Max Horkheimer and the Theological Rummage Sale

James Schmidt, Boston University

In February 1944, Max Horkheimer returned to Columbia University to deliver a series of lectures "on the general subject of Society and Reason."[1] The lectures, as he explained when they were published three years later as *Eclipse of Reason*, were an attempt "to present in epitome some aspects of a comprehensive philosophical theory" that he had been developing during the four years he had spent, at the other end of the American continent, working in collaboration with Theodor Adorno in Los Angeles.[2] Horkheimer had left New York in April 1941, seeking to escape his administrative duties as director of the Institute for Social Research – late of the University of Frankfurt, but since 1934, in exile on Morningside Heights. His hope was to complete a long-projected work on dialectics, which he once characterized as the book "for which all my earlier studies, published and unpublished, have been merely the groundwork."[3] When he returned to Columbia in 1944 his work with Adorno was lurching towards a conclusion. The first samples of it were cobbled together at the end of the Spring, and presented to Horkheimer's life-long friend Friedrich Pollock on the occasion of his fiftieth birthday. By the end of the year a mimeographed version of the manuscript was circulating among friends and associates of the Institute for Social Research under the unassuming title *Philosophische Fragmente*. Three years later, more or less the same text would appear, bound between hard covers and carrying the title that, in the mimeograph, had been reserved for the first chapter: *Dialektik der Aufklärung*.

Though the 1944 manuscript had been extensively revised, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* was no more finished than the *Philosophische Fragmente*. But while the

Fragmente openly announced that it was a work that was still in progress, the changes made in the text prior to its 1947 publication were as relentless in purging such confessions from its pages as they were careful in removing anything that might provide hints to the Marxian provenance of its arguments.[4] The reasons for the latter alterations are straightforward enough: the Cold War was beginning and Horkheimer was eager to ferret out anything that might associate its authors with the new order being consolidated on the other side of the soon-to-be famous line that ran from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic.[5] The motivation for downplaying the unfinished nature of the manuscript is somewhat less obvious. Horkheimer originally seems to have intended that the book would include what he characterized as a "positive theory of dialectics" that would, among other things, explain how the "rescue of enlightenment" might be effected.[6] But for a variety of reasons – chiefly, the burdens associated with administering the ambitious study of anti-Semitism funded by the grant the Institute received from the American Jewish Committee in March 1943 – Horkheimer and Adorno were never able to complete this account and *Dialectic of Enlightenment* appeared without it.[7] Because *Dialectic of Enlightenment* now tends to be read, with the benefit of hindsight, as sketching out a philosophical position that would later be explored, at greater length, in Adorno's *Negative Dialectic*, it is generally assumed that *Dialectic of Enlightenment* was fragmentary by design: the fragmentation in the text is seen as part of a strategy to avoid the pretense of closure. But to do so is to confuse happenstance with intention. The book that Horkheimer and Adorno published in 1947 was no less unfinished than the manuscript they circulated in 1944: it simply did a better job of concealing that fact.

There was one additional burden that – at least in Horkheimer's eyes – disrupted work on his treatise on dialectics: the need to deliver a series of lectures at Columbia University in February and March 1944. Horkheimer tended to dismiss the lectures as merely an "exoteric" presentation of the more serious work he was writing with Adorno in California.[8] But (assuming that he was not simply fishing for a complement), this judgment underestimates the significance of the Columbia lectures and the book that eventually grew out of them. If these texts are less daunting in their complexity than *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, they are also – in one important respect – more comprehensive: both of them conclude with an attempt to sketch out an alternative conception of reason. The attempt was not entirely successful: many readers of *Eclipse of Reason* – beginning with its first reviewers – have been unimpressed by the argument of the book's final chapter "On the Concept of Philosophy."[9] Indeed, Horkheimer himself had reservations about it.[10]

In what follows, I will argue that the issues with which Horkheimer was wrestling at the close of *Eclipse of Reason* can be traced to his initial plan for the book he hoped to write when he left Columbia in 1941. They had been part of a broader reconsideration of the nature of critical theory which Horkheimer and Adorno had begun in discussions during the latter part of the 1930s, but – unlike some of the other topics that figure in these discussions – they did not find a place in the book that Horkheimer wound up writing with Adorno. One of the more striking features of the way in which Horkheimer approached these questions is that he tended to frame them in a manner that seems, at first blush, rather foreign from the conventional understanding of Horkheimer's theoretical orientation during his American exile: his language is theological.

The Dwarf Under the Table

In a letter dated April 27, 1941 Horkheimer explained to his friend Friedrich Pollock that the book he planned to write would explore three propositions: 1) that culture itself was "duplicitous, full of contradictions, fragile" (an insight he credited to Sade and to Nietzsche), 2) that there was a link between contradictory conceptions of truth and contradictions in actual forms of social existence (an insight he attributed to Hegel and Marx), and 3) that the concept of truth was "critical, negative" (which he saw as Schopenhauer's crucial insight).[11] The letter pinpoints many of the themes that would be central to *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, though there are also some significant omissions. While his comments to Pollock foreshadowed the book's concern with the workings of the "culture industry," there is nothing to suggest the role that the discussion of anti-Semitism would play in the work. While the idea that Nietzsche and Sade might serve as points of reference would be confirmed in the second of the book's excurses, there is no hint of the first excursus would be devoted to a discussion of the *Odyssey*. Nor, for that matter, is there any indication of the pivotal role that myth would play in the book's argument. Finally, while the sketch makes it clear that Horkheimer intended to make the examination of the fateful consequences of the domination of nature a central theme, there is not a word in the summary to suggest that the book would have anything to say about the vicissitudes of enlightenment. In short, what is missing from Horkheimer's preliminary mapping of terrain his book would be exploring was the very concept that provided whatever coherence the book eventually possessed: the notion of

the "dialectic of enlightenment" itself, the idea that "myth is already enlightenment, and enlightenment reverts to mythology."[12]

The letter also sketches a theme that, while absent from *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, reappears at the close of *Eclipse of Reason*. Horkheimer goes on to suggest,

> Perhaps the notion that one can "make use of the truth" (Hitler) instead of fulfilling it (Jesus) is the secret conflict of modern society. Art (and philosophy) is thus central, because only it at least intends this fulfillment.[13]

The idea that art and philosophy remain faithful to a conception of truth that science – which allegedly equates truth with instrumental efficiency – would, of course, become a central motif in the subsequent work of the Frankfurt School. But the idea that Jesus has a role to play in this story is, to put it mildly, less familiar. Though Jesus is missing from *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, it seems that Horkheimer hoped to work Him into its sequel. In a letter to Paul Tillich dating from the summer of 1947, Horkheimer explained,

> Teddie and I are now engaged in writing the second part of the "Black Manuscript." The first part is on the presses in Holland and will be published under the name "Dialectic of Enlightenment" before Christmas. During the last weeks we have been writing on the concept of Truth, but we are still in the beginning. … [I]f you could spare me a few minutes at any time, you could render us an invaluable service by telling us where we could find competent theoretical interpretations of the words of Jesus "I am the Truth."

> Has this word been a subject of lively arguments and implications in Protestant or even scholastic or patriatic doctrine, and where could we find an account of them?[14]

Within a few weeks Horkheimer received a response from Tillich that listed the most important literature on the question, surveyed the different ways in which "truth" was employed in John 1:1-14, suggested that they involved a fusing of Hebraic and Hellenic elements, and concluded that its central implication was that truth was not something that was to be excavated by penetrating ever deeper into "ontological layers of being," but, instead, reveals itself in history.[15]

What role such notions might have played in the projected sequel to *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is far from clear, but Horkheimer's interest in such matters calls to mind the famous image that opens Walter Benjamin's "On the Concept of History." Observing that the movements of Wolfgang von Kempelen's chess-playing automaton were, in reality, controlled by the "hunchbacked dwarf – a master at chess" hidden beneath the puppet that sat at the playing table, Benjamin proposed a "philosophical counterpart to the apparatus."

> The puppet, called 'historical materialism,' is to win all the time. It can easily be a match for anyone if it enlists the services of theology, which today, as we know, is small and ugly and has to keep out of site.[16]

Is it possible that – as Horkheimer and Adorno pieced together the fragments of their joint dictations (which had been dutifully recorded by Gretel Adorno) – their hands were being guided by a hunchbacked dwarf hiding under their writing table? Or, to put it less

metaphorically: just what does Horkheimer's contrast between Hitler and Jesus suggest about the role that theological concepts played in his work at the time when he was working with Adorno on *Dialectic of Enlightenment*? It is well known that, after his return to Germany, Horkheimer was increasing drawn to religious formulations, an interest that is generally viewed as a testimony to his increasing pessimism about the prospects for political alternatives to the "administered world."[17] Yet such readings of Horkheimer's development seem to miss an important point: Horkheimer's use of religious imagery can be traced to a much earlier point in his career.

Across the Great Divide

In the summer of 1940 Horkheimer spent a week at the Stanley Hotel, a sprawling Georgian Revival resort in Estes Park, Colorado that had long served as a retreat for celebrities and public figures and would go on to establish itself in American popular culture as the setting for Steven King's novel *The Shining* and – even less auspiciously – the location of the closing scene of the film *Dumb and Dumber*. From his perch in the Rocky Mountains, he sent a letter to Leo Lowenthal – who was condemned to spending the summer keeping things in order back on Morningside Heights – that reported,

> On the journey here I have heard Hitler's speech. His word reaches over the plains and seas of the world, it penetrates into the most distant mountain valley. But I have never felt so strongly that it is not a word, but rather a force of nature. The word is concerned with truth, but this is a means of war, it belongs to the glistening armaments of the inhabitants of Mars.[18]

The experience of hearing Hitler's words on the radio, spreading over the plains of North America and tracking Horkheimer down as he made his was towards the Continental Divide, seems to have crystallized the demonic pact between language and mass communication that, for Horkheimer, lay at the heart of Fascism. As he and Adorno would later observe in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, wireless broadcasting stood in the same relationship to Fascism as the printing press did to the Reformation.[19] By the time he began his collaboration with Horkheimer on *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno had acquired – thanks, in part, to his work on Paul Lazarsfeld's radio research project – a keen sense of radio's potential as an instrument of totalitarian domination. For his part, Horkheimer had spent much of the time prior to his move to Los Angeles reflecting on the changing role of language in modern society and the political implications of these changes.

The upshot of Horkheimer's studies was the realization that Hitler's addresses were best understood as techniques that, through the use of stereotypical and ritualistic elements, incited individuals to submerge their own identity a collective "love of the Führer."[20] What mattered was not anything that Hitler said — indeed, upon reading one of Hitler's speeches it may be difficult to see that anything had actually been said at all — but rather the fact that he had been able to bring a mass of people to together in one place, at a particular time (typically in the late afternoon, with the sun setting behind him, a setting which tended to create an atmosphere in which individual resistance to the spell he sought to weave would be at its weakest), in order to hear him speak. As Horkheimer stressed in his letter to Loewenthal, Hitler's speeches had nothing to do with truth or falsehood and everything to do with mass mobilization.

This analysis had troubling implications for the position Horkheimer had mapped out in essays published in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* during the 1930s. There Horkheimer had presented himself as a critical, but ultimately loyal, defender of the ideals of the Enlightenment. The few criticisms he offered were directed primarily at the tendency of Enlightenment thinkers to deny the historicity of the laws that govern social relations and to assume that they were invariant and "natural" and their inclination to posit a "simple juxtaposition of 'Reason' and ideology, without understanding either in terms of their historical roles."[21] For this reason, Hegel's critique of the Enlightenment — which "did not separate truth and knowledge from the temporal" but instead "made knowledge of the temporal as temporal the content of his philosophy"— might (with a few modifications) serve as a model.[22] With a nod to *Phenomenology*, Horkheimer suggested that the failings of the Enlightenment could be overcome as it became "enlightened about itself."[23]

> The battle cries of the Enlightenment and of the French Revolution are valid now more than ever. The dialectical critique of the world, which is borne along by them, consists precisely in the demonstration that they have retained their actuality rather than lost it on the basis of reality. These ideas and values are nothing but the isolated traits of the rational society, as they are anticipated in morality as a necessary goal. Politics in accord with this goal therefore must not abandon these demands, but realize them …. [24]

To invoke the formula from Marx that Karl Korsch had emphasized in *Marxism and Philosophy*: the ideals of the Enlightenment would be "abolished" by being "realized."

Hitler, however, posed a significant challenge to this conception of ideology-critique. Marx argued that ideologies represented false universalizations of the particular interests of specific classes. Because these ideologies remained within the bounds of propositional speech, the critical theorist could demonstrate how these interests expressed potentially universalizable demands, but couched them in terms of the interests of a particular class. Hitler, however, was not advancing propositional claims: his rhetoric was more like a magical spell than a political argument.[25] While Horkheimer's earlier work searched for unrealized "progressive" elements in "bourgeois thinkers," he now found himself arguing that even apparently progressive elements in "bourgeois ideology" pointed the way to the authoritarian state.[26] The notes from a discussion with Adorno from the autumn of 1939 document the change in perspective. At one point Horkheimer observes that there is something "peculiar" about the arguments of his colleagues Herbert Marcuse and Franz Neumann: "they are still serious about trying to rescue the bourgeoisie."[27] By the end of the 1930s, Horkheimer seems to have concluded that the bourgeoisie was beyond rescue.

In Münchhausen's Swamp

Horkheimer's changing evaluation of the bourgeoisie has tended to receive less attention than his loss of faith in the proletariat, but it was probably of greater significance for his increasingly bleak assessment for the prospects for social criticism. For while it was clear, from the very inception of Horkheimer's concept of critical theory, that the proletariat had failed to fulfill the mission assigned to it in Marx's theory, Horkheimer had still been able to appeal, throughout the 1930s, on those "bourgeois"

ideals that the proletariat was supposed to realize in practice. Even in the absence of an agent capable of realizing them, the most progressive elements of "bourgeois ideology" could still serve as a standard against which society might be judged. But the one thing that Horkheimer's materialist conception of social theory could never accept was an appeal to principles that claimed to be free from the vicissitudes of history. An insistence on this point had been one of the governing principles of his proposed book on dialectics. As he explained in 1938, the book would examine categories such as "causality, tendency, progress, law, necessity, freedom, class, culture, value, ideology, dialectic, etc.," as they had been employed in both "scientific and political discussion of social problems." His intent was to produce a work in which "a determination of philosophical concepts is, at the same time, a presentation of human society in its historically given constitution."[28] In framing his intentions in this way he was reiterating the definition of critical theory he had offered a year earlier in his programmatic essay "Traditional and Critical Theory." Critical Theory was based, he explained, on "the unfolding of a single existential judgment" regarding the development of capitalist society.

> To put it in broad terms, the theory says that the basic form of the historically given commodity economy on which modern history rests contains in itself the internal and external tensions of the modern era; it generates these tensions over and over again in an increasingly heightened form; and after a period of progress, development of human powers, and emancipation for the individual, after an enormous extension of human control over

> nature, it finally hinders further development and drives humanity into a new barbarism.[29]

In the grim vision that had begun to emerge in Horkheimer's work at the close of the 1930s, progress now pointed, unambiguously, to an ever greater barbarism: the capacities that had been developing during the "bourgeois" era found their realization in the techniques of social control that were now being deployed by the Nazi state.

The records that have preserved of discussions between Horkheimer and Adorno from the 1930s open a window onto the way they wrestled with the problem of how a theory that claimed to ground its critique of society in standards that were immanent in history could find a foothold after history had betrayed it.[30] It is not always clear how to interpret the transcripts of these discussions, which range across issues involving language and cognition, logic and mythology, science and domination, and the role of utopian thought. As positions are tried out, criticisms offered, and responses improvised, it is often difficult to tell whether the two discussants are actually committed to the arguments they advance or whether they are attempting to play positions off against one another in order to see how far certain lines of argument could be pushed. There is, however, one point that emerges rather forcefully: by 1939 Horkheimer had come to harbor grave doubts as to whether language was equal to the task of critique. As Adorno noted after reading a paper by Horkheimer on the function of the copula "is" in logic, "Your text awakens the feeling that one really must have another language."[31]

In his comments on the paper, Adorno observed that, in addition to its "analytic" use – which Adorno saw as the central focus of Horkheimer's argument – language was capable of presenting arguments "dialectically." He went on to suggest that perhaps the

problems Horkheimer found in modern discussions of the copula could be traced to a tendency of logicians to neglect the dialectical potential of language and, instead, to "fetishize" the concept of identity. Horkheimer disagreed, arguing,

> The path is inverted: there is not first an identity function, which is then fetishized, rather there is first a belief in an eternal or substantial being, and only insofar as it lays the ground can the identity function constitute itself. Gods were not established on the basis of a reality, rather gods will be presupposed when the concept of an univocal reality was established.[32]

If Horkheimer was correct, the tendency of logic to erase the novel and the non-identical had deep roots, reaching back to the very beginnings of a sense that reality was coherent and orderly. A tendency towards fetishism would appear to be inherent in human thought itself and this tendency now threatened to eradicate the very possibility of arguing that the world could be other than it is. "It appears to me," Horkheimer commented, "that in this world language always corresponds to the equally bad order" of the world. "A better language seems possible only in a better world, where it would no longer be necessary."[33]

The forces responsible for this "bad order" had, by the time of these discussions, becoming clearer to Horkheimer. A 1939 letter to Robert Maynard Hutchins, the president of the University of Chicago, summarized his position quite succinctly:

> If one had to give a quick rough characterization of the complicated process of the breakdown of culture in recent decades — its ultimate causes in every field will be found to go back to the Renaissance — one might say that passionate and unconditional

> interest in truth has been replaced by an interest in "success." To be sure, some intellectuals do not openly maintain that there is no distinction to be made between a good and a bad social order, that one is not obliged to act justly, that God is a meaningless concept. Something much worse has happened. These concepts and their appropriate institutions still receive acknowledgment, but without concern for their concrete contents, without an orientation of science and life in their direction.[34]

Everywhere in the modern world, words have turned into instruments of domination. "It is a wonder," Horkheimer observed, "that anyone can ever say or think anything that is not a technique of administration [*Verwaltungstechnisch*]."[35]

The problem of how to find a means of expression that could escape from this trap loomed large in Horkheimer and Adorno's discussions. Horkheimer had, at least initially, been reluctant to abandon the commitment to a fusing of philosophy and empirical research that had been the driving force behind his work ever since he assumed the directorship of the Institute for Social Research. He repeatedly emphasized the importance of the "positivist" requirement that theories be confirmed by empirical observations. In the earliest of the surviving discussion protocols – an internal seminar from 1931-32 involving a number of associates from the Institute for Social Research – he stressed the need to hold fast to the "positivistic standpoint" in its insistence that "nothing will be deemed as existing except that which bases itself on sense data [*sinnlichen Gegebenheit*]."[36] Eight years later, he still insisted that there were aspects of positivism worth defending, most notably its emphasis on "doubt" and its sense that "in

the sphere of immediacy and phenomena there is nothing secure or true." Indeed, in his view, critical theory had "appropriated the positivist motif into itself as critical."[37]

He also had begun to have reservations about the extent to which "dialectical theory" was "really a theory." "A theory is a deduction from fixed principles," he explained, and it had long been one of his central criticisms of positivism that it tended to treat its laws as eternal and unchanging, rather than as developing historically.[38] As soon as laws were viewed as standing outside history, rather than as hypotheses that needed to be constantly tested in practice, they fell prey to what he characterized as "idealism."[39] As Horkheimer employed the term, any theory that claims that there is "rational structure" to the world or that attempts to construct "a perfect system," is "idealist."[40] In his discussions with Adorno, Horkheimer faced the challenge of reconciling his commitment to a "positivist" standpoint, which required that theories be confirmed by reference to empirical facts, with his allegiance to "materialism," which insisted that theories were themselves products of history and, as such, incapable of offering final and conclusive accounts of the reality they sought to grasp. In wrestling with this problem, Hegel served as a constant point of reference.

Horkheimer praised Hegel for his refusal to exempt his concepts from historical transformation: Hegel's treatment of the individual, for example, was judged superior to that of Schopenhauer or Kierkegaard because his view of humanity as "a mere function of history" was "a much truer presentation of reality than the apparently concrete apprehension of individuality or the individual in psychological or existential thinkers."[41] What Horkheimer found problematic was Hegel's claim that "the truth is the whole" – an assertion that Adorno would brusquely negate, shortly after the completion of *Dialectic*

of Enlightenment, in a famous aphorism from *Minima Moralia*: “the whole is false.”[42] The problem, as Adorno summarized it during a February 1939 discussion, was two-fold: 1) whether a “rigorous conception of truth” was still possible, once Hegel’s assumption of the identity of subject and object was “radically precluded” and 2) how it was possible to conceive of a dialectic in which there was “no room for identity and for totality.”[43] Horkheimer seems to have been deeply troubled by the implications of this “open dialectic.” When translated into the language of Horkheimer’s “materialist” social theory, Hegel’s “whole” corresponded to “our entire theoretical edifice.”[44] The dilemma, as he outlined it to Adorno, was as follows: “We must decide: either historicism is right that truth only holds for a specific time, or truth must remain correlated with something eternal, which does not lapse into decline.”[45]

For his part, Adorno noted that Hegel’s claim that “the truth is the whole” referred not to “the whole of available scientific cognition,” but rather to “the movement that thought undergoes.” As a result, Hegel’s conception of the whole presupposed the principles of “identity” and “totality” and was coherent only if it was assumed that thought was capable of encompassing all reality. “That,” he concluded, “is unacceptable for us” and, hence, both the “idealistic interpretation” of Hegel’s sentence (with its assumption of the identity of subject and object) as well as the “scientific” interpretation (which privileged the “position of science” and failed to see its historical relativity) had to be rejected.[46] “Indeed, we can not say that the whole is true; we can only say that the whole, which does not exist, is true,” a conclusion that – Adorno noted – left critical theory in a position that resembled that of Baron Münchhausen: it was trying to pull himself out of swamp by its own pig-tail.[47]

This result was not particularly troubling for Adorno. Against Horkheimer's reluctance to abandon the idea that facts existed independently of theories, he questioned the "static division of facts and theories" and concluded that, ultimately, this distinction was not a question of "scientific methodology, but rather one of history." Invoking a term he had employed in his work on Kierkegaard and an early lecture on the "Idea of Natural History," he argued that facts might best be viewed as what had been left behind as history's "*caput mortuum*" – a term used in alchemy to designate the worthless residue that remained after everything valuable had been removed.[48] It was for this reason, he explained, that he preferred to speak of not of "facts" but rather of "material," offering as an example the concept of "capital," which includes within it both nature and labor.[49] "Material" such as this – material which has already been worked over by history – could provide the starting point for a process of "construction" that, eschewing claims about the truth of the whole, takes its point of departure from those "smallest cells" which, in Benjamin's account, provide an access to truth.[50] "We do not believe that truth resides in history," Adorno explained, "but rather that history is in the truth."[51] This move had dramatic implications for the way critical theory must now understand itself, as Adorno himself conceded in the candid confession that "a formulation of the concept of truth is impossible without a specific concept of negative theology."[52]

"Negative theology" (and its synonym "inverted theology") was the term Adorno had employed to designate the project on which he and Benjamin had been engaged since their 1929 meeting in the Berlin suburb of Königstein, where Benjamin sketched the outlines of his projected study of the Paris arcades and read from a number of his early notes.[53] Adorno's most concise discussion of the notion occurs in a letter to Benjamin

written in December 1934, shortly after he read Benjamin's recently published essay on Franz Kafka. Observing that "our agreement in philosophical fundamentals" had never been as evident as in this essay, Adorno went on to note how, in his own attempt to interpret Kafka a decade earlier, he suggested that Kafka's work "represents a photograph of our earthly life from the perspective of a redeemed life." "Inverse theology," he noted, is involved in a double game, taking aim at "natural and supernatural interpretation alike."[54] Benjamin played theological and sociological interpretations of Kafka's stories off against each other by employing supernatural images to interpret aspects of Kafka's texts that were typically seen as reflecting Kafka's social and political context while, at the same time, using this social and political context to decode what would appear to be theological dimensions in Kafka's work. It was a measure of Benjamin's success in this peculiar approach that both Bertolt Brecht, who emphasized the "materialist" dimension of Kafka's work, and Gershom Scholem, who approached his work "theologically," found something to complain about in Benjamin's interpretation of Kafka.[55]

Adorno attempted a similar set of moves against the "materialist" Horkheimer, arguing in a discussion dating from 1932 that, insofar as it rejects the idea that the world can be completely grasped by human understanding, theology remains closer to materialism than to idealism.[56] Noting that the relationship between "spiritualism" and "materialism" was "a very dialectical problem," he argued that spiritualism was "revolutionary as the disentangling of human dependency on nature, reactionary in its absolutization."[57] In another discussion, he suggested that it was not really necessary for critical theory to choose between "materialist" and "idealist" standpoints, warning, "As soon as one even enters into this dimension of questions, one has already fallen into

conceptual fetishism."[58]

Horkheimer was initially leery of such formulations. At one point in his discussions with Adorno, he questioned whether it was possible to clarify the "principle of grouping" that governed Adorno's construction of dialectical images and, at another, expressed discomfort what he regarded Adorno's "theologically determined" approach to the history of the subject.[59] He had voiced similar misgivings several years earlier in a letter to Benjamin that criticized Benjamin's argument for the "incompleteness" of history in his essay on the historian Eduard Fuchs.

> I have reflected for a long time on the question of the extent to which the work of the past is closed off. … The assessment of incompleteness is idealistic if it does not incorporate completion into it. Past injustice has occurred and is completed. The slain are really slain. You assertion is ultimately theological. If one takes the lack of closure entirely seriously, one must believe in the Last Judgment. My thinking is too contaminated by materialism for that. Perhaps, with regard to incompleteness, there is a difference between the positive and the negative, so that only injustice, the horror, the sufferings of the past are irreparable. The justice practiced, the joys, the works, have a different relation to time, for their positive character is largely negated by the transience of things. This holds first and foremost for individual existence, in which it is not the happiness but the unhappiness that is sealed by death.[60]

Benjamin preserved this portion of Horkheimer's letter in the notes for his *Arcades Project*, where – in what he characterized as a "corrective" to Horkheimer's criticism – he responded,

> [H]istory is not simply a science but also and not least a form of remembrance. What science has 'determined,' remembrance can modify. Such mindfulness can make the incomplete (happiness) into something complete, and the complete (suffering) into something incomplete. That is theology; but in remembrance we have an experience that forbids us to conceive of history as fundamentally atheological, little as it may be granted us to try to write it with immediately theological concepts.[61]

Avoiding, "immediately theological concepts," the "negative theology" that Benjamin and Adorno sought to elaborate nevertheless "forbids" its disciples from conceiving of history as "fundamentally atheological." Like the dwarf beneath the automaton, it stays out of sight, but makes all the crucial moves.

While Horkheimer may have expressed reservations about such an approach to history in his discussions with Adorno and in his correspondence with Benjamin, his letter to Lowenthal from the Stanley Hotel ends on a rather different note. The passage in which he contrasts Hitler's use of words as weapons with the role of the word in disclosing truth continues:

> However, the particular task that is posed to us is the determination of what truth is. Apparently the idealists already had something correct in sight with the self-knowledge of thinking, but they were

> too arrogant: one cannot put thought in the position of God. The bourgeois tendency towards fascism is hidden in this philosophical undertaking. One must earnestly inquire if, among the rummage that the church has sold off, something that is very valuable has, not unexpectedly, become dirt cheap: for example, the differentiation between thought and truth, with the latter God himself was identified …. Now what, now that God has been sold off![62]

By the summer of 1940, Horkheimer appears to have overcome at least some of his initial misgivings about Adorno and Benjamin's negative theology and had become increasingly interested in seeing what relevance it might have for his own work. The use to which he would put whatever bargains he might find at the church's rummage sale was driven home in the sentence that concludes this remarkable letter: "We must write our logic anew." Rewriting his "logic," he wound up producing the work that would eventually be published under the title *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

The Word Made Flesh

Adorno's most evocative summary of the task of the negative theologian came at the end of *Minima Moralia*, the work he presented to Max Horkheimer "in gratitude and promise" on the occasion of Horkheimer's fiftieth birthday.

> Knowledge has no light than the one that shines on the world from redemption: everything else exhausts itself in reconstruction and remains a piece of technique. Perspectives must be fashioned that

> displace and estrange the world, reveal it to be, with its rifts and crevices, as indigent and distorted as it will appear one day in messianic light. To gain such perspectives without velleity or violence, entirely from felt contact with its objects – this alone is the task of thought.[63]

Dialectic of Enlightenment might be read as an attempt to imagine how the world might appear in the light that shines "from redemption." The notorious exaggerations and distortions that mark this strange book are the bitter fruit of a vision of history that mirrors Benjamin's description of how things appear to the Angel of History: "Where a chain of events appears before *us*, *he* sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it at his feet."[64] It is understandable that, gazing at the world in horror while being pulled backward by the storm that is "blowing from Paradise," the Angel might take Kant and Sade to be saying the same thing – or even, perhaps, confuse Hollywood with Dachau.

Jürgen Habermas has argued that *Dialectic of Enlightenment* arose from an uneasy fusion of two theoretical commitments: Adorno's appropriation of Benjamin's conceptions of natural history, myth, and modernity and Horkheimer's account of the reduction of reason to strategies of self-preservation that, in the end, culminate in the sacrifice of the self. The text that resulted, Habermas notes, "is by no means a seamless web." He detects a divergence in the way its co-authors responded to a critique of reason that was so relentless that, in the end, it deprived itself of a place to stand. While Adorno reconciled himself to "the aporia of the self-referential critique" by drawing on the "independent source of insight" offered by aesthetic experience, Habermas sees

Horkheimer as much more ambivalent: he continued to insist on the possibility that enlightenment might be able to transcend itself, yet he could offer no grounds for this hope.[65] It is this ambivalence, according to Habermas, that drove Horkheimer, after his return to Germany, towards religion, which "now appears as the only agency that – if it only could command assent—would permit distinguishing between truth and falsity, morality and immortality." In the late Horkheimer it is "not mere philosophy – not even in the form of negative dialectics – but theology" that can serve as "the only alternative to a desolate positivism."[66] While much in Habermas' interpretation is confirmed by the records of the discussions between Horkheimer and Adorno, it misses one important point: the arguments that Horkheimer used in the 1940s to defend the capacity of philosophy to rescue reason from the degeneracy that had afflicted it, were already saturated with theological images. He was not drawn to theology after his return to Germany; he was already dependent on its resources during his American exile.

We can catch a glimpse of this between the lines of *Eclipse of Reason*, a work that Habermas regards as the most explicit of the texts where Horkheimer "does not hesitate to lower the sights of a totalizing critique of reason that seriously implicates itself, in order not to deprive the dialectic of enlightenment of its own enlightening function."[67] There is a peculiar moment in the book's concluding chapter when Horkheimer takes a passing swipe at his Columbia colleague Robert Lynd's attempt, in *Knowledge for What?*, to replace "the theology, eschatology, and other familiar aspects of traditional Christianity" with a new framework of "richly evocative common purposes," grounded in social science, that would "have meaning in terms of the deep personality needs of the great mass of the people."[68] Horkheimer argues that such a proposal is indicative of the

more general reduction of reason to an instrument that he has been tracing: "Once men come to speak of religious hope and despair in terms of 'deep personality needs,' emotionally rich common sentiments, or scientifically tested human values, religion is meaningless to them."[69] Against this tendency, Horkheimer sketches a rather different vocation for philosophy:

> Philosophy must become more sensitive to the muted testimonies of language and plumb the layers of experience preserved in it. Each language carries a meaning embodying the thought forms and belief patterns rooted in the evolution of the people who speak it. … [T]he word, with its half-forgotten layers of meaning and association is the guiding principle. These implications have to be re-experienced and preserved, as it were, in more enlightened and universal ideas.[70]

According to Horkheimer – who again echoes Benjamin[71] – language retains a mimetic function: it "reflects the longings of the oppressed and the plight of nature; it releases the mimetic impulse …."[72]

It is at this moment that *Eclipse of Reason* draws a contrast that recalls one of Horkheimer's earliest descriptions of what he hoped to achieve in his book on dialectics. Reflecting on the diverging uses to which the mimetic impulse can be put he observes,

> Fascism treated language as a power instrument, as a means of storing knowledge for use in production and destruction in both war and peace. The repressed mimetic tendencies were cut off from adequate linguistic expression and employed as a means for

> wiping out all opposition. Philosophy helps man to allay his fears by helping language to fulfill its genuine mimetic function, its mission of mirroring the natural tendencies. Philosophy is at one with art in reflecting passion to the sphere of experience and memory.… Philosophy is the conscious effort to knot all our knowledge and insight into a linguistic structure in which things are called by their right names.[73]

Horkheimer's contrast between fascism and philosophy mirrors the distinction he made, in the letter to Pollock that first sketched his plan for his book on dialectics, between "making use of the truth" and "fulfilling it" – the "secret conflict" in modern society that he had marked with the names "Hitler" and "Jesus."

As we have seen, this connection between truth and theology returns once more in the letter Horkheimer wrote to Tillich as he began his aborted effort to compose the sequel to *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Though Horkheimer's intense interest in the significance of the statement "I am the Truth" is more than enough to raise the suspicion that the theological motifs that Habermas associates with the later Horkheimer were already active, under the table, at those very moments when Horkheimer was most actively engaged in attempting to show how enlightenment might rescue itself from the corruption that had befallen it, there is one text in which all these themes come together, if only for a moment. In the Columbia lectures on Society and Reason that served as the first draft for *Eclipse of Reason*, the discussion of the need for philosophy to aid of the mimetic function of language is preceded by a passage that – though part of

Horkheimer's lecture in Room 716 of Philosophy Hall – was not carried over into the book itself:

> The hallowed values of Western Civilization were not created *ex nihilo*. They arise from the interaction of antagonistic groups in the social process. From one point of view, they insure the amenability of the submerged strata by providing them with consolations which divert their frustrations into cooperative rather than aggressive channels. … Such consolations effect a compromise, as it were, between blind coercion and complete abandonment to natural drives, between raw command and anarchy, between spirit and nature. They are the monuments of attempted reconciliation between oppressed nature and oppressing agencies. To the work of mediation which is performed by the language in which these ideals are couched, it is almost proper to apply the words with which the Gospel of John describes the Logos: In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.[74]

Here Horkheimer returns, for a moment, to the vision of history that had guided his work before his departure for California, a vision that sought to extract, from the struggle of ideologies, a glimpse of utopia. From this vantage point, "bourgeois ideology" was not simply an instrument of control, it also carried the promise of reconciliation.

During the 1930s, Horkheimer had sought to ground this vision of history in a materialist account of class struggles. In the years immediately before he began work

with Adorno on what would become *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, he had lost faith in this account of history: class struggles no longer betrayed traces of utopia, they simply registered a massive increase in the capacity for control. Yet, even as he was working on *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer seems to have resisted the grim conclusion to which he had been driven. He clung to a hope that history might promise something other than the perfection of new means of social control. That hope, which can no longer be expressed in the language of historical materialism, appears, if only for a moment, in his lectures on Society and Reason, clad in a garment that Horkheimer picked up, for a bargain price, at theology's rummage sale.

Notes:

[1] The typescript of the lectures has been preserved in the Max Horkheimer Archive at the University of Frankfurt (IX, 36, 6a).

[2] Max Horkheimer, *The Eclipse of Reason* (New York, 1947) vi-vii. I have discussed the relationship between this book and the Columbia Lectures in more detail in "*Eclipse of Reason* and the End of the Frankfurt School in American," *New German Critique* #100 (2007) in press.

[3] Letter to Juliette Favez of February 17, 1939 in Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* 16:.561.

[4] This is clearest in the deletion of the closing paragraph from the 1944 mimeograph, which began, "If the good fortune of being able to work on such questions without the unpleasant prospect of immediate purposes should continue, we hope to complete the whole work in the not too distant future." Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, in Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften,* ed., Gunzelin Schmid Noerr (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1987) 5:23 [*Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002) 254].

[5] One of Horkheimer's letters to Lowenthal suggests that a good many of the changes in the text may have been driven by tactical, rather than theoretical, considerations: "The only consideration for combing the manuscript again is the tactical one. Since I believe that developments will be faster than most people foresee, I want to guard against possible difficulties of traveling in Europe which could result from this publication. The more immediate reason for my desire were the articles from the *New York Times* which you sent me recently. As you will remember, the author makes the point that today the word 'monopoly' in literature is an unmistakable characteristic of those Europeans who are tending toward the East. Since misunderstandings of our book in this direction would be undesirable in a twofold sense, I think it should be cleansed of such expressions as much as possible." Max Horkheimer, letter to Leo Lowenthal of July 17, 1946, Leo Lowenthal Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, bMS Ger 185 (47), folder 24. For his part, Lowenthal expressed reservations – which were initially rejected by Horkheimer – regarding certain passages in the manuscript that drew too close a connection between liberal democracy and National Socialism: "I do not think that you should eliminate every reference to the dialectic between liberal society and fascism. I am nearly insulted that you thought I would suggest such a horrible thing. I only took exception to two or three places where an American institution is stylistically treated in such a way that the reader has to interpret: Aha, he means that American fascism is unavoidable and almost on the threshold." Lowenthal further urged a wholesale revision of tenses in the book, "Certainly you should not only not hide but stress the fact that this book was written during the war and finished long before it has ended. But since it is not a book which is published posthumously, it seems to me a little bit too precieus [sic] and could be interpreted as vanity to be so pedantic in conserving the original text. I am always tempted a little bit to smile when I read these sentences on the Nazis as if they were still in power. In any case I have not a comfortable feeling. Why not mention in the preface that for the reader's sake you have changed the tense to the past?" Letter to Horkheimer of August 2, 1946, Leo Lowenthal Papers, bMS Ger 185 (78), folder 32.

[6] This is made clearest in Horkheimer's response to Leo Lowenthal's enthusiastic praise of the the *Philosophische Fragmente*: "… it is a fine thing that you like the book and I hope that the second part will still be much better." Letter to Lowenthal, June 14, 1944, Leo Lowenthal Papers, bMS Ger 185 (47), folder 17. Some preliminary notes for this work were published as "Rettung der Aufklärung. Diskussen über eine geplante Schrift

zur Dialektik," in Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* 12:593-606. In his editorial note, Gunzelin Schmidt Noerr characterizes these notes as evidence of Horkheimer and Adorno's intention "after the conclusion of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*" to write a "further general work on the dialectic" (593). Yet Horkheimer's letters from the period when he was working on the *Philosophische Fragmente*, suggest that – at least initially – the discussion of the "rescue of enlightenment" was seen as something that needed to be included in the *Fragmente* to bring them to completion, rather than as another book. It was only in the wake of the decision to publish *Philosophische Fragmente* as *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (for example, in the letter to Tillich, discussed below) that Horkheimer began to speak unambiguously of a second book devoted to the topic.

[7] Horkheimer appears to have viewed the grant as, at best, a mixed blessing: it provided much needed funding for the Institute, but effectively ended his work on his *Dialectics.* As he wrote to Lowenthal, shortly after receiving word that the grant had been awareded, "The last weeks and even months have been taken [up] by the most exhausting thinking which I ever did in my life. Besides of some aphorisms I have not written anything, but I think that I [have] arrived now at a definite theory of dialectics, at an aim for which I have been striving during so many years. The formulation of that theory would have taken me the next half year and now I must start conversations with innumerable people in order to organize some worth while empirical study. I won't be able to show a documentation of my work, not even a fragmentary one." Horkheimer to Lowenthal, March 26, 1943, in Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 17:438-9.

[8] Horkheimer to Pollock, January 7, 1944, in Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* 17:539 and Horkheimer to Pollock, December 18, 1945 in Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* 17:687-8.

[9] For a discussion of the largely negative reception of *Eclipse of Reason* see Schmidt, "The *Eclipse of Reason* and the End of the Frankfurt School in America."

[10] In his letter to Lowenthal of January 10, 1946, Horkheimer noted, "[T]he book, as it is, opposes the concept of nature so directly to that of spirit, and the idea of object to that of subject, that our philosophy appears as much too static and dogmatic. We have accused the others, both Neo-Thomists and Positivists, of stopping thought at isolated and therefore contradictory concepts and, as it is, it would be only too easy for them to accuse us of doing the same thing. ... I do not feel any doubt that in the last chapter this gap should be filled."

[11] Letter to Friedrich Pollock, April 27, 1941, in Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* 17:24-5

[12] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung* 21 [*Dialectic of Enlightenment* xviii].

[13] Letter to Friedrich Pollock, April 27, 1941, Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* 17:25

[14] Letter to Paul Tillich of August 29, 1947, in Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* 17:884. An editorial note argues that the use of the phrase “Black Manuscript” is “not metaphorical” but rather refers to the color of the manila binding which enclosed the 1944 mimeographed version. I am not entirely convinced by the claim: the copy of the mimeograph that I examined (from the library of Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles) was bound in a brown cover.

[15] Paul Tillich, letter to Horkheimer of September 1947, in Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* 17:892-3.

[16] Walter Benjamin, “On the Concept of History,” in Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, Volume 4, 1938-1940 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003) 389. Horkheimer and Adorno first learned of the existence of Benjamin’s “On the Concept of History,” in June 1941, when (aided by the American refugee worker Varian Fry and his associates) Hannah Arendt successfully escaped from France along the route that Benjamin found blocked, bringing his papers with her to New York. See Adorno’s letter to Horkheimer of June 12, 1942 in Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 17:59.

[17] For one of the better versions of this argument, see Jürgen Habermas, “Remarks on the Development of Horkheimer’s Work,” in Seyla Benhabib, Wolfgang Bonss, and John McCole, *On Max Horkheimer : New Perspectives* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), 49-66. An exception to this tendency can be found in Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination; a History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950*, [1st] ed. (Boston,: Little Brown, 1973). Jay observes that “Horkheimer’s interest in religion, which surfaced in his later years, was … not as fundamental a departure from the premises of his earlier work as might appear at first glance” (266). See also Brian J. Shaw, "Reason, Nostalgia, and Eschatology in the Critical Theory of Max Horkheimer," *The Journal of Politics* 47, no. 1 (1985). Shaw explores the persistence of “eschatological” elements throughout Horkheimer’s career, but attributes them to his fundamental “pessimism” and “masochism.”

[18] Letter to Leo Lowenthal of July 21, 1940, in Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* 16:731. The letter is noted, in passing, in Helmut Dubiel, *Theory and Politics : Studies in the Development of Critical Theory*, trans. Benjamin

Gregg (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), 86. I have discussed some of its implications in James Schmidt, "Language, Mythology, and Enlightenment: Historical Notes on Horkheimer and Adorno's Dialectic of Enlightenment," *Social Research* 65, no. 4 (1998). The next several paragraphs draw on that discussion.

[19] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 129.

[20] Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* 12:30

[21] See, for example, "Materialism and Metaphysics," in Max Horkheimer, *Critical Theory; Selected Essays* (New York,: Herder and Herder, 1972), 36.; and "Beginnings of the Bourgeois Philosophy of History," in Max Horkheimer, *Between Philosophy and Social Science : Selected Early Writings* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), 361.

[22] Horkheimer, "Materialism and Metaphysics" 38

[23] Horkheimer, "Beginnings of the Bourgeois Philosophy of History," 361, which quotes Hegel's *Phenomenology* 344.

[24] Horkheimer, "Materialism and Morality," in Horkheimer, *Between Philosophy and Social Science* 37; see also 41.

[25] Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* 12:38

[26] The pivotal text is his 1936 article, "Egoism and Freedom Movements: On the Anthropology of the Bourgeois Era," in *Between Philosophy and Social Science* 49-110.

[27] Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* 12:522

[28] Horkheimer, "Idee, Aktivtät und Program des Instituts für Sozialforschung," in Hokheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* 12:156.

[29] Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory," in Horkheimer, *Critical Theory* 227; see also 239.

[30] The relevant texts have been collected in *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:437-525. They have received surprisingly little attention from scholars. For one important exception, see Anson Rabinbach, "The Cunning of Unreason: Mimesis and the Construction of Anti-Semitism in Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*," in Rabinbach,. *In the Shadow of Catastrophe : German Intellectuals between Apocalypse and Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) 166-198.

[31] Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:495

[32] Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:496

[33] Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:497

[34] Letter to Robert Maynard Hutchins of January 7, 1939, in Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 16:536-7

[35] Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:498

[36] Adorno, Horkheimer, et al "Wissenschaft und Krise. Differenz zwischen Idealismus und Materialismum. Diskussionen über Themen zu einter Vorlesung Max Horkheimers," in Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:369, 371

[37] Horkheimer andAdorno, "Discussionen über die Differenz zwischen Positivismus und materialistischer Dialektik," in Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:477.

[38] For the reservations about "dialectical theory," see Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:501. For the characterization of positivism as involving unchanging laws, see "Wissenschaft und Krise" 12:374

[39] Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:374.

[40] Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:376

[41] Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:437; see also 12:439, 452

[42] Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: New Left Books, 1974), 50.

[43] See Adorno's summary of these issues on Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:467

[44] Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:491

[45] Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:506.

[46] Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:491

[47] Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:478. The reference to the so-called "Münchhausensituation" returns in *Minima Moralia* 74.

[48] Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:472.

[49] Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:475

[50] Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:508.

[51] Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:519

[52] Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:492

[53] For the characterization of the conversations, see Adorno's important letter to Benjamin of November 10, 1938, in Theodor W. Adorno and Walter Benjamin, "The Complete Correspondence, 1928-1940," (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 281. For Benjamin's recollection, see his letter to Adorno of March 3, 1932, *Collected Correspondence* 14. For a helpful general discussion of the issues involved as well as a clarification of Adorno's understanding of "negative theology" see Susan Buck-Morss, *Origins of Negative Dialectics* 139-146 and Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing* 173-7, 246-7

[54] Adorno to Benjamin, December 17, 1934, *Collected Correspondence* 66-67. Benjamin's Kafka essay appeared in the December 1934 issue of the *Jüdische Rundschau.* Fo a translation, see Benjamin, *Selected Writings* 2:794-816.

[55] Buck-Morss, *Origins* 142

[56] Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:380-1

[57] Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:357

[58] Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 12:486

[59] For problems with Adorno's "principle of grouping"see 12:533; for reservations about the account of the subject, see 12:454-5.

[60] Letter to Benjamin of March 16, 1937, Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* 16:82-3.

[61] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* 471

[62] Horkheimer, *Gesammmelte Schriften* 16:732.

[63] Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, 247. I have modified the translation, in part incorporating the suggestions in Gerhard Richter, "Aesthetic Theory and Nonpropositional Truth Content in Adorno," *New German Critique* 33, no. 1 (2006). which provides an extended discussion of this passage.

[64] Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," *Selected Writings* 4:392.

[65] Jürgen Habermas, "Remarks on the Development of Horkheimer's Work," 57-58.
in Benhabib, Bonss, and McCole, *On Max Horkheimer*, 57-58.

[66] *Ibid*. 60.

[67] *Ibid*. 58

[68] Robert Lynd, *Knowledge for What?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939) 239, quoted in Horkheimer, *Eclipse* 185.

[69] Horkheimer, *Eclipse* 185-6.

[70] Horkheimer, *Eclipse* 165-6.

[71] Horkheimer explicitly refers to Benjamin at one point in the Columbia lectures, but the reference is absent from *Eclipse of Reason*. See Society and Reason, Lecture V, 5.

[72] Horkheimer, *Eclipse* 179; see Benjamin, "On the Mimetic Faculty," in *Selected Writings* 2:720-2 and his 1935 review of literature on the sociology of language in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* in *Selected Writings* 3:68-93.

[73] Horkheimer, *Eclipse* 179-180.

[74] Horkheimer, Society and Reason Lecture V 13-14.