

An Introduction to Dialectics, by T. Adorno

a. People / Organizations:

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b. Quotes:

- "philosophy should help us to avoid becoming stupid" - Author (pg. 3)
- "...Hegel is an extraordinary complex thinker..." - Author (pg. 16)
- "the task of philosophical education today, it seems to me, is to serve those who seriously desire such an education specifically by immunizing them against the countless philosophical slogans and ready-made concepts which swirl around us everywhere, and which people imagine can provide some kind of 'guide', norm, or meaningful orientation, while we refuse the trouble and effort involved in thinking these concepts through and subjecting them to due critical examination" - Author (pg. 20)
- "...for idealist philosophy the idea of the absoluteness of thinking stands at the very beginning, the idea that there is therefore nothing which is not thought..." - Author (pg. 28)
- "...dialectic somehow promises to square the circle..." - Author (pg. 38)
 - "For it does indeed claim to construe or construct precisely what cannot simply be exhausted in rationality - the non-identical, that which cannot itself be immediately construed - and thus to grasp the irrational by appeal to consciousness itself" - Author (pg. 38)
- "In my little book on Hegel I once declared that Hegelian philosophy is indeed life repeated, as it were, that in this philosophy we actually do have our life again in the many-coloured show of things" - Author (pg. 43)
 - "...Hegel's philosophy as a whole is indeed an entirely logical process, but at the same time a process which, by virtue of its own logical character, also points beyond abstract thought and is nourished on forms of experience with which we are all familiar" - Author (pg. 44)
 - "Hegel's philosophy [is] a rather remarkable field of tensions, where the movement lies not in continuous transitions but in a tremendous exchange of energy, where thought leaps over from the pole of concretion to the pole of abstraction. In this way we pass from what is closest to us, what is most sensuous, to precisely what is most remote: instead of producing some middle term or connection between both, we see how the universal and the particular, the two extremes, touch. And again this is profoundly bound up with the very content of Hegel's philosophy, for it is indeed the essence of dialectical teaching that the universal is also always the particular and the particular the universal" - Author (pg. 52)
- "One must always read Hegel in a very differentiated manner, and above all with a constant readiness to think through all the possibilities harboured within a concept, just as Nietzsche later wished his own readers to do" - Author (pg. 111)
- **"There is nothing in the world, not the highest creations of philosophy or even the highest creations of art, which cannot be misused by clinging to them in isolation, and thereby holding people back from other things, deceiving people about other possibilities, generating false and untrue satisfactions, or creating spurious satisfactions.** And if you expect me to suggest a practical application of dialectic here it would be precisely this: dialectical thought is extraordinarily mistrustful of any attempt to isolate and thus misuse thought. **If any particular aspect of knowledge, any finite instance of knowledge - and any specific knowledge regarding the whole is always a particular instance of knowledge - acts as if it were the whole, is posited as absolute, it can readily enter the service of untruth and become an ideology**" - Author (pg. 54)
 - "...the dialectic has long since functioned, as a religion of the state, to justify a praxis which only perpetuates the repression which the impulse of dialectic inspires us to challenge" - Author (pg. 54)
- "if we just simply read such propositions, as we just simply read something without presuppositions merely in order to understand it, we cannot actually understand anything. For with regard to philosophy - and I am almost tempted to say with regard to anything whatsoever - **there is actually no such thing as presuppositionless knowledge**" - Author (pg. 131)
 - "I would say that the whole art of philosophical understanding and philosophical reading consists in this: that you do not simply read what lies written in front of you...but also learn to read what is written precisely in its own specific gravity, as it were"- Author (pg. 131)
 - "any practice of philosophy, and especially critical philosophy, is legitimate only as long as it is reflective about itself, and that also means as long as it does not demand to be in the right" - Author (pg. 156)
- "there is no such thing as so-called neutral thought..." - Author (pg. 181)

c. General Notes:

- Lecture 1 (pg. 1)
 - "The concept of dialectic which we shall explore here has nothing to do with the widespread conception of a kind of thinking which is remote from the things themselves and revels merely in its own conceptual devices. Indeed, at the point in philosophy where the concept of dialectic first emerges, in the thought of Plato, it already implies the opposite, namely a disciplined form of thought which is meant to protect us from all sophistic manipulation. Plato claims that we can say something rational about things only when we understand something about the matter itself (Gorgias and Phaedrus). **In its origin, the dialectic is an attempt to overcome all merely conceptual devices of spurious argumentation, and precisely by articulating conceptual thinking in a truly rigorous fashion.** Plato attempts to counter his opponents, the Sophists, by use of their own means. All the same, the concept of dialectic as it has come down to us from classical thought is very different from what I mean by the term. For **the ancient concept of dialectic is the concept of a philosophical method.** And to a certain extent this is what it has always remained. Dialectic is both - it is a method of thought, but it is also more than this, namely a specific structure which belongs to the things themselves, and which for quite fundamental philosophical reasons must also become the measure of philosophical reflection itself." (pg. 1)
 - "What dialectic means for Plato is that a philosophical thought does not simply live there where it stands, as it were, but continues to live when it informs our consciousness without our realizing it. Platonic dialectic is a doctrine which enables us to order our concepts correctly, to ascend from the concrete to the level of the higher and most universal" (pg. 1-2)
 - **"the old traditional concept of dialectic was essentially a method for organizing concepts"** (pg. 2)
 - "Plato and Aristotle emphasized the importance of framing our concepts in accordance with nature, so that these concepts might properly express what it is they grasp" (pg. 2)
 - **"The dialectic is indeed a method which refers to the process of thinking, but it also differs from other methods insofar as it constantly strives not to stand still, constantly corrects itself in the presence of the things themselves.** We could define dialectic as a kind of thinking which does not content itself merely with the order of concepts but, rather, undertakes to correct the conceptual order by reference to the being of the objects themselves. The vital nerve of dialectical thinking lies here, in this moment of opposition. **Dialectic is the reverse of what it is generally taken to be:** rather than being simply an elaborate conceptual technique, it is the attempt to overcome all merely conceptual manipulation, to sustain at every level the tension between thought and what it would comprehend. **Dialectic is the method of thinking which is not merely a method, but the attempt to overcome the merely arbitrary character of method and to admit into the concept that which is not itself concept"** (pg. 2)
 - **'opposition' of simply 'otherness' (i.e., what's not itself, where what's not could also include what's yet to be). Furthermore, instead of 'reverse', one could say 'ulterior' (i.e., hidden -> this being quite Kantian).*

- "An introduction to the dialectic can only be pursued in constant confrontation with the problem of positivism. Such an introduction cannot proceed as if the criteria of positivism had not been developed. On the contrary, we must attempt to measure them against themselves and thereby move beyond their own concept. Positivism is not a 'worldview' but, rather, an element of dialectic" (pg. 3)
- Lecture 2 (pg. 4)
 - "Last time, I attempted to introduce you to a problem or difficulty which it is important to grasp right at the beginning if we wish to work our way towards the concept of the dialectic. And the difficulty is this: on the one hand, the dialectic is a method of thinking; on the other hand, it is an attempt to do justice to some determination, quality, or feature of the matter in question" (pg. 4)
 - "I believe it is most important, if we are to develop any serious concept of dialectic, that you should be very clear from the outset that the latter cannot be regarded either merely as a method - for then it would be nothing but what we described in the preceding session as the older dialectic of ancient philosophy, simply a theory regarding the procedure of thought - or merely as a way of identifying oppositions which are empirically discovered in things themselves - for then the dialectic would fail to reveal that compulsion, that power of the whole, which is what actually enables dialectic to be a form of philosophy in the first place, and to furnish something like basic explanatory principles for the great questions of reality and of metaphysics alike. **Both these aspects can certainly only be united if we concede that a dialectical philosophy must be one which posits thought and being as identical. And indeed this is quite true for the dialectic in its most fully developed philosophical form, namely for the Hegelian dialectic, which ultimately is a philosophy of identity**, a philosophy which in the last instance teaches that being itself or, as Hegel puts it in the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, that truth is subject" (pg. 5)
 - "[yet,] I claimed that dialectic is precisely the attempt to develop a philosophical understanding of what is not itself 'subject', that is, to ensure that the two determinations here - the matter itself, on the one hand, the process of thought, on the other - do not merely collapse into one another. Yet it suddenly seems, at least as far as Hegel's conception of philosophy is concerned, that these determinations are identical with one another after all" (pg. 5-6)
 - ◆ **otherwise, that the (at) which we're pointing at in our thought is not wholly equated with the (from) which our thinking is as an activity itself.*
 - "The supreme contradiction with which you are confronted here - on the one hand, that dialectic is the attempt to think non-identity - i.e., the attempt to acknowledge in thought the opposed moments which are not simply exhausted in thought - and, on the other hand, that dialectic is only possible as a philosophy of identity - i.e., a philosophy which posits thought and being in a radical sense as one - [this contradiction] already perfectly expresses the programme which the dialectic in its idealist version, namely the Hegelian version, specifically posed for itself" (pg. 6)
 - **"while everything is indeed to be taken up into thought, thought must also be acknowledged as something which nonetheless differs from its object in every instant"** (pg. 6)
 - "on the one hand, the dialectic is precisely what endeavours to express the opposition between subject and object, the opposition of matter and method, the opposition of cognition and the infinite Absolute; on the other hand, the dialectic is supposed to posit all this as one after all, and thereby expunge this opposition from the world" (pg. 6)
 - "the task of dialectical thinking is not to juggle with concepts, or surreptitiously to replace certain determinations which belong to a concept with quite different determinations of the same concept. That would indeed be a road to sophistical thought rather than to the dialectical concept. Rather, **what is actually required of dialectical thought in the ideal case...is to deploy the concepts themselves, to pursue the matter itself, above all to confront the concept with what it intends to the point where certain difficulties come to light between this concept and the matter which it intends**. And these difficulties compel us to alter the concept in a certain way as we continue with the process of thought, but without thereby relinquishing the determinations which the concept originally possessed. Rather, this alteration comes about precisely through criticism of the original concept - that is, by showing how the original concept does not correspond to the matter it seeks to grasp, however well defined the latter may seem to be - and it thereby does justice to the original concept by insisting that the latter should correspond after all with the matter it sought to grasp" (pg. 7-8)
 - **Dialectic is the process of investigating concepts to uncover the very contradictions hidden away in the structure of such itself. We have thoughts which come to mind, to where we, at some point, begin 'playing' with these ideas. But, at a further point from there, if not aware of ourself and our own thinking, we let go of these ideas at a time / juncture where we did not do justice to learning the inner breadth of what exactly we involved ourself in. We let go of something we never quite understood to begin with. And, it's this non-understanding which leads us to mis-understand - both the idea and ourself. Thus, dialectics aims to further the process of unfolding what's layered within/beneath (cf. pg. 30 - "the opposing claim or proposition must always be derived immanently from the initial claim or proposition itself") those ideas which meet us in our mind. And, it's in this way that dialectics is both 'process' (i.e., how we go about engaging ourself with our own ideas) and 'matter' itself (i.e., our ideas and their complexity). Dialectics requires critique. And, what exactly the thinker is critiquing is the 'handed-down' agglomeration of missed understandings, which Society (by means of culture and politics), through its lack of awareness (much less, its 'concern' with Being-aware), inevitably re-produces its own mis-guided understandings. And, it's this which leads dialectics to be a social critique (of, institutions and the matter of social thought itself). Society, through its perpetuated ignorance (i.e., its mind(less)ness; its 'letting go' of the pursuit to understand) - which is afforded dominion through institutions, cultural and the like - never dis-covers the other side of its own missed-conceptions. As a result, Society knows not what it lacks to begin with. And, because it does not know, society does not truly "progress" - rather, only perpetuates its own mindless mis-understandings through new form.*
 - **"dialectic...always shows a double character, related as it is both to how we think and to the matter itself..."** (pg. 9)
 - **i.e., dialectic deals with both the 'how' and 'what'*
 - "If we are to grasp the essential point from this particular perspective, we must remember that the fundamental experience here must be approached from the side of the matter itself, from the theory of the object rather than the theory of the subject, from the thing which inspired the dialectic itself, from the experience of the fundamentally dynamic character of the matter; in other words, from the fundamentally historical character of the world itself, from the fundamental experience that **there is actually nothing between heaven or on earth which simply is as it is**; from the recognition that **everything that is must actually be comprehended as something in movement, as something that becomes**" (pg. 9)
 - "And it is already implicit in Kant's doctrine, incidentally, that time is not only a necessary form of our intuition; it also provides the ultimate condition for the capacity to connect our thoughts at all, so that nothing can be thought by us unless it can be thought as something essentially temporal. **This idea of the fundamentally historical and dynamic character of experience thus leads dialectical thought to maintain that particular 'essences' cannot in fact be grasped in rigid terms but must be conceived, in their objective interconnections and in their objective determinacy, as something which changes through history**" (pg. 9-10)
 - ◆ "Traditional thought, pre-dialectical thought, had identified the order of necessity, or that which claims ultimate validity, with the essentially permanent and immutable, with that which once and for all just is as it is" (pg. 10)
 - "it is this experience - that the law of our existence should be understood as the historical movement of our epoch and of all epochs rather than as some so-called fundamental determinacy of Being - which is the impulse that actually springs from the matter itself, and which belongs from the start to something like the concept of dialectic itself" (pg. 10)

- "a hypostasis [is] some finite finished thing is made into an absolute and falsely posited as the ultimate ground, as if it were the truth in itself. **The struggle against the reification of the world, against the conventionalization of the world, where what is ossified or frozen, where something which has arisen historically now appears as if it were something simply given 'in itself', something binding on us once and for all - this is what furnishes the polemical starting point for all dialectical thinking**" (pg. 11)
 - "[dialectic] seeks to overcome reification by grasping reification itself in its necessity - that is, by deriving the phenomena of petrification, of ossified institutional structures, of the alienation encountered in what confronts us as an alien and dominating power, from the historical concept..." (pg. 11)
 - **"for to grasp a thing should really mean to grasp the historical necessity of a thing in all its stages"** (pg. 11)
- "I think I have thus basically already indicated that the dialectic, insofar as it is a method, cannot be a way of securing one's own position in a discussion with others, although of course this is just what it is suspected of being. On the contrary, it is an attempt to bring out objective contradictions which lie in reality itself" (pg. 12)
 - "...we must explore these contradictions" (pg. 12)
- "dialectical philosophies...do not rest content with the bare claim that being or truth are historical in character, but conclude from this that the task is precisely to pursue this historical character into all the concrete characteristics of objects" (pg. 12)
 - **"dialectical thought does not claim that truth is eternal, or remains identical to itself, but endorses a concept of truth which has taken historical determinations up into itself"** (pg. 13)
 - "Kant still upholds the traditional conception of truth in the sense of the eternally immutable a priori" (pg. 14)
 - "dialectical philosophy, which cannot accept the opposition between pure being and merely historical existence, seeks to articulate its philosophical judgements precisely by reference to the determinations which derive from historical existence, seeks precisely to do justice to the latter" (pg. 13)
- Lecture 3 (pg. 15)
 - **"[dialectic's] concept of truth itself is not a static one..."** (pg. 15)
 - "We could say that dialectical philosophy or dialectical thought differs from traditional thought in the sense that the former does not hunt after some absolute first ground or principle. For the pursuit of such a ground ultimately involves the idea of the invariance of truth" (pg. 15)
 - "The term 'mediation' in Hegel always signifies a change or alteration which must be expected of a concept as soon as we wish to be apprised of the concept itself" (pg. 18)
 - "this Hegelian concept of the whole is not remotely pantheistic in character and is not conceived as some kind of unfractured organic unity. For this whole is actually nothing other than what Hegel understands by 'system', namely the entire and developed range of all the relations between subject and object, and the antagonistic relations between subject and object which are unfolded on their various levels; and then, when you think all of these relations together, when you finally see how the simplest concepts with which you begin eventually return to themselves as concepts which have now been fully developed and critically clarified, only then, according to Hegel, do you have what he understands by the system or the Absolute. In other words, in Hegel, the system of philosophy is, in the highest sense, actually identical with being. But the concept of being here is not an enchanted word that stands right at the beginning and yields everything else. Rather, we could almost say, that **being, for Hegel, is a demand or programme, something which only becomes what it is precisely through encompassing the entire movement of the concept**" (pg. 21)
 - "[such is] a far too mechanical conception of dialectical thought...which fails to surrender itself at every moment to the experience of the matter..." (pg. 22)
 - "What 'the whole' really means for Hegel, if I may try again to make this difficult concept a little clearer to you, is quite simply that truth does not consist in defining some concept in isolation, treating it in isolation as if it were a mere sector, but rather by taking it in relation to the totality in which it stands" (pg. 23)
 - "dialectics is not the sort of thinking where we deploy concepts in the very different senses in order to prove what we want to say" (pg. 19)
 - "dialectic, in contrast, is not an attempt to introduce the whole, in a merely schematic or mechanical manner, from the outside in order to understand the phenomenon because the latter cannot be understood in its own terms. Rather, dialectic is the attempt to illuminate the individual phenomenon in such a way, to tarry with the phenomenon in such a way, to determine the phenomenon in such a way, that the latter intrinsically passes beyond itself through this very determination and thereby manifests precisely that whole, that system, within which alone it finds its own role and place" (pg. 24)
 - "on the one hand, we should not be content, as rigid specialists, to concentrate exclusively upon the given individual phenomena but strive to understand these phenomena in the totality within which they function in the first place and receive their meaning; and, on the other hand, we should not hypostasize this totality, this whole, in which we stand, should not introduce this whole dogmatically from without, but always attempt to effect this transition from the individual phenomenon to the whole with constant reference to the matter itself" (pg. 24)
 - "we must allow the matter to drive us beyond the merely inert individual determinations, while we must still retain the capacity, through the experience of the specific and the individual which we have exposed, to modify that whole whose concept we must possess in order to grasp the concept of what is individual, to modify that whole in such a way that it forfeits its rigid and dogmatic character. In other words, **the dialectical process is something which relates at once to both: to the parts, the individual moments, which we must pass beyond by virtue of the whole, and to the whole itself, for the whole, the concept which we already have and which should ultimately constitute the truth, must continue to change in accordance with our experience of what is individual.** There is no recipe for how this is adequately to be accomplished, but then it belongs to the essence of dialectic that it is no recipe, but an attempt to let truth reveal itself" (pg. 25)
- Lecture 4 (pg. 26)
 - "I should now like to try and show you, taking another passage from the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, that the Hegelian concept of system or, to put it in less pedantic and historical terms, that the dialectical concept of totality is actually the opposite of that approach. And here I should also like to present once again the central motif of the dialectic in a somewhat different light. I am talking about the idea that the **truth can only be grasped as result, where this result is not just something that emerges at some given point but, rather, includes the process within itself as the necessary condition of its own validity, of its own meaning**" (pg. 27)
 - "Hegelian philosophy, for a quite specific reason, finds itself opposed not only to traditional philosophy and the traditional metaphysics of the permanent and the immutable but also even to traditional logic. This means that Hegelian philosophy does not recognize the principle of contradiction insofar as this philosophy holds that thought itself does not find its truth by proceeding in a wholly non-contradictory manner; rather, it is driven into repeated contradiction precisely through its own rigour and possesses its logical unity - its non-contradictory character - only as a fully developed totality, not in the single steps which it undertakes" (pg. 27-28)
 - "on the one hand, that, **while reason necessarily becomes involved in contradictions, it also possesses the power to go beyond these contradictions and to correct itself.** And according to Hegel this is the very essence of the movement of the concept, the essence of philosophy itself. You have to keep both aspects in mind if you wish to understand dialectical thought properly: the unavoidability of contradictions, on the

- one hand, and the driving force of these contradictions, on the other, where this latter leads to the overcoming or sublation of the contradictions in a higher form of truth and also, in constant correlation with this for Hegel, in a higher form of reality. For, **in Hegel, truth and reality are not conceived as entirely separate from each other, but as two interrelated dynamic moments which depend upon one another and are only constituted in relation to one another in the first place**" (pg. 29-30)
- "For it is the thought that the antithesis is not introduced in opposition to the initial proposition from without - something which he would certainly have repudiated as a purely sophistical dispute about contrary opinions. Rather, **the opposing claim or proposition must always be derived immanently from the initial claim or proposition itself**, as I have already briefly tried to suggest with regard to the relationship between the I and the non-I which indeed furnishes the fundamental theme for Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. **To think dialectically, therefore, is not to confront one proposition of whatever kind with some other contrary opinion from outside. Rather, it is to drive thought to the point where it comes to recognize its own finitude, its own falsehood, and is thereby also driven on beyond itself**" (pg. 30)
 - "For while it is true that thought itself receives this tremendous emphasis in Hegel, that it does indeed claim to develop the Absolute from out of itself, this must also always be understood to mean that thought specifically constitutes itself in and as objectivity. If we can say in an eminent sense that Hegelian dialectic is a subjective dialectic, namely if the Absolute, as Hegel puts it once, is actually Subject, this means that thought, and emphatically on every individual level, finds its measure in and as objectivity. And the pathos of this dialectical philosophy in its entirety lies invariably in this: the judgement of the subject - insofar as it is a merely reflective or ratio-cinatory judgement, insofar as it reaches out solely from itself to the object, without surrendering itself to the discipline, power, or density of the object with which it must engage - and the subject in question always finds itself convicted of its own arbitrary and contingent character, or, as Hegel also often likes to say, of its own vanity. The contradiction or counter-claim which is not drawn from the matter itself, into which the matter itself is not immanently drawn, or which is simply introduced from the outside, all this is merely ascribed to the contingent subject in its finitude, becomes a mere 'opinion'..." (pg. 31)
 - "The 'refutation', as Hegel goes on to say, 'would, therefore, properly consist in the further development of the principle, and in thus remedying the defectiveness, if it did not mistakenly pay attention solely to its *negative* action, without awareness of its progress and result on their *positive* side too'. This passage takes us into the innermost character of dialectical thought which I am hoping to convey to you. For the thought here involves the remarkable admission that the refutation in question is not what is normally described as a refutation in traditional logic, namely the process in which we take a certain thought and demonstrate that it is false. For refutation in Hegel's sense arises not against the original thought but rather with the thought itself, and out of its own power. Thus **Hegelian dialectical thought generally, and Marxian dialectical thought too as long as it is critical thinking, is always a form of immanent critique**" (pg. 31)
 - "it may be a case of immanent critique, that is, a process where what is criticized is measured against its own assumptions, its own principles of form. Now the path of dialectic is always that of immanent critique - that is, in the sense I have just been explaining, we cannot simply confront the matter in question with some criterion external to it or introduce any 'assurances' or 'random thoughts' of our own. Rather, the matter in question, if it is to be disclosed as it is, must be measured, in itself, against its own concept" (pg. 32)
 - ◆ **"dialectical negation is not a simple correction, or counter-claim, to a false thought but...the development of the initial thought, and thus the remedying of its defective character"** (pg. 32)
 - ◇ "If therefore - to take up the Marxian example again - the thought of a free and just society is subjected to critique, the idea of freedom and justice is not thereby eliminated or dissolved in the dialectical method. Rather, we are shown how this idea is not yet realized in the reality which is compared with the idea. And the concepts of freedom and justice which have prevailed hitherto are also themselves modified in the process. That is to say, they cease to be as abstract as they initially present themselves to thought, and thereby become more concrete" (pg. 32-33)
 - **"Hegel says that the critical thought - that is, the thought which measures the matter against itself, which confronts the matter with itself and drives it onwards - pays attention 'solely to its *negative* action, without awareness of its progress and result on their *positive* side'.** This means, in the first place, that Hegel is extraordinarily serious about refutation in his sense, that we do not simply have the whole at our disposal, that we cannot simply extend our concepts at will with the sovereign gesture of a God who assigns its proper place to everything, simply transcend the limitations of our thought and finally secure its proper place. What is demanded, rather, is that **thought must really surrender itself to the dialectic without fear or favour**. This springs directly from what I was trying to get over in our last session, namely that the whole is precisely not something already given, that truth is not something fixed and somehow guaranteed. On the contrary, **truth itself is something which arises and emerges, is essentially result**. But this also means that we cannot deploy truth by introducing it from without, that we cannot, simply by thinking dialectically, already rise above dialectic by virtue of this abstract truth. Rather, **we must immerse ourselves in this dialectical process itself**" (pg. 33) *on pg. 34, Adorno mentions "the idea of the temporal core of truth itself".
 - "only by entrusting ourselves to this partiality, by persevering through this limitation, by **recognizing the critical movement itself as the truth**, is it possible for us to reach truth at all" (pg. 33)
 - "[yet,] the next step - namely that [reflective negativity which manifests the defective character of the finite - is not yet itself the truth either. For this step, insofar as it inevitably misunderstands itself, turns into untruth once again and is thus driven on beyond itself. And the inevitable untruth in which it is then caught up is just what prevents it from appearing simply as an extension or correction of the false. It is what necessarily and inescapably lends it the appearance of an absolute contradiction. You can see from all this that the concept of contradiction, despite all the relevant qualifications, is indeed an extraordinarily serious matter here" (pg. 34)
 - **"there is no universal truth resting statically within itself, and no such truth about society**. For truth itself only ever emerges from the concrete situation, and once it absolves itself from the concrete situation, or believes that it can simply rise above the latter, it thereby finds itself condemned to powerlessness, and can only bring about the very opposite of what it believes it is able to effect" (pg. 34)
 - "I have introduced these reflections here as a model to show you something else which is also extraordinarily important for the general climate of dialectical thinking. I am talking about the continual interaction between an extremely theoretical thought and an orientation to praxis. Here too we find that dialectical thought is fundamentally different from traditional thought. For dialectical thought does not just present us with an elaborated theoretical system from which practical 'conclusions' are produced only after the entire theory has been duly settled. Rather, all levels of dialectical thought, we might say, effectively yield sparks which leap from the extreme pole of theoretical reflection to the extreme pole of practical intervention. And if I have indicated the logical structure of the thought here, the unavoidable limitation of the contradiction involved - or the central role of concrete political praxis in contrast to an abstract political utopia, for example - this must be recognized as a crucial issue for dialectical thought in general" (pg. 35)
 - "For this means that **truth itself cannot be set over against time in a purely contemplative sense. Rather, in possessing a temporal configuration of its own, truth always possesses a quite emphatic relationship to possible praxis as well**" (pg. 35)
 - "a principle or proposition, as long as it is merely a beginning, as long as it is merely abstract, as Hegel would say, is also actually false. And the 'abstract' in Hegel does not mean quite the same thing as the concept of 'abstractness' in our ordinary mode of thinking. What is 'abstract' for Hegel is not simply the universal as such but, rather, what is isolated, the particular determination insofar as it has been detached, abstracted in the literal sense of the term, from the whole in which it belongs. And the movement of thought itself, as a movement towards the whole, is in a Hegelian sense a

movement towards the 'concrete', understood in the sense of what has 'grown together', just as one of the determinations of truth for Hegel is that the truth is indeed essentially concrete. In this connection, therefore, the abstract is the merely particular, that which remains merely isolated, and the 'beginning' is false precisely because it is abstract, because it is isolated, because it has not yet passed over into the whole, or because it has not yet 'come to itself'. Thus the relation between the development or execution of the task and its simple beginning is not like that between the final image and what appeared on the drawing board in the form of a pre-delineated schema. **We are talking rather of the very process in which truth emerges for itself.** These are the things which I wanted to get over to you today by way of introduction to the question of dialectic" (pg. 36)

- Lecture 5 (pg. 37)
 - "In our last session we made an initial attempt to grasp the concept of dialectical negation rather more closely, that is, to explicate the notion of dialectical contradiction. From what we have said, **I believe that it is now already possible to dispel one of the most common and vulgar conceptions regarding the dialectic - the idea that dialectic amounts to an egregious intellectualization of experience and thereby also to a dubiously harmonious understanding of the world**" (pg. 37)
 - "For the Hegelian philosophy in particular, by virtue of its dialectical character - that is, through its recognition of the moment of negativity - is opposed to the idea that everything can simply be entirely construed or constructed by *ratio* in a seamless and unbroken fashion. We could express this in a very pointed way, and say that this philosophy is indeed an attempt to construe or construct reality, but precisely not as a seamless process. It attempts to do so in the breaks and fractures, and by virtue of the breaks and fractures harboured within reality itself" (pg. 38)
 - "The negative, as I pointed out last time, is not some kind of supplement to the positive claims of thought, something counterposed to thought merely from the outside. Thus **the dialectical antithesis, the dialectical counter-thesis, is not something posited externally in opposition to the initial thesis**, something which thought must also address. **Rather, the essence of the dialectical process lies in the way that the antithesis is derived from the thesis itself**, in the way that what is comes to be grasped as both identical and non-identical with itself. It is precisely because this moment of negation is harboured in the specific thesis itself rather than counterposed to it from without, and precisely because in order to grasp these moments properly at all we must not reduce or simplify things in advance, that the dialectic acquires that seriousness which I talked about in the last session. Perhaps we could also capture this seriousness by saying that dialectical thinking is a form of thinking which does not define or determine the particular by reducing it to its class or type, by subsuming the particular beneath ever more inclusive concepts. **Dialectical thinking is thus an attempt to grasp the particular not by resorting to classification but rather by disclosing its own specific character, by trying to break it open, as it were, and thus reveal the opposition between particular and universal in the object of thought in each case.** But subjective reasoning, and thus the supposedly all-governing rationality, is thereby also simultaneously exposed to its own opposite through the power of what is, of the particular which cannot be exhausted without remainder, of what is other, of what can properly be brought to consciousness not by *ratiocinatio* - i.e., not by mere processes of inference - but only by attending or 'looking on'. In this sense, therefore, **dialectical thinking is not actually a rationalistic form of thought, insofar as it is critically directed both against the opaque and unarticulated and against the limitations of every individual rational positing**" (pg. 38-39)
 - "on the one side we have rational thought in the usual sense, which was rather derogatively described by Hegel as the 'philosophy of reflection', a mode of thought which appeals exclusively to the usual logical forms - definition, classification, inference, specific conceptual articulations and distinctions, and all such features - and accepts nothing as genuine knowledge which is not couched and developed in these forms. And on the other side we have all those philosophies which are commonly and rather crudely characterized as irrationalist in character, the last major and significant representative of which was surely the philosophy of Henri Bergson. These philosophies basically defend a standpoint which Schelling was the first to formulate, claiming that the merely finite knowledge produced by 'the understanding', to express this in the language of German Idealism, does indeed remain merely external to its objects and reveals little of the actual life of reality. True knowledge, by contrast, is therefore one which sees the matter in question from within, as it were, instead of merely struggling to grasp and order it from without" (pg. 39)
 - "...Hegel furnishes a most emphatic critique of all merely mechanical or classificatory thought..." (pg. 39)
 - "**to think dialectically is not somehow to think in a non-logical way, or somehow to neglect the laws of logic. Rather, to think dialectically is to allow particular determinations to point beyond themselves whenever they come into contradiction with themselves, is thus to render them 'fluid' through the application of logical categories**" (pg. 40)
 - "[Irrationalism thus reminds us] that, while human beings have been able to escape the blind compulsion of nature only by means of rationality, by means of the thought which dominates nature, and would sink back into barbarism if they were to renounce this rationality, it is equally true that the process of the progressive rationalization of the world has also represented a process of progressive reification - just as the reification of the world, the petrification of the world as an objectivity which is alien to human beings, on the one hand, and the growth of subjectivity, on the other, are not simply opposed to one another, are not simply contradictory, but are mutually correlated so that **the more subjectivity there is in the world, the more reification there is as well**, and it is precisely to this that irrationalism responds" (pg. 41)
 - "The conclusion which Hegel draws from the alternative here is not to pit the alleged powers of the irrational against the powers of the rational, as people tend to do today within the dismal administrative intellectual regimes of the present, which strive to bring everything, even the supposedly irrational, under conceptual bureaucratic categories, and thus neatly separate the class of rationality from that of irrationality. This wretched response is precisely what Hegel disdained, and he attempted instead to pursue what strikes me as the only possible path to take: **by means of consciousness itself, by means of developed logical insight, or, if you wish, by means of enlightenment, to call enlightenment itself by its proper name, to expose in enlightenment itself those moments of reification, alienation, and objectification by rational means, moments which can otherwise be exposed only in an external and therefore powerless fashion.** The task, in other words, is to take up the moment of irrationality into thought or *ratio* itself, as its own immanently contradictory element, rather than just playing this off against thought in an external way as an alternative 'worldview'. Or you could also put it this way: **to comprehend for its own part the irrationality which eludes reason itself**, and also, precisely through reason, to extend the critique of reason far beyond that attempted by Kant; to show that **reason, insofar as it necessarily entangles itself in contradictions, repeatedly fails to do justice to what is not identical with itself, with what is not itself reason**, and thus repeatedly miscarries. This is the very situation in which dialectical thought finds itself in relation to the controversy over rationalism, and it strikes me as symptomatic of the appalling vulgarization of dialectics today that someone like Lukács, who really ought to know better, has written a book entitled The Destruction of Reason, which should never have seen the light of day" (pg. 42) *Adorno comments on pg. 41 that this "is nothing but the dialectic of the process of enlightenment itself"
 - "[there's another] misunderstanding which complains that philosophy intellectualizes the entire world when it employs the means of reason..." (pg. 43)
 - "perhaps I can clarify my own attempts at dialectical thinking in the following way. For **the essential task here, as I see it, is not to logicize language, as the positivists want to do, but rather to bring logic to speak** - and this precisely captures Hegel's intention, namely that happiness and suffering may be revealed as an immanent condition, as an immanent content of thought itself, that thought and life alike may be redefined and reinterpreted, that this task be undertaken with all possible rigour and seriousness. And it is of course precisely this aspect which is completely misunderstood as mere intellectualism in the standard hostility to dialectical thought" (pg. 44)

- "the essence of dialectic lies precisely in this: that it tries by means of thought itself to undo that separation of spheres which is pre-eminently reflected in the common or garden cliché of the three faculties of thinking, feeling and willing. And the celebrated notion of the unity of theory and praxis itself is only the highest expression of this attempted revocation, if you like, which cannot of course imply a mere restitution or restoration of what was once single and undivided. It points, rather, to an immanent process of reunification, in and through separation, of what has been divided" (pg. 44)
 - ◆ "The Hegelian philosophy - which indeed essentially addresses, like all dialectic, the way in which subject and object, the subjective and the objective, are also separated from one another - undertakes specifically to expose and explore this difference between being in itself and being for itself, although there are two paths it can take in this regard" (pg. 45)
 - ◇ "This contrast between being in itself and being for itself is intended with such seriousness that we can already recognize the really decisive objective motif, the objective dimension, at work here, the thought that human beings - and Hegelian philosophy is in its origins a humanistic philosophy - are not identical with themselves in the function which they objectively fulfil in society, and that their social role, to use a modern expression, or their being in itself diverges from the consciousness which they have of themselves, or their being for itself. And **this disparity, this non-identity between human beings and their own world**, which is indeed by no means yet their own, **is itself the ground of that diremption, that suffering, that negativity** which, as I have already suggested to you, **can only be overcome through the labour, the patience, the seriousness, the exertion of the concept**" (pg. 45-46)
- "I doubt if you will now be that surprised if I challenge so much of your preconceived image of Hegel, and perhaps even shock some of you, when I say that **the celebrated triadic schema of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis actually plays nothing like the role in Hegel's philosophy which it is commonly believed to do**. And I would be more than happy if I could succeed here, from a whole variety of angles, in awakening a concept of dialectic which is liberated from the automatic responses typically encouraged in the context of examination questions. Of course, there is also something in all that, but as long as you imagine that we must have a thesis, a claim, a proposition, which we then externally confront with the opposite, before finally combining them both in a similar more or less external fashion, as long as you think in this way, then you will actually entertain nothing but the most external conception of dialectic. The seriousness of the dialectic springs precisely from the fact that it is not some such external intellectual game of juggling contradictions. For the contradiction itself springs from the thesis itself, and shows itself as such only because the speculative proposition itself is always at once true and false. And indeed Hegel himself mounted the most vigorous criticism of this standard manipulation of the concept of dialectic in terms of this triadic schema. The most important thing for you here is to learn what it really means to confront reality in a dialectical spirit, rather than in asking mechanically after the relevant thesis, antithesis, and synthesis in every possible context. And I should also confess right now that I always find the word 'synthesis' profoundly suspect, and, if I understand you rightly, I feel that most of you will also experience a certain sense of horror at the concept of synthesis" (pg. 46)
 - **think quantum mechanics of 'sphere eversion'* <https://www.wmbriggs.com/post/27477/>
<https://www.discretization.de/gallery/model/34/>
 - "Under no circumstances, therefore, must dialectical thought even tempt us into forcing the objects of experience into such a schema. For **to think dialectically is precisely to take individual objects as they are, to do so genuinely rather than in some limiting way; not to limit them or subsume them under their next highest concept, but to try and do justice to the life that prevails in the individual thing itself, that prevails in the individual concept itself**, the life that was indeed regarded by Hegel as something contradictory, as something antagonistic in character. Hegel had already clearly recognized the danger that dialectic can degenerate into a mechanical device, although this is often what he has himself been accused of encouraging, and anyone who takes the actual trouble to study Hegel's major works, and especially the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, will find how little of this mechanical aspect is to be found there" (pg. 47)
 - "We could also express this by saying that **dialectic has here forgotten what it intrinsically and essentially is**. In other words, **it has ceased here to be a critical theory and has turned into a merely mechanical process** of subsumption. No form of thinking is immune to this. Even the principle of dialectic, opposed as it is to mechanical thinking, can revert to a conceptual mechanism once it is no longer genuinely dialectical - that is, once it forfeits intimate contact with its object and ceases to respond carefully and closely to that object. In short, nothing guarantees that dialectic itself cannot in turn become ideology" (pg. 48)
- Lecture 6 (pg. 49)
 - "in our last session we discussed the problem of the supposed intellectualism of the dialectic..." (pg. 49)
 - "we must remember what dialectical theory itself has already insisted upon, namely that all propositions in *abstracto*, such as 'the truth consists in thesis, antithesis, and synthesis', possess no truth unless and until they are unfolded and developed. I would go further and claim we commit no great sin against the spirit of dialectic if we say that, **as soon as such concepts are rigidly fixed, as soon as they are turned into a sort of manual for thinking dialectically, they become the opposite of what Hegel intended them to be**" (pg. 49)
 - "and I would like to add a second formulation which may serve as a warning light against a particularly dubious use of dialectic: when this triadic schema [e.g., thesis, antithesis, and synthesis] is manipulated to produce the opposite of truth" (pg. 50)
 - "The thought here, therefore, is that even a method which is recognized in *abstracto* as the most advanced method of thought only produces falsehood when it is mechanically applied, that is, if the facts are simply subsumed under the method, if our experience or insight into the facts themselves fails to interrupt this subsumptive procedure. Paradoxically, we could say that **the moment that dialectic becomes a kind of device, or a recipe, when it is manipulated as a method, then it is inevitably converted into untruth**, and indeed in the strictly dialectical sense that it thereby comes into contradiction with its own concept. For **to think dialectically is precisely to think through rupture, to think in such a way that the concept is emphatically brought to criticize itself in terms of what it attempts to cover**, while the merely factual is measured in turn against its own concept. And the moment we retreat from this approach, when we no longer undertake what is described in another passage as 'the labour and the exertion of the concept!', the moment we believe we have the method securely at our disposal, then the method has already been falsified and distorted" (pg. 50)
 - ◆ "It is one of the challenges of dialectical thought, and not perhaps the least, that in thinking dialectically we must avoid thinking like a certain kind of Kantian schoolmaster..." (pg. 51)
 - ◇ "Hegel vigorously rejected precisely this idea of method, where we can just carry on blindly and automatically, as it were, instead of undertaking the labour of thought itself at each and every moment" (pg. 51)
 - ▶ **the only retort I have with this expectation is that such would be exhausting - to constantly think about everything. And, in fact, Bertrand Russell would argue against this (cf. J. Dewey, Types of Thinking, pg. 174 - "when the life of the mind becomes too critical of the life of instinct, we become skeptics; we distrust the world; we lose the enthusiasm which only instinct can generate, become coldly critical and detached, and eventually withdraw from the world of action")*
 - ◇ "it is certainly most important, as a thinking individual, resolutely to resist any mechanical application of one's own categories - in other words, to reflect constantly upon these categories, to examine whether they are still indeed appropriate to the things which are being thought under them" (pg. 51)
 - "[Hegel] strives to grasp [the] specific phenomenon itself, attempts to derive even [its] aberration of thought, [its] reification and rigidification of

- thought, from out of the living process of thought itself. And this is entirely characteristic of dialectical thought generally, for **the vital nerve of the dialectic is precisely to resolve all that is rigid, reified, ossified**. But it does so not by simply confronting all that with what is allegedly vital and immediate but, rather, by making use of what has become hardened, recognizing what is sedimented here, the congealed life and labour as it were. Thus it only overcomes what has become rigid and ossified by allowing it to move by virtue of its own power, of the life that has been precipitated in the things and concepts which confront us in an alienated form" (pg. 51)
- **this all sounds quite similar to Heidegger's 'letting' as the essence of truth.*
 - "Hegel is saying something extremely profound here, namely that **thought itself must assume such a specific objective form of presentation if it is to relinquish all merely arbitrary claims and contingent expressions of subjectivity, but precisely in assuming this kind of universality, this determinate conceptual form, it also inevitably courts the danger of becoming a recipe, of being reified and misused**" (pg. 53)
 - "In other words, the misuse which Hegel warns us about - the superficial application of the triadic schema - is by no means external to thought, for it is produced precisely when thought itself does what it must if it is to rise above the merely arbitrary *hic et nunc*, if it is to become an objective truth. In other words, **the untruth that arises from such rigidification is inseparable from the objectivation which belongs to truth itself**. We cannot have one without having the other - this is one of the most important dialectical principles there is. Thus **one cannot acknowledge the power, the objectivity, the binding character of truth, without thereby constantly exposing thought to the danger of simply becoming independent as such, of forcing itself externally upon the matter itself, of being utilized in a blunt and mechanical fashion**. In this warning against the mechanical use of dialectic you have an exemplary case of dialectical thinking itself, for the vital nerve of dialectic can be recognized right here: **truth and untruth are not external to one another, are not simply opposed to one another as an abstract antithesis**; rather, the passage into untruth inhabits truth itself, as its fate, as its curse, as the mark of the context of guilt in which it stands; and likewise the path which truth itself traverses - **and truth is indeed a process** - is solely a path through untruth. You can see, therefore, how dialectical thought responds even to such a warning against its own misuse" (pg. 53)
 - **this seems a necessary underpinning to whatever criticism Adorno may bring against ideology (i.e., the mechanical application of...).*
 - "This warning against the misuse of the triadic schema involves an insight which perhaps should not be forgotten as another fundamental insight of dialectical thought. This is the idea - which just gives a slightly different twist to what we have been saying - that **there is no thought which cannot also become false as soon as we isolate it**, and abstractness for Hegel is always a matter of isolating something and detaching it from the context of the whole" (pg. 53)
 - ◆ **this means to say the all 'truth' is 'truth to an extent'.*
 - **"there is not truth whatsoever, not even the truest theory or even the theory of dialectic itself, which cannot also immediately become untrue if it is torn from its context**, and especially if it is made to serve particular interests" (pg. 53-54)
 - **"There is nothing in the world, not the highest creations of philosophy or even the highest creations of art, which cannot be misused by clinging to them in isolation, and thereby holding people back from other things, deceiving people about other possibilities, generating false and untrue satisfactions, or creating spurious satisfactions**. And if you expect me to suggest a practical application of dialectic here it would be precisely this: dialectical thought is extraordinarily mistrustful of any attempt to isolate and thus misuse thought. **If any particular aspect of knowledge, any finite instance of knowledge** - and any specific knowledge regarding the whole is always a particular instance of knowledge - **acts as if it were the whole, is posited as absolute, it can readily enter the service of untruth and become an ideology**" (pg. 54)
 - "...dialectic is not actually method in the traditional sense" (pg. 54)
 - "What I mean is that the dialectic is not a mere procedure through which mind firmly secures its objective character. For **the movement of dialectic is always also supposed to be at once a movement of the matter itself and a movement of thought**. But if that is so, if the dialectical movement is a movement of the matter itself and can be accomplished by reference to the matter itself, then it springs from this that any form of dialectical reflection which is purely methodological - i.e., is externally foisted upon things - already violates the character of dialectic" (pg. 54)
 - "For the dialectical movement does not arise by taking an initial proposition and externally supplementing it with the opposed proposition. It arises when the contradictory moment is discovered in the proposition originally expressed, when it is shown that the proposition which initially presents itself to you in a fixed and congealed form is a field of internal tension, exhibits a particular kind of life within itself, so that **the task of philosophy is in a sense to reconstruct this life within the original proposition**" (pg. 55)
 - "the very essence of dialectical thought lies in the contrast between this kind of thinking, as I have here been describing it to you, and the purely abstract kind of thinking preoccupied with logical extension of its concepts, which posits oppositions externally and then regards the common feature abstracted from both terms of the opposition as the result" (pg. 55)
 - "it is certainly not the task of thought to try and bring everything that exists under one common denominator" (pg. 56)
 - **"There is a paradoxical relationship there**. If theory imagines that it has the whole within its grasp, that it is itself the key by which to explain everything, it has already fallen victim to the worst kind of hubris. Yet if thought entirely lacks this theoretical moment, this aspect of unification and objectivation, then we are basically no longer talking about knowledge at all, and we have effectively resigned ourselves simply to registering a more or less external, disparate and disorganized multiplicity of data. And it is precisely the need to work against this, without doing too much violence to the things themselves, which underlies the specifically dialectical approach" (pg. 57)
 - **"...the dialectic actually consists solely in the relation of concepts to one another..."** (pg. 57)
 - "The category of contradiction, or the origin of the modern doctrine of dialectic, derives in fact from the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and, if you wish to understand more fully the theme of these lectures which we have broached but not completely developed today, you would do well to take a closer look at what Kant calls 'the transcendental dialectic', either in the original itself or by means of one of the reliable secondary discussions of this text. The basic thought here is that, as soon as we try and extend the fundamental concepts of our reason, what are called our categories, beyond the possibilities of our experience, beyond the possibilities of sensible intuition, or in other words when we try and formulate infinite judgements, then we inevitably run the danger of positing mutually contradictory judgements each of which seems to be equally convincing" (pg. 58)
 - "Kant thus introduced the idea of contradictoriness into the context of knowledge in a new and indeed particularly emphatic way, for he argued that human reason inevitably becomes entangled in such contradictions" (pg. 58)

▪ Lecture 7 (pg. 60)

 - "In the last session we began to address the objection which has been raised against Hegelian philosophy from fairly early on, and which is indeed a radical one. It is this: Why does this philosophy merely seem to acknowledge contradiction rather than simple difference?" (pg. 60)
 - **"[the] core of the Hegelian philosophy...is indeed the principle of negation, or the principle of contradiction"** (pg. 61)
 - "for Kant, 'the dialectic' represents what would be called the 'negative' side of transcendental logic" (pg. 62)
 - "the central concept of Hegelian philosophy which distinguishes [itself] from that of Kant...is one where this moment of self-reflecting consciousness has become thematic, has come to self-consciousness" (pg. 64)
 - "thus here, in the attempted analysis of knowledge itself, we already come upon what is ultimately the principal object of this dialectic itself, namely the distinction of subject and object which is already implicit in the peculiar internal doubling of reflection. For on the one side here you have thought as object, that which is being analysed and examined, as Kant says, while on the other hand you have thought as subject, the thinking which examines itself - or, if you like, the transcendental principle itself, the principle of the synthesis of apperception, the synthetic

- principle itself. And these two sides are thus intrinsically bound up with one another. It is the entirely new and central role accorded to the concept of reflection which constitutes the organ of truth in this philosophy, and we shall see that this moment of reflection - and this is the answer to the question we have asked ourselves here - that this principle of self-knowing reflection is actually one with the principle of negation. **The thinking of thinking...the thinking of thinking itself in Hegel is actually nothing other than the fully developed principle of negativity**" (pg. 64-65)
- "the limit must be at once posited and transcended" (pg. 67)
 - ◆ *I. McMullin, in *Time and the Shared World*, says "The original meaning of transcendere, Heidegger claims, "signifies literally to step over, pass over, go through, and occasionally to surpass." Transcendence is the stepping over or beyond the "borders" of one's internal life to be with or at the thing toward which it is directed: "The transcendens, the transcendent, is that which oversteps as such and not that toward which I step over" (BPP 299). It is a fundamental openness to that which lies outside or beyond the immanent sphere of subjectivity—an openness that is not some kind of occasional activity of the self, but its very essence: "Dasein does not exist at first in some mysterious way so as then to accomplish the step beyond itself to others or to extant things. Existence, instead, always already means to step beyond or, better, having stepped beyond...The transcendence, the over-and-out-beyond of the Dasein makes it possible for the Dasein to comport itself to beings, whether to extant things, to others, or to itself, as beings" (BPP 300)" (pg. 16) https://www.binseelsnotes.com/files/ugd/d7b063_95afc4f64e944874a0ea434bfcf4ab40.pdf
 - **"every particular instance of knowledge becomes knowledge only through and by means of contradiction"** (pg. 67)
 - "...this negative principle, this principle of contradiction, is actually derived from the Kantian doctrine of antinomies, as Hegel presents it" (pg. 67)
 - "We could say that **dialectic, insofar as it is a doctrine of contradiction, critiques the simple logical coherence of the world**, for contradiction or absence of contradiction, which are of course correlative concepts, is precisely the logical criterion here" (pg. 70)
 - "here we must confront the paradox that this divergence between thought and the world is in turn necessarily mediated through thought. Thought itself must therefore strive to grasp precisely what is not thought. And this paradox - that it must try and do what it cannot do - reveals itself in every particular judgement that thought makes, and refers that judgement to the whole, the connected totality, into which thought in its contradictory character must precisely unfold. We say in conclusion, therefore, that the Hegelian idea of contradiction follows from the emphatic concept of truth itself" (pg. 70)
 - Lecture 7 (pg. 71)
 - "the dialectic is not simply concerned with specific differences...the dialectic is pre-eminently concerned with contradiction" (pg. 71)
 - "it is the mark of a world wretchedly entangled in a context of guilt that whatever is in some sense unacceptably heterogeneous cannot be tolerated within this world. This intolerance of the heterogeneous is the ultimate mark of every totalitarian mentality..." (pg. 71)
 - **"the dialectic is the negative expression of a certain condition**, a thinking which answers to a reality where contradiction has taken the place of the happiness promised by difference - **a thinking which strives from within itself, from within its own principle, to bring about its own demise**" (pg. 71)
 - **"the dialectic is essentially and necessarily critical**, although it becomes false the instant that it sets itself up as a kind of positive philosophy, or so-called worldview, and claims to constitute an immediate appearance of truth itself" (pg. 72)
 - "In response to the question why the dialectic is concerned with contradiction rather than simply with difference, I basically claimed that this is precisely how **thought is capable of acknowledging its moment of non-identity, of acknowledging what is not the same as thought, without thereby abandoning itself** to arbitrariness of what merely is - precisely how thought simultaneously retains the power to construe this dimension of the non-identical, to think that which for its own part is not actually the same as thought" (pg. 72)
 - "What is usually described as 'logic' is indeed nothing other than the doctrine of absolute identity, and the heart of logic, the heart of all logical rules, is the idea that the signs or concepts introduced in the domain of logic are maintained precisely as identical with themselves. Logic is thus nothing but the fully explicated theory of the rules which arise from absolute identity exactly as this is preserved in logic at the expense of any content whatsoever, a content which - as Hegel has taught us - is always not simply included within these forms but also comes into a certain opposition to them precisely because the content is not itself form. One could thus almost construe the identity principle of logic entirely in these terms" (pg. 72)
 - **"the fundamental taboo erected by the discipline of logic is the principle of contradiction**, namely the command...that, of two mutually contradictory propositions, only one can be true and that the laws of thought are violated wherever that is not the case" (pg. 72-73)
 - **"The dialectic is a critique of the apparent logical character of the world**, of its immediate identity with our conceptuality, and that is precisely why it makes the principle of contradiction itself, which is repudiated by logic..." (pg. 73)
 - "the origin of the dialectic, which I initially developed for you from the side of thought, of form, of the subject, can just as well be unfolded from the side of the objective as well - as Hegel has also shown in considerable detail" (pg. 73)
 - **"the world - and by 'world' here I mean the one which the process of experience in Hegel is substantially concerned with, namely the social and cultural or mediated world - is indeed an internally contradictory world, but is also a system**. Thus the highly distinctive character of Hegelian philosophy and the dialectic in general lies in the way it undertakes to construe a certain impressive unity while seeking this very unity in the moment of dichotomy, that is, in the moment of contradiction" (pg. 74)
 - "We can also formulate it in this way: the world is construed as a unity, produced as a socialized totality which is internally unified down to its ultimate particular features, through the very principle by which it is also divided. And it is precisely here that the materialist version of the dialectic is extraordinarily close to the idealist version, insofar as the former attempted to grasp and develop that unified but internally contradictory principle in objective terms precisely as the principle of exchange which indeed harbours both the antagonistic and the internally unified character of a world governed by the process of exchange" (pg. 74)
 - **"dialectic [is] an attempt not merely to develop the logic of thought in its relation to objectivity but also, at the same time, to develop the logic of objectivity itself**, and indeed as a logic which is not merely foisted on objectivity from the side of the subject but as one that belongs to the matter itself" (pg. 75)
 - "I think that the experience with which Hegel is concerned here - to formulate this more precisely than I have until now - is the experience that the order of the world which we generally regard as the mere product of our concepts, as imposed by a subjective but coherent contribution of our own upon a more or less chaotic sensuous manifold in the Kantian sense, that this conceptual order is already harboured in the matter itself. Now you might reply that this is itself surely the most extreme form of idealism, a subjective idealism which essentially contains the whole of reality, where reality is the product of the subject. So it is no wonder if in turn it finds nothing in the object but what it has already placed in the object through the a priori features which provide the transcendental conditions of knowledge. But that is not at all what I have in mind here. And it is very important, if you are to understand the specific character of the dialectic, that you grasp the difference which I am particularly interested in at this point. For **what we are concerned with here are the conceptual elements involved in the constitution of reality**, and which belong to a quite different level, to a quite different dimension, than the conceptual elements of the scientific order that we confer upon things. **What we are basically talking about here** - and this is a moment which is also involved in the materialist dialectic, even though,

- remarkably enough, it has never really been theoretically reflected upon as such - **is the way there is actually already something conceptual in the fundamental dynamic of our existence, in the fundamental social dynamic of our existence, something which you might say has much less to do with knowledge than with the course of social processes themselves**" (pg. 76-77)
- "I believe that the decisive experience of Hegel is precisely the insight that the world which we know is not, as the idealist philosophy would have us believe, something chaotic which we ourselves first endow with some kind of form, and that the conceptual forms in turn, namely as a sediment of the history of mankind, are already contained in the reality we are attempting to know. **But this presupposes that we grasp reality**, as this is understood by philosophy, **as something that is itself essentially marked or determined by human beings**. It is determined not in the sense of the object of knowledge as abstractly and purely scientifically constituted by the transcendental subject but, rather, in the practical sense that **the world philosophy undertakes to know is a world essentially mediated through human labour**. The concept of spontaneity, of the generation of the original unity of apperception, which plays a central role in all idealist philosophy after the *Critique of Pure Reason*, in Hegel already assumes the form that the world itself, the world in which human beings live, is actually a world of labour, and that this moment of labour cannot be ignored, so that there is actually no 'nature' which fails to bear, even if it be merely negatively, the trace of human labour. And if you now ask for an interpretation of **the Hegelian concept of mediation in terms of experience**, a concept that I would certainly like to talk to you about today, we could say that **what Hegel means by 'mediation'**, what he means by the claim that there is nothing under the heavens which is not mediated, already signifies in Hegel that **there is actually nothing human which is not determinately marked by the moment of human labour**" (pg. 77-78)
 - "When I speak of 'experience' here, you should not think of it in terms of a narrowly defined sensuous experience, as this is presented in the so-called empiricist philosophers. For when Hegel speaks of experience he means something like the experience of consciousness, namely the way in which human beings who are aware of their thought, aware of the continuity of their life as a whole and of reality, also experience this reality as a whole..." (pg. 81)
 - "...we may realize the sovereign freedom which refrains from violently imposing aspects of our own upon this reality, which opens itself up to this reality, which traces and responds to the object as it were. **This kind of responsiveness, of productive passivity or spontaneous receptivity, is really what the concept of experience**, and in particular the concept of the experience of consciousness, means in Hegel as a specific attitude of thought" (pg. 81)
 - "**dialectical philosophy is the means of expressing - in concepts, in the medium of the concept - the coercive and restrictive character which reality itself possesses**. We could really say of the dialectic that it 'outdoes the rogue' here.' In other words, the coercive construction which dialectical philosophy seems to expect from us is actually none other than the objective compulsion which a fatefully interlinked world exercises upon us" (pg. 78)
 - "**the dialectic is reproached for revealing the compulsive character of the world, while the compulsive character itself is thereby ideologically protected**" (pg. 79)
 - "In this regard dialectical philosophy is infinitely more realistic, is infinitely less guilty of spinning out some merely conceptual web, than those much more innocuous theories which proceed as if the world did not in itself possess a specific character and thereby precisely overlook what is decisive here, namely the compulsion which the world itself exercises upon us." (pg. 79)
 - "**the dialectic must be understood as a critical concept**" (pg. 80)
 - "Hegel himself...with a tremendous clarity and sobriety...argued in several famous passages in the *Philosophy of Right* that civil society, through its very own principle, necessarily created more poverty even as it created more wealth" (pg. 80)
 - ◆ "Hegel introduced the state as a sort of umpire which is meant to bring some order to what would otherwise fall apart through the growth of internal oppositions in accordance with the very dialectic he has identified" (pg. 80)
 - ◇ "**bourgeois or civil society**, insofar as it tries to maintain itself as such under its own conditions, **is ultimately driven in the final phase of its development to generate organizational forms of a statist or authoritarian kind**, forms which no longer trust to the immanent play of economic forces but now attempt to stem this dynamic in a coercive fashion and return society to the stage of simple self-reproduction" (pg. 80)
 - "the dialectic [is] a deductive structure which captures something to which our life is indeed subjected. But then again the dialectic is not simply a seamless or immediately deductive structure: it does not operate in terms of pure identity, and it does not try to derive everything seamlessly from a single principle or proposition. And precisely because it does not proceed in this way the central function of contradiction in the dialectic is understood from the perspective of the matter itself. In other words, in unfolding the matter in question as one that is internally contradictory, it also unfolds it as something that is dirempted, as something that is not identical with itself, and in this sense it is specifically a critical theory. Thus the dialectic also implies that the true philosophical concept must involve both the deductive element and the element of experience" (pg. 81)
 - Lecture 9 (pg. 82)
 - "it is evident that thought or the process of knowing only really represents genuine knowing where it involves more than the mere consciousness of itself - that is, where it concerns itself with something other than itself, where it does not content itself with mere tautology. **If we want to know something, then...we want to know something, and not just stay with the act of knowing**. In other words, we want to advance beyond the domain of our thought. Yet, on the other hand, precisely in wanting to know this something, the latter itself also becomes a moment of our thinking, becomes itself knowledge, and also becomes itself mind or spirit. To know or to cognize something always resembles a process where something other or non-identical which confronts us is taken up into our own consciousness, is appropriated in a certain sense or made into something of our own. And this paradox - that **knowing means translating something into identity, while yet relating to something which is non-identical**, since otherwise there would be no process of knowing at all - this otherwise irresolvable paradox is precisely what calls for the labour of the concept for that process of both self-unfolding truth and self-unfolding thought which we understand by the name of 'dialectic'" (pg. 82-83)
 - "I believe that I can justify my approach here in taking the two essential types of dialectic to be, firstly, the idealist dialectic, as this was developed and defended above all by Hegel, although the thought of Fichte and Schelling, and particularly that of Fichte, already exhibit strongly dialectical features; and, secondly, the materialist dialectic, which, in terms of its origin, is essentially connected with the name of Marx" (pg. 83)
 - "for on the one side you find a form of thought, **one type of dialectic where, of the two moments which essentially define the dialectic, the moment of identity is the predominant one**, where every particular moment of identity is indeed challenged, where therefore, in other words, thought expressly brings out the moment of non-identity within identity in all of its own particular moments, but where a certain reconciliation is nonetheless effected as a whole. It is clear without more ado that **this type of dialectic can only be the idealist dialectic, for the primacy of thought over being is indeed affirmed here**. It is thus a kind of thought in which, in spite of all the non-identity in the particular moments, non-identity is ultimately turned into something identical within the whole. And since the dialectic always begins with reflection upon the knowing faculty itself, namely mind or spirit, we find that spirit - as the principle with which everything is ultimately posited as identical - becomes in this form of thought the dominant principle after all" (pg. 83-84) *Adorno is thus saying 'being' (is) non-identity (i.e., that which is otherwise than the 'knowing faculty' itself)
 - "the Hegelian dialectic as a whole, and regarded from a rather considerable distance, is indeed emphatically a philosophy of spirit - or, more than this, a metaphysics of spirit. In this dialectic, spirit is the Absolute. Everything that is ultimately reveals itself after all as a

- specific determination of spirit" (pg. 84)
- ◆ "it is clear that, in a philosophical project such as Hegel's - in which the non-identical should be fully acknowledged, yet also ultimately be entirely resolved or 'sublated' in the principle of identity which is 'absolute spirit' - that in such a form of thought the dimension of the non-identical, namely everything in our experience which is not actually spirit, is not taken with complete seriousness after all" (pg. 84)
 - "Now for the materialist dialectic, in contrast...that dialectical tendency to make the moment of non-identity, of contradiction, into the decisive factor does not imply that we must assert some final or conclusive identity of thought and being in the world as it is, that is, in the object of knowledge. You can also express this by saying that, in the Marxian dialectic, the experience which effectively shaped it and stands at the centre of attention...is this: the world with which are concerned, the world with which humanity in general has been concerned to this very day, is an internally contradictory world, and that identity which the speculative concept in Hegel already claims in a sense to have at its disposal, and which is sought in the totality of the system, is something which would first have to be established, and the establishment of a form of reality free of contradiction is essentially a matter for human praxis rather than a matter for philosophy" (pg. 85)
 - "I believe that you can clearly see, from these two characteristics of the dialectic, how both these types of thought spring from the essence of dialectic itself." (pg. 85)
 - "...if the idealist dialectic finds itself in extraordinary difficulties in fundamentally emphasizing the non-identical while nonetheless affirming absolute identity as a whole, the concept of a materialist dialectic is also beset with the greatest and most serious difficulties, difficulties which belong in the same domain as I have just been presenting to you. If primacy is actually ascribed to the non-identical, namely to that which is not mind or spirit, in our knowledge of the world, then in a sense it is also extraordinarily difficult to grasp just how we are to arrive at a dialectic at all. For the dialectical principle itself, the principle of negation or reflection, is necessarily for its part a spiritual or intellectual principle" (pg. 85)
 - "the concept of a materialist dialectic leads to that difficulty which is bound up with the simplest meaning of the concept of 'dialectic', namely the difficulty that a conception of the world which essentially involves a movement of concepts, a *dialegesthai*, a thorough explication of intellectual forms, is now in a sense hypostasized, as if it thus had nothing to do with such a thing" (pg. 86)
 - "we see how the materialist dialectic could begin to ossify into the kind of dogma or state religion which inevitably emerges when the thought no longer confronts its own immanent difficulties with full seriousness" (pg. 86)
 - ◆ "the materialist dialectic must constantly and under all circumstances acknowledge that the individual findings on which it is based are determined by the whole, that they are mediated by the totality of society. Thus it is that the individual experiences, however startling and however tangible they may be, never suffice in themselves if we wish to draw social conclusions of a theoretical kind, conclusions which concern the theory of society itself" (pg. 89)
 - "we no longer even make the effort to provide an explanation of social phenomena through their mediation by the totality but rather accuse the opposing view, namely the materialist theory, of real naivety in wanting to explain the world by recourse to something like the desire for profit, or, as people love to say, to base material motives and considerations" (pg. 90)
 - "the dialectical conception of the relation between the whole and the parts is actually far more difficult than the very familiar claim that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, for while, on the one hand, **it is constantly demanded that the parts must be grasped from the perspective of the whole, and that the whole in turn must be grasped through the interplay of the parts, the dialectical conception also insists upon a relation of tension between these moments, between the whole and the parts, between the universal and the particular**. That is why the effort to bring these two moments together actually proves to be extraordinarily problematic and extraordinarily difficult" (pg. 87)
- Lecture 10 (pg. 92)
 - "In our last session I began to talk in more detail about the difficulties involved in the relationship of part and whole in the Hegelian philosophy, and about how these difficulties might be resolved. In this connection we discovered that **the principal difficulty is this: the particular cannot just be grasped as the particular; rather, the particular must always also be grasped from the perspective of the whole**; yet both logic and psychology in their current form claim that the whole is never adequately given, but only the parts" (pg. 92)
 - "I would like to raise the question whether the whole actually does come afterwards, whether our experience does indeed begin with the parts and then gradually rise towards the whole" (pg. 92)
 - "I am thinking about a much more comprehensive and authentically philosophical phenomenon, namely about how our experience is actually organized - that is, about how we actually come by knowledge in the first place" (pg. 93)
 - "it seems to me, as if the standard assumption of the logic of scientific investigation - that we first perceive parts, that we then order these parts according to similarities and differences, that we proceed to classify them and in this way arrive at a universal concept and finally a universal theory - is actually a construction on our part, one which is extraordinarily remote from the actual character of our knowledge or, simply put, from how we actually come to know anything" (pg. 93)
 - "science claims, of course, that it must be possible to transform this living experience, insofar as it is strictly valid, into scientific propositions. But there is also something extraordinarily problematic about this very transformation, and it has never actually been seriously undertaken..." (pg. 93)
 - "What I am claiming is precisely that in a certain sense...**we have more awareness of the system in which we live, that we possess a more direct experience in ourselves of the reality in which we are caught up, than we do of specific individual situations on the basis of which we might gradually ascend to a view or to a concept of the totality within which we live**. And the particular or individual aspect, on its side, is just as much a product of abstraction in relation to the totality of our experience as the whole - and we must critically insist on this as against Gestalt theory - is also, in turn, a product of abstraction in relation to the individual moments which it encompasses. There is no immediate unity between the two, since the relation in question is a process" (pg. 93)
 - "And the order which is pursued by science turns things upside down insofar as it would persuade us that the hierarchical classifications it produces, advancing from particular observations to universal concepts, is actually identical with the character of reality itself" (pg. 93-94)
 - "I am more aware of what kind of world I live in than I am of supposedly individual data. Above all, the moment of oppressiveness, of unfreedom, what contemporary sociology describes with such a neutral expression as 'social role', namely the orientation of the individual to some particular function - all of these, you may say, relatively abstract things manifest themselves to consciousness in an incomparably stronger fashion than, let us say, specific situations such as parliamentary procedures or the current business climate, or whatever other social situations we care to consider - the team situation, the family situation, and so on" (pg. 94)
 - "if we leave aside these genetic moments and focus upon relations within a fully developed society, that **what is actually immediate here, what we first of all perceive, are the general relations much more than the particular relations in which we are involved...**" (pg. 94)
 - ◆ "I believe that human experience generally organizes itself in such a way. Indeed, in this regard I am deeply convinced that the difference between the human being and the animal is not nearly as emphatic as idealist philosophy would have us believe in order to flatter our narcissism and encourage us to submit to the most unlimited moral demands" (pg. 94)
 - "I have said that we first effectively become aware of a certain pressure or oppressiveness, that we thereby become aware of the totality before we register more specific aspects, and that situations in this regard may be just as abstract as the whole" (pg. 95) **this is quite similar to Sartre's for-itself*

& concept of 'self'.

- "If this is so, in a certain rather tacit sense - in contrast to the organized approach of science - **we actually become aware of the whole before we become aware of what is more specific**, and if **what we describe as specific experience is itself already a product of reflection**, then we could find a formulation for the dialectical procedure, one which also serves to reveal a particularly dangerous moment of dialectical thought, and specifically of Hegel's thought. For we could say that **the task of dialectical thought is to restore the naivety, the kind of perception of the world that we enjoyed before we allowed ourselves to be stupefied by a wholly organized form of thinking; that the task of dialectic, therefore, is to overcome in and through reflection those moments of separation and objectification that have been posited by reflection.** I have just suggested that this is a dangerous thought, and indeed when I speak about this danger it is precisely Hegel that I have in mind. For in the work of Hegel - for whom this thought, as I have just expressed it, plays a very significant role - it assumes a particular form on account of his affirmative view of the world, that is, of his belief that spirit effectively wins through, that spirit is absolute and ultimately the only substantial reality. Thus by means of the dialectic the naivety which is more or less prior to reflection in the sense of the merely affirmative, in the sense of the mere acceptance of given relations, of given positive perspectives, of given religions, effectively comes to prevail - something which finds problematic expression in Hegel's claim that speculative philosophy makes common cause with religious belief against reflection. And this formulation can be found in these words in Hegel. But it is clear that, **if we renounce the fundamental conception of identity which prevails in Hegel**, as I showed you in our last session, **and replace it with the concept of an open or fractured dialectic, then that kind of demand falls away.** But this is surely not the least significant of the motivations behind the dialectic: that thought - in reflecting upon itself, in becoming aware of itself as a means of breaking up and dividing the content of experience, as a dominating moment of pre-formation - nonetheless attempts to dispel the guilt, or at least to prepare the way for this, which thought itself has actually produced" (pg. 95)
 - "...theory is really the attempt to explore that consciousness of the whole, which is always already there beforehand, and the ensuing specific individual forms of givenness, which are themselves mediated in turn through the whole, and to do so in such a way that they may enter into a certain concordance with one another" (pg. 96)
 - ◆ **In psychoanalysis, this process of mediating the whole to 'fit' in terms of the individual is called internalization.*
- "on the one hand, **dialectical thought must always try and measure up the data with which it is concerned against theory** - that is, it must not simply and naively accept them as they initially give themselves out to be but, rather, attempt to render them transparent with respect to that whole which is mediated through theory; on the other hand, **dialectical thought must equally keep theory open to those specific experiences by which it is nourished and sustained, and in this regard must equally avoid becoming something merely rigid and definitive**" (pg. 96) **Adorno mentions "the wretched concept of 'intuition'" (pg. 96)*
 - ...intuition is only really justified, to the extent that it is justified at all, precisely as a moment in the process of knowledge, not as something exclusive in its own right" (pg. 96)
 - "what may rightly be described as intuition, if the concept is to mean anything more than it does in the jargon especially favoured by composers of operetta, is a kind of knowledge which lies in the unorganized and...pre-conscious level of experience, which is then **illuminated**, as it were, **by the ray of reflection that emerges at a certain moment at the surface of consciousness.** At this moment of emergence it assumes a certain sudden, abrupt or, if you will, desultory character. But this desultory and disconnected character - which belongs, as the logical positivists would argue, to those despised concepts which are described as intuition - **springs not so much from the way that these insights have allegedly fallen from the heavens as from the way...in which it properly captures those moments where living experience or living cognition breaks through the crust of reified and pre-formed conventionalized concepts and perceptions.** This is therefore where we really come to know something, where our thinking is fulfilled, instead of simply feeding off the already given and socially approved view of the object. Then we come to a kind of encounter, a kind of explosion, and out of this conflict springs that sudden and illuminating character of what is called intuition, and which has so often been described to us. But as far as the process of knowledge itself, or, if you like, the origin of intuition, is concerned, this is by no means so abrupt. For behind it there actually lies that whole fabric of experiences which transpires in us, and only transpires in a really living way where we are not compelled to think in a purely controlled manner, where we still preserve something resembling our freedom of consciousness, where our thinking is not already simply directed by the norms which it is supposed to observe." (pg. 97-98)
 - ◇ **This understanding of 'intuition' draws the picture that the subject alternates between their position (as) subject - which is experiencing the world 'out there' (i.e., to-which) - and (as) object (i.e., 'there' in the world) turned back upon itself to arrange / organize / understand the objectivity of itself (i.e., knowledge of the world) as subject. This would mean that dialectical thinking is a mode of 'transitional' thinking where, to put it in simple, figurative terms, the subject hops over the 'transcendental realm / space / line' to see itself as object and back again to experience the world.*
 - ◆ "I do believe that to say something 'occurs' to us testifies to a living experience still at work in us. If nothing strikes us or occurs to us, this generally means we are being stupid, that we have no relationship to the objects of our experience, and what is called a merely logical intelligence...is a form of intelligence which simply turns upon itself without enjoying any relationship to the matter itself" (pg. 97)
 - "That is what I wanted to say about the concept of intuition in the spiritual sense. To say that the concept of intuition itself can only properly be given a dialectical meaning is just to say that the unexpected character of **intuition is really nothing but that sudden reversal from ossified and objectified concepts into living knowledge which occasionally arises when the concepts from our not yet thoroughly organized or pre-digested experience emerge for reflection.** Intuition itself is thus a way in which the object comes to move precisely through the movement of the concepts which lies behind it. This movement certainly does not need to unfold in terms of pre-formed concepts and, from the psychological point of view, is by no means identical to the *clara et distincta perceptio* with which it is generally equated" (pg. 98)
 - "all theory is open and...theory is not to be conceived as something finished either" (pg. 98)
 - **"on the one hand...I can only come to know the particular insofar as I also have some knowledge of the whole and measure the particular against this knowledge of the whole; on the other hand, however, this whole is never given to me as something finished or complete either.** And as soon as I try and use the whole as something finished and complete, as soon as I simply draw conclusions from it, as they say, then it already turns into something false. And the whole in turn...must be derived, in any dialectical theory, from the movement of its parts, and not from some abstract overarching concept" (pg. 98-99)
 - "the ossification of theory, and specifically of dialectical theory, in terms of a living relationship to the object which it would know, proves to be just as false and fateful as any approach which clings immediately to what is supposedly simply given without grasping its relationship to the whole" (pg. 100)
 - "[dialectic] thinking...does not proceed step by step, unlike the thinking for which the natural sciences provide the classical model and which we typically encounter in traditional and practically oriented science. Thus, grotesque as it may seem, it is precisely dialectical thought, where the various moments are much more intimately connected with one another than they are in the traditional form of thought, which is constantly reproached for being unscientific, in the sense that it lacks the requisite systematic character" (pg. 100)
 - "dialectic knows no 'first' to which everything else would have to be reduced, and thus the dialectic also lacks that pathos of reduction for which

- truth, as I once put it, is a merely differential determination or, rather, a merely residual determination: what is left over once we have deducted all the costs incurred in the process of cognition" (pg. 100)
- "Hegel has shown us that an 'origin' is not the truth, that an origin, on the contrary, becomes a deception the moment it is taken as the truth. It is a deception because it is not an origin at all, and everything that claims to be an absolute 'first' is already mediated within itself" (pg. 101)
 - **"there is no such ultimate and absolute instance of givenness purified of any mediation, whether it be pure consciousness or some pure sensuous datum.** The proof of this forms the very content of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and I wish to introduce this basic thought of the *Phenomenology* into our general presentation of the dialectic here. I hope I shall find time to sketch enough of the overall argument of the *Phenomenology* for you to see how this fundamental motif is developed and elaborated there: wherever thought believes it has now reached an absolute point of rest, this absolute point of rest is once again dissolved, until this quest for something absolutely reliable, something that no longer moves within itself, finally reveals itself as a delusive image of knowledge. Truth, as we learn in the course of the dialectic, is by no means something given and is not something fixed, as Hegel puts it. Rather, truth itself is involved in a process, and the object we find before us is itself caught up in movement; and, inasmuch as the object is in movement, it is not a distinct or unambiguous object. Or let me say, more precisely, that it is not only a distinct object. That is to say, we also require a certain distinctness and determinacy in the object - and here the Cartesian moment asserts its rights - we also require insight into specificity, into the object just as it stands before us in its particular contours. And it is precisely by examining this firm and determinate object closely and carefully in its determinacy that we discover it is not such a firm and determinate object after all. It is through the micrological insight which immerses itself in the particular that what is rigid, what is seemingly distinct and determinate, begins to move, and it is this which also exposes the Cartesian claim to critique" (pg. 101-102)
 - **"objects are dynamic and contradictory in themselves** and, precisely by virtue of this contradictory character, are actually bound up with all other objects as well" (pg. 103)
 - Lecture 11 (pg. 104)
 - "I am still talking about the theme of our last session, namely the relationship between the whole and the parts" (pg. 104)
 - "In this connection I said that we could principally and immediately recognize the priority of the whole over the part above all in that essential part of our life - i.e. in our work - where we essentially feel ourselves as dependent upon society, but not indeed so much as real parts, that is, as beings that are also reliant upon themselves, since we have already been assigned a role by society itself. With regard to this thought, I do not wish to take anything back here, and I certainly stand by it..." (pg. 104)
 - "And in this connection I had expressly objected to the inductive logic which prevails in the sciences, according to which we advance from particular experiences step by step in a more or less continuous manner until we come to an experience of the whole" (pg. 105)
 - **"We only really know about the whole as a whole insofar as we perceive or conceptually recognize this whole in relation to parts over against which it presents itself as a whole, and in turn we also only know about the parts as parts insofar as we are able to relate these parts to a whole,** such as the visual field, for example. Without this reciprocal relation of opposition, the concepts of whole and part simply forfeit their strict significance. Here therefore, in a quite elementary sense, you can evaluate the truth of the dialectical claim that categories such as these which contradict one another, such as the concept of the whole and the concept of the part, are reciprocally mediated by one another. The point I was trying to emphasize for you in our last session, however, could probably be characterized more rigorously and appropriately by saying that **what we initially perceive is neither whole nor part, but a sort of third alternative that is extraordinarily difficult to capture in words**" (pg. 105)
 - "Neither the whole nor the parts are initially perceived as such in an articulated fashion, and what we perceive in the first instance is 'something in general' - something antecedent in a sense to the distinction of whole and part, whereby the priority of the parts over the whole to which we supposedly rise, as affirmed in the usual logic of science, falls way..." (pg. 105-106)
 - "[the] philosophy with which we all grow up, and which is constantly and implicitly knocked into us, as it were, in the course of our scientific and scholarly development, teaches us that genuinely reliable knowledge is that which derives from some absolute 'first' ground or source, quite irrespective of whether this 'first' to which it is ultimately referred is alleged to be an absolute datum, a mere given that cannot supposedly be thought away, or behind which we cannot go, or whether this absolute 'first' is presented as pure thought, as Idea, as spirit, or whatever else, which is accorded such absolute priority precisely because it mediates everything particular or individual and constitutes its possibility in the first place" (pg. 106)
 - **"But it should be clear that this need to have an ultimate point of reference or repair at our disposal is emphatically connected with that need for security with which our knowledge as a whole is intimately bound up.** And, from a philogenetic perspective at least, this knowledge is indeed grounded in our attempt to overcome that anxiety in the face of the overwhelming power of nature which assailed us in archaic times. In this way we strive to appropriate what confronts us as alien, attempt to make it our own and understand it in a certain sense as part of ourselves. This orientation is still at work in every form of what I call the 'philosophy of origins', for the immediately given - that is, the facts of our consciousness - to which we appeal as an ultimate point of reference are indeed precisely always facts of our consciousness, and are supposed therefore to be specific to us, to be our very own, while spirit or consciousness, as the ultimate legitimating ground of all beings, is also a conception on our part, and one that effectively represents an ego which has been metaphysically magnified and inflated into a kind of absolute." (pg. 107)
 - "for whenever some such 'first', some such absolute or ultimate principle, is proffered, we are effectively dealing with idealist thinking..." (pg. 107)
 - ◆ **Yet, Adorno speaks of dialectic in such a way. And, what even should we say of 'death'?*
 - "as soon as I provide some such ultimate or original principle, what we actually discover is spirit's claim to exercise power over everything that is..." (pg. 107)
 - ◆ **"the pathos of dialectical philosophy itself, whatever specific form this philosophy takes, is directed against just such an absolute and original principle.** And the greatest challenge, given the intellectual habits with which we have been inculcated, is surely to relinquish this notion, to abandon the idea that we can appeal to such ultimate truth..." (pg. 107-108)
 - ◇ **but, if there is no 'ultimate truth', positing such a principle to begin with is meaningless, since saying 'there is no absolute truth' cannot itself be treated as absolutely true. This, here, is the fault of many French thinkers (i.e., Camus, Sartre, etc.). They too frequently posit principles whose content, in the same movement, refutes the stature of itself as a principle.*
 - "the challenge with which dialectic confronts us is actually that of recognizing truth in the process, in the entwinement, in the constellation of moments rather than in an attempted reduction to some such original principle" (pg. 108)
 - "For the sake of your own strategic orientation here, as I might almost put it, we can say that **dialectic cuts in two directions at once:** on the one hand, it works against ontology and, on the other hand, against positivism. And, indeed, it creates a specific difficulty for dialectical thought that it cannot comfortably be accommodated within this currently prevailing albeit regressive alternative" (pg. 108)
 - "it is precisely my innermost purpose in these lectures to show you...this very way of thinking in terms of set and rigidified alternatives seems to me to embody the fateful character of the contemporary state of consciousness in general" (pg. 113)
 - "you must recognize that this is precisely how reified thought itself, how the power of the administered world, has effectively compelled our

- own consciousness to think in terms of such pre-given alternatives" (pg. 114)
- "what goes beyond mere facticity in the eyes of dialectic, **what bestows on dialectic its metaphysical right to life, is...precisely the rebellion against the idea that the world of facts to which we have been bound**, and which is utterly meaningless, should have the last word in our existence. **Dialectic is the attempt, precisely in and through the critique of this world of facts which holds sway over us, to perceive the possibility of something else**, without this world of facts itself being in the least transfigured by us in the process" (pg. 114)
 - "dialectical thought is distinguished from positivist thought in that it is anything but 'natural' in character" (pg. 114)
 - "the challenge of **dialectical thinking**, at this point, **consists essentially in this: you must cast overboard the established habits of thought with which you are so familiar and take upon yourselves the labour and exertion of the concept**, and indeed in this very precise sense, that you come to recognize how everything which is given to us 'naturally' that we have no doubts about it is not for its part something natural" (pg. 114-115)
 - Lecture 12 (pg. 116)
 - "positivism of every sort finds its absolutely first principle in the data provided by experience..." (pg. 116)
 - "positivistic forms of thought cannot actually be identified directly with what I call a philosophy of origins..." (pg. 117)
 - "...dialectic is anti-positivistic in character..." (pg. 117)
 - "the problem of dialectic, from one point of view, is not that of starting from some preconceived totality but, rather, to explore the 'windowless' power of the whole...at work within the individual givens of experience in each case" (pg. 117)
 - "**in a certain sense dialectic** is precisely what the movement of phenomenology perhaps unjustifiably claimed to be: an attitude other than the 'natural attitude', an attitude which already approaches everything which is regarded as a given, as a fact, with a certain scepticism, **an attitude which tends to seek out the hidden powers of the whole behind what appears to us, behind what we encounter as given. The distinction between essence and appearance is indeed utterly constitutive for dialectical thought itself**, as we can already see from the way that concepts come to move only by entering into a process of reflection; that is to say, this reflection brings out in the concepts themselves a substance, as it were, which was not actually intended in, and indeed was concealed in, their merely initial appearance, in their apparent or surface meaning" (pg. 118)
 - "**this capacity to doubt what is given to us appears increasingly...to be slipping away from human beings**" (pg. 118)
 - "...human beings capitulate before the so-called givens without displaying that very mistrust which, from the perspective of conventional consciousness, of the mere acceptance of the world as it initially presents itself..." (pg. 119)
 - "I emphatically believe that **the dialectical mode of thinking is distinguished from the ordinary use of the understanding precisely because it refuses to be satisfied with the givenness** we have described, because it properly begins its work exactly there where the given confronts us most inexorably, where dialectical thought attempts to penetrate what is opaque and seemingly impenetrable, and to bring all this into movement" (pg. 119)
 - "dialectical thought shows that the ultimate point of reference to which our claim to knowledge appeals as a solid and secure possession is not an ultimate point at all, but something that generally presupposes in turn what it purports to produce from itself" (pg. 119)
 - "if we fail to reflect closely upon [certain] things, we experience an ever stronger tendency to project what in reality is due to such objective circumstances precisely upon personal factors, upon the characteristics of particular human beings or particular groups of human beings" (pg. 123)
 - ◆ "if we naively rest content with registering what people in general happen to think, then we ourselves fall victim to that delusive mechanism of personalization which I have attempted, at least in outline, to describe for you in my preceding observations" (pg. 123)
 - "**dialectical thought**, in contrast to such [intuitive] thinking, **is expressly self-reflective in character. In other words, dialectical thought is thought that sheds light on itself**, as I put this earlier, rather than proceeding in a rigid and purblind fashion" (pg. 124)
 - "it is an essential part of any dialectical thinking to be a thinking which is always both within its object and also outside of its object, for the movement which we perceive in the object also always presupposes some knowledge of what transpires outside of the object in question - that is, some knowledge of the wider context and connections in which the object itself stands" (pg. 126)
 - Lecture 13 (pg. 128)
 - "one could say that **dialectic is ultimately the attempt...to release the power of rigorous thought itself**, but to do so in a way that may also bind this power by confronting it with the essence of the objects to which our cognition actually relates" (pg. 129-130)
 - "I am supposed to think without 'precipitation', that is to say, I should calmly carry on thinking until the timeless core of truth presents itself to me" (pg. 130)
 - "...dialectical thought stands in contradiction to the notion of any absolute 'first'..." (pg. 132)
 - "the dialectical understanding of an object would be distinguished from a more primitive approach by 'taking a close look at things'..." (pg. 133)
 - "One could actually say that **dialectic as such is an approach which enables us to distrust the tendency**, or which should arm us against the tendency, **to conflate the order that we impose upon the object for the sake of our own peace of mind** with the character of the matter itself, an approach which should encourage us to confront this order with the object in an insistent fashion until we arrive at a form of knowledge where our own subjective forms of knowing may genuinely concur with the essence of the matter itself" (pg. 135)
 - "the path which leads to knowledge is neither that of capricious insights nor that of some abstract coherence in the organization of individual moments. Rather, we are talking about the unity involved in the development of theory" (pg. 135)
 - "During the last session, in attempting to contrast dialectic and positivism, I said to you that dialectic also contains a positivist element within itself, namely the micrological element, that is to say, the moment through which it immerses itself in the smallest details" (pg. 134)
 - "I would say - if I presumed to offer you any positive instruction here about what one should think - that **thinking which genuinely comprehends things, in contrast with one that merely orders and classifies them, is a kind of thinking that measures itself against the living experience which we have with objects**. It is a thinking which acknowledges the moment of conceptual order which it must naturally retain - for I cannot indeed think without concepts - but continually confronts that moment of conceptual ordering with the living experience that I actually have. And **out of the tension between both these moments - between conceptual order and that pre-conceptual experience from which concepts themselves have also nonetheless always sprung - such thinking, in a process of constant reflection upon both the matter and thought itself, eventually leads us out beyond a thinking which simply subsumes things beneath its grasp in a merely external fashion**" (pg. 136)
 - "The more the world becomes rational, the less I am really allowed in a sense to think about in the process. That is to say, everything must now ultimately be reduced to wholly simple, wholly thoughtless, wholly incomprehensible elements, although such a demand completely forgets that, if all that remains is really just what is most simple and most elementary, **the object itself, whose complexity is what I wish to understand in the first place**, has already slipped through my fingers, so that I have then actually failed the object, that I am now left with nothing but the trivialities into which I have broken down the object" (pg. 136)
 - "I have already talked to you in some detail about the dialectic of whole and part, and wherever I am confronted by some whole in its mere immediacy, without further articulation, I cannot simply rest content with this whole. What I have specifically attempted to grasp with the concept of micrological thinking, namely the persistent attention to a given object, already implies in a certain fashion that the wholeness with which an object of knowledge is presented to me is itself resolved into elements, and the movement into which what is alleged to be clearly and distinctly given is resolved lies precisely in this: that the whole in question shows itself to consist of parts, though not simply as a mere sum of parts to which it might be

reduced but rather - and this is decisive here - in such a way that these parts themselves constitute a reciprocal relationship, and stand in a dynamic relation to one another, so that the whole can no more be grasped by simply adding the parts than it can by simply acknowledging and resting content with the undifferentiated whole itself, rather than analysing it with regard to its individual features" (pg. 136-137)

- Lecture 14 (pg. 140)
 - "If I try and apply the dialectical mode of thinking here, I could almost say that any attempt to grasp a whole at all, by denominating it in some way, already includes an analytical aspect, insofar as we do not simply stop or rest content with this totality but relate it to certain conceptual determinations which cannot, in any immediate sense, be simply the same as the whole, but must rather bring out some specific moments of the latter" (pg. 140)
 - "Having said this, I think I may be able to make even clearer to you what I was really driving at with this critique of the analytical method. For it is **essentially a critique of the fetishism of ultimate 'elements'**. From a certain perspective, we may say that dialectical operations of thought do not signify alterations in the intellectual processes we actually perform in knowing something so much as alterations in the interpretations we furnish in this regard. In a specific sense, **dialectic is nothing but the critical attempt to resolve the philosophemes with which** - unless and until we think and intervene here in a really radical way - **we tend to rationalize and in considerable measure to misinterpret our own activity of cognition**. The essential thing I want to say here is that we should not believe that we have already done justice to the matter itself just because we have accepted the necessity of analysing a whole in order to comprehend it. We should not believe that our cognitive demands - for which a whole is not immediately given but is accessible only as mediated through conceptual operations and thus necessarily as differentiated into particular moments which have been conceptually discriminated in terms of characteristic unified features - have already fully determined the matter itself" (pg. 140-141)
 - "I think it is especially important to recognize this with regard to the process of knowledge today, for specifically in our contemporary situation...**there is an enormous temptation to identify the analytic process of knowing which we perform with knowledge itself**" (pg. 141)
 - "**Dialectical thought, which works in terms of contradictions and reversals, is necessarily opposed to the notion of an even or simply continuous development**. That the processes in question - and here we are talking above all about historical processes - are internally contradictory, that they consist precisely in the unfolding of contradictions, is what already excludes the idea of some even and seamless progress, just as it excludes in turn the idea of social stasis or invariance" (pg. 143)
 - "Rather, it is capable of recognizing what for its own part resists or cannot comfortably be accommodated within this so-called progress and grasping it in terms of the principle of development itself. If the idea of dialectic does indeed possess a temporal core, as we have tried to show here, this means that it is also essentially a dialectic of non-simultaneous aspects, namely a dialectic which must also try to understand, in terms of ongoing temporal development, precisely what has, if you like, proved unable to keep pace historically speaking" (pg. 144)
 - "**the task of a dialectical theory of society must always consist in refusing to regard what has not kept pace, what has lagged behind, in a simply static fashion - that is, as something which has simply lagged behind, which is now opposed to change and movement**. For if the extremes are indeed as reciprocally mediated as I have attempted to make clear to you, then the static and the dynamic dimensions are themselves mediated with one another here; that is to say, the supposedly static sectors of society must actually be derived from the dynamic trajectory at work" (pg. 145)
 - "were you to analyse our society, for example, into elements, starting with the larger economic units, then taking the smaller economic units, then the smallest and not wholly rationalized kinds of association such as the family, and then all other possible institutions, you might conceive of society as a whole as a sort of map which is made up by the way all these moments fit together. But such an image of social reality would be literally false, for **society is not composed out of these elements**. Rather, these elements for their own part stand within a highly complex self-conditioning functional context, for which I have attempted to develop a brief schema for you here. And you will perhaps have seen from this schema that this context is actually better described as one mediated by social antagonisms than as one of 'wholeness' - as people love to say - or as a so-called organic social context. For, **if there is such a thing as society, it is far more like a system than an organism**, albeit a system of disparate moments, a system which is essentially self-contradictory in character" (pg. 147)
 - "the principle or problem of dialectic would be not simply to insist upon the moment of discontinuity but, rather, to connect the moments of continuity and discontinuity with one another, namely to grasp continuity and discontinuity themselves as reciprocally mediated" (pg. 148)
 - "I have already put it to you that our **society is more of a system than an organism, and that it is nonetheless an antagonistic society**. Perhaps this alerts you to the dialectical problem that I would particularly like to draw to your attention in the present context. On the one hand, the theoretical task of dialectic is specifically to comprehend the whole or totality, and knowledge is not possible without the idea of a totality; yet, on the other hand, this totality itself is not continuous in character, is not a logical totality within a seamless deductive context. Rather - to put it bluntly - the totality is internally discontinuous in character. And the dialectical response to the problem which arises here is none other than to recognize that **the unity of the society we live in is actually constituted through its very discontinuity**. In other words, the dissociated and discontinuous moments of the object of knowledge, insofar as they are related to one another as contradictions rather than being simply disparate from one another, come precisely through this relationship which they all make up together to crystallize specifically into that whole which should properly constitute the object of knowledge here." (pg. 148)
 - "the idea that the object of knowledge is itself something wholly coherent and consistent that may be logically explicated without remainder always involves the notion that what is articulated in such meaningful and consistent terms is effectively something positive. But **if we are really in earnest with our critique of the existent, that is, if we take the thought of the antagonistic character of reality itself really seriously, then we are specifically bound to exhibit the discontinuity that characterizes the existent**. And we are thereby driven to lend this character of separation and discontinuity to our own thought as well, but to do so in such a way that the unity and interconnectedness of what we are actually dealing with is revealed precisely through this discontinuity, precisely through this internally mediated contradiction, in the matter itself. There is absolutely no question that productive thinking today can take the form only of one that works through breaks and fractures, whereas any **thinking which is simply oriented in advance to unity, synthesis and harmony can only serve to conceal something which thinking is called upon to penetrate, for it then inevitably contents itself with simply reproducing, or even reinforcing, the façade of what is already there in the medium of thought**" (pg. 149)
 - "**in truth there is no rule for thought other than that of freedom towards the object**, as Hegel calls it. The discipline of thought is simply that of measuring itself against the matter itself, of doing as much justice to the matter itself as it possibly can. It is not that of imposing upon itself, qua method, a rule which prescribes how it is to proceed, and then on the basis of this so-called demand for method ultimately renouncing thought itself, for to think in the richest sense is invariably to think in a way that is not methodically regulated" (pg. 150)
 - "**thought must be capable of its own freedom, must along with freedom towards the object also possess freedom within itself**, and cannot therefore just relinquish itself, so to speak, before the object but must continually seek out relationships of some kind with the object, relationships in which alone thought can find itself contented. **Thought which is no longer capable of this will never be able to disclose its object**. The pedantry of thought is the way it fails its relation to the matter itself, fails it for the sake of securing what one already has, for the sake of the small security of the private person, of the small individual" (pg. 150)
 - ◆ "thus I believe that it is really essential to intellectual health....that you always continue to retain a critical attitude..." (pg. 150)

- Lecture 15 (pg. 152)
 - "In the last session we spoke about the Cartesian demand that our intellectual procedure must be careful not to leave out any steps, and I attempted to show you in what sense this Cartesian axiom is actually incompatible with the approach of dialectical thought" (pg. 152)
 - **"the moment which dialectic rebels against...is the coercive character of thought"** (pg. 152)
 - **"dialectical thinking is obliged to show a specific kind of mobility, namely a refusal to be nailed down precisely to that particular point, to be confined or compelled to remain at that particular point, where the chosen object or form of argumentation currently finds itself"** (pg. 153)
 - ◆ "when I talk about the mobility of thought with regard to the phenomenon, what I mean to say is precisely that one must consider the phenomenon both from within, in terms of its own demands, its own origin, its own principles, and also indeed from without, in terms of the functional context in which it stands, the side which it turns to human beings, its meaning it specifically assumes for the life of human beings" (pg. 154)
 - ◆ "Thus you can perhaps see that it makes good sense to pursue these two perspectives, the immanent and the transcendent approaches, independently of one another in a certain way, and simply trust that, if our thought penetrates both aspects deeply enough, the relationship between them will reveal itself after all - a trust which, I must admit, I have never been able to relinquish to this day" (pg. 154)
 - ◇ "this double-edged character of thought...must therefore be at once within the matter and outside of it" (pg. 154)
 - ◇ "this very double-edged character of thought expresses something essential to dialectical thought, and it is only for that reason...that I am talking about this idea of the mobility of thought here today" (pg. 154-155)
 - **"'mobility of thought' here does not mean a constant readiness to change what is generally described as a 'standpoint'. Rather, it refers to a self-reflective change in the approach of thought, depending on whether it has to relate to the context in which the particular stands or to the particular itself"** (pg. 161)
 - **"dialectical thinking does indeed imply the unremitting effort to bring together the universal and the particular...while remaining aware that there is no immediate or unmediated identity between these moments and that, indeed, they diverge from one another"** (pg. 155)
 - "I would say that the epistemological-dialectical place of what I have called the mobility of thought, in contrast to all merely inductive or merely deductive intellectual procedures, is precisely the attempt of thought - now abiding with itself, now moving beyond itself - ultimately to bring the knowing subject that approaches from without together with the movement of the matter itself. This is something which is necessarily involved in the dialectical method" (pg. 155)
 - ◆ "it is because this is actually the colour of dialectic itself, the colour of a kind of thinking that unites identity and non-identity" (pg. 155)
 - "a single individual judgement, taken in isolation, is indeed neither absolutely true nor absolutely false, and the truth is actually nothing but the path that leads precisely through the falseness of our individual judgements" (pg. 155)
 - **"The path of dialectic, which attempts to move beyond the specialist and highly circumscribed perspective of logic and epistemology, **would be one which did not content itself with simply identifying the point which requires criticism** and then declaring: 'Look! There is a mistake in the reasoning here, you have got yourself entangled in contradiction - the whole thing is therefore worthless.' Rather, **the next step would be to show why, within the constellation of such thinking, the relevant mistakes and contradictions inevitably arise, what has motivated them within the movement of such thought, and thus how far they reveal themselves, in the total context of thought, to be significant in their own falsehood and contradictoriness**"** (pg. 157)
 - "This is actually the most important thing one can learn about the discipline of dialectical thought. Since **dialectical thinking does not start from any rigid concepts, from a rigid system, from any rigid givens, but is eminently required to abandon itself to the matter itself**, it can only really avoid the danger of that relativism, that arbitrariness, that spurious flexibility of which we have spoken if it takes that obligation towards the individual object not more loosely but indeed more seriously than the usual sciences and our usual habits of thought typically do, if it immerses itself in individual problems with an incomparably greater seriousness than conventional thinking ever allows" (pg. 157)
 - "dialectical thought as such can of course be misused for any conceivable mischief in the world just as much as any other form of thought..." (pg. 157)
 - ◆ **"The suspicion which dialectic encounters at this point, the general suspicion with regard to the mobility of thought is itself grounded in social factors. Such mobile thinking is generally identified with relativism, with a refusal to acknowledge anything determinate or firmly established at all,** instead of seeing that the movement of such thought proceeds precisely by taking what is determinate and firmly established even more seriously. This is exactly the domain where the dialectical approach is accused of being essentially ungrounded, of offering us nothing established to hold onto, of representing a form of thought that only ever deprives us of something without giving anything back" (pg. 158)
 - "That is all for now regarding the charge of groundlessness. The assumption that thought should always stand on firm ground, that it must never be deprived of such ground under any circumstances, is essentially bound up with that notion of a given absolutely first principle, of the primacy of such a ground or principle, which we have already criticized. Dialectical thought must confront this issue. There is no such ground for philosophy, at least not for philosophy today, any more than contemporary society can still be grasped on the basis of its supposedly natural foundations, any more than agriculture is still crucial for contemporary society. For here the **truth itself is a dynamic truth**, where the primordial moments, as they say, do still also appear as moments, as moments of the archaic, as moments of memory, or however you want to describe them, but not as something to which any higher substantial meaning could be ascribed from the metaphysical, moral or logical point of view. The core of thought, that which is actually substantial in thought, that which allows it to show its truth and makes it more than merely empty talk, this core is not the unshakeable ground on which it stands, nor is it some reified detachable thesis..." (pg. 159)
 - "...all this effectively implies the denial of that moment of intellectual freedom which provides the essential climate for **the dynamic exploration of philosophical thought**" (pg. 159)
 - "Dialectical thought cannot possibly proceed in this way [e.g., the way of methodical control] since it emerges strictly from critical thought, is itself nothing but philosophical critique brought to its most acute point of self-awareness" (pg. 160)
 - **"In our current situation we are actually confronted with a very grave antinomy:** on the one hand, **thought is consumed in the blind repetition** of what exists and is known anyway, **namely in conformity**, and, on the other, thought which eludes methodical control thereby runs the danger of becoming uncontrollable in any sense and effectively falling into delusion. And this tendency is surely not the least innocuous of those symptoms of intellectual dissociation and collective schizophrenia which we can observe today in so many areas of our life, and one that deserves, it seems to me, to be taken with extraordinary seriousness" (pg. 161)
- Lecture 16 (pg. 163)
 - **"we can never be sure of the completeness of our knowledge** if we cannot say whether new elements of knowledge will not constantly emerge in what is already given - for **every object harbours an infinite wealth of aspects**, and there is no need to add anything new here precisely because the matter itself offers infinite newness in every moment..." (pg. 166)

- "Now I would say that, while we should not strive for completeness of knowledge, neither should we of course simply isolate our individual cognitive acts, merely registering things in a static and thus unconnected form which lacks any relationship to the whole" (pg. 166)
 - "I would therefore say that the authentic task of philosophical thought is to furnish certain models rather than trying to embrace everything" (pg. 166)
 - "Philosophy should effectively be concerned with constructing models, and, if I expressed this last time by saying that the substance of philosophy, **the substance of thought, lies not in its supposed theses or its individual propositions but in the source of illumination which stands behind this thought and falls upon the individual objective moments in each case**, this also applies to what I am saying to you at this moment: this source of illumination, this cone of light, falls in fact upon individual and specific objects which it brings out - here, if you like, it indeed resembles positivism - but does so in such a way that the cognition of the particular thing also casts light, or is reflected in turn, upon all other objects which there are" (pg. 166)
 - **"the core or substance of thinking is the latent power from which thought is ultimately drawn, the light which falls upon things through thought, which is not itself thing-like, not some reified object** to which one then has to swear allegiance. This is the *'idole d'échelle*, for which truth ultimately depends on the demand that thought must be able at any and every moment to justify the ground on which it stands and the reified core that forms its content. Whereas we have to recognize that this substantial moment is something that stands behind thought, a source of power rather than something like a thesis, something we could just repeat or take into possession merely by a process of checking or control" (pg. 159)
 - "I would say that **the criterion of philosophical truth lies in how far it is capable of moving from something specific already known to us to shed further light upon a range of other things - lies in how far the activity of knowing is driven onwards from this centre of cognitive force**. It is this cognitive intention, which allows illumination to transpire from the perspective of particular knowledge, rather than mere subsumption under a cover concept which has effectively been shaped by an administrative mentality, that seems to me to be the essential concern of philosophy" (pg. 166-167)
 - "our thoughts, without reflecting upon themselves in terms of their universal determinacy, are necessarily driven beyond themselves and almost always lose what they actually intend by allowing themselves to be reduced to a generic universal concept" (pg. 171)
- Lecture 17 (pg. 174)
 - "any philosopher who undertakes to furnish a system of philosophy today already thereby cuts a rather ridiculous figure - for surely only someone who does not know the world can even entertain the idea of trying to capture the whole world in such a butterfly net..." (pg. 176)
 - "these systems in the most recent style are nothing more than organizational schemata which are measured in terms of whether they are capable of capturing everything without leaving anything 'outside', and without anything turning up that they would not already know how to file away. I believe that the contemporary appeal of such systematic or pseudo-systematic structures is not accidental, that it is connected with the way in which the world is experienced by human beings today in a new and - I would like to say - negative manner precisely as a closed world" (pg. 177)
 - "the need for systematic structure that arises in this new situation is then simply that of finding the conceptual forms which correspond to this pre-organized character, which are already foisted upon everything that is, namely through the phenomenon of the *'bureaucratization du monde'*, through the phenomenon of the administered world. It is characteristic of these systems of the most recent style that they essentially furnish enormous procedural plans or arrangements where everything is expressly assigned its preordained place, that in such systems there is therefore no room for anything whatever which might transcend them" (pg. 178)
 - "In these critical reflections you will encounter once again the same dialectical issue which we have emphasized throughout these lectures, namely this: in contrast to merely subjective reason, to mere method, to the idea of forms externally applied by the subject, we must bring out objectivity as an independent moment, must emphasize that every kind of categorical form which is not developed as much through contact with the object in itself as it is by reference to the classificatory or other logical needs of organizational rationality will thereby inevitably violate the truth" (pg. 180)
 - "the idea of a 'frame of reference' also seems to me to have a very sinister aspect to it. For precisely because such a frame of reference, abstractly 'ready-made' or 'factic', is externally applied to the facts it is supposed to grasp like a solid or palpable thing, it becomes something like an article of faith, however vacuous or nugatory it may be" (pg. 183)
 - **"The reification of social or philosophical understanding which is implicit in this concept of a 'frame of reference' thus also has a very precise social function. For it helps to make our thought appear solid and reliable, helps to reduce it to a rigid underlying relational system that can easily be labelled in terms of one of today's readily available 'worldviews' or 'ideologies', as people like to put it - and that is precisely what strikes me as sinister in this connection"** (pg. 183)
 - "I believe that dialectical thinking alone...is capable of disclosing the dimension of untruth involved in those seamless and stream-lined categorical forms that are increasingly coming to prevail today" (pg. 184)
- Lecture 18 (pg. 185)
 - "I concluded the last session by trying to show you precisely how **dialectical thinking stands in contradiction to the essentially administrative mode of thought which prevails today**" (pg. 185)
 - "the dialectic itself cannot simply become the opposite of an Either-Or. In other words, dialectical theory and dialectical thought cannot be read in terms of a Both-And." (pg. 186)
 - "For people have imagined that to think dialectically is basically to think that there is something good and also something bad about every conceivable thing..." (pg. 186-187)
 - "we must recognize that dialectical thought itself can move only through its extremes towards that moment with which it is not itself identical. In other words, if I may express this in a phronomic fashion, dialectical mediation is not a mean between opposed terms, for it is only produced by entering into the heart of the extreme, and it is precisely by driving this extreme to the uttermost point that we become aware of its opposite within the extreme itself..." (pg. 187)
 - "what we are talking about today is not the logical aspect of this movement through the extremes but rather the ethical aspect of thinking..." (pg. 187)
 - **"There is no power in the world which can arrest the movement of critical thought**, and if dialectic itself has ever been tempted in certain contexts, as in its critique of so-called 'reflective thought', to abort the process of critical reflection, this is surely its cardinal sin and the very moment which implies that we cannot simply stay with the Hegelian dialectic itself. But, if critical thought fully engages with a progressive phenomenon, this cannot mean invoking an average and wholly familiar expression of human reason in this regard. It can only mean the attempt to reveal the higher potential of the phenomenon whose inadequacies are in question by bringing its own principle ever more powerfully to bear. Or to express this more substantively: if we must constantly recognize a dialectic of enlightenment, namely a dialectic of rationality which compels us to acknowledge all the sacrifice and injustice which the path of enlightenment has brought in its course, this should not mean and cannot mean that we try and return to something before this enlightenment or that we cultivate protected 'nature parks' of irrationality. **It should mean and can only mean that we also recognize the wounds which enlightenment has left behind as the moments where enlightenment itself betrays its own imperfect character and reveals that it is actually not yet enlightened enough**. And it is only by pursuing the principle of enlightenment through to the end that these wounds may perhaps be healed" (pg. 188)

- **"dialectical theory holds fast to the idea of truth.** A dialectic which was incapable of bringing the measure of truth to bear so rigorously and persistently upon every claim to knowledge that this latter would dissolve in the face of it would already lack the power without which no dialectical process could ever be grasped at all. And the idea of truth is already involved in the insight into untruth, namely in the critical motif that is the decisive dimension of dialectic, as its necessary condition. The notion of exercising critique without thereby capturing the untruth of the matter in question is meaningless. Yet the concept of truth which is called into play here is not something transcendent to the phenomena themselves. This is precisely what the dichotomous consciousness of the present finds so hard to grasp, namely what is at stake in dialectic as a whole: that, while the theme of truth is ineluctably and unconditionally posited and intended in this moment of critique, in the moment of thought which cannot but press onward, the truth in question cannot itself be fixed and reified as something beyond the phenomena. Rather, **the truth must be sought within the life of the phenomena themselves**, and the individual phenomenon must be questioned with regard to itself, with regard to its own internal consistency, if it is to be convicted of its own untruth" (pg. 189-190)
- "I have already said that the relevant criterion, or the only possibility which **dialectical thought** acknowledges as such, **must be immanent in character**. And I believe that it is precisely here, if anywhere, that genuinely contemporary thought can learn something absolutely decisive from Hegel's thought - namely from his demand that **thought must not bring any external criteria to bear upon the matter**, which was indeed the characteristic approach of the time, **but rather abandon itself to the matter itself and derive its criterion solely from the latter precisely by simply 'looking on'**, as Hegel himself puts it. And this is the decisive moment of the dialectic: that the object to which dialectical thought addresses itself is not something intrinsically featureless which acquires determination only through the way in which we impose a categorical network upon it. Rather, the object in question is also already something determinate within itself; in other words, there is no object, precisely insofar as it presents itself to us as something determinate, which does not also already harbour thought, does not harbour subject, within itself. In other words, at this point in the dialectic there is a moment of idealism, namely the reference to subjectivity as something mediated, a moment which must also be retained, however critically or sceptically we otherwise resist the general claim of idealism to grasp or produce the world out of itself. On the other hand, this approach is not idealist in character, for the moment which I have just described as subjective is itself precisely only a moment, and the underlying concept of subjectivity itself in this connection is something abstract, is an abstraction from those living subjects, those living human beings, whose thought belongs to the determination of the oppositions in question. And precisely on account of this abstractness, on account of this untruth, if you will, this moment cannot itself be turned into something absolute either, cannot be turned into something which simply exists 'in itself'. For the subject is just as inevitably mediated through the object as the object in turn is also precisely mediated by thought" (pg. 192)
 - "the act of evaluation, or whatever it is that appears to transcend the relativity and contingency of the merely given with which I am engaged, is inevitably referred back to some 'standpoint' or other, and the choice or adoption of this standpoint itself is implicitly treated as something which is effectively contingent" (pg. 193)
- "In short, **dialectical thought refuses to provide intellectual recipes**. I have often said as much *in abstracto*. I believe I have shown with reference to certain models today just how little the dialectic has to offer in the way of recipes, how little it can provide for anyone. And I believe that, unless you can renounce the idea that thought should 'give' you something, as they say, unless you are prepared instead to give something to thought, namely to give yourselves to it, then you should eschew dialectical thought altogether. **I would strongly recommend anyone who cannot do these things to stay with traditional forms of thought which are not only generally accepted but also provide a rather comforting sense of security which anyone who engages with dialectical questions must abandon**" (pg. 194)
 - "[the] sense of security is a deception, and one of the tasks of dialectical thought, among others, is to shatter the deceptive confidence of this faith in definitions" (pg. 194)
 - "a 'definition' is basically a way of determining concepts by reference to other concepts" (pg. 194)

d. Further Readings:

- Dialectic, by M. Adler https://ia801503.us.archive.org/20/items/in.ernet.dli.2015.46365/2015.46365.Dialectic_text.pdf
- Materialism and the Dialectical Method, by M. Cornforth <https://www.marxists.org/archive/cornforth/1953/materialism-and-dialectical-method.pdf>
- Historical Materialism, by M. Cornforth <https://www.marxists.org/archive/cornforth/1954/historical-materialism.pdf>
- The Theory of Knowledge, by M. Cornforth <https://www.marxists.org/archive/cornforth/1955/theory-knowledge.pdf>
- Dialectical Logic, by E. Ilyenkov <https://www.marxists.org/archive/ilyenkov/works/essays/dialectical-logic.pdf>
- Critique of Dialectical Reason, by J. Sartre <https://files.libcom.org/files/jean-paul-sartre-critique-of-dialectical-reason-volume-1.compressed.pdf>
- Dialectic of Enlightenment, by T. Adorno and M. Horkheimer https://monoskop.org/images/2/27/Horkheimer_Max_Adorno_Theodor_W_Dialectic_of_Enlightenment_Philosophical_Fragments.pdf