

Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life, by T. Adorno

a. People / Organizations:

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b. Quotes:

- "The major part of this book was written during the war, under conditions enforcing contemplation. The violence that expelled me thereby denied me full knowledge of it." - Author (pg. 18)

c. General Notes:

- Dedication (pg. 15)
 - **"What the philosophers once knew as life has become the sphere of private existence and now of mere consumption, dragged along as an appendage of the process of material production, without autonomy or substance of its own. He who wishes to know the truth about life in its immediacy must scrutinize its estranged form,** the objective powers that determine individual existence even in its most hidden recesses. To speak immediately of the immediate is to behave much as those novelists who drape their marionettes in imitated bygone passions like cheap jewellery, and make people who are no more than component parts of machinery act as if they still had the capacity to act as subjects, and as if something depended on their actions. **Our perspective of life has passed into an ideology which conceals the fact that there is life no longer.**" (pg. 15)
 - **"But the relation between life and production,** which in reality debases the former to an ephemeral appearance of the latter, **is totally absurd. Means and end are inverted.** A dim awareness of **this perverse quid pro quo** has still not been quite eradicated from life. Reduced and degraded essence tenaciously resists the magic that transforms it into a façade. The change in the relations of production themselves depends largely on what takes place in the 'sphere of consumption', the mere reflection of production and the caricature of true life: in the consciousness and unconsciousness of individuals. **Only by virtue of opposition to production, as still not wholly encompassed by this order, can men bring about another more worthy of human beings.** Should the appearance of life, which the sphere of consumption itself defends for such bad reasons, be once entirely effaced, then the monstrosity of absolute production will triumph. Nevertheless, **considerations which start from the subject remain false** to the same extent that life has become appearance. For since the overwhelming objectivity of historical movement in its present phase consists so far only in the dissolution of the subject, without yet giving rise to a new one, individual experience necessarily bases itself on the old subject, now historically condemned, which is still for-itself, but no longer in-itself. The subject still feels sure of its autonomy, but the nullity demonstrated to subjects by the concentration camp is already overtaking the form of subjectivity itself. Subjective reflection, even if critically alerted to itself, has something sentimental and anachronistic about it: something of a lament over the course of the world, a lament to be rejected not for its good faith, but because the lamenting subject threatens to become arrested in its condition and so to fulfil in its turn the law of the world's course. **Fidelity to one's own state of consciousness and experience is forever in temptation of lapsing into infidelity, by denying the insight that transcends the individual and calls his substance by its name.**" (pg. 15-16)
 - "The dismissive gesture which Hegel, in contradiction to his own insight, constantly accords the individual, derives paradoxically enough from his necessary entanglement in liberalistic thinking. **The conception of a totality harmonious through all its antagonisms compels him to assign to individuation, however much he may designate it a driving moment in the process, an inferior status in the construction of the whole.** The knowledge that in prehistory the objective tendency asserts itself over the heads of human beings, indeed by virtue of annihilating individual qualities, without the reconciliation of general and particular - constructed in thought - ever yet being accomplished in history, is distorted in Hegel: with serene indifference he opts once again for liquidation of the particular. Nowhere in his work is the primacy of the whole doubted. The more questionable the transition from reflective isolation to glorified totality becomes in history as in Hegelian logic, the more eagerly philosophy, as the justification of what exists, attaches itself to the triumphal car of objective tendencies. The culmination of the social principle of individuation in the triumph of fatality gives philosophy occasion enough to do so. **Hegel, in hypostasizing both bourgeois society and its fundamental category, the individual, did not truly carry through the dialectic between the two.** Certainly he perceives, with classical economics, that the totality produces and reproduces itself precisely from the interconnection of the antagonistic interests of its members. But the individual as such he for the most part considers, naively, as an irreducible datum - just what in his theory of knowledge he decomposes." (pg. 17)
- For Marcel Proust (pg. 23)
 - See text
- Great Seat (pg. 24)
 - "Our relationship to parents is beginning to undergo a sad, shadowy transformation. Through their economic impotence they have lost their awesomeness. Once we rebelled against their insistence on the reality principle, the sobriety forever prone to become wrath against those less ready to renounce. But today we are faced with a generation purporting to be young yet in all its reactions insufferably more grown-up than its parents ever were; which, having renounced before any conflict, draws from this its grimly authoritarian, unshakeable power. Perhaps people have at all times felt the parental generation to become harmless, powerless, with the waning of its physical strength, while their own generation already seemed threatened by the young: in an antagonistic society the relation between generations too is one of competition, behind which stands naked power." (pg. 24)
- Fish in Water (pg. 25)
 - "Now that **the whole of society is becoming hierarchical, these murky connections are proliferating wherever there used still to be an appearance of freedom. The irrationality of the system is expressed scarcely less clearly in the parasitic psychology of the individual** than in his economic fate. Earlier, when something like the maligned bourgeois division between professional and private life still existed - a division whose passing one almost now regrets - anyone who pursued practical aims in the private sphere was eyed mistrustfully as an uncouth interloper. **Today it is seen as arrogant, alien and improper to engage in private activity without any evident ulterior motive.** Not to be 'after' something is almost suspect: no help to others in the rat-race is acknowledged unless legitimized by counterclaims." (pg. 26)
 - **"...belated individualism poisons what little is left over of the individual"** (pg. 26)
- Final Serenity (pg. 27)
 - "If a man of advanced years is praised for his exceptional serenity, his life can be assumed to comprise a succession of infamies. He has rid himself of the habit of getting excited. Breadth of conscience is passed off as magnanimity, all-forgiving because all-too-understanding. The quid pro quo between one's own guilt and that of others, is resolved in favour of whoever has come off best. After so long a life one quite loses the capacity to distinguish who has done what harm to whom. In the abstract conception of universal wrong, all concrete responsibility vanishes. The blackguard presents himself as victim of injustice: if only you knew, young man, what life is like. But those conspicuous midway through life by an exceptional kindness are usually drawing advances on such serenity. **He who is not malign does not live serenely but with a peculiarly chaste hardness and intolerance. Lacking appropriate objects, his love can scarcely express itself except by hatred for the inappropriate, in which admittedly he comes to resemble what he hates.** The bourgeois, however, is tolerant. His love of people as they are stems from his hatred of what they might be." (pg. 27)
- How nice of you (pg. 27)

- "there is nothing innocuous left" (pg. 27)
 - "Even the blossoming tree lies the moment its bloom is seen without the shadow of terror; even the innocent 'How lovely!' becomes an excuse for an existence outrageously unlovely, and there is no longer beauty or consolation except in the gaze falling on horror, withstanding it, and in unalleviated consciousness of negativity holding fast to the possibility of what is better. Mistrust is called for in face of all spontaneity, impetuosity, all letting oneself go, for it implies pliancy towards the superior might of the existent." (pg. 28)
- "Every visit to the cinema leaves me, against all my vigilance, stupider and worse. Sociability itself connives at injustice by pretending..." (pg. 28)
- "For the intellectual, inviolable isolation is now the only way of showing some measure of solidarity. All collaboration, all the human worth of social mixing and participation, merely masks a tacit acceptance of inhumanity. **It is the sufferings of men that should be shared:** the smallest step towards their pleasures is one towards the hardening of their pains." (pg. 28)
- Antithesis (pg. 29)
 - "He who stands aloof runs the risk of believing himself better than others and misusing his critique of society as an ideology for his private interest. While he gropingly forms his own life in the frail image of a true existence, he should never forget its frailty, nor how little the image is a substitute for true life. Against such aware-ness, however, pulls the momentum of the bourgeois within him. The detached observer is as much entangled as the active participant; the only advantage of the former is insight into his entanglement, and the infinitesimal freedom that lies in knowledge as such." (pg. 29)
 - "With the dissolution of liberalism, **the truly bourgeois principle, that of competition**, far from being overcome, has passed from the objectivity of the social process into the composition of its colliding and jostling atoms, and therewith as if into anthropology. The subjugation of life to the process of production imposes as a humiliation on everyone something of the isolation and solitude that we are tempted to regard as resulting from our own superior choice. It is as old a component of bourgeois ideology that each individual, in his particular interest, considers himself better than all others, as that he values the others, as the community of all customers, more highly than himself. Since the demise of the old bourgeois class, both ideas have led an after-life in the minds of intellectuals, who are at once the last enemies of the bourgeois and the last bourgeois. In still permitting themselves to think at all in face of the naked reproduction of existence, they act as a privileged group; in letting matters rest there, they declare the nullity of their privilege. Private existence, in striving to resemble one worthy of man, betrays the latter, since any resemblance is withdrawn from general realization, which yet more than ever before has need of independent thought. There is no way out of entanglement. **The only responsible course is to deny oneself the ideological misuse of one's own existence, and for the rest to conduct oneself in private as modestly, unobtrusively and unpretentiously as is required, no longer by good upbringing, but by the shame of still having air to breathe, in hell.**" (pg. 30)
- They, the people (pg. 30)
 - See text
- If knaves should tempt you (pg. 31)
 - See text
- Promise me this, my child (pg. 33)
 - See text
- Divided-united (pg. 33)
 - "Marriage, living on as an abject parody in a time that has removed the basis of its human justification, usually serves today as a trick of self-preservation: the two conspirators deflect outward responsibility for their respective ill-doing to the other while in reality existing together in a murky swamp. **The only decent marriage would be one allowing each partner to lead an independent life, in which, instead of a fusion derived from an enforced community of economic interests, both freely accepted mutual responsibility.** Marriage as a community of interests unfailingly means the degradation of the interested parties, and it is the perfidy of the world's arrangements that no-one, even if aware of it, can escape such degradation." (pg. 33-34)
- With all my worldly goods (pg. 34)
 - See text
- Inter pares (pg. 35)
 - See text
- Protection, help and counsel (pg. 36)
 - See text
- Le bourgeois revenant (pg. 37)
 - See text
- Le nouvel avare (pg. 38)
 - See text
- On the dialectic of tact (pg. 39)
 - See text
- Property rights (pg. 41)
 - "It is the signature of our age that no-one, without exception, can now determine his own life within even a moderately comprehensible framework, as was possible earlier in the assessment of market relationships. **In principle everyone, however powerful, is an object.**" (pg. 41)
 - "It follows directly from this that anyone who attempts to come out alive - and survival itself has something nonsensical about it, like dreams in which, having experienced the end of the world, one afterwards crawls from a basement - ought also to be prepared at each moment to end his life. This is the mournful truth that has emerged from Zarathustra's exuberant doctrine of freely-chosen death. Freedom has contracted to pure negativity, and what in the days of art nouveau was known as a beautiful death has shrunk to the wish to curtail the infinite abasement of living and the infinite torment of dying, in a world where there are far worse things to fear than death. **The objective end of humanism is only another expression for the same thing. It signifies that the individual as individual, in representing the species of man, has lost the autonomy through which he might realize the species.**" (pg. 41)
- Refuge for the homeless (pg. 41)
 - "wrong life cannot be lived rightly" (pg. 43)
- Do not knock (pg. 43)
 - "Matter-of-factness between people, doing away with all ideological ornamentation between them, has already itself become an ideology for treating people as things." (pg. 45)
- Articles may not be exchanged (pg. 46)
 - "**Every undistorted relationship**, perhaps indeed the conciliation that is part of organic life itself, **is a gift. He who through consequential logic becomes incapable of it, makes himself a thing and freezes.**" (pg. 47)
- Baby with bath water (pg. 47)
 - "Among the motifs of cultural criticism one of the most long-established and central is that of the lie: that culture creates the illusion of a society worthy of man which does not exist; that it conceals the material conditions upon which all human works rise, and that, comforting and lulling, it

serves to keep alive the bad economic determination of existence. This is the notion of culture as ideology, which appears at first sight common to both the bourgeois doctrine of violence and its adversary, both to Nietzsche and to Marx. But precisely this notion, like all expostulation about lies, has a suspicious tendency to become itself ideology." (pg. 47)

- Plurale tantum (pg. 49)
 - See text
- Tough baby (pg. 49)
 - "In the end the tough guys are the truly effeminate ones, who need the weaklings as their victims in order not to admit that they are like them." (pg. 50)
- To them shall no thoughts be turned (pg. 51)
 - See text
- English spoken (pg. 51)
 - See text
- On parle français (pg. 52)
 - See text
- Paysage (pg. 52)
 - See text
- Dwarf fruit (pg. 53)
 - See text
- Pro domo nostra (pg. 54)
 - See text
- Cat out if the bag (pg. 55)
 - See text
- Savages are not more noble (pg. 56)
 - See text
- Out of the firing-line (pg. 57)
 - "The idea that after this war life will continue 'normally' or even that culture might be 'rebuilt' - as if the rebuilding of culture were not already its negation - is idiotic. Millions of Jews have been murdered, and this is to be seen as an interlude and not the catastrophe itself." (pg. 59)
- Johnny Head-in-Air (pg. 61)
 - See text
- Back to culture (pg. 61)
 - See text
- The Health unto Death (pg. 62)
 - "What psycho-analysis suspected, before it became itself a part of hygiene, has been confirmed. The brightest rooms are the secret domain of faeces. The verses: 'Wretchedness remains. When all is said, / It cannot be uprooted, live or dead. / So it is made invisible instead', are still more true of the psychic economy than of the sphere where abundance of goods may temporarily obscure constantly increasing material inequalities. **No science has yet explored the inferno in which were forged the deformations that later emerge to daylight as cheerfulness, openness, sociability, successful adaptation to the inevitable, an equable, practical frame of mind.**" (pg. 63)
 - "Underlying the prevalent health is death. All the movements of health resemble the reflex-movements of beings whose hearts have stopped beating. Scarcely ever does an unhappily furrowed brow, bearing witness to terrible and long-forgotten exertions, or a moment of pathetic stupidity disrupting smooth logic, or an awkward gesture, embarrassingly preserve a trace of vanished life. For socially ordained sacrifice is indeed so universal as to be manifest only in society as a whole, and not in the individual. Society has, as it were, assumed the sickness of all individuals, and in it, in the pent-up lunacy of Fascist acts and all their innumerable precursors and mediators, the subjective fate buried deep in the individual is integrated with its visible objective counterpart. And how comfortless is the thought that the sickness of the normal does not necessarily imply as its opposite the health of the sick, but that the latter usually only present, in a different way, the same disastrous pattern." (pg. 64)
- This side of the pleasure principle (pg. 64)
 - "Professional warmth, for the sake of profit, fabricates closeness and immediacy where people are worlds apart." (pg. 64)
 - "He [e.g., Freud] no more discerns in it the work of repressive society than the trace of the disastrous mechanisms that he has himself described. Or rather, he vacillates, devoid of theory and swaying with prejudice, between negating the renunciation of instinct as repression contrary to reality, and applauding it as sublimation beneficial to culture. In this contradiction something of the Janus-character of culture exists objectively, and no amount of praise for healthy sensuality can wish it away. In Freud, however, it leads to a devaluation of the critical standard that decides the goal of analysis. Freud's unenlightened enlightenment plays into the hands of bourgeois disillusion. As a late opponent of hypocrisy, he stands ambivalently between desire for the open emancipation of the oppressed, and apology for open oppression. Reason is for him a mere superstructure, not — as official philosophy maintains - on account of his psychologism, which has penetrated deeply enough into the historical moment of truth, but rather because he rejects the end, remote to meaning, impervious to reason, which alone could prove the means, reason, to be reasonable: pleasure. Once this has been disparagingly consigned to the repertoire of tricks for preserving the species, and so itself exposed as a cunning form of reason, without consideration of that moment in pleasure which transcends subservience to nature, ratio is degraded to rationalization. Truth is abandoned to relativity and people to power. He alone who could situate utopia in blind somatic pleasure, which, satisfying the ultimate intention, is intentionless, has a stable and valid idea of truth. In Freud's work, however, the dual hostility towards mind and pleasure, whose common root psycho-analysis has given us the means for discovering, is unintentionally reproduced." (pg. 65)
- Invitation to the dance (pg. 66)
 - See text
- Ego is Id (pg. 67)
 - "The denial of objective truth by recourse to the subject implies the negation of the latter: no measure remains for the measure of all things; lapsing into contingency, he becomes untruth. But this points back to the real life-process of society. The principle of human domination, in becoming absolute, has turned its point against man as the absolute object, and psychology has collaborated in sharpening that point. The self, its guiding idea and its *a priori* object, has always, under its scrutiny, been rendered at the same time non-existent. In appealing to the fact that in an exchange society the subject was not one, but in fact a social object, psychology provided society with weapons for ensuring that this was and remained the case. The dissection of man into his faculties is a projection of the division of labour onto its pretended subjects, inseparable from the interest in deploying and manipulating them to greater advantage. Psycho-technics is not merely a form of psychology's decay, but is inherent in its principle. Hume, whose work bears witness in every sentence to his real humanism, yet who dismisses the self as a prejudice, expresses in this contradiction the nature of psychology as such. In this he even has truth on his side, for that which posits itself as 'I' is indeed mere prejudice, an ideological hypostasization of the abstract centres of domination, criticism of which demands the removal of the ideology of 'personality'. But its removal also makes the residue all the

easier to dominate. This is flagrantly apparent in psycho-analysis. It incorporates personality as a lie needed for living, as the supreme rationalization holding together the innumerable rationalizations by which the individual achieves his instinctual renunciation, and accommodates himself to the reality principle. But precisely in demonstrating this, it confirms man's non-being. Alienating him from himself, denouncing his autonomy with his unity, psycho-analysis subjugates him totally to the mechanism of rationalization, of adaptation. The ego's unflinching self-criticism gives way to the demand that the ego of the other capitulate. The psycho-analyst's wisdom finally becomes what the Fascist unconscious of the horror magazines takes it for: a technique by which one particular racket among others binds suffering and helpless people irrevocably to itself, in order to command and exploit them. Suggestion and hypnosis, rejected by psycho-analysis as apocryphal, the charlatan magician masquerading before a fairground booth, reappear within its grandiose system as the silent film does in the Hollywood epic. What was formerly help through greater knowledge has become the humiliation of others by dogmatic privilege. All that remains of the criticism of bourgeois consciousness is the shrug with which doctors have always signalled their secret complicity with death. **In psychology, in the bottomless fraud of mere inwardness**, which is not by accident concerned with the 'properties' of men, **is reflected what bourgeois society has practised for all time with outward property**. The latter, as a result of social exchange, has been increased, but with a proviso dimly present to every bourgeois. The individual has been, as it were, merely invested with property by the class, and those in control are ready to take it back as soon as universalization of property seems likely to endanger its principle, which is precisely that of withholding. Psychology repeats in the case of properties what was done to property. It expropriates the individual by allocating him its happiness." (pg. 67-69)

- Always speak of it, never think of it (pg. 69)
 - See text
- Inside and outside (pg. 71)
 - "Piety, indolence and calculation allow philosophy to keep muddling along within an ever narrower academic groove, and even there steadily increasing efforts are made to replace it by organized tautology. Those who throw in their lot with salaried profundity are compelled, as a hundred years ago, to be at each moment as naive as the colleagues on whom their careers depend. But extra-academic thinking, which seeks to escape such compulsion, with its contradiction between high-flown subject matter and petty-minded treatment, faces a scarcely lesser threat: the economic pressure of the market, from which in Europe the professors at least were protected. The philosopher who wishes to earn his living as a writer is obliged at each moment to have something choice, ultra-select to offer, and to counter the monopoly of office with that of rarity." (pg. 71)
- Freedom of thought (pg. 73)
 - "Among the public functions of psycho-analysis, this is not the least. Its medium is free association. The way into the patient's unconscious is laid open by persuading him to forgo the responsibility of reflection, and the formation of analytic theory follows the same track, whether it allows its findings to be traced by the progress and the falterings of these associations, or whether the analysts - and I mean precisely the most gifted of them, like Groddeck - trust to their own associations. We are presented on the couch with a relaxed performance of what was once enacted, with the utmost exertion of thought, by Schelling and Hegel on the lecturer's podium: the deciphering of the phenomenon. But this drop in tension affects the quality of the thought: the difference is hardly less than that between the philosophy of revelation and the random gossip of a mother-in-law. The same movement of mind which was once to elevate its 'material' to a concept, is itself reduced to mere material for conceptual ordering. The ideas one has are just good enough to allow experts to decide whether their originator is a compulsive character, an oral type, or a hysteric. Thanks to the diminished responsibility that lies in its severance from reflection, from rational control, speculation is itself handed over as an object to science, whose subjectivity is extinguished with it. Thought, in allowing itself to be reminded of its unconscious origins by the administrative structure of analysis, forgets to be thought. From true judgement it becomes neutral stuff. Instead of mastering itself by performing the task of conceptualization, it entrusts itself impotently to processing by the doctor, who in any case knows everything beforehand. Thus speculation is definitively crushed, becoming itself a fact to be included in one of the departments of classification as proof that nothing changes." (pg. 73-74)
- Unfair intimidation (pg. 74)
 - See text
- For Post-Socratics (pg. 75)
 - "Nothing is more unfitting for an intellectual resolved on practising what was earlier called philosophy, than to wish, in discussion, and one might almost say in argumentation, to be right. The very wish to be right, down to its subtlest form of logical reflection, is an expression of that spirit of self-preservation which philosophy is precisely concerned to break down." (pg. 75)
 - "**When philosophers, who are well known to have difficulty in keeping silent, engage in conversation, they should try always to lose the argument, but in such a way as to convict their opponent of untruth. The point should not be to have absolutely correct, irrefutable, watertight cognitions — for they inevitably boil down to tautologies, but insights which cause the question of their justness to judge itself.** To say this is not, however, to advocate irrationalism, the postulation of arbitrary theses justified by an intuitive faith in revelation, but the abolition of the distinction between thesis and argument. Dialectical thinking, from this point of view, means that an argument should take on the pungency of a thesis and a thesis contain within itself the fullness of its reasoning. All bridging concepts, all links and logical auxiliary operations that are not a part of the matter itself, all secondary developments not saturated with the experience of the object, should be discarded. In a philosophical text all the propositions ought to be equally close to the centre. Without Hegel's ever having said so explicitly, his whole procedure bears witness to such an intention. Because it acknowledges no first principle, it ought, strictly speaking, to know of nothing secondary or deduced; and it transfers the concept of mediation from formal connections to the substance of the object itself, thereby attempting to overcome the difference between the latter and an external thought that mediates it. The limits to the success of such an intention in Hegelian philosophy are also those of its truth, that is to say, the remnants of prima philosophia, the supposition of the subject as something which is, in spite of everything, 'primary'. One of the tasks of dialectical logic is to eliminate the last traces of a deductive system, together with the last advocatory gestures of thought." (pg. 76)
- How sickly seem all growing things (pg. 77)
 - "**Dialectical thought opposes reification in the further sense that it refuses to affirm individual things in their isolation and separateness:** it designates isolation as precisely a product of the universal. Thus it acts as a corrective both to manic fixity and to the unresisting and empty drift of the paranoid mind, which pays for its absolute judgements by loss of the experience of the matter judged." (pg. 77)
 - "**Common sense, the correct assessment of situations, the worldly eye schooled by the market, shares with the dialectic a freedom from dogma, narrow-mindedness and prejudice.** Its sobriety undeniably constitutes a moment of critical thinking. But its lack of passionate commitment makes it, all the same, the sworn enemy of such thinking. For opinion in its generality, accepted directly as that of society as it is, necessarily has agreement as its concrete content" (pg. 77-78)
 - "Dialectical reason is, when set against the dominant mode of reason, unreason: only in encompassing and cancelling this mode does it become itself reasonable. Was it not bigoted and talmudic to insist, in the midst of the exchange economy, on the difference between the labour-time expended by the worker and that needed for the reproduction of his life? Did not Nietzsche put the cart before all the horses on which he rode his charges? Did not Karl Kraus, Kafka, even Proust prejudice and falsify the image of the world in order to shake off falsehood and prejudice? The dialectic cannot stop short before the concepts of health and sickness, nor indeed before their siblings reason and unreason. Once it has recognized the ruling universal order and its proportions as sick - and marked in the most literal sense with paranoia, with 'pathic projection' - then it can see as healing cells only what appears, by the standards of that order, as itself sick, eccentric, paranoia - indeed, 'mad'; and it is true today as in the Middle Ages that only fools

- tell their masters the truth. **The dialectician's duty is thus to help this fool's truth to attain its own reasons, without which it will certainly succumb to the abyss of the sickness implacably dictated by the healthy common sense of the rest.**" (pg. 78)
- On the morality of thinking (pg. 79)
 - **"Knowledge can only widen horizons by abiding so insistently with the particular that its isolation is dispelled. This admittedly presupposes a relation to the general, though not one of subsumption, but rather almost the reverse. Dialectical mediation is not a recourse to the more abstract, but a process of resolution of the concrete in itself"** (pg. 79-80)
 - **"The morality of thought lies in a procedure that is neither entrenched nor detached, neither blind nor empty, neither atomistic nor consequential.** The double-edged method which has earned Hegel's *Phenomenology* the reputation among reasonable people of unfathomable difficulty, **that is, its simultaneous demands that phenomena be allowed to speak as such — in a 'pure looking-on' - and yet that their relation to consciousness as the subject, reflection, be at every moment maintained, expresses this morality most directly and in all its depth of contradiction.** But how much more difficult has it become to conform to such morality now that it is no longer possible to convince oneself of the identity of subject and object, the ultimate assumption of which still enabled Hegel to conceal the antagonistic demands of observation and interpretation. Nothing less is asked of the thinker today than that he should be at every moment both within things and outside them - Münchhausen pulling himself out of the bog by his pig-tail becomes the pattern of knowledge which wishes to be more than either verification or speculation. And then the salaried philosophers come along and reproach us with having no definite point of view." (pg. 80)
 - De gustibus est disputandum (pg. 80)
 - **"Beauty, as single, true and liberated from appearance and individuation, manifests itself not in the synthesis of all works, in the unity of the arts and of art, but only as a physical reality: in the downfall of art itself.** This downfall is the goal of every work of art, in that it seeks to bring death to all others. That all art aims to end art, is another way of saying the same thing. It is this impulse to self-destruction inherent in works of art, their innermost striving towards an image of beauty free of appearance, that is constantly stirring up the aesthetic disputes that are apparently so futile. While obstinately seeking to establish aesthetic truth, and trapping themselves thereby in an irresolvable dialectic, they stumble on the real truth, for by making the works of art their own and elevating them to concepts, they limit them all, and so contribute to the destruction of art which is its salvation. Aesthetic tolerance that simply acknowledges works of art in their limitation, without breaking it, leads them only to a false downfall, that of a juxtaposition which denies their claims to indivisible truth." (pg. 81)
 - For Anatole France (pg. 81)
 - See text
 - Morality and temporal sequence (pg. 84)
 - See text
 - Gaps (pg. 86)
 - "For the value of a thought is measured by its distance from the continuity of the familiar. It is objectively devalued as this distance is reduced; the more it approximates to the pre-existing standard, the further its antithetical function is diminished, and only in this, in its manifest relation to its opposite, not in its isolated existence, are the claims of thought founded." (pg. 86)
 - "knowledge comes to us through a network of prejudices, opinions, innervations, self-corrections, presuppositions and exaggerations, in short through the dense, firmly-founded but by no means uniformly transparent medium of experience." (pg. 86)
 - Memento (pg. 91)
 - "A first precaution for writers: in every text, every piece, every paragraph to check whether the central motif stands out clearly enough. Anyone wishing to express something is so carried away by it that he ceases to reflect on it. Too close to his intention, 'in his thoughts', he forgets to say what he wants to say." (pg. 91)
 - **this is quite ironic since Adorno fails at his own advice.*
 - Where the stork brings babies from (pg. 94)
 - See text
 - Folly of the wise (pg. 94)
 - See text
 - The Robbers (pg. 95)
 - See text
 - May I be so bold? (pg. 97)
 - See text
 - Genealogical research (pg. 98)
 - See text
 - Excavation (pg. 98)
 - See text
 - The truth about Hedda Gabler (pg. 100)
 - See text
 - Since I set eyes on him (pg. 102)
 - See text
 - A word for morality (Pg. 103)
 - See text
 - Court of appeal (pg. 104)
 - See text
 - Brief expositions (pg. 106)
 - See text
 - Death of immorality (pg. 107)
 - See text
 - Morality and style (pg. 108)
 - See text
 - Not half hungry (pg. 109)
 - See text
 - Milange (pg. 110)
 - **"An emancipated society, on the other hand, would not be a unitary state, but the realization of universality in the reconciliation of differences.** Politics that are still seriously concerned with such a society ought not, therefore, propound the abstract equality of men even as an idea. Instead, they should point to the bad equality today, the identity of those with interests in films and in weapons, and conceive the better state as one in which people could be different without fear." (pg. 110)

- Unmeasure for unmeasure (pg. 111)
 - See text
- People are looking at you (pg. 112)
 - See text
- Little folk (pg. 113)
 - "For only leaders who resembled the people of the country in their ignorance of the world and global economics could harness them to war and their pigheadedness to an enterprise wholly unhampered by reflection. Hitler's stupidity was a ruse of reason." (pg. 114)
- Uninformed opinion (pg. 114)
 - See text
- Pseudomenos (pg. 115)
 - "**The magnetic power exerted by patently threadbare ideologies is to be explained, beyond psychology, by the objectively determined decay of logical evidence as such.** Things have come to a pass where lying sounds like truth, truth like lying. Each statement, each piece of news, each thought has been pre-formed by the centres of the culture industry. Whatever lacks the familiar trace of such pre-formation lacks credibility, the more so because the institutions of public opinion accompany what they send forth by a thousand factual proofs and all the plausibility that total power can lay hands on. Truth that opposes these pressures not only appears improbable, but is in addition too feeble to make any head way in competition with their highly-concentrated machinery of dissemination." (pg. 115-116)
 - "So desperate have people become in civilization, however, that they are forever ready to abandon their frail better qualities as soon as the world does their worse ones the obligation of confessing how evil it is. The political forces of opposition, however, are compelled to make constant use of lies if they are not themselves to be completely wiped out as destructive." (pg. 116)
- Second harvest (pg. 117)
 - See text
- Deviation (pg. 121)
 - See text
- Mammoth (pg. 122)
 - See text
- Chilly hospitality (pg. 124)
 - See text
- Gala dinner (pg. 126)
 - See text
- Auction (pg. 127)
 - See text
- Over the hills (pg. 129)
 - See text
- Intellectus sacrificium intellectus (pg. 130)
 - "The assumption that thought profits from the decay of the emotions, or even that it remains unaffected, is itself an expression of the process of stupefaction" (pg. 130)
 - "It is true that the objective meaning of knowledge has, with the objectification of the world, become progressively detached from the underlying impulses; it is equally true that knowledge breaks down where its effort of objectification remains under the sway of desire." (pg. 130)
- Diagnosis (pg. 131)
 - "Because thinking burdens them with a subjective responsibility which their objective position in the productive process does not allow them to meet, they renounce it, shiver a bit, and run to join their opponents. **Dislike of thinking rapidly becomes incapacity for it:** people who can effortlessly discover the most sophisticated statistical objections when it is a question of sabotaging a piece of knowledge, are unable to make *ex cathedra* the simplest predictions. They hit out at speculation and in it kill common sense. The more intelligent of them suspect the sickness of their intellectual powers, since it first appears not universally but in the organs whose services they sell. Many wait in fear and shame for their defect to be discovered. But they all find it publicly acclaimed as a moral achievement, and see themselves recognized for a scientific asceticism which to them is none, but the secret contour of their weakness. Their rancour is socially rationalized with the argument: thinking is unscientific. At the same time, their mental power has, in a number of dimensions, been prodigiously increased by control mechanisms. The collective stupidity of research technicians is not simply an absence or regression of intellectual faculties, but a proliferation of the thinking faculty itself, which consumes thought with its own strength. The masochistic malice of young intellectuals springs from the malignance of their disease." (pg. 132)
- Great and small (pg. 133)
 - "to deprive thought of the moment of spontaneity is to annul precisely its necessity." (pg. 133)
- Keeping one's distance (pg. 135)
 - "Positivism reduces the detachment of thought to a reality, that reality itself no longer tolerates. Cowed into wanting to be no more than a mere provisional abbreviation for the factual matter beneath it, thought loses not only its autonomy in face of reality, but with it the power to penetrate reality. **Only at a remove from life can the mental life exist, and truly engage the empirical. While thought relates to facts and moves by criticizing them, its movement depends no less on the maintenance of distance.** It expresses exactly what is, precisely because what is is never quite as thought expresses it. Essential to it is an element of exaggeration, of over-shooting the object, of self-detachment from the weight of the factual, so that instead of merely reproducing being it can, at once rigorous and free, determine it. Thus **every thought resembles play**, with which Hegel no less than Nietzsche compared the work of the mind. The unbarbaric side of philosophy is its tacit awareness of the element of irresponsibility, of blitheness springing from the volatility of thought, which forever escapes what it judges. Such licence is resented by the positivistic spirit and put down to mental disorder. Divergence from the facts becomes mere wrongness, the moment of play a luxury in a world where the intellectual functions have to account for their every moment with a stop-watch. But as soon as thought repudiates its inviolable distance and tries with a thousand subtle arguments to prove its literal correctness, it founders. If it leaves behind the medium of virtuality, of anticipation that cannot be wholly fulfilled by any single piece of actuality; in short, if instead of interpretation it seeks to become mere statement, everything it states becomes, in fact, untrue. Its apologetics, inspired by uncertainty and a bad conscience, can be refuted at every step by demonstrating the non-identity which it will not acknowledge, yet which alone makes it thought." (pg. 135)
 - "**Distance is not a safety-zone but a field of tension**" (pg. 136)
 - **And, that's the dialectic!*
 - "The distance of thought from reality is itself nothing other than the precipitate of history in concepts. To use them without distance is, despite all the resignation it implies or perhaps because of it, a child's affair. For **thought must aim beyond its target just because it never quite reaches it, and positivism is uncritical in its confidence of doing so, imagining its tergiversations to be due to mere conscientiousness.** A transcending thought takes its own inadequacy more thoroughly into account than does one guided by the control mechanisms of science. It extrapolates in order, by the over-

exertion of the too-much, to master, however hopelessly, the inevitable too-little. The illegitimate absolutism, the allegedly definitive stamp of its formulations, with which philosophy is reproached, derives precisely from the abyss of relativity. The exaggerations of speculative metaphysics are scars of reflecting reason, and the unproven alone unmasks proof as tautology." (pg. 136)

- Vice-President (pg. 137)
 - "Advice to intellectuals: let no-one represent you" (pg. 137)
- Timetable (pg. 138)
 - See text
- Passing muster (pg. 139)
 - See text
- Little hans (pg. 141)
 - See text
- Wrestling club (pg. 142)
 - See text
- Simple simon
 - See text
- Blackmail (pg. 145)
 - See text
- Institution of deaf mutes (pg. 146)
 - "No harm comes to man from outside alone: dumbness is the objective spirit" (pg. 147)
- Vandals (pg. 147)
 - "**Psychological emptiness is itself only the result of the wrong kind of social absorption.** The boredom that people are running away from merely mirrors the process of running away, that started long before. For this reason alone the monstrous machinery of amusement keeps alive and constantly grows bigger without a single person being amused by it. It channels the urge to be in on the act, which otherwise, indiscriminately, anarchically, as promiscuity or wild aggression, would throw itself on the collective, itself consisting of none other than those on the move. Most closely related to them are addicts." (pg. 149)
- Picture-book without pictures (pg. 149)
 - "**...the power of abstraction is vanishing**" (pg. 150)
- Intention and reproduction (pg. 151)
 - See text
- All the world's not a stage (pg. 152)
 - See text
- Damper and drum (pg. 154)
 - See text
- Palace of Janus (pg. 156)
 - "The dual nature of progress, which always developed the potential of freedom simultaneously with the reality of oppression, gave rise to a situation where peoples were more and more inducted into the control of nature and social organization, but grew at the same time, owing to the compulsion under which culture placed them, incapable of understanding in what way culture went beyond such integration. What has become alien to men is the human component of culture, its closest part, which upholds them against the world. They make common cause with the world against themselves, and the most alienated condition of all, the omnipresence of commodities, their own conversion into appendages of machinery, is for them a mirage of closeness." (pg. 157)
- Monad (pg. 158)
 - "The individual owes his crystallization to the forms of political economy, particularly to those of the urban market. Even as the opponent of the pressure of socialization he remains the latter's most particular product and its likeness. What enables him to resist, that streak of independence in him, springs from monadological individual interest and its precipitate, character. The individual mirrors in his individuation the preordained social laws of exploitation, however mediated. This means too, however, that his decay in the present phase must itself not be deduced individualistically, but from the social tendency which asserts itself by means of individuation and not merely as its enemy." (pg. 158)
- Bequest (pg. 160)
 - "**Dialectical thought is an attempt to break through the coercion of logic by its own means.** But since it must use these means, it is at every moment in danger of itself acquiring a coercive character: the ruse of reason would like to hold sway over the dialectic too." (pg. 160)
 - "Benjamin's writings are an attempt in ever new ways to make philosophically fruitful what has not yet been foreclosed by great intentions. The task he bequeathed was not to abandon such an attempt to the estranging enigmas of thought alone, but to bring the intentionless within the realm of concepts: the obligation to think at the same time dialectically and undialectically." (pg. 162)
- Gold assay (pg. 162)
 - See txt
- Sur l'Eau (pg. 166)
 - See text
- Hothouse plant (pg. 171)
 - See text
- More haste, less speed (pg. 172)
 - See text
- Boy from the heath (pg. 173)
 - See text
- Golden Gate (pg. 174)
 - See text
- Expiry (pg. 175)
 - See text
- All the little flowers (pg. 176)
 - See text
-***From here, I am only including parts I can tolerate reading***
- Monograms (pg. 202)
 - "**Love is the power to see similarity in the dissimilar**" (pg. 203)

- **"True thoughts are those alone which do not understand themselves."** (pg. 204)
 - I.Q. (pg. 209)
 - "Thought, having lost autonomy, no longer trusts itself to comprehend reality, in freedom, for its own sake." (pg. 209)
 - "Instrumentalism, the latest version of pragmatism, has long been concerned not merely with the application of thought but the a priori condition of its form. When oppositional intellectuals endeavour, within the confines of these influences, to imagine a new content for society, they are paralysed by the form of their own consciousness, which is modelled in advance to suit the needs of this society. While **thought has forgotten how to think itself**, it has at the same time become its own watchdog. Thinking no longer means anything more than checking at each moment whether one can indeed think." (pg. 209)
 - Wishful thinking (pg. 210)
 - "intelligence is a moral category" (pg. 210)
 - "intelligence, in asserting its power of judgement, opposes anything given in advance, by at the same time expressing it" (pg. 210-211)
 - Regressions (pg. 212)
 - **"The capacity for fear and for happiness are the same, the unrestricted openness to experience amounting to self-abandonment in which the vanquished rediscovers himself."** (pg. 213)
 - Service to the customer (pg. 213)
 - "The culture industry is geared to mimetic regression, to the manipulation of repressed impulses to copy. Its method is to anticipate the spectator's imitation of itself, so making it appear as if the agreement already exists which it intends to create." (pg. 214)
 - In nuce (pg. 236)
 - "the task of art today is to bring chaos into order" (pg. 236)
 - Finale (pg. 263)
 - **"The only philosophy which can be responsibly practised 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: all else is reconstruction, mere technique. Perspectives must be fashioned that displace and estrange the world, reveal it to be, with its rifts and crevices, as indigent and distorted as it will appear one day in the messianic light. **To gain such perspectives without velleity or violence, entirely from felt contact with its objects - this alone is the task of thought. It is the simplest of all things,** because the situation calls imperatively for such knowledge, indeed because consummate negativity, once squarely faced, delineates the mirror-image of its opposite. But it is also the utterly impossible thing, because it presupposes a standpoint removed, even though by a hair's breadth, from the scope of existence, whereas we well know that any possible knowledge must not only be first wrested from what is, if it shall hold good, but is also marked, for this very reason, by the same distortion and indigence which it seeks to escape. The more passionately thought denies its conditionality for the sake of the unconditional, the more unconsciously, and so calamitously, it is delivered up to the world. Even its own impossibility it must at last comprehend for the sake of the possible. But beside the demand thus placed on thought, the question of the reality or unreality of redemption itself hardly matters." (pg. 263)
- d. Further Readings:
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