

Sartre and Adorno: The Dialectics of Subjectivity, by D. Sherman

a. People / Organizations:

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b. Quotes:

- "as a very young man, Adorno was engrossed in Kierkegaard's thought..." - Author (pg. 27)
- "Adorno's work was relatively unified over his lifetime..." - Author (pg. 28)
- **"Even Adorno's most 'systematic' works, such as *Negative Dialectics* and *Aesthetic Theory*, appear to be little more than a constellation of essays structured around a loose organizing principle**, while other central works, such as *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and *Minima Moralia*, are comprised (in part and whole, respectively) of aphorisms" - Author (pg. 36)
- "Adorno does not just hold on to a notion of subjectivity in his philosophy, but that the notion of subjectivity is, arguably, at the heart of his philosophy" - Author (pg. 54)
- **"Sartre is scarcely troubled by epistemology'**, according to Raymond Aron, and Sartre himself endorses the claim. Thus, when questioned by Michel Rybalka, who tells Sartre that he has 'often been criticized for not being interested in scientific thought and epistemology', Sartre replies: 'But after all, I never found them terribly absorbing'" - Author (pg. 97)
 - **And, this is very disconcerting, as half of Philosophy is epistemology (i.e., "how can I know?")*
- "Boiled down for Sartre (as for Adorno), the basic difference between the philosophies of Husserl and Heidegger is that Husserl's Cartesian-inspired phenomenological method collapses the being of the object into an objectivized transcendental subject, while Heidegger's anti-Cartesian ontology collapses the subject into an object that has been unwittingly objectivized. Sartre, by way of contrast, seeks to circumvent the pitfalls of both Husserl's transcendental ego, which supports an eidetic analysis that reveals more about the structures of consciousness than the objects under analysis, and Heidegger's Dasein, whose "being-in-the-world" reveals more about the sociohistorical determinations of our world than the existential structures of Dasein" - Author (pg. 115)
- "[Sartre's] later works do not forsake the abstract principles that are inherent in the earlier works, but, rather, merely flesh them out" - Author (pg. 135)
 - *"Being and Nothingness* steadily moves from abstract concepts to their concrete instantiations..." - Author (pg. 150)
- **"in the 1975 Schilpp interview, Sartre says that freedom remains his 'starting point'"** - Author (pg. 152)
- **"freedom is the ability to take a different point of view. It is the ability to reflectively call into question aspects of our existing initial orientation from another standpoint that does not spontaneously arise outside of our prevailing subjective constitution but, to the contrary, reflects the wide-ranging nature of the experiences that are a part of it"** - Author (pg. 165)
 - "Nietzsche's claim [is] that the best way to get at the truth of a phenomenon is to look at it from as many different perspectives as possible..." - Author (pg. 216)
 - **cf. M. Heidegger, Introduction to Metaphysics, pg. 24 - "to know means to be able to learn...Being able to learn presupposes being able to question. Questioning is the willing-to-know...[It's] the open resoluteness to be able to stand in the openness of beings"*
 - "To sustain his object of hate, and thus solidify his own (reactive) self-understanding, the anti-Semite must close himself off to the richness of experience since the truths of experience tend to undermine the stereotypes that provide the very stuff of the anti-Semite's identity" - Author (pg. 220)
- "Throughout his works...Sartre's approach remains markedly phenomenological in the sense that his philosophical analysis begins from the first-person standpoint and builds out to the world. Even in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, he starts with free, but totally concretized, individuals who progressively come together in larger and increasingly self-conscious collectives (i.e., the series, the group, the organization, and the institution). Crucially, however, **to balance this first-person, phenomenological perspective, which is inherently one-sided because it begins from the concrete individual as a simple given, we must also consider the sociohistorical context from the third-person perspective** (i.e., the perspective from which the identities of these concrete individuals are formed), provided that, at bottom, this third-person perspective also presupposes a free individual. Such is the perspective of Adorno, who plays, in Hegel's words, the "objective subject-object" to Sartre's "subjective subject-object," but who, like Sartre, rejects the totalizing movement that is, in some sense, Hegel himself" - Author (pg. 171)
 - **this is the author's thesis - i.e., the reason for positioning Sartre (first-person) against Adorno (third-person). Cf. pg. 6-8*
 - "Adorno and Sartre share similar presuppositions concerning the nature of the subject despite the fact that one looks at the subject from the third-person standpoint of the dialectic and the other from the first-person or phenomenological standpoint..." - Author (pg. 216)
 - "By bringing freedom and historical determinism into a dialectical relation, Adorno is basically doing what I am attempting to do here namely, he is interrogating these first- and third-person standpoints so as to show how each leads back to the other" - Author (pg. 247)

c. General Notes:

- Introduction (pg. 1)
 - "Since the late 1960s, during which time various strains of poststructuralism and critical theory's linguistic turn have largely demarcated the field in continental philosophy, there has really been only one point of agreement among the preponderance of continental philosophers - namely, that any philosophical approach beginning with 'the subject' is utterly flawed" (pg. 1)
 - "there have been, in addition to Zizek, a number of philosophers who have sought to revivify the notion of the subject..." (pg. 2-3)
 - "For good reason, then, in recent years the question of the subject has been explicitly raised anew. As Slavoj Zizek aptly puts it in the opening sentence of *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, 'a specter is haunting Western Academia...the spectre of the Cartesian subject'. As the book's subtitle appropriately suggests, **the subject is an ineliminable component of all political projects, or at least, I would argue, political projects that are motivated by the aim of ameliorating the existing state of affairs for human beings. Without a commitment to efficacious subjects** - a commitment whose very possibility is being progressively undermined by a polity that is ever more constructed in the circuits of contemporary 'postmodern' capitalist globalization processes - there can be no basis for change, and this only plays into the hands of those groups that most profit from the prevailing order of things" (pg. 2)
 - "As Dewes states, the poststructuralists and Habermas share a view of the subject 'ultimately derived from Heidegger', whose philosophy is virtually defined by its antipathy toward the notion of the subject. At the risk of being accused of confusing genesis and validity, I would argue that from such quintessentially antagonistic beginnings, there can be no basis for any project that would seek to revivify the subject" (pg. 3)
 - **"my own philosophical orientation remains largely Hegelian in nature**. By rejecting all philosophical foundations, Hegel catapulted both reason and the subject into the movement of history, and thus he did no less to 'deconstruct' the overblown subjectivity of Cartesianism than his contemporary critics. **On Hegel's dialectical account, in which subject and object interpenetrate one another, the historical movement of reason and subjectivity finally leads to the modest recognition that all thought is context-bound, but that as free, self-determining beings we are the ones who construct the historical context**, and, therefore, the categories that mediate our relation to the world" (pg. 4)
 - "If there is an overemphasis on Spirit in Hegel's philosophy, it pertains to Spirit as universal (human) subject, not as some ontologically discrete entity. **Hegel is more than clear throughout his works that his phenomenological approach deals solely with the realm of human thought and**

- action** - indeed, according to its most basic tenets, it could deal with nothing else. But this is not inconsistent with the claim that Hegel gives short shrift to the individual (as opposed to universal) subject" (pg. 4)
- "although he emphasizes the mediation of universal and particular, Hegel ultimately privileges the universal, and although motivated by the desire to truly reconcile the individual to both himself and his social world, the contrived reconciliation that Hegel feels historically compelled to posit ultimately takes place at the expense of this individual. By failing to carry through his dialectic, which is grounded in the notion of determinate negativity, Hegel fails to give the existing individual subject its due, as both the spirit and letter of his dialectic otherwise requires" (pg. 4-5)
 - "Giving the existing individual subject its due does not, of course, augur a return to the transcendental subject, which for **philosophers such as Kant, Fichte, and Husserl performs the epistemic task of constituting the world of our experience**. The abstract, universal structures that compose this kind of individual subject are as incompatible with the notion of a vibrant individual subject as is Hegel's domineering universal subject. And, of course, even from a strictly epistemological standpoint, such a move would be regressive, for it does not have the merit of Hegel's dialectical rejoinder to classical epistemology. In this sense, I am in agreement with poststructuralists, hermeneuticists, and Habermas-inspired critical theorists. Conversely, **the existing individual subject is also not to be collapsed into**, or otherwise seen as coterminous with, "**the self**" (or what Anglo-American philosophers might refer to as the ordinary, common sense concept of "a person"), as many of these continental philosophers are inclined to do. Even Heidegger tried to make sense of authentic Dasein, but by virtue of its undialectical relation to the world of everyday social practices, which it awkwardly straddles, such a notion was easy enough for his successors to bury. The postmodern "self," understood as wholly determined by the overarching structures of language or power, is still as "fallen" as Heidegger ambivalently understood inauthentic *Dasein* to be, but now without even so much as an impoverished concept against which the recognition of this phenomenon might arise. To use Zizek's terms, but without confining the claim to "Western academia" and "political ontology," **the nature of the present individual's experience of both himself and his world is increasingly becoming the absent center of the sociopolitical world**" (pg. 5)
 - "it is my view that it is a mistake to reduce the standpoint of embodied, intentional consciousness, which obliges us to recognize ourselves as free, efficacious agents in the world, to the sociohistorical standpoint. **Although subjectivity is plainly mediated by the existing sociohistorical structures, it also has the capacity to affect these very structures in turn**, and therefore the self-identities that they engender. Thus, **subjectivity is not just passively mediated**, which is how it invariably appears when one's philosophical perspective is limited to the third-person standpoint. Due to the continuing historical existence of the subject - that is, the first-person standpoint, which, by virtue of its historical legacy, continues, however tenuously, to presuppose the freedom of its choices in the face of the political totality - **subjectivity is also active or mediating**. And, ethically speaking, the notion that we are mediating subjects is basic to our self-constitution, both collectively and individually." (pg. 6)
 - "In this book, I aim to mediate these two standpoints by way of the philosophies of Sartre and Adorno. Although beginning from these conflicting standpoints, **Sartre's phenomenology and Adorno's critical theory are both committed to the subject-object paradigm, the dialectical privileging of the individual over the collective** (or the particular over the universal), **and, indeed, the notion of a mediating subjectivity itself**. Moreover, by rejecting the idea of a transcendental subject, Sartre and Adorno were in no small part responsible for bringing about the shift that has taken place since the late 1960s in continental philosophy. After all, it was Sartre who asserted that the self is not in consciousness but is "out in the world," and it was Adorno who cautioned that inherent in the very process by which the self is formed is a regressive moment that tends to propel the self toward absolute self-identity - a self-identity that, by closing itself off to its other, makes itself absolutely coercive of both self and other. In contrast to most current philosophers, however, neither Sartre nor Adorno held that the subject is merely a harmful fiction, and both tenaciously defended the moment of agency inherent in the first-person standpoint" (pg. 6-7)
 - "However, because I am interested in investigating the relation between Sartre's first-person standpoint and Adorno's third-person standpoint, I will not engage the latest works of each, and will remain content with identifying the potential of the later movement within the earlier works" (pg. 7)
 - "Accordingly, although Sartre's primary focus is on the freedom of consciousness in his earlier works, he does not take this freedom to be historically unencumbered. Instead, because consciousness is nothing other than the objects of which it is "positionally" aware - that is, it is purely "intentional" - **a person's freedom is always-already embedded within a "situation."** (It is the "nonpositional" consciousness of this positional consciousness, which Sartre heuristically ascribes to the prereflective cogito, that provides the latitude for our phenomenological freedom, and thus the grounds for a mediating subject). The situation not only limits the ways in which a person can act on his phenomenological freedom, but also fundamentally circumscribes the very nature of his selfhood" (pg. 7-8)
 - "Contrary to Sartre, Adorno refuses to consider the subject in abstraction from its concrete sociohistorical situation. Still, **he unremittably attacks those who would conceive of the free self-determining subject as merely a deceptive notion emanating from the metaphysical tradition**. These attacks extend to his own mentor, Walter Benjamin, who, according to Adorno, calls into question not just the 'over-inflated subjectivism' of the philosophical tradition, 'but rather the notion of a subjective dimension itself', which causes the subject to 'evaporate', and turns 'man into the stage on which an objective process unfolds'" (pg. 8)
 - "**Sartre and Adorno share similar underlying notions of the subject**" (pg. 9)
 - "what I propose to do in this book is bring about a dialectical movement between these two standpoints so as to highlight this similarity and enrich both in the process" (pg. 9)
 - "According to Adorno, **Kierkegaard has a notion of subjectivity in which all meaning devolves onto the subject, thus causing the loss of the world; Heidegger devolves all meaning onto the being of the world, thus causing the loss of the subject; and, finally, Husserl seeks to preserve both the subject and the world, but in an unmediated way**. Ultimately, Adorno contends, because Husserl seeks to preserve the integrity of both subject and object (although statically), his thought is the high point of the phenomenological and existential traditions" (pg. 9)
 - "because Sartre seeks to preserve the integrity of both subject and object in an existential framework, it is my view that it is his thought that is the high point of the phenomenological and existential traditions..." (pg. 9-10)
 - Part 1 - Adorno's Relation to the Existential and Phenomenological Traditions (pg. 13)
 - "orthodox Marxists...offhandedly dismissed existentialism and phenomenology as bourgeois ideology..." (pg. 13)
 - "...by abstracting from the existing sociohistorical context, this exclusive category, which purports to surmount the drive for identity (i.e., "the rule of totality") that exists in Hegel's idealism, ultimately reveals itself as an 'identity theory' that is far more troubling. In sharp contrast to Hegel's dialectics, in which the subject's drive to conceptually identify the object once and for all occurs within the context of an evolving subject-object relation that is not predicated on transcendental first principles, an exclusive category is ultimately an undialectical positing of transcendence that circumvents the "negative" labor which drives Hegel's dialectic. And by striving for indeterminate truths beyond the profane mediations of the dialectic, this self-identical first principle unavoidably - although unwittingly - makes itself determinate by importing the empirical stuff of its own sociohistorical context. In this way, the profane existence from which the exclusive category seeks to extricate the philosophy uncritically becomes a part of the philosophy itself. Ironically, then, philosophers such as Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Husserl, who use their first principles to pursue existential or epistemological truths that transcend the mere existing, not only end up replicating idealism's drive toward identity at the very point at which they are intent on facilitating a break with it, but fall behind Hegel's idealism in the process" (pg.

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- "To avoid the antinomies that arise from using an "exclusive category" (i.e., "systematic subordinating concept"), which breaks off the subject-object dialectic and therefore leads to the assortment of false reconciliations that are the hallmark of what Adorno calls "identity thinking," one must work through Hegel's "idealist construction," and it is for this reason that **Adorno largely conforms to Hegel's dialectical method**, while simultaneously rejecting his assumption of an ultimate reconciliation" (pg. 15)
 - ◆ "this is not to say, however, that Adorno believes that we should stop trying to reconcile subject and object" (pg. 15-16)
 - ◇ "Adorno thinks that subject and object must be kept in a dialectical tension, a dialectical tension from which Kierkegaard, Husserl, and Heidegger all philosophically flee" (pg. 16)
 - ◇ "unlike his predecessors in the tradition, **Sartre's philosophy is inherently dialectical**, which means that he can engage the concrete phenomena of everyday existence in a way that does not violate Adorno's methodological strictures" (pg. 16)
- Chapter 1 - Adorno and Kierkegaard (pg. 17) *this chapter reviews Adorno's 'Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic' (pg. 25)
 - "although he was nominally attacking Kierkegaard, Adorno actually has his sights on the entire existential tradition, and, at least with respect to Heidegger, who was his secondary target, Kierkegaard compared rather favorably..." (pg. 17)
 - "Going one step further, I would argue that a good deal of Adorno's hostility toward existentialism arises from his distaste for its particular German manifestation, and that his 'negative dialectics, [which] kept alive an insistence on undefined experience', has strong affinities with many elements of Kierkegaard's "negative" existential philosophy" (pg. 17)
 - "Although **Adorno uses Hegel's dialectic** to expose the ways in which Kierkegaard's thought collapses into the kind of idealism that it purports to leave behind by rejecting Hegel, he is also extremely sympathetic to Kierkegaard's attack on Hegel's 'identity thinking'. Of course, for Adorno, Kierkegaard's ultimately undialectical approach backfires, which leaves him open to attack on the precise grounds that he attacks Hegel: Kierkegaard, despite his intentions, makes individual existence abstract. Still, confronted with what he refers to as the 'totally administered society', whose levelling drive progressively extirpates individual subjectivity, Adorno embraces certain aspects of Kierkegaard's philosophy, as well as a number of Kierkegaard's techniques for reviving individual subjectivity in mass society - albeit, of course, in a dialectical framework that is more mediative and materialistic" (pg. 17-18)
 - "By breaking off the subject-object dialectic, Kierkegaard hopes to open up spaces within which, come what may, one's personal 'meaning' can be preserved. (Indeed, one's personal meaning does not even have to be 'positive', as is the case with Kierkegaard's negative theology.) But this tactic - namely, **the attempt to protectively isolate subjectivity by casting out everything that is not subjectivity - is fundamentally misguided...**" (pg. 20)
 - ◆ "In *Kierkegaard*, Adorno attacks Kierkegaard for breaking off the subject-object dialectic by positing an 'abstract self' whose 'abstractness is the counterpole to the abstractness of the universal' (K, p. 75) - in other words, his attack on Kierkegaard's 'abstract self' comes from the viewpoint of the universal, which dialectically shapes the individual's existence" (pg. 28)
 - ◆ "In *Kierkegaard*, Adorno rails against Kierkegaard because he, like Hegel, fails to carry through the dialectic. But in legitimately attempting to recuperate the individual in the face of Hegel's idea of world history, **Kierkegaard catapults to the other extreme. In order to vindicate the individual's existence in the face of objective history, he does away with the object, external history, and nature, thereby leaving the individual in objectless inwardness**. As a result, Adorno contends, existence is actually no less abstract for Kierkegaard than Kierkegaard claims it is for Hegel" (pg. 30)
 - ◇ "Kierkegaard's idea of individuality is based on an infinitely negative 'vertical' relation to God" (pg. 30)
 - "Just as Kierkegaard aims to exclude the external world from subjectivity, he aims to exclude external history from one's 'personal' history, which is marked totally by interiority. Nevertheless, external history again comes crashing through the perimeter. Language, ostensibly the form of the communication of pure subjectivity, is itself sedimented by the historical dialectic that Kierkegaard refuses to recognize, and, therefore, drags external history's meanings into the core of inwardness, thus leading Kierkegaard all the more to fall prey to the objective historical situation that he would just as soon escape" (pg. 20)
 - "According to Adorno, there can be no impetus for reconciling with reality without first coming to grips with both history and nature, which dialectically "inter-weave" but can be neither reduced nor sublated. Kierkegaard, however, simply avoids the dialectical problem altogether by fleeing both" (pg. 23)
 - "according to Adorno...**'the aesthetic' pertains to the 'object' side of the subject-object dialectic...**" (pg. 23)
 - "Yet, in moving away from Hegel's dialectically informed idealistic aesthetics toward what he mistakenly takes to be a 'materialist' aesthetics based on 'sense perception' (in which 'the aesthetic in a man is that by which he immediately is what he is'), Kierkegaard falls into the very idealism that he sought to escape. According to Adorno, this is invariably the result when the dualism of form and content is rigidly maintained, as is the case with Kierkegaard..." (pg. 24)
 - "By managing 'the material' in such a way as to exclude the treatment of social experience, Adorno contends, Kierkegaard falls behind Hegel, who mediates the relation between form and content (as well as subject and object, external history and personal history, and history and nature), but veers into idealism by producing the entire process - which from the contrived standpoint of the Absolute is 'meaningful' and 'rational' through-out - out of his own thought determinations. Thus, although Hegel precipitously brings this concrete dialectical process to completion, **Kierkegaard, by stripping 'meaning' from existence, never even embarks on it** - that is, he fails to attain historical concretion in the first place, a failure that sets a precedent the German existentialists of the twentieth century would emulate" (pg. 24-25)
 - "According to Adorno, Heidegger erroneously reads the question of the 'meaning of existence' out of Kierkegaard because, for Kierkegaard, 'existence' is not to be seen as some 'manner of being'; rather, **the question for Kierkegaard is what gives existence meaning**. In other words, unlike Heidegger's 'fundamental ontology', which holds that there is a meaning to which existence must correspond, the meaning that Kierkegaard would find is generated entirely out of the domain of existence itself. **Without a contribution from the subject, existence itself is meaningless. Consequently, Kierkegaard would have found Heidegger's fundamental ontology as intolerable as Hegel's system**, for it fosters the kind of objectifying attitude toward existence that Kierkegaard so thoroughly denounced" (pg. 25)
 - "what ultimately differentiates Kierkegaard and Heidegger is that **Kierkegaard is a philosopher of nonidentity, while Heidegger is a philosopher of identity**" (pg. 26)
 - ◆ "deconstruction is heavily influenced by Heidegger's thought..." (pg. 26-27)
 - "Given Habermas's rejection of every 'philosophy of the subject', which is a position that he shares with deconstructionists, it is ironic that it is exactly Kierkegaard's defense of individual subjectivity that prompts him to assert that elements of Kierkegaard's thought are indispensable to his own enterprise, which is based on the idea of 'communicative rationality'" (pg. 27)
 - "Adorno is no less troubled by Hegel's individual, who is concretized - indeed, in a real sense, all too concretized. Hegel's concept of *sittlichkeit* is based on a view of 'horizontal' relations among people. The community is the ethical substance of the individual, and if it is 'rational', Hegel declares, the individual should be reconciled to it. According to Adorno, however, Hegel's ethical community achieves its harmony by crushing the particularities of individuality. Thus, harmony - or at least what has historically passed for harmony - is the 'totalitarian unison' to which

- Adorno refers" (pg. 30)
- **"Adorno thus buys into neither Kierkegaard's "vertical" model nor Hegel's "horizontal" one.** Indeed, since both ultimately succumb to idealism's siren song, he thinks that neither one gives "the other" its due. Nevertheless, both have an undeniably strong influence on his thought. Of course, this influence has always been much clearer in the case of Hegel, for there can be no question that Adorno embraces the moving impulse in Hegel's dialectic, determinate negativity, if not the ends with which he precipitately brings the process to a conclusion. (And, of course, it is just as clear that he rejects the indeterminate negativity of Kierkegaard's wholly inward dialectic.) But in terms of Adorno's attack on the unrelenting drive toward systematic totality in Hegel's philosophy, Kierkegaard's influence has been underappreciated. In trying to resuscitate the subject in the face of a society that has left him with few resources with which to resist it, Kierkegaard and Adorno share a number of theoretical and stylistic commitments" (pg. 30)
 - "Kierkegaard and Adorno are averse to Hegel's 'metaphysics', which both take to be a system that purports to reconcile thought and being at the latter's expense" (pg. 30)
 - ◆ **this is the mark of absolute idealism*
 - "Kierkegaard's 'existential dialectic' culminates not in a Hegelian synthesis but rather in a final either/or..." (pg. 31)
 - **"Adorno claims that Kant's notion of the thing-in-itself at least acknowledges the ultimate impossibility of obtaining a conceptual stranglehold on reality** - although, clearly, Adorno does not want to buy into its deeper metaphysical implications. Instead, for Adorno, the thing-in-itself is the phenomenon grasped from the standpoint of a sociohistorical reconciliation" (pg. 32)
 - **"both Kierkegaard and Adorno passionately embrace 'the negative'** and both hold fast to the idea of a 'negative utopia', albeit for one this idea is theological, while, for the other, it is sociohistorical" (pg. 33)
 - "the negative has a number of connotations for Kierkegaard. **It is the source of our freedom**; as was suggested above with respect to irony, the individual is always in a position to detach himself from 'what is' and try to reconstruct it through his own actions. **The negative also reflects our essential existential position in the world; there is no resting place**, no end point at which we can just 'be done with it'. It is only through the wholly negative phenomenon of death that this can come about. (The will to metaphysics is thus a will to death.) In life, however, we who actually 'exist' are trapped in a negative relation between the rock of being and the hard place of thought, and thus must bear an interminable deferral of truth. Yet, Kierkegaard says, we must strive toward this deferred truth in passion - that is, we must keep the negative tension alive - lest we become 'deluded' and 'fooled' persons that fail 'to exist'. **For Adorno, in contrast, the negative** does not refer to metaphysical inquiries, but, instead, to **the dialectical relation that constitutes such linked dualities as subject and object, individual and society, and nature and history. The fluid tension that is supposed to internally characterize these dualities, however, is fractured by the prevalence of identity thinking,** which, in the pursuit of control and, ultimately, self-preservation, eradicates not only the other, but the self as well" (pg. 33)
 - "Kierkegaard upholds the universality of a Christian love that is ultimately based on pure subjective inwardness. But this love is like the Kantian ethics of duty. Concerned more with its own status than the other, the inward self must abstract from all natural preferences that its empirical self may harbor regarding the particularities of others in order to meet the requirement of universality. Such an indiscriminating love, however, can easily turn into its opposite, a universal hatred of other human beings, and, according to Adorno, this is what happens in the case of Kierkegaard. To this point, Adorno's critique of Kierkegaard's doctrine of love reflects his prior critique in Kierkegaard. The demand that the purely inward self love the universalized other reflects an expulsion of nature, and, in turn, nature revenges itself on this abstract self in the form of a mythical taboo against the preferences of natural love, which ultimately transforms into a universal hatred" (pg. 34-35)
 - "by virtue of Kierkegaard's attempt to resurrect the subject through language, he stands in much closer proximity to Adorno than does Heidegger, who believes that a proper understanding of language will lead to the elimination of that very notion of subjectivity to which the works of Kierkegaard and Adorno are ultimately geared" (pg. 36)
- Chapter 2 - Adorno and Heidegger (pg. 37)
- "As the title *Jargon of Authenticity* suggests, **Adorno is not only concerned with the basic categories of Heidegger's 'fundamental ontology' but also the language that he uses to articulate them,** for Heidegger's philosophy of language is a function of his 'fundamental ontology', a fact that Adorno emphasizes throughout the book. Of course, Adorno's recognition that Heidegger's account of language directly follows from his philosophical commitments is, in and of itself, not particularly interesting, for it is well known that Heidegger sought to use language in a way that would allow him to speak in terms that might evade the presuppositions of Western metaphysics, which had supplanted 'the question of the meaning of Being' with an instrumentalizing, subject-centered epistemological framework. The significance of Adorno's analysis lies, instead, in his recognition that **Heidegger's idiosyncratic language,** as well as the ontology that it expresses, **effectively operates as a cover for the existing ideology,** the 'untruth' of the times, and is thus at odds with its own initial impulse..." (pg. 38)
 - "although Heidegger views the positivistic use of language as a manifestation of a misguided (if inevitable) Cartesian-inspired worldview, because he "breaks off" the dialectic and attacks not only Cartesian subjectivism but subjectivity altogether, Heidegger's philosophy is itself ultimately positivistic. Both fundamental ontology and positivism ahistorically neglect the self-conscious moments in language when it reflectively pushes beyond its existing stock of meanings in order to close the gap between these meanings and the world to which they refer. Instead, by virtue of their respective strictures, fundamental ontology and positivism would just establish an identity between language and that to which language putatively refers. Both seek an absolute language, and in so doing both fall prey to mythological thinking - in other words, thinking that does not reflect on its own sociohistorical determination - the only difference being that at least fundamental ontology acknowledges that "one cannot speak absolutely without speaking archaically" (JOA, p. 43). **For Adorno, in contrast to both fundamental ontology and positivism, language can never purport to have identified the truth once and for all"** (pg. 39-40)
 - "Perhaps the best example of this tendency in Heidegger's language, and the one that is most profoundly intertwined with his "fundamental ontology," is his use of the term "Being" itself. In an important passage in *Negative Dialectics* titled "Copula," **Adorno says that in a very real sense Heidegger's philosophy is built on the misuse of "is."** "By definition," Adorno states, the copula is "fulfilled only in the relation between subject and predicate. It is not independent" (ND, p. 101). Comprehended in this way, the copula smacks of what Heidegger would call "the ontical." But in taking the general term "is" by itself, devoid of both the subject and predicate, Heidegger transforms this essentially ontical term, whose "generality is a promissory note on particularization" (ND, p. 101), into one that is ontological, and therefore hypostatizes it in its generality. **Contrary to Heidegger's aims, then, Being becomes an object, when, in fact, the "is" of Being is no more independent of the "is" in a judgment than the state of facts that ordinarily comprise a judgment** (ND, p. 102). In other words, it is not the case that Being "is" if this means that it transcends the subject-object relation by virtue of the "ontological difference," for Being is always-already entangled in this dialectical relation. Thus, **while Heidegger revives the question of the meaning of Being in reaction to the drive for identity that is inherent in positivism, his notion of Being falls into the same type of identity thinking..."** (pg. 40)
 - ◆ "it is Adorno's belief that Heidegger's notion of Being results from an abuse of the copula "is," which leads Heidegger to objectify Being as that unconceptualizable "something more" that exists beyond mere empirical entities, and to which they obliquely refer. **But rather than just acknowledge that all things point beyond themselves, which would then make it incumbent on reason to attempt to mediate the difference, Heidegger ends up objectifying the "something more" as "Being," thereby putting it beyond**

the ontical sphere, as well as the boundaries of reason..." (pg. 49)

- ◇ "in the place of reason, Heidegger's account substitutes intuition" (pg. 49)
- "By placing Being safely beyond the punishing mediations of the subject-object dialectic, Heidegger's thought nonetheless expresses a social psychological need, and it is here, as Adorno says, that the "truth content" of his philosophy lies. **The assorted expressions that constitute Heidegger's jargon**, such as "the need for shelteredness" and "angst," which are vouchsafed by Being and thus have deep existential meaning, **are actually melancholy expressions of the sociohistorical circumstances in which Heidegger and his compatriots found themselves**. Those who live in dire economic circumstances, such as the Germans did in the 1920s, have good reason to be anxious about their shelter. With both capital concentration and technological development accelerating (not to mention the severe economic repercussions of World War I), it becomes increasingly clear that the ground of one's sustenance - if, in fact, one is being sustained at all - is not only beyond one's control but is also beyond one's conceptualization. This is what produces that feeling of "meaninglessness," which is actually nothing more than the expression of real need. **By explaining this situation in existential terms, however, fundamental ontology not only serves the palliating function of religion but also the concomitant need to be able to make sense of a senseless situation...**" (pg. 41)
 - ◆ "to accomplish this task, fundamental ontology draws on prior ways of 'being' that are able to make sense of existence in a reassuring way..." (pg. 41)
 - ◇ "Small farmers and artisans, in particular, are glorified by Heidegger for reflecting the "splendor of the simple" (JOA, p. 50). But, of course, ontologizing a past form of economic life does not actually make it so, and the supposedly "immediate" relation that had once existed between the farmer and his land, as well as the artisan and his handicrafts, exists no longer. The conditions of the former's increasingly tenuous existence are tied to finance capital, while the latter, who is fighting a losing battle against the mass production of his product, is circumscribed by his calculated opposition to that inexorable process" (pg. 41-42)
 - ▶ **Adorno's argument, then, is with Heidegger putting into an ontological framework a historical situation which is being applied to today's circumstance, where supposedly different relations exist.*
 - ◆ "Thus, according to Adorno, by **ontologizing what are transitory historical circumstances, Heidegger's jargon** - despite its various consolations and compensations - actually degrades the very notion of what a human being is. In contrast to thinkers such as Kant, Hegel, Marx, and Kierkegaard, who believed that a state of affairs worthy of human beings must be produced through the force of antagonisms, Heidegger's thought offers up such a state on an ontological platter" (pg. 42)
 - ◇ "Heidegger's unmediated approach leads to an equally unmediated notion of what a human being is, for, on the one hand, as the shepherd of Being he is privileged in a general and empty fashion, while, on the other hand, he is actually being degraded into a bundle of functions" (pg. 42)
 - ◆ "On Heidegger's account, it is only when the self takes hold of itself in its own way that it becomes an "authentic self". But, according to Adorno, **by reformulating the self as "Dasein" ("being-there") to avoid the reifying subject-object dialectic**, and then (in some qualified sense) withdrawing this self from the world or "there" of the "they-self," Heidegger's "authentic self" actually signals "a retreat from the empirical content of subjectivity" (JOA, p. 74). In this way, the "authentic self" becomes identical with itself..." (pg. 43)
 - ◇ "In other words, Heidegger's 'authentic self', formulated in reaction to the reified subjectivity of the "they-self" engendered by "the they," itself becomes the embodiment of reification because that which allegedly individuates it is its own purely formal self-possession. Yet, into this ontological vacuum that distinguishes the "authentic self" from its appropriated selfness flows the bad empirical aspects of "the they," which are then grasped ontologically, not historically. The existing social relations that actually beget subjectivity are thus made into an "in-itself," which brings the metaphysical tradition to an untoward conclusion. Thus, the problem with Heidegger's thought is not that it is composed by aspects of an empirical reality that it wants to transcend, "but that it transforms a bad empirical reality into transcendence" (JOA, p. 116). Indeed, since there is neither an objective determination for what actually constitutes authenticity nor even a subjectivity that could reflect on the question without thereby losing its claim to being authentic, the question as to whether a given subjectivity is authentic is ultimately determined by the arbitrariness of the subject, who - regardless of how substantively warped - is authentic to himself (JOA, p. 126)" (pg. 43-44)
 - ◆ "But by taking death, which is absolutely alien to the subject, and positing it as the ground of transcendence, Heidegger's philosophy ends up as a model of reification. Much like Hegel's famous description of subjectivity during the time of the French Terror, in which subjectivity would not tolerate the limits imposed on it by that which would concretize it, Heidegger's notion of the "authentic self" turns into its own negation and thus resembles the very death that would utterly individuate it. Practically, Heidegger's attitude toward death "robs the subject of its moment of freedom and spontaneity: it completely freezes, like the Heideggerian states of mind, into something like an attribute of the substance 'existence'" (pg. 45)
 - ◇ "despite its nostalgic yearnings for that which precedes the modern, as well as its hostility toward the subject, at its root this philosophy manifests what Adorno and Horkheimer call the 'dialectic of enlightenment', for Heidegger's subject-less Dasein ends up destroying itself in the name of its own self-preservation. In other words, in the very process of trying to preserve the idea of an authentic self from the they-self of the they, Heidegger requires the bracketing of the they-self through the acknowledgment of one's impending death, but this winnows down the authentic self that he seeks to absolutely nothing" (pg. 45)
- "Ultimately, then, **the primary categories of Heidegger's philosophy, such as "Being," "Authenticity," and "Death," are self-consciously crafted by thought in opposition to thought, and then put in a safe haven outside thought's reach**, as if this could insulate them against the bad empirical reality that inspired their formulation. What Heidegger fails to see is that "otherness" must be dialectically worked toward, and that all attempts to get it on the cheap by evading this process betray the impulse that led us to strive toward it in the first place" (pg. 45)
- "It seems to me, in contrast, that these scholars should remember Nietzsche's contention that those who try to conflate seminal thinkers have bad eyesight, for, at least in this particular case, one thing is clear: **Adorno and Heidegger are irreconcilable**" (pg. 46)
 - "Clearly, Heidegger, like Adorno, fought against positivism, but Heidegger's dogmatic approach, which in privileging Being grounds itself on a theologically inspired transcendental entity, ultimately collapses into a reified form of thought that is no less troubling than positivism. The point, however, is that much as Kant played off the empiricists and rationalists in the First Critique, Adorno plays off the positivists and Heidegger" (pg. 48)
- "unlike Heidegger, who categorically rejects subject-centered reason as a deformation wrought by western metaphysics, Adorno believes in a recursive or self-conscious form of subjective reflection, which is to be distinguished from "objectivating" or "instrumental" reason. Accordingly, in addition to playing off Heidegger against the positivists in a fashion that recollects Kant's treatment of the rationalists and empiricists, Adorno

- is engaged in yet another essentially Kantian task: he is critiquing reason by reason" (pg. 48)
- "Adorno think that our relation to nature must be conceptually mediated..." (pg. 49)
 - ◆ "reason is ceaseless brought to bear on the existing material conditions to open up new ways of seeing and understanding" (pg. 50)
 - "In contrast to Heidegger, then, Adorno's project of facilitating a mindfulness of nature is inextricably bound up with facilitating a mindfulness of concrete social history. What's more, the technique that he uses to revive this mindfulness is diametrically opposed to Heidegger's ontological approach. **While Heidegger abstracts from phenomena and then subsumes them under the classificatory concept of Being, Adorno attempts to unveil the concrete particularity in phenomena by taking combinations of concepts, which represent these phenomena, and bringing them into nonhierarchical patterns or 'constellations' for the purpose of illuminating that which was previously obscured by the reified patterns of 'second nature'.** In the same way that playing around with the components of a puzzle or riddle can suddenly reveal previously concealed answers, constellations can suddenly unlock the pure particularity that was previously concealed in the phenomena, as well as the higher order principles that link them. Moreover, **these insights, which are as fleeting as they are sudden because they manifest an ever-changing sociohistorical situation, are not to be understood as intuitions of essences, but instead must then be interpreted by the subject, who conceptually mediates the moment of insight with the socio-historical context that gives rise to them**" (pg. 50)
 - "Adorno does reject both the constituting subject of classical idealism and the passive subject of empiricism. But by continuing to rely on concepts...and attacking Heidegger for refusing to do so, Adorno also rejects, in terms that are no less certain, the intuitionism that underlies Heidegger's phenomenological ontology" (pg. 51)
 - "In short, Adorno's critical approach cannot be distilled from his deeply contextual philosophical positions, and as the driving force behind these positions, it renders superficial apparent convergences between his philosophy and Heidegger's" (pg. 52)
 - "Adorno rejects any abandonment of metaphysics" (pg. 53)
 - "Heidegger declares in 'Letter on Humanism', written as a rejoinder to Sartre's 'Existentialism as a Humanism', that metaphysics must be abandoned" (pg. 53)
 - "First, Adorno tenaciously holds on to the subject-object paradigm. And while Adorno rejects the notion of a "constituting subjectivity" because it cannot open itself up to the object, which he privileges, Adorno is, for the most part, motivated in this regard by the desire to free up subjectivity itself. By extirpating spontaneity and imagination, a constituting subjectivity extirpates subjectivity itself: it is "the subject as the subject's foe" (ND, p. 12). Second, **much of Adorno's critique of Heidegger in *Negative Dialectics* is principally directed against Heidegger's rejection of subjectivity, or what Adorno calls a "subjective share" that escapes determination (which, as we shall see, is, in some sense, exactly what Sartre's phenomenology offers)...**" (pg. 54)
 - "While for Heidegger the primacy of the individual arises from the philosophical tradition's wrong turn into metaphysics, for Adorno the primacy of the individual is the promise of the enlightenment, a promise to which Adorno remains firmly committed" (pg. 55)
 - "in contrast to Marcuse (who does not get so much as a mention in Adorno), Adorno was tormented by the question of praxis, and, some would argue, lapsed into quietism, but even if this is so, the very torment that constituted his relation to praxis profoundly impacted the nature of his thought" (pg. 56)
 - "according to Adorno, Heidegger's undialectical thought, which is characterized by Being's premature harmonization of the tensions that inhere within the superseded subject-object paradigm, antinomically manifests both objectivistic and subjectivistic tendencies" (pg. 57)
- Chapter 3 - Adorno and Husserl (p. 59)
 - "Kierkegaard and Heidegger both flee from the subject-object dialectic, albeit in diametrically opposed ways: Kierkegaard withdraws from the profane world into subjective inwardness so as to preserve his "personal meaning," while Heidegger rejects subjectivity in his quest to recover the "meaning of Being." Moreover, by rejecting one of the two poles in the subject-object relation, and therefore the determinacy that can only arise by maintaining the dialectical tension between them, Kierkegaard and Heidegger both end up advancing an identity theory (although, at least for Kierkegaard, identity theories, such as the alleged identity of thought and being in Hegel's dialectic, are ostensibly an anathema). Husserl, in contrast, holds on to both the subject and object poles, both reason and reality. As a result, although Heidegger builds on Husserl's phenomenology, it is actually Husserl, according to Adorno, who represents the high point of modern idealism" (pg. 59)
 - "Husserl's desire to get 'back to the things themselves' anticipates Adorno's desire to give the object its due, and thus **Husserl, like Adorno, rejects the 'constitutive subjectivity' of classical idealism,** as well as all other forms of dogmatic rationalism. Despite this rejection, however, **neither Husserl nor Adorno give up on idealism's reliance on reason** (although, of course, by "reason" they intend very different things). Conversely, **both Husserl and Adorno also reject the positivistic implications of the empiricist tradition,** which indiscriminately assents to 'the facts' as the only imaginable truth. And, in fact, according to Adorno, it is Husserl's attack on psychologistic positivism's 'naive and uncritical religion of facts' that constitutes the element of truth in his philosophy. Thus, as this excerpt from "Husserl and the Problem of Idealism" suggests, **Husserl, like Adorno, believed that it was necessary to reason through the problems of idealism, to 'burst it open' from the standpoint of its deepest contradictions, as opposed to just setting it aside**" (pg. 60)
 - "it is Adorno's view that all epistemological endeavors, including, as we will see, Husserl's, start with a privileged category, an originary concept or absolute foundation, on which firm knowledge, as opposed to mere belief, can be built" (pg. 60)
 - "Adorno asserts, Husserl correctly attacks the psychologistic position that the laws of logic can be derived from the laws of nature, for, as we have already seen, Adorno also believes in the 'objectivity of truth'" (pg. 63)
 - "In actuality, the laws of pure logic are themselves nothing more than the product of human thought, and even the most rarefied form of human thought cannot be disentangled from its sociohistorical context" (pg. 63)
 - Part 2 - Subjectivity in Sartre's Existential Phenomenology (pg. 69)
 - "Sartre's earliest works build mostly on the philosophy of Husserl, but unlike Husserl, who holds on to the notion of a transcendental ego that categorially intuits the object in its essence, Sartre rejects the notion of a transcendental ego altogether. In this way, as we shall see, **Sartre's brand of phenomenology is able to avoid the basic charge that we saw Adorno level against Husserl's phenomenology - namely, that it perpetrates a static subject-object relation in which both the empirical subject and the empirical object are lost.** According to Sartre, consciousness is always immersed in the empirical world, and it is for this reason that Sartre, like Adorno, reproaches Husserl for the idealistic character of his thought" (pg. 69)
 - "With the advent of *Being and Nothingness*, which is usually taken to be the culmination of his 'early philosophy', Sartre moves beyond his earlier works in at least two crucial ways, one explicit and one implicit. Explicitly, Sartre brings Heidegger's ontology into a productive tension with his own unique appropriation of Husserl's phenomenology - that is, **Sartre relies on Heidegger to bring his own notion of a 'consciousness in the world'** into an existential relation with a world that is peopled (although emphatically not as Heidegger's "being-with"). In this way, Sartre does not fall prey to what Adorno finds most disconcerting about Heidegger's ontology - namely, his "taboo concerning subjective reflection" (JOA, p. 126) - which evidences his rejection of the individual subject in favor of Dasein, whose self-identity is ultimately a mere function of 'the they'. Implicitly, Sartre appropriates certain crucial features of Hegel's model of subjectivity formation - that is, Sartre relies on Hegel's notion that consciousness is characterized by negativity, which, for Sartre, tends to drive the individual subject past every existing self-identity" (pg. 69-70)

- "With respect to the status of other people, which is implicated in these various moves, Sartre's philosophy undergoes a continuous evolution from his earliest works through *Being and Nothingness*, the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, and, finally, *The Family Idiot*, his five-volume biography of Flaubert. Yet, drawing on Sartre's own words in *Being and Nothingness* - in which he says that his portrayal of interpersonal relations as basically contentious does not preclude the possibility of a "radical conversion" that would produce "an ethics of deliverance and salvation" (B&N, p. 534) - many critics claim that there is a "radical conversion" in Sartre's own thought between *Being and Nothingness* and *Search for a Method*, the introductory essay to the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. **It seems to me that this claim, which is better understood in terms of what Althusser calls an "epistemological break," is wrong, and Sartre himself denies the notion that there is a "conversion" or "break" in his thought" (pg. 70)**
 - "it is my view that there is no break in Sartre's thought..." (pg. 71)
- **"we must take Sartre at his word when he declares that the war years - during which time he read Heidegger - are what defined his later philosophy" (pg. 72)**
 - "This is not to suggest that Sartre's rather one-sided depiction of the concrete content of social relations is correct - indeed, Sartre's notion that we are basically *for*-others seems to have been affected by the sociohistorical conditions that existed in France at the time - but it is to suggest that Sartre's phenomenological framework in *Being and Nothingness* is up to the task of theoretically supporting the social turn of his later philosophical commitments" (pg. 72)
- "to view Sartre's phenomenology of freedom as nothing more than a function of the French Resistance, which is then dropped in his move to Marxism, is to fail to appreciate that **the notion of a free subject**, which is the impetus for all projects of social resistance, **depends on the phenomenological, or first-person, standpoint, which is the condition of its possibility.** There is no question but that Sartre continues to adhere to this position in his later works, and, indeed, it is this adherence to the phenomenological standpoint that fundamentally separates his theory of history from Foucault's" (pg. 73)
- Chapter 4 - The Frankfurt School's Critique of Sartre (pg. 75) *cf. M. Poster, *Existential Marxism in Postwar France, Chapter 4 - The Attack on Sartre*
 - "Besides the essay "Commitment," in which Adorno attacks Sartre's argument for the committed writer in *What Is Literature?*, his most sustained treatment of Sartre's philosophy is a three-page subsection in *Negative Dialectics* titled "Existentialism." Adorno contends here that Sartre's philosophy dishonors his own literature, for unlike his plays (such as *The Flies* and *The Respectful Prostitute*), which shed light on the cruelty of an unfree reality, **Sartre's philosophy honors an unreal freedom...**" (pg. 75)
 - "Crucially, however, Adorno wrongly conflates Kierkegaard and Sartre, and, in fact, his attack on Sartre here is one with which Sartre would fully agree if it was directed against Kierkegaard" (pg. 76)
 - "Sartre's concept of 'being-for-itself', which refers to the subject, and is characterized by the intentional nature of translucent consciousness, is surely distinguished from the empirical self, which is 'out in the world'" (pg. 77)
 - "properly understood, Sartre's (phenomenological) concept of the subject is structurally analogous to Adorno's" (pg. 77)
 - **"[Sartre] argues against the idea that objects can be immediately known.** He asserts that the 'being of the phenomenon' (i.e., the brute existent) necessarily overflows what consciousness perceives, which implies that the being of what we perceive is not reducible to the meanings that we ordinarily attribute to it. That is to say, the brute existent - the most primordial aspect of Sartre's concept of "being-in-itself" (which, more broadly, refers to facticity) - is also 'transphenomenal'. This is due to the fact that 'the existent cannot be reduced to a finite series of manifestations since each one of them is a relation to a subject constantly changing', which, in turn, 'implies the possibility of infinitely multiplying the points of view on that *Abschattung*' (B&N, p. 5). According to Sartre, then, we are, in principle, incapable of getting a conceptual stranglehold on the object - an idea that is in conformity with Adorno's own privileging of the object. And, for this reason, as is the case with Adorno, it is Sartre's view that 'philosophy is interpretation'" (pg. 78)
 - "Sartre not only retains the subject and object poles but maintains a dialectical tension between them - a feat that his predecessors could not pull off, as Adorno himself aptly shows" (pg. 78)
 - "It is, nevertheless, my objective in this chapter to demonstrate that Adorno's criticism of Marcuse's attempt to mediate Heidegger's phenomenological ontology and Hegelian-Marxism, which I take to be right, is not apt with respect to Sartre's phenomenological ontology. Unlike Heidegger, who uses phenomenology to gain access to a fundamental ontology, Sartre's phenomenology, as Marcuse himself accurately suggests, opens up on to nothing less than history itself" (pg. 79)
 - "Marcuse claims that the book [Being and Nothingness] nevertheless harbors within it the seed of a revolutionary theory..." (pg. 79)
 - "According to Marcuse, however, in the final part of *Being and Nothingness* Sartre repudiates the consequences of his earlier insight by attempting to rehabilitate the autonomy of the for-itself. Sartre tries to show that while human beings find themselves in what seem to be overdetermining sociohistorical situations, they still remain absolutely free from an individual standpoint. This is because each person freely chooses his own projects, and it is only from the perspective of these freely chosen projects that he can be said to be "unfree" in any particular situation. By making the unfreedom of a particular situation that which is essentially posited by the oppressed person himself though his freely chosen project, however, Sartre's notion of human freedom, Marcuse says, reaches the point of self-abnegation: 'free choice between death and enslavement is neither freedom nor choice because both alternatives destroy the *réalité humaine* which is supposed to be freedom'. Thus, Marcuse concludes, Sartre's idea of freedom is the essence of bourgeois ideology: through free competition and free choice each person is responsible for whether he has transcended his situation. And, unlike Hegel's dialectic, in which self-consciousness becomes progressively enriched in a historical movement toward social reconciliation, Sartre's concept of being-for-others, which is itself sociohistorically engendered, ends up being ontologized, thereby ruling out even the theoretical possibility of reconciliation: '**Sartre's concepts are, in spite of his dialectical style and the pervasive role of negation, decidedly undialectical. In his philosophy, the negation is no force of its own but is a priori absorbed into the affirmation...The subject moves in a circle**'" (pg. 80-81)
 - "Marcuse is absolutely right when he says that Sartre's concept of being-for-others (and, it should be added, his concept of being-in-itself, which includes the body and thus our biological needs) pushes the subject out of the realm of "pure ontology" and into the empirical world. And, indeed, it is because Heidegger "remained within the limits of pure ontology" that Marcuse's own misguided attempt to mediate Heidegger and Hegelian-Marxism does not necessarily augur poorly for my own undertaking with respect to Sartre and Adorno. Still, Marcuse takes this insight to be the foundation of his attack on Sartre's philosophy, for it is his view that Sartre's notion of freedom is not up to the task of encountering the empirical world, and that it is really nothing more than an ontological notion with empirical pretenses. This is incorrect. As we shall increasingly come to see, although it is true that Sartre's phenomenological notion of freedom should not be confused with social freedom, it does not follow that it is just another internalized view of freedom. Instead, as part of the necessary self-understanding of any efficacious agent, Sartre's phenomenological notion of freedom is the necessary precondition of social freedom" (pg. 81)
 - **"Sartre notion of phenomenological freedom is not transcendental" (pg. 84)**
 - "Countering all forms of idealism - 'free will' metaphysics, the stoical freedom of inner thought, and the transcendental constitution of the world of our knowledge - **Sartre freely admits that phenomenological freedom is always already theoretically and practically limited by**

arise outside of being but rather on the very foundation of being. On Sartre's account, then, nothingness is both remote from being, which explains the distance that is the condition of self-consciousness, and is part of being. Or, to put it in Sartre's terms, **being-for-itself is remote from being-in-itself, but both being-for-itself and being-in-itself are a part of being**" (pg. 94)

- ◆ **"Nothingness is not a transcendental foundation but rather arises within being itself**, thus giving him a theoretical basis for moving 'downstream' toward an account of subjectivity in both the natural and historical world: we stand in an interior relation to being and are thus just as much a part of it as we are remote from it. From this point forward, Sartre will deal with the negative relation between being and nothingness within being. Or, to be more exact, 'being', which has a variety of meanings for Sartre, will come to deal more or less exclusively with the being-in-itself of the natural and historical world that consciousness encounters (i.e., "being" in the first sense) and not the abstract philosophical concept of Being that concerns Heidegger and more current French thinkers (i.e., "being" in the second sense)" (pg. 96)
- "As is the case with Adorno, **Sartre rejects Heidegger's purge of the subject side of the subject-object dialectic**. Instead, he retains the subject-object paradigm of knowledge by carving up the world into pure consciousness and its objects, neither of which is reducible to the other..." (pg. 98)
- **"Because consciousness is 'clear and lucid' - that is, it is nothing more than the immediate awareness of some transcendent object that is not itself consciousness** - Sartre is in a position to proffer what he calls an 'ontological proof' for the existence of the external world: 'consciousness is born supported by a being which is not itself...'" (pg. 98)
 - "In other words, from the fact that consciousness is itself nothing other than its awareness, it necessarily follows that the objects of which it is aware are independent of it. The epistemological benefit, which shall be fleshed out momentarily, is that it purges consciousness's 'transcendental field' of all egological structures, thus enabling consciousness to apprehend objects in their transparency (TE, p. 93). And, finally, the ethical benefit, which will be fleshed out in chapter 6, is that it sets up the phenomenological-ontological foundation for Sartre's claim in *Being and Nothingness* that we are 'absolutely free'. **Emptied of all 'contents', consciousness is determined by neither an inherent self nor the objects of the empirical world**" (pg. 99)
- **"The 'consciousness in the first degree, or unreflected consciousness' to which Sartre refers in this passage is the forerunner of what he calls the prereflective cogito in *Being and Nothingness*, and it indicates both our positional consciousness of objects** (i.e., our immediate awareness of the world) and **our nonpositional consciousness (of) this consciousness** (i.e., our immediate awareness of this awareness), which **Sartre takes to be a necessary condition of all awareness**. The parentheses around "of" - first used by Sartre in *Being and Nothingness* - are intended to indicate that this foundational nonpositional consciousness is not one that "knows" the positional consciousness of the object in some detached fashion (i.e., as an object in its own right), but rather is one **with** this positional consciousness: there is 'an immediate, non-cognitive relation of the self to itself' (B&N, p. 12). This is critical not only because it prevents a situation in which the nonpositional consciousness would need to be an object of another nonpositional consciousness to be grounded, which would occasion an infinite regress, but also because it gives rise to the possibility that this consciousness (of) consciousness can stand in a nonobjectifying relation to its positional consciousness of objects. By avoiding this objectifying relation, which would merely reproduce within a bifurcated consciousness the classic epistemological question as to whether our representations truly correspond to reality, Sartre hopes to avoid the impasse to which this question leads. Accordingly, **Sartre's embrace of Husserl's phenomenology, shorn of the transcendental ego, provides the basis for 'getting back to the things themselves' because consciousness's direct relation to the objects of its awareness yields an immediate, intuitive knowing that, for Sartre, is the privileged form in which we can come to know the thing**: 'it puts us in the presence of the thing' (TE, p. 35). When Sartre states that 'the necessary and sufficient condition for a knowing consciousness to be knowledge of its object is that it be consciousness of itself as being that knowledge' (B&N, p. 11), then, it must be emphasized that the knowledge to which he refers is not conceptual knowledge but rather intuitive 'knowledge'" (pg. 99-100)
 - "Indeed, the importance of intuitive knowledge for Sartre is implicit in his claim that the prereflective cogito's nonpositional consciousness (of) positional consciousness is a unitary phenomenon, for this suggests that dichotomous **reflection is only a secondary phenomenon that presupposes unreflective consciousness**: "it is the nonreflective consciousness which renders reflection possible" (B&N, p. 13). This evidences an essential break with Descartes, who, Sartre claims, wrongly conflates the reflective consciousness that says "I think" with the prereflective consciousness that truly thinks (TE, p. 45). Because Sartre's consciousness (of) consciousness merely establishes the foundation on which all consciousness is made possible, this function of **the prereflective cogito actually has a much greater affinity with Kant's transcendental unity of apperception than with Descartes cogito**. It is not by accident, therefore, that *Transcendence of the Ego* begins with neither Husserl nor Descartes but rather with Kant, and, in particular, his contention that the "I think must be able to accompany all our representations" (TE, p. 32). Like Kant's transcendental unity of apperception, which Sartre characterizes as "nothing but the set of conditions which are necessary for the existence of an empirical consciousness" (TE, p. 33), **in Sartre's own thought, the prereflective cogito is the condition that is necessary for the existence of an empirical consciousness**. Of course, I do not mean to suggest that Sartre buys into Kant's transcendental unity of apperception (much less his transcendental ego *writ* large, which, with its categories, burdens consciousness far more than Husserl's transcendental ego, and leads to the conclusion that the things themselves are off limits). For Sartre, in contrast to Kant, for whom the "I" is intrinsic to the transcendental unity of apperception, **the "I" is neither intrinsic to the prereflective cogito, in particular, nor consciousness, more generally, but is reflectively ascribed by consciousness to itself retroactively**: "It is consciousness which unifies itself, concretely, by a play of transversal intentionalities which are concrete and real retentions of past consciousnesses. Thus consciousness refers perpetually to itself" (TE, p. 39). Crucially, then, not only is the ego (i.e., the "me" or empirical self) "outside, in the world" (TE, p. 31), as it is for Kant, but so is the "I". And this is the case whether the "I" is understood materially, "as an infinite contraction of the material me" (TE, p. 54), or formally, as the "unity of [my] actions" (TE, p. 60), for even in this way, it neither inhabits consciousness nor effects the synthesis of our experience" (pg. 100-101)
 - "The key epistemological distinction that Sartre draws is between intuitions and concepts, both of which, he states, are rooted in the 'phenomenon of being.'" (Due to the transphenomenal nature of being, it will be remembered, there is no basis for either intuiting or conceptualizing the "being of the phenomenon" itself, which is simply the condition of the appearances that can be intuited or conceptualized instead of the appearances themselves.) While, as a phenomenologist, **Sartre privileges the immediate seeing or direct apprehension of things that comes through "the revealing intuition of the phenomenon of being"** (B&N, p. 9), he is also concerned with concept formation, and, in particular, concept formation that properly manifests the insights of intuition. Although, **in contrast to intuitive truths, conceptual truths are only probable** by virtue of the fact that they are mediated - that is to say, they result from a subject-object paradigm in which the content of experience is objectified as a result of being reflected on - they are as necessary as they are fallible. A detailed answer as to why this is so must await chapter 6 (and, what's more, the nature of this answer changes somewhat in the movement from *The Transcendence of the Ego to Being and Nothingness*). The short answer for present purposes, however, is that **the "I" or "me" - the empirical self that is "out in the world" - is the product of reflection**, and therefore from "consciousness in the first degree, or unreflected consciousness," there is an inexorable movement to a "consciousness in the second degree, or reflected consciousness," which then reflects on the things of the world with the aim of making good its own egological commitments" (pg. 101)

- ◆ "[Sartre] is not saying that concepts should simply be discarded but rather that as an explanatory tool they should be grasped in a somewhat more modest fashion" (pg. 101)
 - ◇ "on this point, it seems to me, Sartre's phenomenology and Adorno's negative dialectic approach one another" (pg. 102)
- ◆ "For both Sartre and Adorno (and, for that matter, Derrida), then, there is a recognition of both the inadequacy and unavoidability of concepts" (pg. 102)
- "Moreover, unlike his immediate predecessors in the phenomenological tradition, Sartre's account of conceptual knowledge progresses, albeit implicitly, toward a dialectical theory of knowledge, which is also in keeping with Adorno's position. After introducing what he refers to as the "new dualism" of finite and infinite, Sartre declares that the existent "can not be reduced to a finite series of manifestations since each one of them is a relation to a subject constantly changing. Although an object may disclose itself only through a single *Abschattung*, the sole fact of there being a subject implies the possibility of multiplying [to infinity] the points of view on that *Abschattung*" (B&N, p. 5). Although Sartre's discussion is admittedly cryptic, I believe that his emphasis on a subject that is "constantly changing" has far reaching implications. To be sure, unlike Husserl's transcendental ego, which statically intuits essences from a privileged point of view, Sartre's prereflective cogito, by virtue of its unity with positional consciousness, is inescapably in a changing world. As Thomas Flynn eloquently puts it, 'the prereflective cogito considered as transcendence breaks through Husserl's 'pointillism of essence to the reality of concrete, individual beings in their temporal flow'" (pg. 102)
 - ◆ "because 'concrete, individual being in their temporal flow' are 'constantly changing' due to sociohistorical conditions that are constantly changing, **conceptual knowledge is based on an intuitive knowledge that arises from the historically changing nature of immediate experience**" (pg. 102-103)
- "In the meantime, Sartre's claims concerning an intuitive knowledge of the "phenomenon of being" are somewhat more problematical - largely because Sartre is less than clear on exactly what "being" means in this context. To be sure, an intuitive knowledge of "the phenomenon of being, like every primary phenomenon, is immediately disclosed to consciousness. We have at each instant what Heidegger calls a pre-ontological comprehension of it; that is, one which is not accompanied by a fixing in concepts and elucidation" (B&N, p. 25). And, to be sure, in contrast to Heidegger, although Sartre also believes that we can have a "meaning of being," that meaning applies only to the phenomenon of being rather than to being itself - in other words, there can be no intuitive knowledge of the being of the phenomenon that would yield such a meaning. Yet, in another respect, as was mentioned in the last section, Sartre flirts with a position of Heidegger's that he would be much better off rejecting. When Sartre speaks of an immediate apprehension of being, he means not only "concrete, individual beings in their temporal flow" but being itself, more generally, which smacks of Heidegger's distinction between the being of beings and Being" (pg. 103)
 - ◆ "Sartre's assertion that we can have an intuitive knowledge of the "phenomenon of being" qua "being" itself is the most flawed aspect of *Being and Nothingness*. For it is here, and not in his explication of phenomenological freedom, that Sartre is most guilty of the charge that is leveled by Adorno and Marcuse - namely, that he has ontologized a bad reality. Therefore, when Sartre asserts in *Being and Nothingness* that "being will be disclosed to us by some kind of immediate access - boredom, nausea, etc., and ontology will be the description of the phenomenon of being as it manifests itself...without intermediary" (B&N, p. 7), he is mistaken. Boredom and nausea reveal absolutely nothing about the "phenomenon of being" (understood as "being," more generally) and "ontology" is not a description of its manifestation. What boredom and nausea reveal, rather, are a profound alienation from one's personal (empirical) existence, and it is a psychosocial analysis - not ontology - that more accurately describes this manifestation. Yet, I am not suggesting here that we should drop Sartre's reliance on intuitions, for I think that they are deeply revealing - in fact, as I shall argue, they may be truer than conceptual knowledge in terms of revealing to us the degree to which we are "self-actualized." I am just suggesting that they must be understood dialectically, not ontologically" (pg. 103-104)
 - ◇ "In *Truth and Existence* (a manuscript that was published nine years after Sartre's death), Sartre continues to maintain that 'the criterion of truth' is 'Being as presence'" (pg. 104)
 - ▶ "he begins to understand the way the Being is 'revealed' by intuition in a more dialectical fashion" (pg. 104)
- "What I am suggesting, in the final analysis, is that Sartre begins to move in the direction of what I take to be most valuable in his phenomenology - namely, the revealing intuitions of an unabashed first-person perspective, which struggles to do justice to objective truths that might help break up the conceptual stranglehold of a sociohistorically engendered situation that tends to close off alternative ways of seeing and knowing. And, crucially, it is through an unremitting attention to the particulars of the situation - "the reality of concrete, individual beings in their temporal flow" - that this can come about. For Sartre, these revealing intuitions are unique in that they transcend "consciousness in the first degree, or unreflected consciousness" by, in some sense, being reflective, as phenomenological evidence must be, but they are not reflective in the detached, subject-object fashion of conceptual knowledge, as is the case with "consciousness in the second degree, or reflected consciousness." Thus, this consciousness, which addresses the need for reflection without sacrificing the phenomenological imperative for immediacy, is, as Flynn puts it, a kind of "reflective immediacy." So far so good. Yet, this consciousness, which Sartre calls "pure reflection," is, as he acknowledges, limited: "Pure reflection (which, however, is not necessarily phenomenological reduction) keeps to the given without setting up claims for the future... [It is] merely descriptive, which disarms the unreflected consciousness by granting its instantaneousness" (TE, pp. 64-65). This means that phenomenological insights must be conceptually mediated, lest they perpetually arise and disappear in the instant (which assumes a consciousness without an empirical self, which Sartre surely denies) or become fetishized (which assumes a conceptual hypostatization that would also hypostatize the empirical self, which is the gist of the ubiquitous Sartrean phenomenon of "bad faith"). And, with the conceptual mediation of these phenomenological insights, phenomenology opens on to historialization, and, ultimately, history, which would incorporate these insights" (pg. 105)
- "According to Heidegger, a person's anxiety in the face of the recognition that one is a "being-towards-death," which frees one from the tranquilizing fashion in which "the they" has conditioned the perception of death, performs an individuating function: a person's recognition that death is actually one's "ownmost potentiality-for-Being, which is non-relational and not to be out-stripped, "opens up the possibility that one can assume an authentic stance toward existence, and is therefore the condition of opening up all other possibilities. This foundational approach towards death is rejected by French thinkers such as Levinas and Blanchot, who do not buy into the possibility of self-presence that it implies. But, in rejecting Heidegger's approach to death, they do not reject the theoretical centrality of death. To the contrary, death becomes for them the non-foundational foundation of their theoretical moves" (pg. 106)
 - "Sartre thus declares that death can be neither one's ultimate possibility nor the thing that gives one's life its meaning. Although it is a factual possibility that can take place at any time, death "can not be apprehended as my possibility but, on the contrary, as the nihilation of all my possibilities, a nihilation which itself is no longer a part of my possibilities" (B&N, p. 687). In other words, for death to be my possibility, my subjectivity would have to be capable of realizing it, but, of course, this presupposes that I will not actually be dead" (pg. 107)
 - ◆ *but, then, death becomes a limit of the for-itself. But, Sartre has claimed the for-itself is absolutely free, which would mean it, too, is

free to 'realize' its death - and, in fact, it in part does through its own 'projecting' / 'transcending'. Even more, if death is not a possibility of the for-itself (i.e., man in the world), then how does one begin to explain war and destruction? How is death different from destruction?

- "death cannot be that which gives my life its meaning. As an initial matter, since we do not freely choose the time at which we die, it is the arbitrariness of death's timing and not its inevitability that would seem to give life its final meaning. Whether or not I have had the time to realize my projects will determine the meaning of my life. More importantly, as this suggests, since the meaning of my life is determined by the free positings of my subjectivity, and since my subjectivity is eclipsed by death, death does not give meaning to life but rather "removes all meaning from life" (B&N, p. 689)" (pg. 107)
 - ◆ **I'd argue we can choose the time at which we die, so long as we understand time as a temporal space (i.e., window) and not a 'concrete' moment.*
- "from this standpoint, our freedom remain untrammled, and we are forced to confront the fact that we are wholly responsible for giving a determinate meaning to our lives through our choices" (pg. 108)
- Chapter 6 - Sartre's Mediating Subjectivity (pg. 109)
 - "Sartre's phenomenological ontology implies that as agents in the world we must, practically speaking, experience ourselves as free and responsible, but this does not mean that it is Sartre's claim that we are 'absolutely' free, as so many critics in addition to Adorno and Marcuse have maintained. Matters are far more complicated, for right after Sartre posits the notion that we are free in the final section of chapter one of *Being and Nothingness* ("The Origin of Nothingness"), he proceeds to qualify this position - indeed, in a very real sense, much of the book's remainder is a qualification of this central thesis. In the very next chapter, Sartre deals with the ubiquitous phenomenon of "**bad faith**," which **involves what is by all appearances our inevitable attempt to deceive ourselves about the nature of our freedom**. And, after dealing with the general structures of the for-itself in part II, Sartre deals with the problem of being-for-others, which involves the limits that are placed on our freedom by the freedom of "the Other." Thus, when Sartre squarely returns to the issue of freedom in the last part of Being and Nothingness, which deals with our freedom in situation, as well as the practical limits that are imposed by what he terms "the fundamental project" (the apparently universal human impulse to be a "for itself-in-itself"), his notion of freedom has been fully developed (if not over-whelmed) and is no longer subject to the charge that it involves understanding ourselves as 'absolutely' free" (pg. 109)
 - "In the first section, I shall consider the basic constituents of Sartre's decentered subject, which is the product of his synthesis of the philosophies of Husserl and Heidegger. In particular, I shall focus on the prereflective cogito, which is the structure within Sartre's phenomenological ontology that testifies to our experience of freedom. In the second and third sections, I shall then consider the limits to human freedom that are established by our being-for-others and bad faith, respectively. I have broken with Sartre's ordering of these phenomena in *Being and Nothingness* (in which his exposition of bad faith comes before his exposition of being-for-others) because it is my view that our relations with others are an inextricable part of bad faith. Indeed, virtually every example of bad faith given by Sartre revolves around one's own self-conception, which on Sartre's account (like Hegel's before him) is engendered by one's relations with others. Finally, in the fourth section, I shall probe the boundaries of freedom in Sartre's thought, with particular emphasis on the prospects for a '**purifying reflection**', which is the only way that consciousness frees itself and becomes, in a strong sense, a mediating subjectivity" (pg. 110)
 - "**One of the defining ideas in Sartre's philosophy is that human beings are fundamentally decentered** - or, to put it in Sartre's words, 'divided' - which makes it all the more ironic that he has been virtually ignored by the poststructuralists, who have preferred Husserl and, of course, Heidegger. Still, in contrast to Husserl, whose transcendental ego is "self-present" (in that it coincides with both itself and the objects whose essences it intuits), and Heidegger, whose "authentic" Dasein is present to being, it is ultimately only Sartre who posits the irreparability of our decenteredness. Thus, although Sartre does speak in terms of '**self-presence**' in *Being and Nothingness*, he uses this term to refer to **the unbridgeable rupture that exists between reflecting consciousness and consciousness reflected-on...**" (pg. 110)
 - "Sartre provides a powerful theory of agency, and such a theory, which the poststructuralists lack, is indispensable to any ethical project" (pg. 111)
 - "**each person is not just a function of 'a world of knowledges and of techniques', but, just as importantly, surpasses and reformulates these knowledges and techniques in the pursuit of his freely chosen ends**. This position sharply contrasts with the position of the poststructuralists, whose subjectless subject is nothing more than a function of these existing knowledges and techniques but is still somehow also supposed to be a vigorous moral agent" (pg. 111)
 - "**the prereflective cogito...is not only the ground of our knowledge...but is also the ground of Sartrean agency**. It is, in other words, the active or 'mediating' constituent of human subjectivity" (pg. 111-112)
 - "the wellspring of [our] freedom for Sartre is the prereflective cogito..." (pg. 114)
 - "**Human beings, according to Sartre, are dispersed across what he takes to be the three essential structures of being - being-in-itself, being-for-itself, and being-for-others - and the three temporal dimensions (past, present, and future)**. As we saw in the previous chapter, being-in-itself is that aspect of being that is self-identical, and it is alternatively described by Sartre as "solid," "a synthesis of itself with itself," or "full positivity" (B&N, pp. 28-29). Beyond just referring to the material world, which constitutes his first paradigm of being-in-itself, however, being-in-itself refers to "facticity," more generally, which includes, among other things, the past" (pg. 112)
 - ◆ "according to Sartre, my 'being-for-others' is on an ontological par with being-in-itself and being-for-itself" (pg. 113)
 - "Sartre emphasizes fact in opposition to necessity here because **being-for-itself, which, quite literally, is nothing other than consciousness**, is not determined by "the facts" - although consciousness must nevertheless exist its factual context. More specifically, as I previously discussed, because consciousness does not contain the ego or any other substance that would cause it to be determined by the laws of nature, but rather is characterized by intentionality (i.e., it is always about the objects of which it is positionally aware), it is "nothing," or, to be precise, a "nothingness" that perpetually transcends itself. And, in the process of transcending itself, consciousness is a "nihilitating nothingness" that gives rise to "negatités." In other words, **this "nothingness" is active, and, in accordance with its specific project, it nihilates - that is to say, negates - various aspects of the solidity that is being-in-itself**" (pg. 112)
 - ◆ "the for-itself is essentially a project, and therefore it is necessarily always beyond itself. Unlike being-in-itself, then, which refers to the past, being-for-itself refers to the future..." (pg. 113)
 - ◇ "being-for-itself is, therefore, basically a relation..." (pg. 113)
 - "As an initial matter, consciousness "is what it is not" because it is purely intentional - that is, it is constituted by the world of which it is intentionally aware, which founds it but never completely. But **consciousness is never passively aware**, and, therefore, as we have seen, it also "is what it is not" by virtue of its ability to negate various aspects of the world of which it is aware. This is what enables consciousness to imagine, interrogate, doubt, and, as we have seen, experience absence, all of which revolve around its ability to project itself toward the future. Even more fundamentally, the ability of consciousness to negate various aspects of the world might be the very condition of perception's possibility, for in the absence of this ability, being-in-itself would simply be an undifferentiated mass or what has been called a 'blooming, buzzing confusion'" (pg. 113)

- ◆ **thus, to-be 'aware' is to-be 'active' - only then can it be said that 'consciousness is never passively aware'. Consciousness 'makes' itself aware (of) the world.*
- **"the prereflective cogito is a nonpositional (or, put rather differently, "nonthetic") consciousness of our positional consciousness of objects.** According to Sartre, all knowledge must be conscious of itself as knowledge in order to truly be knowledge, and the nonpositional consciousness of the prereflective cogito is what performs this function" (pg. 114)
 - "[what we have, then, is a] two-tiered structure of prereflective consciousness (i.e., its positional awareness of intentional objects and the prereflective cogito's nonpositional awareness of this positional awareness..." (pg. 116)
 - "By making the prereflective cogito, which crudely substitutes for Husserl's transcendental ego, one with the positional awareness of prereflective consciousness, Sartre plunges Husserl's transcendental consciousness back into the world. With the prereflective cogito, Sartre is still able to ground consciousness's positional knowledge of intentional objects, but now this immediate knowledge (of) our knowledge of intentional objects is non-cognitive, given its prereflective nature" (pg. 116)
 - **"But if Sartre is wrong about this, and the prereflective cogito can be shaved off with Ockham's razor, the cost to his key theses concerning freedom and responsibility would be enormous"** (pg. 117)
 - ◆ "According to Grene, there is no compelling reason for Sartre to argue that for consciousness to have knowledge of an object, it must also be conscious of itself as having that knowledge. Grene does readily acknowledge that there is necessarily an implicit ground of knowledge, but she argues that this ground need not be self-reflexive as it is for Sartre" (pg. 118)
 - ◆ "This, of course, would negate Sartre's robust notions of reflection and freedom, which are necessary for a mediating subject. **From a strictly 'ontological' standpoint, then, Sartre's argument for the reflective cogito and freedom may fail"** (pg. 120)
 - ◇ **remember the author stated earlier "I am just suggesting that they [e.g., Sartre's notions] must be understood dialectically, not ontologically" (pg. 103-104).*
 - "Ultimately, however, Sartre's argument for reflection and freedom is not properly viewed from a strictly ontological standpoint, nor, for that matter, is it actually an "argument" at all. As I already discussed, Sartre's characterization of *Being and Nothingness* as a "phenomenological ontology" entails that **all claims about the nature of the world must follow from the way in which we consciously experience ourselves within it,** which means that Sartre's "ontological argument" actually follows from the phenomenological standpoint. Consequently, it is not the existence of the prereflective cogito that makes us free, but it is our experience of freedom - regardless of the metaphysical fact of the matter - that leads us to posit the prereflective cogito" (pg. 120)
 - ◆ **but, it is exactly this which, then, makes 'truth' impossible. Is not this claim founded upon the very solipsistic position Sartre so admittedly argued against? But, this is exactly why Sartre's 'phenomenology' fails - and, as so, so too does his ontology.*
- **"On the one hand, Sartre employs Heidegger's ontology to transport Husserl's transcendental ego into the world, while, on the other hand, he employs Husserl's phenomenological approach to create the necessary space for beings-in-the-world to bracket their empirical existences or 'essences' (as Sartre wryly puts it) to move beyond them. Yet, this synthesis comes at a price: the objective knowledge afforded by Husserl's transcendental ego and the possibility of self-presence afforded by Heidegger's fundamental ontology both go by the wayside. But the upshot of this synthesis is nothing less than the starting point of Sartre's entire philosophy: the unique trait of human beings is to be a "freedom-in-the-world." From the phenomenological standpoint, this notion of being a freedom-in-the-world captures the very nature of what it means to be a mediating subject" (pg. 121-122)**
- **"in what follows I shall be concerned mainly with the relation between being-for-others and the formation of the ego.** The purpose of this particular inquiry is to show that Sartre's notion of subjectivity in *Being and Nothingness* is by no means as individualistic and abstract as many critics reflexively maintain. To be sure, Sartre does not fill in his account with specific sociohistorical facts, for this is not the intent of his phenomenological ontology. The question, rather, is whether Sartre's phenomenological ontology tacitly incorporates sociohistorical categories into its understanding of what it means to be a person in the world, and on this score it is my position that there is no question but that it does. In any event, as a preliminary matter, I shall briefly consider **Sartre's response to the 'reef of solipsism', for his examination of this enduring philosophical question, which more or less constitutes the first forty pages of his characterization of being-for-others, lays the groundwork for his understanding of ego formation"** (pg. 122)
 - "Sartre contends that the classical responses of both realism and idealism to the problem of solipsism are inadequate to the task, and that, ultimately, these two archetypical positions tend to collapse into one another" (pg. 122)
 - "by seeing our relation to others as an internal relation, or, more specifically, an internal negation, Sartre is not only saying that our knowledge (of) the Other's existence takes place on the plane of being rather than knowing. He is also saying that it is ultimately on the plane of being that human beings inter-subjectively constitute one another" (pg. 124)
- **"On Sartre's account, the look is a 'fundamental' and 'immediate' relation between me and the Other in which I do not grasp the Other as an object,** as idealists and realists are inclined to do, **but, rather, as a subject..."** (pg. 124)
 - **"the look of the Other completely decenters [a] person's phenomenological world"** (pg. 125)
 - **"Strictly speaking, Sartre's response to the problem of solipsism must be deemed a failure.** Just as the realist and idealist cannot get beyond the probable nature of the Other's subjectivity by considering him as an object of knowledge, there can be little doubt but that Sartre cannot get beyond the probable nature of the Other as subject by immediately apprehending his look. And, indeed, it seems fairly clear that Sartre himself would agree" (pg. 125)
 - ◆ "it is roughly at this point in the argument that the question of "the existence of others" slides from the less interesting question of whether the Other truly exists to the more interesting question of how the Other's existence bears on my own existence, and specifically how it bears on the existence of my ego structure" (pg. 126)
- **"Indeed, relations are fundamentally inscribed with conflict on Sartre's account** precisely because 'the Other-as-subject', who has turned me into a 'being-as-object', could just as easily have been objectified by me under a different set of circumstances. And, moreover, I can, at least theoretically, always turn the tables on him, such that I could become a "being-as-subject" while he becomes an "Other-as-object." One of the most compelling reasons that "hell is other people" is that relations of domination and subordination can never be fixed or reach a final resting place. As Sartre's theoretical discussion of concrete relations implies, and the dilemma of the characters in "No Exit" graphically depicts, these relations of domination and subordination are always fluid: **there is no dialectic of my relations with the Other** but rather a circle although each attempt is enriched by the failure of the other" (B&N, p. 474)" (pg. 128)
 - ◆ **cf. pg. 102 - dialectical theory of knowledge but non-dialectical social relations...????*
 - "As this excerpt already begins to attest, there are also deep differences between Sartre and Hegel on the matter of intersubjectivity, and explicating these differences will help clarify the particulars of Sartre's position. Accordingly, the most obvious difference between Sartre and Hegel (and the one suggested by this excerpt) bears on the prospects for a social reconciliation. Hegel's intersubjective dialectic, as is well known, might start with the master-slave encounter, but the unreconcilable contradictions that arise in these two forms of consciousness lead to their sublation by a new form of consciousness (stoicism) that seeks to resolve them. This movement, in which an ensuing form of **consciousness incorporates the truths of the superseded forms of consciousness** in the course of resolving their

contradictions, is repeated until reconciling reason engenders a form of consciousness in which there is mutual recognition amongst all individuals, all of whom identify themselves with the broader social collective. In contrast, as we just saw, Sartre does not see human relations breaking out of the "circle" of domination and subordination..." (pg. 128) *cf. pg. 132, paragraph 2 for Sartre's contradiction and implication for freedom and ethics

- ◆ **this 'incorporability' is, in a sense, 'progress' - i.e., a progression. So, where Sartre doesn't allow for such, he also refutes that there can at all be 'progress'. However, we find this undertone in his progressive-regressive method.*
<https://blogs.law.columbia.edu/critique1313/bernard-e-harcourt-introduction-to-sartres-critique-of-dialectical-reason-1960/?cn-reloaded=1>
- "while the impulse toward recognition within Hegel's framework is a positive thing, as it yields richer forms of subjectivity through self-knowledge, the impulse toward recognition within Sartre's framework is a negative thing, as it testifies to the objectification of subjectivity, and therefore the usurpation of its freedom to self-determine (or, to be more exact, to determine its self). This difference, which revolves around Sartre's emphasis on the prereflective cogito, is at the heart of his critique of Hegel" (pg. 129)
 - ◆ **"Along the lines of Kierkegaard, Sartre is saying that Hegel only abstractly considers consciousness in its being, and he therefore loses its irreducible concreteness, which cannot be defined in terms of knowledge.** This conflation of knowledge and being leads Sartre to level what he calls a "twofold charge of optimism" against Hegel (B&N, p. 324). On the one hand, Hegel is guilty of an "epistemological optimism," for he thinks that the for-itself of the Other can be known. But, of course, on Sartre's account, not only can I not "know" the for-itself of the other (i.e., the Other-as-subject), I cannot even "know" the for-itself of myself (i.e., my being-as-subject), given that I am always beyond my objectifications of my self" (pg. 130)
- "Ultimately, **for Sartre, we ceaselessly career between the Other-as-object and the Other-as-subject**, for the aim of equality - namely, the apprehension of the Other as simultaneously freedom (subject) and objectivity (object) - is, in principle, unobtainable (B&N, p. 529)" (pg. 134)
 - **"If Sartre is guilty of ontologizing a bad reality, this is where the charge is most apropos, for his phenomenologically based notion that interpersonal relations are characterized by conflict is arguably a reflection of the conditions in which he lived.** Given that Sartre acknowledged that his philosophy of freedom was inspired by his war experiences, it seems reasonable enough to conclude that his view that human relations are founded on domination and subordination also arose from his war experiences - his life in a prisoner of war camp, under the Nazi occupation, and, more generally, under competitive capitalism. This conclusion, however, is only partially right, for just as Sartre's doctrine of freedom runs philosophically deeper than its socio-historical breeding grounds, it seems to me although to a somewhat lesser degree that his claim that we can no more be a for-itself-for-others than a for-itself-in-itself also strikes a deeper philosophical chord. Now, undoubtedly, the excesses of the conflict-ridden nature of his characterization of interpersonal relations do bear witness to his particular times, but his refusal to concede that the modern individual can be seamlessly reconciled with others under any conditions strikes me as being correct" (pg. 134)
 - ◆ **I can't help but think that the author is 'excusing' the radicalness of Sartre's philosophy merely for the purpose of achieving his own agenda. This failure, in conjunction with Sartre's many others, is enough ground for dismissal. So, I'm not exactly sure what's leading the author to remark that Sartre's perspective is wholly derived from his war experiences. Much less, do I understand why irreconciliation is 'correct'.*
 - "both Sartre and Adorno hold on to the idea of an interpersonal reconciliation as a regulative ideal. Another regulative ideal that Sartre retains, which is strongly affected by the sociohistorical condition of interpersonal relations, is the idea of an intrapersonal reconciliation, or, more simply, 'good faith'" (pg. 135)
- **"Sartre's account of the phenomenon of bad faith is unavoidable for ontological reasons:** human being can never entirely overcome it" (pg. 136)
 - ◆ **again, how can the for-itself be 'completely free' but never free enough to overcome its own faults / mis-steps?*
 - **"bad faith is an inescapable human problem that arises from the fact that consciousness is a nothingness that must establish its being in a world that it must simultaneously be and not be.** In other words, the problem arises from the nonidentical or dualistic nature of human consciousness, which, as we saw, **"is what it is not" (transcendence) and "is not what it is" (facticity)** by virtue of the nothingness that separates non-positional and positional consciousness. Moreover, although, we generally tend to speak about bad faith as an individual phenomenon, and not without good cause (given that this ontologically rooted pathology proximately expresses itself through the choices of individuals), it is my view that it is fundamentally a social, and derivatively epistemological, phenomenon - albeit, as I just implied, a social and epistemological phenomenon that must find expression in all individuals irrespective of the nature of their particular social situations and the kinds of knowledge that they engender. Crucially, however, bad faith is a phenomenon that can be more or less egregious in terms of the regulative ideal of good faith, and although bad faith must take place irrespective of the character of the individual, the particular social situation, and the kinds of knowledge that it engenders, **the degree of bad faith that exists individually and collectively in a given population depends, in the first instance, on the character of the particular social situation"** (pg. 136)
- "According to Sartre, to be in bad faith is to 'lie to oneself'" (pg. 136)
 - ◆ **meaning, this "lie to oneself" depends upon the situation for which we find ourself.*
 - "the person in bad faith must paradoxically know in his capacity as deceiver the truth that is hidden from him in his capacity as the one deceived, but he must know it in such a way that he can successfully conceal it from himself" (pg. 137)
 - ◆ **which means, then, Sartre implicitly accepts that there is such thing as 'truth' (if not at least in subjective terms as opposed to objectively). Now, to be fair, by this author's account, Sartre admits a 'dialectical theory of knowledge' while purporting a 'non-dialectical theory of interpersonal human relations'. Cf. pg. 128 & 102. **My question surrounds the reason(s) for dropping the dialectical method in the moment of crossing from internal to external.***
 - "Sartre contends...that **bad faith is grounded in the 'double property of the human being, who is at once a facticity and a transcendence'** (B&N, p. 98). And, to be more precise, Sartre contends, it is through a person's approach to this double property of his constitution that bad faith arises: 'Bad faith does not wish either to coordinate them or to surmount them in a synthesis. **Bad faith seeks to affirm their identity while preserving their differences.** It must affirm facticity as being transcendence and transcendence as being facticity in such a way that at the instant when a person apprehends the one, he can find himself abruptly faced with the other' (B&N, p. 98)" (pg. 137)
 - ◆ "on Sartre's account, we must exist our sociohistorically produced facticity in a much more entangled fashion, for the 'ontological distance' between nonpositional and positional consciousness, which is comprised of 'nothing', is only an ideal one, which means that the kind of freedom it ultimately makes possible is better understood as arising from a phenomenological distance. As such, we are free only to the extent that we can choose how to plunge ourselves back into the fray, and then only within a limited range of possibilities..." (pg. 138)
- "I would like to further shut the door on the notion that good faith is an attainable ideal" (pg. 139)
 - "although I have rejected Santoni's account of good faith due to the fact that it conflates a bad faith overemphasis on transcendence and good faith, there is still the possibility of another practical concept of good faith that we saw Sartre himself raise in passing - namely, a

too strongly, this notion of the initial project is, in certain respects, not unlike an Hegelian 'form of consciousness', at least to the extent that it sublates previous orientations (or, at least, leaves the space for their inclusion in the larger subjective constitution of which it is a part) and only gradually breaks down due to the possibility of a continuing nonaccessory reflection that, unless the initial project is wholly in bad faith, at least hazily perceives internal contradictions (rather than spontaneously breaks down all at once)" (pg. 165)

- ◆ **"we must take into account what experience teaches to refine our initial project**, and therefore our self-conception - that is, until such a point that experience teaches that, in its broad outline, the existing initial project is untenable. Moreover, it is at this point that we see the ethical necessity for practical freedom. Beyond the particular ends that he seeks to obtain, the individual must be oriented by the desire to expand the range of practical freedom within his sociohistorical context because it delineates the range of possible subjective orientations that determine, in a fundamental way, how he is able to "remake [his] Self." As Adorno succinctly puts it, "there is no available model of freedom save one: that consciousness, as it intervenes in the total social constitution, will through that constitution intervene in the complex of the individual" (ND, p. 265)" (pg. 166)
- Part 3 - Adorno's Dialectic of Subjectivity (pg. 173)
 - **"Because Adorno emphasizes the relation between enlightenment subjectivism and an oppressive historical dialectic, many commentators claim that he all but rejects the subject. This conclusion**, which is often based on Adorno's analysis of the subject's genesis and historical development in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (but at least nominally finds support in virtually all of his principal works), **is fundamentally misguided**. As Adorno himself declares in *Negative Dialectics*, **"it is not the purpose of critical thought to place the object on the orphaned royal throne once occupied by the subject. The purpose of critical thought is to abolish the hierarchy"** (ND, p. 181). Much like Sartre, whose synthetic approach also explicitly rejects the hierarchies that are inherent in classical versions of both idealism and materialism - Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, Heidegger's fundamental ontology, orthodox Marxism's material dialectic, and Anglo-American positivism - it is Adorno's intention to revitalize the subject rather than to reject him" (pg. 173)
 - "although they differ methodologically in that Sartre's concrete phenomenological depiction of the subject takes place in an abstract sociohistorical context, while Adorno's concrete dialectical analyses presuppose a subject who remains largely abstract, both are committed to the dialectical mediation of the opposite pole and, finally, of subject and object, universal and particular" (pg. 173-174)
 - "Of course, while Adorno advocates the principles of self-responsibility and self-determination, poststructuralists are correct when they claim that he unequivocally attacks the kind of subject that is offered in the works of Descartes, Kant, and Husserl, in which the subject is purged of every natural desire" (pg. 175)
 - "like Sartre, indeed, Adorno is ultimately a humanist of sorts. Such a claim, to be sure, is a controversial one, for Adorno himself often repudiates the term" (pg. 178)
 - "My focus in this part will revolve around my attempt to justify this claim. In chapter 7, I shall consider Adorno's understanding of the relation between the subject's formation and reason for the purpose of showing that the "dialectic of enlightenment" to which his most pessimistic work refers is a historical tendency that is being contingently expressed rather than a historical necessity. In chapter 8, I shall try to show that Adorno's own notion of "negative dialectics," which is grounded in enlightenment thought, does not jettison the enlightenment notion of an autonomous subject but rather reworks it for the purpose of doing justice to it" (pg. 179)
- Chapter 7 - The (de)formation of the Subject (pg. 181)
 - "In contrast to Being and Nothingness, which considers the subject from the phenomenological standpoint, and therefore does not call into question such "first person" notions as freedom and responsibility (because, practically speaking, we must operate under these ideas), Dialectic of Enlightenment considers the subject from the historical or "third person" standpoint. From this standpoint, notions such as freedom and responsibility, which constitute "the subject" as such, become quite problematical - indeed, with the ineluctable march of history as a backdrop, they tend to all but disappear from view" (pg. 181)
 - "In sum...the Dialectic of Enlightenment is nothing other than a critique of reason by (dialectical) reason..." (pg. 183-184)
 - "[Adorno's] form of self-preservation, which exemplifies enlightenment self-assertion, does not relate to biological self-preservation but to the preservation of the particular ego structure that separates a human being both from nature and other human beings. And, when taken to the extreme, it not only destroys its bid for self-preservation, as Adorno states here, but ultimately threatens its self-preservation as well" (pg. 185)
 - "What actually makes us human, according to Hegel, is our innate human drive for recognition, which is the very condition of the "self" (in the egological sense)" (pg. 185)
 - **"Adorno differs from Hegel and Marx...[by] his rejection of a universal history that concludes in some ultimate reconciliation"** (pg. 186)
 - "for Marx no less than for Adorno and Horkheimer, reason and money are part and parcel of the ordering logic of modern bourgeois society - an ordering logic that both lays the groundwork for human beings (individually and collectively) to actualize their full potential and, when ultimately fetishized at the expense of sensuous particularity, precludes them from doing so" (pg. 189)
 - "Written by German Jews during World War II and published during the early stages of the Cold War and nuclear arms race, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is well positioned to see the negative aspects of the enlightenment project. And, to be sure, there can be little question but that Adorno and Horkheimer are using these Homeric adventures for the purpose of showing that the formation of the subject is inextricably intertwined with the contemporary dynamics of domination and subordination" (pg. 190)
 - **"Adorno and Horkheimer intend *Dialectic of Enlightenment* to be a diagnostic tool that reveals the coercive element that is inherent within enlightenment thought, and therefore the enlightenment subject**, but reveals it not for the purpose of discarding enlightenment rationality and subjectivity altogether, but rather for encouraging the sort of self-reflection that would enable it to overcome this inherent propensity" (pg. 190)
 - ◆ "Adorno and Horkheimer declare in the Introduction to *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, they are not concerned with abstract forms of life but rather with the "actual movement of civil society as a whole in the aspect of its idea as embodied in individuals and institutions" (DOE, p. xiv)" (pg. 195)
 - **"According to Adorno and Horkheimer...hierarchies arise in society itself - that is, they are fundamentally historical phenomena - and therefore there is nothing necessary about them"** (pg. 194)
 - "Adorno and Horkheimer believe that science's instrumental approach to reason and nature has delimited the standards of all other spheres of human experience" (pg. 198)
 - "while **Adorno and Horkheimer clearly contend that there is a coercive element indigenous to science in its underlying concept** (i.e., when considered abstractly), and, moreover, clearly contend that this coercive element could - and, indeed, did - manifest itself in a coercive, instrumental approach not only to the way in which science is undertaken and applied but to the total range of human endeavors (i.e., to morality and culture), they do not even contend that science is necessarily coercive in its unfolding..." (pg. 200-201)
 - ◆ "accordingly, their attack on science is actually an attack on scientism..." (pg. 201)
 - **"Adorno aims to revitalize the deeply existential concern with 'living experience', which has been progressively emptied of meaning"** (pg. 202)
 - "if the universalizing, instrumentalizing impulse that undeniably is, and ought to be, at the heart of science is allowed to run rampant -

both in terms of the larger society, and, indeed, even in terms of the scientific enterprises's own self-understanding - it is actually a reflection on society rather than science" (pg. 203)

- "It is only in the absence of self-reflection - an absence that analogously culminates in a capitalist society that is based on relations of domination that aim to ideologically piggyback on to the unifying, instrumentalizing tendencies of science - that science runs amok" (pg. 204)
- "All of this, it seems to me, is in keeping with **Adorno's commitment to the notion that truth must be strived toward by way of the subject-object dialectic**: reducing science to a social construct would break off the subject-object dialectic every bit as much as orthodox Marxism's dialectic of nature, the difference being that while the latter idealistically absolutizes nature by purging the subjective aspect, the former idealistically relativizes nature by purging the objective aspect. In its fallibilistic way, **science must strive toward the truth**" (pg. 204-205)
- "early Critical Theory [was] divided crudely along two lines - a theory of society based on mediating a historical convergence of philosophy's theoretical norms and (social) scientific facts as they manifested themselves in practices (Horkheimer, Marcuse) and an immanent critique of philosophy's norms and the larger culture of which they are a part, but with little expectation that social practices would make good philosophical theory (Adorno, Benjamin)..." (pg. 204)
- "It was Kant, of course, who first divided reason into three differentiated spheres, and in this way constructed the archetype for Habermas's own theory of communicative action, but, in contrast to Habermas, Kant explicitly recognized the fragmented nature of the subject in his architectonic. **For Kant, of course, human beings are, in one sense, completely determined, and yet, in another sense, completely free**, and it is the task of aesthetic reflection to mediate the split. Conversely, for Habermas, who only nominally rejects Kant's dualistic metaphysics, and seems to have no real use for the notion of aesthetic reflection, the spheres of instrumental reason or "system" (i.e., science and capitalism) and practical reason or "lifeworld" (i.e., morality) either are mediated by communicative relations of some type or are discrete. On the one hand, if they are mediated, what, precisely is their grounding?" (pg. 205-206)
- "What Sartre rejects about the Freudian notion of the unconscious is the ontological claim that it constitutes some discrete realm of the mind that is primarily hidden from consciousness, which is directly at odds with his own view that consciousness is both unitary and translucent. Nevertheless, Sartre readily agrees that we are not aware of most of the objects of which we are, in a minimal sense, conscious. It is necessarily the case that there are huge swaths of conscious life of which we are unaware, for consciousness must nihilate (i.e., in some sense "intentionally" become unaware of) a good deal of the world to constitute a coherent experience, which depends on raising only particular aspects of the world to awareness. This phenomenon, as we saw in the last chapter, gives rise to the inevitability of bad faith, which is based on the fact that we can be only prereflectively conscious of objects (and, even then, with varying degrees of awareness). Ultimately, the level of awareness that we actually have with respect to objects of which we are conscious is symptomatic of our hierarchy of projects, which, for the most part, goes back to the initial project-our most basic self-orienting project that is generally not brought to awareness without the benefit of existential psychoanalysis" (pg. 224)
 - "In sum, Sartre does believe in the notion of libidinal drives of which we are unaware - provided that we recognize that we choose not to be aware of them by dint of our spontaneously conceived underlying projects - **which brings him much closer to the Freudian framework**" (pg. 225)
- "In contrast to Sartre, Adorno relies on the idea of unconscious libidinal drives not only to articulate the psychological inducements of fascism - which seek to camouflage the existence of these frustrated drives while simultaneously giving them a distorted sociopolitical outlet - but to also provide a locus for emancipatory urges. As an initial matter, however, it must be pointed out that while this does imply that Adorno has a somewhat more classical approach to Freudian psychoanalytic theory than Sartre, as I asserted above, Adorno's critique of the unconscious does bear certain important resemblances to the Sartrean critique. Specifically, while Sartre, given his first-person phenomenological method, breaks down the division of consciousness that Freud's theory of the unconscious posits by holding that consciousness is unitary, and that even libidinal drives of which we are unaware have intentionality, Adorno, given his third-person dialectical method, reverses the direction of the criticism and holds that Freud's division of consciousness is broken down by the sociohistorical, which penetrates to, the center of the unconscious" (pg. 225)
 - "Adorno is right to say that the psyche must be dragged back into the social dialectic, which is the position that Marcuse takes in *Eros and Civilization*, and he is right to say that when conceived as an abstract, autonomous "for itself," it has the effect of draining the subject of his subjectivity. However, this attack on Freud's notion of the psyche belies a certain tension in his own thought, and it is the same tension that was previously discussed in the context of Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization*. If the ego fails to differentiate itself by virtue of the fact that it has been colonized by the institutional structures of society (bourgeois or fascist), it not only effectively cancels itself out as an agent, but, in the process, it also immediately transmits to the unconscious those social aims that would otherwise be subject to the critical capacities of a well-functioning, mediating ego - aims that actually contradict the goals of the primary libido. In other words, if the primary libido is what Adorno intends by the "nature in the subject," which ideally serves as a reminder of the nondominating possibilities of genuinely enlightened thought (DOE, p. 40), the transposition of societal aims directly into the unconscious (due to a colonized ego structure's inability to filter out the irrational) would effectively negate the possibility of the "remembrance" that would permit the libido to serve as this source of resistance. And, indeed, this is exactly the aim of fascist propaganda, which seeks to reinforce its program of "malicious egalitarianism" by foisting on the collective psyche the idea that individual (as opposed to collective) instinctual gratification is unacceptable" (pg. 226)
- "In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, [Jessica Benjamin] states, Adorno and Horkheimer hold the view that "the ego creates an increasingly hostile world through its exercise of domination and control," while in [later] passages...Adorno holds the view that the ego is necessary to control the unconscious's innate destructiveness." Although, at first blush, this claim would seem to be right, it is ultimately wrong, and to see why this is so it is necessary to consider Benjamin's broader critique of Adorno, which in many ways helps to more clearly elucidate Adorno's actual position. The crux of the matter for Benjamin, who critiques Adorno from the standpoint of object relations theory, is that he buys into Freud's idea of internalization" (pg. 227-228)
 - "the problem with Benjamin's critique is that it simultaneously overstates and understates various aspects of Adorno's thought" (pg. 228)
 - ◆ **this, surely, is little to enough reason to categorize Benjamin as 'wrong'*
 - "Object relations, which emphasizes Hegel's theory of recognition and, more generally, the construction of a nurturing social environment in which authority need not be internalized because the ego is developed in a nonauthoritarian familial framework, is an ideal with much to recommend it" (pg. 232)
- "In sum, then, Adorno will have no truck with theories that purport to offer foundations for a social reconciliation. **Rather than abstractly elevate candidates such as love and justice to this role, we must concretely consider these concepts as they have been dialectically bequeathed to us**. This means that we must work through the fallen nature of these otherwise lofty concepts to make something more of them rather than simply do an end run, which would only make them adequate to their concepts in thought rather than reality (and probably not even that, since they would drag along the bad reality into thought). **To get at the truth content of these concepts, as they currently exist, which is the only way to actually make something more of them, Adorno offers a methodology of sorts, which is part and parcel of his notion of**

negative dialectics" (pg. 235)

- Chapter 8 - Subjectivity and Negative Dialectics (pg. 237)
 - "not unlike Sartre's freedom, which is grounded in the transphenomenality of the subject, Adorno's negative dialectics is grounded in the transphenomenality of the object, but both of their philosophies are ultimately grounded in history, and therefore, in principle, could go away" (pg. 239)
 - "it must be made clear that this turn toward nonidentity sharply differs from nominally similar turns later made by certain poststructuralists. Adorno does not want to discard the moment of identity altogether - "the appearance of identity is inherent in thought itself," or, put more simply, "to think is to identify" (ND, p. 5). Rather, he asserts, philosophy "must strive by way of the concept to transcend the concept" (ND, p. 15)" (pg. 240)
 - "although **Adorno rejects phenomenology's "pure intuition" in favor of socially mediated concepts**, since he thinks that pure intuitions unwittingly smuggle in the stuff of the conceptual apparatuses they purport to "bracket," his negative dialectics shares phenomenology's fundamental impulse to surmount the 'constitutive subjectivity' of German idealism 'to return to the things themselves'" (pg. 240)
 - "Adorno thinks that hanging behind these philosophical and psychological drives toward self-identity (i.e., the self-identical self) is the drive toward self-preservation..." (pg. 241)
 - "This progressively tends to alienate human beings from themselves, and this alienation, in turn, manifests itself in the drive toward identity, in which one's genuine "self" tends to be viewed as something that is outside of experience...or one with experience. In both types of cases, there is an identity" (pg. 241)
 - "**At its core, negative dialectics is Adorno's attempt to immanently think through identity thinking** in the service of what he takes to be "the concern of philosophy" - namely, "cognitive utopia," which "would be to use concepts to unseal the non-conceptual with concepts, without making it their equal" (ND, p. 10)" (pg. 242)
 - "**Adorno's concern is with an analytic structure, an analytic structure that is constituted by the entwinement of myth and enlightenment:** mythic rationalization processes, which are already instrumentally rational, betoken enlightenment rationalization processes, which harbor a mythic core in that they banish the nonconceptual from the concept to better instrumentalize it (theoretically and practically)" (pg. 242)
 - ◆ "Adorno himself offers a methodology of sorts to disenchant the concept - that is, **to mine the nonconceptual that the enchanted concept has sealed up in the name of control**, which would plug external and internal nature back into the picture, and therefore fulfill not only the concept but the human subject who uses it. Crucially, however, this methodology self-reflectively builds into itself the historical processes that, for better or worse, inform it in any event. Rejecting the subsumptive linear style that is part and parcel of abstract identity thinking, Adorno opts for nonhierarchical "models" or "constellations." These puzzle-like constructions are designed to release the repressed truths in identity thinking by juxtaposing the different concepts that are operative in a particular socio-historical context so as to reveal their limitations - limitations that point toward the repressed difference between identifying concepts and the objects that they purport to capture" (pg. 243)
 - ◇ "by putting concepts and objects into different configurations or trial combinations within a constellation, which is as fleeting as the particular sociohistorical context that gives rise to it (in its whole and parts), insights into the concepts and objects under consideration can be "unriddled" through the novel interplay of the particulars..." (pg. 244)
 - ▶ what this means is that any approach to the 'truth content' of the particular must be by way of the mediating social totality or 'the whole'..." (pg. 244)
 - "for Adorno, the bad social totality and an identity driven conceptuality are homologous: they are just different expressions of a petrified universal moment. And, just as conceptuality is a necessary aspect of cognition and cannot be discarded to get around the failings of an identity driven conceptuality in the name of the non-conceptual, the social moment is a necessary aspect of cognition and cannot be discarded to get around the bad social totality in the name of particularity" (pg. 245)
 - "**Negative Dialectics** itself, more broadly, is best viewed as a constellation of sorts. It is **a constellation that is fashioned to show how the enlightenment's most fundamental philosophical concepts have turned against the basic commitments that inspired them** (perhaps, most of all, the commitment to the individual, whose self-determination was perhaps the enlightenment's core); to unriddle the truth content that still continues to subsist in these concepts, and that might point the way to better redeeming the enlightenment project; and to "unfold" the paradoxical title" of the book itself (ND, p. xix), which, for Adorno, is connected to redeeming the enlightenment project" (pg. 245)
 - "in many respects, **Heidegger's thought**, as well as the support that it garners, **is a manifestation of enlightenment thought gone bad**, but this is no reason to privilege it, and if Adorno's intent is to redeem enlightenment thought, Heidegger has very little to say. What is most significant, then, is not Heidegger's inclusion in the constellation that is *Negative Dialectics* but his placement within it." (pg. 246)
 - ◆ "Heidegger's philosophy has nothing to contribute to his own project" (pg. 246)
 - ◆ "while **Adorno largely shares Heidegger's concern about the overinflated subjectivism of the enlightenment subject**, he holds, in contrast to Heidegger, that we must fully emancipate the subject, not reject him..." (pg. 246-247)
 - "Adorno aims to show that the concept of freedom poses an actual problem that has only been turned into a pseudoproblem by virtue of its failure to be properly articulated in the first instance a failure that owes its very existence to just those "objective social trends" that sought to bury the concept once the idea of it no longer served the ruling interests. In other words, for Adorno, the abstract idea of freedom served the interests of the rising bourgeoisie, who relied on it to commercially maneuver while they extracted surplus value from those who "freely" offered themselves up as wage laborers. However, under advanced, neoliberal, monopoly capitalism, with its close (but unacknowledged) ties to the state, even the idea of freedom became a hindrance, and if it was not "buried" outright it was ideologically modified to accord with the new realities" (pg. 251)
 - "**For both Adorno and Sartre, then, the linked dualities freedom and unfreedom, autonomy and heteronomy, and necessity and chance dialectically entail one another not only externally but also internally**" (pg. 255)
 - "freedom requires engagement and disengagement, action and reflection, for while Adorno rightly resists breaking off the subject-object dialectic in theory, he tends to break it off in practice, and if subject and object are not mediated in practice, in the long run they will not be mediated in theory either" (pg. 259)

d. Further Readings:

- (Article) Subject and Object, by T. Adorno https://platypus1917.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/adorno_onsubjectandobject.pdf