Meilaender, "Self-Evident, Not Obvious," review of *C. S. Lewis on Politics and the Natural Law*, by Justin
Buckley Dyer and Micah J. Watson, in *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion & Public Life* (May
2017), https://www.firstthings.com/article/2017/05/self-evident-not-obvious. Adorno seems to make this
mistake when he writes that "morality is by no means self-evident. It is rather the case that within the
complexities of modern life . . . there are countless situations in which it is far from self-evident how we
should act." He appears to be confusing being self-evident with being obvious in this case. Adorno,
Problems of Moral Philosophy, 116.

[98] Lewis, "Why I Am Not a Pacifist," 68.

humanity as such."[99] For Lewis, this second element of basic moral intuitions represents the central principles of the *Tao*.

On the fourth factor, authority, Lewis distinguishes between two types: *human* and *divine*. He further subdivides each of these types into the categories of *special* and *general* authority. For example, concerning human authority, he distinguishes between special ("the society to which I belong"), which is not final or conclusive, and so must even be disobeyed at times (e.g., conscientious objection, civil disobedience), and general, which represents the *Tao* and is absolutely binding. Although Lewis refers to the latter under the category of human authority, he is referring to its secondary not its primary origin, which he believes to be divine.[100]

All in all, these four elements taken together form what Lewis calls "our first canon for moral decisions."[101] Lewis' practical conclusions are modest and measured. He does not propose his canon as the means to reaching absolutely certain, dogmatic moral conclusions about everyday moral concerns, but rather for reaching a position in which one can say "I can trust my moral judgment with reasonable confidence."[102] One's conclusion in the end is defeasible and subject to further revision by facts, evidence,

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[99] Lewis, "Why I Am Not a Pacifist," 69.

[100] Lewis describes,

The sentence of general human authority is equally clear. From the dawn of history down to the sinking of the *Terris Bay*, the world echoes with the praise of righteous war. To be a Pacifist, I must part company with Homer and Virgil, with Plato and Aristotle, with Zarathustra and the *Bhagavad-Gita*, with Cicero and Montaigne, with Iceland and with Egypt. From this point of view, I am almost tempted to reply to the Pacifist as Johnson replied to Goldsmith, "Nay Sir, if you will not take the universal opinion of mankind, I have no more to say." Lewis, "Why I Am Not a Pacifist," 80-81.

He acknowledges some will reject the general testimony of human authority, that "though Hooker thought 'the general and perpetual voice of men is as the sentence of God Himself,' yet many who hear will give it little or no weight" (81). One reason for this rejection is the belief held by some Christians, for example, those opposed to the doctrine of natural law, who believe "that the human race is fallen and corrupt, so that even the consent of great and wise human teachers and great nations widely separated in time and place affords no clue whatsoever to the good" (82). If such a belief is true, then the only recourse, says Lewis, is to turn directly to divine authority.

[101] Lewis, "Why I Am Not a Pacifist," 70.

[102] Lewis, "Why I Am Not a Pacifist," 72.

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arguments, or appeals to authority, all of which could serve as defeaters of the moral judgment. Thus, Lewis' aim in making moral judgments is not mathematical certainty but "moral certainty."[103] Given this distinction, it can be said that Lewis avoids the charge of dogmatism regarding the results of the moral decision-making process. Although it must be said he would not shudder at the charge of dogmatism regarding the principles of the *Tao*, the second element of the canon, which again are inarguable, and without which all valid moral reasoning is impossible.

Negating the canon. It is helpful at this juncture to contrast Lewis with Adorno-Horkheimer. First, Adorno-Horkheimer reject Lewis' sense of conscience (a), for they reject as dogmatism any claims of absolute authority, human or divine, over the individual. Second, regarding Lewis' sense of conscience (b), Adorno-Horkheimer would reject this as well but with some qualifications. Their own descriptions of conscience are consistent here with Lewis' description of conscience as a mixed bag involving human judgments based upon questionable reasoning processes and even submission to fallible *human* authority. However, in theory, they would reject Lewis' appeal to "inarguable intuitions," the crucial second of Lewis' three elements of conscience. However, as discussed earlier, in practice, they are inconsistent on this point given their frequent appeals to moral principles as if they were indeed absolute, universal, and unarguable. Regarding the fourth element, Adorno-Horkheimer reject the notion of divine authority wholesale, which seems to leave them with no higher court of appeal than some type of human authority. However, they reject all appeals to general human authority as well.[104] Consequently, it seems to follow, absent any transcendent moral

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[103] Lewis, "Why I Am Not a Pacifist," 72.

[104] Elsewhere, Horkheimer discusses problems with appeals to both divine and human authority. For example, he argues the abandonment of divine authority led to man becoming wholly subject to human authority, especially to economic powers. This meant the exchange of one blind authority for another, and thus unfreedom. At the same time, Horkheimer makes clear that he opposes any anarchistic rejection of authority. Max Horkheimer, "Authority and the Family," 82-93, 96.

authority over all humans alike, that some immanent human power become the final arbiter of moral truth, in effect the voice of conscience.

Yet, Lewis warns that "those who create conscience cannot be subject to conscience themselves."[105] Therefore, apart from both the fact and the recognition of an absolute authority speaking in and through human conscience in the form of basic moral intuitions (the *Tao*), the conscience is left to be shaped into whatever form the dominant power might make of it, a power motivated not by practical reason and a sense of moral duty but only its base level desires, mere appetite.[106]

Disenchanted Natural Law Theory

The result of the abandonment of the authority of the *Tao* is that enlightened reason proffers its own mythical version of a natural law theory, one based on mere conformity to nature as it in fact *is*, thus perpetuating the status quo. According to this theory, in its new Enlightenment clothes, some men are naturally stronger than others who are by nature weaker. It is the weak not the strong who are rebelling against the natural order by trying to usurp the latter, their natural superiors. Therefore, it is the weak who act contrary to nature and in violation of natural law. Quoting Sade, Adorno-Horkheimer explain this as "'the wrong of stepping outside his own character of weakness, which nature has impressed on him: She created him to be a slave, and poor.

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[105] Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 81. He writes,

> Many a popular "planner" on a democratic platform, many a mild-eyed scientist in a democratic laboratory means, in the last resort, just what the Fascist means. He believes that "good" means whatever men are conditioned to approve. He believes that it is the function of him and his kind to condition men; to create consciences by eugenics, psychological manipulation of infants, state education and mass propaganda (81).

Furthermore, he argues, "The very idea of freedom presupposes some objective moral law which overarches rulers and ruled alike. Subjectivism about values is eternally incompatible with democracy. We and our rulers are of one kind only so long as we are subject to one law. But if there is no Law of Nature, the *ethos* of any society is the creation of its rulers, educators and conditioners; and every creator stands above and outside his own creation" (81).

[106] Lewis defines moral duty as "an act of obedience to the moral law." Lewis, "Ethics," 48.

He refuses to submit; that is his wrong.'"[107]

Two kinds of natural. Lewis gets to the heart of the problem of these different interpretations of natural law in his work *Studies on Words*, where he carefully distinguishes between two different senses of *nature*, two corresponding senses of *natural*, and how these differences relate to "the gigantic antithesis . . . between *natural* and *civil* law; the unchangeable and universal law of *nature* and the varying law of this or that state."[108] Lewis outlines the totally different political philosophies that result from these different senses. The first political philosophy is one that thinks of *nature* "as the real (opposed to convention and legal fiction) and the laws of *nature* as those which enjoin what is really good and forbid what is really bad (as opposed to the pseudo-duties which bad governments praise and reward or the real virtues which they forbid and punish)." According to this view, "the law of nature" represents "an absolute moral standard" by which "the laws of all nations" are to be judged and "to which they ought to conform."[109] Natural law precedes and is the basis for civil law, and thus represents the

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[107] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 79; quoting Marquis de Sade, *Juliette*, trans. Austryn Wainhouse (New York: Grove Press, 1968), 119, Kindle. Adorno-Horkheimer provide an example of this perversion of natural law theory, drawing on Sade's character of Dorval, a Paris gang leader, who expounds to Juliette,

> 'It is not the reprisals of the weak against the strong which truly conform to nature. . . . To carry out such reprisals the weak man would need strength he has not been given. He would have to assume a character which is by no means his—in a certain way he would do violence to nature. What is truthful in the laws of this wise mother is that the strong are allowed to injure the weak, since, to act in this way, they must only use the gifts they have received. The strong individual does not, like the weak, disguise himself with a character other than his own. He merely expresses in action what he has received from nature. Everything which follows from that is therefore natural: his oppression, his violence, his cruelties, his tyrannies, his injustices . . . are pure, like the hand which has imprinted them on him. . . . We should never, therefore, have scruples over what we are able to take from the weak, since it is not we who are committing the crime. Rather, it is the defense or revenge of the weak which are characteristic of crime.' Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 78; quoting Sade, *Juliette*, 117-18.

[108] Lewis, *Studies in Words*, 59.

[109] Lewis, *Studies in Words*, 61. And so, "Great Mother Nature may well come in at this point but she will be either, for Stoics, a deified Mother Nature, or, for Christians, a Mother Nature who is the 'vicaire of the almightie lord,' inscribing her laws, which she learned from God, on the human heart. This is the conception of *natural* Law that underlies the work of Thomas Aquinas, Hooker and Grotius" (61; emphasis original). Cf. Rom. 2:12-16, especially v. 15 (ESV): "They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them."

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ultimate standard for distinguishing between just and unjust human laws, justified

obedience or disobedience to the state, a rightful ruler or tyrant.[110]

But, the above view sharply contrasts with another tradition that develops later

based on a different, disenchanted sense of the word *nature*. Lewis writes,

> The "laws of *Nature*" on this view are inferred from the way in which non-human
> agents always behave, and human agents behave until they are trained not to. Thus
> what Aquinas or Hooker would call "the law of *Nature*" now becomes in its turn the
> convention; it is something artificially imposed, in opposition to the true law of
> *nature*, the way we all spontaneously behave if we dare (or don't interfere with
> ourselves), the way all the other creatures behave, the way that comes "naturally" to
> us. The prime law of *nature*, thus conceived, is self-preservation and self-
> aggrandizement, pursued by whatever trickeries or cruelties may prove to be
> advisable. This is Hobbes's *Natural Law*.[111]

This is the understanding of natural law reflected in the criticisms of Sade and Nietzsche.

The result of this disenchanted natural law theory is that traditional values, emotional

attitudes, and actions, which formerly served to protect the weak and vulnerable of

society, are dispensed with by the strong as contrary to nature and thus "contrary to

reason." This includes all appeals to remorse, pity, kindness, good deeds, even pleasure

and romantic love.[112] Through this perverse inversion of real natural law, what was once

perceived as virtue is transvalued into vice, an interference "'with the inequality required

by the laws of nature.'"[113]

As a result of the repudiation of the above sentiments as vices, domination and

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[110] Cf. C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama*, The Oxford History of English Literature, vol. 3 (1954; repr., London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 48. Lewis, on natural law, writes: "I hold this conception to be basic to all civilization. Without it, the actual laws of the state become an absolute, as in Hegel. They cannot be criticized because there is no norm against which they should be judged." C. S. Lewis, "We Have No Right to Happiness," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 318.

[111] Lewis, *Studies in Words*, 61-62; emphasis original. Elsewhere, Lewis discusses the gradual historical moves towards an abandonment of the medieval conception of natural law and towards the development of a theory of sovereignty invested in the State. Lewis says Hobbes knew a true "Law of Nature" was a threat to absolute State power, thus he "abolished the concept while astutely retaining the name." The new theory of sovereignty transfers the basis of what is right from the reason to the will, "which decrees what shall be right." Once again, *sic volo, sic jubeo*. Lewis, *English Literature*, 50. Cf. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994).

[112] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 79-86.

[113] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 79; quoting Sade, *Juliette*, 177.

suppression are elevated in their place to the status of virtue. Once again, this illustrates Nietzsche's doctrine of the transvaluation of values, which states, "'All good things have at one time been considered evil; every original sin has, at some point, turned into an original virtue.'"[114] Adorno-Horkheimer explain how Sade's Juliette "applies this principle in earnest, for the first time consciously performing the transvaluation of all values. After the destruction of all ideologies she elevates as her own morality what Christianity, in its ideology if not always in its practice, held to be abominable." Moreover, she does this with the "cool and reflective" demeanor of a "good philosopher" of enlightenment without any pretentions or illusions.[115]

The problem is the formalization of reason is devoid of any substantive content or goals.[116] Moreover, the goals it advocates are "stripped of the character of necessity and objectivity, which is dismissed as illusion." Accordingly, not only are remorse, pity, kindness, and good deeds transmuted into sin and vice, but "injustice, hatred, and destruction become merely operations." They are reduced to "mere activity, into the means—in short, into industry."[117] The same fate befalls the pursuit of pleasure, which is deemed as superstitious as any myth, as well as romantic love (what Lewis refers to as *eros*), which is reduced to mere erotica. Juliette's libertinism demonstrates this dissociation of love:

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[114] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 81; quoting Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, ed. T. N. R. Rogers (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2003), 89, Kindle.

[115] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 81. Adorno-Horkheimer provide another example from Sade:

> To Clairwil's proposal for a sacrilegious act she responds: "Now that we do not believe in God, my dear, . . . the desecrations you desire are no more than useless childish games. . . . I may be still firmer in my disbelief than you; my atheism is unshakable. So do not imagine that I need the childish pranks you propose to confirm it. I shall take part because it amuses you, but only for entertainment and never as something necessary, either to strengthen my way of thinking, or to convince others of it." Though swayed by momentary kindness toward her accomplice, she still upholds her principles (81; quoting Sade, *Juliette*, 451).

[116] Recall that Adorno-Horkheimer state the problem as such: "As reason posits no substantial goals, all affects are equally remote to it. They are *merely natural*." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 70; emphasis added.

[117] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 81.

By turning her praise of genital and perverted sexuality into condemnation of what is unnatural, immaterial, illusory, the libertine Juliette has thrown in her lot with the normality which belittles and restricts not only the utopian exaltation of love but physical pleasure, not only the loftiest joy but that which is nearest at hand. The cynical roué whose side she takes has metamorphosed, with the help of the sex educator, the psychoanalyst, and the hormone physiologist, into the open-minded practical man who extends his affirmation of sport and hygiene to include the sex life.[118]

In their discussions of Sade and Nietzsche, Adorno-Horkheimer repeatedly betray their (albeit unacknowledged) commitment to more than just negative criticism. It would appear the point of citing these examples is not only to provide a negative critique of the Enlightenment's perversion of natural law theory, but also to *positively* highlight what they seem to accept as normative standards of human behavior. Otherwise, not only are we left with a castrated natural law theory but a gelded moral critique as well. For their criticism depends upon accepting the basic moral intuition that it is wrong for the stronger to oppress the weaker.

The naturalistic fallacy. Much of Adorno-Horkheimer's critique has to do with Enlightenment rationalism's mistaken affirmation of the status quo, *what is*. Hence, they seem to acknowledge the fallacy in attempting to derive an *ought* from what merely *is*. Such fallacious reasoning reasons thus: *The people in power are, in* fact, *stronger than others. Therefore, they are* right *in exercising their power to oppress others.*

In *Abolition*, the linchpin of Lewis' argument is the acceptance that what is variously called the naturalistic or "is-ought" fallacy is indeed an example of fallacious moral reasoning. He argues that in order to reject the *Tao* or traditional morality one must try to reintroduce value in the premises of one's argument in order to engage in moral criticism. However, Lewis writes, "Of any reintroduction of value in one's

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[118] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 85-86. Regarding pleasure, Adorno-Horkheimer explain, "Nature actually does not know pleasure: it does not go beyond the satisfaction of needs" (82). For Lewis on romantic love, see C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (1936; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958); C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (1960; repr., New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1991).

argument the question posed to traditional morality can still be asked of the new value: 'Why should we obey it?' Every argument used to support it will be an attempt to derive from premises in the indicative mood a conclusion in the imperative. And this is impossible."[119] Hence, Lewis pinpoints the fundamental error: the attempt to get in one's conclusions what is not contained in the premises of one's argument.[120]

For an example of Lewis' application of this fallacy, consider his thoughts on the nature of evil. Evil is both *natural* and *not natural*, depending on what you mean by *natural*. He writes, "Evil is certainly not a 'Thing.' But many states of affairs, or relations between things, are regrettable, ought not to have occurred, and ought to be removed. And 'Evil' is an elliptical symbol for this fact."[121] Thus, Lewis would not accept the simplistic fact/value dichotomy presented by some because he believes in *moral facts* and *factual values*, like it is a fact certain states of affairs ought not to be and

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[119] Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 75-76.

[120] Of course, a number of philosophers have been critical of the so-called naturalistic fallacy. Cf. Dieter Birnbacher, *Naturalness: Is the "Natural" Preferable to the "Artificial?,"* trans. David Carus (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2014). Birnbacher takes a negative assessment of normative appeals to naturalness and is critical of the so-called naturalistic fallacy. He is also one of the few examples of a writer who refers to both Lewis' *Abolition* and Adorno-Horkheimer's *Dialectic* together in the same discussion (18). Scruton, writing on G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica* and the naturalistic fallacy, offers the following analysis and assessment:

> Moore thought that he discerned a fallacy in many of the traditional ethical systems: the fallacy of identifying goodness with some property other than itself. Many philosophers have tried to define the term "good," by listing the "natural" properties which good things possess. . . . By a "natural" property Moore meant a property that was straightforwardly part of the natural world, as happiness is: a property whose causes and effects are discoverable by the standard methods employed in understanding nature. All such "naturalistic" definitions of the term "good" commit a fallacy, he argued. For suppose it were true that "good" meant "promoting happiness." Then the statement "Whatever promotes happiness is good" would be a tautology, equivalent to "whatever is good is good," or "whatever promotes happiness promotes happiness." But in that case it would be absurd to ask "Is the promotion of happiness good?" This would be like asking "Are good things good?" But, Moore went on, it is *never* absurd to ask, of *any* natural property, "Is it good?" It is always an *open question* whether some natural property is good. And that is tantamount to saying that "good" can never be defined in terms of natural properties. Scruton, *Modern Philosophy*, 272; emphasis original.

Scruton proceeds to explain how Moore's immediate successors believed he had found the proof of what is sometimes called "Hume's law," regarding the slip from "is" to "ought," that a gap exists between the two. See David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature*, ed. Ernest C. Mossner (New York: Penguin, 1984). Although Scruton finds the naturalistic fallacy questionable, like Lewis, he embraces moral realism in the end.

[121] C. S. Lewis to Edward T. Dell, January 30, 1950, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 3, *Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy 1950-1963*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 8.

should be opposed. Moreover, that *evil exists* is both a factual as well as an evaluative

statement, a factual and a moral truth about the world. Yet, as Lewis explains, evil is not

a fact in the sense that it is a "thing" or "object" of nature with a substantial existence.

Evil is not a material quantity and it lacks any positive observable qualities—indeed it is

a pure negative, absence, or privation of the good.[122] Hence, the factual or moral

identification of something's or someone's being evil requires more than a mere scientific

or socio-economic description of physical characteristics and conditions, states of affairs,

relations, and so forth. An objective moral judgment requires an appeal to a natural

(normative) standard of what natural (as in simply occurring) characteristics, states of

affairs, and relations *ought* or *ought not* to be.[123] And indeed, this is one of Lewis' main

contentions, that the moral law is real, a real thing, a real law. It is a fact, "yet it is not a

fact in the ordinary sense."[124] This is the problem with positivism in that it allows for

nothing but facts in the ordinary sense. But, as Lewis see it, here we have an undeniable

fact that is irreducible to the ordinary sense of *natural*. This sense can only lead to the

problematic, denuded sense of natural law theory, for which Adorno-Horkheimer rightly

heap their scorn. More to the point, only upon the basis of the real thing can the

counterfeit be exposed and rightly critiqued.[125]

        Thus, Lewis has the critical advantage over the critical theorists in his embrace

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[122] Cf. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 44: "Goodness is, so to speak, itself: badness is only spoiled goodness. And there must be something good first before it can be spoiled. We called sadism a sexual perversion; but you must first have the idea of a normal sexuality before you can talk of its being perverted; and you can see which is the perversion, because you can explain the perverted from the normal, and cannot explain the normal from the perverted." Furthermore, he writes, "Evil consists not in being, but in failing to be; it is privative, defective, parasitic." C. S. Lewis, review of *Boethius: Some Aspects of His Times and Work*, by Helen M. Barrett, in *Image and Imagination: Essays and Reviews*, ed. Walter Hooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 202. Cf. C. S. Lewis, "Evil and God," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

[123] Cf. Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 10-11; Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 17-18.

[124] Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 20.

[125] For example, Lewis discusses how abuses in the realm of civil law can only be rightly critiqued and justifiably disobeyed from the standpoint of the natural law. Lewis, *English Literature*, 48.

of the moral intuitions of the *Tao* and in his avoidance of committing the naturalistic fallacy. Lewis does not merely appeal to *what is* (or what is not) as a basis for *what ought to be*, but to a divine authority beyond nature as the ultimate ground of natural law.

The Law of Nature and Nature's God

According to Lewis, in modern society, before engaging in discussions about God, it has become necessary to remind people of natural law.[126] The problems outlined above concerning the limitations, errors, and abuses of human authority made possible by the disenchantment of value demonstrate the need for divine authority in the moral sphere. Apart from divine authority, there is no objective check and balance for the exercise of human authority, which thus becomes a law unto itself.

From Law to Lawgiver

Simply put, Lewis reasons that without a Moral Lawgiver (God), real moral law cannot exist. But, we all indelibly and undeniably know the moral law does exist. Therefore, the Moral Lawgiver exists. He does not make this case in *Abolition* where he explains he was "trying to write ethics, not theology."[127] However, elsewhere Lewis does make the connection between God and the *Tao* much clearer. For example, in *Mere Christianity* he makes many of the same arguments from *Abolition* in defense of an objective moral law, but employs them further as an argument from morality to the conclusion that God exists as the transcendent source of the moral law. He makes a similar argument in his book *Miracles*, in which he concludes,

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[126] C. S. Lewis to Don Giovanni Calabria, September 15, 1953, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 3, *Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy 1950-1963*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 365.

[127] C. S. Lewis to Clyde S. Kilby, January 11, 1961, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 3, *Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy 1950-1963*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 1227. See Judith Wolfe, "Theology in *The Abolition of Man*," in *Contemporary Perspectives on C. S. Lewis' Abolition of Man: History, Philosophy, Education, and Science*, ed. Gayne John Anacker and Timothy M. Mosteller (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).

If we are to continue to make moral judgments (and whatever we say we shall in fact continue) then we must believe that the conscience of man is not a product of Nature. It can be valid only if it is an offshoot of some absolute moral wisdom, a moral wisdom which exists absolutely "on its own" and is not a product of non-moral, non-rational Nature. As the argument of the last chapter led us to acknowledge a supernatural source for rational thought, so the argument of this leads us to acknowledge a supernatural source of our ideas of good and evil. In other words, we now know something more about God.[128]

Or consider a further example from his essay "Bulverism": "[E]ither I am self-existent (a belief which no one can accept) *or* I am a colony of some Thought and Will that are self-existent. Such reason and goodness as we can attain must be derived from a self-existent Reason and Goodness outside ourselves, in fact, a Supernatural."[129] Clearly, Lewis' identification of Reason with Goodness as one and the same supernatural source has important implications for his thinking about morality and ethics (and everything else for that matter). Whereas in the previous chapter, the theological focus was on the rational nature of God (God as self-existent Reason), here the emphasis is on the moral nature of God (God as self-existent Goodness).

Moreover, Lewis writes in the same theological tradition which describes the law of nature as one of God's two books: Holy Scripture and the Book of Nature. And although this particular description of these two types of divine revelation developed later in the Christian tradition, Lewis draws heavily upon its earlier Jewish roots, especially in the book of Psalms of the Old Testament.[130] By contrast, despite their Jewish heritage, Adorno-Horkheimer do not share "the old Jewish feeling about the Law," which Lewis describes. Nor do they follow the sun's rays up to its source in God as Lewis does.

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[128] Lewis, *Miracles*, 60.

[129] C. S. Lewis, "'Bulverism' or, The Foundation of 20th Century Thought," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 276; emphasis original.

[130] For example, Lewis reflects on Psalm 19 and the use of the imagery of the sun for the law of God in C. S. Lewis *Reflections on the Psalms* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1958; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002), 64. Cf. C. S. Lewis, foreword to Joy Davidman, *Smoke on the Mountain: An Interpretation of the Ten Commandments* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), 8. See Kathryn Lindskoog and Gracia Fay Ellwood, "C. S. Lewis: The Natural Law in Literature and Life," *The Lewis Legacy* (Autumn 1996): 12-17.

Lewis, of course, would view this rejection of the Law as a serious regression from the Jewish heritage.[131] Moreover, he would further argue that though they deny it, Adorno-Horkheimer depend upon the Law for engaging in their moral critique of society and culture.

God Is Great, God Is Good

Lewis addresses the question: "But how is the relation between God and the moral law to be represented?" And in several places in his writings he offers an answer in the form of what is called *divine essentialism* (or *ethical monotheism*), as well as a defense of what is called *divine command theory* against the popular challenge known as the Euthyphro dilemma. A modern update on the Euthyphro dilemma basically asks: Are God's commands good because he commands them, or does he command them because they are good? Lewis characterizes the two options of the dilemma accordingly,

> If the first, if good is to be *defined* as what God commands, then the goodness of God Himself is emptied of meaning and the commands of an omnipotent fiend would have the same claim on us as those of the "righteous Lord." If the second, then we seem to be admitting a cosmic diarchy, or even making God Himself the mere executor of a law somehow external and antecedent to His own being. Both views are intolerable.[132]

Lewis cuts the Gordian knot per se by rejecting both horns of the dilemma.

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[131] Michael Löwy, quoting Jack Jacobs, writes, "Although most of the members of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research (ISR) were of Jewish origin, '*Marxism was a far brighter star in their constellation than Jewishness*,' particularly during the Weimar period." Michael Löwy, "The Frankfurt School and the Jews," review of *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, by Jack Jacobs, *New Politics* 15, no. 3 (Summer 2015): 141, *MasterFILE Premier*, EBSCO*host*, emphasis added. Keep in mind the sun is a star after all. Similarly, Lewis writes, "The Jew knows more than the Pagan, the Christian more than the Jew, the modern vaguely religious man less than any of the three." C. S. Lewis, "Dogma and the Universe," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 46-47. The "modern vaguely religious man" is actually an accurate description of Adorno-Horkheimer with their abandonment of the ancient faith of their fathers, yet still employing theological concepts in their writing. See John Hughes, "Unspeakable Utopia: Art and the Return to the Theological in the Marxism of Adorno and Horkheimer," *Cross Currents* 53, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 480, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

[132] Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 79; emphasis original. See Plato, *Euthyphro*. On Lewis' rejection of divine *omnipotence* as a basis for moral obligation, see C. S. Lewis, "A Reply to Professor Haldane," in *Of Other Worlds: Essays and Stories*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1966; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002), 74; also, his chap. titled "Divine Omnipotence," in Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 16-27.

Employing a form of negative dialectic, Lewis lays down two negations: "that God

neither obeys nor creates the moral law." Yet, his assessment is not wholly negative for

his reasoning that God does not create the moral law is due to the positive knowledge that

the good is uncreated and necessary.[133] Thus, he makes an explicit, positive

identification of God with goodness in unequivocal terms: "God is not merely good, but

goodness; goodness is not merely divine, but God."[134] His proposal represents an often

overlooked third option to the two horns of this false dilemma. On this third view, God is

the sovereign authority *de jure*.[135] Moreover, Lewis does not think he is spinning "fine-

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[133] Accordingly, Lewis explains, "The good is uncreated; it never could have been otherwise; it has in it no shadow of contingency; it lies, as Plato said, on the other side of existence. It is the *Rita* of the Hindus by which the gods themselves are divine, the *Tao* of the Chinese from which all realities proceed." Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 80; cf. Lewis, *Abolition*, 17-18.

[134] Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 80. Elsewhere, he explicitly states, "God is Goodness." Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 43. For further discussion, see chap. 3, "Divine Goodness," in Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 28-47. Furthermore, he clarifies, "If I had any hesitation in saying that God 'made' the *Tao* it would only be because that might suggest that it was an arbitrary creation (*sic volo, sic jubeo*): whereas I believe it to be the necessary expression, in terms of temporal existence, of what God by His own righteous nature necessarily is." Lewis to Clyde S. Kilby, *Collected Letters*, 3:1226-27.

[135] Lewis writes, "Nothing can be more alien to most characteristically modern modes of thought—Barthian, Marxist, or Bergsonian-Shavian—than an interest in that which has authority *de jure*." C. S. Lewis, review of Paradise Lost *in Our Time: Some Comments*, by Douglas Bush, in *Image and Imagination*, ed. Walter Hooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 299-300. This characterization aptly applies to Adorno-Horkheimer.

Some scholars appear to misunderstand Lewis' view of the connection between religion and morality. For example, Meilaender writes,

Whatever the precise relation of religion to morality, Lewis did not think the moral law can be grounded in a theory of divine command. . . . Although Lewis did not want to ground the moral law in God's command, neither did he want to make it greater than God—as if God himself were compelled to obey the law. In "The Poison of Subjectivism" Lewis suggested that we must content ourselves with a double negation: that God neither creates nor obeys the moral law. Meilaender, "Ethics and Morality."

However, Meilaender greatly oversimplifies Lewis' position. Lewis in fact is not just content with a double negation. He clearly grounds the moral law in God's commands *as they are derived from God's essence or character*. His commands are good because *God is good*, in fact *God is goodness*. Consider another statement by Lewis: "The thing to which, on my view, culture must be subordinated, is not (though it includes) moral virtue, but the conscious direction of all will and desire to *a transcendental Person in whom I believe all values to reside,* and the reference to Him in every thought and act." C. S. Lewis, "Christianity and Culture," in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 26; emphasis added. For Lewis, only persons can value, and only an absolute Person can value absolutely. Thus, Lewis says God is the "*absolutely wise and good Person* (Aristotle's φρόνιμος raised to the nth)," the transcendental Person in whom all values reside. Lewis, "Christianity and Culture," 27; emphasis added. In sum, it can be said that Lewis anticipates and brilliantly defends what Robert Merrihew Adams later terms "a *modified* divine command theory." See Robert Adams, *Finite and Infinite Goods: A Framework for Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). Also, see Scott B. Rae, *Moral Choices: An Introduction to Ethics*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 91-99.

spun speculations." Stressing the enormous significance of his theological theorizing, he writes,

> I believe that nothing short of this can save us. A Christianity which does not see moral and religious experience converging to meet at infinity, not at a negative infinity, but in the positive infinity of the living yet superpersonal God, has nothing, in the long run, to divide it from devil worship; and a philosophy which does not accept value as eternal and objective can lead us only to ruin.[136]

While Adorno-Horkheimer reject the notions of natural law and of a divine lawgiver as religious dogmatism, they are also critical of atheism's equally dogmatic attempts to ground morality in nature and its processes. For example, Horkheimer refers to the French Enlightenment philosophe, Paul-Henri Thiry Baron d'Holbach (1723-1789), and "his *System of Nature*, the bible of eighteenth-century materialism," as an example of the failure of atheists to establish a natural law without a lawgiver.[137] By rejecting "divinity they offer Nature," he says. "But Nature does not say anything. . . . The place of God is taken in each case by an impersonal concept."[138] This is the fundamental problem with any atheistic, materialistic exaltation of nature into a law of its own.

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[136] Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 80-81. This identification of God with positive infinity is the very kind of claim that Adorno-Horkheimer absolutely reject. For them such a claim violates the Jewish prohibition of the name (*Bilderverbot*). Nevertheless, Lewis points to ancient Jewish theology to show that the Jews claimed to know about God's being absolutely good in his own nature, as well as the connection between his divine nature, his laws, and the nature he created. Cf. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*, 61.

[137] Max Horkheimer, "Theism and Atheism," in *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. Matthew J. O'Donnell et al., Radical Thinkers (New York: Seabury Press, 1974; repr., New York: Verso, 2013), 41, Kindle. See Paul-Henri Thiry d'Holbach, *System of Nature*, trans. H. D. Robinson (London: 1770; repr., New York: Burt Franklin, 1970).

[138] Horkheimer, "Theism and Atheism," 42, 43. Adorno similarly states, "The thesis that society is subject to natural laws is ideology if it is hypostatized as immutably given by nature." Adorno,, *Negative Dialectics*, 355. Horkheimer further explains the problem, while also very curiously giving a nod to traditional religion over against atheism:

> The dogma of a Nature which can speak and command—or at least serve as a principle for deducing moral truths—was an inadequate attempt to go along with science without giving up the age-old longing for an eternal guideline. But nature could only teach self-preservation and the right of the stronger, not for example liberty and justice. The liberal bourgeois order was always forced to pursue non-rational interests. Traditional institutionalized religion was still in a far better position to arouse these interests than atheism of whatever kind. Horkheimer, "Theism and Atheism," 43.

Homo Economicus or *Homo Imago Dei*?

Of course, one's theological viewpoint has major implications for one's theory of ethics and morality, but also the related area of *anthropology*, the study of human nature. This gets to the heart of a further difference between *Abolition* and *Dialectic*, and represents one of the most significant divergences between Lewis and Adorno-Horkheimer.

From stock market to stock responses. According to Adorno-Horkheimer, the grim result of Enlightenment rationalism is that all feeling, expression, and culture "is stripped of any responsibility to thought and transformed into the neutralized element of the all-embracing rationality of an economic system long since grown irrational."[139] Thus neutralized, it poses no real threat to the status quo. This is a kind of stock market rationality or morality, which reduces man to *homo economicus*. The only value that counts is that which can be counted, meaning economic or exchange value. Human value and worth is determined by its capacity for productivity, profit, and preservation.

Lewis finds the solution to this stock market mentality in his appeal to the *Tao*, and in the development of what he calls "a good stock response." The development of good stock responses, as opposed to morally neutral impulses, which can be manipulated for any purpose or end, serves to inoculate the subject from the distorting influences of worldly powers (e.g., economic, political, religious). A stock response is simply another name for a virtue, and so Lewis has in mind the cultivation of virtuous character.[140]

Stock responses, or virtues, are conventional in the sense that they are, at least in part, taught by society. However, they are not mere human inventions, but are grounded in human nature, as well as an essential remedy to halting the domination of

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[139] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 72.

[140] Recall Lewis says, "Every virtue is a *habitus*—i.e., a *good* stock response." Lewis, "Christianity and Culture," 24; emphasis original.

human nature. It is the loss of value *and* virtue which leaves humans vulnerable to mere

nature as well as the powers which oppress them. The resistance needed is not primarily

revolutionary political action, but the development of resistance to the corrupting

influences of society and culture (both material and spiritual). Accordingly, the *Tao*

serves as more than just a list of general principles or rules which must be obeyed, but

also as a design plan, template, or ideal for producing a *habitus*, a virtue for right

action.[141] The *Tao* provides the normative basis for arranging the instincts into a

hierarchical order, for arraigning any inordinate instincts or desires, and for organizing

emotions "by trained habit into stable sentiments."[142] Thus, the *Tao* is the sheet music

for deciding which keys on the piano to play, along with when and where it is morally

appropriate to play them.[143]

Further insight into the nature and role of stock responses can be found in

Lewis' *A Preface to Paradise Lost*. Here Lewis states, "Certain things, if not seen as

lovely or detestable, are not being correctly seen at all."[144] Once again, Lewis uses the

metaphor of *seeing* or *sight* for correct understanding. Moreover, in his epistemology,

genuine knowledge of some objects depends upon seeing their objective moral qualities.

Hence, the positivistic reduction of objects to nothing but quantitative calculation causes

a blindness to the truth about objects. Lewis argues, in *Abolition*, and elsewhere, for an

ethical foundation to knowledge, an important contribution to a virtue epistemology,

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[141] Hooper writes of Lewis,

He mistrusted, in fact, the free play of mere immediate experience. He believed, rather, that man's attitudes and actions should be governed by, what he calls . . . Stock Responses (e.g., love is sweet, death bitter, virtue lovely). Man must, for his own safety and pleasure, be taught to copy the Stock Responses in hopes that he may, by willed imitation, *make* the proper responses. . . . This concern is expressed, directly or indirectly, in almost all of Lewis' books. Lewis, *Poems*, viii; emphasis original; cf. Lewis, *Abolition*, 15-17.

[142] Lewis, *Abolition*, 24-25.

[143] Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 11.

[144] C. S. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (1942; repr., London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 53.

something utterly absent in the work of Adorno-Horkheimer.[145] And no wonder since such a view depends upon a substantive rationality, morality, and anthropology for becoming an intellectually virtuous person.

Moral habituation to the world. Consider a further example of Lewis' virtue epistemological approach, when he states, "But a concrete (as opposed to a purely conceptual) view of reality would in fact involve right attitudes; and the totality of right attitudes, if man is a creature at all adapted to the world he inhabits, would presumably be in wholesome equilibrium."[146] Adorno-Horkheimer likewise argue on behalf of a concrete view of reality, in order to avoid identity thinking and the reification of concepts. This means coming into contact with objects in their concreteness and allowing one's purely conceptual ideas to be corrected by the objects (i.e., preponderance of the object). Due to the disenchantment of the world, however, the subject's domination of nature causes an estrangement or alienation from nature, thus the subject's increased distance and detachment from objects. As a result, the subject is no longer habituated in the world. Unfortunately, Adorno-Horkheimer offer no means by which mediation between the subject and object might be accomplished. As with their rejection of a pre-established psycho-physical parallelism, they also reject any basis for such a parallel between the subject and object that would account for a moral habituation to the world. Hence, they reject the pursuit of anything like Lewis' stock responses.[147]

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[145] Lewis writes, "For what you see and hear depends a good deal on where you are standing: it also depends on what sort of person you are." C. S. Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew*, illus. Pauline Baynes (London: The Bodley Head, 1955; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 136. For further reading on virtue epistemology, see: W. Jay Wood, *Epistemology: Becoming Intellectually Virtuous*, Contours of Christian Philosophy, ed. C. Stephen Evans (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998); Linda Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[146] Lewis, *Preface to Paradise Lost*, 54.

[147] Lewis describes three causes for the repudiation of stock responses, which seem to accurately describe Adorno-Horkheimer's view. He explains,

(1) The decay of Logic, resulting in an untroubled assumption that the particular is real and the universal is not. (2) A Romantic Primitivism . . . which prefers the merely natural to the elaborated,

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Adorno-Horkheimer and Lewis share the similar goal of achieving mediation, harmony, reconciliation of subject and object, which represents the opposite of estrangement, alienation, the dialectic of enlightenment and myth, or of reason and imagination. For Lewis, however, creaturely adaptation, being properly morally habituated in the world, means having the "the totality of right attitudes." This is necessary if man is to live in relationship to the world in "wholesome equilibrium." Moreover, such a goal requires, at least in part, a re-enchantment of the world with meaning and value, which involves a return to the *Tao*.[148]

The heart of man: the middle element.

The heart of man: the middle element. Adorno-Horkheimer bemoan the fact that "mankind, instead of entering into a *truly human condition*, is sinking into a new kind of barbarism."[149] But, on their view, what is a "truly human condition"?

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the un-willed to the willed. Hence a loss of the old conviction . . . that simple "experience," so far from being something venerable, is in itself mere raw material, to be mastered, shaped, and worked up by the will. (3) A confusion . . . between the organization of a response and the pretense of a response. Von Hügel says somewhere, "I kiss my son not only because I love him, but in order that I may love him." That is organization, and good. But you may also kiss children in order to make it *appear* that you love them. That is pretense, and bad. The distinction must not be overlooked. Lewis, *Preface to Paradise Lost*, 55; emphasis original.

Adorno-Horkheimer emphasize the concrete, the particular at the expense of the universal; they express a strong preference for the natural ("spontaneous impulse," the urge," "the addendum") over against its willed or civilized suppression, which is equated with mastery or domination of nature; and, they often overlook the distinction between the traditional aim of the organization of a response and its pretentious imitation, especially in their references to examples of historical abuses, in which appeals to traditional morality were really lies used for power or mastery over others. Compare Adorno's addendum with Lewis on the "residuum" discovered by introspection, which contains "no concentrated will, no logical thought, no morals, no stable sentiments, and . . . no mental hierarchy," in which case, both are morally vacuous. Lewis, *Preface to Paradise Lost*, 135-36. Cf. Lewis, *Abolition*, 34-35, on discussion of the "spontaneous, unreflective impulse."

[148] For a further discussion of the need of the *Tao* for the work of re-enchantment as a response to the disenchantment of the world, see Christopher Tollefson, "The Tao of Enchantment," *National Review* 65, no. 23 (December 16, 2013): 50-51, *MasterFILE Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

[149] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xiv; emphasis added. Elsewhere, Horkheimer writes that "the fundamental philosophical problem, the problem of being as such, is inseparable from *the problem of man*." Horkheimer, "The Concept of Man," 1; emphasis added. Adorno-Horkheimer frequently express their concerns regarding the "concept of man" and the role of critical thought in motivating the "tendencies toward *real humanity*." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xi; emphasis added. Horkheimer writes of the "sense of the *common humanity of every man*." Max Horkheimer, "The German Jews," in *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. Matthew J. O'Donnell et al., Radical Thinkers (New York: Seabury Press, 1974; repr., New York: Verso, 2013), 103, Kindle. Nonetheless, Bryan Lee Wagoner notes the lack of substantive engagement with anthropology in *Dialectic*. Bryan Lee Wagoner, "The Subject of Emancipation: Critique, Reason and Religion in the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Paul Tillich" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2012), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

Remember, Lewis does not ultimately ground the human predicament in an inherently

flawed rational faculty. Neither does he locate the problem in socio-economic forces or

circumstances.[150] According to Lewis, man is neither simply a calculating machine nor a

being motivated solely by the appetite for material substance. Man is more than mere

homo rationalis or *homo economicus*—he is *homo imago Dei*.[151] He states, "It may even

be said that it is by this middle element that man is man: for by his intellect he is mere

spirit and by his appetite mere animal."[152] This middle element—the chest—represents

the heart of man, which needs to be nurtured in the wisdom of the *Tao*. Lewis believes

the problem of Western civilization is the rejection of the *Tao* and the attempt to create a

new value system. This amounts to no less than the goal of remaking human nature.

Again, the heart is the liaison officer between "cerebral man and visceral man," and, as

Lewis explains, "Without the aid of trained emotions the intellect is powerless against the

animal organism."[153] Accordingly, what Adorno-Horkheimer identify as the root

problems are really just the symptoms of a much deeper problem in the heart or will of

man. Man is created in the image of God and is designed to operate according to God's

divinely revealed pattern for human nature, which is found (in part) within the *Tao*. To

reject this divine pattern is to reduce man to the level of a narrowly self-interested,

cunning, deceitful, exploitative, violent, and cruel animal.[154] Hence, the solution Lewis

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[150] For example, Horkheimer states, "The old world is in decline because of an outdated principle of economic organization, and the cultural collapse is bound up with it as well. *The economy is the first cause of wretchedness*, and *critique, theoretical and practical, must address itself primarily to it*." Max Horkheimer, "Postscript," in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1968; repr., New York: Continuum, 1995), 249; emphasis added.

[151] See Brian Fikkert and Michael Rhodes, "*Homo Economicus* vs. *Homo Imago Dei*," *Journal of Markets & Morality*, vol. 20, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 101-26.

[152] Lewis, *Abolition*, 25.

[153] Lewis, *Abolition*, 25.

[154] For Horkheimer's very pessimistic assessment of humanity in general, cf. "Threats to Freedom," 144. His assessment sounds almost like a recognition of the fallenness of human nature. Cf. Lewis on "The Fall of Man," in *Problem of Pain*, 63-85.

proposes involves a return to natural law. Lewis, like Adorno-Horkheimer, but for different reasons, is not holding his breath for the redemptive efforts of a humanist utopia. Moreover, he is incredibly skeptical of the effectiveness of secular ethical theories, which either reject the *Tao* altogether or attempt to modify it to suit their nonrational impulses and desires.[155] Tantalizingly, Horkheimer later writes, "In fact, . . . the old principle that man is a rational animal, 'a compound of soul and body,' and with it the whole of traditional anthropology have not lost their validity."[156]

The Choice: Hierarchy or Tyranny?

Adorno-Horkheimer write, "Nationalist anti-Semitism seeks to disregard religion. It claims to be concerned with purity of race and nation. Its exponents notice that people have long ceased to trouble themselves about eternal salvation."[157] This disregard for the Other of religion translates into a disregard of, and even violence towards, anything different, *the other*. Lewis argues that alienation or estrangement from the Other (God) leads to indifference to the other (neighbor), hence the need for the two Great Commandments: Love of God and love of neighbor.[158]

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[155] Jeffrey J. Folks explains Lewis' reticence this way: "Human society could approach an ethical condition only through the redemption of individuals. Since this moral revolution could not rely on collective action, [Lewis remains] skeptical concerning humanistic theories of ethics. . . . [H]umanistic approaches to ethics invariably devolve into self-interested action since they lack a point of moral reference outside of human nature." Jeffrey J. Folks, "Telos and Existence: Ethics in C. S. Lewis's Space Trilogy and Flannery O'Connor's Everything That Rises Must Converge," *Southern Literary Journal* 35, no. 2 (2003): 108, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*. For a similar skepticism of secular ethical theories, though for different reasons, see Adorno, *Problems of Moral Philosophy*.

[156] Horkheimer, "The Concept of Man," 14; citing Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 11: *Man* (I). Elsewhere, Horkheimer laments, "Meanwhile, the idea of the individual immortal soul, which at one time was the ground for respect of neighbor and a belief in a personal destiny, has lost its power among the majority of young people." Max Horkheimer, "The Future of Marriage," in *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. Matthew J. O'Donnell et al., Radical Thinkers (New York: Seabury Press, 1974; repr., New York: Verso, 2013), 97, Kindle.

[157] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 144.

[158] Cf. Matt. 22:37-40. Also, compare Adorno-Horkheimer in *Dialectic* on the paranoiac man, who, having rejected divine omnipotence (the Other), becomes the "surrogate for omnipotence" and the "caricature of divine power," resulting in domination and abuse of the other (157, 158). These results are the "products of false projection," or what Lewis refers to as the "products of subjectivism." Paranoiac men are "men without chests."

Of course, Adorno-Horkheimer are deeply concerned about the ideology of anti-Semitism and Nazi violence against the Jews. Lewis unequivocally opposes treating human beings as superior or inferior in value.[159] Nevertheless, his answer to the problems of racism, xenophobia, imperialism, and colonialism, somewhat paradoxically involves the need for hierarchy and hierarchical relationships. Lewis emphasizes the importance of hierarchy within the individual, the collection of individuals in society, and beyond.[160] His concept of hierarchy is central to his views of human nature, nature as a whole, and humanity's place within the cosmos. Finally, the concept of hierarchy is fundamental to understanding the differences between his and the critical theorists' divergent approaches to society and culture. For Adorno-Horkheimer adamantly reject the notion of hierarchy as authoritarian and mythical.[161]

The hierarchical principle. Hierarchy is a major theme appearing throughout Lewis' writings, whether explicitly or implicitly, especially in *Abolition*, as it forms the background of his thinking as a whole. One of the most helpful analyses of the concept is

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[159] Lewis writes, "I don't think there are in fact any people who stand to the rest of us as adult to child, man to beast, or animate to inanimate." Lewis, "On Punishment," 298. In a footnote to this passage, he further states: "This is really the same objection as that which I would make to Aristotle's theory of slavery (*Politics* 1254a *et seq*.). We can all recognize the 'natural' slaves (I am perhaps one myself) but where are the 'natural' masters?" (298). Cf. C. S. Lewis, "Equality," in *Present Concerns: A Compelling Collection of Timely, Journalistic Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Fount, 1986; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002), 17. On imperialism and colonialism, Lewis writes, "Conquest is an evil productive of almost every other evil both to those who commit and to those who suffer it." C. S. Lewis, *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, ed. by Walter Hooper (1966; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 123. For further discussion, see Lewis, "Religion and Rocketry"; Sanford Schwartz, "Cosmic Anthropology: Race and Reason in *Out of the Silent Planet*," *Christianity & Literature* 52, no. 4 (2003): 523-56, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

[160] This also extends to Lewis' concept of membership in the mystical body of Christ. Thus, he presents three spheres of existence in a hierarchical order of value and function: the individual life, life in the collective body, and life in the mystical body. See C. S. Lewis, "Membership," in *The Weight of Glory: And Other Addresses*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: Macmillan, 1949; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001). Cf. Lewis, "Three Parts to Morality," *Mere Christianity*, 72.

[161] Horkheimer states, "It has always been characteristic of liberal civilization that hierarchy and subordination are its freely adopted form." Max Horkheimer, "Feudal Lord, Customer, and Specialist: The End of the Fairy Tale of the Customer as King," in *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. Matthew J. O'Donnell et al., Radical Thinkers (New York: Seabury Press, 1974; repr., New York: Verso, 2013), 124, Kindle.

found in a chapter titled "Hierarchy," in his *A Preface to Paradise Lost*.[162] In this work, Lewis introduces what he calls the "Hierarchical conception." This hierarchical conception significantly shapes Lewis' ethical understanding in *Abolition*. Moreover, as with his ethical thought, the importance of this concept extends to his political, social, and cultural thinking as well. According to this conception, the universe consists of differing degrees of objective value. Distinctions of superiority and inferiority are part of the very make-up of things, with God being at the top of the hierarchy (with no superior) and matter residing at the bottom (with no inferior). Everything in between is, therefore, hierarchically ordered or arranged. Accordingly, as Lewis states, "The goodness, happiness, and dignity of every being consists in obeying its natural superior and ruling its natural inferiors."[163] This is not only consistent with but essential to Lewis' theory of natural law. Thus, the good of a thing (whatever it is in reality) is defined in terms of its role or place in the hierarchical system. For something to step outside of its place in the system can only lead to error and destruction since to do so is to make an enemy out of nature. In *Abolition*, for example, Lewis warns of the Controllers "stepping outside of the *Tao*," which is a departure from the natural order reflected in natural law.

Once again, the problem for Adorno-Horkheimer (and critical theory in general) involves a lack of a normative standard for critique. This problem is made especially evident in Lewis' further description of what he says is the only alternative to hierarchy: "The real alternative is tyranny; if you will not have authority you will find yourself obeying brute force."[164] Hierarchy is the necessary basis for distinctions of

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[162] Lewis, "Hierarchy," *Preface to Paradise Lost*, 73-81. Throughout this essay, Lewis variously refers to "Hierarchy," "the Hierarchical conception," "the hierarchical principle," etc. For a discussion of Lewis' distinction between hierarchy of function and hierarchy of value, see C. S. Lewis, "On Priestesses in the Church?," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

[163] Lewis, *Preface to Paradise Lost*, 73.

[164] Lewis, *Preface to Paradise Lost*, 75. Lewis further writes,

The greatest statement of the Hierarchical conception in its double reference to civil and

degree at all levels of reality: individual, social, and cosmic. Granting the hierarchical

conception, Lewis has a basis for identifying different types of violations of the natural

order, or ways in which that order may be destroyed, and thus a basis for making

distinctions of just and unjust uses of power, or rightful and wrongful demands for

obedience by those in positions of authority (de jure or de facto).[165]

The abolition of hierarchy. The philosophical revolution of the

Enlightenment led to an abandonment of the hierarchical conception of reality as one

more remnant of mythological thinking. As Gay explains, "The intellectual revolution

over which the Enlightenment presided pointed to the abolition of hierarchy as much as

to the abolition of God."[166] Lewis simply connects the dots: the abolition of God leads to

the abolition of hierarchy, which inevitably leads to the abolition of man in the end. This

is a central connection to understanding the *whole* of Lewis' argument, which is only

partially revealed in *Abolition*. The rejection of God results in a loss of a transcendent

basis for a natural order of varying degrees of objective value in the universe.

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cosmic life is, perhaps, the speech of Ulysses in Shakespeare's *Troilus*. Its special importance lies in its clear statement of the alternative to Hierarchy. If you take "Degree" away "each thing meets in mere oppugnancy," "strength," will be lord, everything will "include itself in power." In other words the modern idea that we can choose between Hierarchy and equality is, for Shakespeare's Ulysses, mere moonshine (75; quoting William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, 1.3.25-30).

Somewhat ironically, Adorno-Horkheimer appear to acknowledge this fact when they write, "Ultimately, the antiauthoritarian principle necessarily becomes its own antithesis, the agency opposed to reason: its abolition of all absolute ties allows power to decree and manipulate any ties which suit its purposes." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 73. In other words, it leads to tyranny. As Adorno-Horkheimer write, the subject (the "I am") is "turned into a single, unrestricted, empty authority" (70). Likewise, Lewis argues the abandonment of the authority of God (the Subject, "I AM," Eternal Reason) leads to the empty authority of the subject, "I am," autonomous reason, as a result. Consider Clyde S. Kilby's comment, referring to his editorial arrangement of topics or themes for Lewis' anthology: "Though one section is marked 'Hierarchy,' the whole volume might not inappropriately be called by that title. All other things are seen in the light and by the standard of the great 'I AM' and take their values from that fact." In preface to C. S. Lewis, *A Mind Awake: An Anthology of C. S. Lewis*, ed. Clyde S. Kilby (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1968: repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 1980), 11.

[165] Lewis writes, "Now if once the conception of Hierarchy is fully grasped, we see that order can be destroyed in two ways: (1) By ruling or obeying natural equals, that is by Tyranny or Servility. (2) By failing to obey a natural superior or to rule a natural inferior—that is, by Rebellion or Remissness." Lewis, *Preface to Paradise Lost*, 76.

[166] Gay, *Enlightenment*, 25.

Consequently, human nature is reduced to mere quantification and calculation, minus any qualities or values, which are relegated to irrational, subjective projections. Again, consider Gay's analysis of the Enlightenment, stating, "The philosophes could not understand this hierarchy of values, and refused to make any attempt to understand it. For the Enlightenment, as we know, philosophy was autonomous and omnipotent, or it was nothing."[167] Though Gay is a critic of Christianity, it is noteworthy what he describes as the result of the philosophes' refusal to subordinate reason to any higher authority: a loss of an understanding of any hierarchy of values, along with the refusal to even try to understand it. By contrast, Gay characterizes the Christian response in a way that fits well with Lewis' own approach and experience. Gay writes, "But, unlike the philosophe, the Christian yearned for this unknown, tried to approach it through mystical experience, theological speculation, and sheer prayerful hope: somehow to share in the great myth was, after all, his destination."[168] However, Lewis' critics, as well as the critical theorists, take the tack of Enlightenment thinking, which was to "reduce the idea of hierarchy to a convenient metaphor or a sociological category describing patterns of domination, and to convert hierarchy from being the foundation of a rational social order into its enemy."[169]

Gay's remarks help to shed some light on what makes for an amazing irony for Adorno-Horkheimer's critical theory. The focus of their critique in *Dialectic* is the positivism and scientism that grew out of the scientific revolution as a result of

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[167] Gay, *Enlightenment*, 236.

[168] Gay, *Enlightenment*, 237. Compare Lewis' autobiographical description of his own spiritual pilgrimage from atheism to Christianity in *Surprised by Joy*, which details his mystical experiences, engagement in theological speculation, and a whole lot of prayerful hope, which, based on his testimony, was fulfilled when he decided to take the plunge by sharing in the great "Myth Became Fact." See C. S. Lewis: *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1955; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 1966); C. S. Lewis, "Myth Became Fact," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

[169] Gay, *Enlightenment*, 244. Adorno explicitly states, "The purpose of critical thought is to *abolish the hierarchy*." Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 181; emphasis added.

Enlightenment rationality, the rise of positivism and the reduction of rationality to instrumental reason (what they call the "the triumph of subjectivity"), the domination of nature and of human nature, finally culminating in the persecution of the Jews in the twentieth century. But, according to Gay, it is the "triumph of critical thinking" that led to the abolition of the idea of hierarchy, an idea equally rejected by the critical theorists. For example, they write that enlightened reason "rightly exposes the notion of hierarchy in nature as a reflection of medieval society, and later attempts to demonstrate a new order of values bear the unmistakable taint of mendacity."[170] Lewis agrees with their second point, regarding how enlightened reason is inherently incapable of providing an objective order to the universe that it is already lacking. However, regarding their first point, Lewis would certainly say that Adorno-Horkheimer's approval of the Enlightenment's rejection of the hierarchical principle is likewise irrational, mendacious, and self-destructive. The abolition of the principle is destructive of any notions of progress or regress since no higher order of being exists to progress *to* or regress *from*. Ironically, Adorno-Horkheimer's abandonment of the hierarchical principle means the abandonment of a basis for making the critical evaluation that the principle was *rightly* abandoned.

On this point, no half-way house exists between the writers' opposing positions. Either reality is hierarchically ordered, and thus infused with varying degrees of objective value, according to which real differences in objective right and wrong, justice and injustice, can be adjudicated—or it is not, and all such differences are utterly subjective and illusory. Adorno-Horkheimer want to make these kinds of objective distinctions, yet they also reject the hierarchical conception of reality upon which such

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[170] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 71. Note how Adorno-Horkheimer reject the notion of hierarchy in nature as a reflection of medieval society, whereas Lewis argues for the medieval age the hierarchical ordering of society was believed to be a reflection of the hierarchy in nature. At the same time, like Lewis, Adorno-Horkheimer acknowledge the attempt to introduce a new order of values is mendacious. Hence, they refuse to submit to the authority of the old order as well as any attempted introduction of a new one. But, after this wholly negative criticism, what is left but nihilism?

distinctions are based. Thus, on the practical level they seek to apply what on the theoretical level they deny. Most of what Adorno-Horkheimer object to concerning enlightenment reason concerns abuses of power, the intertwinement of reason with power. Yet, tyrannical rule is all that is left once the hierarchical conception of reality has been abandoned. Based on Lewis' analysis, it is arguably the Enlightenment's rejection of hierarchy that inevitably leads to the abuses of power Adorno-Horkheimer condemn. Again, the real (and only) alternative to hierarchy is tyranny.

Even worse, this would seem to make the whole project of critical theory an absolutely futile endeavor, for it simply has no standpoint from which to launch its moral critique.[171] On Adorno-Horkheimer's view, there is no natural order to speak of, to uphold, or to destroy. All appeals to *nature* or what is *natural* can only be received as quantitative, statistical, descriptive, pragmatic, or instrumental, in other words, statements about what *is* the case. Furthermore, given their commitment to determinate negation or negative dialectic, they refuse to subscribe to any positive conception of reality, arguing that any such conception inevitably involves the error of reification or false projection. But, given the absolutely binary, logical distinction between a hierarchical conception of reality and its alternative, rejecting the former means conceding the latter, including the loss of any warrant for a justified critique of reality as it is, the status quo. For in the end, on their view, there is no way reality truly *ought* to be.

Christianity, Christ, and the *Tao*

So what would Adorno-Horkheimer make of Lewis' argument for a return to the *Tao* in *Abolition*? Again, the critical theorists do not show any familiarity with Lewis

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[171] Adorno claims critical theory or negative dialectics has no standpoint or *Weltanschauung*. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 5-6, 303. He writes, "The position of dialectical criticism is a non-position; it can neither immerse itself in the object in the manner of idealizing, redemptive criticism, nor take a stand outside culture by comparing it with a fictitious absolute." Theodor Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J. M. Bernstein, 2nd ed., Routledge Classics, vol. 20 (New York: Routledge, 2001), 28-29.

or his writings. However, they do make critical comments about the work of others who take a similar position to Lewis. For example, Horkheimer, in his essay "Art and Mass Culture," critiques the ideas of the conservative neo-Thomist thinker Mortimer Adler, in his book *Art and Prudence*.[172] This makes for a fascinating comparison with Lewis' *Abolition*.

Christianity and the *Tao*

For Horkheimer, Christian thinkers like Adler, and by affinity Lewis, are "dogmatists," who succumb to either "relativism" or "conformism," two ideologies Horkheimer absolutely and dogmatically rejects. One of the main purposes of Lewis' *Abolition* is to defend the principles of the *Tao* for moral education. Horkheimer is critical of what he understands to be one of the main purposes of Adler's book, which is to "discover principles for art education."[173] However, Horkheimer indicts Adler's "concept of morality" with being "as unhistorical as his concept of art." Horkheimer writes,

> Adler is irresistibly led to conclusions drawn long ago . . . what is moral is determined by the positive content of existing customs and habits, and morality consists in formulating and approving what is accepted by the prevailing social order. But even if the whole of a society, such as the coordinated German nation, is of one mind in this regard, it still does not follow that its judgment is true. Error has no less often united men than truth.[174]

Based on the above, it would appear Horkheimer would accuse Lewis of merely advocating the principles of the *Tao* because of their widespread acceptance among varying groups or societies. Yet, the consensus opinion regarding these principles does not guarantee their truth. German society is a case in point. However, Lewis does not

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[172] Max Horkheimer, "Art and Mass Culture," in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1968; repr., New York: Continuum, 1995); Mortimer J. Adler, *Art and Prudence* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1937).

[173] Horkheimer, "Art and Mass Culture," 282.

[174] Horkheimer, "Art and Mass Culture," 282-83; citing Adler, *Art and Prudence,* 448.

argue for the acceptability of the principles of the *Tao* on the basis of the mere fact of their broad acceptance. He argues that the principles of the *Tao* are first principles whose truth must be simply *seen*. His appeal to varying religions, philosophies, and cultural traditions is to illustrate how indeed they have been seen to be true cross-culturally throughout human civilization.[175]

But, Horkheimer gets to the heart of the problem with Adler's approach. He writes,

> Adler's book breathes the conviction that mankind must orient to fixed values, as these have been set forth by great teachers, above all by Aristotle and St. Thomas. To positivism and relativism he opposes sturdy Christian metaphysics. It is true that modern disbelief does find its theoretical expression in scientivism, which explains that binding values exist for "psychological" reasons, because there is need for them. . . . In this way, according to Adler, positivism grants a charter to Fascism. . . . Metaphysics draws from this a conclusion advantageous to itself: since the denial of eternal principles handicaps the struggle against the new barbarism, the old faith must be reestablished. Men are asked to risk their lives for freedom, democracy, the nation. Such a demand seems absurd when there are no binding values. Metaphysics alone, Adler supposes, can give humanity the hold it has lost, metaphysics makes true community possible.[176]

The parallels in Horkheimer's description of Adler's approach and Lewis' argument in *Abolition* are uncanny, such as Adler's appeal to "fixed values" . . . "set forth by great teachers" like "Aristotle and St. Thomas." Like Adler, Lewis argues that a positivistic science (scientism or scientivism) reduces morality to nothing but a socio-biological need, mere preservation of self or the human species, which, of course, is perfectly consistent with the doctrine of Fascism. Furthermore, like Adler, Lewis calls for a return to "metaphysics" and "eternal principles" to reestablish the "old faith" in "binding values" that foster genuine community (although Lewis' advocacy for "Christian metaphysics" is only implicit in *Abolition*). But, Horkheimer thinks metaphysicians like Adler are simply taking advantage of a situation that seems to work in their favor by

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[175] Cf. appendix, "Illustrations of the *Tao*," Lewis, *Abolition*, 83-101.

[176] Horkheimer, "Art and Mass Culture," 284.

exploiting the faithless "state of mind" of the youth through appeals to a religious

pragmatism.[177] He further explains,

> Uncritical return to religion and metaphysics is as questionable today as the road back to the beautiful paintings and compositions of classicism, no matter how enticingly such havens may beckon. The revivals of Greek and medieval philosophers, such as Adler recommends, are not so far remote from certain revivals of melodies by Bach, Mozart and Chopin in current popular music.[178]

Likewise, Horkheimer would probably view Lewis' work as a misguided attempt at the

defense of "absolute values," and an "uncritical return to religion and metaphysics." This

"road back" (compare to Lewis' "the Way"), given the rise of positivistic thinking, is

utterly questionable since it depends on pragmatic appeals to ideas which the young

simply no longer accept. The issue, says Horkheimer, is not the usefulness of these ideas

but their truth, and modern science has exposed the falsehood of such mythical thinking.

Thus, it would be regressive, not progressive, to point the young "back to older

authorities" for a solution to the problems of the modern day.[179] The answer is not found

in the exchange of one form of dogmatism for an older, pre-scientific one. It is indeed a

positive advance for humanity that scientific thought replaced religious dogmatism.

Thus, appeals to general abstractions like the "high and eternal principles" of freedom

and justice are not the answer due to their abstraction from the particulars of reality.[180]

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[177] Horkheimer, "Art and Mass Culture," 284.

[178] Horkheimer, "Art and Mass Culture," 285.

[179] Horkheimer, "Art and Mass Culture," 286. He further speaks of "the meaning of science" as "will to truth." He then states, "The way toward overcoming positivistic thinking does not lie in a regressive revision of science, but in driving this will to truth further until it conflicts with present reality" (286). Compare Horkheimer's reference to a "revision of science" to Lewis' "regenerated science." Also, in contrast to Lewis' call for a return to "the Way," Horkheimer offers his own "*way* toward overcoming positivistic thinking." This "way" takes the form of a drive towards truth through determinate negation of the "present reality."

[180] Horkheimer further explains,

> Sublime principles are always abstract . . . but insights always refer to the particular. . . . Abstract formulations of the highest values are always adjustable to the practice of stake and guillotine. Knowledge really concerned with values does not look to higher realms. It rather tries to penetrate the cultural pretenses of its time, in order to distinguish the features of a frustrated humanity. Values are to be disclosed by uncovering the historical practice that destroys them. Horkheimer, "Art and Mass Culture," 286.

Horkheimer also refers to Adler's "preference for static principles." This use of the emotive language of "*static* principles" is reminiscent of Lewis' criticism of the equally emotive language of "*stagnant* values," and would seem to be guilty of the same fallacy.[181] For Horkheimer, the preference for these principles is delusional because it fails to illuminate or provide insights into the constantly changing socio-historical conditions. However, Lewis allows for the possibility of a real moral advance over time, an adjustment to one's moral views as a response to changing situations and conditions. But, any specific adjustments would have to fall within the general parameters of the principles of the *Tao*. Apart from these fixed moral fence posts, there would be nothing to prevent the complete moral innovation of a Nietzschean transvaluation of values.[182]

What is more, like in so many cases in the writings of the critical theorists, Horkheimer actually speaks like the dogmatic, moral absolutist he so vehemently opposes, for example, when he warns of the potential tendency for the "highest values" to adjust to "the practice of stake and guillotine."[183] His highly moralistic language in this case is clearly trans-historical for his opposition to stake and guillotine is not limited to any particular historical situation or context, but instead represents an immoral tendency that should always be opposed. Thus, he equally condemns absolutist and relativist moralities, while simultaneously speaking as if moral values are subject to a process by which they might be completely contradicted and transformed. Even so, he finds "the practice of stake and guillotine" to be absolutely condemnable.

Nevertheless, Horkheimer makes it clear that, if one is "really concerned with

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[181] Horkheimer, "Art and Mass Culture," 286. Cf. Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivity," 76-77; Lewis, "*De Descriptione Temporum*," 10-11.

[182] Cf. Lewis, "Poison of Subjectivism," 76-77. Lewis explains, "Real moral advances, in fine, are made *from within* the existing moral tradition and in the spirit of that tradition and can be understood only in the light of that tradition. The outsider who has rejected the tradition cannot judge them" (77; emphasis original).

[183] Horkheimer, "Art and Mass Culture," 286.

values," then one is looking in the wrong place when trying to find them in "higher realms." This kind of moral knowledge comes *from below*; it is revealed through critical reflection upon oppressed or "frustrated humanity" in its particular historical context, along with the practices that are destructive of values. Both positivism and metaphysics are dogmatic; they propose fundamental ideas as stopping points for thought, which effectively cuts thought short. In the end, such thinking is representative of the "enfeebled man of today" as one beholden to "a fetishism of ideas."[184] By contrast, dialectical thinking in the form of determinate negation refuses to be duped by appeals to absolutes, whether of the positivistic or the ontological variety. But, this again raises the intractable problem for critical theory as to where it derives its critical resources for making normative claims and judgments.

Intriguingly, despite the earlier Horkheimer's disdain for appeals to absolute values, the later Horkheimer shows a change in attitude towards a more conservative approach. He expresses great regret over the younger generation's abandonment of the traditional morality of old, as well as concerns that the bridge to it is eroding away, leaving only violence and cruelty in its place.[185] This strongly parallels Lewis' ironic proclamation that "we laugh at honor and find traitors in our midst."[186] Furthermore, Horkheimer explains what is needed to address the problem of increasing insensitivity to violence among the young:

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[184] Horkheimer, "Art and Mass Culture," 286-87.

[185] For example, Horkheimer writes,

A bridge to the old civilization still exists but its piers are becoming steadily weaker. Disillusionment, crass realism, and the absence of any dreams of personal fulfillment are the sign of an interior coldness and find further manifestation in the tendency to give imaginative expression only in quite undifferentiated form to sexual and related impulses. Young people do not have morality in their bones. To the extent that, rightly or wrongly, they experience religion only as something traditional, something purely conventional, they are unable to understand why (if they can escape the police and the criminal courts) violence and cruelty should not be perfectly acceptable forms of gratification. Horkheimer, "On the Future of Marriage," 96.

[186] Lewis, *Abolition*, 26.

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> The decisive point—and *the real task of education* without which neither the Jewish nor the Christian nor the German cause is helped—is that men should become sensitive not to injustice against the Jews but *to injustice as such*, not to persecution of the Jews but to *any and all persecution*, and that something in them should rebel when *any individual is not treated as a rational being*.[187]

Once again, we find Horkheimer the moral absolutist, and, ironically, making appeals to the need for educating the young according to the "static" principle of justice, so that they become sensitive to acts of injustice against all persecution of any individual or rational being. This is reminiscent of Lewis' advocacy for training in "good stock responses" or the development of "stable sentiments." Although written much later in Horkheimer's career, make no mistake about it, this same moral absolutism against violence and injustice is present throughout his (and Adorno's) writings.

Intriguingly, what Horkheimer calls for as "the real task of education" is exactly what Lewis sets out to accomplish in *Abolition*, to oppose "injustice as such," but with a defense of the only basis for such universal, absolute, and principled moral opposition—the *Tao*.[188] For Lewis, the Christian worldview offers a foundation for an objective rationality and morality grounded in the divine mind and nature of God. What Adorno-Horkheimer lack ultimately is a God's-eye-view of the world. Christianity provides this perspective, not as the pretentious product of rational deliberation or empirical observation, nor as irrational capitulation or emotional consolation. Rather, it proclaims to be divine revelation.[189]

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[187] Horkheimer, "German Jews," 117; emphasis added.

[188] Recall Lewis, *Abolition*, 13-14: "The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles but to irrigate deserts. The right defense against false sentiments is to inculcate just sentiments. By starving the sensibility of our pupils we only make them easier prey to the propagandist when he comes. For famished nature will be avenged and a hard heart is no infallible protection against a soft head."

[189] Speaking of our consciousness of the moral law, both approved of and disobeyed, Lewis writes, "This consciousness is neither a logical, nor an illogical, inference from the facts of experience; if we did not bring it to our experience we could not find it there. It is either inexplicable illusion, or else revelation." Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 11. Not surprisingly, Adorno-Horkheimer reject appeals to divine revelation as dogmatic and mythical. See Theodor Adorno, "Reason and Revelation," in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1963/1969; repr., New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

Christ and the *Tao*

Moreover, although Lewis tips his hat to pagan moralists like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Confucius, and others, for their avowal of the natural law, he believes its fullest and most concrete expression is found in the person and work of Jesus Christ. In a certain sense, Lewis sees a continuity between Jesus and the earlier teachers for "Christ did not come to preach any brand new morality. . . . Really great moral teachers never do introduce new moralities: it is quacks and cranks who do that."[190] At the level of the fundamental moral principles reflected in the *Tao*, the teachings of Jesus do not really add anything substantially different or new. But, Lewis also understands that Jesus was more than a great moral teacher, and his mission and purpose was more than a moral one; it was *redemptive*. Lewis states, "The relation between the Tao and Xtianity is best seen from Confucius' remark 'There may be someone who has perfectly followed the way: but I never heard of one.'"[191] Thus, the problem is not a dearth of moral instruction, humanity has had plenty of that, but rather the total failure of humanity to live according to what it has regularly received throughout its history. The *Tao* reveals the blueprint for how mankind ought to live, while at the same time serves as a continual reminder of our constant inability to keep it. Accordingly, the *Tao* functions like the Law of the Old Testament, which the Apostle Paul explains awakens a sense of sin or guilt within the individual who violates it. Thus, like a schoolmaster, tutor, or guardian it points or leads people to Christ.[192] According to Lewis, mankind is fallen, incapable of fulfilling the

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[190] Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 82; cf. 155-56; Lewis, "On Ethics," 46.

[191] C. S. Lewis to Martyn Skinner, March 4, 1943, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 2, *Books, Broadcasts, and the War, 1931-1949*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 561.

[192] See Rom. 7:7-9; 10:4; Gal. 2:16; 3:24-5; cf. Matt. 5:17-18. Lewis laments, "What you say about the present state of mankind is true: indeed, it is even worse than you say. For they neglect not only the law of Christ but even the Law of Nature as known by the Pagans." C. S. Lewis to Don Giovanni Calabria, March 17, 1953, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 3, *Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy 1950-1963*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 306. Lewis believes modern culture needs to be brought back to the natural light, the *Tao*, as a guide to the supernatural light of Christ. Furthermore, in another letter, he writes, "Confucius ends up by saying 'This is the Law, but I do not know of anyone who has kept it.' Doesn't that canal us straight into St. Paul?" C. S. Lewis to Dom Bede Griffiths, September 27, 1948, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 2, *Books, Broadcasts, and the War, 1931-1949*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 881. Similarly, he writes, "The

principles of the *Tao*, and needs to be redeemed by the one who did. In other words,

humanity needs more than the *principles* of the *Tao*; it needs the *person* of Christ.[193]

Christianity proclaims that Christ is the fulfillment of the law and thus mankind's

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Order of the Divine mind, embodied in the Divine Law, is beautiful. What should a man do but try to reproduce it, so far as possible, in his daily life? . . . Yet I cannot help fancying that a Chinese Christian—one whose own traditional culture had been the 'schoolmaster to bring him to Christ'—would appreciate this Psalm more than most of us; for it is an old idea in that culture that life should above all things be ordered and that its order should reproduce a Divine order." Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*, 60. Thus, Lewis clearly believes the *Tao* serves as schoolmaster to the pagans as the Law did for the Jews. He depicts this in fictional form through the character of the Fox, the Greek tutor, to Orual in her moral development in C. S. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1956; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 1980).

[193] For another explicit statement from Lewis on the insufficiency of law and the need for "the true Cure; a Person, not a set of instructions," see his foreword to Davidman, *Smoke on the Mountain*, 9. Lewis makes it amply clear he never intended the *Tao* to be alone sufficient, but only a guide, leading people ultimately to Christ in the end. In fact, Hooper, speaking of *Abolition*, explains, "Lewis did not attempt in this book to show the precise relationship between moral law and Christianity, but on 8 February 1943, he read a paper to the Socratic Club entitled, 'If We Have Christ's Ethics, Does the Rest of the Christian Faith Matter?' in which he carried his argument further." Hooper describes how all that is left of this paper is the précis from the *Socratic Digest* (no. 1, 23). This is worth quoting in full for it shows the more complete account of Lewis' overall argument, beginning with an appeal to natural law (the *Tao*), then humanity's failure to keep this law, and finally introducing the need for Christ and Christianity. Thus, we read:

> Mr. Lewis first demonstrated the existence of a massive and immemorial moral law by listing precepts from Greek, Roman, Chinese, Babylonian, ancient Egyptian, and Old Norse sources. By this account of the immutable laws of general and special beneficence, duties to parents and to children, of justice, good faith, and of the law of mercy, three illusions were dispelled; first, that the expression "Christian moral principles" means anything different from "moral principles"; secondly, the anthropological illusion that the crude and barbarous man is the natural and normal man; and, thirdly, that the great disease of humanity is ignorance and the great cure, education. On the contrary, it is only too obvious that while there is massive and immemorial agreement about the moral law, there is also a massive and immemorial inability to obey it. In considering the remedy for the cleavage between human nature and generally accepted moral law, Mr. Lewis first separated from normal humanity those faddists, whether Epicureans, Communists, H. G. Wells, whose indefensible naiveté forbade them to understand the actual condition of Man. The remainder of humanity would be divided into the ordinary mass of pagan mankind and Christians. Both these classes of men know the moral law and recognize their own inability to keep it. Both endeavor to deal with this tragic situation. The pagan mysteries and Christianity are two alternative solutions, and whatever falls outside these two is simply naïve. Now the *differentia* of Christianity, as against pagan mystery religions, lie in its survival, its historical core, its combination of the ethical and the sacramental, its ability to produce that "new man" which all rites of initiation premise and finally its restraining effect upon a community under its domination.

> The datum is the complete cleavage between human behavior and the code of morals which humanity acknowledges. And Christianity is the cure for this particular disease. For "excellent instructions" we have always had; the problem is how to obey them. To ask whether the rest of the Christian Faith matters when we have Christ's ethics presupposes a world of unfallen men with no need for redemption. "The rest of the Christian Faith" is the means of carrying out, instead of merely being able to discourse on, the ethics we already know.

Walter Hooper, "Oxford's Bonny Fighter," in *C. S. Lewis at the Breakfast Table and Other Reminiscences*, ed. James T. Como (New York: Macmillan, 1979; repr., New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992), 143-44.

redeemer. He serves a soteriological function through his death and Resurrection for the sins of humanity, providing reconciliation between God and man. In the previous chapter, we saw Lewis' identification of Christ with the *Logos*, the Eternal Reason of God, the "Truth." Likewise, Lewis expressly identifies Christ with the *Tao*, "the Way," the fullest revelation of the necessary goodness and righteousness of God: "One could indeed say of it *genitum, non factum*: for is not the *Tao* the Word Himself, considered from a particular point of view?"[194]

Conclusion

This chapter has examined some of the central themes of Lewis' *Abolition* and Adorno-Horkheimer's *Dialectic*, with a special emphasis on their views of morality and ethics. Both Lewis and the critical theorists expose what they consider the deplorable result of Enlightenment rationalism and its instrumental reason—an instrumental morality. This is the next regretful step in the historical process of Enlightenment's progress from and simultaneous regress to myth. The disenchantment of the world resulted in a disenchantment of value, paving the way to forms of false projection or subjectivism, Sadean or Nietzschean nihilism, and eventually twentieth-century barbarism.

But, whereas Adorno-Horkheimer utterly lack the needed normative criterion

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[194] Lewis to Clyde S. Kilby, *Collected Letters*, 3:1227; the Latin translates as "begotten, not made" from the Nicene Creed. Aeschliman writes, "The great Chinese Christian jurist Dr. John C. H. Wu translated the initial line of Saint John's gospel into Chinese as: 'In the beginning was the Tao, and the Tao was with God, and the Tao was God.' Lewis would have been delighted." M. D. Aeschliman, in Schultz and West, *C. S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Tao." Wu wrote in his book *Beyond East and West*, 'Whenever I think of Confucius and Mencius, Buddha and Lao Tzu, I am inclined to call them—as Saint Justin Martyr called Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle—'Pegagogues to lead men to Christ.'" Quoted in Frank Weathers, "Thoughts from the 'Tao Teh Ching,'" trans. "Chinese Chesterton," Patheos (Blog), Feb 15, 2012, http://www.patheos.com/blogs/yimcatholic/2012/02/thoughts-from-the-tao-teh-ching-translated-by-the-chinese-chesterton.html.

For a sympathetic yet critical discussion of this identity between *Tao* and *Logos*, see Joseph H. Wong, "Logos and Tao: Johannine Christology and a Taoist Perspective," *Path* 2 (2003): 341-74, http://theolibrary.shc.edu/resources/wong.pdf; Anthony E. Clark, "Beyond the Dusty World: Daoism and the Epistolary Dialectics of Thomas Merton and John Wu," Whitworth University (2016), History Faculty Scholarship, Paper 56, http://digitalcommons.whitworth.edu/historyfaculty/56.

for waging a critique of Enlightenment morality, Lewis points to the *Tao*, natural law, as an objective basis for moral criticism. Furthermore, he grounds this law of nature in nature's God, a transcendent, personal source of objective moral values, duties, and virtues. Finally, he points to Jesus Christ as the fullest revelation of God and the fulfillment of the *Tao*, such that Lewis can proclaim, "Mere morality is not the end of life. You were made for something quite different from that."[195] He explains,

> Morality is indispensable: but the Divine Life, which gives itself to us and which calls us to be gods, intends for us something in which morality will be swallowed up. We are to be re-made. All the rabbit in us is to disappear—the worried, conscientious, ethical rabbit as well as the cowardly and sensual rabbit. We shall bleed and squeal as the handfuls of fur come out; and then, surprisingly, we shall find underneath it all a thing we have never yet imagined: a real Man, an ageless god, a son of God, strong, radiant, wise, beautiful, and drenched in joy.[196]

But, more about this in the next chapter.

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[195] C. S. Lewis, "Man or Rabbit?," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 112. Cf. on escaping from "the region of mere morality," Lewis, "On Ethics," 45. Also, see C. S. Lewis, *George MacDonald: An Anthology*, ed. and comp. C. S. Lewis (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1946; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001), xxxix. Nevertheless, Lewis also says, "The road to the promised land runs past Sinai. The moral law may exist to be transcended: but there is no transcending it for those who have not first admitted its claims upon them, and then tried with all their strength to meet that claim, and fairly and squarely faced the fact of their failure." Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 59-60. Thus, Lewis believes life itself is the context of moral education, in which the *Tao*, like the Law of the Old Testament, serves as a temporary tutor to bring one to Christ, the fulfillment of the Law. And so, with great hope, Lewis writes, "But the school-days, please God, are numbered. There is no morality in Heaven." C. S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1963; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002), 115.

[196] Lewis, "Man or Rabbit?," 112.

CHAPTER 6

ON CULTURE

Introduction

"Man's conquest of Nature turns out, in the moment of its consummation, to be Nature's conquest of Man."[1]

"Civilization is the triumph of society over nature—a triumph which transforms everything into mere nature."[2]

This chapter, the last of my triumvirate critical comparative analysis, demonstrates how the problems of Enlightenment rationalism finally culminate in enormous ramifications for civilization, society, and culture. Lewis and Adorno-Horkheimer are keen on these issues in their writings, identifying and criticizing many problems associated with the rise of cultural modernity. Based on the preceding, one can trace the failures of enlightenment reason to a loss of normative standards in morality, to, finally, the degeneration, decay, and decadence of modernist society and culture.[3] Once

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[1] C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man: Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools*, Riddell Memorial Lectures, 15th Series (London: Oxford University Press, 1944; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 68. Hereafter cited as *Abolition*.

[2] Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, Cultural Memory in the Present, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Amsterdam: Querido, 1947; repr., Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 153. Hereafter *Dialectic*.

[3] In addition to Adorno-Horkheimer's *Dialectic*, the following list includes many of their important writings pertaining to cultural criticism. For works by Max Horkheimer, see *Eclipse of Reason* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947; repr., New York: Continuum, 1996); *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. Matthew J. O'Donnell et al., Radical Thinkers (New York: Seabury Press, 1974; repr., New York: Verso, 2013), Kindle; *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell et al. (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1968; repr., New York: Continuum, 1995); and *Between Philosophy and Social Science: Selected Early Writings*, trans. G. Frederick Hunter, Matthew S. Kramer, and John Torpey, Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought, ed. Thomas McCarthy (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995). For works by Theodor Adorno, see *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J. M. Bernstein, 2nd ed., Routledge Classics, vol. 20 (New York: Routledge, 2001); Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1950); *Minima Moralia: Reflections from*

again, the goal is to show that Lewis, given his Christian theological and philosophical foundations, provides the more cogent and coherent evaluation of the problems for Western civilization due to the excesses of Enlightenment rationalism.

Generally speaking, this chapter explores the authors' views on society and culture as part of their cultural critique of Enlightenment rationalism. More specifically, this chapter closely examines the following themes: (1) their views on civilization, culture, the rise of technocracy, and the problems of progressivism; (2) the inadequacy of a purely negative critique of culture; (3) the dialectic of desire, and the need for the re-enchantment of the world; and, lastly, (4) the reconciliation of reason and imagination (enlightenment and myth).

On *Kulturkritik*

Maybe more so than in the previous chapters, Adorno-Horkheimer and Lewis share a great deal in common both in terms of their identification of certain regressive elements within society and culture, and their assessments of the apparent downward spiral of Western civilization into barbarism.[4] Even their specific terminology is

Damaged Life, trans. E. N. F. Jephcott, Radical Thinkers (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1951; repr., London: Verso, 2006); *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. and ed. Robert Hullot-Kentor, Bloomsbury Revelations (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970; repr., New York: Bloomsbury, 2013); *Prisms*, ed. Thomas McCarthy, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber, Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997); *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1963/1969; repr., New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); *Can One Live After Auschwitz?*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003); *The Stars Down to Earth and Other Essays on the Irrational in Culture*, ed. Stephen Crook, 2nd ed., Routledge Classics, vol. 113 (New York: Routledge, 2001); and *Notes to Literature*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen, rev. ed., 2 vols., European Perspectives: A Series in Social Thought and Cultural Criticism, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman and Richard Wolin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991, 1992).

[4] Alan Jacobs writes that *Abolition* "remains the most profound of Lewis's cultural critiques." Alan Jacobs, *The Narnian: The Life and Imagination of C. S. Lewis* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 174. In addition to *Abolition*, Lewis wrote many important writings pertaining to cultural criticism. See the following by C. S. Lewis: *Present Concerns: A Compelling Collection of Timely, Journalistic Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper, (London: Fount, 1986; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002); *Image and Imagination: Essays and Reviews*, ed. Walter Hooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); *Selected Literary Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (1969; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); *Of Other Worlds: Essays and Stories*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1966; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002); *On Stories and Other Essays on Literature*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1966, repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002); *The World's Last Night: And Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1960; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002); with E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Personal Heresy: A Controversy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939; repr., New York: HarperOne, 2017); *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology*

uncannily similar, despite the lack of any cross-influence in their writings. For example,

consider the following comments by Adorno-Horkheimer:

> The increase in economic productivity which creates the conditions for a more just
> world also affords the technical apparatus and the social groups controlling it a
> disproportionate advantage over the rest of the population. The individual is
> entirely nullified in the face of the economic powers. These powers are taking
> society's domination over nature to unimagined heights. While individuals as such
> are vanishing before the apparatus they serve, they are provided for by that
> apparatus and better than ever before. In the unjust state of society the
> powerlessness and pliability of the masses increase with the quantity of goods
> allocated to them.[5]

> Compare with Lewis' account:

> Each generation exercises power over its successors: and each, in so far as it
> modifies the environment bequeathed to it and rebels against tradition, resists and
> limits the power of its predecessors. This modifies the picture which is sometimes
> painted of a progressive emancipation from tradition and a progressive control of
> natural processes resulting in a continual increase of human power. In reality, of
> course, if any one age really attains, by eugenics and scientific education, the power
> to make its descendants what it pleases, all men who live after it are the patients of
> that power.[6]

Both Lewis and the critical theorists are incredibly concerned about the

unchecked "power" of the "pliable experts in humanity," the "controllers" or

"conditioners," and the rising "technocracy." Of course, given the historical

circumstances of their writing, with the rise of authoritarianism and various totalitarian

states, this is not surprising.[7] Given the historical context of their writings, and the

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and Ethics, ed. Walter Hooper, (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); *An Experiment in Criticism* (1961; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper, (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); *The Weight of Glory: And Other Addresses*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: Macmillan, 1949; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001); *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1952; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001); *The Four Loves* (1960; repr., New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1991); *The Screwtape Letters* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1942; repr., with additional letter and additional preface as *The Screwtape Letters and Screwtape Proposes a Toast*, 1961; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001); *The Great Divorce: A Dream* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1946; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001); "New Learning and New Ignorance," in *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama*, The Oxford History of English Literature, vol. 3 (1954; repr., London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 1-65; *Out of the Silent Planet* (London: John Lane the Bodley Head, 1938; repr., New York: Scribner, 2003); *Perelandra*, (London: John Lane the Bodley Head, 1944; repr., New York: Scribner, 2003); and *That Hideous Strength: A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups* (London: John Lane the Bodley Head, 1945; repr., New York: Scribner, 2003).

[5] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xvii.

[6] Lewis, *Abolition*, 66-67.

[7] Cf. Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality*.

cultural upheaval of the times, the authors were too close for comfort with real life examples of "scientific planning" and attempts at the total "administration of society" through forms of "mass propaganda," "technology," and "machines," all used for the "manipulation" of mankind in the name of "progress." Moreover, they issue their own serious warnings about the continued "domination of nature," and, more importantly, the "abolition" or "liquidation" of man through the creation of "civilized man" or "Men without Chests." The linguistic and conceptual parallels in their respective critiques can be multiplied many times over, concerning the immediate present as well as the future of humanity.

Civilization, Culture, and Crisis

For Adorno-Horkheimer, the claim that civilization through society triumphs over nature while transforming everything into nature expresses their concern that as enlightenment reverts to myth so does progress into regress.

Cultural regression. They provide an explanation of this regressive process in their introductory chapter to *Dialectic*, in which they describe how, due to Enlightenment reasoning, all existing things become universally mediated through the reasoning subject. This mediating function of the subject "amputates the incommensurable." This means not only the dissolution of all qualities into thought, but also the dissolving of individuality into conformity.[8] Enlightenment, while recognizing the individual self and acknowledging the existence of different selves, nonetheless through mediation seeks to make all things the same or unified. This is achieved through various forms of social coercion by the collective. Difference cannot be tolerated, and people must be made to conform. Equality means sameness, and man is fungible.

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[8] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 9.

Consequently, the individual is liquidated.[9]

Through the control of language, the power-wielders of industry, like their magical counterparts in the priests and sorcerers of the past, solidify a system of hierarchy and compulsion. Science and industry's exertion of power over society, through the division of labor, is aimed at the self-preservation of the whole of society. Adorno-Horkheimer warn, "But this necessarily turns the whole, as a whole, and the operation of its immanent reason, into a means of enforcing the particular interest. Power confronts the individual as the universal, as the reason which informs reality."[10] The claim to universal validity of philosophical concepts (as in Plato and Aristotle), metaphysical ideas and norm, in representing the world only serves to elevate the "conditions which those concepts justified to the status of true reality."[11] These concepts, expressed through "the social power of language," serve to reinforce "the conditions of domination, with the universality it had acquired as the means of intercourse in civil society." As this power increased, ideas "became more superfluous . . . and the language of science put an end to them altogether."[12] Science creates a "unity of collectivity and

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[9] Adorno-Horkheimer refer to this negation of the individual as "the triumph of repressive *égalité*, the degeneration of the equality of rights into the wrong inflicted by equals." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 9. Similar to Adorno-Horkheimer, Lewis explores the problematic modernist corruptions of democracy and equality in the following essays: "Equality," in *Present Concerns: A Compelling Collection of Timely, Journalistic Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Fount, 1986; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002); "Democratic Education," in *Present Concerns: A Compelling Collection of Timely, Journalistic Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Fount, 1986; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002); "A Reply to Professor Haldane," in *Of Other Worlds: Essays and Stories*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1966; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002); and "Screwtape Proposes a Toast," in *The World's Last Night: And Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1960; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002). These essays were written over a span of time from 1943 to 1960, and thus reveal how Lewis' ideas grew and evolved with time. Many of his ideas which he presented in only germ form in *Abolition* were developed further in these essays. Also, on the meaning of democratic education and some of the problems in effectively implementing it, see C. S. Lewis to Warfield M. Firor, March 12, 1950, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 3, *Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy 1950-1963*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 17-18; C. S. Lewis to Dan Tucker, December 8, 1959, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 3, *Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy 1950-1963*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 1104-5.

[10] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 16. Hence, Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 50: "The whole is false."

[11] Such concepts "reflected with the same fidelity the laws of physics, the equality of freeborn citizens, and the inferiority of women, children, and slaves." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 16. In other words, they were oppressive.

[12] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 16-17.

power," manifested through language, which results in even more subjugation of the powerless due to the dominance of science and scientific language in reinforcing the existing order. Consequently, Enlightenment's corrosive process eats away at universal concepts, leaving nothing behind of metaphysics "except the abstract fear of the collective from which it had sprung."[13]

Furthermore, social conditioning is achieved through the commodification of life as a whole. Adorno-Horkheimer explain that "the economic apparatus endows commodities with the values which decide the behavior of people." Consequently, human beings and their behavior are subjected to the same standardization processes used by the "agencies of mass production and its culture."[14] This standardized behavior becomes considered "the only natural, decent, and rational one. Individuals define themselves now only as things, statistical elements, successes or failures. Their criterion is self-preservation, successful or unsuccessful adaptation to the objectivity of their function and the schemata assigned to it." This means differences are exposed and leveled by the powerful collective, which in reality is controlled by "the powers which

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[13] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 17. On the abuse of social and cultural powers through the manipulation of language, recall Lewis says, "Once we killed bad men: now we liquidate unsocial elements." Lewis, *Abolition*, 74. He also writes, "The first symptom is in language. When to 'kill' becomes to 'liquidate' the process has begun. The pseudo-scientific word disinfects the thing of blood and tears, or pity and shame, and mercy itself can be regarded as a sort of untidiness." Lewis, "Reply to Professor Haldane," 84. Cf. Roger Scruton:

> With the depersonalization of the world there comes a disintegration of language. The phenomenon of "Newspeak," described with such extraordinary prescience by George Orwell in *1984*, should always be borne in mind by those who ask how the crimes of totalitarian politics have been possible. By emptying language of every vestige of a moral idea, we change the way in which the world is perceived. . . . When the murder of twelve million people (the kulaks) is described as "the liquidation of a class," or of six million (the Jews) as the "final solution to the Jewish question," all reference to the human reality is expunged from discourse. . . . Vocabulary, syntax, logic and style take on a new purpose which is neither to describe the world nor to interpret it, but to deprive it of its meaning, so that the dictates of power can be inscribed without resistance on the resulting blank.

Roger Scruton, *Modern Philosophy: An Introduction and Survey* (London: Reed Consumer Books, 1994; repr., New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 471. See George Orwell, *1984* (Orlando: Harcourt, 1949; repr., Signet Classics, 1961). Also, see David Mills, "To See Truly through a Glass Darkly: C. S. Lewis, George Orwell, and the Corruption of Language," in *The Pilgrim's Guide: C. S. Lewis and the Art of Witness*, ed. David Mills (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

[14] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 21.

manipulate the collective as an agent of violence."[15]

Yet, in an ironic twist of fate, "nature as true self-preservation is thereby unleashed . . . by the process which promised to extirpate it. . . . The self, entirely encompassed by civilization, is dissolved in an element composed of the very inhumanity which civilization has sought from the first to escape."[16] From the point of view of civilization, "purely natural existence" is the ultimate threat to be overcome. The progress of civilization involved a movement through mimetic, mythical, and metaphysical stages, eliminating the forms of behavior associated with each. To revert back to any of these stages would mean the return of the self to "mere nature." Accordingly, the controlling minority seeks to ensure the continuation of the whole of society by "subordinating life in its entirety to the requirements of its preservation," based on the bourgeois commodity economy.[17]

As a result, self-preservation becomes automated, meaning the abdication of individual reason and choice to the controllers of production. This involves a process of reification of thought which amounts to the cutting off of thought. The commodification of culture means reduction to *mass* culture, which stifles the development of thought, which becomes "short-winded," capable only of the apprehension of "isolated facts." It tires of making "intellectual connections," and ultimately is narrowed or leveled down to a myopic focus on "what is immediately present." The increased commodification of thought means greater instrumentalization of thought, which has a disabling effect, blocking the self-reflective thought that counteracts paranoia. Hence, *homo sapiens* is reduced to *homo economicus*.[18] Thus, similar to Lewis, Adorno-Horkheimer describe a

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[15] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 21-22.

[16] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 23-24.

[17] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 24.

[18] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 163. They further describe the individual as the "psychological small business" and how on this economic model of man the individual and his choices, once internally self-relegated, become subsumed (or usurped) by society and "the schema of mass culture"

weakening, an atrophying of the organs of man. The commodification of culture causes

"the organs which enabled individuals to manage their lives autonomously to atrophy."[19]

Thus, regarding the culminating effects of the culture industry, they write,

> Now that thinking has become a mere sector of the division of labor, the plans of the authorized experts and leaders have made individuals who plan their own happiness redundant. The irrationality of the unresisting and eager adaptation to reality becomes, for the individual, more reasonable than reason. If, previously, the bourgeois had introjected the compulsions of conscience and duty into themselves and the workers, now the entire human being has become at once the subject and the object of repression. In the progress of industrial society . . . the human being as person, as the bearer of reason—is going under. The dialectic of enlightenment is culminating objectively in madness.[20]

Modernist (mis)diagnoses. In many respects, the parallels to Lewis' thought

here are striking, although a number of important differences should be noted. In terms

of their similarities, both Lewis and the critical theorists share a grave concern about a

cultural process whose product is a greatly diminished man, paranoiac man, or what

Lewis calls "men without chests." Both describe how this process is causing the

intellectual organs of man to wither, thereby reducing them to purely instrumentalist

means-ends rationalization. The success of this process means the subordination of

individuals to the plans of those in positions of power and control over society, so much

so that the path of least resistance is the one of conformity to the status quo, which

becomes the most rational prospect for living in spite of its inherent irrationality.

Moreover, the safeguards of conscience and duty are no longer effective in counteracting

the deeply penetrating reaches of the system into the whole life of man. Consequently,

the individual becomes enslaved to the system that guaranteed him liberation. The

Enlightenment promise of progress, the utter alleviation of human misery, has failed to

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(168). Cf. Theodor Adorno, "The Schema of Mass Culture," in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J. M. Bernstein, 2nd ed., Routledge Classics, vol. 20 (New York: Routledge, 2001).

[19] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 169.

[20] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 169.

deliver on its promise and has actually led to the diminution of man as a result.

But, whereas Adorno-Horkheimer see the problem in primarily socio-economic terms, material production and the increasing commodification of society with its correlative reification of thought, Lewis would diagnose the problem as something deeper still, as a moral and spiritual crisis due to society's abandonment of the *Tao*. Accordingly, Lewis gets more to the *heart* of the issue, in that many of the problems Adorno-Horkheimer describe should be viewed as the inevitable results of the "poison of subjectivism." Society's rejection of normative standards or ethical principles creates an imbalance of power within society, which leaves the weak vulnerable to the strong. Western man is no longer capable of self-governing because he fails to acknowledge the transcendent, objective principles and values for rightly governing himself and resisting the encroachments of external forces and pressures that seek to erode his intellect and conscience.

In many respects, Adorno-Horkheimer underscore the cultural indicators or symptoms which show mankind has lost its way. In keeping with their method of negative critique, they indeed expose numerous contradictions and deficiencies in the current cultural disorder. However, lacking a normative criterion of judgment, they fail to diagnose the root cause of the problems; they come up short in prescribing any positive remedies for what ails society; and they are unable to provide a basis for a hopeful prognosis for the future.

Civilization or Barbarism?

Lewis does not look for imminent solutions in what is immanent, whether a new economic order or arrangement, a new system of government, a new method of theorizing, or any other product of human civilization. Although Lewis seeks to conserve, promote, and defend what is good of Western civilization, he understands that civilization is a mixed bag, which needs saving itself and at times from itself. In fact,

Lewis is ambivalent about what goes for civilization, both evoking its praise while also condemning its flaws. For example, he praises civilization while noting its opposite, barbarism, when he writes,

> One of the most dangerous errors instilled into us by nineteenth-century progressive optimism is the idea that civilization is automatically bound to increase and spread. The lesson of history is the opposite; civilization is a rarity, attained with difficulty and easily lost. The normal state of humanity is barbarism, just as the normal surface of our planet is salt water.[21]

Civilization is a rarity, something to be prized once achieved, and its absence means barbarism, an uncultivated humanity. Elsewhere, however, Lewis offers a qualification about civilization lest one think it is inherently good and the solution to man's ills. He writes, "Civilized man murders, enslaves, cheats, and corrupts savage man. Even inanimate nature he turns into dust bowls and slag-heaps."[22] Civilization per se does not prevent man from acting uncivilized. Furthermore, always sensitive to deficiencies in human language, Lewis identifies problems with the use of the terms *civilized* and *uncivilized*:

> I do not say "civilized," for vulgar power and vulgar luxury have debauched that word beyond redemption. It is civil in the sense that it presupposes in those who are to enjoy it some discipline in good letters and good "manners." It demands that our merely natural passions should have already been organized into such "sentiments" as ordered and magnanimous commonwealths prefer.[23]

We get closer to Lewis' central assessment of civilization, when he speaks of

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[21] C. S. Lewis, "Our English Syllabus," in *Image and Imagination: Essays and Reviews*, ed. Walter Hooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 22-23. Thus, Lewis does not see barbarism as a new development of mankind or an extraordinary culmination of a genealogy of enlightenment reason, but rather a rupture, a breaking through the surface, of the restraints that genuine civilization seeks to instill in a fallen humanity. Hence, the Enlightenment emancipation or liberation from the constraints of natural law (the *Tao*) actually unleashed fallen humanity's proclivity towards barbarism.

[22] C. S. Lewis, "Religion and Rocketry," in *The World's Last Night: And Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1960; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002), 89. Cf. Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1966; repr., New York: Continuum, 1995), 285: "[T]he humanity of civilization is inhumane toward the people it shamelessly brands as uncivilized."

[23] C. S. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (1942; repr., London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 135.

"the rebellion of 'civilization' against civility."[24] Thus, he distinguishes between what

counts for civilization and the essence of *civility*. Much of what Lewis associates with

civility represents elements of the *Tao*, the standard for distinguishing between civil and

barbaric attitudes and behavior. But, what is often thought of as civilization is not

necessarily civilized and can even be opposed to civility. Once more, he writes,

"'Civilization'—by which I here mean barbarism made strong and luxurious by

mechanical power—hates civility from below: sanctity rebukes it from above."[25]

Whereas Lewis earlier distinguished civilization from barbarism, here he identifies the

two. Clearly, he distinguishes two different senses of civilization, *de re* and *de dicto*. In

either case, civilization, according to Lewis, is no guarantor against barbarism but can

even regress into an intensified barbarism, as Adorno-Horkheimer also concede. For

Lewis, the safeguard against a civilization devolving into barbarism is ultimately the

sanctity that "rebukes it from above."[26]

Meanwhile, as inhabitants of middle earth needing middle things, we have to

determine *how* to live with them.[27] This raises the issue concerning the nature, meaning,

and value of *culture*. For insights into Lewis' thinking and attitude towards culture we

turn briefly to his essay "Lilies that Fester." Here Lewis explains that the term *culture*

belongs in the same class of "dangerous and embarrassing words," like *civilization*,

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[24] Lewis, *Preface to Paradise Lost*, 135.

[25] Lewis, *Preface to Paradise Lost*, 137.

[26] On this note, Lewis makes a connection between the *Tao* and societal regression. He writes,

It might be that humanity, in rebelling against tradition and authority, has made a ghastly mistake. . . . If we are content to go back and become humble plain men obeying a tradition, well. . . . But a society where the mass is still simple and the seers are no longer attended to can achieve only superficiality, baseness, ugliness, and in the end extinction. On or back we must go; to stay here is death.

C. S. Lewis, *Miracles: A Preliminary Study* (New York: Macmillan, 1947; repr., with revision of chap. 3, London: Collins-Fontana Books, 1960; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 66-67.

[27] Lewis says, "As long as we live in merry middle earth it is necessary to have middle things." Lewis, *Preface to Paradise Lost*, 137.

religion, *refinement*, and others, whose meaning is ambiguous and subject to misunderstanding. But, Lewis claims, "Whatever else it may mean, it certainly covers deep and genuine enjoyment of literature and the other arts."[28] Speaking further on the misuse of the concept, he writes, "*Culture*, like religion, is a name given from outside to activities which are not themselves interested in *culture* at all, and would be ruined the moment they were."[29] Genuine culture is spoiled once it is reduced to the equivalent of the modernist "art for art's sake," the danger of which he further describes in the following:

> To be constantly engaged with the idea of *culture*, and (above all) of *culture* as something enviable, or meritorious, or something that confers prestige, seems to me to endanger those very "enjoyments" for whose sake we chiefly value it. . . . For the true enjoyments must be spontaneous and compulsive and look to no remoter end.[30]

Whether it be culture, art, or religion, what is of greater importance are not the associated activities themselves, but the object of which the activities are about or to which they point. Moreover, the object of these activities can be true or false, good or evil, beautiful or ugly. Accordingly, given the Janus-faced nature of culture, Lewis does not seek in it a panacea for society's problems. A faith in culture is a misplaced faith. He explains,

> A "faith in culture" is as bad as a faith in religion; both expressions imply a turning away from those very things which culture and religion are about. "Culture" as a collective name for certain very valuable activities is a permissible word; but *culture* hypostatized, set up on its own, made into a faith, a cause, a banner, a "platform," is unendurable.[31]

Thus, Lewis shares a similar concern for what Adorno-Horkheimer describe as the

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[28] C. S. Lewis, "Lilies that Fester," in *The World's Last Night and Other Essays* (San Diego: Harcourt, 2002), 33.

[29] Lewis, "Lilies that Fester," 33-34; emphasis original.

[30] Lewis, "Lilies that Fester," 34-35; emphasis original. He contrasts his view of culture with one that views the enjoyments of culture as only worth pursuing for a particular habit of mind they produce, like trying to improve one's mind by reading poetry, and thus becoming *cultured*. "But," he explains, "even if *culture* did all these things, we could not embrace it for their own sake. This would be to use consciously and self-consciously, as means to extraneous ends, things which must lose all their power of conducing to those ends by the very fact of being so used (37). Cf. Lewis' character of the Artist Ghost in the *Great Divorce*, 82-87.

[31] Lewis, "Lilies that Fester," 38.

process of hypostatization or reification. Lewis identifies the essential problem with this process as it pertains to culture: it makes an end of what is really only a means, possessing only instrumental value or worth. Hence, Lewis is not condemning culture and the activities of culture per se, but only their reification, hypostatization, even the idolization of culture, making it an end in itself.

Rise of the Charientocracy

The glorification of culture paves the way for the emergence of what Lewis calls the *Charientocracy*. Just as Adorno-Horkheimer coined the term *cultural industry* to describe the whole socially oppressive, economic, and cultural complex, Lewis coined the former term for a similar or related phenomenon.[32] A closer examination of the meaning of this Lewisian neologism helps to illuminate what he likely had in mind regarding the role of the controllers or conditioners of society in *Abolition*.

Tyranny of the elites. According to Lewis, in the wake of the post-Victorian era, the following state of affairs developed, given the collapse of the old social classes:

> On the one hand, since most men, as Aristotle observed, do not like to be merely equal with all other men, we find all sorts of people building themselves into groups within which they can feel superior to the mass; little unofficial, self-appointed aristocracies. The *Cultured* increasingly form such a group. Notice their tendency to use the social term *vulgar* of those who disagree with them. . . . On the other hand, inevitably, there is coming into existence a new, real, ruling class: what has been called the Managerial Class. The coalescence of these two groups, the unofficial, self-appointed aristocracy of the *Cultured* and the actual Managerial rulers, will bring us to the Charientocracy.[33]

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[32] However, Lewis' term never caught on like the critical theorists' *culture industry*.

[33] Lewis, "Lilies that Fester," 41; emphasis original. Lewis further describes it as "the rule of the χαρίεντες, the *venustiores*, the Hotel de Rambouillet, the Wits, the Polite, the 'Souls,' the 'Apostles,' the Sensitive, the *Cultured*, the Integrated, or whatever the latest password may be" (41) The various terms and expressions Lewis uses here all reflect *high-brow* culture. According to one writer, in coining the term *Charientocracy*, possibly "Lewis is making a sardonic pun on the Latin word '*caritas*' (deep personal love, now called Charity), Charientocracy probably comes from the Greek word for 'grace.' Lewis may be using it here as in the higher graces someone in polite society is able to deploy." See Brenton Dickieson, "The Words C. S. Lewis Made Up: Charientocracy," A Pilgrim in Narnia (Blog), October 18, 2017, https://apilgriminnarnia.com/2017/10/18/charientocracy/. Charientocracy also contains aspects of what Lewis calls "the inner ring." See C. S. Lewis, "The Inner Ring," in *The Weight of Glory: And Other Addresses*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: Macmillan, 1949; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001). Also, on the not so helpful distinction between high- and low-brow culture, see C. S. Lewis, "High and Low

Thus, the Charientocracy represents a combination of two elitist subgroups: the Cultured (or the social elites) and the Managerial Class (or the economic elites). The latter represent political and financial power, while the former wields enormous social and cultural power. Whereas the Cultured are unofficial, self-styled rulers, the Managerial Class are an actual ruling class. The former exert control over people through forms of social pressure and coercion, while the latter have real power to control an individual's role (or fate) within industry or the labor market.

Like for the culture industry, education has a crucial role to play in the rise of the Charientocracy. Although Lewis shares similar concerns as Adorno-Horkheimer about the "half-educated," he expresses possibly greater concern for those who are "fully" educated![34] This is due to the fact that people increasingly access the Managerial Class through education, and so education takes on a new significance in bolstering the Charientocracy. Of course, the kind of education exemplified in *The Green Book* will be incredibly useful for those in control who make up the Managerial Class. For modernist education seeks to cut, shape, and mold the student to conform to the ideas and ideals of the powerful, such that the student is indoctrinated in order to be subsumed totally by the system. Lewis explains,

> The educational machine seizes him very early and organizes his whole life. . . . In short, the modern pupil is the ideal patient for those masters who, not content with teaching a subject, would create a character; helpless Plasticine. Or if by chance (for nature will be nature) he should have any powers of resistance, they know how to deal with him.[35]

Brows," in *Selected Literary Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (1969; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). Here Lewis states, "It is low hearts and not low brows that are vulgar" (275). Also, see his *Experiment in Criticism* for further discussion of the distinction.

[34] In *That Hideous Strength*, Lewis satirizes modern education, journalism, the propaganda of both, and the plasticine nature of the "fully" educated public, noting, by contrast, the greater resistance of the "half-educated" public. See the discussion between the characters Hardcastle and Mark Studdock (97-98). Also, see C. S. Lewis, "Private Bates," in *Present Concerns: A Compelling Collection of Timely, Journalistic Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Fount, 1986; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002). For Lewis on the problems of the corruption of journalists, see C. S. Lewis, "After Priggery—What?," in *Present Concerns: A Compelling Collection of Timely, Journalistic Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Fount, 1986; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002).

[35] Lewis, "Lilies that Fester," 42. Moreover, the "Charientocracy can deal with the minority of

And so, the reward of culture is entrance into the ruling class, and this makes for the rise of the Charientocracy.[36] This is all reminiscent of Lewis' "man-molders" in *Abolition* and Adorno-Horkheimer's "pliable experts in humanity" of the culture industry. Furthermore, this development seems to provide the necessary next step which leads to the rise of a powerful technocracy, or rule by a class of self-described and self-appointed cultural elites, who have a monopoly on the use of powerful technology for the manipulation of the whole of society—the Masters of the Universe.

"Becoming metaphysics, an ideological curtain." In the preface to *Dialectic*, Adorno-Horkheimer proclaim the "basic premise of our fragments" is that

> the enthronement of powerful groups . . . is producing the international threat of fascism: progress is reverting to regression. That the hygienic factory and everything pertaining to it, Volkswagen and the sports palace, are obtusely liquidating metaphysics does not matter in itself, but that these things are themselves becoming metaphysics, an ideological curtain, within the social whole, behind which real doom is gathering, does matter.[37]

Adorno-Horkheimer's chief concern is that the components making up the culture industry are "becoming metaphysics, an ideological curtain." Of course, staunchly post-metaphysical, they disregard the liquidation of metaphysics as such. For Lewis, by contrast, the liquidation of metaphysics is central to many of the cultural problems he and

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pupils who have tastes of their own and are not pure Plasticine. They get low marks. You kick them off the educational ladder at a low rung and they disappear into the proletariat (46). On Lewis' prescience regarding the problems of a government-controlled educational system, foreshadowing problematic educational reforms in both England and the U.S., see Zachary A. Rhone, "C. S. Lewis' Warnings for Education," *The Bulletin of the New York C. S. Lewis Society* (March/April 2016), vol. 37, no. 2, 1-8, http://www.carolyncurtis.net/images/files/csl_march-april_2016_excerpt.pdf.

[36] Lewis, "Lilies that Fester," 45. He describes this kind of rule as being "only one degree less intolerable" as what he describes as "the worst of all possible governments" and that is theocracy (40). However, according to Lewis, we are not in any actual danger of becoming a theocracy; Charientocracy is the real threat to Western civilization and culture.

[37] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xviii. For a further discussion on metaphysics, see Max Horkheimer, "The Latest Attack on Metaphysics," in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1968; repr., New York: Continuum, 1995); Max Horkheimer, "Materialism and Metaphysics," in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, 10-46 (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1968; repr., New York: Continuum, 1995); Theodor Adorno, *Metaphysics: Concepts and Problems*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1998; repr., Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001).

the critical theorists address. Bereft of a correct metaphysic, the discarded image leaves behind an insatiable void, which is then filled with things of the immediate present as alone real, a new metaphysic of "the stream."[38] Similarly, Adorno-Horkheimer lament the "triumph of subjectivity" that is "bought with the obedient subordination of reason to what is immediately at hand."[39] The lack of submission to a higher, transcendent authority beyond the immediate present results in bondage to the latter. The fact is, Lewis claims, all views have metaphysical implications, and this includes Adorno-Horkheimer's negative, anti-metaphysical position, a metaphysic in its own right, despite their protests to the contrary.[40]

To avoid the above ideological trap, Lewis argues that culture must be subordinated to something higher. Conformism to the status quo, what merely is, can only be avoided by culture's conformity to something else, a template, an archetype, an ideal of what ought to be. Apart from the subordination of culture to something higher than culture, there remains nothing to prevent the social conditioning and engineering of humanity. To avoid this barbaric and catastrophic result, culture must conform to the *Tao*. More importantly, Lewis professes, "The thing to which, on my view, culture must be subordinated, is not (though it includes) moral virtue, but the conscious direction of all will and desire to a transcendental Person in whom I believe all values to reside, and the reference to Him in every thought and act."[41] Short of this, humanity and culture are destined to be subjugated by the powers that be until the liquidation or abolition of man is complete.

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[38] Lewis, *Screwtape*, 2.

[39] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 20.

[40] Cf. C. S. Lewis, "Bluspels and Flalansferes: A Semantic Nightmare," in *Selected Literary Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (1969; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 265.

[41] C. S. Lewis, "Christianity and Culture," in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 26.

The Road from Progress to Regress
(i.e., Progressivism)

Adorno-Horkheimer reject the popular appeals to progress, believing that "just as the capacity to be represented is the measure of power, . . . so it is also the vehicle of both progress and regression."[42] With the growing "technical facilitation of existence," humanity is compelled back to a more primitive stage of existence.[43] This repression takes place both in the sensuous world and the intellectual one, impoverishing bodily experience as well as the mind. The real result of cultural progress is cultural decadence.[44] Thus, they utterly reject as ideological the naïve view of progressivist optimism with its belief in the inevitable movement of history towards the improvement of the human condition.

Similarly, Lewis associates the view of optimistic, inevitable progress with the philosophical theory of history called *historicism*. Historicism is an extension into history of what Lewis calls Developmentalism or Evolutionism (just as scientism is an extension of the latter into science).[45] This leads to the socio-cultural phenomenon called

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[42] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 27.

[43] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 27-28.

[44] Patrick Brantlinger writes, "Central to Nietzsche's philosophy, moreover, is the paradox that the seeming progress of society really signifies its decadence, a paradox that is also basic to the 'decadent movement' of artists and poets. 'Nothing avails: one *must* go forward—step by step further into decadence (that is my definition of modern 'progress').'" Moreover, Nietzsche states, "'Progress' is merely a modern idea, that is, a false idea." Patrick Brantlinger, *Bread and Circuses: Theories of Mass Culture and Social Decay* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016), 114, Kindle; quoting Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, "Maxims and Arrows 17," in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin, 1976), 468, 547; emphasis original.

[45] Lewis explains,

> This Developmentalism, in the field of human history, becomes Historicism: the belief that the scanty and haphazard selection of facts we know about History contains an almost mystical revelation of reality, and that to grasp the *Worden* and go wherever it is going is our prime duty. . . . [I]t is wholly inimical to Christianity, for it denies both creation and the Fall. Where, for Christianity, the Best creates the good and the good is corrupted by sin, for Developmentalism the very standard of good is itself in a state of flux.

C. S. Lewis, "Modern Man and his Categories of Thought," in *Present Concerns: A Compelling Collection of Timely, Journalistic Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Fount, 1986; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002), 64. Cf. Lewis, "*De Descriptione Temporum*," 12. Also, see C. S. Lewis, "Historicism," in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995). A corollary of historicism is a strong emphasis on the future. M. D. Aeschliman writes of Lewis as a representative of the body of anti-modernist literature opposing the "cult of the future," and how "The

"Progressivism," the modernist concept of progress which Lewis critically examines in his essay "Is Progress Possible?".

The nature of progress. Lewis describes progress in the following: "Progress means movement in a desired direction, and we do not all desire the same things for our species." Moreover, he explains, "Progress, for me, means increasing goodness and happiness of individual lives."[46] Bearing on this question of the nature of progress, Lewis identifies two key factors he forecasts will have a continuing influence on society for some time: (1) "the advance, and increasing application of science"; (2) "the changed relation between Government and subjects."[47] Regarding the first factor, he writes,

> As a means to the ends I care for, this is neutral. We shall grow able to cure, and to produce, more diseases—bacterial war, not bombs, might ring down the curtain—to alleviate, and to inflict, more pains, to husband, or to waste, the resources of the planet more extensively. We can become either more beneficent or more mischievous. My guess is we shall do both; mending one thing and marring another, removing old miseries and producing new ones, safeguarding ourselves here and endangering ourselves there.[48]

Once again, his comments highlight his more balanced position regarding applied science

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enduring power of C. S. Lewis's critique of modernity cannot be accurately understood unless he is seen in the light of this particular tradition of cultural criticism." M. D. Aeschliman, *The C. S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia*, ed. Jeffrey D. Schultz and John G. West, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), s.v. "Modernity." Lewis understands that any future progress, like moral progress, ultimately depends upon a transcendent standard of measurement. But, modernism's rejection of such a standard makes it impossible to measure any change as a change from worse to better or vice versa, making any hope for the future utterly vacuous. Lewis writes, "If things can improve, this means that there must be some absolute standard of good above and outside the cosmic process to which that process can approximate. There is no sense in talking of 'becoming better' if better means simply 'what we are becoming'—it is like congratulating yourself on reaching your destination and defining destination as 'the place you have reached.' Mellontolatry, or the worship of the future, is a *fuddled* religion." C. S. Lewis, "Evil and God," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 21.

[46] C. S. Lewis, "Is Progress Possible? Willing Slaves of the Welfare State," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 311. According to Hooper's editorial note, this essay was part of a five-part series in *The Observer* in response to the two following questions: "'Is man progressing today?' 'Is progress even possible?'" Lewis' contribution is a response to the first article in the series written by C. P. Snow, titled "Man in Society," *The Observer*, July 13, 1958. See C. P. Snow, *The Two Cultures*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[47] Lewis, "Is Progress Possible?," 312-13.

[48] Lewis, "Is Progress Possible?," 312.

and technology. Science and technology are means to ends—good or bad. Moreover, Lewis is neither naively optimistic nor morosely pessimistic about their use, but realistic, acknowledging both the good and the bad humans can and will produce.

Regarding the second factor, the changed relation between the state and its subjects, he warns of a "new attitude to crime." His chief concern is the abandonment of the traditional retributive view of crime and punishment in exchange for what he refers to as the humanitarian view. Opposed to this theory, he writes, "On the humanitarian view all crime is pathological; it demands not retributive punishment but cure. This separates the criminal's treatment from the concepts of justice and desert; a 'just cure' is meaningless."[49] He further describes the implications this has for society's assessment of the criminal in the process:

> the criminal ceases to be a person, a subject of rights and duties, and becomes merely an object on which society can work. And this is, in principle, how Hitler treated the Jews. They were objects; killed not for ill desert but because, on his theories, they were a disease in society. If society can mend, remake, and unmake men at its pleasure, its pleasure may, of course, be humane or homicidal.[50]

As in *Abolition*, the central issue concerning the nature of progress is the nature of humanity. Does man have an objective, fixed, given nature deserving of respect and honor, or is human nature like clay to be shaped and molded by the powerful controllers and conditioners of society and culture? In the subjective, instrumental sense of reason and progress, progress is amenable to both humane and homicidal ends. This is a poignant example of the serious danger of the rejection of the *Tao*, and, though an

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[49] Lewis, "Is Progress Possible?," 313. See C. S. Lewis, "The Humanitarian Theory of Punishment," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); C. S. Lewis, "On Punishment: A Reply to Criticism," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970. repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

[50] Lewis, "Is Progress Possible?," 313. Cf. on theories of punishment, Max Horkheimer, "The Arrest of Eichmann," in *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. Matthew J. O'Donnell et al., Radical Thinkers (New York: Seabury Press, 1974; repr., New York: Verso, 2013), Kindle. Here Horkheimer declares his theory of punishment to be one of deterrence and that "all other theories of punishment are just bad metaphysics" (119). By contrast, Lewis defends the traditional retributive theory of punishment based on the traditional juridical concept of "desert," the *sine qua non* of a just punishment.

extreme case, it is rooted in the "political philosophy implicit in most modern communities," in other words, progressivism.[51]

With Adorno-Horkheimer, Lewis acknowledges the complex and precarious economic factors that have given rise to progressivism. However, these factors are only symptomatic of the deeper, more fundamental problem of the abandonment of classical political theory grounded in the *Tao*, along with its traditional conceptions of law, justice, and human value and rights.[52] The tragic result is the increasing growth in power of the state rulers in planning the lives of their subjects, power "to do something to us or to make us something." Lewis is more concerned with *how* humanity lives than with *how long*, and this includes conserving things that possess objective value or worth. He believes that in an increasingly planned society things of genuine worth become increasingly rare, hence the dire need to preserve and protect the good cultural fruit of Western civilization from the corruptive effects of progressivism.

The technocratic establishment. Moreover, the interloping of government and science in planning society leads to the establishment of a Technocracy.[53] Lewis explains, "Again, the new oligarchy must more and more base its claim to plan us on its claim to knowledge. . . . This means they must increasingly rely on the advice of

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[51] Lewis, "Is Progress Possible?," 313. Furthermore, the result is the death of various "key-conceptions (natural law, the value of the individual, the rights of man)" (314). For further reading on Lewis, politics, and progressivism, see Kimberly R. Hill, "C. S. Lewis on the Dangerous Politics of Progress" (MA thesis, Georgetown University, 2014), https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/handle/10822/712438.

[52] See Justin Buckley Dyer and Micah J. Watson, *C. S. Lewis on Politics and the Natural Law* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Micah J. Watson, "Natural Law in *The Abolition of Man*," in *Contemporary Perspectives on C. S. Lewis' Abolition of Man: History, Philosophy, Education, and Science*, ed. Gayne John Anacker and Timothy M. Mosteller (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).

[53] Apart from the *Tao*, Lewis says, "The individual is to become all head. The human race is to become all Technocracy." Lewis, *That Hideous Strength*, 256. This technocracy is represented, in fictional form, in *That Hideous Strength* as the N.I.C.E., "which was "the first-fruits of that constructive fusion between the state and the laboratory on which so many thoughtful people base their hopes for a better world. It was to be free from all the tiresome restraints—'red tape' was the word its supporters used—which have hitherto hampered research in this country." Moreover, the N.I.C.E. receives its support from "The Progressive Element" (21).

scientists, till in the end the politicians proper become merely the scientists' puppets. Technocracy is the form to which a planned society must tend."[54] Lewis strongly opposes, and rightly fears, the conglomeration of governmental "leaders" and scientific specialists motivated by an insatiable lust for power, unchecked by the moral principles of the *Tao*, and catering to a morally illiterate public via a welfare state. He claims, "We have on the one hand a desperate need; hunger, sickness, and the dread of war. We have, on the other hand, the conception of something that might meet it: omnicompetent global technocracy. Are not these the ideal opportunity for enslavement?"[55] Reminiscent of, and yet further illuminating, his themes in *Abolition*, he concludes,

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[54] Lewis, "Is Progress Possible?," 314-15. Elsewhere, he describes this in terms of "scientific planning" or the "scientific planned democracy." See Lewis, "Reply to Professor Haldane."

[55] Lewis, "Is Progress Possible?," 315-16. Interestingly, in a letter written the same year as the publication of *Abolition*, Lewis writes, "Gaius and Titius were, as you will not be surprised to learn, Australians. Singapore knows what comes of Green Books now." C. S. Lewis to Martyn Skinner, March 4, 1943, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 2, *Books, Broadcasts, and the War, 1931-1949*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 561. Lewis was well aware of the need to pushback against socialist ideology as well as the central role of economics in addressing social problems. He clearly favored free-market, capitalist solutions to such problems, including solutions governed by the principles of the *Tao*. See C. S. Lewis to Laurence Whistler, January 9, 1947, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 2, *Books, Broadcasts, and the War, 1931-1949*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 757. Moreover, redistributionist policies and efforts are in direct violation of the *Tao*'s principles of fairness and justice. Lewis criticizes calls by sociological (or socialist) writers for a "just distribution of goods," yet giving us "no assurance that they know what Good means." See C. S. Lewis, "William Morris," in *Selected Literary Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (1969; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 227. It is not that Lewis is unconcerned with the problem of poverty in society, but he greatly distrusts the socialist proposals for how to address this problem, especially since their notions of what is good, fair, equitable, and just are not derived from the *Tao* except in a distorted form. For Lewis on the seriousness of the affliction of poverty, see Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (London: The Centenary Press, 1940; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 109.

It is beyond the scope and space of this paper to evaluate Lewis' contributions to a discussion of economics. However, his essay "Good Work and Good Works" deserves mentioning. In this essay, Lewis' most extended treatment on these issues, we find a number of interesting parallels between the cultural criticism of Lewis and that of Adorno-Horkheimer. Although not a major topic of discussion in his writings, Lewis is very critical of certain aspects of modern industrialism and its corresponding economic order, for example, the practice of planned obsolescence in the production of goods and how this practice produces an alienating effect on the worker in the process. While Lewis shares a number of Adorno-Horkheimer's economic concerns, he offers starkly different proposals as a solution to them. See C. S. Lewis, "Good Work and Good Works," in *The World's Last Night: And Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1960; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002). Also, for further reading on issues of modern industrialism, see C. S. Lewis, "Answers to Questions on Christianity," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 48. Finally, compare/contrast Lewis on the value of work with Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Towards a New Manifesto*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1989; repr., London: Verso, 2011), 53. The book's title and its contents suggest the need for a contemporary version of Friedrich Engels' and Karl Marx's *The Communist Manifesto* (1848).

Let us not be deceived by phrases about "Man taking charge of his own destiny." All that can really happen is that some men will take charge of the destiny of others. They will be simply men; none perfect; some greedy, cruel and dishonest. The more completely we are planned the more powerful they will be. Have we discovered some new reason why, this time, power should not corrupt as it has done before?[56]

Technocracy is totalitarian, and Lewis vehemently and unequivocally opposes all forms of totalitarianism, both left and right, especially theocracy, which he argues is the "worst of all governments."[57] Theocracy represents the apotheosis of "uncontrolled power over others." Lewis' description (if not a definition) of theocracy is noteworthy: "a metaphysic, held by the rulers with the force of a religion."[58] This description is broad enough in its scope to include not only what are commonly thought of as traditional religious bodies, but also secular groups, organizations, panels, parties and other governing bodies often thought of as non-religious (or anti-religious). Moreover, this also includes technocratic rule; technocratic power is theocratic power: it is one more form of totalitarianism with its own metaphysic upheld by its rulers with the fierce religious force.

As an antidote to totalitarianism, in whatever form, Lewis advocates for democracy and individual freedom with a view towards the general good of society, the goal of real moral progress, all within the boundaries of natural law, the *Tao*. Around the

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[56] Lewis, "Is Progress Possible?," 316.

[57] Lewis writes, "I believe in God, but I detest theocracy. For every Government consists of mere men and is, strictly viewed, a makeshift; if it adds to its commands 'Thus saith the Lord,' it lies, and lies dangerously." Lewis, "Is Progress Possible?," 315. Elsewhere, Lewis explains,

I am a democrat because I believe that no man or group of men is good enough to be trusted with uncontrolled power over others. And the higher the pretentions of such power, the more dangerous I think it both to the rulers and to the subjects. Hence Theocracy is the worst of all governments. . . . And since Theocracy is the worst, the nearer any government approaches to Theocracy the worse it will be. Lewis, "Reply to Professor Haldane," 81.

Moreover, John West, Jr. comments on how Lewis was a "a consistent critic of totalitarianism on both the right and the left. . . . In other words, Lewis believed that both communism and fascism were products of the same poisonous philosophy." John West, Jr., in Schultz and West, *C. S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Communism and Fascism." On the "poisonous philosophy," see C. S. Lewis, "The Poison of Subjectivism," in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

[58] Lewis, "Reply to Professor Haldane," 81.

same time period as his writing of *Abolition*, Lewis reveals in several writings his deep concern with the growing appeal of progressivist ideals and values, particularly as they are reinforced through education. For Lewis, these represent distortions or perversions of the traditional elements of the *Tao*, including, implicitly or explicitly, the ideals of democracy, individual liberty, and equality. Lewis shows a strong commitment to individualism over collectivism, while stressing the importance of the eternal individual over the temporary state, nation, culture, or civilization. Hooper refers to this emphasis on the individual as "the central premise of all Lewis's theological works—a premise implicit, even, in his books on other subjects. It is that *all* men are immortal."[59] Indeed, this theme of immortality undergirds Lewis' project in *Abolition*.

A Critical Error: "Why So Negative?"

Adorno-Horkheimer, as a matter of principle, engage in a wholly negative critique of culture. Yet, arguably, their negative stance is excessive and makes for an imbalanced and ineffective criticism. Have the results of modernity really been so negative? After reading *Dialectic*, one would think so. Somewhat shockingly, Adorno-Horkheimer, themselves committed modernists, have a more negative outlook on modernity than does Lewis, who is admittedly and adamantly anti-modernist![60] Whereas

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[59] Hooper, preface to Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, vii. Lewis writes, "If individuals live only seventy years, then a state, or a nation, or a civilization, which may last for a thousand years, is more important than an individual. But if Christianity is true, then the individual is not only more important but incomparably more important, for he is everlasting and the life of a state or a civilization, compared with his, is only a moment." Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 74-75. Moreover, Lewis makes a profound, practical application of the possibility of immortality to living with one's neighbors: "There are no *ordinary* people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendors." Lewis, "The Weight of Glory," 45-46; emphasis original. Also, on the difference between bourgeoisie and proletariat, and the liberal's love for humanity in the abstract ("the Proletariat, the thin, far-away Abstraction") versus individual particular men ("the quotidian face and fact, his neighbor!"), see C. S. Lewis, "The Genuine Article," in *Poems*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1964; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 1977), 63-64. Cf. Lewis' description of Mark Studdock, a sociologist, in Lewis, *That Hideous Strength*, 85.

[60] Adorno-Horkheimer reflect a degree of cynicism comparable to the character of Hard-Bitten Ghost in Lewis, *Great Divorce*, 51-56.

Lewis critiques the excesses and extremes of modernity (particularly the various ideological forms of modernism), he stops short of throwing out the proverbial baby with the bathwater in his critical assessment. But, the same cannot be said for the critical theorists. Moreover, Adorno-Horkheimer fail to establish a normative standard for making critical judgments of the culture industry.

Technology: Boon or Bane?

Needless to say, Lewis and Adorno-Horkheimer are deeply alarmed by the increasing role of technology in society. In their works, technology is nearly reified into a mythical character in its own right, at times appearing dark and sinister. Of course, technology is associated with instruments and instrumentalization, the technical and the technique, and especially the threat of technocracy (both in the forms of Charientocracy and the culture industry).

One of the most important of Lewis' statements on technology is found in his essay "*De Descriptione Temporum*," where he discusses what he believes to be "the greatest of all divisions in the history of the West" (also referred to as the "Great Divide"). He describes this further as

> that which divides the present from, say, the age of Jane Austen and Scott. The dating of such things must of course be rather hazy and indefinite. No one could point to a year or a decade in which the change indisputably began, and it has probably not yet reached its peak. But somewhere between us and the Waverley Novels, somewhere between us and *Persuasion*, the chasm runs.[61]

He then proceeds to describe four major changes that have taken place in society and culture as a result of the Great Divide, in order of the weakest to the strongest: changes in the political order, the arts, religion, and, finally—*the birth of machines*.[62]

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[61] Lewis, "*De Descriptione Temporum*," 7.

[62] On the fourth change, Lewis explains, "Between Jane Austen and us, but not between her and Shakespeare, Chaucer, Alfred, Virgil, Homer, or the Pharaohs, comes the birth of the machines. This lifts us at once into a region of change far above all that we have hitherto considered. . . . It alters Man's place in nature. . . . I conclude that it really is the greatest change in the history of Western Man." Lewis, "*De Descriptione Temporum*," 10-11.

Adorno-Horkheimer express eerily similar sentiments and concerns regarding the "development of the machine" with its implications for society's progress or regress.[63] Yet, despite the similarities between the authors' concerns about the effects of machinery on human beings, Adorno-Horkheimer's tone is almost wholly negative, whereas Lewis' is much more measured. The critical theorists' negative critique of technology is so totalizing that they leave little room for the acknowledgement of any positive technological contributions. Their pessimistic assessment is not surprising considering their epistemological critique of a totalizing rationality. Enlightenment rationality coupled with the technologization of society can only mean greater enslavement to nature, domination, and social control via the technical apparatus—ironically, all in the name of progress. The greater the social and economic control over the individual means the liquidation of the individual in its service to the apparatus. The more the masses are provided for by this apparatus the more powerless and pliable they become in the process. Therefore, despite what goods technology might produce, even creating "the conditions for a more just world," Adorno-Horkheimer argue technological progress inevitably means technocracy and thus an "unjust state of society" in the end.

Consider as a poignant example Adorno-Horkheimer's negative criticism of radio broadcasting. They write,

> Radio, the progressive latecomer to mass culture, is drawing conclusions which film's pseudomarket at present denies that industry. The technical structure of the commercial radio system makes it immune to liberal deviations of the kind the film industry can still permit itself in its own preserve. . . . In fascism radio becomes the universal mouthpiece of the *Führer*; in the loudspeakers on the street his voice merges with the howl of sirens proclaiming panic, from which modern propaganda is hard to distinguish in any case. The National Socialists knew that broadcasting gave their cause stature as the printing press did to the Reformation. The *Führer*'s metaphysical charisma, invented by the sociology of religion, turned out finally to be merely the omnipresence of his radio addresses, which demonically parodies that

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[63] Adorno-Horkheimer write, "Where the development of the machine has become that of the machinery of control, so that technical and social tendencies, always intertwined, converge in the total encompassing of human beings, those who have lagged behind represent not only untruth. . . . The curse of irresistible progress is irresistible regression." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 28.

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of the divine spirit. . . . To posit the human word as absolute, the false commandment, is the immanent tendency of radio.[64]

Lewis was aware of the negative uses of the radio (or the "wireless") by Hitler and the Nazi propaganda machine. In *Abolition*, he speaks of how those in power can wield various technologies like the radio for propaganda, manipulation, and control of the masses. However, Lewis' approach reflects the principle of *abusus non tollit usum*. The abusive use of technology does not nullify its proper use, especially for the good of society. For example, consider Lewis' (and Winston Churchill's) rightful appropriation of the radio for the cause of the Allies in WWII as a case in point.[65] Arguably, this proper use of the radio was essential to the war effort and the eventual victory of the Allies over the Nazis. The Allied governments were able to combat the false propaganda of the Nazis in winning the battle, not just in the air and amidst the waves of the sea, but also over the *airwaves*, penetrating the hearts and minds of the listening public. In most cases, one can distinguish between a moral and an immoral use of the technology in question. Hence, Lewis is not an opponent of technology as such but only its misuses and abuses, such as its idolization or elevation to the status of what he calls "first things" as opposed to their proper place as "second things."[66] In a letter to the famous science-

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[64] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 128-29. Cf. Horkheimer: "Europe has reached the point where all the highly developed means of communication serve constantly to strengthen the barriers 'that divide human beings'; in this, radio and cinema in no way yield the palm to airplane and gun. . . . To the extent that the last works of art still communicate, they denounce the prevailing forms of communication as instruments of destruction, and harmony as a delusion of decay." Max Horkheimer, "Art and Mass Culture," in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell et al., (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1968; repr., New York: Continuum, 1995), 279.

[65] Justin Phillips provides a discussion of Lewis and the broadcasting industry during wartime. He describes how Lewis was convinced that the radio could be used for good as a counter to its use for evil as with Hitler's radio broadcasts. Lewis' broadcasts on the BBC would later be published as *Broadcast Talks*, which eventually was edited and published as *Mere Christianity*. See Justin Phillips, *C. S. Lewis in a Time of War* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002).

[66] See C. S. Lewis, "First and Second Things," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper, 278-81 (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002). Cf. Lewis: "*Of course* enjoying equipment or motoring is not a sin. . . . My motto would be 'Have your toys, have your conveniences, but for heaven's sake don't start talking as if those things really mattered as, say, charity matters.'" C. S. Lewis to Michael Edwards, October 20, 1956, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 3, *Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy 1950-1963*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 800; emphasis original. Roger Scruton discusses the recent concerns of addiction to various forms of technology, writing that criticisms of the use of the latter often parallel "the 'fetishizing' nature of mass culture made by Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and other members of the neo-Marxist Frankfurt

fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke, Lewis succinctly sums up his view: "I agree Technology

is *per se* neutral: but a race devoted to the increase of its own power by technology with

complete indifference to ethics *does* seem to me a cancer in the universe. Certainly if he

goes on his present course much further man can *not* be trusted with knowledge."[67]

Thus, Lewis' primary concern is the powerful abuse of technology by those who have

abandoned the *Tao*.[68]

"The Signs of the Times"

       Lewis also largely differs with Adorno-Horkheimer in their competing critical

valuations of the successes of Western civilization and culture. Jürgen Habermas shows

how Adorno-Horkheimer's pessimistic approach extends to their unduly negative critique

of Western society and culture.[69] Bewildered, he comments,

> It is still difficult to understand a certain carelessness in their treatment of, to put it
> quite blatantly, the achievements of Western rationalism. How can the two
> advocates of the Enlightenment (which they always claimed to be and still are) so
> underestimate the rational content of cultural modernity that they observe in its
> elements only the amalgamation of reason and domination, of power and validity?[70]

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school." Ultimately, Scruton argues that a distinction needs to be made, one Adorno-Horkheimer failed to make, between a positive and a negative use of such technologies. Interestingly, he emphasizes the need for "the kind of education that makes it possible to take a critical approach to television, so as to demand real insight and real emotion, rather than kitsch, Disney, or porn." See Roger Scruton, "Hiding Behind the Screen," *The New Atlantis: A Journal of Technology & Society* no. 28 (Summer 2010): 48-60, https://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/hiding-behind-the-screen.

      [67] C. S. Lewis to Arthur C. Clarke, December 7, 1943, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 2, *Books, Broadcasts, and the War, 1931-1949*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 594.

      [68] Many have taken notice of Lewis' important contributions to the ongoing philosophical and ethical discussions of the use (or abuse) of technology. For example, Aeschliman writes, "In their important anthology *Philosophy and Technology: Readings in the Philosophical Problems of Technology* (New York, 1972, 1983, et seq.), Carl Mitcham and Robert Mackey reprint outstanding essays on some of the most exigent problems of our time. A substantial selection from *The Abolition of Man* is among them." M. D. Aeschliman, in Schultz and West, *C. S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Modernity." Also, see Timothy James Demy, "Technology, Progress, and the Human Condition in the Life and Thought of C. S. Lewis" (PhD diss., Salve Regina University, 2004), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

      [69] Jürgen Habermas, "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Re-reading *Dialectic of Enlightenment*," trans. Thomas Y. Levin, *New German Critique* 26 (Spring/Summer 1982): 18, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*; emphasis original.

      [70] Habermas, "Entwinement," 23.

More recently, Herf, in his essay "*Dialectic of Enlightenment* Reconsidered,"

makes a similar assessment, accusing the Frankfurt school theorists of working with "an

inadequately narrow understanding of the meaning of the term *modernity*, one that

reduced it to technology, science, and bureaucracy."[71] He says Adorno-Horkheimer

ignored the positive contributions (historical, technological, medical, and scientific) that

came from modernity probably because of the Marxist, anticapitalistic residue in their

work. Some examples of the successes of modernity "simply absent" in *Dialectic*,

include the following: "the panoply of ideas and events associated with the 1688

revolution in Britain," "the ideas and institutions that emerged from the American

Revolution," "British antislavery," "American abolitionism," "the rule of law," "liberal

democratic ideas and institutions," "freedom of speech, of assembly, of the press, and of

religion or unbelief," and many others.[72] What is more, Herf writes,

> One of the work's strangest aspects lay in the absence of any mention of World
> War II. The text made no reference at all to the fact that the war was taking place in
> the months and years in which the book was written. It did not mention that an anti-
> Hitler coalition composed of the successors of the moderate Enlightenment in
> England and the United States and of the Jacobins' radical Enlightenment in the
> Soviet Union was at war with the Axis powers, all of which had repeatedly stressed

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[71] Jeffrey Herf, "*Dialectic of Enlightenment* Reconsidered," *New German Critique* no. 117
(2012): 84, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*; emphasis original. Furthermore, he writes of how a
significant part of Adorno-Horkheimer's slanted viewpoint was due to their "highly idiosyncratic readings
of classic texts in the Western tradition, including Homer's *Odyssey*, the book of Genesis, and Bacon's 'In
Praise of Human Knowledge'" (85-86). Although Lewis also shares a similar negative assessment of
Bacon's work, it is interesting to contrast Adorno-Horkheimer with Lewis on this point, when he states, "It
is my settled conviction that in order to read Old Western literature alright you must suspend most of the
responses and unlearn most of the habits you have acquired in reading modern literature." Lewis, "*De
Descriptione Temporum*" 13. Considering the deficiencies in Adorno-Horkheimer's interpretative method
noted by Herf, it is helpful to consider Lewis' review of Robert Fitzgerald's translation of Homer's
Odyssey. Lewis writes, "But we must judge Mr. Fitzgerald by the rules he accepts. He is trying to do for
our age what Chapman, Pope and Morris did for their ages. His version, like theirs, becomes an
unconscious critique of the period that begot it. The prevailing taste acts like a stencil: it lets through some
Homeric qualities and excludes others." C. S. Lewis, review of *The Odyssey*, trans. Robert Fitzgerald, in
Image and Imagination: Essays and Reviews, ed. Walter Hooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
2013), 187. Similarly, Adorno-Horkheimer, though consciously rather than unconsciously, attempt a
critique of their own modern period, letting in some Homeric qualities while excluding others. Lewis says,
"Chapman made Homer cryptic, Machiavellian, and fantastical. Pope made him elegant and epigrammatic;
Morris, romantically Nordic. Mr. Fitzgerald makes him tough, stark, colloquial and rather like Stephen
Vincent Benét" (187-88). One could add that Adorno-Horkheimer make Homer the prototypical bourgeois!

[72] Herf, "*Dialectic of Enlightenment* Reconsidered," 84.

their hatred for the Enlightenment.[73]

Finally, Brantlinger**,** in his book *Bread and Circuses*, is also critical of the critical theorists for their relentless negativity regarding Western *mass* culture and mass media.[74] He writes, "At his most negative, which may also be his logically most consistent, Adorno appears to have no faith in any prospective liberation or redemption through culture, even philosophy: 'All post-Auschwitz culture, including its urgent critique, is garbage. . . . Not even silence gets us out of the circle.'"[75] Once again, due to Adorno-Horkheimer's totalizing critique, reason reaches a dead end on their analysis, in this case in its application to society and culture.

In sum, Lewis arguably was a better prophet in his foretelling and forth-telling regarding "the signs of the times." He is capable of both negatively condemning the regressive elements of modernism, while also positively acknowledging the successes of modernity in the causes of democracy, freedom, and justice. The same cannot be said, however, for Adorno-Horkheimer's exclusively negative critique, which concludes everything is utterly soiled by the culture industry, and thus seemingly irredeemable.

Negation vs. Rehabilitation

Central to Adorno-Horkheimer's critical theory is what Roger Scruton calls a "posture of negation."[76] Critical theory can only negate, nullify, "make nothing" of the

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[73] Herf, "*Dialectic of Enlightenment* Reconsidered," 87. He continues his scathing rebuke, stating that even "the Allied victory in 1945 made no impact on their theory of modernity and the Enlightenment" (87). It was not until much later that Adorno-Horkheimer's postwar attitude became more pro-American and pro-Western (88). By stark contrast, Lewis makes numerous references to the war effort throughout his works, praising the Allied effort and condemning the Axis powers.

[74] Brantlinger, *Bread and Circuses*, 9.

[75] Brantlinger, *Bread and Circuses*, 225; quoting Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 367. Brantlinger further describes Adorno's extreme pessimism:

> The reified false consciousness of industrialized mass culture has settled like a pall over history, masking the facts of violence and exploitation so completely that the majority of victims (that is, the majority of mankind) move through life like anesthetized zombies, believing themselves to be free individuals (success stories, even) instead of victims. Rarely has a thinker . . . taken a more dismal view of those he is championing, or of the prospects for the liberation to which he is devoted, than has Adorno. Brantlinger, *Bread and Circuses*, 226.

[76] Scruton describes this posture as the "refusal to accept any external authority and a rejection

status quo. Despite the critical theorists' advocacy for democracy, freedom, human rights, and justice, their commitment to negative critique prevents them from attributing any positive content to these principles or from pointing to anything past, present, or future, in heaven above or earth below, for a ground of these principles. It is no wonder that after all of their negating nothing is left but "a disenchanted spectacle of pure power."[77]

Lewis offers similar criticisms of society and culture but from an entirely different posture, contra the radical perspective of the critical theorists. Lewis seeks to preserve, conserve, "make something" out of civilization while opposing the status quo. Hence, he offers both a *positive* and a *negative* critique, based on the normative principles of the *Tao*. Accordingly, Lewis can say "no" to the ideologies, oppressive policies, and immoral practices, that corrupt the individual and society. Additionally, he can also say "yes" to the many positive contributions of Western civilization, which he works to recover from its critics. Hence, Lewis' dialectic and overall critical stance is *rehabilitative*. Bruce Edwards notes, "It is this rehabilitative disposition that informs and unifies the Lewis canon."[78] This is essential to understanding Lewis' modus operandi in *Abolition*, probably the most representative of his rehabilitative stance.

Another important example of Lewis' rehabilitative approach is his views of the relationship between religion and culture. Brantlinger explores the history of this problematic relationship, especially in regards to mass culture. He writes,

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of every value, every custom, every norm which impedes the 'liberation' of the self." Scruton, *Modern Philosophy*, 460.

[77] Scruton, *Modern Philosophy*, 469.

[78] Bruce L. Edwards, "Deconstruction and Rehabilitation: C. S. Lewis' Defense of Western Textuality," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 29, no. 2 (1986): 206, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCO*host*. Edwards explains, "Lewis' rehabilitative stance manifested his reverence for the past, his principled skepticism of his own period's mores and dogma, and his profound propensity for recovering, restoring and preserving lost values and ideals." One of his earliest attempts in this regard was C. S. Lewis, *Rehabilitations and Other Essays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939). The work was never reprinted, but fortunately all of its contents have been republished in other collections of his essays.

The social and industrial processes that have created the modern mass media seem intrinsically bound up with secularization. But mass culture also can be viewed as a substitute for mythology or even as an ersatz religion. Nineteenth and twentieth-century ideas about the relations between religion and culture range from the view that religion is the foundation of culture to the view that they are antithetical.[79]

This is consistent with Adorno-Horkheimer's assessment of the culture industry in connection with religion. On the one hand, the growth of the culture industry means increasing secularization in all areas of life. Even in the religious sphere, religious practitioners are not immune to the corrosive effects of mass culture. The more religion is harmonized with the culture the less effective its sales-resistance becomes. On the other hand, the culture industry also becomes a substitute for religion.

But, as Brantlinger further explains, the relationship between Christianity and culture was different in the ancient world than in the modern. He writes, "During the gradual breakdown of ancient civilization, the bloody mayhem of the arenas gave way to the ceremonial observances of the Church as the center of most people's cultural attention. Bread and circuses met their nemesis in Christianity."[80] This highlights the conflict between Christianity and at least certain elements of mass culture in its early years. Nevertheless, according to Brantlinger, even religion has a mass appeal of its own and can take the form of mass culture.[81]

Some Christians down through the history of the church have taken positions or attitudes towards culture similar to Adorno-Horkheimer's negative approach, yet from

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[79] Brantlinger, *Bread and Circuses*, 82. Cf. Christopher Dawson, *Religion and Culture*, The Gifford Lectures 1947 (London: Sheed and Ward, 1948; repr., New York: Meridian Books, 1958).

[80] Brantlinger, *Bread and Circuses*, 83.

[81] He explains,

The identity between religion and mass culture, moreover, is possible not just because there are and have always been multitudes of believers, or because prayerbooks, hymnals, sermons, and the Bible achieve enormous circulations, but also because religion per se can be viewed as "for the many" or even as fundamentally "proletarian" and set over against a category of arts and sciences defined both as "for the few" and as classical. Brantlinger, *Bread and Circuses*, 84.

These comments are especially notable considering the mass market success of Lewis' books. Moreover, Lewis did not write primarily for the *intelligentsia* or the *literati*, but for the masses.

a more overtly religious perspective. For example, the early church father Tertullian epitomized the problematic relationship between Christianity and culture, representing the "complete negation of culture."[82] However, other Christians like Augustine advocated for a re-appropriation of culture for the glory of God. Likewise, instead of calling for a complete renunciation of culture, Lewis advocates for a rehabilitation of culture and a dialectic of enjoyment and renunciation. Accordingly, he sees "no essential quarrel between the spiritual life and the human activities as such."[83]

The Re-Enchantment of the World

In the end, what is the alternative to the "abolition of man" or the "dialectic of enlightenment"? What hope, if any, is there for humanity? For Adorno-Horkheimer, hope for the future is fragile at best. They provide no reason for thinking man can or will ever break through the dialectic of enlightenment. An honest and sober assessment of their *Dialectic* can only lead to despondency and despair, for the liquidation of man appears inevitable and unavoidable. For Lewis, there are only two possibilities for humanity (and, more importantly, for individuals): redemption or resignation.[84] In

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[82] Brantlinger, *Bread and Circuses*, 85. In fact, Lewis condemns something like Tertullian's negative approach when he excoriates what he calls the "Vigilant school of critics," which represents the extreme of renunciation in relation to culture. Lewis, *Experiment in Criticism*, 124-25. Although commending their motives and intentions, Lewis believes the purely negative critics (like Adorno-Horkheimer) make the mistake of seeking to avoid one extreme only to fall into another.

[83] C. S. Lewis, "Learning in War-Time," in *The Weight of Glory: And Other Addresses*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: Macmillan, 1949; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 55; cf. 53-54; Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 100. On Lewis' distinction between enjoyment and renunciation, see Gilbert Meilaender, *The Taste for the Other: The Social and Ethical Thought of C. S. Lewis*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 20-31. Another related distinction Lewis makes regarding the Christian believer's relationship to the world involves the "two-edged character of Christianity." This two-edged character is both *world-affirming* (like Confucianism) and *world-denying* (like Buddhism), while striving to avoid the extremes of each. See C. S. Lewis, "Some Thoughts," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper, 147-50 (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002). Also, see Jerry Root, "Tools Inadequate and Incomplete: C. S. Lewis and the Great Religions," in *The Pilgrim's Guide: C. S. Lewis and the Art of Witness*, ed. David Mills (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

[84] Cf. Theodor Adorno, "Resignation," in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1963/1969; repr., New York: Columbia University Press, 1998). Also, see S. D. Chrostowska, "Thought Woken by Memory: Adorno's Circuitous Path to Utopia," *New German Critique* no. 118 (Winter 2013): 93-117, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost.

Abolition, Lewis shows us what will become of humanity as a result of the abolition of God, the *Tao*, and hierarchy from reality. But, he also alludes to the hope for a better future, and elsewhere he more explicitly outlines what this hope entails, which is the subject of this penultimate section of the chapter.

For Lewis, "the question on which all hangs is whether we can go on to Re-enchantment."[85] Re-enchantment is a primary goal of Lewis' philosophical, moral, and cultural apologetic. Essentially what Lewis means by the notion is a return to God, supernaturalism, the hierarchical conception of reality, and the embrace of natural law and natural order. For Lewis, this "discarded image" is central to his overall solution to the threat of "the abolition of man." To be clear, this does not mean a turning back of the clock or a going backward in time. He does not mean the recovery of a formerly lost Enchanted Age, but the ushering in of a Re-enchanted Age.[86]

For Lewis, re-enchantment entails the breaking of a spell of enchantment. He claims, "It is our painful duty to wake the world from an enchantment."[87] Moreover, he writes, "Spells are used for breaking enchantments as well as for inducing them. And you and I have need of the strongest spell that can be found to wake us from the evil enchantment of worldliness which has been laid upon us for nearly a hundred years."[88] Thus, the work of re-enchantment is twofold: first, the exorcising of the evil enchantment

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[85] In a much neglected essay, Lewis speaks of the following four stages (or Ages) of man: the Unenchanted, the Enchanted, the Disenchanted, and the Re-Enchanted. C. S. Lewis, "Talking about Bicycles," in *Present Concerns: A Compelling Collection of Timely, Journalistic Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Fount, 1986; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002).

[86] See Lewis, "Epilogue," in *Discarded Image*, 216-23.

[87] C. S. Lewis, "The Funeral of a Great Myth," in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper, 82-93 (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 93. Cf. Lewis: "I am sure 'demythologizing' the N.T. always really means *re*-mythologizing it: i.e., clothing it in the popular scientific and historical theories of your own period which are in fact transitory and will soon seem as mythological as those of the first century." C. S. Lewis to Mary Van Deusen, January 16, 1959, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 3, *Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy 1950-1963*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 1012. As demythologizing is really a *re*-mythologizing, Lewis likewise understands disenchantment to be really a form of *re*-enchantment, a mythological spell made up of various "popular scientific and historical theories," which can only be broken by another.

[88] Lewis, "The Weight of Glory," 31.

of worldliness; and, secondly, to reorient the modern mind-set to a transcendent, supernaturalism in its full vigor, most importantly, to Christianity in all its glory.

By contrast, for Adorno-Horkheimer, all spells, all enchantment, like all metaphysics, are mythical, and for that reason must be rejected.[89] Fundamental to the deficiencies of critical theory is its lack of a mythical imagination, making it powerless to bring about any real positive change in the world.[90] Because it can only denounce, it fails to account for any objective meaning to its critical endeavors; it ultimately labors in vain. Its lack of positive content regarding truth, value, and meaning makes critical theory impotent and utterly hopeless against the powerful cultural forces that be.

Dialectic of Desire

The key to understanding Lewis on re-enchantment is found in what he terms the "dialectic of desire."[91] Lewis distinguishes between a rational or logical demonstration, a "merely argued dialectic," and what he calls a "sort of ontological

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[89] Interestingly, the term *spell*, and related expressions with a magical or mythical connotation, make a frequent appearance throughout Adorno-Horkheimer's *Dialectic* and other writings. Consider the following examples (emphasis added for each): "the *spell* of any despotism"; "the *spell* of myth"; "thought *spellbound*"; "fallen back under its *spell*"; "the hero is able to *break the spell of the name*"; "the *spell* of technical civilization." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xvi, 8, 19, 25, 47, 161, respectively. Also, consider Adorno's comment: "Progress means: to step out of the *magic spell*, even out of the *spell* of progress." Theodor Adorno, "Progress," in *Can One Live After Auschwitz?*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 130.

[90] In fact, Adorno-Horkheimer contrast Enlightenment with "mythical imagination." Horkheimer and Adorno, 8.

[91] In the past few decades, it has been customary to speak of Lewis' *argument from desire*, in addition to his argument from reason and his argument from morality, thus completing his formidable triad of apologetic arguments for the existence of God. Yet, some recent scholars have challenged the claim that an argument from desire for God's existence can be found in Lewis. For now let it suffice to suggest that based upon Lewis' dialectic of desire a rational argument from desire might be developed or formalized. More importantly, Lewis' dialectic of desire provides a *way of breaking through the dialectic of enlightenment*, and is in part a remedy for the problems he addresses in *Abolition*. For further discussion of Lewis' argument from desire, see the following: Peter Kreeft and Ronald K. Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics: Hundreds of Answers to Crucial Questions* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 78-81; Alister E. McGrath, *The Intellectual World of C. S. Lewis* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 105-28; Arend Smilde, "Horrid Red Herrings: A New Look at the 'Lewisian Argument from Desire'—and Beyond," *The Journal of Inklings Studies* 4:1 (April 2014): 33-92; Norbert Feinendegen, *Denk-Weg zu Christus: C. S. Lewis als kritischer Denker der Moderne* (PhD diss., University of Bonn, 2008); Norbert Feinendegen, *Denk-Weg zu Christus: C. S. Lewis als kritischer Denker der Moderne*, Ratio Fidei, bd. 37 (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 2008); John Beversluis, *C. S. Lewis and the Search for Rational Religion*, rev. ed. (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2007).

proof" or "lived dialectic."[92] He refers to the latter phenomenon variously as "the

dialectic of Desire," "dialectic of natural desire," "a desire," "this sweet Desire," "this

Desire," "the Desire," "Desirable," or simply "Desire." Moreover, he frequently denotes

the same experience using the German *Sehnsuct* (a term often appearing in Adorno-

Horkheimer), which Lewis translates as "longing" or simply "Joy," referring to a

particular type of recurring mystical experience he had, beginning as a child, on through

his teenage years, and even still as an adult.[93] This experience played an absolutely

essential role in his spiritual journey and eventual conversion from atheism to theism to

eventually Christian theism in 1931. On the one hand, Lewis speaks of his conversion as

being almost entirely philosophical, that is based on an argued dialectic. On the other

hand, he refers to the dialectic of desire as fundamental to his spiritual progress as well:

"this lived dialectic and the merely argued dialectic of my philosophical progress, seemed

to have converged on one goal."[94] He discusses much of the above in his

autobiographical *Surprised by Joy*, in which he writes, "In a sense the central story of my

life is about nothing else . . . it is that of an unsatisfied desire which is itself more

desirable than any other satisfaction. I call it Joy."[95]

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[92] C. S. Lewis, *The Pilgrim's Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity, Reason and Romanticism* (London: J. M. Dent, 1933; repr., with preface, London: Geoffrey Bles, 1943; repr., with illustrations by Michael Hague, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 205.

[93] Lewis reveals, "From at least the age of six, romantic longing—*Sehnsucht*—had played an unusually central part in my experience." C. S. Lewis, *Narrative Poems*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1969; repr., Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 1979), 4.

[94] Lewis, *Pilgrim's Regress*, 205.

[95] C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1955; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 1966), 17-18. Lewis discusses (in brief or at length) or illustrates this dialectical experience of Joy in a variety of his writings, especially the following: *Pilgrim's Regress* (especially the preface, or afterword in third edition); "Hope" chap. in *Mere Christianity*, 134-37; *Problem of Pain*, especially chap. on "Heaven," 148-62; "The Weight of Glory." Additionally, see C. S. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1956; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 1980); Lewis' essays "On Stories," "William Morris," "Talking about Bicycles"; C. S. Lewis, "Hedonics," in *Present Concerns: A Compelling Collection of Timely, Journalistic Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Fount, 1986; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002). Also, see C. S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1963; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002). Finally, see several of Lewis' poems: "Dymer," in *Narrative Poems*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1969; repr., Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 1979); and the following in C. S. Lewis, *Poems*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1964; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 1977): "An Expostulation: Against Too Many Writers of Science Fiction"; "Joys That

Lewis uses the expression Joy in a technical sense in order to sharply distinguish this peculiar desire from other more common desires, such as happiness and pleasure (general or aesthetic). He explains,

> Joy (in my sense) has indeed one characteristic, and one only, in common with them; the fact that anyone who has experienced it will want it again. Apart from that, and considered only in its quality, it might almost equally well be called a particular kind of unhappiness or grief. But then it is a kind we want. I doubt whether anyone who has tasted it would ever, if both were in his power, exchange it for all the pleasures in the world. But then Joy is never in our power and pleasure often is.[96]

Hence, unlike happiness and pleasure, Joy is never within our power to be produced at will or manipulated or controlled. It is a fleeting experience which keeps us looking and longing, waiting and wanting for something never fully within one's grasp.[97] Moreover, Lewis says, "It must have the stab, the pang, the inconsolable longing," which is the peculiar quality distinguishing it from other desires.[98] And despite the resulting unhappiness, grief, or pang left in its wake, we want it nonetheless. This is one of two things differentiating this experience of "intense longing" from other types of longing. Lewis explains that "though the sense of want is acute and even painful, yet the mere wanting is felt to be somehow a delight."[99] The second differentia is that

> there is a peculiar mystery about the *object* of this Desire. Inexperienced people . . . suppose, when they feel it, that they know what they are desiring. . . . But every one of these impressions is wrong. The sole merit I claim for this book is that it is written by one who has proved them all to be wrong. . . . I know them to be wrong not by intelligence but by experience. . . . For I have myself been deluded by every one of these false answers in turn, and have contemplated each of them earnestly enough to discover the cheat . . . Every one of these supposed *objects* for the Desire is inadequate to it.[100]

Sting"; "Sweet Desire"; and "No Beauty We Could Desire."

[96] Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 18.

[97] Cf. Lewis, "Dymer," canto 5, st. 10; Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 135: "There was something we grasped at, in that first moment of longing, which just fades away in the reality."

[98] Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 72.

[99] Lewis, *Pilgrim's Regress*, 202.

[100] Lewis, *Pilgrim's Regress*, 203; emphasis original.

This passage helps to illustrate what Lewis means in referring to a "lived dialectic" or when calling it a "sort of ontological proof." He believes the mysterious object of his desire is not to be found in the material world of nature. Moreover, he arrived at this conclusion not by philosophical argumentation (i.e., argued dialectic). Based on his experience, he had attempted to identify the object of his desire with various objects of this world, and he proved one by one that each was "inadequate to" his desire of intense longing. Again, Lewis believes all knowledge depends on three elements: authority, reason, and experience. In his lived dialectic, experience takes the foremost position in knowledge acquisition.

In certain respects, Lewis' lived dialectic parallels Adorno-Horkheimer's critique of the reification of thought and identity thinking. A central emphasis of their critical theory is the inadequacy of thought to thing. Reification of thought happens when one assumes the world of objects is identical to the ideas in one's mind, as if the mind reflects like a mirror the world of facts without remainder, leaving behind no aspects of the object not comprehended by the mind's activity. Hence, determinate negation, or negative dialectic, seeks to expose the inadequacy of the idea or thought through criticism, thus opening the possibility for the mind to the preponderance of the object. Similarly, Lewis' lived dialectic shows how another problem of identity thinking arises in relation to one's desires and the lived experience of the world of objects. Whenever someone confuses a particular object of the world with the object of their longing, this is a case of mistaken identity. Lewis says the proof of the inadequacy of the object becomes evident once one comes to possess the object; it reveals itself to be false in that it fails to satisfy the desire. Although this process is heavily experiential, it is not purely experiential for it also involves contemplation, or critical reflection upon one's ideas about the objects experienced.[101] Lewis sought a mental content in his experience

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[101] Lewis describes the process of critical self-reflection involved in the dialectic of desire:

that would be adequate to his desire, but was continually left wanting. The inadequacy of

his images and sensations led him to the knowledge that they were only the "mental track

left by the passage of Joy," like the imprint left by a wave in the sand, or one might say

the photographic negative, not to be mistakenly identified with the true object of Joy.

Moreover, it is the mediated experience of objects that confesses the impressions to be

spurious, inadequate, and in a way points beyond the objects to something else.

But, might one argue Lewis is simply mistaken in assuming that what he

wanted was any particular object and not Joy itself, the mere experience? However,

Lewis confesses he did not want Joy itself but the object of Joy, which was not a

particular mental or physical state of his own. In this way, the dialectic of desire serves

as a corrective to one's experience and interpretation of the world, both internal and

external. It exposes both the false images and objects as idols not to be identified with

the true object of one's desire, which refuses identification with one's sensations or

experience.[102] The object "proclaims itself sheerly objective." It is outside, something

else, something other, "the naked Other, imageless (though our imagination salutes it

with a hundred images), unknown, undefined, desired."[103] And yet, the self is capable of

having "commerce with," engaging (or being engaged by), this Other in one's

experience. Lewis summarizes and draws out the conclusion of his dialectic of desire,

I saw that all my waitings and watchings for Joy, all my vain hopes to find some mental content on which I could, so to speak, lay my finger and say, "This is it," had been a futile attempt. . . . I should never have to bother again about these images or sensations. I knew now that they were merely the mental track left by the passage of Joy. . . . The inherent dialectic of desire itself had in a way already shown me this; for all images and sensations, if idolatrously mistaken for Joy itself, soon honestly confessed themselves inadequate. All said, in the last resort, "It is not I. I am only a reminder. Look! Look! What do I remind you of?" Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 219-20.

[102] In his conclusion to *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis speaks of having had ongoing experiences of Joy. But, he confesses a diminished interest in the experience since his conversion to Christianity. He came to realize the experience had been only "a pointer to something other and outer" (238). Elsewhere, he similarly writes, "The thing I am speaking of is not an experience. You have experienced only the *want* of it. The thing itself has never actually been embodied in any thought, or image, or emotion." Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 152-53; emphasis original.

[103] Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 221. Hence, the dialectic of desire reveals a deep-seated longing for "the Other." Sanford Schwartz provides a helpful discussion of Lewis' "ubiquitous use of 'the Other.'" Sanford Schwartz, "Cosmic Anthropology: Race and Reason in *Out of the Silent Planet*," *Christianity & Literature* 52, no. 4 (2003): 546-47, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

It appeared to me therefore that if a man diligently followed this desire, pursuing the false objects until their falsity appeared and then resolutely abandoning them, he must come out at last into the clear knowledge that the human soul was made to enjoy some object that is never fully given—nay, cannot even be imagined as given—in our present mode of subjective and spatio-temporal experience. This Desire was, in the soul, as the Siege Perilous in Arthur's Castle—the chair in which only one could sit. And if nature makes nothing in vain, the One who can sit in this chair must exist. I knew only too well how easily the longing accepts false objects and through what dark ways the pursuit of them leads us: but I also saw that the Desire itself contains the corrective of all these errors. . . . The dialectic of Desire, faithfully followed, would retrieve all mistakes, head you off from all false paths, and force you not to propound, but to live through, a sort of ontological proof.[104]

Thus, Lewis was convinced, based upon critical self-reflection upon his own experience, that the dialectic of desire, if diligently and carefully followed, would lead one right out of the self, beyond all false objects, "into the clear knowledge that the human soul was made to enjoy some object that is never fully given."[105] For nature makes nothing in vain. But, what is this object we are meant to enjoy? For Lewis, Joy is itself a desire, an intense longing, yearning, for something not to be found in nature but for what is other-worldly, supernatural, immortal, and eternal. Ultimately, he concludes, the object of this longing is heaven, and, more importantly, the God of heaven.

Looking for heaven on earth? Lewis' dialectic of desire offers a possibility for breaking through the dialectic of enlightenment. This possibility is only hinted at, alluded to, but is definitely present in Adorno-Horkheimer's expressions of longing or yearning found in *Dialectic* and their other writings. We find one curious example in the following passage from *Dialectic*, interestingly related to the sense of smell:

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[104] Lewis, *Pilgrim's Regress*, 204-5. Interestingly, Adorno-Horkheimer note how "with the idea of vengeance *longing*, too, is tabooed—thereby, of course, *enthroning* vengeance, mediated as the self's revenge on itself." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 262n12; emphasis added. Here Lewis describes an *enthroning* of the true object of desire in the chair of the soul "in which only one can sit." It seems to follow that the dethronement of "the One who can sit in this chair" leads to violence and vengeance against nature and human nature, including the self.

[105] Cf. Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 150-51: "You have never *had* it. All the things that have ever deeply possessed your soul have been but hints of it—tantalizing glimpses, promises never quite fulfilled, echoes that died away just as they caught your ear. But if it should really become manifest . . . you would know it. Beyond all possibility of doubt you would say 'Here at last is the thing I was made for'" (emphasis original).

In the ambiguous partialities of the sense of smell the old nostalgia for what is lower lives on, the longing for immediate union with surrounding nature, with earth and slime. Of all the senses the act of smelling, which is attracted without objectifying, reveals most sensuously the urge to lose oneself in identification with the Other. That is why smell, as both the perception and the perceived—which are one in the act of olfaction—is more expressive than other senses. When we see we remain who we are, when we smell we are absorbed entirely.[106]

Lewis also associates longing with nostalgia, but he does not limit it to such. For Lewis, the sense of sight or "seeing" plays a significant role throughout his writings, and it is this sense that is most often connected with his experiences of longing: the sight of a toy garden, the artistic rendering of Siegfried, the sight of a beautiful natural object or scene.[107] But, the other senses also come into play for Lewis, including the sense of hearing (lines of poetry, music of Wagner), and, like Adorno-Horkheimer, even the sense of smell, though they give this sense greater emphasis, believing it to be more immune to objectification and reification and more powerful in absorbing the individual in the sensory experience.[108] Lewis' experience of longing is often brought about through sensory encounters with nature and a desire to be possessed by her, even "to lose oneself" in her, indeed to be reconciled with rather than to control her. This desire for reconciliation with nature is a prominent theme in both Lewis and Adorno-Horkheimer, and it represents the antithesis of the desire for the domination of nature. However, for Lewis, these experiences provide real insight; they point beyond the shortsighted identification with nature to a longing for the "naked Other," not nature itself but the

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[106] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 151. They further describe how civilization, positivism, rationalization, and the instrumentalization of language places a constraint on longing: "If, before its rationalization, the word had set free not only longing but lies, in its rationalized form it has become a straightjacket more for longing than for lies" (133-34). Cf. Lewis, "Talking about Bicycles," 68, for an example of a connection between the sense of smell and longing. Also, see Chrostowska, "Thought Woken by Memory," on the connections between *nostalgia* and *utopia* in Adorno.

[107] See Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, especially chaps. 1 and 5.

[108] Cf. Lewis, "The Weight of Glory," 30-31: "The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust to them; it was not *in* them, it only came *through* them, and what came through them was longing. These things—the beauty, the memory of our own past—are good images of what we really desire; but if they are mistaken for the thing itself, they turn into dumb idols, breaking the hearts of their worshippers. For they are not the thing itself; they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited" (emphasis original).

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Creator of nature.[109]

Considering Adorno-Horkheimer's comments on the repressive nature of civilization in seeking to outlaw or expunge the olfactory experience, Lewis writes something similar regarding the experience of longing in general. He states,

> Almost our whole education has been directed to silencing this shy, persistent, inner voice; almost all our modern philosophies have been devised to convince us that the good of man is to be found on this earth. And yet it is a remarkable thing that such philosophies of Progress or Creative Evolution themselves bear reluctant witness to the truth that our real goal is elsewhere. When they want to convince you that earth is your home, notice how they set about it. They begin by trying to persuade you that earth can be made into heaven, thus giving a sop to your sense of exile in earth as it is. Next, they tell you that this fortunate event is still a good way off in the future, thus giving a sop to your knowledge that the fatherland is not here and now. Finally, lest your longing for the transtemporal should awake and spoil the whole affair, they use any rhetoric that comes to hand to keep out of your mind the recollection that even if all the happiness they promised could come to man on earth, yet still each generation would lose it by death, including the last generation of all, and the whole story would be nothing, not even a story, for ever and ever. . . . [A]s if we could believe that any social or biological development on this planet will delay the senility of the sun or reverse the second law of thermodynamics.[110]

Accordingly, Lewis and Adorno-Horkheimer share related concerns about the efforts of certain aspects of civilization, especially modern education, to quench the experience of longing and to perpetuate a disenchantment of the world. Yet, quite paradoxically, Adorno-Horkheimer embrace what Lewis believes is the *raison d'être* of modernism, and that is to "convince us that the good of man is to be found on this earth" or "to convince you that earth is your home." As Lewis explains, however, the lived experience of longing proves just the opposite. It awakens the individual to a "sense of exile in earth as it is." Elsewhere, he calls this a sense of our "pilgrim's status."[111] Whereas the dialectic

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[109] Cf. Lewis, "Expostulation," 58; "No Beauty We Could Desire," 124.

[110] Lewis, "The Weight of Glory," 31-32. Cf. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 135: "Most of us find it very difficult to want 'Heaven' at all. . . . One reason for this difficulty is that we have not been trained: our whole education tends to fix our minds on this world."

[111] Lewis says, "All joy (as distinct from mere pleasure, still more amusement) emphasizes our pilgrim status; always reminds, beckons, awakens desire. Our best havings are wantings." C. S. Lewis to Dom Bede Griffiths, November 5, 1954, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 3, *Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy 1950-1963*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 523. Cf. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 108-16, on pleasure, amusement, and their corruptions in the culture industry.

of desire draws one further up and out of this world for its object, modernism, by disenchanting the world, seeks to keep one's feet chained to the ground per se, to disabuse one of any hope of a home beyond this world. Such thoughts and desires are simply dismissed as wishful thinking, escapism, or moonshine. Again, Adorno-Horkheimer make this same fatal error. Critical theory is just another of what Lewis describes as Post-War period "intellectual movements" of whom "the one thing that seemed to unite them all was their common enmity to 'immortal longings.'"[112] Their entire philosophy is grounded in the dubious hope for a future "heaven on earth." Moreover, they ignore or downplay the fact that, even if all of their utopian visions were to come to fruition at some point in history, this happy utopia would still be only finite, temporary, and eventually end not just in the death of democracy or civilization, nor just of this planet and our solar system, but the cosmic heat death of the whole universe. Nothing in Adorno-Horkheimer's critical theory (or any other version since) even begins to adequately address this cosmic totalizing event. The prospect of future oblivion confronts the individual with the question of what it all means in the end (as well as the present), and the answer critical theory offers seems only one of utter despair. How could it be otherwise?[113]

Furthermore, in response to the charge of wishful thinking and escapism, Lewis explains,

> Hope is one of the Theological virtues. This means that a continual looking forward to the eternal world is not (as some modern people think) a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do. It does not mean that we are to leave the present world as it is. If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next. The Apostles themselves, who set on foot the conversion of the Roman

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[112] Lewis, *Pilgrim's Regress*, 205.

[113] By contrast, Lewis points to the dialectic of desire, along with a whole host of other criteria (rational, moral, mystical, historical, and experiential), as a source of faith and the basis for an expectation or hope. Cf. C. S. Lewis, "Is Theism Important?," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 175. He thus affirms "the real *praeparatio evangelica* inherent in certain immediately sub-Christian experiences." Lewis, *Pilgrim's Regress,* 207.

Empire, the great men who built up the Middle Ages, the English Evangelicals who abolished the Slave Trade, all left their mark on Earth, precisely because their minds were occupied with Heaven. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this. Aim at Heaven and you will get earth 'thrown in': aim at earth and you will get neither. . . . [W]e shall never save civilization as long as civilization is our main object. We must learn to want something else even more.[114]

Clearly, in both *Abolition* and in *Dialectic*, the authors are deeply concerned with the state of the present world, and the serious need for a change in the status quo. The fear of many modernists, like Adorno-Horkheimer, is that religious people become "so heavenly minded they are of no earthly good." But, as Lewis points out, the Christian emphasis on life in the hereafter does not mean an abandonment of, or abdication to, the present world as it is. Christian heavenly mindfulness has historically motivated Christians in taking great care for what happens here on earth. In fact, it is possible for people to be so earthly minded that they are of no earthly good. This is because they prescribe only material, this-worldly answers and solutions to problems moral and spiritual at their root.

Thus, Lewis opposes all policies that seek to make "a heaven on earth" as utopian fantasies, "wild hopes," not only misguided but contrary to moral law as well as Christian social and ethical teaching properly taught and understood.[115] The central problem of all such utopian visions, and the reason for their inevitable failure, is their aim to establish a happiness on earth apart from a devotion to the ultimate, transcendent source of happiness—God in heaven.[116] The theorizing and practical efforts of communists, socialists, and even critical theorists like Adorno-Horkheimer, all fall on the same stumbling block, which is their ceaseless, tireless efforts in looking for or making a heaven of earth, while also disregarding any genuine belief in heaven or the transcendent. This illustrates a fundamental principle that is a reoccurring theme in Lewis' works—the

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[114] Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 134-35. Cf. Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 114.

[115] Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 114-15.

[116] Cf. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 49.

principle of "first and second things."[117] Modernists reject or ignore the actual existence

of "first things," but then struggle to make "first things" of "second things." But, if "*first*

things" are nonexistent, then so are "*second* things," in other words, only "things" exist,

the status quo. Moreover, Lewis' *Abolition* and Adorno-Horkheimer's *Dialectic* reveal

what the nature of "aiming at earth" indeed looks like and what it leads to for the future

of humanity. Whereas for Christians, Lewis succinctly says, "Because we love

something else more than this world we love even this world better than those who know

no other."[118] Furthermore, Lewis writes of how "the joys of heaven" are ultimately the

answer to the problem of pain and suffering in this world.[119]

On three ways. Lewis distinguishes two wrong ways and one right way of

responding to the longing for the other world, or heaven: "The Fool's Way," "The Way

of the Disillusioned 'Sensible Man,'" and "The Christian Way." The first continually

seeks for the object of its desire in this world, in sex, holidays, hobbies, traveling,

"always thinking that the latest is 'the Real Thing' at last, and always disappointed,"

while the second "soon decides that the whole thing was moonshine."[120] Adorno-

Horkheimer sound a lot like the second way. They too express this deep desire, yearning,

longing, but theirs is a "desire without hope" for anything beyond this world to satisfy it.

For them, it is mere moonshine, or mythical.[121] As an alternative to these two wrong

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[117] Cf. Lewis, "First and Second Things"; Lewis, *Great Divorce*, vii-x.

[118] Lewis, "Some Thoughts," 150.

[119] Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 148.

[120] Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 136. Regarding the first option, "The Fool's Way," compare Lewis, "The Weight of Glory," 26: "We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased." Regarding the second option, Lewis further argues, "It would be the best line we could take if man did not live forever. But supposing infinite happiness really is there, waiting for us? . . . In that case it would be a pity to find out too late (a moment after death) that by our supposed 'common sense' we had stifled in ourselves the faculty of enjoying it." Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 136.

[121] It is interesting to compare Adorno-Horkheimer to Lewis' comments on the poet William Morris, a prominent socialist/communist. In Morris, Lewis finds a "dialectic of natural desire," which

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roads, Lewis proposes "The Christian Way," which states,

> Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire: well, there is such a thing as sex. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. If none of my earthly pleasures satisfy it, that does not prove that the universe is a fraud. Probably earthly pleasures were never meant to satisfy it, but only to arouse it, to suggest the real thing. If that is so, I must take care, on the one hand, never to despise, or be unthankful for, these earthly blessings, and on the other, never to mistake them for the something else of which they are only a kind of copy, or echo, or mirage. I must keep alive in myself the desire for my true country, which I shall not find till after death. . . . I must make it the main object of life to press on to that other country and to help others to do the same.[122]

Remember, nature makes nothing in vain. Lewis speaks of innate desires, in other words natural desires as opposed to artificial desires one might acquire over time but are not inherent to human nature. For example, a person naturally experiences hunger, which should lead a person to reasonably conclude that such a thing as food exists. Of course, the mere experience of the desire does not guarantee a person will eat; he or she may starve to death in the end. However, the desire does, and should, lead to the probable conclusion that the object of the desire is real and its attainment possible.[123] Moreover, like the shared moral principles of the *Tao*, throughout the world, and

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consists of a tension felt "between the love of mortal life and the longing for immortality." Lewis, "William Morris," 228. Lewis explicitly connects this tension in Morris with the social and political Left. Moreover, what he says of Morris' "dialectic of natural desire" is very applicable to Adorno-Horkheimer. Throughout their writings one finds both a desire to liberate or emancipate mortal life and a yearning for something beyond this life. But, given their philosophical commitments, they are unable to resolve this tension. Moreover, like Morris, they ignore, suppress, or refuse to address "the great bar of black that runs across the shield of man" (the eventual heat death of the universe) in order to mark a space for the possibility of human happiness. But, as Lewis says, this is ultimately an act of self-deception (230-31).

[122] Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 136-37.

[123] Adorno seeks to refute such reasoning, "The ontological need can no more guarantee its object than the agony of the starving assures them of food. But no doubts of such guarantees plague a philosophical movement once destined for better things: it was for this reason as much as for any other that it became untruthfully affirmative." Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 65. Yet, Lewis retorts, "At one time I was impressed by Arnold's line 'Nor does the being hungry prove that we have bread.' But, surely, tho' it doesn't prove that one particular man will *get* food, it *does* prove that there is such a thing as food? i.e., if we were a species that didn't normally eat, wasn't designed to eat, would one feel hungry?" C. S. Lewis to Sheldon Vanauken of December 23, 1950, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 3, *Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy 1950-1963*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 76; emphasis original.

expressed in a variety of cultural forms, we discover people attesting to something like the experience of what Lewis calls *Sehnsucht*, Joy, intense longing, the desire for immortality, for what is eternal. Yet, no object of this world is (or has been) capable of satisfying this desire. Therefore, it is rational and reasonable to conclude another world exists beyond the natural one—and, as Lewis says, that *I was made for it.* In addition, many of the pleasures, and much of the happiness, of this world, though not meant to satisfy the desire, they do serve "to arouse it, to suggest the real thing." They are copies, echoes, mirages of "my true country."[124]

Critics might charge that Lewis' appeal to heaven is not so much a longing for another world as a looking for this-worldly comfort in religion (i.e., Marx's famous "opiate of the masses"). But, he responds, "We find thus by experience that there is no good applying to Heaven for earthly comfort. Heaven can give heavenly comfort; no other kind. And earth cannot give earthly comfort either." This is because, once again, faced with the cosmological (or eschatological) fact of the projected end of our universe—"There is no earthly comfort in the long run."[125] Yet, for many, practically speaking, this may indeed be the starting place for the initial breaking through of the dialectic of enlightenment or what Lewis calls the "evil enchantment of worldliness."[126] Besides, Lewis is not embarrassed or surprised by the connection between religion and desire: "For the essence of religion, in my view, is the thirst for an end higher than natural ends; the finite self's desire for, and acquiescence in, and self-rejection in favor

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[124] This is another one of Lewis' expressions for the object of this desire. Additionally, he refers to the following: "the fatherland," "another world," "the Unearthly," "Beauty," "Wonder," "the transtemporal," "the eternal world," "infinite happiness," "infinite joy," "immortality," "the glory," "heaven" or "Heaven," "the Real Thing," "Other," "naked Other," "the One," and, finally, "God."

[125] Lewis, *Four Loves*, 139. Cf. C. S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed* (1961; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 25.

[126] For example, Lewis concedes, "I am quite ready to describe *Sehnsucht* as 'spilled religion,' provided it is not forgotten that the spilled drops may be full of blessing to the unconverted man who licks them up, and therefore begins to search for the cup whence they were spilled. For the drops will be taken by some whose stomachs are not yet sound enough for the full draught." Lewis, "Christianity and Culture," 23n.

of, an object wholly good and wholly good for it."[127] This is the antidote to the

Enlightenment's maxim of self-preservation, and that is self-rejection, self-abandonment,

abdication of self. For after all, "to lose one's life is to save it."[128] Furthermore, Lewis

identifies this wholly good object, wholly good for the self, with Eternal Reason and the

source of the *Tao*, being absolutely and perfectly good.

In sum, whereas in chapter 4 the theological focus was placed on the rational

nature of God (God as self-existent Truth), and in chapter 5 the emphasis was on the

moral nature of God (God as self-existent Goodness), finally, here the attention is given

to the much more elusive yet longed for beautiful, living nature of God (God as self-

existent Beauty or Life).[129]

Utopian Visions and False Infinites

Not only is Lewis skeptical of utopian visions concerning this world, so are

Adorno-Horkheimer though they maintain the necessity of such visions. The early

writings of Adorno-Horkheimer are strongly Marxist through and through, but by the

time of their writing of *Dialectic*, they had become disillusioned with Marx's doctrine of

the dictatorship of the proletariat and the possibility of achieving the communist dream of

utopia through political action and revolutionary means.[130] Moreover, based on their

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[127] C. S. Lewis, "Religion without Dogma?," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 131.

[128] Mark 8:35 (ESV).

[129] Lewis explains that a picture is admirable not simply because it is admired or because if it is not something disagreeable might result, but because "admiration is the correct, adequate or appropriate, response to it." Moreover, he says, "It was from this end, which will seem to some irreverent, that I found it best to approach the idea that God 'demands' praise. He is that Object to admire which (or, if you like, to appreciate which) is simply to be awake, to have entered the real world; not to appreciate which is to have lost the greatest experience, and in the end to have lost all." Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*, 92. Thus, God deserves, demands, or merits praise as *adequate* or appropriate to Him, adequate as in an idea being adequate to its object, in this case, as "*the supremely beautiful and all-satisfying Object*" (92-93; emphasis added).

[130] As Albrecht Wellmer explains,

Consequently, the revolution anticipated by Marx and still postulated by the early Horkheimer could no longer be thought of as the obvious possibility of a collective process of emancipation. Rather, what a revolution would demand had become the almost impossible, since it would have to undo the

commitment to critical theory and their method of determinate negation, one is prohibited from making any positive outlines for utopia or definite descriptions of what its attainment would look like in reality. Such portrayals would be subject to the same problem of reification as other positive claims about the nature of reality. Thus, as a *via negativa*, one can only say what this reality *is not* rather than proclaim what *it is*. For example, Adorno-Horkheimer look to art and the aesthetic for its power to expose the status quo. Yet, John Hughes emphasizes that "despite this favorable account of the political power of the aesthetic, its utopian elements are only ever negative. There can be no positive depiction of this utopia, or how it should be attained, let alone the recognition of anything as the positive advent of these utopian realities."[131] Thus, Adorno confesses the impotence of both theory and art to bring about a concrete utopia, even when they are practiced negatively. No consolation is to be found in these endeavors, philosophical, political, or aesthetic.

Nevertheless, at times we get a glimpse in Adorno-Horkheimer of what they seem to have in mind, at least in general outline, concerning a real emancipation or liberation of humanity. For example, they speak of utopia as a "reconciliation between nature and the self," "the idea of the community of free individuals," "free agreement,"

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very dialectics of enlightenment that had so deeply *de-formed* the possible subjects of a revolution that they could not possibly satisfy the conditions that Horkheimer had postulated with respect to a genuine revolutionary process. The revolution, in other words, would have to break through a dialectic of enlightenment, the blind continuation of which all hitherto revolutions had been.

Albrecht Wellmer, "On Critical Theory," *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 81, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 708, *MasterFILE Premier*, EBSCO*host*; emphasis original.

[131] John Hughes, "Unspeakable Utopia: Art and the Return to the Theological in the Marxism of Adorno and Horkheimer," *Cross Currents* 53, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 477-78, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*. Hughes' further remarks reveal the central problem is critical theory's negative dialectic. Hughes explains that Adorno's utopia "is properly unrepresentable because it nowhere exists, and any imaginings of it are inescapably implicated in the negative realities which produce these fantasies" (478). Cf. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*. On the role of art as negative critique, note the impotence of this approach given "the poison of subjectivism." Art is stripped of its power to expose injustice when the objective distinction between just and unjust is lost on humanity. Both high and low art may revel in depictions of debauchery and decadence, while appealing to a seared conscience no longer pricked or pained, but only entertained and amused. Horkheimer seems to agree: the culture industry "manages to incorporate as its own ornament even criticism, negative art, resistance." Horkheimer, "Schopenhauer Today," 64-65.

the eradication of "the power to dispose of the labor of others," and the "idea of a truly human society."[132] Yet, once again, they are hamstrung by their negative critique. Adorno-Horkheimer are extremely sensitive to the problem of false infinites, absolutes, or truth-claims about the whole, which they associate with identitarian, reifying, or mythical thinking. Thus, in *Dialectic* they speak of abolishing "the false absolute, the principle of blind power."[133] Both religious and enlightenment thinking is guilty of making positive pronouncements regarding the truth of the whole.[134] Accordingly, Adorno writes,

> The materialist longing to grasp the thing aims at the opposite: it is only in the absence of images that the full object could be conceived. Such absence concurs with the theological ban on images. Materialism brought that ban into secular form by not permitting Utopia to be positively pictured; this is the substance of its negativity. At its most materialistic, materialism comes to agree with theology.[135]

Furthermore, Adorno-Horkheimer draw upon the Jewish prohibition of the name (*Bilderverbot*) with its prohibition against identifying anything finite as infinite.[136] This applies as much to finite objects in the natural world, which can become *physical* idols, as well as the *psychical* idols in the form of ideas or concepts of infinity. Regarding

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[132] See, respectively, Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 71; Max Horkheimer, "The Authoritarian State," in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, ed. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (New York: Continuum, 1995), 113; and Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason*, v.

[133] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 33. Cf. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 13-15.

[134] Again, Adorno states, "The whole is false." Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 50. Cf. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 204-5: "There is no sense in blaming or praising the Whole, nor, indeed, in saying anything about it. Even if you persist in hurling Promethean or Hardyesque defiances at it, then, since you are part of it, it is only that same Whole which through you 'quietly declaims the cursings of itself.'"

[135] Adorno, *Negative Dialectic*, 207.

[136] Regarding the Jewish prohibition of the name (*Bilderverbot*), Adorno-Horkheimer explain how this makes the Jewish religion resistant to myth. Ancient Judaism provided a disenchanted view of the world by which it both propitiated and yet negated magic in the idea of God. Accordingly, they write, "The Jewish religion brooks no word which might bring solace to the despair of all mortality. It places all hope in the prohibition on invoking falsity as God, the finite as the infinite, the lie as truth. The pledge of salvation lies in the rejection of any faith which claims to depict it, knowledge in the denunciation of illusion." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 17. Thus, they contrast the Jewish approach of negation with any "guaranteed paths to redemption" (17-18). Moreover, Horkheimer laments, "Crimes committed *in the name of God* are a recurrent theme in the history of Christian Europe." Max Horkheimer, "Theism and Atheism," in *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. Matthew J. O'Donnell et al., Radical Thinkers (New York: Seabury Press, 1974; repr., New York: Verso, 2013), 34, Kindle; emphasis added.

enlightenment thought, the same prohibition applies to any concept of the Absolute,

whether material (naturalism) or spiritual (idealism). Moreover, this is one of their

reasons for refusing to positively describe utopia, which they assert can only be

negatively thought or expressed. Hence, they prohibit or reject any hypostatization of a

positive, substantive utopian vision for humanity, demanding a purely negative one

instead.[137]

          On reconciliation. Adriana Benzaquén elaborates on this connection between

Adorno-Horkheimer's negative utopian vision and the Jewish concept of *reconciliation*.

She writes,

> "Reconciliation is the highest notion of Judaism, and expectation is its whole
> meaning," write Horkheimer and Adorno in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. They also
> name their own utopian vision "reconciliation." Adorno claims that there is
> something inherent in the *idea* of reconciliation that precludes its discursive
> formulation: "Irreconcilably, the idea of reconcilement bars its affirmation in a
> concept." Likewise, a future that is expected to be different (utopian, reconciled)
> cannot be described with categories taken from the present. No present categories
> would be adequate to describe the radically different future, *if it is to be* radically
> different.[138]

Benzaquén further explains what critical theory does and does not have in common with

Judaism regarding reconciliation. She writes,

> Like Judaism, critical theory aims at reconciliation; unlike Judaism, it does not
> believe that there are any *guarantees* that utopia will inexorably come about. Thus,
> expectation cannot mean the same thing for Jews and for critical philosophers. . . .
> Expectation . . . is understood by Adorno and Horkheimer as negative thinking.
> Negative thinking criticizes the existent as that which can and should change, and in
> so doing it marks the space of an absence. That absence, however, is not to be filled

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[137] Horkheimer writes, "Every finite being—and humanity is finite—which gives itself airs as the ultimate, the highest, the unique, becomes an idol with a demonic ability to change its identity and take on another meaning." Horkheimer, "Schopenhauer Today," 80. Cf. Lewis, *Four Loves*, 6: "[L]ove begins to be a demon the moment he begins to be a god."

[138] Benzaquén, "Thought and Utopia," 150; emphasis original; quoting Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 165; Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 145. Moreover, according to Horkheimer, "in regard to the essential kind of change at which the critical theory aims, there can be no corresponding concrete perception of it until it actually comes about. If the proof of the pudding is in the eating, the eating here is still in the future." Max Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory," in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1968; repr., New York: Continuum, 1995), 220-21. Recall Lewis' critique of the "cult of futurism" (see above).

with images or given a positive content; it is to remain *as* absence, as possibility. Negative thinking stays *on this side* of the change it seeks.[139]

Thus, departing from traditional Judaism, critical theory precludes any positive pictures, images, or guarantees of utopia; hence, the sole emphasis is given to negative thinking, reflection on an absence, the *possibility* of change only, while paradoxically staying on the opposite side of it.

However, this expectation sounds similar to Lewis' "desire without hope," especially when considering the problem of the eventual fate of the universe. Another problem is how one validly recognizes an "absence" (a strongly value-laden concept in Adorno-Horkheimer), and even more so, how one moves from a mere absence to the critical judgment that something ought to be different, without any transcendent standard for making such normative judgments. Adorno claims, "The physical moment tells our knowledge that suffering ought not to be, that things should be different. 'Woe speaks: "Go."'"[140] Similarly, Lewis concurs that our experience informs us suffering should not be: "Pain is unmasked, unmistakable evil; every man knows that something is wrong when he is being hurt." But, he further describes this knowledge as grounded in natural law.[141] A mere "physical moment" cannot "tell" one anything, yet the moment awakens

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[139] Benzaquén, "Thought and Utopia," 151; emphasis original. Moreover, Benzaquén makes an intriguing connection between Horkheimer and another member of the early Frankfurt School, Walter Benjamin. Benjamin proposed a view of historical materialism, but one that had a very strong connection to Jewish theology with Messianic overtones. She explains how Horkheimer, in his "Authoritarian State," "follows Benjamin in rejecting the progressive view of history." Thus, for Horkheimer, "the Messianic is the revolutionary" (156). It is interesting at this point to note the type of language Benjamin, Horkheimer (and Benzaquén) use of this Messianic revolution: "a qualitative leap," "*something else*, new, different," "making the continuum of history explode," and "(the advent of) the radically other." Similarly, Brantlinger offers the following assessment of Adorno: "His thinking becomes apocalyptic to the degree that he conceives of all history as domination, to be broken only by a future revolution that, because of its uniqueness and improbability, acquires the character of a miracle, a Judgment Day that will bring history itself to a close." Brantlinger, *Bread and Circuses*, 226. Intriguingly, all of the above closely parallels the Christian doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ. Cf. C. S. Lewis, "The World's Last Night," in *The World's Last Night: And Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1960; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002).

[140] Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 203.

[141] Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 90. He explains, "But pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world. A bad man, happy, is a man without the least inkling that his actions do not 'answer,' that they are not in accord with the laws of the universe" (91).

or arouses within the mind the moral knowledge (i.e., conscience) that suffering ought to be negated, based on the intuitive grasp of the principles of the *Tao* inscribed in human nature by God. Hence, there is a fundamental difference between the two thoughts *I am experiencing pain* and *I ought not to be experiencing pain*. The former tells what "is" the case and is purely descriptive. The latter tells what "ought" to be the case and is prescriptive, thus presupposing a transcendent, moral standard for its justification. But, again, critical theory lacks a normative standard. Accordingly, for Lewis, both moments of pain and moments of desire function as "signposts," pointing us to the way things should be in this world and to a hope for a better world in the hereafter, one completely free of pain and suffering: "Joy is the serious business of Heaven."[142] Actually, Adorno-Horkheimer's utopian vision is something like the photographic negative of what Lewis claims are the positive promises of Christianity as a reward for believers in their glorified existence in heaven. Indeed, Lewis frequently opposes his heavenly vision to the utopian one.[143]

In some respects, Lewis might actually agree with the critical theorists, based on his distinction between lived and argued dialectic, that any discursive formulation of

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[142] Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm*, 93. Compare Adorno-Horkheimer on the antithesis of the culture industry's cheap laughter: "What is infernal about wrong laughter is that it compellingly parodies what is best, reconciliation. Joy, however, is austere: *res severa verum gaudium*." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 112. *Res severa verum gaudium* translates as "True joy is a serious thing," from Seneca, "Letter 23," in *Letters from a Stoic: Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium*, trans. Robin Campbell (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1969).

[143] See Lewis on the five promises of Scripture, in "The Weight of Glory," 34-46. Also, see C. S. Lewis, "Membership," in *The Weight of Glory: And Other Addresses*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: Macmillan, 1949; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001). Here Lewis describes the positive, heavenly vision, based on the New Testament concept of *membership*. Cf. Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4:25; 5:30. Membership is central to Lewis' thinking about the nature of society and culture, and brings to completion some of his ideas regarding the fulfillment of human nature implicit in *Abolition*. Lewis distinguishes three types of life: the collective life, one's personal and private life, and life in the Body of Christ. Not only are these distinct, but Lewis further describes them as existing in a hierarchical relationship. Given this hierarchy, apart from membership in the Body of Christ, the former two types of life remain fragmented and unsatisfying. Thus, Lewis opposes his religiously informed perspective to both collectivism and individualism. Cf. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 185-86. Adorno-Horkheimer's writings show that they also ardently oppose the extremes of collectivism and individualism, while opining and groping for something like the communion that Lewis claims can only be found through membership in the mystical Body of Christ.

utopia will fall short of "the Real Thing." However, we not only try and think it but we also experience *glimpses* of it in the lived dialectic. In addition, given the limitations of the intellectual concept, the meaning of reconciliation must also be imaginatively grasped. But, then again, whether conceptual, experiential, or imaginative, limitations remain. Lewis agrees reconciliation cannot be adequately encapsulated in "categories taken from the present." Of course, such categories would not be adequate to the thing they seek to envision. But, the failure of one's ideas or speech to adequately describe the taste of a peach does not require one to forgo eating peaches, to deny their objective existence, or refuse to make positive statements about them. As this is true for desired objects of the natural world, it is likewise the case that valid rational inferences can be made about the desired Object of the supernatural world, based upon one's experiential data from the dialectic of desire. For these reasons and more, Lewis does not shy away from affirming the positive infinity of the God revealed in Christianity.[144]

"A new heaven and a new earth." Benzaquén is much more confident in the expectation for a this-worldly utopia based upon negative thinking than Adorno-Horkheimer ever were. It is true that, even after *Dialectic*, the later Adorno writes,

> Philosophy, which once seemed obsolete, lives on because the moment to realize it was missed. The summary judgment that it had merely interpreted the world, that resignation in the face of reality had crippled it in itself, becomes a defeatism of reason after the attempt to change the world miscarried.[145]

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[144] Recall Lewis on Christianity's affirmation of "the positive infinity of the living yet superpersonal God." Lewis "Poison of Subjectivism," 80-81. Cf. Lewis, *Miracles*, chap.11, "Christianity and 'Religion,'" 129-50.

[145] Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 3. Benzaquén explains, "Adorno's words might be construed as a reversal of Marx's thesis," referring to Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it." Benzaquén, "Thought and Utopia," 149; citing Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in *The Marx/Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker, 143-45, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979). On both the limits yet tenuous hope of philosophy, Horkheimer likewise writes, "Philosophical theory itself cannot bring it about that either the barbarizing tendency or the humanistic outlook should prevail in the future. However, by doing justice to those images and ideas that at given times dominated reality in the role of absolutes . . . and that have been relegated in the course of history, philosophy can function as a corrective of history, so to speak." Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason*, 186. Also, see Max Horkheimer, "The Social Function of Philosophy," in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1968; repr., New York: Continuum, 1995). Notice Horkheimer's admission of the need for absolutes. Thus, in one sense,

Indeed, the critical theorists acknowledge the role philosophy or thought (even if only negative) plays in the effort to change the world. But, over time they grew increasingly pessimistic about the possibility of such a change through philosophical critique, due to the totalizing effects of the culture industry.

Lewis also believes philosophy has a critical contribution to make to effecting cultural change. He writes, "Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered."[146] Yet, Lewis does not place his expectation for change in the philosophical endeavor or any other product of human thought, imagination, or culture.[147] Consistent with Lewisian thought, mere philosophy is only a bastardized theology, an "understanding without direction from another" and "freed from all tutelage."[148] By contrast, Christian philosophy is the return of the prodigal son. Thus, for Lewis, the only hope for reconciliation, for a radically different world, is indeed *other*-worldly, and is only found in the three-personal God: the Father of heaven, revealed in Jesus Christ the Son (the *Logos*, the Eternal Word of God), and the fruit-bearing ministry of the Holy Spirit.[149]

On this note, Lewis writes, "New heavens and earth—the resurrection of the body—how we have neglected these doctrines and indeed left the romantics and even the

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Adorno-Horkheimer give something of a backhanded compliment to Lewis' dialectic of desire. Although they refuse to affirm any actual transcendence, they operate based upon a posited transcendence, clinging to transcendent intellectual principles of truth, logic, and reason, as well as transcendent moral principles of goodness, justice, and freedom. For a discussion of Horkheimer on posited transcendence vs. actual transcendence, see Bryan Lee Wagoner, "The Subject of Emancipation: Critique, Reason and Religion in the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Paul Tillich" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2012), 281-82, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

[146] Lewis, "Learning in War-Time," 58.

[147] Lewis writes, "If we had foolish un-Christian hopes about human culture, they are now shattered. If we thought we were building up a heaven on earth, if we looked for something that would turn the present world from a place of pilgrimage into a permanent city satisfying the soul of man, we are disillusioned, and not a moment too soon." Lewis, "Learning in War-Time," 63.

[148] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 68; quoting Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?," *Practical Philosophy*, trans. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 17.

[149] See Lewis, on "The Three-Personal God," in *Mere Christianity*, 160-65.

Marxists to step into the gap."[150] Whereas liberal theologians abandoned such notions for a "Christianity-and-water" view, Lewis himself advocates for and staunchly defends a robust, supernatural vision of Christianity, including the doctrines of the Incarnation and Resurrection of Jesus Christ and the future New Creation.[151] Accordingly, for him the answer to the disenchantment of the world is its re-enchantment through these fundamental Christian truths, theoretically, practically, and imaginatively speaking. Besides, Adorno-Horkheimer cannot avoid drawing upon similar theological language, concepts, and themes to express (even if negatively) their great expectation and messianic hope for a better world—"a yearning for the homeland."[152] Adorno-Horkheimer yearn for the "unspeakable utopia" of which Lewis both humbly and boldly speaks.

But, Adorno-Horkheimer seek to demythologize their sense of yearning or longing. They cite in approval Novalis' definition of all philosophy as "homesickness," but only to the extent that the longing he describes is "not dissipated in the phantasm of a lost original state, but homeland, and nature itself, are pictured as something that have had first to be wrested from myth."[153] Homeland is to be found in the natural world, and it represents the state of having escaped from myth for, on their view, "the concept of homeland is opposed to myth."[154] Moreover, confined to a this-worldly interpretation of their experience, Adorno-Horkheimer offer a different interpretation of homesickness,

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[150] C. S. Lewis to Dom Bede Griffiths, May 10, 1945, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 2, *Books, Broadcasts, and the War, 1931-1949*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 648. Lewis also writes, "If the real theologians had tackled this laborious work of translation about a hundred years ago, when they began to lose touch with the people (for whom Christ died), there would have been no place for me." C. S. Lewis, "Rejoinder to Dr. Pittenger," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 183.

[151] One can only wonder what difference it might have made had Adorno-Horkheimer been familiar with Lewis and/or his writings instead of the influence of liberal theologians like Paul Tillich. For a detailed discussion of Adorno-Horkheimer's relationship with Tillich, see Wagoner, "The Subject of Emancipation."

[152] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 60.

[153] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 61.

[154] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 60.

comparing it to the escape into pleasure from civilization. They explain how pleasure is a

social phenomenon arising from alienation, which grows out of civilization, "the fixed

order from which it yearns to return to the very nature from which that order protects it."

Accordingly, pleasure is the correlative of the "homesickness of those enmeshed in

civilization, the 'objective despair' of those who had to turn themselves into elements of

the social order."[155] In like manner, the yearning for the homeland, or the experience of

homesickness, results from the alienation brought on by civilization. They are also

correlatives. In other words, the source of yearning is fundamentally this-worldly, not

other-worldly. Nonetheless, Adorno-Horkheimer's yearning is clearly for more than

what is offered in the course of this world. Lewis just might have asked of Adorno-

Horkheimer, "Do you think it all meant nothing, all the longing? The longing for

home?"[156]

The Return of the Theological

Even with their restricted this-worldly emphasis, one cannot help but notice the

deeply religious elements of Adorno-Horkheimer's writings. John Hughes, in his essay

"Unspeakable Utopia," is incredibly insightful in his recognition of these elements. In

fact, he claims their writing represents a "return to the theological" within the Marxist

tradition, despite what suspicions they still had regarding religion and their general

hostility towards theology. He also points to the presence of a theological hope that

remains embedded in their work.[157]

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[155] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 82.

[156] Lewis, *Till We Have Faces*, 76. Compare to Lewis' character of the Unicorn who finally arrives in the New Narnia: "I have come home at last! This is my real country! I belong here. This is the land I have been looking for all my life, though I never knew it till now." C. S. Lewis, *The Last Battle*, illus. Pauline Baynes (London: The Bodley Head, 1956; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 196.

[157] Hughes begins his essay by discussing the connection between the Marxist tradition and theology, noting how "A specter has haunted the Marxist tradition from its origins to the present day: the specter of theology." Hughes, "Unspeakable Utopia," 475. But, he states that Adorno-Horkheimer's "rehabilitation of the cultural can be seen as a return to the theological" (476). Moreover, Hughes notes how, despite their suspicion of religion, Adorno-Horkheimer draw on theology for "hope," though it is only a "negative hope" (476).

Only a semblance of truth. What one finds in Adorno-Horkheimer is a transposition of the themes of religion into the spheres of politics and aesthetics. For example, Horkheimer writes, "Art, since it became autonomous, has preserved the utopia that evaporated from religion."[158] But, recall the critical theorists' pessimism due to the impotence of the aesthetic (as of philosophical theorizing and political activism) in bringing about utopia. Thus, somewhat ironically, Adorno-Horkheimer's method of determinate negation, or negative dialectic, serves as a case study which seems to confirm Lewis' method of the dialectic of desire. The results of their negative criticism seem to point them to the semblance of truth in Christianity in the end. For example, Hughes draws attention to Horkheimer's yearning for transcendence, a transcendent otherness, even for the "Someone Other" of Christianity. He writes,

> Discussing threats to freedom, after a surprising profession of Jewish faith in an aside, Horkheimer makes the following extraordinary claim: "The ideas which can relativize such experience are, in the last analysis, inseparable from theology, and as they fade, the world of numbers is becoming the only valid one." Transcendence itself is the necessary foundation for the hope that things might be otherwise: "Does not Christianity . . . stand in utter opposition to conformism, however much secular authority may have been indebted to religion in this respect? Non-conformity, freedom, self-determined obedience to Someone Other than the status quo may be regarded as typically Christian realities."[159]

Thus, the late Horkheimer was moving away from atheism, confessing a form of Judaism, and finding certain counter-cultural aspects of Christianity quite appealing.

For further reading on Adorno-Horkheimer on religion, see Michael R. Ott, *Max Horkheimer's Critical Theory of Religion: the Meaning of Religion in the Struggle from Human Emancipation* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001); Raymond Guess and Margarete Kohlenbach, eds., *The Early Frankfurt School and Religion* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Eduardo Menieta, ed. *The Frankfurt School and Religion: Key Writings by the Major Figures* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Christopher Craig Brittain, *Adorno and Theology* (London: T & T Clark, 2010). For those who argue for a sympatico relationship between critical theory and Christianity, see Gary M. Simpson, *Critical Social Theory: Prophetic Reason, Civil Society, and Christian Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002); Paul Lakeland, *Theology and Critical Theology*: *The Discourse of the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990).

[158] Horkheimer, "Art and Mass Culture," 275.

[159] Hughes, "Unspeakable Utopia," 483; quoting Max Horkheimer, "Threats to Freedom," in *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. Matthew J. O'Donnell et al., Radical Thinkers (New York: Seabury Press, 1974; repr., New York: Verso, 2013), 157, 149, Kindle.

Interestingly, his shift in language from the expectation for something other to the extolling of obedience to "Someone Other" mirrors the language Lewis uses of God as the source of the moral law in *Mere Christianity*.[160] Hughes also describes Adorno-Horkheimer's attraction to Christian anthropology for the contributions it can make to resistance.[161] Also, like Benzaquén and Brantlinger, Hughes shows how this theological hope finds expression in a form of Jewish messianism, especially for the later Horkheimer. This messianic hope further translates into an appreciation for a Christian ethic, or praxis, based on charity or love of neighbor.[162] In fact, Horkheimer acknowledges this form of love had its origins in the Judeo-Christian theological tradition.[163] For these reasons and more, the later Horkheimer began to recognize the

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[160] Especially in bk. 1, where Lewis refers to God variously as the "Someone Behind" the universe, the "Someone Else," and the "Somebody." See Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, chaps. 1-5. Moreover, consider how Adorno's discussion in *Negative Dialectics* begins with his critical discussion of "the ontological need," but by the end of the book this morphs into a theological need that he seems inclined towards.

[161] Hughes writes, "Horkheimer believes that traditional theological anthropology can preserve a radical sense of freedom neglected by the deterministic Soviet materialists." Hughes, "Unspeakable Utopia," 483. For example, Horkheimer writes, "'Soul' is becoming, in retrospect as it were, a pregnant concept, expressing all that is opposed to the indifference of the subject who is ruled by technology and destined to be a mere client. Reason divorced from feeling is now becoming the opposite of *Anima* or soul." Max Horkheimer, "The Soul," in *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. Matthew J. O'Donnell et al., Radical Thinkers (New York: Seabury Press, 1974; repr., New York: Verso, 2013), 60, Kindle. Cf. Max Horkheimer, "The Concept of Man," in *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. Matthew J. O'Donnell et al., Radical Thinkers (New York: Seabury Press, 1974; repr., New York: Verso, 2013), 14, Kindle.

Hughes continues,

Adorno is not entirely without similar claims, as when he asserts that the resurrection of the dead takes seriously the inseparability of the spiritual and physical. Or when he insists: "The self should not be spoken of as the ontological ground, but at the most theologically, in the name of its likeness to God. He who holds fast the self and does away with theological concepts helps to justify the diabolical positive, naked interest. Hughes, "Unspeakable Utopia," 483-84; quoting Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 154; cf. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 207, 400-402.

[162] Hughes refers to their concern with the theological implications for "the 'eschatological' questions of hope for the future and the 'ethical' question of what praxis might contribute to that hope. Thus Horkheimer links this hope with Judaism's messianism, which persists in a weaker form in Christianity's hope for the Messiah's return and the consummation of the kingdom of Heaven, the 'expectation that against all probability and despite the previous course of history paradise would one day come.'" Hughes, "Unspeakable Utopia," 484; quoting Horkheimer, "Threats to Freedom," 150. Cf. Lewis, chap. on "Hope," in *Mere Christianity*, 134-37. It is worth noting Lewis places this discussion within bk. 3, "Christian Behavior," highlighting the implications of one's eschatological hope for ethical behavior. For Lewis on the theological virtue of charity, or *agape* love, see the following: C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (1936; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958); *Mere Christianity*, chap. 9, "Charity," 129-33; *Four Loves*, chap. 6, "Charity," 116-41; also *Till We Have Faces*.

[163] Horkheimer affirms, "Such selflessness, such a sublimation of self-love into love of others

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impotence of atheism and the greater counter-cultural power of Christianity as he noticed it was believers who seemed to be the locus of greater possibility for resistance to the world system.[164]

Yet, despite Adorno-Horkheimer's reappraisals of theology, in addition to philosophy and art, they ultimately reject (in their published works) theology as a source of hope for utopia in the end. In their estimation, *Christianity is mythology*. Of course, despite all of its excesses and shortcomings, Adorno-Horkheimer promote enlightenment against myth. And interestingly, on this note they turn not to the dialectic of enlightenment in Homer nor the historical period known as the Enlightenment as their model, but to the Jewish Enlightenment in its battle against mythical paganism. As Hughes explains, the Jewish Enlightenment took steps in the direction of a disenchanted, demythologized reality over against the nature religions, and in this regard was successful. But, Christianity regressively reverted back to mythology and magic, infusing the world once again with enchantment, aiming at a re-enchantment of the world.[165] And at the very heart of this regression is "the belief in Christ and his cross." Once again, this is the problem of the false infinite or the absolutization of the finite, in this case applied to the doctrine of the incarnation of Jesus. Even worse, the false belief in "a crucified god" perpetuates a false reconciliation, effectively deifying (and thus justifying) violence and suffering rather than opposing and ending them.[166] For Adorno-

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had its origin in Europe in the Judaeo-Christian idea that truth, love and justice were one . . . The necessary connection between the theistic tradition and the overcoming of self-seeking becomes very much clearer to a reflective thinker of our time than it was to the critics of religion in by-gone days." Horkheimer, "Theism and Atheism," 50; cf. Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason*, 135-38.

[164] Hughes, "Unspeakable Utopia," 485; cf. Horkheimer, "Theism and Atheism," 49.

[165] Hughes notes the problem for the Frankfurt school theorists was "Christianity, particularly in its Catholic form, as a return to magic, a lapse from Jewish Enlightenment. The cult of angels and saints, the restoration of the feminine in the cult of the Virgin." Hughes, "Unspeakable Utopia," 485. It is noteworthy Lewis was a communicant of the Church of England, "not especially 'high,' nor especially 'low,' nor especially anything else." Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, viii. Moreover, he rejected Roman Catholicism for many of the same reasons mentioned here.

[166] Hughes explains that Adorno-Horkheimer conclude, "'Christianity, idealism, and materialism, which in themselves contain truth, are therefore also responsible for the barbaric acts

Horkheimer, Hughes explains,

> Christianity cannot be classed purely as regression from Judaism in that both its universalizing of a national religion and its stress on grace and love beyond law are an advance on Judaism (albeit latent in the latter). Nevertheless the regression to magic is not merely accidental to Christianity but goes to its very heart: the belief in Christ and his cross. The belief in the incarnation absolutizes the finite, Christ is "the deified sorcerer," and this "intellectualization of magic" is the "root of evil." The crucified god is . . . a prematurely contrived reconciliation of civilization and nature which is equally alien to Judaism and the Enlightenment. The confession of the crucified savior supposedly introduced torments into the Godhead itself, thus deifying suffering, with the consequence that the "acceptance of destiny became a religion." . . . The "deception" of Christianity lies in giving a positive meaning to suffering and self-denial. Reconciliation is falsely declared to have arrived, so theology is transformed into theodicy, the justification of God, which is actually the justification of the status quo with all its injustices and oppression.[167]

The true light of the Sun. However, Hughes identifies a number of problems with Adorno-Horkheimer's "negative critique of Christian theology." He indicts their account of the cross as theodicy and Christianity's glorification of suffering as necessary. He explains how this represents a confusion on their part of Christian theology with Hegelian philosophy, such as Hegel's historicism. By contrast, Augustine's explanation of evil as a privation of being proclaims the opposite of the necessity of suffering. In fact, Hughes' criticisms highlights the value of Lewis as an alternative to critical theory. For example, Lewis rejects Hegelianism and historicism. He also espouses the Augustinian view of evil as an unnecessary privation of the good. Although Lewis

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perpetrated in their name.' The betrayal is most evident when these philosophies align themselves with political power." Thus, they found pre-Constantin Christianity more appealing than that of Christendom, which is "described as a betrayal of Christ." Hughes notes their preference for theologians such as Kierkegaard, Luther, Pascal, and Barth, all "belonging to a more negative tradition." Yet, they surprisingly repudiate "the modern demythologizers, whom Horkheimer accuses of emptying faith of any content." Hughes, "Unspeakable Utopia," 486; quoting Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 186; cf. Horkheimer, "Theism and Atheism," 34-37. But, notice the acknowledgement that the violence committed by Christians is a "betrayal of Christ," due to the corrupt associations of Christianity with political power, i.e., Christendom. Cf. Max Horkheimer, "Thoughts on Religion," in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1968; repr., New York: Continuum, 1995). Recall Lewis confesses theocracy is "the worst of all governments." Also, in Lewis' spiritual awakening, he first abandoned materialism, then idealism, but eventually embraced Christianity as having the only real resources for a normative check on abuses of power, including those of Christendom. Finally, it is worth noting Lewis' shared disapproval with Horkheimer of the "modern demythologizers."

[167] Hughes, "Unspeakable Utopia," 485-86; cf. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 145.

affirms the value of pain and suffering in a fallen world for shattering illusions of human self-sufficiency, he denies the necessity and glorification of suffering. Whereas Adorno-Horkheimer claim theology can only provide *consolation* not *reconciliation*, Lewis claims he did not turn to Christianity for consolation, nor did he exploit it to justify the status quo. Instead, he relentlessly criticizes the world system based upon his deeply entrenched theological commitments. In *Abolition*, for example, he opposes "the Way" to "the way of the world."

Finally, speaking of Adorno-Horkheimer's further problem of the "danger of absolutizing the negative," Hughes concludes his essay with the following critical comments:

> If explanations of the world as all or nothing are equally false, why should one refuse mediations that are not purely negative, such as the incarnation in Christianity? More pointedly, it is unclear whether negative dialectics can ever deliver on its promises. If dialectic only produces negation then it remains completely determined by what it negates . . . . It is hard to see how this is anything other than a pseudo-transcendence that could never truly bring anything new. . . . If everything is so soiled that there has never been any virtue breaking through, then it seems resistance is as futile as if there were nothing wrong. In a revealing Platonic image, Adorno and Horkheimer set up too sharp a choice:
>
> > 'The appeal to the sun is idolatry. The sight of the burning tree inspires a vision of the majesty of the day which lights the world without setting fire to it at the same time.'
>
> Yet we do not have to choose simply between man-made fires or looking at the sun; we can also see in the sun's light without looking directly at it and being blinded. For we cannot rule out the possibility that the new will come, even that it might already have been made flesh and dwelt amongst us, for those with eyes to see.[168]

Considering Hughes' concluding thoughts, quite surprising, he nowhere mentions Lewis in this otherwise brilliant essay. For the parallels to Lewis, both conceptually and linguistically, are incredibly striking. Consider Hughes' remarks regarding the use of the Platonic image of the sun in Adorno-Horkheimer. Lewis employs the very same Platonic

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[168] Hughes, "Unspeakable Utopia," 488-89; quoting Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 182. The latter clearly contains an allusion to the burning bush account in Ex. 3:2.

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image in several of his writings. However, unlike the critical theorists, he did not think the appeal to the sun idolatrous but illuminating. Thus, in what is probably the most oft quoted and celebrated line of the Lewisiana corpus, he professes,

> I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.[169]

Lewis concludes *Abolition* with the same visual metaphor of "seeing." On both counts, this metaphor serves to highlight a fundamental distinction between Lewis and the critical theorists. Lewis speaks of the danger of the attempt to see through everything as being the same as not to see. This metaphor aptly applies to Adorno-Horkheimer's negative critique, which demands to see through everything without exception, but becomes blind to any positive knowledge in the end, including even the light of the Sun.[170]

By contrast, Lewis became convinced that the living God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who was revealed indirectly to Moses in the light of the burning bush, spoke once again to Moses on the holy mount, saying of Jesus: "This is my beloved Son: hear him." Moreover, he is the "light of the world," for "the true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world."[171]

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[169] Lewis, "Is Theology Poetry?," 140. For Lewis, it is by looking along the sun's rays that one sees it is there and is able to "see everything else." In his essay "Meditation in a Toolshed," Lewis distinguishes between "looking at" and "looking along." The expression "looking at" refers to the attempts to "see through" things, as in getting to the bottom of them. However, since sight depends upon not seeing through all things (as Lewis says in concluding *Abolition*), one must rely upon, by looking along, that which cannot be seen through in order to see other things. See C. S. Lewis, "Meditation in a Toolshed," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002). For further examples of Lewis' use of the metaphor of the sun and "seeing," see the following: Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*, 64; C. S. Lewis, foreword to Joy Davidman, *Smoke on the Mountain: An Interpretation of the Ten Commandments* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), 8; chap. 12 in C. S. Lewis, *The Silver Chair*, illus. Pauline Baynes (London: The Bodley Head, 1953; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 171-85. Also, for a further critical analysis of the role of "seeing" or "sight" and the use of the metaphors of sun and light in Lewis, see Alister E. McGrath, *The Intellectual World of C. S. Lewis* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 83-104.

[170] For uses of the metaphor of the sun for God or the Son of God, consider the following: Mal. 4:2; 2 Sam. 23:4; Ps. 67:1, 84:11; Isa. 60:1; Hos. 6:3; Rev. 22:16. Nevertheless, Adorno, in his final words to *Minima Moralia*, fascinatingly writes, "The only philosophy that can be responsibly practiced in face of despair is the attempt to contemplate all things as they would present themselves from *the standpoint of redemption. Knowledge has no light but that shed on the world by redemption*" (247; emphasis added).

[171] Luke 9:35; John 8:12, 1:9. Cf. Lewis, "Is Theology Poetry?," 128.

Reconciliation, or "Myth became Fact."

Adorno-Horkheimer's insufferable position is captured perfectly in the poetic lines of Matthew Arnold, another culture critic, who described himself as "Wandering between two worlds, one dead, / The other powerless to be born."[172] As Jewish emigrants from Germany to the U.S. during WWII, Adorno-Horkheimer saw themselves as wanderers like Odysseus. Both historically and spiritually, they were yearning for a homeland, but one which seemed nowhere to be found, neither in this world nor the next. Adorno-Horkheimer reject all positive pictures of homeland as mythical. Indeed, "the concept of homeland is opposed to myth."[173] Nonetheless, somewhat surprisingly, if also paradoxically, Adorno-Horkheimer claim that

> the criticism that the Homeric legends "withdraw from the earth" is a warranty of their truth. They "turn to men." The transposition of myths into the novel, as in the adventure story, does not falsify myth so much as drag it into the sphere of time, exposing the abyss which separates it from homeland and reconciliation.[174]

Thus, Adorno-Horkheimer seem to acknowledge myth serves an important role in revealing the absence of homeland and the lack of reconciliation between humanity and nature. They recognize something meaningful in myth even when they vigorously seek to negate it.

For Lewis, the longing for homeland is inextricably bound to the mythical imagination. Instead of seeking to escape or be wrested from myth, he enters into it.[175]

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[172] Matthew Arnold, "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse," in *The Poems of Matthew Arnold*, ed. Kenneth Allott (London: Longmans, Green, 1965), 2.85-86.

[173] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 60.

[174] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 61. The reference to "turn to men" comes from Johann Christian Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843), German poet and philosopher. See Friedrich Hölderlin, "Autumn," in *Selected Poems and Fragments*, ed. Jeremy Adler, trans. Michael Hamburger, 2nd. ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1998). On the transposition of myth into the novel, and myth entering time, compare Lewis in the following: C. S. Lewis, "Myth Became Fact," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper, 63-67 (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); C. S. Lewis, "Transposition," in *The Weight of Glory: And Other Addresses*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: Macmillan, 1949; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001); and Lewis, chap. 12, "The Grand Miracle," in *Miracles*, 173-213.

[175] For more from Lewis on the subject of myth, see his essays "On Myth," "Myth Became Fact," "Is Theism Important?," and *Miracles*, especially chaps. 14-16. Also, see C. S. Lewis, "The Anthropological Approach," in *Selected Literary Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (1969; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). Finally, see McGrath, chap. 3, "A Gleam of Divine Truth: The

He embraces myth for its glimmers of truth and meaning, not discursively grasped but imaginatively gleaned. Moreover, it is in Christ, and Christ alone, that such a fulfillment of utopian visions, immortal longings, comes. He writes, "It might be true, as the materialists must hold, that there is no possible way by which men can arrive at such felicity; or again, as Mr. Eliot and I believe, that there is one Way, and only one."[176] In fact, the ultimate purpose of the *Tao*, like the Jewish Law, is to serve as a schoolmaster to bring people to Christ. In Christ, both universal law and myth ultimately find their fulfillment in the particular, concrete embodiment of both.[177] Therefore, the choice between *either* enlightenment *or* myth is a false choice for in Jesus "Myth became Fact," and it is in the person of the incarnate Son of God, his life, death, and Resurrection, that one finds the resolution to both the dialectic of desire and the dialect of enlightenment, the reconciliation of myth and fact, imagination and reason.

Dialectic of Myth

As noted above, Adorno-Horkheimer have an ambivalent attitude towards Christianity. Whereas the critical theorists represent a return to the theological, finding certain aspects of Christianity quite attractive, they clearly reject the Christian religion due to its perceived associations with myth, magic, and idolatry—all deemed ideological. At its core, Christianity adores and worships Jesus Christ. But, according to Adorno-Horkheimer, this represents a regression from Judaism and Jewish Enlightenment to the

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Concept of Myth in Lewis's Thought," in *Intellectual World*, 55-81.

[176] C. S. Lewis, "Shelley, Dryden, and Mr. Eliot," in *Selected Literary Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper, 187-208 (1969; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 208. By "felicity" he is referring to the fourth act of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, which ends with descriptions of final ecstasy or paradise.

[177] Again, Lewis identifies the *Tao* with Christ. See C. S. Lewis to Clyde S. Kilby, January 11, 1961, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 3, *Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy 1950-1963*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 1227. Paul writes, "So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian" (Gal. 3:24-25; cf. Matt. 5:17-18; Acts 13:38-39; Rom. 3:20-22; 10:4; Heb. 7:18-19). Recall Adorno-Horkeimer speak of "independence from external powers" and "the unconditional freedom from tutelage" as defining "the essence of enlightenment." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 90.

mythical thinking of the nature religions: "To reason, devotion to the adored creature appears as idol worship."[178]

Jewish enlightenment vs. Christian myth. Both ancient Jewish religion and modern enlightenment contribute to the "demise of idolatry." For Judaism, this demise "follows necessarily from the ban on mythology pronounced by Jewish monotheism," a ban which is also "enforced against the changing objects of adoration in the history of thought by that monotheism's secularized form, enlightenment." However, opposed to these two negative forces, "Christianity propagated love" in the positive form of "the pure adoration of Jesus," and "also tried to bring the crystalline radiance of law closer to earthly life by the idea of heavenly grace."[179] But, they write, "The reconciliation of civilization with nature which it sought prematurely to purchase with the doctrine of the crucified God remained as alien to Judaism as to the rigorism of the Enlightenment. Neither Moses nor Kant proclaimed emotion; their icy law knew neither love nor sacrificial pyres."[180]

The concept of the monotheistic Jewish God develops out of a form of henotheism, which believed in a god who was enmeshed in nature as a nature deity. With this development, certain elements of the pre-animist nature deity are retained in the concept of God as an absolute self. This divine absolute self becomes the creator and ruler over a subjugated nature, alienating nature from the deity. Yet, the divine being "is still attainable to thought, which becomes universal through this very relationship to

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[178] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 89. Accordingly, concerning the prohibition of images in the context of a discussion of the belief in Jesus' incarnation, Adorno in the strongest terms writes, "I see no other possibility than an extreme ascesis [or askesis] toward any type of revealed faith, an extreme loyalty to the prohibition of images, far beyond what this originally meant." Theodor Adorno, "Reason and Revelation," in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1963/1969; repr., New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 142.

[179] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 89.

[180] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 89-90.

something supreme, transcendental."[181] God is thus understood as spirit in opposition to nature. The more God is understood as remote, or wholly other, the more terrible he becomes as well: "The God of Judaism demands what he is owed and settles accounts with the defaulter. He enmeshes his creatures in a tissue of debt and credit, guilt and merit."[182]

By contrast, Christianity places greater emphasis on "the moment of grace . . . in God's covenant with men and in the Messianic promise," thus softening the "terror of the absolute."[183] The creature sees its self-reflection in the deity: "the divine mediator is called by a human name and dies a human death. His message is: fear not; the law yields before faith; love becomes greater than any majesty, the only commandment." However, its success in breaking "the spell of nature religion" is bought at the price of "producing ideology once again, in a spiritualized form." Adorno-Horkheimer explain,

> To the same degree as the absolute is brought closer to the finite, the finite is made absolute. Christ, the incarnated spirit, is the deified sorcerer. The human self-reflection in the absolute, the humanization of God through Christ, is the *proton pseudos* [first substitution]. The progress beyond Judaism is paid for with the assertion that the mortal Jesus was God.[184]

This represents anew the problem of the false infinite, or false absolute. Consequently, the progress achieved by Christianity's reflective moment turns into a form of regression,

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[181] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 145.

[182] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 145.

[183] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 145.

[184] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 145. *Proton pseudos* is taken from Aristotle's *Analytics*. One online dictionary explains, "The term relates to Aristotle and the theory of the syllogism, which describes the link between false premises and false conclusions: if the premises are false, if there is an original error, then the conclusion must necessarily be false in spite of the soundness of the intermediary reasoning. The *proton-pseudos* refers to those false premises, the original error." See Encyclopedia.com, s.v. "*proton pseudos*," last modified March 22, 2020, https://www.encyclopedia.com/psychology/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/proton-pseudos. Accordingly, "first lie" or "fundamental error" seems a more accurate translation than the translator's "first substitution." It appears Adorno-Horkheimer are saying Christianity is faulty from its first premise, "the humanization of God through Christ," and thus the whole edifice is built upon a faulty foundation. Similarly, Lewis writes that "error in its own right breeds error—if the first step in an argument is wrong, everything that follows will be wrong." Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 117.

specifically a regression to magical practice or "the spiritualization of magic."[185]

They highlight a further difference between Christianity and Judaism in relation to sacrifice. Ancient Judaism, similar to other Asiatic belief systems, "was hardly separable from national life, from collective self-preservation." Moreover, the Jewish religion's "reshaping of the heathen ritual of sacrifice not only took place in worship and in the mind but determined the form of the labor process. In providing the schema for the latter, sacrifice becomes rational. The taboo is transformed into the rational organization of the work process."[186]

But, Christianity represents a regression from these steps of enlightened progress. Christianity, they claim, "wanted to remain spiritual even where it aspired to power," and its ideological form "repudiated self-preservation by the ultimate sacrifice, that of the man-god, but thereby relegated devalued life to the sphere of the profane: it abolished the law of Moses but rendered what was theirs unto both God and Caesar." Accordingly, what follows is that

> secular authority is either confirmed or usurped, while Christianity acquires a license to manage salvation. Self-preservation is to be conquered [through] the imitation of Christ—by order. In this way self-sacrificing love is stripped of its naivety, severed from natural love and turned to account as credit. The love mediated by ecclesiastical knowledge is presented as immediate love, in which nature and the supernatural are reconciled. Therein lies its untruth: in the fraudulently affirmative interpretation of self-forgetting.[187]

The fraudulence is due to the fact that the institution of the church depends for its survival on people believing salvation comes through obedience to the church's teachings (whether in the form of Catholic works or Protestant faith). But, the church cannot

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[185] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 145. This results from the mind's attribution of a spiritual essence to something that is natural, i.e., the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation.

[186] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 146. Thus, rationality arises from the rules related to the religious cultus and the ritual of sacrifice. Primitive peoples instituted ritual as a means of liberating themselves from fear of the powers of nature. However, this process of liberation "was refined by Judaism into the sanctified rhythm of family and national life" (146).

[187] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 146.

possibly guarantee such a salvation will be attained. Minus this guarantee (or assurance

of salvation), the religious promise of salvation becomes a *nonbinding* agreement. This

has the result of relativizing the church and its authority over "naive believers, for whom

Christianity, supranaturalism, becomes a magic ritual, a nature religion." For these naïve,

simple-minded believers, "religion itself becomes a substitute for religion."[188]

Mythical roots of anti-Semitism. Moreover, those who "convinced

themselves of Christianity as a secure possession, were obliged to confirm their eternal

salvation by the worldly ruin of those who refused to make the murky sacrifice of

reason."[189] Significantly, for Adorno-Horkheimer, this "is the religious origin of anti-

Semitism," which grew out of the bad conscience of Christianity's claim to guarantee

eternal salvation as a secure possession. This led to the persecution of the Jews for their

refusal to sacrifice their own reason through worship of the sacrificed God. Adorno-

Horkheimer trace this hostility between the "religion of the Son" and the "religion of the

Father," through centuries of persecution of the Jews, up to the present barbarism

committed by Hitler and the Nazi regime.[190]

In response to Adorno-Horkheimer's accusation against Christianity of anti-

Semitism, some points are worth mentioning. First, consider the following from

Horkheimer when he later writes,

> The decisive thing, in my opinion, is to awaken the interest that finds its happiness
> in insight into things and men. . . . Anyone who has with full awareness found truth
> in the work of a Jewish poet or a Jewish composer will hardly be inclined to anti-
> Semitism. Anyone who has taken a serious interest in Jewish culture will easily see
> through the nonsense peddled by the propagandists of hatred.[191]

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[188] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 146.

[189] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 147.

[190] As a result, the "adherents of the religion of the Son hated the supporters of the religion of
the Father as one hates those who know better. . . . Anti-Semitism is supposed to confirm that the ritual of
faith and history is justified by ritually sacrificing those who deny its justice." Horkheimer and Adorno,
Dialectic, 147.

[191] Max Horkheimer, "The German Jews," in *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. Matthew

In light of these comments, it is noteworthy Lewis expresses his great respect for and indebtedness to the Jewish people, his acknowledgement of and appreciation for their contributions to human culture, and a deep concern for their persecution by the Nazis.[192] That Lewis was no anti-Semite is evinced by the fact that he corresponded and eventually fell deeply in love with a Jewish poet and writer, whom he eventually married: Helen Joy Davidman, a former atheist and Marxist-Communist from America, who converted to Christianity.[193]

Second, as earlier noted, even Adorno-Horkheimer in their writings, including

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J. O'Donnell et al., *Radical Thinkers* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974; repr., New York: Verso, 2013), 117, Kindle.

[192] Lewis expresses his concern for the persecution of the Jews at a very early date, writing,

> I might agree that the Allies are partly to blame, but nothing can fully excuse the iniquity of Hitler's persecution of the Jews, or the absurdity of his theoretical position. Did you see that he said "The Jews have made *no contribution to human culture* and in crushing them I am doing the *will of the Lord*." Now as the whole idea of the "Will of the Lord" is precisely what the world owes to the Jews, the blaspheming tyrant has just fixed his absurdity for all to see in a single sentence, and shown that he is as contemptible for his stupidity as he is detestable for his cruelty. For the German people as a whole we ought to have charity: but for dictators, "Nordic" tyrants and so on—well, read the chapter about Mr. Savage in the [*Pilgrim's*] *Regress* and you have my views.

C. S. Lewis to Arthur Greeves, November 5, 1933, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 2, *Books, Broadcasts, and the War, 1931-1949*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 128; emphasis original; cf. Lewis, *Pilgrim's Regress*, bk. 4, chap. 6. Lewis also refers to the round-up of Jews in Holland and elsewhere in a letter to his brother in 1940. C. S. Lewis to Warren Lewis, May 18, 1940, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 2, *Books, Broadcasts, and the War, 1931-1949*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 415-16.

[193] See Joy Davidman, *Out of My Bone: The Letters of Joy Davidman*, ed. Don W. King (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009). King notes how from 1938-45, in addition to her other works, Joy published poetry, book reviews, and movie reviews regularly in the *New Masses*, the semi-official weekly magazine of the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) (xiii). Also, in the early 1940s, "the high point of her Communist fervor," she joined the Communist writers' guild, the League of American Writers, and actively promoted their events. She also was on the faculty for the School of Democracy, an anti-fascist, pro-Communist institution in New York City (xviii). King further explains, "However, by the mid-1940s Davidman rejected Communism, in large part because for the first time she read the books of Marx, Lenin, and Engels. What she found there intellectually appalled her" (xviii). For further reading, see Don W. King, "Joy Davidman and the New Masses: Communist Poet and Reviewer," *The Chronicle of the Oxford C. S. Lewis Society* 4, no. 1 (February 2007): 18-44; Don W. King, "Joy Davidman, poet: Letter to a Comrade," The Free Library, September, 22, 2012, https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Joy Davidman, poet: Letter to a Comrade-a0326130677 (originally published in *Christianity and Literature* [Sept 22, 2012]). For a summary, in her own words, of her spiritual journey from secular Judaism to atheism to Communism to Christianity, see Joy Davidman, "The Longest Way Round," in *These Found the Way: Thirteen Converts to Protestant Christianity*, ed. David Wesley Soper (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1951), also found in Davidman, *Out of My Bone*, 83-97. See Lewis, foreword to Joy's *Smoke on the Mountain*, in which he offers his own account of Joy's Communist background and her conversion to Christianity. Finally, see Lyle Dorsett, *And God Came In: The Extraordinary Life of Joy Davidman, Her Life, and Marriage to C. S. Lewis* (New York: Macmillan, 1983).

Dialectic, are careful to distinguish the actual teachings of Jesus from the abuses of these teachings. Likewise, a philosophy should not be judged by its abuses. Although throughout its history Christianity has been poorly represented by those who persecuted Jews in the name of Jesus, it goes without saying that this anti-Semitic behavior clearly contradicts both the person and teachings of the Jewish Jesus of Nazareth (*Yeshua haNotzri*).

Finally, considering Adorno-Horkheimer's Jewish heritage as well as their high regard for the Jewish hope of reconciliation, it is noteworthy what Lewis writes concerning "converted" and "unconverted" Jews:

> In a sense the converted Jew is the only normal human being in the world. To him, in the first instance, the promises were made, and he has availed himself of them. He calls Abraham his father by hereditary right as well as by divine courtesy. He has taken the whole syllabus in order, as it was set; eaten the dinner according to the menu. Everyone else is, from one point of view, a special case, dealt with under emergency regulations. To us Christians the unconverted Jews (I mean no offence) must appear as a Christian *manqué*; someone very carefully prepared for a certain destiny and then missing it. And we ourselves, we christened gentiles, are after all the graft, the wild vine, possessing "joys not promised to our birth"; though perhaps we do not think of this so often as we might. And when the Jew does come in, he brings with him into the fold dispositions different from, and complementary of, ours; as St. Paul envisages in Ephesians ii. 14-19.[194]

Needless to say, for Lewis, Christianity is not a mythical regression from Judaism, but the fulfillment of the messianic promises made to the Jewish people of the coming servant who would be given as "a covenant of the people" of Israel as well as "a light to the Gentiles" bringing "salvation to the end of the earth."[195] Thus, whereas the Enlightenment's promises were a cheat, those of the Jewish enlightenment were brought to fruition.

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[194] Lewis, foreword to *Smoke on the Mountain*, 7-8. It is important to bear in mind that Lewis has the converted Jewess woman who would later become his beloved wife in view in the writing of these words.

[195] Isa. 42:6; cf. 49:6, 60:3; Luke 2:32; Acts 13:47.

Imagination, Meaning, and Myth

Lewis' answer to the disenchantment of the world involves its re-enchantment. This requires more than the rational aspect of the argued dialectic with its appeals to reason, truth, and logic. Re-enchantment also appeals to the experiential aspect of the lived dialectic and the roles of imagination, meaning, and myth. To ignore the latter while exalting the former is one of the fundamental errors of Enlightenment rationality. In its quest to eradicate myth from the human mind, enlightenment reverts to a mythology of its own making as a result, as both Lewis and the critical theorists argue. However, the latter make the same mistake in supposing the mythical is inherently opposed to reason. For them, myth is superstition, false clarity, thought cut off, the end of reason, identity thinking, and so forth.[196] But, as Lewis argues in *Abolition*, human beings, as *animal rationale*, are not reduced to pure intelligences. Humans reason, but they also imagine, feel, dream, create, and desire. We are at once intellectual, volitional, and emotional beings.

The power and value of myth. The problem of the dialectic of enlightenment is that, severed from a transcendent source of truth and meaning capable of satisfying man's reason as well as his imagination, the entwinement of enlightenment and myth is fated to continue due to the incapability of either faculty becoming reconciled with the other.[197] Hence, in its attempts to demythologize reality, reason inevitably re-

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[196] Adorno-Horkheimer write, "False clarity is only another name for myth. Myth was always obscure and luminous at once. It has always been distinguished by its familiarity and its exemption from the work of concepts." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, xvii. Adorno-Horkheimer's distinction between myth and "the work of concepts" seems to closely fit Lewis' view that reason is the organ of truth while imagination is the organ of meaning. However, Lewis does not share their disparaging view of myth. On his view, myth functions as a vehicle for truth and meaning. But, for Adorno-Horkheimer, "Only when subjectivity masters itself by recognizing the nullity of images does it begin to share the hope which images vainly promise. . . . The Promised Land for Odysseus is not the archaic realm of images. . . . [A]ll the images reveal their true essence as shades in the world of the dead, as illusion. . . . [T]he power of myth, transposed into mental forms, survives only as imagination. The realm of the dead, where the disempowered myths gather, is farthest from his homeland, with which it can communicate only from the remotest distance" (59). However, in contrast with the mythical shades of the realm of the dead, consider: "He is not God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. 22:31-2; cf. Mark 12:26-7; Luke 20:37-8).

[197] Horkheimer writes, "These reflections, which underlie my earlier studies as well, support, I hope, the contention that *the rule of freedom*, once brought to pass, *necessarily turns into its opposite*."

mythologizes it with new myths as substitutes for the old ones. This reveals reason's inadequacy in providing a complete account of reality beyond the mere identification or positing of facts. These facts are devoid of value and meaning, categories unquantifiable and incalculable by scientific methodologies and techniques. Hence, this process produces extreme forms of reason and rationality. Due to the inherent incapability of reason to satisfy the heart's deeper yearnings, longings, and desires, the process likewise reverts to radical forms of myth and imagination in order to capture what is missing in the reductionist theories of man and the world. The fundamental problem is that man by nature is not one-dimensional.[198] Both the rational and mythical tendencies err in a single direction, either reducing man to his head or to his belly. Lewis and the critical theorists recognize this error as they seek to navigate a way between Scylla and Charybdis, symbolizing the poles of religious and secular myths.[199] Adorno-Horkheimer attempt to do so by negating the extremes, while refusing to posit anything in their place, leaving only an absence, an empty space. But, this makes critical theory impotent and hopeless in the face of the incredibly powerful forces of enlightenment and myth that fill the void as they continually battle and become entwined.

Lewis advocates a more holistic approach, which avoids the perpetual conflict and entanglement of enlightenment and myth. Once again, Lewis argues that man is neither angel nor animal but *man*, consisting of head, belly, and *heart*. The heart mediates between the other two and seeks to reconcile them through the moral truth of the *Tao* apprehended through reason in order to establish an hierarchical order within

Horkheimer, foreword to *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, para. 3; emphasis added.

[198] Cf. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (New York: Routledge, 1964; repr., Boston: Beacon Press, 1991).

[199] In *Pilgrim's Regress*, Lewis associates the Northern region of his *Mappa Mundi* with the ideologies of materialism, positivism, naturalism, and others, while the Southern region is represented by the ideologies of pantheism, spiritualism, idealism, and others. Both represent extremes of reason and myth, neither purely rational nor purely mythical, but comprising varying degrees of entwinement of each, as well as including philosophical and religious, as well as psychological, sociological, and economical examples.

man. The *Tao* represents the positive values needed to negate the extremes of both reason and desire. But, although right and wrong are a clue to the meaning of the universe, morality does not exhaust this meaning. The law brings about the knowledge of sin; it does not remedy or redeem it.[200] The *re*-cognition of sin and evil in the world exposes the true condition of humanity as fragmented individuals inclined to various extremes of our nature and prone to error, violence, and barbarism. We are fallen creatures for whom no amount of moral instruction, psychoanalysis, dialectical reasoning, social praxis, economic restructuring, is capable of correcting or satisfying. This supports Lewis' thesis that most likely we were "made for another world," and likewise helps explain the natural human desire for one.[201] Moreover, the yearning or longing for a meaningful existence in a world beyond takes imaginative expression in the form of myth, the "organ of meaning." For Lewis, the prescription for the loss of meaning in a demythologized, disenchanted world begins with, but also goes beyond, the set of moral principles contained in the *Tao*, principles no one is capable of keeping. The *Tao* provides the ideal, the template, the model for a good individual and society, thus revealing humanity's true condition as fallen. In addition, myth reveals further clues to the real meaning of and remedy for the human condition. The power and value of myth is that it restores or rehabilitates the significance of things formerly lost in the "stream" of material existence. This is especially so given the role of the culture industry, as Adorno-Horkheimer explain, in stultifying our reason and imagination.[202] Thought and

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[200] Rom. 3:20.

[201] Lewis writes, "Perhaps in a fallen world the social problem can in fact never be solved and we must take more seriously—what all Christians admit in theory—that *our home is elsewhere*." Lewis to Warfield M. Firor, *Collected Letters*, 3:17-18; emphasis added.

[202] See Horkheimer, "Authoritarian State," 116: "The narrow-minded and cunning creatures that call themselves men will some day be seen as caricatures, evil masks behind which a better possibility decays. In order to penetrate those masks, *the imagination would need powers of which fascism has already divested it. The force of imagination is absorbed in the struggle* every individual must wage in order to live" (emphasis added).

imagination are blunted from going outside of the bounds of the present socio-economic and cultural order of reality. But, for Lewis, things reacquire their savor when "dipped in a story."[203] In fact, it is only then that things become *real* to us in our experience. Despite their persistent charge that myth is simply a form of escapism, Adorno-Horkheimer's comment that myths "turn to men" reveals a clue that myth, as Lewis claims, is not a "retreat from reality" but a way of rediscovering it, breaking the spell of disenchantment and making "the real things . . . more themselves." Myth provides glimpses of the positive meaning hidden within the objects of reality and inaccessible through discursive reason alone or determinate negation. Hence, the cure for the dissatisfaction people experience from being subsumed in the culture industry, causing them to tire of "a real landscape," is not found in more scientistic, positivist descriptions of nature, nor in negative critique of the economic system and the mass culture that dulls peoples' sensibilities, but in an appeal to their imagination through myth. Myth makes it possible to break through the "evil enchantment of worldliness," to break through the dialectic of enlightenment, through an imaginative re-enchantment of reality.

"Myth became fact." In his earlier years, as a professed atheist, Lewis held a more "enlightened" view of religion, myth, and mythology, much like Adorno-Horkheimer's as expressed in *Dialectic* and elsewhere.[204] Lewis later rejects the

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[203] Lewis writes,

> The value of the myth is that it takes all the things we know and restores to them the rich significance which has been hidden by "the veil of familiarity." The child enjoys his cold meat (otherwise dull to him) by pretending it is buffalo, just killed with his own bow and arrow. And the child is wise. The real meat comes back to him more savory for having been dipped in a story; you might say that only then it is the real meat. If you are tired of the real landscape, look at it in a mirror. By putting bread, gold, horse, apple, or the very roads into a myth, we do not retreat from reality, we rediscover it. As long as the story lingers in our mind, the real things are more themselves.

C. S. Lewis, review of *The Two Towers* and *The Return of the King*, by J. R. R. Tolkien, in *Image and Imagination: Essays and Reviews*, ed. Walter Hooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 108.

[204] Lewis writes,

You ask me my religious views: you know, I think, that I believe in no religion. There is absolutely

anthropological approach to myth as wholly speculative and unsatisfactory as an

explanation of the mythical need in man.[205] Moreover, unlike the unhistorical legends

and myths of the ancient world, Lewis believes that in Jesus a number of philosophical,

religious, moral, and mythical trajectories all find their *historical* culmination and

fulfillment. He writes, "In Christianity this historical element is strongly re-affirmed.

The object of faith is at once the *ens entium* of the philosophers, the Awful Mystery of

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no proof of any of them, and from a philosophical standpoint Christianity is not even the best. All religions, that is, all mythologies to give them their proper name are merely man's own invention— Christ as much as Loki. Primitive man found himself surrounded by all sorts of terrible things he didn't understand—thunder, pestilence, snakes etc.: what more natural than to suppose that these were animated by evil spirits trying to torture him. These he kept off by cringing to them, singing songs and making sacrifices etc. Gradually from being mere nature-spirits these supposed beings[s] were elevated into more elaborate ideas, such as the old gods: and when man became more refined he pretended that these spirits were good as well as powerful.

Thus religion, that is to say mythology grew up. Often, too, great men were regarded as gods after their death—such as Heracles or Odin: thus after the death of a Hebrew philosopher Yeshuah (whose name we have corrupted into Jesus) he became regarded as a god, a cult sprang up, which was afterwards connected with the ancient Hebrew Jahweh-worship, and so Christianity came into being—one mythology among many, but the one that we happen to have been brought up in.

C. S. Lewis to Arthur Greeves, October 12, 1916, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 1, *Family Letters 1905-1931*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 230-31. Compare with the later post-conversion Lewis, who writes that myth is "at its best, a real though unfocused gleam of divine truth falling on human imagination." Lewis, *Miracles*, 218n1; cf. Lewis, "Religion without Dogma?," 131-32. Also, in his appendix to *Abolition*, "Illustrations of the *Tao*," under the heading Laws of Magnanimity, sec. c., 101, we find: "I know that I hung on the gallows for nine nights, wounded with the spear as a sacrifice to Odin, myself offered to Myself. (Old Norse. *Hávamál*, I.10 in *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*; stanza 139 in Hildebrand's *Lieder der Älteren Edda*. 1922)." Also, see references to the myth of Odin and Nazi ideology in Lewis, "First and Second Things." Adorno-Horkheimer also refer to the myth of Odin's self-sacrifice by being hung on a tree, "a sacrifice of the god to the god," and speak of "Christology, the monotheistic disguise of myth." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, 42. Also, in a footnote, they refer to the "the dialectic of myth, religion, and enlightenment," the first and only occasion they use this expression in *Dialectic* (261n10).

[205] Cf. Lewis, "Shelley, Dryden, and Mr. Eliot," 205. Some of what Lewis says here works as an appropriate criticism of various modernist interpreters of myth like Frazer as well as Adorno-Horkheimer. Lewis notes how in "a reflective age" there is a tendency for reading into stories the "conscious doctrines of the poet." In the case of Adorno-Horkheimer, they seem to make the same error in their eisegesis of Homer's *Odyssey*, for which they "thrust into the story" their own social and economic theories, and so succumb to the "temptation to allegorize." Hence, for Adorno-Horkheimer, Odysseus is the prototypical bourgeois, his wandering adventures are capitalist ventures, his crew aboard his ship are the working class or proletariat, the gift-exchange is commodity-exchange, and so on. Cf. discussion of this problem of interpreting myth with that of dreams in Lewis, "On Myth," 45. Their allegorization of the myth causes them to fundamentally miss "the important something which the myth seems to suggest." Ironically, Lewis attributes this error to the "effort to seize, to conceptualize" what is contained within the myth, which recalls the enlightenment error of the overconceptualization of reality, an error Adorno-Horkheimer both criticize as well as commit, in this case in their reduction of the Homeric myth to scientific economic concepts. The meaning they accuse enlightenment rationalism of missing in the fetishization of the concept is likewise lost upon themselves in their allegorizing of Homer. Thus, Lewis warns we must be careful about our interpretations of what the pagans meant or felt regarding their myths and rituals. Lewis, "The Anthropological Approach," 304.

Paganism, the Holy Law given of the moralists, and Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified under Pontius Pilate and rose again on the third day."[206] Lewis did not seek the key to the meaning of human nature and the historical process in Homer's myth of Odysseus suspended on the ship's mast or the Norse myth of Odin hung on a tree. However, he did believe such myths foreshadowed, or were "good dreams" pointing toward, the *true myth*.[207] For in the historical person of Jesus, his life, death, and Resurrection, "Myth became Fact." Lewis declares,

> The heart of Christianity is a myth which is also a fact. The old myth of the Dying God, without ceasing to be myth, comes down from the heaven of legend and imagination to the earth of history. It happens—at a particular date, in a particular place, followed by definable historical consequences. We pass from a Balder or an Osiris, dying nobody knows when or where, to a historical Person crucified (it is all in order) under Pontius Pilate. By becoming fact it does not cease to be myth: that is the miracle.[208]

Thus, it is in the historical person of Jesus and his guileless self-sacrificial act, not Odysseus and his cunning acts of self-preservation, that Lewis finds the a basis for hope and optimism sharply distinct from the pessimism of Adorno-Horkheimer's *Dialectic*.

Conclusion

This chapter reveals a major conflict of competing worldviews, which provides the backdrop for explaining the key differences in Lewis' and Adorno-Horkheimer's diagnoses, prognoses, and proffered solutions for the human predicament. Adorno-Horkheimer appear to finally reject Christianity in the end. In fact, they seem to sit on the edge of despair given the lack of real, objective meaning, purpose, and morality on their view, which is a consequence of their rejection of a good personal God and a final

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[206] Lewis, "Is Theism Important?," 175; L. *ens entium* = "being of beings."

[207] On myths as "good dreams" for pagans, see Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 50.

[208] Lewis, "Myth Became Fact," 66-67. For further discussion on Lewis, myth, imagination, and the truth of Christianity, see Stratford Caldecott, "Speaking the Truths Only the Imagination May Grasp: Myth and 'Real Life,'" in *The Pilgrim's Guide: C. S. Lewis and the Art of Witness*, ed. David Mills (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

redemption or reconciliation of man and nature.

Exactly three months prior to Lewis' death, Adorno, in one of his lectures, comments on Kant's seeming indifference to his practical postulates of God, freedom, and immortality. He then professes,

> This view of things completely ignores the fact that if death is the ultimate reality, if there is nothing but the brief life that we have, and if we surrender entirely to a blind principle, or rather a non-principle, a dead end, then our lives are exposed to a degree of meaninglessness of which modern philosophy, even in its less rigorous variants, has made an all too liberal and all too popular use. What I mean to say is that my inability to make any sense of God, freedom, and immortality, cannot blind us to the fact . . . that *our entire life, every moment we are alive, assumes a very different complexion depending on whether or not this is all there is.*[209]

Moreover, Brian J. Shaw offers a heartbreaking account of the utter pessimism of Horkheimer's general worldview at the end of his life. He speaks of Horkheimer's "refusal to abandon the unreasonable and ill-conceived demands made by Critical Theory. The incessant and immoderate 'yearning for the entirely Other' (*die Sehnsuch nach dem ganz Anderen*) *which motivates all of Horkheimer's writings* has to result in disillusionment."[210]

Given these despairing sentiments, consider Lewis writes,

> All your life an unattainable ecstasy has hovered just beyond the grasp of your consciousness. The day is coming when you will wake to find, beyond all hope, that you have attained it, or else, that it was within your reach and you have lost it forever.[211]

Lewis describes his way of thinking prior to his conversion to Christianity as follows: "The two hemispheres of my mind were in the sharpest conflict. On the one side

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[209] Theodor Adorno, *Problems of Moral Philosophy*, ed. Thomas Schröder, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 62; emphasis added. Elsewhere, Adorno writes, "Even so, it is impossible to think of death as the last thing pure and simple. . . . If death were that absolute which philosophy tried in vain to conjure positively, everything is nothing; all that we think, too, is thought into the void; none of it is truly thinkable. . . . The idea of absolute death is hardly less unthinkable than that of immortality." Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 371.

[210] Brian Shaw, "Reason, Nostalgia, and Eschatology in the Critical Theory of Max Horkheimer," *Journal of Politics* 47, no. 1 (1985): 161-62, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*; emphasis added.

[211] Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 152.

a many-island sea of poetry and myth; on the other a glib and shallow 'rationalism.'

Nearly all that I loved I believed to be imaginary; nearly all that I believed to be real I

thought grim and meaningless."[212] Thus, he experienced a kind of dialectical tension

between myth and enlightenment similar to the dialectic central to Adorno-Horkheimer's

thesis, one which they apparently never resolved themselves. Yet, Lewis was able to put

an end to this "entwinement" or "entanglement" of reason and imagination through the

lens of his Christian worldview.[213] Jerry L. Walls writes,

> As is well known, it was his conversion to Christianity that allowed Jack to bring
> the two hemispheres of his mind together. It was in Christianity that he discovered
> a *true myth*, a beautiful story that not only spoke to our imaginations and longing for
> goodness and meaning, but was also rooted in real history. In short, Christianity
> provided a way to hold together Truth, Goodness and Beauty.[214]

Furthermore, Lewis believes Jesus' fulfillment of pagan myth closely parallels

his fulfillment of the Jewish law (or more broadly speaking the *Tao*). The *Tao* is at once

the *Logos* as well as the *Mythos*. Far from calling for a return to paganism, Lewis calls

everyone to the one who boldly proclaims: "I am the way, the truth, and the life."[215]

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[212] Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 170.

[213] James Schmidt comments on how many of the chapters in *Dialectic* end "with an image of awakening from a dream, of returning to consciousness, of a coming to possession of one's powers. Though Horkheimer and Adorno were probably not aware of it, a return to consciousness after a period of illness or sleep was one of the eighteenth-century meanings of the word '*Aufklärung*.'" James Schmidt, "Language, Mythology, and Enlightenment: Historical Notes on Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*," *Social Research* 65, no. 4 (1998): 835, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*. Yet, the authors themselves did not appear to have attained such an enlightenment in their own lives. By contrast, Warren Lewis describes his brother's conversion to Christianity as "no sudden plunge into a new life, but rather a slow steady convalescence from a deep-seated spiritual illness of long standing." Warren Lewis, "Memoir of C. S. Lewis," in Lewis, *Letters of C. S. Lewis*, ed. W. H. Lewis, 2nd ed. (San Diego: Harcourt, 1988), 39.

[214] Jerry L. Walls, introduction to *C. S. Lewis as Philosopher: Truth, Goodness and Beauty*, ed. David Baggett, Gary R. Habermas, and Jerry L. Walls (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 18; emphasis added.

[215] John 14:6. Compare Lewis on the relationship between *Logos* and *Mythos* with his discussion of *Logos* and *Poiema* in Lewis, *Experiment in Criticism*, 132.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has provided a critical examination of two watershed works
of twentieth-century philosophical, moral, and cultural criticism: C. S. Lewis' *The
Abolition of Man*, and the collaboration of Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno's
Dialectic of Enlightenment.[1] By way of critical comparative analysis, I have established
that Lewis, given his Christian theological and philosophical foundations, provides the
more cogent and coherent evaluation of the problems for Western civilization due to the
excesses of Enlightenment rationalism than the critical theorists. I have given special
attention to the many fascinating similarities between Lewis and Adorno-Horkheimer,
while also concentrating on the crucial differences in their overall theories, evaluations,
and conclusions. More importantly, this presentation has revealed how Adorno-
Horkheimer's approach to the issues (based on their critical theory), though providing
many beneficial insights along the way, ultimately is impotent and ineffective as a
critique due to serious deficiencies and, at times, gaping blind-spots. The superiority of
Lewis' position is evidenced by the fact that Adorno, and especially Horkheimer, seems
to have moved closer in Lewis' direction in the end, recognizing the powerful resources
(and power of resistance) of traditional Christianity in opposition to Enlightenment
rationality, moral nihilism, and the culture industry. Finally, I have attempted to give
Lewis his due as premier philosopher, moralist, and culture critic, by demonstrating the

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[1] C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man: Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools*, Riddell Memorial Lectures, 15th Series (London: Oxford University Press, 1944; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001). Hereafter cited as *Abolition*. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, Cultural Memory in the Present, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Amsterdam: Querido, 1947; repr., Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002). Hereafter *Dialectic*.

superiority of his philosophical arguments, his greater prophetic and poetic vision, and his superb defense of the Christian worldview over against the atheistic, neo-Marxist alternative propounded by Adorno-Horkheimer.

The fact is, in many ways, this dissertation has only scratched the surface of the wealth of material available for further exploration that looks to be very promising indeed. Any one of the three major themes treated in connection with these authors—*rationality*, *morality*, and *culture*—could be further analyzed at great length. Additionally, more extensive examination on the similarities and differences between the authors in the following areas is sure to be fruitful: on religion; on myth; on anthropology; on politics; on economics; on education; on art; on literary criticism; and many more. Furthermore, it would be worth pursuing how Lewis' ideas and arguments stack up against more recent versions of critical theory, especially the work of Jürgen Habermas, Slavoj Žižek, and others.

Significance of Their Works: Past, Present, and Future

Lewis was an arch defender of traditional values and greatly opposed to progressivism. For this reason, Lewis' work in *Abolition*, as well as his other writings, continues to be recognized by many as possessing great worth in the current culture wars. Ironically, although Adorno-Horkheimer employed their method of determinate negation to oppose fascist and progressivist ideologies in their day, new iterations of critical theory have aligned with much more radical, more dangerous versions of progressivism in the present. In *That Hideous Strength*, Lewis describes a situation in which certain problematic theories eventually result in "their own child coming back to them: grown up and unrecognizable, but their own."[2] Likewise, it is instructive to consider the

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[2] C. S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength: A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups* (London: John Lane the Bodley Head, 1945; repr., New York: Scribner, 2003), 371. On this note, it is interesting to compare Lewis' views of education with that of critical theorist Angelo Letizia, "Battle for the Enlightenment: Neoliberalism, Critical Theory and the Role of Circumvential Education in Fostering a

contemporary fruit borne of critical theory, especially given Adorno-Horkheimer's negative posturing. One could argue it is indeed a case of the chickens coming home to roost. Many of Adorno-Horkheimer's critical ideas, outlined in *Dialectic* and elsewhere, have been zealously taken up by today's radical socio-political Left. This fanatical leftward shift had already begun during Adorno-Horkheimer's lifetime, and in some cases was even used against them. For example, consider the protests against Adorno towards the end of his career in the radical sixties. It appears some of critical theory's early offspring were not content with making a theoretical critique of society but desired a greater emphasis on critical praxis and radical activism, even the use of violence to accomplish their goals.[3]

However, decades on, it seems to be getting even worse than the radical sixties. The later offspring of the New Left seeks to denounce, debunk, negate, and tear down Western civilization, deeming it wholly corrupt, capitalistic, imperialistic, colonialist, racist, nativistic, paternalistic, sexist, heteronormative, homophobic, transphobic, . . . and the list goes on. The critical theory of Adorno-Horkheimer and the Frankfurt School has given rise to new forms of deconstructionism, post-structuralism,

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New Phase of the Enlightenment," *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies* (JCEPS) 11, no. 3 (July 2013): 164-93, *Education Full Text (H.W. Wilson)*, EBSCO*host*. Drawing heavily on the work of the Frankfurt School and Adorno-Horkheimer, Letizia explains, "The seeds of this academic revolution must be planted in students and their future children to grow" (184).

[3] See Gerhard Richter, "Who's Afraid of the Ivory Tower? A Conversation with Theodor W. Adorno," *Monatshefte* 94, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 10-23, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*. Richter refers to "Adorno's cancellation of his University of Frankfurt lecture course 'Introduction to Dialectical Thinking' during the summer semester of 1969, following confrontations with student activists who disrupted his lectures with heckling. During the previous semester, Adorno's decision to involve the police in clearing student occupiers from the Institute for Social Research (the Frankfurt School's departmental unit at the University of Frankfurt) had caused controversy(11). He further states, "In a patricidal reversal that pitted parts of the Student Protest Movement and the New Left against one of their theoretical fathers, Adorno was subjected to a series of institutional and personal attacks at least since 1967, and leaflets proclaiming that 'Adorno as an institution is dead' *('Adorno als Institution ist tot')* were circulated during his lectures" (12). Contrast Adriana S. Benzaquén with Adorno-Horkheimer on the relationship between theory and practice, or praxis, in Adriana S. Benzaquén, "Thought and Utopia in the Writings of Adorno, Horkheimer, and Benjamin," *Utopian Studies* 9, no. 2 (1998): 149-61, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*; emphasis original. Adorno-Horkheimer adamantly opposed the use of violence to accomplish one's political ends or social goals, unlike some recent critical theorists such as Slavoj Žižek, who has supported the use violence and terror to effect societal change. See Slavoj Žižek, *Violence*, (London: Profile Books, 2008); Slavoj Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes* (New York: Verso, 2008).

radical feminism, critical race theory, queer theory, gender theory, and other dangerous

and destructive ideologies. By comparison, Adorno-Horkheimer look like traditionalists

or conservatives! Nevertheless, they laid the foundations that have led to (or negated the

foundations that would have helped to prevent) the rise of many more radical versions of

contemporary critical theory, with emphases on anarchism; class warfare; power

dynamics of oppressor and oppressed; victimization; white male privilege;

intersectionality; social justice causes; systemic, structural, or institutional racism;

gender, race, and group identity politics; environmental extremism, and many more. One

common denominator of these leftist themes is the rejection of authority and the single-

minded focus of blaming what is external (the system) for humanity's ills rather than

focusing on the internal (the self) moral and spiritual problems that plague humanity.[4]

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[4] Lewis seems to have accurately anticipated this development:

> A strong anti-clericalism has of course been a feature of continental Proletarianism almost from its beginnings. This element is generally said (and, I think, correctly) to be less present in the English forms. But what is common to all forms of it is the fact that the Proletariat in all countries (even those with "Right" governments) has been consistently flattered for a great many years. The natural result has now followed. They are self-satisfied to a degree perhaps beyond the self-satisfaction of any recorded aristocracy. They are convinced that whatever may be wrong with the world it cannot be themselves. Someone else must be to blame for every evil.

C. S. Lewis, "Modern Man and his Categories of Thought," in *Present Concerns: A Compelling Collection of Timely, Journalistic Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Fount, 1986; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002), 64. Moreover, consider Lewis' helpful counsel, which makes for an important and needed lesson for the overly sensitive in today's society, often attributed to the Millennial generation who are pejoratively referred to as "snowflakes," who are known to retreat to "safe spaces." Writing to a student who had failed his examination for entrance to an honors degree at university, Lewis writes,

> Are you in danger of seeking consolation in *Resentment*? I have no reason to suppose you are, but it is a favorite desire of the human mind (certainly of my mind!) and one wants to be on one's guard against it. And that is about the only way in which an early failure like this can become a real permanent injury. A belief that one has been misused, a tendency ever after to snap and snarl at "the system"—that, I think, makes a man always a bore, usually an ass, sometimes a villain. So don't think *either* that you are no good *or* that you are a Victim. Write the whole thing off and get on.

C. S. Lewis to Laurence Harwood, August 2, 1953, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 3, *Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy 1950-1963*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 353; emphasis original. For Lewis, the victimhood mentality boils down to the vice of vanity. Thus, he also writes, "I *loathe* 'sensitive' people who are 'easily hurt' by the way, don't you? They are a social pest. Vanity is usually the real trouble." C. S. Lewis to Mary Willis Shelburne, August 3, 1956, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 3, *Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy 1950-1963*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 775-76. Furthermore, Lewis writes of the connection between this character flaw and its tyrannical tendencies. He writes, "Did we pretend to be 'hurt' in our sensitive and tender feelings (fine natures like ours are so vulnerable) when envy, ungratified vanity, or thwarted self-will was our real trouble? Such tactics often succeed. The other parties give in. . . . And so we win; by cheating. But the unfairness is very deeply felt. Indeed what is commonly called 'sensitiveness' is the most powerful engine of domestic

Moreover, in spite of its great disdain for traditional religion, contemporary critical theory possesses a tremendous religious fervor, making the conflict between contemporary critical theory and traditional, evangelical Christianity a deeply religious one.[5] Of all the current political, socio-economic, religious, and ethical debates and disagreements happening today, probably none is more important than the current conflict between these two worldviews (*Weltanschauungen*) for the future of democracy, freedom, rights, religious liberty, individual and social morality—in sum, Western civilization. And arguably modern-day progressivism is putting us on the fast track to "the abolition of man."

In proclaiming and defending Christianity against its critics, Lewis understood the need for a rational, moral, and cultural apologetic, one that would seek to conserve and protect the good fruit produced by the Christian faithful for the world at large. Beginning with *Abolition*, but also including a whole hosts of other books and essays, Lewis offers a traditionalist alternative to the modernist, secular-progressive approach to life and society, which is becoming increasingly anti-religious, anti-science, anti-biology, anti-life, anti-human, anti-family, anti-marriage, and so forth. This is especially so concerning the recent attempt to abolish traditional sexuality and gender norms (rooted in the *Tao*). During the sexual revolution of the radical sixties, and displaying just as much

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tyranny, sometimes a lifelong tyranny." C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1958; repr., San Diego: Harcourt, 2002), 14. These examples are instructive in that they easily parallel present day attempts at social control and social coercion by appeals to peoples' sensitivities, what they find offensive or hurtful. Such appeals are even used to silence or censor those with whom they disagree.

[5] See Neil Shenvi, "Critical Theory & Christianity," Freethinking Ministries (Blog), August 17, 2018, http://freethinkingministries.com/critical-theory-christianity/; William Lane Craig, "The Dangers of Critical Theory," Reasonable Faith Podcast, Reasonable Faith, May 21, 2018, audio, 22:23, https://www.reasonablefaith.org/media/reasonable-faith-podcast/the-dangers-of-critical-theory/. Craig, commenting on Shenvi's work, and addressing the concern about critical theory potentially invading Christian schools, states: "Yes, and not merely potentially but actually is doing so. It underlies the so-called social justice movement. As Christians, all of us are rightly concerned about achieving a just society, but the Critical Theory which underlies the so-called social justice movement affirms values and theses that I think are fundamentally anti-Christian in their orientation. The fear is, I think, that Christian students out of an understandable desire to help create a better world and a more just society are being taken in unawares by this sort of Critical Theory with its emphasis upon identity politics, power, gender identity, and so forth. This movement is sweeping Christian colleges and universities and I think has become very influential even in campus Christian organizations."

prescience as in *Abolition*, Lewis concludes the last essay he would ever pen with the

following words:

> [T]hough the "right to happiness" is chiefly claimed for the sexual impulse, it seems to me impossible that the matter should stay there. The fatal principle, once allowed in that department, must sooner or later seep through our whole lives. We thus advance toward a state of society in which not only each man but every impulse in each man claims *carte blanche*. And then, though our technological skill may help us survive a little longer, our civilization will have died at heart, and will—one dare not even add "unfortunately"—be swept away.[6]

If only society had heeded his prophetic wisdom and insight! Today, we seem to be

witnessing the utterly disastrous results of the abandonment of the *Tao*, the "poison of

subjectivism," the production of "men without chests"—that is, "the abolition of man."

Once again, Lewis deserves praise for his foresight, his vindication of Western

civilization, and, most importantly, for his relentless defense of a robust, orthodox

Christian world- and life-view.

Lewis the Philosopher

Finally, I would like to conclude with some brief comments regarding Lewis

the philosopher. Jerry Walls describes Lewis as the "Jack of the Philosophical Trade"

and provides a helpful survey of Lewis' philosophical background in *C. S. Lewis the

Philosopher*.[7] Lewis studied at Oxford, one of the world's top philosophical institutions,

and took a "First" (the highest possible grade) in three degrees: Greek and Latin

Literature, "Greats," which was a study of philosophy and ancient history, and finally

English. When his philosophy tutor, E. F. Carritt, decided to travel for a year to teach

philosophy in an American university, he chose Lewis to fill in for him during this time.

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[6] C. S. Lewis, "We Have No Right to Happiness," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper, 317-22 (1970; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 322. This is the final paragraph of this essay, the last words Lewis ever published.

[7] Jerry L. Walls, introduction to *C. S. Lewis as Philosopher: Truth, Goodness and Beauty*, ed. David Baggett, Gary R. Habermas, and Jerry L. Walls (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 13. Also, see Adam James Barkman, *C. S. Lewis & Philosophy as a Way of Life: A Comprehensive Historical Examination of His Philosophical Thoughts* (Allentown, PA: Zossima, 2009).

Thus, as Walls notes, Lewis' "first job at Oxford, then, was teaching philosophy," though the position was temporary. When Lewis took his first permanent job at Oxford as Fellow at Magdalen College (1925), he was hired to teach primarily English, but he also tutored philosophy students for his first few years in this new post. In 1941, with the founding of The Oxford Socratic Club by Stella Aldwinkle, she nominated Lewis as the club's first president. This position required Lewis to take on a number of prominent philosophers in debate as they were invited as guest presenters to the club. According to Walls, "it was in this role that [Lewis] gained his reputation as a formidable debater." This led a number of academic philosophers to engage Lewis' works in their own writings due to the dearth of Christian philosophers writing in defense of the faith at the time. For example, the most published atheist philosopher of the twentieth century, Antony Flew, in his *New Essays in Philosophical Theology* (1955), sets his sights on Lewis as his target. Thus, Lewis the intellectual filled a major gap in his day, utilizing the tools of philosophy to critically engage the alternative non-Christian ideologies that were dominant in academia and the culture at large.

He held his position as president of the Socratic Club until 1954, the year he was installed as Chair of Renaissance and Medieval English Literature at Magdalene College, Cambridge a position especially created for Lewis. Consequently, although Lewis' recognition comes more from his contributions to literature, both academic and popular, through these writings he has also inspired a great many philosophers and has had a tremendous impact on the philosophical arena.[8] He may not have fit the bill as a

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[8] For example, philosopher Tom Morris writes:

Clarity is power. This is one of the reasons that, for more than half a century, the immensely popular books and essays of C. S. Lewis have launched into the world a nearly steady stream of new Christian philosophers and intellectuals. The stunning clarity of his thought and the scintillating crispness of what he wrote in expression of that thought have together stimulated generations of readers to aspire to some measure of that intellectual power and to at least a small fraction of the positive impact that Lewis has had in people's lives. I for one became a philosopher in part because of the influence of C. S. Lewis. He was a vivid role model and a potent stimulus that set me out on the very steps of a great adventure, initially on the path of academic philosophy and then later on to a broader cultural calling as a philosopher. . . . Moreover, in deftly managing the daunting balance

"professional" philosopher, but, of course, neither did Socrates.[9]

Considering Lewis' brilliant defense of natural law theory as foundational to the endurance of Western civilization; or his tactical defenses of moral realism and objectivism (against anti-realism and subjectivism in ethics); or his unyielding defense of substantive dualism (against physicalism and reductionism in anthropology); or his promotion of a virtue epistemology (against the depersonalizing excesses of rationalism and empiricism); or his robust defense of supernaturalism (against naturalism, materialism, and pantheism in metaphysics); or his modest defense of the value of science and technology properly pursued and applied (against positivism and scientism); or his realistic defense of individual liberty, freedom, and democracy in political philosophy (against socialism, communism, and totalitarianism); or his defense of biblical and theological orthodoxy (against liberal theology and the attacks of modern biblical criticism); or his recognition of the incredible significance of the imagination in addition to reason for grasping truth and meaning about reality (against all the debunkers and demythologizers); or, finally, his persuasive apologetic defense of "mere Christianity," which helped to perpetuate its survival in evangelical form to the present day (attested to by scores of believers who came to know Christ through the reading of Lewis' arguments). Many other examples could be mentioned. Furthermore, this list

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between a keen and easy accessibility of language together with a real logical rigor of thought conveyed by that language, he presented to many of his readers an immensely attractive example of what a public philosopher could be and do. Tom Morris, foreword to *C. S. Lewis as Philosopher*, by Baggett, Habermas, and Walls, 9.

[9] Victor Reppert explains, "It is sometimes presupposed by those who are familiar with the technical side of a discipline like philosophy that no one who is not similarly a 'professional' has anything serious to say. But of course 'professionalism' in philosophy is a rather recent development: the majority of those who have made significant contributions to philosophy over the past twenty-five centuries would not qualify as 'professional' philosophers in the contemporary sense." Victor Reppert, *C. S. Lewis's Dangerous Idea: In Defense of the Argument from Reason* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 15. Hooper writes, "I venture to guess that, if Lewis had become a philosopher, and if he had still been converted, the one most purely philosophical book of his we would still have had is *The Abolition of Man*." Hooper, preface to C. S. Lewis, *Selected Literary Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (1969; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), xivn1. In saying "if Lewis had become a philosopher," he seems to mean philosopher in the professional sense.

would be sorely incomplete without noting the deeply spiritual and moral character of the man, how he not only *taught* and *wrote* philosophy, but he *lived* it too. Though maybe too bold and daring a claim, one he would have certainly and humbly rejected, measured by his impact on the total sphere of life and thought, one could argue that C. S. Lewis was the most influential Christian philosopher of the twentieth century.

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ABSTRACT

MAX HORKHEIMER, THEODOR W. ADORNO, . . . AND C. S.
LEWIS? TWO REVOLUTIONARY PHILOSOPHICAL,
MORAL, AND CULTURAL CRITIQUES

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This dissertation is a critical comparative analysis of two twentieth-century works of profound philosophical, moral, and cultural criticism: C. S. Lewis' *The Abolition of Man* (1944) and Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944). Written during, and greatly influenced by, the horrors of WWII, both works attempt a theoretically rigorous and substantive account of the seemingly precarious state of affairs for humanity in their times. And yet, intriguingly, there appears to be no reciprocal influence (or even an awareness of the other) in either direction between the authors. Notwithstanding, the authors explore many common themes including the following: the history of Western civilization, the nature of reason and rationality, human nature, the subject-object relation, the question of ethical normativity, the human struggle against and conquest of nature, the increasing detachment of science from practical life, the encroaching dominance of industry and technology in the form of a growing technocracy, and the resulting loss of personal liberty and dignity through increasing forms of dehumanization in mass culture and society. In this regard, both works belong to the prominent corpus of twentieth-century conservative and radical critiques of the excesses of Enlightenment thought—a distorted view of rationality, a groundless system of morality, and a dehumanizing approach to culture—or Enlightenment rationalism.

For both assessments, the fate of Western civilization rests on a knife edge, while the diagnosis, prognosis, and proposed solutions they prescribe could not be more drastically different in their final analysis. The authors approach the past and present unfolding of this human drama from two radically different points of view on the ideological spectrum—on the one hand, Lewis the traditional, evangelical Christian, and, on the other, Adorno and Horkheimer, atheistic neo-Marxists, and founding members of the Frankfurt School and critical theory. In spite of the fascinating historical background and context of their writing, few scholars have examined these thinkers and their works together.

This dissertation argues, by way of critical comparative analysis, that Lewis, given his Christian theological and philosophical foundations, provides the more cogent and coherent evaluation of the problems for Western civilization due to the excesses of Enlightenment rationalism than the critical theorists Adorno and Horkheimer. The argument in defense of this thesis begins with a critical summary and analysis of the main lines of thought contained in Lewis' *Abolition* and Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic*, each treated separately. The goal is to provide the reader with a careful exposition and explication of the two works, drawing on current scholarship in addition to providing new insights where possible. Next, I provide a critique of the two works based on three central themes: *rationality*, *morality*, and *culture*. I give special attention to the many fascinating similarities between Lewis and Adorno and Horkheimer, while also concentrating on the key differences in their overall theories, evaluations, and conclusions. The primary goal is to demonstrate the superiority of Lewis' philosophical arguments, his greater prophetic and poetic vision, and the truth of the Christian worldview over against the atheistic, neo-Marxist alternative propounded by Adorno and Horkheimer.

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