

A reconceptualization of utopia as akairological rupture

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Abstract

This thesis argues that utopia is negatively articulated through akairological rupture, and engendered by an individual through particular musical creation. Akairological rupture is a qualitative state of incompatibility, where the contradictions in rational articulation are rendered apparent. This rupture is juxtaposed against a reading of utopia as the teleological result of chronological and collectively plotted out reform. The introduction provides a contextual justification for the argument, and a history of the key concepts: utopia and kairos. Chapter one focuses upon Friedrich W. Nietzsche's conceptions of self-overcoming, transvaluation and perspectivism, and how these relate in an essential way to Dionysian music as engendering ruptures that may be deemed akairological, and that correspond with a negative articulation of utopia. Chapter two examines Ernst Bloch's response to Nietzsche's Dionysian aesthetic theory through a historical materialist reading of utopia as concrete and kairological. Chapter three presents Theodor W. Adorno's inversion of Bloch's positive dialectic, and a development of Nietzsche's aesthetic theory, to render a negative utopia in line with akairos. Discussed by the three primary thinkers, music is a strand that runs throughout the argument, insofar as it may express the contradictions of rational articulation, and is therefore central to the discussion of utopia as akairological rupture.

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Introduction

What?

This thesis argues for a reconceptualization of utopia as akairological rupture engendered by exacting music. Music is presented over other art forms as most appropriate to reveal the inability of linguistic discourse to comprehensively and rationally articulate time bound thought. Akairological rupture is presented as a qualitative state of incompatibility, where the contradictions in rational articulation are revealed.¹ This thesis's argument is opposed to what will be termed the 'colloquial' reading of utopia as a teleological result enacted by a social collective. Instead, using Nietzsche's distinction between the Dionysian and the Apollonian,² it is argued that an individual artist may articulate a reading of utopia through music, which expresses the limit of Apollonian, rational, communication.³ Music is a temporal art. The primary formal requirement of music as an art form is to articulate the passage of time, and as such to express different senses of temporality. The capacity of music, through formal structures, such as verse and refrain, developing variation, and sonata form, along with the intimate relationship between notes in a melody or a harmony to create and resolve tensions allows music to articulate temporal movement, to construct, fulfil and frustrate expectations of temporal movement, and thereby to explore the listener's sense of time. It will be argued that music, through exposing and interrogating the limits of Apollonian communication renders akairological rupture, which, commensurate with utopia, marks immanent resistance to cultural mores.

¹ Robert Leston, 'Unhinged: *Kairos* and the Invention of the Untimely', *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 21:1 (2013), 29-50 (p.47).

² This will be explored in chapter one. In sum, in Nietzsche's aesthetic theory, the Dionysian represents chaos and the primordial, whilst the Apollonian represents order and rationality.

³ Friedrich W. Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy' in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, trans. Walter Kauffman (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), pp.1-145 (pp.99-100).

Why?

A key issue is that of reconceptualizing utopia amidst a contemporary culture that will be characterized as neoliberal. This is because, enmeshed within the logic of neoliberalism, concepts such as utopia are crudely appropriated within normative discourse and packaged for social consumption. That is, concepts, especially those deemed as potentially challenging to the status quo, are simplified and rendered largely innocuous to reduce their critical efficacy. This thesis deems it problematic to render utopia solely in terms of social reform, as occurs within neoliberalism. Because of the neoliberal context, along with a late capitalist system that is capable, through the process of commodification, to reduce not just material objects, but also concepts, to an economic value, and thus render them exchangeable,⁴ it is argued that utopia ought to be reconceptualized as akairological rupture in order to break radically from the existing neoliberal system. By adopting Adorno's account of late capitalism as a 'totally administered system',⁵ it will be argued that contemporary neoliberal society has brought time to a historical standstill. The idea of historical progress is no longer coherent, and thus a radical alternative conception of time and history is required.

Nietzsche

The thesis falls in the tradition of critical social theory and is inspired by Paul Ricoeur's three masters of suspicion: Marx, Nietzsche and Freud,⁶ as well as their intellectual heirs, Bloch and Adorno. The thesis takes its starting point from Nietzsche's provocative discourse to unsettle

⁴ It will be argued below that commodification entails that an idea such as that of 'utopia' can be incorporated into a costed and administered project of work, that, precisely because of its costing (placing an exchange value on utopia), means that any projected utopia will merely reproduce the capitalist system.

⁵ Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (London; New York: Routledge, 1973), p.141.

⁶ Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: an Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970).

what he deems to be a lethargic culture.⁷ Nietzsche promotes individual self-overcoming and ‘transvaluation’ of cultural mores in line with a Dionysian ontology. This ontology is linked to the significance of music as manifestation of a healthy creative abundance that usurps Apollonian rationality. Nietzsche is thus important to the argument insofar as he demonstrates the importance of revealing the limits of rationally articulated discourse.

Through his aversion to systems,⁸ and a desire for introducing perspectivism amidst his contemporary discourse,⁹ in spite of not explicitly engaging with the concepts of *kairos* or utopia at length,¹⁰ I will argue that an akairological reading of utopia can be attributed to Nietzsche. Nietzsche’s genealogical programme of problematizing the apparent solidity of concepts that govern social interaction is crucial to my project of reconceptualizing utopia. Nietzsche is the ‘bad conscience’ of his time after the manner of a Socratic gadfly,¹¹ who seeks to unsettle norms. He does this by transposing ideas from Greek antiquity, namely, the relationship between the Dionysian and Apollonian, into modern European discourse.

Nietzsche also argues against the logic of positivism throughout his mature and late works.¹² Positivism is commensurate with utopia as classically understood, in effect, linearly and rationally articulated. I am reading positivism after Auguste Comte, who founded a political version of the approach, which promoted a specific form of ratiocination, privileging

⁷ Nietzsche, ‘The Birth of Tragedy’, p.60.

⁸ Friedrich W. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2003), p.35.

⁹ Nietzsche, ‘On the Genealogy of Morals’ in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, pp.437-600 (p.555).

¹⁰ ‘Utopia’ appears twice in his oeuvre. See Friedrich W. Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, trans. Marion Faber and Stephen Lehmann (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), p.220 and Friedrich W. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p.61.

¹¹ The term ‘gadfly’ (*mýops*) refers to one who provokes the status quo. It was coined in this sense by Plato in the *Apology* (399 BC) to describe Socrates’ relationship to the Athenian political scene. Kaufmann notes Nietzsche’s use of ‘gadfly’ as the model of an ideal philosopher. See Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Princeton; London: Princeton University Press, 1974), p.391.

¹² Via a proto-perspectival seeing, Nietzsche flirts with a positivist perspective in *Human, all too Human* (1878), and in early parts of *The Gay Science* (1882). See Friedrich W. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, ed. Bernard Williams, trans. Josephine Nauckhoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

a certain understanding of the scientific method as the only way of understanding and manipulating the material and social world.¹³ This method, Comte argued, was a way in which to facilitate a rationally articulable reading of utopia.¹⁴ My gambit, however, is that following Raymond Geuss, in a 'conflict-ridden'¹⁵ society such as the contemporary one, appropriating political positivism into social policy, and aiming for top down governance to spell out a linear path to a teleological utopia is problematic. Instead, I posit a temporal and qualitative reconceptualization of utopia to account for the contemporary socio-political milieu, without nullifying the concept's critical function. What remains are only ruptures, but it is argued that these are qualitatively loaded, open-ended and enable the theorist to conceptualize a notion of utopia that ensures it cannot be commodified. Writing over a century ago amidst a different socio-political climate, Nietzsche is still crucial to this argument in his role as diagnostician of the crises of modernity, and the problematic attempts of paradigms such as positivism, to account for the complexity of conflict-ridden societies.

Bloch

It is argued that Nietzsche's Dionysian ontology is responded to by Bloch, whose Hegelian-Marxism articulates a positive, kairological reading of utopia. As David Harvey observes, Marx was a child of Enlightenment thought, who sought to convert utopian thinking (in a pejorative

¹³ See Matthew Wilson, 'Labour, utopia and modern design theory: the positivist sociology of Frederic Harrison', *Intellectual History Review*, 29:2 (2019), 313-335, in which the author observes that Comte's positivist utopia appealed to the purse strings of capitalists; in effect, a conservative utopia. Wilson argues: 'At the root of positivist sociology was the utopian belief that the ethical coordination of science and industry could improve the lives of everyone' (p.327). Moreover, Wilson argues that positivism is a 'human-centred form of activism' (p.327). I contest that this (Wilson's) reading of utopia is necessarily conservative, insofar as it operates within the realm of what is contemporaneously rendered both possible and desirable by those with capital.

¹⁴ See Auguste Comte, *The essential Comte: selected from Cours de philosophie positive by Auguste Comte: first published in Paris, 1830-42*, trans. Stanislaw Andreski (London; New York: Routledge, 2015).

¹⁵ Raymond Geuss, *A World Without Why* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), p.13.

sense) into materialist science by inverting Hegel's idealism (so that its logic could be utilised within a materialist philosophy) and thereby demonstrating how, through class conflict, human emancipation could emerge.¹⁶ Bloch is, however, a neo-Marxist insofar as he places utopia at the centre of his epistemology, and deems Marx's historical materialism as a precursor to *Heimat* (being at home in the world), or, in other words, juxtaposed against *Entfremdung* (alienation). Bloch deems utopia an ever present critical and diagnostic tool in epistemology,¹⁷ and thus differs from a Marxist-Leninist reading of the concept as simply a projection of the future.¹⁸ Nevertheless, Bloch's neo-Marxism still applies a historical-materialist approach to a notion of progress, and is concerned with class conflict at the heart of all utopian developments. As such, Bloch eschews Nietzsche's individualism in favour of social emancipation from a condition of alienation. Moreover, Bloch responds to Nietzsche's argument that humanity is something to be overcome,¹⁹ by arguing instead, in historical-materialist vein, that humanity is something yet to come to fruition.²⁰ He attempts to demonstrate the validity of a positive future, in line with classic utopia (which will be spelled out below in this introduction), by filtering wilfully concrete, from compensatory abstract, examples of utopia.²¹

¹⁶ David Harvey, *The condition of postmodernity: an enquiry into the origins of cultural change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), p.14.

¹⁷ Paul R. Mendes-Flohr, "'To Brush History against the Grain': The Eschatology of the Frankfurt School and Ernst Bloch", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 51:4 (December, 1983), 631-650 (p.641).

¹⁸ Gary Zabel distinguishes Bloch's neo-Marxism from a more heterodox version: 'For orthodox Marxists on the opposite front, utopias were wishful projections of emancipated societies which remained pragmatically empty because they lacked any foundation in objective social tendencies. Bloch replied to this critique by demonstrating that utopias were rooted in people's concrete aspirations for more gratifying forms of life, and that these aspirations themselves helped to define the parameters of objective possibility'. See Gary Zabel, 'Ernst Bloch and the Utopian Dimension in Music', *The Musical Times*, 131:1764 (February, 1990), 82-84 (p.82).

¹⁹ Friedrich W. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2003), p.56.

²⁰ Ernst Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, trans. Anthony A. Nassar (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), p.1.

²¹ Bloch's argument will be spelled out in chapter two.

Adorno

Following Bloch's social concern, Adorno is shown to return to Nietzsche's Dionysian ontology. Adorno is also a neo-Marxist, but for different reasons to those ascribed to Bloch; Adorno has lost faith in any revolutionary class in traditional Marxist terms, and instead focuses upon how the material base of late capitalism deems that forces and relations of production are no longer in contradiction.²² For Adorno, by highlighting existing ideological and conceptual violence, the only possible critique that remains is an immanent one.²³ Adorno combines elements of Nietzsche's Dionysian ontology with an inversion of Bloch's positive Hegelianism, to provide a determinately negative articulation of utopia, of a kind which is best exhibited through music. Determinate negation, manifest in what Adorno terms 'non-identity thinking', entails resistance to the imposition of a culture of processual development toward a supposed telos, and a refusal to hypostatize concepts. Thus, non-identity thinking challenges the assumption, characteristic of identity thinking, that concepts can and do grasp reality as it is (and always will be), and as such are impervious to critique or malleability. Utopia thus lies in the discrepancy between concept and reality.

Summary

In conclusion, the integrity of utopia is shown to reside not in a colloquial reading of it as a prescribed ideal commonwealth whose inhabitants live in harmony, but as something that is engendered through akairological rupture and manifested through a determinately negative, individual, approach. This is a temporal and qualitative reconceptualization of utopia, which is anathema to the positive, liberal reading of it as feasible through social reform and rational

²² See, for example, Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, pp.143-160.

²³ Immanent critique is discussed in chapter three, section two.

discourse. Having established what this thesis will do, why it makes its central claim, and the three key theorists who will constitute the main body, the remainder of the introduction will further contextualize the need for the argument, before explicating the two central key concepts: utopia and kairos.

Context

Whilst the utopia of Thomas More, who coined the term in his 1516 eponymous text, was presented as a physical place, 'utopia' for Nietzsche, Bloch and Adorno may rather be understood as a social condition, not a place. The discussion of utopia can thus be drawn out through analyses of the normative, yet contingent, rules that necessarily govern social interaction. Norms are necessary for social cohesion and liberal progress. They are, however, constantly under negotiation by social agents. This is where my contribution enters, in arguing the need to reconceptualize utopia. Geuss observes that the malaise of contemporary culture is within 'the structure of rationality itself', which renders forms of 'political action traditionally recommended by those on the left to be ineffective or even counterproductive'.²⁴ He continues, arguing that discourse amongst the left has not been able to move beyond Adorno's prescient analyses in the 1960s, which acutely diagnosed the ineffectiveness of traditional political action.²⁵ Attempts to rationally articulate a palatable utopia are, then, all too liable to fall foul to the prevalent logic, and limitations of, liberalism.

The contemporary socio-economic context is that of neoliberalism. My contention will be that the neoliberal thought that underpins contemporary political and economic culture, while not uncontested, fundamentally serves to shape and limit any remaining conceptions of a utopian society that may be articulated. Utopia is restricted to a market-based capitalism, in which the rule of law secures individual negative freedom. I read this neoliberal paradigm after Harvey, who defines neoliberalism as 'a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong

²⁴ Geuss, *A World Without Why*, p.114.

²⁵ Geuss, *A World Without Why*, p.114.

private property rights, free markets and free trade'.²⁶ Grounded in the tradition of the Enlightenment, this paradigm is ostensibly concerned with human flourishing, where human flourishing is understood in terms of the happiness and formal or negative freedom of individuals, and where society, if the concept is tolerated at all, is a mere aggregate of those individuals. Neoliberalism is manifest in the thinking and influence of political philosophers such as Friedrich Hayek, and economists such as Milton Friedman (and the Chicago School).²⁷ Faith in market forces, combined with a concomitant belief in a positivist conception of science, along with a commodified notion of a better way of living, leads to the treatment, within orthodox positivist economics, of the norms that govern economic systems as natural (and thus akin to the laws of physics). Neoliberalism can necessarily only then render a conservative utopia (thus bringing history to a standstill). This is because within the neoliberal paradigm, socio-political improvement is achieved through individual freedom and the manipulation of the logic of the market as a natural phenomenon. While this improvement will be realized through a process of reform, such reform can only be a stripping down of a capitalist system to its essential elements, and hence, for example, minimising state interventions in favour of largely laissez-faire approaches. Reform remains within the capitalist framework, rather than occurring through revolution and an attendant demand for a paradigm shift in social and political thought. Such a shift is not possible within a neoliberal, positivist paradigm. Utopia, in this paradigm, can only be incrementally different from that which exists.²⁸ It is precisely within this context that Russell Jacoby's experience echoes that of mine, in musing that when he allots time for students to sketch out their own utopia: '[t]hey

²⁶ David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p.2.

²⁷ See, for example, Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

²⁸ See, for example, the neoliberal utopia of Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974).

come up with laudable ideas—universal health care with choice of doctors; free higher education; clean parks; ecological vehicles—but very little that is out of the ordinary. Their boldest dreams could be realized by a comprehensive welfare state'.²⁹ In an age of 'There is no Alternative' (TINA),³⁰ it is understandable why Jacoby's students deem the above notions utopian, in a pejorative reading, that is, fantastical and unrealistic under existing conditions.

Jacoby argued in 2007, on the brink of the financial crisis, that 'liberal anti-utopians are almost universally hono[u]red; their ideas have become the conventional wisdom of our day'.³¹ Following 2008's financial crisis, deregulated capitalism has been revealed as highly fallible. For Ruth Levitas, post-2008 social policy, both as an academic discipline, and as a political practice, is not utopian enough. Levitas rightly asserts that such policy is 'dominated by a mode of thinking about the future that is essentially one of extrapolation accompanied by crisis management and trouble-shooting'.³² It is within this context that Levitas reads piecemeal reform as 'infinitely safer' than utopian proposals which run the risk of 'totalitarian attempts to impose social and political changes on populations'.³³ With the prevalence of TINA and neoliberalism, socially progressive reforms certainly do appear utopian in a fantastical manner. Levitas caveats popular advocacy of reform by arguing that 'the preference for this kind of safety is tenable only from the position that current systems are,

²⁹ Russell Jacoby, *Picture Imperfect: Utopian Thought for an anti-Utopian age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p.xiv. Whilst a comprehensive welfare state is at odds with neoliberalism's minimal state, such opposition to neoliberalism cannot think beyond Keynesian (mass welfare state) capitalism as a viable alternative.

³⁰ TINA was a slogan often employed by Margaret Thatcher to justify deregulation of national services.

³¹ Jacoby, *Picture Imperfect*, p.xiii.

³² Ruth Levitas, 'Looking for the blue: the necessity of utopia', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 12:3 (2007), 289-306 (p.300).

³³ Levitas, 'Looking for the Blue', p.300. Attempts at radical political change have led to totalitarianism. Neoliberalism, however, exploits the awareness of this history, in order to create a fear of radical change. My defence of negative readings of utopia, below, may be seen as responding to this problem, as historical examples of radical political change projected positive, but ultimately unrealisable, images of utopia onto the future, rather than treating utopia negatively.

at least to an adequate degree, “working”. Indeed the trope of capitalist hegemony is that capitalism “works”.³⁴ It is against this reduction of utopia as piecemeal, liberal, reform that my reading of the concept responds.

Instead, my argument takes its cue from Fredric Jameson’s negative reading of utopia, itself inspired by Adorno’s analysis of late capitalism, in that the concept maintains a critical function only when non-reified, or, not neatly packaged for consumption.³⁵ A key issue is to avoid the codification or precise definition of utopia, or, any supposed chronological path toward it. This is because, in my Jamesonian reading, the function of utopia ‘lies not in helping us to imagine a better future but rather in demonstrating our utter incapacity to imagine such a future—our imprisonment in a non-utopian present without historicity or futurity—so as to reveal the ideological closure of the system in which we are somehow trapped’.³⁶ Jameson continues by acknowledging, especially given the dominant pragmatist tradition of twentieth century philosophy in his native USA, that this negative reading of utopia is ‘a peculiarly defeatist position’, and that ‘one is tempted to evoke nihilism or neurosis; it is certainly rather un-American in spirit’.³⁷ My contribution is therefore a bleak standpoint: in Adornian (F. H. Bradley) vein, utopia, as the good place that is no place, is best articulated through knowing the worst of what exists.³⁸ The ‘best-worst’ case scenario is to render lucid the inability of rational discourse to positively articulate a concept such as utopia.³⁹ Or, in Jamesonian terms, to render lucid ‘our imprisonment in a non-utopian present without historicity or futurity’.

³⁴ Levitas, ‘Looking for the Blue’, p.300.

³⁵ Fredric Jameson, ‘The Politics of Utopia’, *New Left Review*, 25 (Jan/Feb, 2004), 35-54 (p.46).

³⁶ Jameson, ‘The Politics of Utopia’, p.46.

³⁷ Jameson, ‘The Politics of Utopia’, p.46.

³⁸ Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: reflections from damaged life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 1978), p.83.

³⁹ Jacoby’s students should not then be encouraged to image ever wilder and more radical utopias, but rather to reflect upon their very inability to do so.

My Adorno, Jameson and Geuss inspired reading of utopia, therefore, is at odds with a predominant reading of the concept as commensurate with either piecemeal, liberal, reform, or indeed with radical ‘blueprints’ that would guide the engineering of progress towards a perfect society.

During the initial phase of the research, engagement in utopian studies circles at international conferences (2011 – 2015), and with social movements such as Occupy (September, 2011)⁴⁰ made it apparent that Nietzsche and Adorno were conspicuous by their absence from the discourse. This is because the worth of these two thinkers resides in the challenge that they present to normative discourse, and not in any reconciliatory outcome that might be gleaned from such a critical task. In effect, the materialism of political positivism, and the domination of the neoliberal paradigm, championing socio-political engagement and action in entrepreneurial fashion, has become all-encompassing such that not even progressive movements such as Occupy are able to articulate their beliefs and desires in a non-commodified manner.

Contemporary formal utopian discourse is based upon measurable plans for social reform, with Bloch promoted as a positive utopian thinker *par excellence*.⁴¹ Conversely, Nietzsche’s Dionysian ontology and Adorno’s determinate negation provide the necessary critical thought for an akairological reading of utopia. The uncomfortable ontological and epistemological questions they present are not compatible with neat and practical guidance in the context of socio-political reform. Having summarized the context within, and against which, my thesis responds, the next section of the introduction will outline the central

⁴⁰ Occupy coincided with the start of this research project (September, 2011).

⁴¹ I have written on the problems surrounding the uncritical promotion of Bloch elsewhere. See Dharmender S. Dhillon, ‘Don Quixote contra Faust: Ernst Bloch’s Abstract or Concrete Utopia?’, in *Yesterday’s Tomorrows: On Utopia and Dystopia*, eds. Pere Gallardo and Elizabeth Russell (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), pp.293-306.

concepts of the thesis: utopia and kairos, and how they will be analysed through the main three chapters.

Utopia

This section will begin by outlining the etymology of utopia, before exploring its legacy in nineteenth century socialist movements. These movements will be deemed as representing classic, or 'blueprint', utopia. It will be argued that these classic utopias were grounded in post-Enlightenment, liberal thought, and laid the conceptual foundation for subsequent classic utopian responses to the crises of modernity. Classic utopia will be juxtaposed against, after Jacoby, 'iconoclastic' utopia.⁴² The latter, I will argue, is transcendental,⁴³ in effect, a condition of possibility, but unconcerned with stipulating the dictates of a material and reformatory reading of utopia. Through a critical social theory lens, classic utopia will be deemed 'finalist', and what I shall label iconoclastic utopia, 'fallibilist'. This will set the scene to then go onto an analysis of kairos, and how this polysemic concept of time may be related to a reading of iconoclastic and akairological utopia that this thesis will argue for.

Classic utopia

Utopia is a product of Renaissance and Reformation thought, which blends Hellenistic rationalism with the 'democratizing impulse of Western Christianity'.⁴⁴ It therefore has temporal, spatial and historical qualities, and is often associated with a 'desire for a better way'.⁴⁵ First coined as a pun by More in his 1516 eponymous text, 'utopia' is the result of a combination of *eu* (good) + *ou* (not) + *topos* (place). The original title of the text was *De optimo rei publicæ deque nova insula Utopia*. The title has had a number of translations, all of which

⁴² Jacoby, *Picture Imperfect*, p.xiv.

⁴³ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. P. Guyer and A. Wood (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.149 (B25): 'I call all knowledge *transcendental* if it is occupied, not with objects, but with the way that we can possibly know objects even before we experience them'.

⁴⁴ Krishan Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), p.51.

⁴⁵ Ruth Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2011), p.198.

allude to a notion of the 'best state of a republic/commonwealth'. At its inception, as noted above, utopia was considered a physical place. Over the past five centuries, the term has been used in a number of iterations and has a variety of connotations across the political spectrum. Jameson observes that utopia has 'come to be a code word on the left for socialism or communism; while on the right it has become synonymous with "totalitarianism", or, in effect, with Stalinism'.⁴⁶ These readings of utopia are commensurate with a 'classic' version. The features of this classic tradition will be spelled out before explicating why such a reading fails to render a contemporary definition that withstands scrutiny.

Classic utopia stipulates an ideal space in the future, whereby perfection is attained, and history, as formally understood, comes to an end. Paul Tillich observes that whilst in infinite progress, 'realization of meaning is never attained',⁴⁷ in classic utopia, history comes to an end. Classic utopia is therefore a telos that is plotted out in advance. Hence, the description of it as 'blueprint' utopia. This version of utopia is exemplified in works such as Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*,⁴⁸ and underpins the positivism of Comte as described above, whose law of three stages of history rejected metaphysics, and instead recognized only empirical facts and scientifically observable phenomena.⁴⁹

Classic utopia therefore has a paternalistic and prescriptive quality to it. For example, classic utopia was politically enacted by the Jacobins of the French Revolution.⁵⁰ The Marquis de Condorcet, Henri de Saint-Simon and Robert Owen, amongst others, all proposed

⁴⁶ Fredric Jameson, *Late Marxism: Adorno, or, the persistence of the dialectic* (London: Verso, 1996), p.35.

⁴⁷ Paul Tillich, *The Interpretation of History*, trans. N.A. Rasetzki and Elsa L. Talmey (London; New York: Scribner's, 1936), p.275.

⁴⁸ Francis Bacon, *New Atlantis* (2000). Retrieved from <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/2434>.

⁴⁹ Comte, *The essential Comte*, p.20.

⁵⁰ Harvey, *The condition of postmodernity*, p.14.

teleological, spatial utopias.⁵¹ Stalinism declared itself as the apparent realization of utopia through Marx's historical materialism.⁵² Lucy Sargisson argues that the above examples of are of paternalistic, classic utopias, that involve the social collective in line with a grand narrative. As such, these utopias that 'appear to be formed by reference to perfection have a static feel to them ([Edward] Bellamy's *Looking Backward* [1888] is one example)'.⁵³ Theirs are classic utopias, commensurate with a notion of chronological progress, and of a kind which my thesis argues do not withstand scrutiny for a contemporary reading of utopia.

Classic utopia is grounded in historical progress, and the telos of static closure. This reading of utopia, however, is limited. Peter Osborne argues that history is desire, and in turn, suffering, given that – à la Jacques Lacan⁵⁴ – desire is never satisfied. Ergo, history is utopia insofar as it contains a *ou* (not) + *topos* (place) of a 'not yet', and is grounded in finitude.⁵⁵ Osborne continues by arguing that 'history is a democratic utopia of death. Death is the end which structures all narrative; narrative carries with it a fatal utopian charge'.⁵⁶ Insofar as death structures narrative, Sargisson's following observation helps shed light on the problem of classic teleological utopia that seeks perfection. This utopia, Sargisson argues, symbolizes death: 'the death of movement, the death of progress and process, development and change; the death, in other words, of politics. To strive for perfection is to strive for death'.⁵⁷ It is within this reading of history that classic utopia may be situated, and grounded in linear

⁵¹ The legacy of proto, as well as fully fledged, utopian socialists such as Saint-Simon and Owen, can be found through the new left movements that emerged in the United States and UK during the 1960s counterculture, which structured utopia by age and logistics. See Jacob Jewusiak, 'Retirement in Utopia: William Morris's Senescent Socialism', *ELH*, 86:1 (2019), 245-266 (pp.249-50).

⁵² At a conference on utopia and twentieth century Russia (September, 2011), Evgeny Dobrenko presented a paper entitled 'Petrified Utopia: Socialist Realism and Stasis', which analysed propaganda under Stalinism that depicted a supposed materially realized utopia.

⁵³ Lucy Sargisson, *Contemporary Feminist Utopianism* (London: Routledge, 1996), p.20.

⁵⁴ Sean Homer, *Jacques Lacan* (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), p.12 and p.20.

⁵⁵ Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time: modernity and the avant-garde* (London; New York: Verso, 1995), p.125.

⁵⁶ Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, p.125.

⁵⁷ Sargisson, *Contemporary Feminist Utopia*, p.37.

progress onto perfection via continued reformation. The problematic notion of classic, static utopia born out of liberal Enlightenment thought has now come into sharper focus. The next section will firstly explore the legacy of Enlightenment thought upon readings of utopia born out of the epoch of Modernity.

Modernity

Linear progress toward perfection is a characteristic belief of Modernity. According to Harvey, this sense of progress can be associated with positivism, technocentrism, rationalism, and absolute truths, as well as with the 'rational planning of ideal social orders, and the standardization of knowledge and production'.⁵⁸ This thesis, after Nietzsche, deems this notion of progress problematic.⁵⁹ Classic utopia posits an all-binding future set of perfect affairs, and is thus emblematic of a *modern* sensibility. What Jürgen Habermas refers to as the 'project' of modernity arose during the eighteenth century and involved the efforts of Enlightenment thinkers to 'develop objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic'.⁶⁰ This project was to contribute to human emancipation. Rather than being a simple chronological, linear process, this project was a qualitative break from times past. Modernity can thus be read as a category encapsulating a particular outlook. Osborne observes through the thought of Adorno that modernity is a 'qualitative, not a chronological, category'.⁶¹ Modernity involves a desire for progress, for the ever new, it is 'permanent transition'.⁶² Harvey adds that modernity 'entails a ruthless break

⁵⁸ Harvey, *The condition of postmodernity*, p.9.

⁵⁹ Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ*, p.128.

⁶⁰ Jürgen Habermas, 'Modernity: an incomplete project' in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. H. Foster (Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 1983), quoted in Harvey, *The condition of postmodernity*, p.12.

⁶¹ Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, p.218, quoted in Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, p.9.

⁶² Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. C. Lenhardt (London: Routledge, 1984), p.41, quoted in Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, p.14.

with any or all preceding historical conditions’, and is furthermore characterized by a ‘never-ending process of internal ruptures and fragmentations within itself’.⁶³ Moreover, Osborne observes that modernity is characterized as a post-Enlightenment epoch – once ‘Christian eschatology had shed its constant expectation of the imminent arrival of doomsday’ – and marks a ‘conceptual space available for an abstract temporality of qualitative newness which could be of epochal significance’ that opened up as it could be extrapolated into a now open future.⁶⁴ There is a tension that arises during modernity between, on the one hand, the possibility of classic utopia as plotted out through a blueprint (and thus Harvey’s characterization of modernism involving the ‘rational planning of a social order’), and, on the other hand, the impossibility of classic utopia owing to ‘never-ending’ ruptures and fragmentations in line with open-endedness.⁶⁵ It is here that the possibility, and, indeed, historical, qualitative, necessity, for my alternative reading of utopia begins to arise.

Finalist and fallibilist

Eschewing the above notion of classic utopia as a future (temporal) perfect commonwealth (spatial), and given that the thesis falls within the discipline of critical social theory, I intend to negotiate Maeve Cooke’s finalist/fallibilist dichotomy in my interpretation of utopia.⁶⁶ Classic utopia falls in the finalist camp, in effect, the closure of the historical process. Cooke responds to this problem of finalism by evoking a ‘post-metaphysical’ strategy. A ‘post-metaphysical’ strategy involves accepting the challenge that ‘utopian thinking has an

⁶³ Harvey, *The condition of postmodernity*, pp.11-12.

⁶⁴ Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, pp.10-11. The consequence of this for ‘time’ will be discussed in next section on kairos.

⁶⁵ The tension between an open-ended modernity and ‘linear progress toward perfection’ can be resolved by seeing modernity as a perpetual progress to a permanently deferred perfection.

⁶⁶ Maeve Cooke, ‘Redeeming Redemption: The Utopian Dimension of Critical Social Theory’, *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 30:4 (2004), 413-429 (p.423).

unavoidable metaphysical moment'.⁶⁷ However, for Cooke, ascribing a metaphysical quality to utopia renders it pluralistic and malleable, not dogmatic. Moreover, Cooke's fallibilist reading is at odds with a neoliberal reading of utopia, which deems it commensurate with a classic reading of the concept as allowing every individual to merely pursue their own market oriented 'good', thereby concealing a metaphysical aspect that underpins utopia.⁶⁸ Cooke therefore urges the theorist to accept the inevitability of utopia presupposing a social good, but, to 'maintain a productive tension between closure and contestability and between attainability and elusiveness' in a fallibilist conception of utopia.⁶⁹

A fallibilist conception means that utopia is literally *nowhere*: 'it is construed as a perfect place *beyond* history that, due to our dissatisfaction with existing social conditions, we long to inhabit, but that always evades our attempts to do so'.⁷⁰ A fallibilist conception of utopia is therefore a transcendental one, albeit expressive of what might be termed a 'negative transcendentalism', insofar as it articulates conditions of impossibility, and so in this thesis, the impossibility of a positive articulation of utopia. The best the theorist can do is to articulate their entrapment within their contemporary discourse.⁷¹ So, as Krishan Kumar asserts, whilst 'utopia may be nowhere [...] historically and conceptually, it cannot be just *anywhere*'.⁷² Seeking to maintain a tension between 'closure and contestability', and 'attainability and elusiveness', Cooke argues that the theorist may maintain a commitment to

⁶⁷ Cooke, 'Redeeming Redemption', p.413.

⁶⁸ The argument may be seen to be analogous to communitarian criticisms of liberalism. Liberalism is exposed as presupposing a substantial vision of the good society, while overtly claiming that it merely defends the right of each individual to pursue their own separately defined goods. Thus, neoliberal utopia is not a mere conglomeration of individuals (with their separate personal goods), but rather a vision of society organised in a specific way – specifically through the free market; any personal goods incompatible with the neoliberal social good are excluded.

⁶⁹ Cooke, 'Redeeming Redemption', p.413.

⁷⁰ Cooke, 'Redeeming Redemption', p.423. Cooke can therefore be seen to be responding to the challenge articulated through Jacoby and Jameson above.

⁷¹ See p.11, fn. 38 above.

⁷² Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, p.3.

a ‘metaphysical idea of the “good society” without succumbing to “bad utopianism” and “finalism”, with its attendant risk of “totalitarianism”’:⁷³ utopia is non-dogmatic; it does not impose a vision of the good life, but invites critical engagement with contemporary discourse. Cooke continues by arguing that maintaining such a commitment ‘allows critical social theory to retain its utopian dimension and, with this, its power to justify and to motivate transformative social action’.⁷⁴

Cooke’s finalist/fallibilist distinction helps to delineate the interpretation of utopia in this thesis, but does not encapsulate it. Levitas argues that ‘utopia is a social construct [...] subject to mediation’;⁷⁵ that is, critical engagement and contestation. Utopia is therefore malleable, which explains its use across the political spectrum, subject to contingent norms that render it irreducible to the concrete temporal and spatial account of a telos. To label a social arrangement as the ‘best’, at any given moment in historical time, would be reductionist.⁷⁶ As such, any given conception of utopia is more instructive about a particular discourse and situation, rather than about a desirable future per se. Again, understood as stimulating a (negative) transcendental inquiry, the appeal to utopia begins to unpack the conditions that inhibit radical thought and political action.

Utopia as what will be termed ‘akairological rupture’ (and as engendered in music as it will be explored in this thesis) is not finalist, and nor does it involve a transcendent commitment. But neither is it a justification or motivation for ‘transformative social action’

⁷³ Cooke, ‘Redeeming Redemption’, p.424.

⁷⁴ Cooke, ‘Redeeming Redemption’, p.424. The precise nature of the critical engagement with contemporary discourse advocated by Cooke is crucial. The discussions of Nietzsche, Bloch, and Adorno, in the main body of this thesis, may be read as critical assessments of three different attempts to realize this engagement.

⁷⁵ Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia*, p.182.

⁷⁶ Harvey acutely observes: ‘If social life is to be rationally planned and controlled so as to promote social equality and the welfare of all, then how can production, consumption, and social interaction be planned and efficiently organised except through the incorporation of the ideal abstractions of space and time as given in the map, the chronometer, and the calendar?’. See Harvey, *The condition of postmodernity*, p.253.

after Cooke, with an apparently preordained idea of the 'good society'. The latter notions fall within the realm of reform, in line with agreed social objectives. My reconceptualization of utopia is an open-ended one, which does not subscribe to a formal political outlook, neither with social reform, nor transformation. Eric Charles White is critical of such an open-ended reading, arguing that an 'unqualified affirmation of perpetual novelty condemns us to eternal frustration. Endless interpretation has as its obverse an ascetic refusal to enjoy the undeniable pleasure of even a provisional totality'.⁷⁷ It is in opposition to this 'undeniable pleasure' that my reconceptualization of utopia steadfastly refuses to indulge. Instead, to reiterate above, this is a Jameson inspired reading of utopia, as one that may play a critically substantive role in highlighting existing entrapment.⁷⁸ This Jamesonian reading of utopia does not fall within the parameters of classic utopia. Jameson thereby justifies the need for an alternative reading of the concept. In order to do this, it is necessary to elucidate the problems of both chronological and kairological readings of utopia, before I am able to argue the need for an akairological and iconoclastic contribution.

Chronos and eternity

Given that classic utopia entails the transformation of present society into a future (perfected) one, it presupposes a conception of time. Indeed, the writing of history itself, as a political enterprise that judges the past and present and does so in the anticipation of a better future, presupposes a certain understanding of time.⁷⁹ History is measured temporally. Conversely,

⁷⁷ Eric Charles Wright, *Kaironomia: On the Will-To-Invent* (Ithica; Cornell University Press, 1987), p.87.

⁷⁸ As such, this reading of utopia is also at odds with modernity's perpetual progress to a permanently deferred perfection, for a Jamesonian conception of utopia is critical and disruptive, not affirmative of progress to a given (if shifting) good society.

⁷⁹ See, for example, Ernst Mayr, 'When is Historiography Whiggish?', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 51:2 (1990), 301-309.

it may be suggested that different social and cultural formations lead to different experiences of time. This section will therefore begin to articulate different conceptions of time (emphasizing quantitative conceptions), their influence on political thought, but also their mediation by culture. This will serve as a preliminary to understanding a conception of time that is appropriate to genuinely utopian thought.

Beginning with Immanuel Kant's reading of time and space as pure intuition, and as such the universal and necessary conditions under which the empirical content of perception is rendered understandable, this section proceeds by mapping out a definition of *chronos*, primarily through the thought of Tillich. It then explores the tension in correlating measurable time with lived, individual experience. This leads onto a more nuanced reading of time presented by Giacomo Marramao, which helps elucidate the relationship between *chronos* and *aion*, or, eternity. The discussion then moves on to the problem of historicism, or reducing historical time to chronology, before an analysis of the limits of historical materialism. This acts as a preliminary to the analysis of messianic time, insofar as it relates to revolutionary *kairos*, as well as *o kairos*, in the Christian tradition. The latter in turn lays the groundwork for a reading of *akairos*, which will be argued to be fundamental to the reconceptualization of utopia as iconoclastic.

Kant deems that time and space are *a priori* particulars, which structure the manifold of experience.⁸⁰ These particulars constitute the basis of intelligibility of any subsequent empirical content that is imposed upon them. Space and time do not, then, necessarily

⁸⁰ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp-Smith (London: Macmillan, 1929), pp.275-289. See Stephan Korner, *Kant* (London: Penguin, 1990): 'To use a very crude analogy, space and time are the spectacles through which our eyes are affected by objects' (p.37). Furthermore, 'time, too, in which all perceptions are situated, is empirically real, that is to say it is real "with respect to all objects which could ever be given to our senses" and it is transcendently ideal: "once we abstract from the subjective conditions of perception it is nothing at all and cannot be attributed to the things in themselves"', Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p.44, quoted in Korner, *Kant*, p.38.

correspond to properties of the thing-in-itself, in the sense that they do not necessarily exist independently of the human observer. Rather, they set the parameters for the possibility of empirical enquiry. The *a priori* of time entails that time unfolds uniformly into the future. More precisely, when Kant introduces the categories, and in particular that of causality, time is understood in the unfolding of chains of causes and effects. The human agent is therefore able to shape the future by bringing about causes that will have known effects. In this manner, Kant's analysis is commensurate with the political positivism of Comte, and indeed any form of social engineering, as outlined above, insofar as these projects align with scientific method, planning, and the standardization of knowledge described above by Harvey – in effect, blueprint utopia. Crucially, however, it may be suggested that this discourse of reasonable, scientific utopia does not account for the individual human being's qualitative experience of time. As such, Kant's analysis helps to highlight the tension in correlating empirical, measurable, time with lived, individual experience:⁸¹ there is a qualitative surplus in lived experience, that can be referred to as the ineffable, and which exceeds the possibility of ratiocination to encapsulate the totality of being. What follows is a summary of key moves made by theorists working amidst the legacy of Kant's analysis.

⁸¹ After the Enlightenment, with the Industrial Revolution, came the growth of industrial capitalism, and, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a culture of instrumentalism. Time became money: 'with capitalism came the homogenization of labour-time: the time of abstract labour (money, the universal equivalent), the time of the clock' (Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, p.34). Moreover, as David Wood observes: 'timetables, time and motion measurement, schedules, clocks, system coordination all work on the assumption that time can be deployed as an independent dimension' (David Wood, *The Deconstruction of Time* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2001), p.xvii). It is crucial to note that this assumption implicates utopia. This is because the modernist notion of history throws into question the possibility of a static end-time commensurate with classic utopia, apparently plottable in advance via a chronological blueprint (this will be explored in the section below on *kairos*). Harvey's observation above regarding ruptures and fragmentations highlights the contingency within any given historical epoch. Whig history, grounded in the notion of chronological progress, masks these ruptures and fragmentations by co-opting them into a supposed grand narrative, articulable through the linear time of the clock, and culminating in liberal democracy (Mayr, 'When is Historiography Whiggish?', pp.301-309). However, there is something ineffable about individual lived experience that supersedes the limits of quantitative measure. To reduce lived experience to the latter is a symptom of the legacy of Enlightenment liberalism through to Modernity, which reduces time to the clock.

Tillich observed that the Ancient Greeks had two words for 'time': *chronos* and *kairos*. *Chronos* refers to the quantitative measuring of time, while *kairos* refers to the qualitative experience of (in particular, historical) time. My focus in this section will be on *chronos*. *Chronos*, Tillich proposed, is measurable clock time and the root of 'chronology' and 'chronometer'. Tillich proposes that *chronos* is mere physical time that is grasped through repeated, quantitatively uniform and predictable units. Chronology is therefore commensurate, it may be suggested, with the possibility of social engineering and the implementation of blueprints to realize classic utopia (for it presupposes Kant's causally determined time, articulated above), as well as the dictates of time as money through a logic of capitalism (where units of labour-time can be given precise exchange-values). The implications of recording time via the chronometer has had totalizing effects on both thought and action. These effects, insofar as they link to capitalism and modernity, were outlined above through the thought of Harvey and Osborne. A neat conception of 'past and future as linearly connected by the ticking away of the clock allowed all manner of scientific and historical conceptions to flourish',⁸² and led to the fallacy of social agents being able to absolutely control the future. György Lukács argues in *History and Class Consciousness* that clock time is very much a product of capitalism, and a reflection of the quantification of experience that runs throughout capitalism:

Neither objectively nor in his relation to his work does man appear as the authentic master of the process; on the contrary, he is a mechanical part incorporated into a mechanical system. He finds it already pre-existing and self-sufficient, it functions independently of him and he has to conform to its laws whether he likes it or not.⁸³

⁸² Harvey, *The Condition of postmodernity*, p.252.

⁸³ György Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1971), p.89.

So, whilst ‘no civilization can avoid endowing itself with some measure of predictability, even if limited or minimal, the same way that it cannot entirely avoid repetition and cycles’,⁸⁴ this model of linear, chronological time is organized upon a particular human-centred perspective. That is to suggest that, given the cultural nature of human being, the precise way in which time, as both repetition and cycles and as what might be called the ‘arrow of time’ (and thus its projectability into a predictable future) is articulated will vary from culture to culture. These articulations of time both respond to and shape a particular culture’s organization of social practice. From this it may then be argued that Kant, with a privileging of causally determinate linear progress over repetition or cycles, is analysing not time per se, but time as it is experienced in industrial modernity. The linear model further offers a single, and it may be argued ultimately repressive, solution to the problem concerning how the temporal flow of time and individual life may be correlated, and thus how social practice is to be organized. Akin to the working ‘utopia’ projected by neoliberalism, noted above, the linear model serves to block out all other solutions as unimaginable or unrealizable.

The twentieth century saw, in continental philosophy at least (Henri Bergson, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger), the recognition of an experience ‘bound by the juxtaposition between an *authentic*, yet ineffable, time, which expresses the subjective and inner feel of duration; and an inauthentic, but measurable, time, which manifests itself in its objective and spatialized representation’;⁸⁵ individual, qualitative time is juxtaposed against objective, quantitative time. This renders problematic attempts to conflate individual experience with a meta-narrative, such as that of a classic utopia. This relates to the problem of attempting to articulate utopia, positively and chronologically, through a collective, in line with shared

⁸⁴ Giacomo Marramao, *Kairós: towards an ontology of ‘Due Time’*, trans. P. Larrey and S. Cattaneo (Aurora, Colo.: Davies Group Publishers, 2007), p.58.

⁸⁵ Marramao, *Kairós*, p.40.

norms. Collective experience requires a homogeneity of the experience of time. Therefore, any individual alternative experience of time cannot be incorporated within the discourse. The significance of Marx, then, is that he deems different classes as having different historical experiences.⁸⁶ Individual difference is not countenanced, for each can be neatly organized along class lines. This, however, is too simplistic an approach to the individual, qualitative, experience of lived time.

To summarize the argument to this point, Kant and Tillich's chronos have been interpreted as offering accounts of time as a quantitative universal, and as linearly progressive (rather than cyclical). Such conceptions of time are doubly problematic. On the one hand, with reference to Kant, it has been suggested (via Lukács) that he has articulated only the experience of clock time within a specific historical period, that of industrial capitalism. On the other hand, even if, as with Tillich, chronos were to be accepted as an ontological universal, it remains at odds with the qualitative, personal, experience of time. Time potentially differs, qualitatively, for every individual. Marramao offers a radical response to these problems, initially by restating a Kantian distinction between the phenomenal experience of time and the qualities of the thing-in-itself, but then by articulating a complex equation between time as chronos and time as eternity, that again recognizes conceptions and experiences of time as cultural and historical, rather than universal.

Chronos has already been equated as 'tick-tock' time, measured and therefore quantitative, and according to Kant and Tillich, universal. Marramao's research from 1992⁸⁷ argues against this reductionist approach. Instead, Marramao asserts that contemporary enquiries regarding time have resulted in a 'disintegration of the idea of a universal flow of

⁸⁶ Marx's argument is in line with the point made above that time is a cultural construct. Marx is identifying different cultures for different classes.

⁸⁷ *Kairós* was first published in Italian: *Kairós. Apologia del tempo debito*, Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1992.

time'.⁸⁸ Marramao argues that Newton's mechanics, Einstein's relativity, as well as Heisenberg's and Schrodinger's quantum mechanics, all operate consistently even if time moves backwards. Therefore, the 'unidirectional character of time' appears to be no more than a mental deception, or, 'psychological time'.⁸⁹ As Carlo Rovelli observes, Newton argued that 'true' time was only indirectly accessible, through calculation.⁹⁰ This model of time independent of material things enabled the emergence of a modern physics that works consistently.⁹¹ We therefore only describe the world as it happens, not as it is; 'how events *happen*, not how *things* are'.⁹² Moreover, Rovelli's observation concerning how we can only describe things *post-rem*, echoing Kant, demonstrates the disingenuousness of positive knowledge acquisition as correlative with ontological fact, in effect, a pitfall of positivism as argued above.⁹³ The works of Marramao and Rovelli thus further articulate the problem of reducing time to discussions of chronos, to time as strictly unidirectional and quantifiable.

Marramao and Rovelli's arguments have implications for understanding historical time (and thus for understanding the way in which different conceptions of time shape the organization of social practice, and attempts to realize a better, future society). Whig history in the tradition of liberalism necessitates a reading of time as linear and quantifiable in order to legitimize its claims of unidirectional progress. Through such a reading of time, tensions and contradictions in the discourse of progress may be explained as serving to justify the status quo, as they are seen as aberrations and instantiations of political regression.⁹⁴ It will

⁸⁸ Marramao, *Kairós*, p.32.

⁸⁹ Marramao, *Kairós*, p.14.

⁹⁰ Carlo Rovelli, *The Order of Time*, trans. E. Segre and S. Carnell (London: Allen Lane, 2018), p.39.

⁹¹ Rovelli, *The Order of Time*, p.40

⁹² Rovelli, *The Order of Time*, p.59.

⁹³ See pp.3-4.

⁹⁴ See, for example Lukacs' criticisms of 'regressive literature' in 'Realism in the Balance', trans. Rodney Livingstone, in Ronald Taylor (ed.), *Aesthetics and Politics* (London: NLB, 1977), pp.28-60 (p.33).

be argued that a reconceptualization of utopia as ‘akairological’ – which will highlight the limits of liberal, positive, rational articulation – avoids the problem of reducing the concept to a teleological result enacted in chronological manner. The argument below will continue to demonstrate how I arrive at akairos as a solution to the problem of positive chronos (or, indeed, kairos). Part of this justification necessitates evidencing how chronos is linked to *aion*, or, eternity. This comparison will qualify measurement against which to negatively articulate akairos.

Returning, like Tillich, albeit to different effect, to the Ancient Greeks, Marramao equates chronos with *aion*, or, in other words, ‘eternity’:⁹⁵ ‘*chronos* is the moving image of *aión*’.⁹⁶ By this, Marramao argues through Plato, that ‘*chronos* is the true imitation of *aión* in the sense of a division, a *rhythmic* articulation of duration. It is like a reproduction by snapshots of the continuum of a movie plot’.⁹⁷ Marramao sustains this definition by positing that in the *Vulgate*, time is defined as the ‘moving image of eternity’.⁹⁸ In Marramao’s reading of *aion*, chronos is implicated as perennial eternity, and thus, implicitly, to nihilism.⁹⁹ Time is

⁹⁵ The concept of ‘eternity’ is of most relevance to Nietzsche, not least insofar as he identifies the dangers of chronos, after the death of God, becoming perennial eternity, and in the thought experiment of ‘eternal return’ to which he responds. This will be developed in chapter one. It may also be suggested that Adorno’s claim that historical dialectics have come to a standstill in late capitalism is also an evocation of eternity.

⁹⁶ Marramao, *Kairós*, p.7.

⁹⁷ Marramao, *Kairós*, p.10.

⁹⁸ Marramao, *Kairós*, p.9. Michael Theunissen observes that *aion* translates in the Latin tradition as *aeternitas*, ‘setting it off against *sempiternitas*, unlimited duration’. See Michael Theunissen, ‘Metaphysics’ Forgetfulness of Time: On the Controversy Over Parmenides, Frag. 8, 5’ in *Philosophical Interventions in the Unfinished Project of Enlightenment*, eds. A. Honneth, T. McCarthy, C. Offe and A. Wellmer, trans. W. Rehg (Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press, 1992), pp.3-28 (p.15). In this way, Theunissen implicitly grounds utopia as a desired and possible end time, in other words, *limited* duration, contra *unlimited* duration. Theunissen does this by distinguishing between alternative readings of eternity: ‘we can speak of eternity either in a weak or a strong sense. In the weak sense, eternity could include unlimited duration. Inasmuch as duration, even without beginning or end, is admittedly a duration in time, it seems reasonable to restrict the concept of eternity to eternity in the strong sense’, Theunissen, ‘Metaphysics’ Forgetfulness of Time’, p.7. Eternity in Theunissen’s ‘strong sense’ is thus compatible with a classic, eschatological and kairological utopia. The latter will be spelled out in the next section below.

⁹⁹ The consequences of this will be spelled out in Nietzsche’s discussion of the eternal recurrence below. See p.59.

what is (infinitely) counted; time as *aion*, chronos as numerical measure thereof. *Aion* is thus time ontologically, while chronos is epistemic time: time measured by human beings. Utopia is thus implicated in a reading of time as chronological. It is against this implication that my reconceptualization of utopia as akairological will respond.

Historical time

Fundamental to articulating an adequate conception of the relationship between time and utopia is, as has been suggested at a number of points above, an awareness that a given conception of time has implications for how history and political practice are understood and experienced. Time is not just culturally and historically mediated. Its very conception shapes the human understanding and possibility for making history.

Marramao attributes to the Hebrew-Christian roots of modernity a split between an 'endless projection towards the future', and an 'atrophy and fossilization of the past', which has resulted in an erosion of the 'space of existence of the present' and an 'impossible correspondence between the individual life and the temporal flow of the world'.¹⁰⁰ This is elaborated upon by Osborne, who observes that the 'temporality of the everyday is both internally complex and inherently contradictory, since it must mediate a variety of repetitive cycles (both social and natural) with the inherent directionality of the phenomenologically extended, incomplete present of primordial temporalization'.¹⁰¹ Exploring the tension between an individual's experience of time with historical time, Osborne continues through the thought of Reinhart Koselleck, arguing that since the late eighteenth century, historical

¹⁰⁰ Marramao, *Kairós*, p.40.

¹⁰¹ Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, p.198.

time has been conceived 'in and for itself in the absence of an associated subject or object'.¹⁰²

The problems of this are spelled out in the below, where Osborne holds that there are three principal features of the standardization of historical time:

1. Homogenous empty time: the re-chronologization, or naturalization, of history; historicism is a vulgar naturalism which presents itself as a science;
2. Naturalism is a form of forgetting, thus a misconstrual of history as progress: 'historicism trades the living remembrance of a historical present for the reestablishment of an abstract continuity with the past, in a naturalized and merely chronological form;
3. Historicism presents phenomena in the past as cultural treasures, thus is barbaric as per Benjamin's interpretation of history as read through the victor.¹⁰³

Therefore, time as history is recollected as a series of events and processes, that allow subjects an apparently better grasp and comprehension of the material world. The problem with this is twofold. Firstly, Osborne observes through the thought of Susan Buck-Morss that 'historical time cannot be reduced to its empirical dimension (chronology). That would be historicism'.¹⁰⁴ Secondly, there remains Marrao's constant tension between individual life and the temporal flow of the world. Osborne concludes that it is the 'consciousness of these contradictions that allows us to grasp the dehistoricization of life by the commodification of the everyday as the historical process it is, in which the immanent historicity of existential temporalization is turned back upon itself, but can never be fully contained'.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Reinhart Koselleck, "'Neuzeit'": Remarks on the Semantics of the Modern Concept of Movement' in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. K. Tribe (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), pp.231-66 (p.238), quoted in Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, pp.11-12.

¹⁰³ Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, p.140. Earlier in this section of the text, Osborne observes that 'historicism', in a 'relatively neutral sense', means a 'general belief in the historical character of knowledge'. Philosophically, it designates 'either a belief in the immanent identity of truth and history of a Hegelian kind; or an empirical view of historical knowledge developed by the Historical school in Germany, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, in explicit opposition to Hegel's philosophy of history' (p.138).

¹⁰⁴ Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, p.152.

¹⁰⁵ Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, p.198.

The importance of the ‘consciousness of these contradictions’ cannot be overstated: it is this awareness that, I will argue, is correlative with a reading of utopia as akairological rupture. That which can ‘never be contained’ is, after Adorno, a qualitative remainder,¹⁰⁶ and a negative articulation of utopia.¹⁰⁷ In preparation for an articulation of the ‘akairological’ (and an immanent and negative Adornian reading of utopia), the next section will explicate the limits and thus unviability of either Hegelian or Marxist dialectics, which may be considered exemplary as attempts to articulate historical time to utopian ends.

Historical materialism

While the Hegelian system, and indeed Marx’s historical materialism, may superficially be seen as instantiating a linear conception of historical time, a more subtle reading may be given. Hegel may be seen, not as prioritizing quantitative linear time, but rather as offering an early response to the tension between experience, be it that of the individual or a collective, and the *a priori* precondition of quantified time that is implicit to Kant’s philosophy. He thereby already offers an alternative to positivism’s repression of that tension. Expounding upon Hegel’s response to the challenge posed by time, Osborne proposes that Hegel’s dialectic as absolute method eternalizes the present in order to ‘offer the possibility of an absolute knowing’.¹⁰⁸ In order to do this, it must absorb the past as memory into the actuality of the present, while treating the future as ‘wholly immanent to the rationality of the present’.¹⁰⁹ What results, then, is an eternalization of the present. As a result, progress, through Osborne’s analysis of Hegel’s dialectic, is a ‘projection of certain people’s presents as

¹⁰⁶ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, pp.5-6.

¹⁰⁷ This is also the moment of negative transcendentalism, such that an akairological reading of utopia makes one aware of the conditions leading to the impossibility of positive utopian thought.

¹⁰⁸ Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, p.42.

¹⁰⁹ Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, p.42.

other people's futures, at the level of the development of history as a whole'.¹¹⁰ Marx builds upon Hegel's dialectic, albeit by inverting Hegel's idealism in order to ground the dialectic in material terms. From Marx's historical materialism, 'what a surface sequentiality of events reveals when interrogated is a deeper pattern of qualitative transformations, of development through conflict, the emergence and resolution of contradictions, and so on', which can be rendered intelligible through teleology.¹¹¹

There remain fundamental problems with historical materialism and dialectical thinking with regard to time – and indeed it may be suggested that these problems are common to any attempt, typically of classic utopia, to project an image of utopia on to the future (either to engineer its realization, as in Comte's positivism, or to anticipate its realization, as in certain readings of Hegelianism and Marxism). The move from Hegel's idealist to Marx's materialist dialectic, that of displacing Spirit in favour of an analysis of class relations, does not challenge the eternalization of the present that Osborne identifies in the Hegelian dialectic. It does not challenge the premise that dialectical thought is only 'guaranteed applicability by the nature of the subject in each case',¹¹² projecting certain people's presents on to other's futures. In Marx, a certain experience of time – that of the proletariat – is privileged. As noted above, there is then an impossible correspondence between individual experience and the temporal flow of the world.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, p.17.

¹¹¹ Wood, *The Deconstruction of Time*, p.322.

¹¹² Wood, *The Deconstruction of Time*, p.322.

¹¹³ See p.29.

Disruption

Classic utopia as plotted out in linear, blueprint manner, cannot be realized through a scientific, teleological project grounded in either an idealist, or, materialist, positive, dialectic.

Rather, in order to satisfy the demands of a genuinely radical utopia, it must, according to

Saul Newman:

... be that which breaks with all determinism, positivism and historical materialism – and which affirms what is heterogenous to the current order. In other words, it can be seen as a disruption of the current order which, at the same time, emerges from *within* the current order, and which introduces a moment of radical indeterminacy and unpredictability in which anything is possible. Rather than a society of the future, utopia is an *event* which takes place in the present.¹¹⁴

Newman indirectly builds upon Osborne's reading of the future above, as 'wholly immanent to the rationality of the present', in a radical and productive manner. In effect, juxtaposed against a purely causal (Kantian) relationship between present and future, predicated on a notion that the future is engineered out of the present – blueprint utopia, Newman's utopia is a radically disruptive one that cannot be conceptualized from the present (even if it is contained within the present). Newman's reading of utopia is thus 'akairological' (which will be spelled out below), which pairs utopia with 'disruption', or, rupture, that demonstrates the limits of rationally articulated discourse. Neither Kant's casually articulated time, nor measurable chronos, are relevant to such utopian thought. My reading of utopia is thus commensurate with Newman's insofar as utopia is an (akairological) 'event' that takes place in the present. Eschewing teleology, or, a future orientation, utopia is neither chronological, nor teleological. Rather, I will argue, it can only be articulated as 'akairological'; that is, where individual lived experience is incommensurate with a liberal reading of progress. Rather,

¹¹⁴ Saul Newman, 'Anarchism, Utopianism and the Politics of Emancipation', in Laurence Davis and Ruth Kinna (eds.), *Anarchism and Utopianism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), pp.207-220 (p.218).

akairos will be seen to mark a disruption of the quantitative time of chronos, and as marked by an ineffable, qualitative surplus that is not articulable through rational, liberal, discourse.

Having established a clearer understanding of chronos, the problems of the blueprint planning of classic utopia have been shown to lie predominantly in the presuppositions of time as a regularly controllable chronology. Kairos, giving predominance to the qualitative experience of time, grants the theorist a reading of time that resolves the problem of classic utopia, and supplants it with what will be termed an 'iconoclastic' version, which is to say, a transcendental reading of utopia as that which renders possible a form of critical thought that escapes a mundane reformist, teleological understanding of time and social change. In the next section, a definition of kairos can now be brought into sharper focus, before demonstrating that even kairos cannot satisfy the argument for the reconceptualization of utopia in this thesis. Instead, a discussion of kairos will lay the groundwork for a clarification of akairos, before concluding the introduction with an articulation of iconoclastic utopia as akairological.

Kairos

As noted above, Tillich identifies two conceptions of time in Ancient Greek culture: *chronos* and *kairos*. Tillich argues that *kairos* is in juxtaposition against the quantitative time of *chronos*, and is therefore qualitative time of the occasion, 'the right time'.¹¹⁵ He argues that *kairos* is the meaning of time, and crucially of 'the historical time', which is qualitative.¹¹⁶ It has been argued above that through quantitative *chronos*, time – be it that of the working day or that of history – is the measured.¹¹⁷ *Kairos* therefore introduces a new element, responding more closely to the qualitative experience of time, in highlighting the question of meaning in history (and offers a more profound and stimulating articulation of a *telos* of history than is found in the more secular, classic utopia tradition). It will be argued below that *kairos* presupposes *chronos*, and that, therefore, the two concepts of time are complementary, not juxtaposed.

Kairos is a polysemic concept that has been interpreted as, for example, 'due measure', 'fitness' and 'opportunity'.¹¹⁸ These widespread qualifiers have led *kairos* scholars such as James Kinneavy to suggest: 'I frankly think that you could probably take a concept of *kairos* and apply it to practically almost anything'.¹¹⁹ William Trapani and Chandra Maldonado correctly note that 'few concepts rival *kairos*' terminological capaciousness':¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ Paul Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought*, 2nd ed., ed. C. E. Braaten (London: SCM Press, 1968), p.1.

¹¹⁶ Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought*, p.118.

¹¹⁷ Osborne observes that 'chronological time provides a *measure* for relations between different times within this ongoing history. It does not constitute this time *qua* historical time', in Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, p.26.

¹¹⁸ Richard B. Onians, *The origins of European thought about the body, the mind, the soul, the world, time and fate: new interpretations of Greek, Roman and kindred evidence, also of some basic Jewish and Christian beliefs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), p.343.

¹¹⁹ Roger Thompson, 'Kairos revisited: an interview with James Kinneavy', *Rhetoric Review*, 19:1-2 (2000), 73-88 (p.81).

¹²⁰ William C. Trapani and Chandra A. Maldonado, 'Kairos: On the Limits to Our (Rhetorical) Situation', *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 48:3 (2018), 278-286 (p.278).

The term has indexed diverse notions such as ‘symmetry,’ ‘propriety,’ ‘occasion,’ ‘due measure,’ ‘fitness,’ ‘tact,’ ‘decorum,’ ‘convenience,’ ‘proportion,’ ‘fruit,’ ‘profit,’ and ‘wise moderation’ (Sipiora), just as it has enabled granular distinctions between closely related notions like the ‘opportune,’ the ‘appropriate,’ and the ‘possible’ (Poulakos). Its elasticity often encompasses its polar opposite, such as the timely and the untimely (Leston), the temporal and the spatial (McAlister), the secure and the vulnerable (Brown, Jr.), and the management, as well as loss of control over situations (Scott).¹²¹

They continue by noting contemporary interest in the concept, from a desire to reinstate a ‘classic,’ or, in other words, the Tillichian reading of it,¹²² to that of this thesis, which deems that the classic reading does not withstand scrutiny, and that, à la utopia, there is scope to reconceptualize kairos after contemporary scholars such as Roland Boer.¹²³

Aristotle, in line with his notion of the golden mean, equates kairos with appropriate action, at an appropriate time.¹²⁴ This is commensurate with the Ancient Roman rendering of it as ‘occasio,’ or ‘opportunity’. Kairos, like utopia, is therefore temporal: being ‘on time’ chronologically is linked to being ‘on time’ ethically speaking.¹²⁵ Depicted as a deity, in Aesop’s *Fables*, Kairos is presented as:

Running swiftly, balancing on the razor's edge, bald but with a lock of hair on his forehead, he wears no clothes; if you grasp him from the front, you might be able to hold him, but once he has moved on not even Jupiter [Zeus] himself can pull him back: this is a symbol of Tempus [Kairos, Opportunity], the brief moment in which things are possible.¹²⁶

¹²¹ Trapani and Maldonado, ‘*Kairos*’, pp.278-79.

¹²² Trapani and Maldonado, ‘*Kairos*’, p.279.

¹²³ Roland Boer, ‘Revolution in the Event: The Problem of Kairós’, *Theory, Culture & Society*, 30:2 (2013), 116-134.

¹²⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Joe Sachs (Boston: Focus, 2002), pp.12-13, in Melissa Shew, ‘The Kairos of Philosophy’, *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 27:1 (2013), 47-66 (p.50).

¹²⁵ Amélie F. Benedikt, ‘On Doing the Right Thing at the Right Time: Toward an Ethics of Kairos’, in Phillip Sipiora and James. S. Baumlin (eds.), *Rhetoric and Kairos: Essays in History, Theory, and Praxis* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), pp.226-35 (p.227).

¹²⁶ This fable is associated with the famous statue of Kairos at Olympia by the Greek sculptor Lysippos of the 4th century, B.C. The Greek name Kairos is rendered as Tempus in this Latin version of Aesop's fables: Aesop, ‘Fables 536’. Available at <<http://www.theoi.com/Daimon/Kairos.html>> [accessed 30 September 2011].

Rendered as *Tempus* in the above, *Kairos*'s elusive nature is apparent, as is his enmeshment within chronological time. Marramao is once again instructive: having established *chronos* as the moving image of *aion*, and what *kairos* is not, he defines the latter as neither the opportune moment, nor, as will be outlined in the next section, the eschatological event in Christian thought, but rather, the 'fundamental dimension of the appropriate time, of the crucial moment that is nothing but that part of each "identity", within which the very phenomenon of the mind, or Awareness, takes-place'.¹²⁷ What this means can be clarified through Marramao's rendering of *kairos* as *tempus*. Marramao convincingly argues through a close reading of Plato, and attention to Ancient Greek etymology, that the correlative of *tempus* is indeed not *chronos*, but *kairos*.¹²⁸ Spatially, Marramao argues, *tempus* indicates vital parts of an organism 'in shape', that is, balanced and tempered in its components.¹²⁹ Therefore, *kairos*, when it is comprehended in terms of *tempus*, suggests that 'we can only experience the dimension of due time, of "kairological" time, independently from the nature of the *disorientation* that delimits it'.¹³⁰ Marramao asserts that *tempus* as the 'union of elements, becomes the relation and "housing structure" of life forms', while *spatium* as a residue, indicates the constitutive uncertainty and instability of any "dwelling".¹³¹

Whilst Marramao equates *kairos* with due time, and as balanced and tempered, independent of the chronological 'nature of the *disorientation* that delimits it', Terry Eagleton interprets *kairos* differently. Eagleton suggests a reading of *kairos* that might superficially be

¹²⁷ Silvia Benso, 'Review: Marramao's *Kairós*: The Space of "Our" Time in the Time of Cosmic Disorientation', *Human Studies*, 31:2 (June, 2008), 223-228 (p.227).

¹²⁸ Marramao, *Kairós*, p.71. Marramao notes that E. Benveniste related '*kairós* (deriving from the Indo-European roots **krr*-) to the meaning of the verb *keránnymi*, "to mix", "to temper", reaching the conclusion that "tempus corresponds, in its different meanings to *kairós*".

¹²⁹ Marramao, *Kairós*, p.71.

¹³⁰ Marramao, *Kairós*, p.72: 'Whether *kairós* comes after Bohr's and Heisenberg's "indeterminacy", or whether it originates from Newton's and Einstein's 'incomprehensible power' - for which there is a plan of the "Great Old Man" and "God does not place dice".

¹³¹ Marramao, *Kairós*, pp.71-72.

taken to suggest the appropriateness of associating utopia (as Newman's moment of disruption) with kairos. For example, the history of the capitalist mode of production: 'for a while things slide along smoothly, and then there occurs a crisis, disruption or revolution'.¹³² To equate kairos with 'crisis, disruption or revolution' is, *ipso facto*, to render chronos as ordered, composed and harmonious, where apparently 'things slide along smoothly'. Eagleton's reading is responding to the liberal tradition, whereby owing to his adherence to Marxist historical materialism, kairos as 'crisis, disruption or revolution' is still ultimately related to a notion of human authenticity and final flourishing, insofar as any disruption is that of the dominant capitalist narrative, in favour of an alternative, non-capitalist, in effect, socialist or communist, narrative; kairos is rendered as creatively destructive. I argue, contra Eagleton, that the incoherence of any conception of kairos, not least as to its implication of an end of time, renders the association between kairos and any profound conception of an iconoclastic utopia untenable.

Melissa Shew proposes that kairos both 'stands outside and perhaps measures chronological time',¹³³ and is 'out of place or strange, in being a moment that changes the whole of everything'.¹³⁴ The former definition is compatible with Marramao's assertion that kairological time is independent from the chronological disorientation that delimits it. Moreover, Shew's first proposition is correlative with Marramao's assertion that kairos is the 'housing structure' of life forms, including chronos. Shew's second proposition is paradoxically compatible with both Marramao and Eagleton's reading of kairos. This is because kairos as either disruptive, or, in shape, may be deemed 'out of place or strange' in juxtaposition with norms. I also read kairos in paradoxical fashion, as per both of Shew's proposals: it both

¹³² Terry Eagleton, *Walter Benjamin: or, Towards a revolutionary criticism* (London: Verso, 1981), p.74.

¹³³ Shew, 'The *Kairos* of Philosophy', p.53.

¹³⁴ Shew, 'The *Kairos* of Philosophy', p.53.

presupposes *chronos*,¹³⁵ as well as appears out of place in its exceptionalism. Suffice it to say, Wood's pithy observation that *kairos* proffers a 'complexity to temporal organization' is apt.¹³⁶ The reading of *kairos* as either balance or disruption, sustained by a meta-narrative, owes much to a theological appropriation of the concept. The next section will examine the legacy of this reading, including analyses of the notion of messianic time. Doing so will help to further clarify how these orthodox readings of *kairos* fail to articulate a reading of utopia as per the terms of my contribution.

Christian theology

The common reading of *kairos* in relation to time owes much to the Christian appropriation of the concept in the New Testament. Following this tradition, Tillich argues that *kairological* time is 'qualitatively fulfilled time, the moment that is creation and fate'.¹³⁷ This is an eschatological reading, which suggests the necessity of an end of a process. The Christian reading of *kairos* distinguishes between 'kairos' and 'o kairos', with the latter being the New Testament version of the former, subsuming it under the notion of 'The time'.¹³⁸ As the 'last'

¹³⁵ John E. Smith, 'Time and Qualitative Time', in Sipiora and Baumlin (eds.), *Rhetoric and Kairos*, pp.46-57 (p.48).

¹³⁶ Wood, *The Deconstruction of Time*, p.350.

¹³⁷ Tillich, *The Interpretation of History*, p.129.

¹³⁸ Boer provides the following, helpful, summary of how *kairos* is presented in the New Testament: '[it] may mean the period when fruit becomes ripe and the harvest is ready (Luke 20:10; Mark 11:13, 12:2), a season such as autumn or spring (Galatians 4:10), the present (2 Corinthians 8:14; Luke 12:56, 18:30; Romans 3:26, 8:18), a designated period that is more often signalled by the plural, *kairoi*' (Acts 1:7; Matthew 16:3, 21:41). But the term also identifies a specific moment, often in the dative "at the right time", which may be opportune or favourable, or it may be dire and risky (Galatians 6:9; John 5:4; Luke 4:13, 12:42; Romans 5:6; 9:9). Increasingly the word takes the definite article, "the time" (*o kairos*), and in this form its sense is the time that is fulfilled, or of crisis or the last times.... [it] is one of the New Testament's major eschatological terms, specifying variously the time of Christ's appearance (Mark 1:16) or his own death (John 7:6, 8; Matthew 26:18), the fulfilment of his words (Luke 1:20), eternal life after death (Mark 10:30), the time of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2), the longed-for, albeit troubled, time of final conflict, the end of history, the reign of the Evil One and Christ's return to vindicate the faithful (Corinthians 4:5; 7:29; Luke 19:44, 21:8, 24; Mark 13:33; Matthew 8:29, 13:30; 1 Revelation 1:3, 11:18, 12:12, 14, 22:10; Romans 13:11)'. See Boer, 'Revolution in the Event', p.117.

time, or 'time of crisis', *eschatos kairos* suggests that 'chronological time must be completed' before kairological 'end time and final judgement' may come to fruition.¹³⁹ Tillich notes the problem of *eschatos kairos* insofar as the 'concept of an end of time, in a temporal sense, cannot be maintained. It would not be an end, but a discontinuance. The thought of a discontinuance of time, however, is itself a time-determined thought, and therefore contradicts itself'.¹⁴⁰

Building upon Tillich's reading of the End time, Frank Kermode expounds upon this temporal account of eschatological *kairos* in arguing that the notion of the 'End changes all'.¹⁴¹ Kermode notes that the Ancient Greeks, and also the Hebrews, had 'no contrast between time which is simply "one damn thing after another"'¹⁴² and time that is concentrated in the kairological. Kermode continues by noting that the New Testament lays the foundation for the modern sense of an epoch as well as a distinction between the 'coming of God's time (*kairos*), the fulfilling of the time (*kairos*—Mark i.15), [and] the signs of the times (Matt, xvi.2,3), as against passing time, *chronos*'.¹⁴³ *Eschatos kairos* fulfils the past, validating Old Testament prophecy, thereby squaring the circle of history.

Messianic

Building upon this theological reading of *kairos*, Giorgio Agamben argues that *kairos* is 'an incoherent and un-homogeneous time, whose truth is in the moment of abrupt interruption, when man, in a sudden act of consciousness, takes possession of his own condition of being

¹³⁹ Phillip Sipiora, 'Kairos: The Rhetoric of Time and Timing in the New Testament', in Sipiora and Baumlin (eds.), *Rhetoric and Kairos*, pp.114-127 (p.121).

¹⁴⁰ Tillich, *The Interpretation of History*, p.280.

¹⁴¹ Frank Kermode, *The sense of an ending: studies in the theory of fiction* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.47.

¹⁴² Kermode, *The sense of an ending*, p.47.

¹⁴³ Kermode, *The sense of an ending*, p.48.

resurrected'.¹⁴⁴ Agamben states that 'the time of the messiah cannot designate a chronological period or duration, but, instead, must represent nothing less than a qualitative change in how time is experienced'.¹⁴⁵ In describing what he deems Agamben's 'messianic pedagogy', Tyson Lewis argues that:

The messianic present is a creative time that exceeds chronological time by introducing future eternity as an internal surplus to the everyday and likewise bleeds the chronological as excess into the eternal. It is, in other words, a zone of indistinction or undecidability that short-circuits definitive boundaries between the past, present, and the future.¹⁴⁶

It is through the 'messianic present' that a qualitative juxtaposition between an incomplete present and a future teleological utopia may be revealed. Crucially, the messianic is a dynamically active concept that functions in the present, and thus engenders the possibility of the future in the here and now, over endless deferral through waiting for a messiah to come.¹⁴⁷

If the End time is eschewed, *akairos* comes to the fore. The notion of an End cannot be understood independently of Christian eschatology. *Kairos*, as read within this tradition, is equated with the Messianic, and is rendered as *o kairós*. Messianism as eschatological can be reconceptualized, in Marramao's terms, as a messianism 'after the end of the *faith* in history'.¹⁴⁸ That is to say, when faith in linear progress to a better society is lost. Marramao reads this messianic moment as only articulable through political action.¹⁴⁹ He argues that each historical moment is 'locked', and that it can be opened by political action, which itself

¹⁴⁴ Giorgio Agamben, *Infancy and History: On the Destruction of Experience*, trans. Liz Heron (London: Verso, 2007), p.111.

¹⁴⁵ Giorgio Agamben, *The Church and the Kingdom*, trans. Leland de la Durantaye (London; New York: Seagull Books, 2012), p.4.

¹⁴⁶ Tyson Lewis, 'Messianic Pedagogy', *Educational Theory*, 60:2 (April, 2010), 231-248 (p.238).

¹⁴⁷ As such, *kairos* may be understood as articulating Osborne's eternalization of the present as outlined above. See p.31.

¹⁴⁸ Giacomo Marramao, 'Messianism without Delay: On the "Post-religious" Political Theology of Walter Benjamin', *Constellations*, 15:3 (2008), 397-405 (p.397).

¹⁴⁹ Marramao, 'Messianism without Delay', p.401.

can thereby be qualified as messianic. Marramao reads the Messiah not as ‘the grand representation of Roman Catholicism’, but as appearing in a ‘moment of danger, when a small opening seems to reveal itself: the entryway for the messianic is also the entrance point of contingency, of transience’.¹⁵⁰ Marramao deems this moment kairological, which coincides with a quasi ‘interlude between being and nothingness’.¹⁵¹

Marramao’s reading of the messianic as kairological tempus, ready to emerge at each and every moment is commensurate with Benjamin’s *Jetztzeit*, or ‘now-time’. This time is a *Modell* (model) of the Messianic, “‘shot through” with “chips” (*Splitter*) of Messianic time, [a] site of “weak” (*schwache*) Messianic power’.¹⁵² Now-time, Boer argues, is Benjamin’s kairós, read through an eschatological o kairós, or, messianic, End time, and as ‘both a moment and a period of imminent and final crisis’.¹⁵³ Osborne observes that Walter Benjamin’s now-time is thus an intense, interruptive element within normative narrativity. In functioning so, it ‘draws attention to its utopian core: a pair of ideals (fulfilment and equality) which derive their meaning from the level of history as a whole’.¹⁵⁴ Benjamin’s kairós, steeped within an eschatological reading, and, as interruptive as per Eagleton’s reading outlined above, aligns with notions of ‘fulfilment and equality’, and is thus in line with a traditional Western Marxist reading of kairós as revolutionary, and serving a particular socio-economic organization of society. Marramao’s messianism therefore has Benjaminian connotations in its political advocacy.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ Marramao, ‘Messianism without Delay’, p.403.

¹⁵¹ Marramao, ‘Messianism without Delay’, p.403.

¹⁵² Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, p.149.

¹⁵³ Boer, ‘Revolution in the Event’, p.118.

¹⁵⁴ Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, p.158.

¹⁵⁵ Whilst this secularized, revolutionary reading of the messianic is instructive for mobilizing political action, it falls foul of the problems of a limited reading of kairós that Boer charges popular Western Marxist thinkers as being guilty of. Boer asserts that ‘various positions of major Marxist thinkers on revolution may be gathered under the common framework of kairós, understood as a resolutely temporal term relating to the critical time’. See Boer, ‘Revolution in the Event’, p.117.

Akairos

An eschatological, messianic reading of kairos is qualitatively different from that of akairological utopia. In my reading, akairos is understood as untimely, unconcerned with eschatology or a telos. In helping to articulate akairos, Robert Leston's distinction between cosmological and nomological kairos is instructive. The former is an opening toward a 'future to come that sees the present expression of the logos as a single moment in a never-ending cosmic flow of time'. The latter 'turns back that potentiality in order to ground it into the here and now'.¹⁵⁶ Crucially, however, nomological kairos does not attempt to stipulate the future, but rather ventures into the unknown; it is thus much more akin to an untimely rupture, echoing Newman's argument above for a moment of 'radical indeterminacy', over and above the timely, or, opportune.¹⁵⁷

Supplanting Tillich's juxtaposition of chronos against kairos, and building upon the reading of kairos proffered by Marramao, Shew and Leston in particular, I argue, after Boer, that akairos is a more instructive concept than chronos and kairos in a reading of utopia. This is because akairos is an interruption in the order of chronology, and not an apex of 'goodness' as per kairos in the eschatological sense. Instead, akairos is non-prescriptive, and engenders a rupture in the fabric of lived historical time. It cannot be plotted out, but only articulated negatively, in effect, by way of what it is not. What it is not, is chronological in a rationally articulated manner. It is therefore not commensurate with any sense of a linear progress to an end of history (be this understood as o kairos, or as a secular classic utopia). Instead, akairos as rupture is utopia insofar as it is no place, and euchronistic; it is the 'good' time. 'Good' in this sense is to be read tenuously: it is 'good' insofar as it is not what currently exists.

¹⁵⁶ Leston, 'Unhinged', p.35.

¹⁵⁷ See p.33.

The *eu* of utopia is necessarily not articulable through either utilizing *chronos* or *kairos*. Correlating utopia with *akairos*, crucially, ensures that utopia cannot be co-opted or reified by any particular perspective. Therefore, the neat juxtaposition of *chronos* against *kairos* in the Tillichian reading only serves a conservative utopianism that can distinguish what is utopia from what is not by having a notion of *o kairos*: the eschatological end time that qualifies historical progress as teleological. Thus, in spite of Tillich noting the contradiction of conceptualizing a time bound thought of the End of time, to read *kairos* as 'timely', qualified through an eschatological Christian reading is problematic, insofar as it is predicated upon a direct knowledge of the End time.¹⁵⁸ Therefore, the legacy of the New Testament reading of *kairos* versus *chronos* ought to be superseded. Doing so helps to reconceptualize utopia in a similarly liberating manner.

My reading of *akairos* is commensurate with what Leston refers to as the 'unhinged'.¹⁵⁹ That is, *akairos* is when the ability to rationally narrativize breaks down, and time is 'unhinged'. During such moments, qualitative gaps emerge which are neither chronological, nor *kairological*. Whilst Leston refers to such ruptures as *kairological*, in referring to them as 'unhinged', they can also be associated with Boer's 'ill-timed, displaced and non-harmonious'; in effect, *akairological*. In such ruptures, Leston argues that something new, or alien, may enter into discourse. I will argue that this potential 'newness' is not positively articulated, but the moment of a Nietzsche inspired Adornian-Jamesonian recognition of the limits of rational articulation. This recognition, it can be argued, is utopia insofar as it is the good place that is no place in terms of normative discourse, in effect, an

¹⁵⁸ Boer notes that the Tillichian juxtaposition between *chronos* and *kairos* unwittingly reflects a logic of 'domination', whereby 'the universal law of *kairos* becomes the claim of a particular perspective to universal status at the expense of others'. See Boer, 'Revolution in the Event', pp.125-26.

¹⁵⁹ Leston, 'Unhinged', p.47.

iconoclastic reading of utopia (this will be spelled out in the next section). The echoes of the qualitative impact of this reading of utopia may be felt, but cannot be positively articulated. If such impact was articulable, then it would be reform, not utopia. In sum, this thesis builds upon Boer's akairos, and argues that this disruptive notion of time is better suited to the task of negatively articulating utopia, over either a positive, politically informed chronos, or, theologically revolutionary kairos.

Iconoclastic utopia

Jacoby juxtaposes classic utopia with iconoclastic utopia. Arguing from the Jewish tradition, with a concomitant ban on graven images,¹⁶⁰ including those of an o kairological utopia in the future, Jacoby argues that iconoclastic utopia is 'essential to any effort to escape the spell of the quotidian', and moreover, 'the prerequisite of *any* thinking'.¹⁶¹ Iconoclastic utopia is thereby, as argued above, (negatively) transcendental; in effect, a condition of (im)possibility in thought, as well as practice. For Jacoby, iconoclastic utopia thus perpetually widens the parameters of possibility of the classic tradition. Jacoby asserts that 'the choice we have is not between reasonable proposals and an unreasonable utopianism. Utopian thinking does not undermine or discount real reforms. Indeed, it is almost the opposite: practical reforms depend on utopian dreaming – or at least utopian thinking drives incremental improvements'.¹⁶² However, insofar as the utopian is concerned with social reform, its emancipatory potential is stifled. If utopia is to involve taking up the contingent issues of the

¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, related to the Jewish ban on graven images, Jacoby argues: 'In an image-obsessed society such as our own, I suggest that the traditional blueprint utopianism may be exhausted and the iconoclastic utopianism indispensable. The iconoclastic utopians resist the modern seduction of images. Pictures and graphics are not new, of course, but their ubiquity is'. See Jacoby, *Picture Imperfect*, p.xvi.

¹⁶¹ Jacoby, *Picture Imperfect*, p.xvii.

¹⁶² Jacoby, *Picture Imperfect*, p.1

day, 'it would forfeit its own commitment to a realm beyond the immediate choices'.¹⁶³ Yet, if utopia is to be transcendent, it would also become ineffectual in that it would claim to be divorced from the conditions that enable its intelligibility at all. The current thesis argues for utopia as immanent rupture that is neither prescriptive, nor transcendent. Rather, as per Jameson's analyses outlined above, utopia's role is a critically substantive one that sheds a light on our entrapment. As akairological rupture, utopia is the moment when the ability to narrativize in rationally articulated manner is rendered as mired in contradiction. Iconoclastic utopia as akairological rupture is thus in juxtaposition against the classic reading, which may be plotted out in blueprint fashion. Instead, in my reading, there is rupture, which highlights the limits of positive knowledge acquisition and expression. Reiterating the above discussion of the limits of the existing positivist paradigm,¹⁶⁴ akairological rupture emerges within it, and, after Adorno and Jameson, highlights the limits of positivist articulations.

Supporting this reconceptualization of utopia, Wayne Hudson argues that no 'fixed range of temporal compartments is intrinsic to utopia, just as no one knows how many different ways of conceiving time can be given a utopian deployment'.¹⁶⁵ The connotations of utopia as finality, telos, closure, death, and time of the end (as discussed by Osborne and Sargisson above), are as outmoded as the reading of it as an ideal commonwealth, in effect, 'eutopia' as the best place, and as 'euchronia', the best time, in the future.¹⁶⁶ This thesis will argue for utopia as an akairological rupture that, à la Newman above, occurs in any given present, and that this is best rendered by music, given music's temporal character.

¹⁶³ Jacoby, *Picture Imperfect*, p.145.

¹⁶⁴ See pp.3-4.

¹⁶⁵ Wayne Hudson, *The Reform of Utopia* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p.25.

¹⁶⁶ Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, p.58.

This thesis therefore makes a case for an open-ended utopia, as qualitative rupture of existing normative discourse, as opposed to either reform, resolution, or, telos. Building upon Sargisson's research from the mid-1990s, which argued for a feminist utopianism that was resistant to closure and notions of perfection, and was informed by the 'transgressive discourses of Derridean and Cixousian post-structuralism',¹⁶⁷ my contribution utilizes the diagnostic work of Nietzsche, and critical social theory of Bloch and Adorno, to read utopia as open-ended and non-prescriptive of the precise nature of a better future. The akairological ruptures that are defended, in Sargisson's words, 'exploit the "ou" of utopia', and stress open-endedness.¹⁶⁸ Iconoclastic utopia is open-ended and nonsensical in terms of classic utopia. It performs a critically substantive role as per Jameson and can tenuously be equated with Levitas's call for a broad analytic definition of the concept, in that it represents desire for a better way.

What results is a modest account, which is politically ineffective when read through a lens of normative liberal democratic reform, and irrelevant or nonsensical from the perspective of neoliberalism. That said, it is *precisely* a palatable reading of utopia that this thesis forgoes to redeem the critical efficacy of the concept. My thesis's argument understands a reconceptualization of utopia as qualitative rupture, over and above spatial place and telos, as able to withstand scrutiny. This reading of utopia is not ahistorical, but instead takes its cue from Adorno's mode of immanent critique by asserting that utopia can only be engendered as rupture amidst historically and culturally embedded normative discourse.¹⁶⁹ If such qualitative rupture leads to reform, that is incidental, and not an aim of this reconceptualization of utopia.

¹⁶⁷ Sargisson, *Contemporary Feminist Utopianism*, p.226.

¹⁶⁸ Sargisson, *Contemporary Feminist Utopianism*, p.21.

¹⁶⁹ Immanent critique is discussed in chapter three.

Not only does this reconceptualization challenge the dominant reading of utopia as an ideal future place in which inhabitants reside in harmony, it also challenges the popular notion that utopia involves a social collective, for example, a polis enmeshed within liberal democracy. This thesis is thus opposed to conceiving of utopia as a result of realizable material reform by either orthodox, political parliamentary democracy, or grassroots movements such as Occupy, for example. By determinately negating normative discourse, my reading of utopia can help to negatively reveal that which does not currently exist. In other words, utopia is argued to necessarily *always* be in opposition to a given state of contingent affairs, since there is no telos to be had. Ultimately, through highlighting contradictions in liberal discourse and classic utopia, this iconoclastic reading of utopia follows Adorno and Jameson, in arguing that it is 'good to know the worst'. This is a negative articulation of utopia, which may be substantiated by a reading of time that is akairological. Akairos is a way of reading or experiencing time. My claim is that akairos thus shapes our understanding of utopia: as we read and experience time akairologically, we necessarily reconsider utopia. This akairological approach thus also rejects positivist and neoliberal readings of time, which, as has been explored throughout this introduction, both curtail the possibility of a radical conception of utopia.

Herein lies the criticality of Nietzsche as diagnostician of the crux of the narrative, Bloch as interlocutor, and Adorno as negative dialectician *par excellence* in conferring an akairological reading of utopia, informed by music, fit to withstand the challenge of commodification. The next section will clarify the key texts and thinkers that will constitute the main body of the thesis, as well as justify why certain theorists have not been discussed at length.

Key texts

The discussion focuses upon Nietzsche's first work *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) because of its explicit discussion of the Dionysian-Apollonian relationship and music, his 'free-spirit' middle works trilogy of *Human, all too Human* (1878), *Daybreak* (1881) and *The Gay Science* (1882, 1887), and the utopian literary text of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-5), because of their discussions of higher, self-overcoming, transvaluing types. *The Gay Science* will also be used to analyse Nietzsche's notion of 'eternal recurrence', and how this links to the potential for attributing an akairological reading of utopia to his critical task. Furthermore, I will incorporate *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887) for its discussion concerning perspectivism. I take Nietzsche to be committed to a Dionysian ontology throughout his corpus, from *The Birth of Tragedy* up to his final works, *Twilight of the Idols* (1888), *The Antichrist* (1888) and *Ecce Homo* (1888). Nietzsche is consistently the 'gadfly' of his time, and determined to introduce *Rausch* (intoxication)¹⁷⁰ into his contemporary discourse. The limitations of Nietzsche's contribution to my argument will be primarily elucidated through Georg Simmel's analysis of 'sociological tragedy',¹⁷¹ which necessitates the need for Bloch's Hegelian-Marxism.

The second chapter focuses upon the processual, Hegelian-Marxist utopia found within Bloch's philosophy, and contrasts it with Nietzsche's disavowal of social progress. Criticisms are provided by discussing Bloch's subjective prejudice, and the circular nature of his concept of *docta spes*, or 'educated hope'. The discussion argues in Bloch's favour insofar as his is a kairological reading of utopia, articulated in expressionistic style. Bloch renders utopia attainable for the social collective, through coalescing existent cultural material in line

¹⁷⁰ *Rausch* translates, unsatisfactorily, as a combination of intoxication, ecstasy and drunkenness.

¹⁷¹ Donald N. Levine, 'The Structure of Simmel's Thought', in Kurt H. Wolff (ed.), *Georg Simmel, 1858-1918: a collection of essays with translations and a bibliography* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1959), pp.9-32 (p.31).

with Marx's historical materialism, and a Nietzsche inspired *Rausch*. In this chapter, the argument centres upon Bloch's first work, the Nietzschean *The Spirit of Utopia* (1918), as well as *Traces* (1930), the diagnostic *Heritage of our Times* (1935), and his magnum opus *The Principle of Hope* (1938-47). This is because his early to middle works read as directly inspired by, and as a response to, Nietzsche's Dionysian ontology. Furthermore, his early works focus upon utopia, music and *Rausch* to a degree not found in his later works.

This third and final chapter discusses the importance of determinate negation, as well as individual resistance through engagement with Adorno's post-Nietzsche and post-Bloch reading of utopia. Adorno's programme of immanent critique, in the spirit of what he coins negative dialectics, along with non-identity thinking and interpreting concepts as configured within a constellation, is presented as a militantly playful mode of critical engagement linked to Nietzsche's perspectivism. It is argued that Adorno's programme of undertaking an immanent critique of socio-cultural material, along with his musical analysis, is commensurate with an akairological reading of utopia. Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944, 1947) is referenced for its analysis of the problem of cultural reification. *Philosophy of New Music* (1949), the autobiographical (and aphoristically Nietzschean) *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life* (1951), Adorno's cultural essays collected in *Prisms* (1955), along with essays on Bloch (*Notes to Literature I and II*, 1958 and 1961), *Negative Dialectics* (1966), and the accompanying lecture notes (1965, 1966), as well as the collected works in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catch Words* (1969) and the posthumously compiled *Aesthetic Theory* (1970), and *Night Music: Essays on Music, 1928 – 1962* (2009) have been incorporated for their explicit reference to music, the individual subject, and utopia.

Notable omissions from the research include a sustained discussion of the works of Walter Benjamin and Herbert Marcuse, who both originally formed a larger part of the central

argument. That notwithstanding, Benjamin's discussions on *Jetztzeit*, or messianic time, and investigation into the significance of altered states of consciousness offer an insightful perspective on the kairological, which has been in part discussed above.¹⁷² Benjamin has been primarily omitted because of restrictions of scope, and because his works do not permit me to as forcefully make the central claims that Nietzsche, Bloch and Adorno do. Marcuse has been omitted from sustained discussion because he, despite earlier Adornian misgivings, attempts in his later works to combine art and utopia in a manner that does not correlate with, nor steadily oppose in a manner attributed to Bloch, the reading of akairological utopia argued for in this thesis.¹⁷³

Other key thinkers that could have been discussed in greater detail in relation to a utopia, (a)kairos, a Dionysian ontology, the individual subject and music, include Henri Bergson, the post-structuralists Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, phenomenological existentialists Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre, as well as the Situationists Guy Debord and Raoul Vaneigem. Whilst these thinkers do engage with aspects of this thesis to varying degrees, they do not do so in a manner to merit extended discussion in line with the central argument.¹⁷⁴ Nonetheless, there could be much fruitful research building upon this thesis by engaging with these thinkers in relation to the central argument that utopia ought to be reconceptualized as akairological and engendered by music.

Having clarified the key concepts that constitute the focus of the thesis, and the thinkers that both explicitly and implicitly address them, the discussion will now move onto

¹⁷² See Walter Benjamin, *On Hashish*, trans. Howard Eiland and others (Cambridge, Mass; London: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2006) and Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Volume One: 1913 - 1926*, eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, trans. Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996).

¹⁷³ For example, Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics*, trans. Herbert Marcuse and Erica Sherover (London: Macmillan, 1979).

¹⁷⁴ Key works from these thinkers were consulted in the development of this thesis.

discussion of Nietzsche as the diagnostician of the crises of nineteenth century European intellectual thought, and how his radical formulations through recourse to Ancient Greece help to negatively articulate utopia amidst contemporary socio-political discourse.

Chapter One: Nietzsche

Overview

The initial section of this chapter starts by contextualizing key elements of a material reading of utopia that can be ascribed to Nietzsche's critical task. This is done through discussion of his opposition to Platonism, Liberalism, Christian and Socialist sentiments, and the notions of the eternal recurrence and *amor fati* as his ethical responses against the challenge of nihilism. The chapter continues by analysing his notion of the self-overcoming, transvaluing individual, who, eschewing teleology, pushes rational, Apollonian articulation to its limits to reveal Dionysian excess. This leads to discussion of the centrality of a Dionysian ontology to utopia in Nietzsche. This ontology in turn links explicitly to the critical role non-lyrical music plays in terms of a higher individual being able to demonstrate the limits of Apollonian, rational, expression, to render akairological rupture. The final section analyses the limitations of Nietzsche's critical task, by arguing that through a focus upon the Dionysian individual of his later works, his analysis is worthy as a critical response to post-Enlightenment, liberal, thought, but not so helpful in terms of determining praxis. This ends the chapter with the need to move on to his successor, Bloch, who seeks to domesticate the severity of Nietzsche's diagnosis and fashion it into something – fused with a Hegelian-Marxism – useful in terms of social progress.

Contextual introduction

Nietzsche's anti-Platonism renders any account of utopia attributed to him a strictly materialist one. Insofar as it foregoes the material world in favour of the transcendent,¹⁷⁵ Platonist metaphysics, for Nietzsche, is emblematic of nihilism. This is the belief that there is no ultimate meaning or purpose to existence. By positing the notion of an ideal realm of forms, Plato tacitly devalues the material world. Wood deems this move to be that of a 'consummate nihilist'.¹⁷⁶ Wood continues by implicitly equating this nihilism with classic utopia, insofar as the latter is read as the perfectibility of humankind, and an ideal future that devalues the present. An ideal future suggests a strong set of ideal values against which present norms are to be judged. This devaluation of the present leads, in Wood's Nietzsche-inspired analysis, to a 'second stage of depressive nihilism', whereby the 'world has no value, and there are no values for it to have'.¹⁷⁷ Nietzsche's materialism responds to this challenge of nihilism. Utopia as attributed to Nietzsche therefore has to satisfy the following criteria: it must be eternally present and materially grounded, without recourse to a transcendent realm. Alan Schrift notes that transcendent appeals to legitimize normative claims regarding either political or ethical stances, for example, are to be expected in a 'conservative theocratic polity', but these appeals also find 'near universal acceptance [...] within liberal democratic polities'.¹⁷⁸ This can be understood as a Kantian position insofar as Kant's political philosophy

¹⁷⁵ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p.25: 'Metaphysics is still needed by some, but so is that impetuous demand for certainty that today discharges itself in scientific-positivistic form among great masses - the demand that one wants by all means something to be firm (while owing to the fervour of this demand one treats the demonstration of this certainty more lightly and negligently): this is still the demand for foothold, support - in short, the instinct of weakness that, to be sure, does not create sundry religions, forms of metaphysics, and convictions but does - preserve them'. Also, see Theunissen, 'Metaphysics' Forgetfulness of Time', p.23.

¹⁷⁶ David Wood, 'Nietzsche's Transvaluation of Time', in David Farrell Krell and David Wood (eds.), *Exceedingly Nietzsche: Aspects of Contemporary Nietzsche Interpretation* (London: Routledge, 1988), pp.31-62 (p.44).

¹⁷⁷ Wood, 'Nietzsche's Transvaluation of Time', p.44.

¹⁷⁸ Alan D. Schrift, 'Spinoza vs. Kant: Have I Been Understood?', in Keith Ansell-Pearson (ed.), *Nietzsche and Political Thought* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), pp.107-122 (p.108).

posits forms of liberalism as the telos of the historical development of humanity. Against the tide of neoliberalism, this Kantian position has come to be considered in the liberal West, post-Kantian Enlightenment (especially in the academy), as the preeminent *reasonable* ethical-political position worth defending, namely, a Rawlsian and Habermasian one.¹⁷⁹ Nietzsche is as dismissive of Kantian regulative ethics as he is of 'Platonic-Christian transcendent ideals'.¹⁸⁰ For Nietzsche, Plato, Christianity and Kant form a 'holy trinity of nihilism', as 'willers of nothingness who judge the world as it is that it ought not to be and who determine what ought to be as existing in a world beyond this one'.¹⁸¹ Utopia as classically understood is thus in line with a Platonic, Christian, or Kantian ontology, which involves a telos: Republic, Messiah, Liberalism.

In response to 'Platonic-Christian transcendent ideals', building upon a reading in the introduction of eternity, or, *aion*, as that of a moving image of time measured by *chronos*, first presented in aphorism 341 of *The Gay Science* (1882) is a highly contested concept within Nietzsche's oeuvre: the eternal recurrence [*ewigen Wiederkehr*]. To understand its implications, it is necessary to first analyse an earlier aphorism in the same text. As a diagnostician of nineteenth-century fin-de-siècle spiritual and religious ennui, and in the face of seismic changes in narratives governing social life, in *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche presents a parable of a 'madman', who proclaims that 'God is dead', and that 'we', as modern subjects, have killed him. In sum, Nietzsche's madman is deemed so by a mob, who observe the passing of God as no bad thing. The madman, however, discerns that the death of God symbolizes an epoch in which the narrative of religion as governing social life and morality to have come to

¹⁷⁹ See, for example, John Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, Revised edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

¹⁸⁰ Schrift, 'Spinoza vs. Kant', p.108.

¹⁸¹ Schrift, 'Spinoza vs. Kant'. p.108.

an end.¹⁸² With this shift will come a belief in alternative neo-religions, as the mob, swirling in a metaphysical abyss, will seek to create and sustain meaning in the face of realizing that there is arguably none in terms of a meta-narrative. The challenge this poses is one of nihilism, and, given that it is born out of the lack of meta-narrative, marks a disappearance of an eschatological or messianic *kairos* from the discourse, at the expense of a perennial *chronos*, as measure of eternity.¹⁸³

Nietzsche argues that nihilism will be the greatest challenge facing humanity in the twentieth century. His mature to late works from 1882 onward are an attempt to confront this challenge. One potential solution is the eternal recurrence. In aphorism 341 of *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche proposes the following:

What, if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: 'This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more' [...] Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: 'You are a god and never have I heard anything more divine'.¹⁸⁴

If God is dead, and there is no ultimate meaning to existence, no kairological coming, then nihilism is a likely outcome. To confront this, eternal recurrence is posed as an ethical challenge. This challenge can be met through *amor fati*, or, a 'love of fate', best articulated in 'Why I am so clever' (section 10) of *Ecce Homo* (1888), in which Nietzsche postulates: 'My formula for human greatness is *amor fati*: that one wants to have nothing different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity. Not merely to bear the necessary, still less to conceal it—all idealism is mendaciousness before the necessary—but to *love* it'.¹⁸⁵ The love of what exists in any given present, not 'forward, not backward, not in all eternity', renders

¹⁸² This notion is echoed in Osborne's observation concerning death as structuring narrative above (p.16).

¹⁸³ See p.28.

¹⁸⁴ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p.194.

¹⁸⁵ Nietzsche, 'Ecce Homo', p.714.

an attempt to qualitatively exceed the quantitative measure of chronos. To do this, Nietzsche's gambit is to advocate an inversion of the unremitting pessimism of one of his major early philosophical influences, Arthur Schopenhauer, with a fervent 'yes' saying in the face of the tragicomedy of existence.

In terms of Liberalism, for Kant, humankind requires a social order in order to become 'free'. He argues that social order prevents individuals from becoming 'stunted, bent and twisted [*krüppelig, schief, und krumm*]'.¹⁸⁶ Whilst Nietzsche is not averse to rank and social order of a kind to engender the coming of higher types,¹⁸⁷ he differs from his predecessor's focus upon society as a whole. Through appeal to regulate normative ethics, Kant's position is, in Nietzsche's terms, a nihilistic one. Denial of existing material conditions, and a 'concomitant affirmation of a transcendental world [...] that anchors life by giving it meaning' provides the nihilist with comfort.¹⁸⁸ Nietzsche deems that his critical task must be to respond to this. He does so by presenting an ethical challenge that conflates the idea of eternity with the idea of history.¹⁸⁹ This is best depicted through his notion of the eternal recurrence as outlined above.

¹⁸⁶ Jacoby, *Picture Imperfect*, p.65.

¹⁸⁷ For example, see Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p.162: 'My philosophy aims at an ordering of rank: not at an individualistic morality. The ideas of the herd should rule in the herd-but not reach out beyond it: the leaders of the herd require a fundamentally different valuation for their own actions, as do the independent, or the "beasts of prey," etc.'

¹⁸⁸ Dennis King Keenan, 'Blanchot and Klossowski on the Eternal Return of Nietzsche', *Research in Phenomenology*, 48 (2018), 155-174 (pp.155-56).

¹⁸⁹ Eternity in Nietzsche is read in Heraclitean vein through the image of a child at play: 'Heraclitus compares the world-building forces of a playing child that places stones here and there and builds sand hills only to overthrow them again', in Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy', p.142; 'From now on, man is *included* among the most unexpected and exciting lucky throws in the dice game of Heraclitus' "great child", be he called Zeus or chance', in Nietzsche, 'On the Genealogy of Morals' in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, p.521; 'The doctrine of the "eternal recurrence", that is, of the unconditional and infinitely repeated circular course of all things - this doctrine of Zarathustra *might* in the end have been taught already by Heraclitus', in Nietzsche, 'Ecce Homo' in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, pp.655-802 (pp.729-30).

Nietzsche's post-Kantian politics therefore strives 'towards the affirmation of every moment and every being as part and parcel of the whole becoming of life in its eternity'.¹⁹⁰ This perspective of the whole (which Vanessa Lemm deems as 'great politics') renders the idea of historical change, as per the reading of Whig history as outlined in the introduction,¹⁹¹ as 'merely an illusion to which small politics must adhere because it is structured by the belief that human action can change the course of time'.¹⁹² On Lemm's conception, great politics is that which is beyond politics and morality that aims 'not to change the course of time', but, instead, 'to affirm the eternity of the moment'¹⁹³ through *amor fati*. This renders Nietzsche's vision of the whole to be a 'liberating and elevating' one, insofar as it deems that each moment, as a part of the whole, has 'eternal value and worth', or, in other (of Lemm's) words, 'that what seems to be historically contingent has in fact the imprint of eternity'.¹⁹⁴ In this way, the eternal recurrence involves the 'reinscription of becoming within the discourse of metaphysics in a way that undermines that discourse'.¹⁹⁵ Within the discourse of the eternal recurrence, the historical subject is 'caught in the moment as in a circle of time'.¹⁹⁶ In effect, the subject is entrapped within chronos as the measure of eternity. That said, 'this perspective of the suprahistorical as representative of eternity is also a perspective of radical immanence'.¹⁹⁷ To clarify, eternal recurrence undermines the discourse of transcendent metaphysics by grounding it in material terms. This is spelled out in an aphorism below, dated 1883-1885:

¹⁹⁰ Vanessa Lemm, 'Nietzsche's Great Politics of the Event', in Ansell-Pearson (ed.), *Nietzsche and Political Thought*, pp.179-195 (p.182).

¹⁹¹ See pp.21-23 and p.27.

¹⁹² Lemm, 'Nietzsche's Great Politics of the Event', p.182.

¹⁹³ Lemm, 'Nietzsche's Great Politics of the Event', p.181.

¹⁹⁴ Lemm, 'Nietzsche's Great Politics of the Event', p.182.

¹⁹⁵ Wood, *The Deconstruction of Time*, p.29.

¹⁹⁶ Lemm, 'Nietzsche's Great Politics of the Event', p.184.

¹⁹⁷ Lemm, 'Nietzsche's Great Politics of the Event', p.184.

If we affirm one single moment, we thus affirm not only ourselves but all existence. For nothing is self-sufficient, neither in us ourselves nor in things; and if our soul has trembled with happiness and sounded like a harp string just once, all eternity was needed to produce this one event – and in this single moment of affirmation all eternity was called good, redeemed, justified, and affirmed.¹⁹⁸

This conflation of the moment and eternity is substantiated in the following claim, written during the same period, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in which Nietzsche argues through the mouthpiece of Zarathustra's animals, that 'existence begins in every instant; the ball There rolls around every Here. The middle is everywhere. The path of eternity is crooked'.¹⁹⁹ Exposing the notion of progress as myth, and appeals to the transcendent as nihilistic, Nietzsche's ethical challenge of the eternal recurrence grounds being in the historical moment as compatible with eternity as a way of confronting the challenge of nihilism. Nietzsche's response of the eternal recurrence is in line with his notion of the 'will to power'. That is, a Dionysian affirmation 'of the eternally self-creating, the eternally self-destroying'.²⁰⁰ Nietzsche argues during his mature period (1885) for a

mystery world of the twofold voluptuous delight, my 'beyond good and evil,' without goal, unless the joy of the circle is itself a goal; without will, unless a ring feels good will toward itself — do you want a *name* for this world? A *solution* for all its riddles? A *light* for you, too, you best-concealed, strongest, most intrepid, most midnightly men? — *This world is the will to power — and nothing besides!* And you yourselves are also this will to power — and nothing besides!²⁰¹

The 'strongest, most intrepid, most midnightly men' chronologically appear paradoxically both at the end and beginning of a cyclical measure of time. They are thereby entrapped, but may rejoice in their predicament, in effect, 'the joy of the circle', to successfully respond to the challenge of the eternal recurrence. Such higher types will be the focus of the next section. It will analyse Nietzsche's propagation of higher types who may embrace his Dionysian

¹⁹⁸ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, pp.532-33.

¹⁹⁹ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p.234.

²⁰⁰ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p.274.

²⁰¹ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p.274.

ontology and seek to overcome the challenge of nihilism through ecstatic affirmation of the 'eternity of the moment'. In so doing, such individuals render an akairological account of utopia; one that overcomes the pitfalls of either prescriptivism or transcendentalism, but that materially grounds the concept.²⁰² There is in Nietzsche, then, a manner of legitimately attributing utopia to his critical task which fulfils the following criteria: eternally present, materially grounded, and without recourse to the transcendent.

²⁰² See pp.18-19.

1. Dionysian individual

Overview

This section begins by presenting Nietzsche's critical task as responding to positivism, and what he deems as *ressentiment*²⁰³ imbued within Christian and Socialist ideals. His presentation of Alexandrian man in *The Birth of Tragedy*, and the 'last' man in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is discussed as part of his response to the contemporary discourse, which bears the hallmark of Socratic reason. I will argue that the tradition of Socratic dialectic, and the ideologies of Christianity, Socialism and positivism are all commensurate with classic utopia and a kairological reading of time. In opposition to these positions, I will present Nietzsche's critical task as compatible with an iconoclastic version of utopia, one that presents a restless sense of self and perpetual overcoming of suffering; liberal being versus Nietzschean becoming is a strand that runs throughout the section. Nietzsche's arguments in favour of self-overcoming, higher types, including the overman, as well as transvaluation, in part through discussion of the three metamorphoses of the spirit as presented in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, will demonstrate the importance of individual creative destruction in Nietzsche's critical task.²⁰⁴ In addition, Nietzsche's non-teleological reading of history, in favour of a genealogical unpacking of mores through a perspectival seeing in order to usurp them will be presented as commensurate with akairos. The section will conclude by exploring the centrality of a Dionysian ontology to his discourse, and how his thought develops from his

²⁰³ Walter Kaufmann points out that Nietzsche uses the French word *ressentiment* owing to the lack of any close equivalent in German. See 'Editor's Introduction to On the Genealogy of Morals', in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, pp.439-448 (p.441). *Ressentiment* encapsulates the notion that the cause of suffering of the slave type may be projected onto the master type. In other words, the slave may justify their suffering through blaming another.

²⁰⁴ Creativity is a theme that runs throughout this thesis, and especially in discussion concerning music in each of the three main chapters.

first published work, which seeks to harmonize Dionysian and Apollonian worldviews, to that of his final works, which focus upon the insurmountable limits and contradictions of Apollonian discourse. The final part of this section sets the scene for discussion of the importance of non-lyrical music to negatively reveal Dionysian excess in the second section of the chapter

The last man and the Alexandrian man

Writing amidst late nineteenth-century Europe, in a culture rife with what he deems 'brutal positivism',²⁰⁵ which attempts total, mechanistic understanding of existence as outlined in the introduction, Nietzsche seeks to provoke a transvaluation of existing values (*Umwertung aller Werte*). The values Nietzsche opposes are those of Christianity and Socialism (as emblematic of a liberal worldview) in particular.²⁰⁶ He argues in a note made during his mature period that '[r]esidues of Christian value judgments are found everywhere in socialistic and positivistic systems. A critique of Christian morality is still lacking'.²⁰⁷ In his mature work *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche deems Christian morality as 'slavish'. By this, he means that it is based upon rejection of a particular socio-political reality. He

²⁰⁵ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p.74: 'More natural is our attitude toward art: we do not demand beautiful illusory lies from it, etc.; brutal positivism reigns, recognizing facts without becoming excited' (section 120, 1887); Nietzsche, 'On the Genealogy of Morals', p.583: 'science today is a *hiding place* for every kind of discontent, disbelief, gnawing worm, *despectio sui*, bad conscience - it is the unrest of the *lack* of ideals, the suffering from the *lack* of any great love, the discontent in the face of involuntary contentment'.

²⁰⁶ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, pp.241-42: 'We "conserve" nothing; neither do we want to return to any past; we are by no means 'liberal'; we are not working for 'progress'; we don't need to plug our ears to the marketplace's sirens of the future: what they sing - 'equal rights', 'free society', 'no more masters and no servants' - has no allure for us. We hold it absolutely undesirable that a realm of justice and concord should be established on earth'; Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p.202: 'When the socialist with a line indignation demands "justice," "right," "equal rights," he is merely acting under the impress of his inadequate culture that cannot explain why he is suffering: on the other hand, he enjoys himself; if he felt better he would refrain from crying out: he would then find pleasure in other things. The same applies to the Christian: he condemns, disparages, curses the "world" - himself not excluded. But that is no reason for taking his clamor seriously. In both cases we are in the presence of invalids who feel better for crying out, for whom defamation is a relief' (section 372, 1888).

²⁰⁷ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p.7 (section 4, 1885-86).

continues by arguing the Christian and Socialist alike posit a 'hostile external world', and need 'external stimuli to act at all – their action is fundamentally reaction'.²⁰⁸

Nietzsche thus regards Christianity and Socialism as emblematic of *ressentiment*.²⁰⁹ *Ressentiment* is born out of slave morality, which is predicated on a rejection of external conditions. Slave morality entails a grand narrative, and a notion of the good that it uses to judge existing conditions as either progressive or regressive. Nietzsche deems that Christianity is the forebear of Socialism, insofar as the Christian and Socialist 'find their existence something of which someone must be *guilty*', and thus an 'instinct of revenge and *ressentiment* appears here in both cases as a means of enduring, as the instinct of self-preservation'.²¹⁰ Further, Keith Ansell-Pearson observes that Nietzsche 'interprets modern socialism in terms of an exacerbation of the atomistic and individualistic tendencies of liberalism', insofar as it reduces 'the relationship between the individual and the state to a merely prudential one in which our obligation to society arises out of fear and insecurity, and in which its prime basis is that of rational self-interest'.²¹¹ This is to suggest that the slave's original sentiment of hatred towards their masters is manifest anew in the modern individual's hatred and fear of the state (and thus that both the liberal and socialist are motivated by *ressentiment*, reacting to contemporary conditions, rather than acting agentively and creatively. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche posits the notion of the 'last man', as emblematic of a liberal, fearful individual steeped in *ressentiment*.

²⁰⁸ Nietzsche, 'On the Genealogy of Morals', pp.472-73.

²⁰⁹ Nietzsche, 'On the Genealogy of Morals', pp.472-73. Ansell-Pearson defines '*ressentiment*', as used by Nietzsche, as 'a reactive and negative sentiment against the oppressive masters' held by slaves. See 'Introduction: on Nietzsche's critique of morality', *On the Genealogy of Morality and other writings*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans. Carol A. Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp.xiii-xxix (p.xxiv).

²¹⁰ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p.201 (section 373, 1888).

²¹¹ Ansell-Pearson, *Nietzsche as Political Thinker*, p.75.

For Nietzsche, the last man is a figure worthy of contempt, insofar as he seeks peace, comfort and stasis. These desires may be equated with classic, blueprint utopia, where utopia is interpreted as a peaceful and materially secure society, and thus as an ideal state within which a genuine humanity is realized. These desires are commonly read as worthwhile goals of political and social administration. The Socialist and Christian are both emblematic of the last man, and, *ipso facto*, *ressentiment*. Nietzsche explicitly states in a late writing (1888) that he is opposed to Socialism ‘because it dreams quite naively of “the good, true, and beautiful” and of “equal rights”’.²¹² The latter are commensurate with kairological utopia in both the Western Marxist tradition as outlined in Boer’s analysis above,²¹³ as well as the messianic in the Judeo-Christian canon as described in the introduction.²¹⁴

Complementary to the peace seeking last man, Nietzsche is also opposed to Alexandrian man. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche presents the Alexandrian as ‘theoretical man’,²¹⁵ who is a proto-positivist in his attempt to fully comprehend existence through ratiocination. Nietzsche describes such a figure as one that ‘combats Dionysian wisdom and art, it seeks to dissolve myth, it substitutes for a metaphysical comfort an earthly consonance’.²¹⁶ Alexandrian man is complementary to the last man, in that the Alexandrian’s appeal to reason provides the positivist methodology through which the desires of the last man, for order, understanding and harmony, may be realized. It is these desires, steeped in *ressentiment* owing to their rejection of external conditions, of the last man and Alexandrian man, that are targeted in Nietzsche’s critical task. Nietzsche deems that ‘our whole modern world is entangled in the net of Alexandrian culture. It proposes as its ideal the theoretical

²¹² Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p.397 (section 753, 1885).

²¹³ See p.42, fn.153.

²¹⁴ See pp.40-42.

²¹⁵ Nietzsche, ‘The Birth of Tragedy’, p.18.

²¹⁶ Nietzsche, ‘The Birth of Tragedy’, p.18.

man equipped with the greatest forces of knowledge, and labo[u]ring in the service of science, whose archetype and progenitor is Socrates'.²¹⁷

In juxtaposition against the 'earthly consonance' of the Alexandrian man, and the peace and stasis desired by the last man, Nietzsche argues for dissonance and suffering, and the impossibility of organized revolution. He does this to provoke what he deems a stagnant culture to render expression that exceeds the mundane and reasonable: it is a culture of positive knowledge acquisition and Socratic reason that he aims to usurp. These cultural norms that Nietzsche targets gave rise to classic utopia in the tradition of More, and are commensurate with a chronological and kairological reading of the concept insofar as it is a geographical future place, articulated through ratiocination, in which inhabitants reside in harmony. Nietzsche's contribution to my argument is thus a necessary diagnostic tool to articulate the problems of positivism and Socratic reason. This then justifies the need for an alternative reading of utopia.

Classic utopia

Utopia is only explicitly referred to on a couple of occasions within Nietzsche's corpus. In *Human, all too Human* (1878), which forms the first of his 'free-spirit' trilogy, he states:

My utopia. In a better social order, the hard work and misery of life will be allotted to the man who suffers least from it, that is, to the dullest man, and so on step by step upwards to the man who is most sensitive to the highest, most sublimated kind of suffering, and therefore suffers even when life is most greatly eased.²¹⁸

In response to the positivist utopia and the liberal conception of an 'ideal man', read as ideal citizen, after articulating his opposition to Alexandrian man and Socratic reason, and prior to

²¹⁷ Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy', pp.18-19.

²¹⁸ Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, p.220.

providing his conception of the last man, in the above description of utopia in *Human, all too Human*, Nietzsche parodies a liberal reading of classic utopia, which focusses instead upon the individual. Utopia for Nietzsche consists of a restless sense of self, which seeks suffering as a means of perpetual self-overcoming. This is not a classic articulation of utopia as outlined in the introduction, namely, that of reforming social and material conditions so as to eliminate human suffering.²¹⁹ Rather, Nietzsche is concerned with changing the human subject, and a thinker of utopia precisely insofar as he is concerned with exploring the possibility of a 'good place which is no place' that does not, nor could feasibly ever, exist. As such, paradoxically given that he does not consider himself a thinker of utopia, Nietzsche's critical task is one that forcefully presents a non-classic account of utopia; in effect, an iconoclastic version.

Whilst 'being' (stasis) for Nietzsche is compatible with happiness as understood in terms of the last man, there is little of this to be found in a continual process of 'becoming' (dynamism).²²⁰ What is generally referred to as 'happiness' for Nietzsche is a common value that is actualized through sober reason, and within a socially sanctioned moral order.²²¹ Nietzsche vehemently argues against socially programmed happiness, in effect, classic utopia,²²² when he states:

²¹⁹ In a note made in 1887, Nietzsche states in derisory tone: "'Utopia', the 'ideal man'... these are our gifts from the eighteenth century'. By 'utopia' and the 'ideal man', here he is opposed to the reading of the concept of the positivist tradition after Comte, as outlined in the Introduction (*The Will to Power*, p.61, section 97, 1887).

²²⁰ The hermeneutics of Nietzsche are instructive here, as 'becoming', in his ontology, is a constant, 'and hence embodies the value of *permanence*, which is the hallmark of being' (Wood, *The Deconstruction of Time*, p.28). That notwithstanding, in Nietzsche's critical task, concepts are to be played with in a perspectival manner (see pp.76-77), to reveal their inability to grasp reality as it is. A nominalist, Nietzsche pre-empts a later critique of 'identity thinking' in Adorno, which will be spelled out in chapter three below.

²²¹ One only need think of contemporary neoliberal projects steeped in normalized conservative values such as a heterosexual, organic family, earning a good wage and residing in a well-to-do catchment area.

²²² Here, a liberal, utilitarian utopia after Jeremy Bentham (1748 - 1832) would be an appropriate target. See, for example Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, eds. James H. Burns and Herbert L. A. Hart (London: Athlone Press, 1970).

We 'conserve' nothing; neither do we want to return to any past; we are by no means 'liberal'; we are not working for 'progress' [...] We hold it absolutely undesirable that a realm of justice and concord should be established on earth (because it would certainly be the realm of the most profound levelling down to mediocrity [...]) we are delighted by all who love, as we do, danger, war, and adventure.²²³

Eschewing 'justice and concord' in favour of 'danger, war, and adventure' is incommensurate with classic, blueprint utopia. By extension, Nietzsche's preference for dissonance over consonance, and disinterest in 'progress' renders my reading of utopia attributable to him as neither chronological in the liberal/Enlightenment conception of time, nor kairological in the messianic sense as articulated in the introduction. Rather, my reading of utopia through Nietzsche's critical lens is an akairological and iconoclastic one that does not seek a harmonious telos. Nietzsche's dismissal of socio-political reform as 'absolutely undesirable' is key to the reading of akairological and iconoclastic utopia that I ascribe to his critical task.

Nietzsche's critical task corroborates a reading of utopia as 'no place', insofar as it cannot be bureaucratically plotted out in accordance with rational, positivist discourse. This in turn exempts him from the problems associated with an authoritative, static, classic utopia, as discussed through Osborne and Sargisson in the introduction.²²⁴ During his mature period (1883 – 1888), Nietzsche argues that the prerequisite of his philosophy is: 'joy in what is coming and lies in the future, which triumphs over existing things, however good'.²²⁵ Nietzsche's advocacy of joy in the future to engender the hitherto unknown, over and above 'existing things', regardless of how worthy they may appear, substantiates his argument in favour of perpetual becoming: Nietzsche's critical task is against a liberal conception of time, and a concomitant notion of Whig history.²²⁶

²²³ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, pp.241-42.

²²⁴ See p.16.

²²⁵ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p.224.

²²⁶ See p.27.

In this moment of future orientation in his thought – that appears in tension with, and briefly perhaps triumphant over the contentment with ‘existing things’ that reflection on eternal return encourages – Nietzsche’s project could arguably be deemed commensurate with classic utopia. However, given that Nietzsche does not issue any telos, and is unconcerned with liberal progress, there is never a positive, kairological apex of goodness to be realized. Rather, there is only perpetual becoming and rupture of the present: an iconoclastic utopia presented through akairological rupture, the ever untimely.²²⁷

To read Nietzsche’s discourse in terms of a linear teleology would be to (mis)understand him as exemplifying what he rejects; namely, the logic of the ‘last man’,²²⁸ whereby individual happiness is constituted by mastery of social norms to live a life of comfort. Utopia as ascribed to Nietzsche’s critical task is thereby necessarily perennially oppositional, and cannot be domesticated in the service of a socially approved value, be it happiness or peace, or any other commonly associated with classic utopia. Rather, through its argument in favour of perpetual becoming and dynamism, Nietzsche’s critical task is commensurate with a reading of utopia as akairological and iconoclastic.

Having established Nietzsche’s opposition to Socratic reason, positivism, Christianity and Socialism, as well as Alexandrian man, and what he deems his contemporaneous last man, it is clear that his hopes lie not with any collective, nor liberal individual. Rather, he presents the possibility of ‘higher’ individual types.

²²⁷ This notion of perennial rupture also links to the eternal recurrence as discussed above; as an ethical challenge to undermine the discourse of Platonist metaphysics. Nietzsche’s mature to later project seeks to undermine normative discourse through demonstrating how it fails to satisfy its own demands. Positivism is once more the broad target. In attempting to irrefutably equate theory with being, Nietzsche deems that it is disingenuous. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ*, p.35: ‘I mistrust all systematizers and void them. The will to a system is a lack of integrity’.

²²⁸ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p.17.

Higher types

Nietzsche understands a noble existence as involving suffering against norms. The recompense is that higher types may be born out of the 'common' mass, full as it is for Nietzsche with lethargic beings that lack dynamism, namely, the last men. A severity toward oneself is a pre-requisite for the noble individual. Such an individual is able not merely to survive the lassitude of existence, but actively seeks and embraces suffering as a path that leads to profundity.

In juxtaposition against the last man, Nietzsche posits in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* that a higher type 'wants to create new things and a new virtue', whilst a 'good man' merely 'wants the old things and that the old things shall be preserved'.²²⁹ Markedly against a linear, classic utopia oriented toward a telos as a state of being, Nietzsche's higher type is steeped in an ontology of perpetual processual becoming. Nietzsche argues in one of his final works, *The Antichrist*, that 'the most spiritual human beings find their happiness where others would find their destruction', namely, 'in the labyrinth, in severity towards themselves and others, in experimenting'.²³⁰ This supplanting of the last man's happiness with that of the 'most spiritual' type, helps to exemplify the centrality of severity in Nietzsche's discourse, and the strength of character his ethical challenge demands, which is unlikely to appeal to any political mass.

Nietzsche's higher type interminably suffers, and, at the same time, celebrates an overflowing vitality, and is representative of someone who is able to transmute inner chaos onto the hitherto inconceivable. This is one of the reasons Nietzsche writes at all: to herald the coming of a higher individual, who seeks to not only embrace, but also perpetuate, inner

²²⁹ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p.71.

²³⁰ Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ*, p.190.

chaos.²³¹ This, as yet unrealized, type is Nietzsche's creative response to what he deems as the lethargy of the legacy of Alexandrian man as outlined above, and thus by extension: the last man. Richard Schacht observes that the notion of the overman is a conception that is archetypal of mythical imagery, which has value insofar as it disorients normative discourse.²³²

For Nietzsche, what is qualified as a 'common good' is of little merit. This is because it uncritically regurgitates existing social and cultural norms. Thus, Nietzsche asserts that the 'common always has little value'.²³³ Gary Shapiro notes that Nietzsche repeatedly employs *Pöbel* (rabble), *Heerde* (herd) and *Massen* (mass) with a 'tone of contempt', and is 'appalled by the possibility of the formation of a strong, uniform herd, insofar as the 'homogeneity of the masses' will likely stifle the development of higher types.²³⁴ The notion of the higher man contra the last man is once more apparent in that the former is able to manifest his own unique way of perpetual becoming.

Pierre Klossowski observes that the Nietzschean higher type is one who experiments on himself 'to create something that is not apparent: a set of forces capable of acting upon and modifying that which exists'.²³⁵ Such an individual overcomes the desire for socio-political integration and culturally determined conceptions of 'success', seeking instead to carve out

²³¹ Nietzsche prophetically decrees in *Zarathustra* that: 'Alas! The time is coming when man will no more shoot the arrow of his longing out over mankind, and the string of his bow will have forgotten how to twang! I tell you: one must have chaos in one, to give birth to a dancing star. I tell you: you still have chaos in you'. The dancing star Nietzsche speaks of is commensurate with his conception of the overman (*Übermensch*). Nietzsche implicitly develops the notion of the overman through his free spirit trilogy of *Human, all too Human* (1878), *Daybreak* (1881) and *The Gay Science* (1882), and is presented in the subsequent work *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-85).

²³² Richard Schacht, 'Zarathustra/Zarathustra as Educator', in Peter R. Sedgwick (ed.), *Nietzsche: A Critical Reader* (Oxford; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995), pp.222-249 (p.232).

²³³ Friedrich W. Nietzsche, 'Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future', in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, pp.179-436 (p.243).

²³⁴ Gary Shapiro, 'Kairos and Chronos: Nietzsche and the Time of the Multitude', in Ansell-Pearson (ed.), *Nietzsche and Political Thought*, pp. 123-139 (pp.129-30). Nietzsche's analysis of the mass versus the higher individual prefigures Adorno's critique of the social collective. This will be outlined in chapter three below.

²³⁵ Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the vicious circle*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London: Athlone, 1997), p.127.

their own space to express themselves. In positing what is a demanding ethical challenge – for it is by now clear that Nietzsche’s discourse is an ethical one, given that it is concerned about what an individual ought to do – he successfully wards off the risks associated with merely reacting to what he sees as – pre-empting Freud – a ‘repressive reality principle’.²³⁶ In so doing, Nietzsche secures a creative space in which his conception of a higher type is able to exercise their creative faculties. This is not to say that such an individual is actually feasible, but that to posit such a notion is itself an attempt at unsettling normative discourse.

Comprising a central role in his ethical challenge, Nietzsche’s works abound with references to the notion of self-overcoming (*Selbstüberwindung*). This notion confirms the dynamism at the heart of his discourse, and abates the risk of stasis and regression to decadence, which links to the propagation of the status quo that he seeks to supplant. Nietzsche’s philosophy is concerned with the present, but a present that is continually renewed in unpredictable ways, and thus cannot be bureaucratically plotted out. For example, Nietzsche exclaims in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, that ‘life itself told me this secret. “Behold”, it said, “I am that *which must overcome itself again and again*”’.²³⁷ In Nietzsche’s ethical challenge, the higher type must repeatedly self-overcome to avoid propagating values representative of the prevalent discourse of their time.

²³⁶ See Sigmund Freud. See *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, trans. W. J. H. Sprott (New York: Norton, 1933).

²³⁷ Friedrich W. Nietzsche, ‘Beyond Good and Evil’, p.138. Some commentators have also feasibly interpreted perennial self-overcoming in relation to Nietzsche’s conception of the eternal recurrence, and his metaphysical account of time. See David Owen, *Nietzsche, Politics and Modernity: a critique of liberal reason* (London: Sage, 1995), pp.105-131.

Child spirit

Nietzsche's higher type is only answerable to himself as opposed to any prevalent discourse and the confines of its moral framework. Having overcome societal mores, this individual is able to express themselves in a post-normative manner. As way of doing this is exemplified in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* through Nietzsche's description of the three metamorphoses of the spirit, whereby he dictates how an individual is to transfigure from a burden carrying 'camel spirit' who fosters an understanding of the morality of custom in which they reside, but does not wish to partake in, to the freedom seeking 'lion spirit', who, liberating itself from the burdens of the camel, seeks to assert its moral agency, to the liberated 'child spirit' who is able to create new values.²³⁸ The camel spirit is likely the first stirrings of discontent within the last man. The progression, then, from the camel, through the lion, onto the child spirit, is analogous to the transformation from last man to higher man. However, given that Nietzsche's discourse does not prescribe a dogmatic telos, it does not extinguish dynamism in the manner of many failed blueprint utopian projects. Whilst his corpus entails a quasi-telos characterized by an ever self-overcoming individual in the spirit of the child of the three metamorphoses, Nietzsche does not prescribe what such an individual ought to do. Accordingly, utopia in Nietzsche is articulated indirectly. Nietzsche's critical task exemplifies how utopia may be preserved instead of formally codified and instrumentalized. As the child-spirit is not a permanent state of being, but rather an apex in a cycle of perpetual metamorphoses, Nietzsche does not at any point allow for stagnation that would equate to the betrayal of iconoclastically utopian sentiment. As he argues in his notebooks: 'becoming must be explained without recourse to final intentions [...] the present must absolutely not

²³⁸ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, pp.54-55.

be justified by reference to a future, nor the past by reference to the present'.²³⁹ This exemplifies his status as an untimely thinker who eschews the linear process of chronological, blueprint, utopia in favour of ever original creation.

Nietzsche argues that the child spirit is representative of 'innocence and forgetfulness, a new beginning, a sport, a self-propelling wheel, a first motion, a sacred Yes. Yes, a sacred Yes is needed, my brothers, for the sport of creation: the spirit now wills *its own* will, the spirit sundered from the world now wins *its own* world'.²⁴⁰ The child spirit is a being able to create anew in a playful manner without bearing the burdens of the camel spirit, nor the feelings of vengeance of the lion spirit. This is because the child spirit is unconcerned with creation that may be accommodated in normative discourse, in effect, rational, discursive and logical. In juxtaposition against rational discourse, the child spirit may render expression that is qualitatively greater than the sum of its parts, and thus involves superseding existent cultural material and values. These creative articulations would appear other-worldly to those enmeshed in mores. That notwithstanding, in Nietzsche's ontology of perpetual becoming, whatever the child spirit creator renders must necessarily be repeatedly destroyed

Transvaluation

Reactivity born out of *ressentiment* to existing conditions is juxtaposed against the creative abundance of Nietzsche's higher type, who is able to transvalue socio-cultural mores, and is thereby creative in a post-normative manner. So, by a transvaluation, Nietzsche does not mean merely reacting against the discourse of the prevalent *Zeitgeist*, but, rather, coming to a genealogical understanding of how things have come to be as they are through dissecting

²³⁹ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p.377.

²⁴⁰ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p.55.

norms using a variety of perspectives. It is crucial to note that Nietzsche engages in a genealogical investigation to unsettle norms. In effect, he is not concerned with the discipline of 'mere' history, which seeks to apparently, objectively, recount past data and artefacts. Rather, he is interested in – pre-empting Foucault – generating speculative accounts of how prevalent discourse has come to the fore, and the consequences this has had upon a non-teleological movement of time, as well as concomitant narratives and projects of meaning-making. This genealogical approach then allows him to reckon how best to go about provoking a transvaluation of his contemporary discourse.

Transvaluation is an essential part of utopia as attributed to Nietzsche in that it is a manifestation of self-legislation beyond any given morality. Transvaluation is not merely a rebellious or playful reaction to contemporary norms: the response of the child spirit is hard earned and a result of discipline. Prior to fully spelling out the notion of transvaluation in the mature work, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, and in the preface to *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche argues that one of the greatest goals in life is to transvalue all that we are 'into light and flame',²⁴¹ so that from our 'abysses' and illnesses, we are able to return to life 'newborn'.²⁴² This illustrates the importance for Nietzsche of transvaluation as linked to a process of converting illness into health. In the Nietzschean view, we ought not to react to the inevitable hardships of life through bitterness, but, rather, utilize the depths of our suffering to enrich ourselves by dealing with matters anew. Hence, whilst transvaluation in Nietzsche is not about a reconfiguration of the political establishment or civic life, it will enable the individual

²⁴¹ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p.6.

²⁴² Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p.7.

to undergo an inner re-birth, which in turn results in a new way of seeing, being and feeling in the world.²⁴³

Nietzsche argues in *Beyond Good and Evil* that his self-appointed task is to show that the transvaluing individual has to exhibit 'something different – it demands that he *create values*'.²⁴⁴ This value creation is a *sin qua non* of any utopia, insofar as it strives for 'a better way' as per Levitas' definition of the concept in the introduction.²⁴⁵ To create values, the individual must firstly be able to understand the genealogical origins of the norms within a society that it has appropriated uncritically. For Nietzsche, this project of creative transvaluation differentiates the noble, or, self-legislating, individual: a higher man, from a good citizen: the last man. What typifies the difference between Nietzsche's last man and higher man, is that the former seeks to eliminate suffering and preserve that which they deem to be worthy from the past; they posit classic utopia.²⁴⁶ The higher type is able to transvalue societal mores, and, unconcerned with social progress or preserving remnants of the past, express themselves in post-normative manner.

A key to the higher type being able to come to a genealogical understanding of any given present is to do away with interpreting phenomena in dialectical fashion, after the legacy of Socratic reason and Alexandrian man, which has been the prevalent mode of

²⁴³ This is analogous to the Buddhist tradition in which, post-enlightenment, the individual interprets the same phenomena anew: 'Before a man studies Zen, to him mountains are mountains and waters are waters; after he gets an insight into the truth of Zen through the instruction of a good master, mountains to him are not mountains and waters are not waters; but after this when he really attains to the abode of rest, mountains are once more mountains and waters are waters' in D. T. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (London; New York: Rider, 1926), p. 24. This in turn is linked a reading of utopia as articulated in the introduction as unconcerned with projects for social reform.

²⁴⁴ Nietzsche, 'Beyond Good and Evil', p.326.

²⁴⁵ See p.14.

²⁴⁶ This notion will be explored in the next chapter on Bloch, specifically through discussion of 'non-synchronicity'. See p.136.

philosophical enquiry for over two millennia.²⁴⁷ Instead, Nietzsche posits the notion of ‘perspectival’ seeing, to approach an issue from a multitude of perspectives to then reckon how best to proceed.

Perspectivism

Advocating a vigilant perspectival seeing, Nietzsche’s project aims at ensuring that the critical subject is not captured by a particular belief.²⁴⁸ Leslie Thiele argues that this vigilance revokes the higher individual’s membership in the community as such membership would be commonly practised. This revocation in turn serves to constitute the higher individual as a community in and of itself. Community membership, not least that exemplified by the last man, entails the embrace of a single perspective (a single ethics and epistemology). The higher individual relinquishes such faith in a single perspective, and thus the ordinary members’ naive belief that they have definitive knowledge of facts. By extension, an awareness of the perspectival nature of seeing provides a remedy for the individual’s own philosophical ills, for ‘the self-enclosure of the individual is counteracted by the multiple perspectives each individual is capable of maintaining’.²⁴⁹ In this manner, Nietzsche exposes something about being which unveils it as perspectival, which is a characteristic that liberal

²⁴⁷ In *The Birth of Tragedy* (section 15), Nietzsche offers an analysis of Socrates’ influence, noting ‘a profound *illusion* that first saw the light of the world in the person of Socrates: the unshakeable faith that thought, using the thread of causality, can penetrate the deepest abysses of being, and that thought is capable not only of knowing being but even of *correcting* it’, p.95.

²⁴⁸ Nietzsche argues that ‘there is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective “knowing”; and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our “concept” of this thing, our “objectivity” be. But to eliminate the will altogether, to suspend each and every affect, supposing we were capable of this - what would that mean but to *castrate* the intellect’, Nietzsche, ‘On the Genealogy of Morals’, p.555.

²⁴⁹ Leslie Paul Thiele, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the politics of the soul: a study of heroic individualism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), p.37. This is corroborated by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s ‘schizoanalysis’. See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Schizoanalytic Cartographies*, trans. Andrew Goffey (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

culture attempts to conceal through positivism. That is, following the discussion in the introduction, the apparent ability to directly observe phenomena and construct theory in line with how the world actually is. In a culture rife with collective myths, Nietzsche, as the gadfly and 'bad conscience' of his age, is keen to reveal the illusions maintaining social mores. This may spur individuals strong enough to countenance the inability of any one narrative to account for the totality of being.

In a series of critical observations made during the period of his mature works (1883 – 1888), Nietzsche states:

Against positivism, which halts at phenomena – 'There are only *facts*'. I would say: No, facts [are] precisely what there [are] not, only interpretations. We cannot establish any fact 'in itself': perhaps it is folly to want to do such a thing. 'Everything is subjective', you say; but even this is interpretation. The 'subject' is not something given, it is something added and invented and projected behind what there is. – Finally, is it necessary to posit an interpreter behind the interpretation? Even this is invention, hypothesis. In so far as the word 'knowledge' has any meaning, the world is knowable; but it is *interpretable* otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings. – 'Perspectivism'. It is our needs that interpret the world; our drives and their For and Against. Every drive is a kind of lust to rule; each one has its perspective that it would like to compel all the other drives to accept as a norm.²⁵⁰

Developing upon the themes outlined in the above, Thiele argues that Nietzsche's epistemological method of perspectivism seeks to isolate and then dissolve the individual, hence developing an understanding of ontological objectivity as no more 'than a multiplication of the personal'.²⁵¹ In this way, the higher 'individual' who has constituted themselves as a community is potentially able to internally organize the dynamism at the heart of existence that surrounds and fills them, hence Nietzsche's adage that the greater the chaos, the more profound the individual. This quasi-schizophrenic conception of community as internal to the individual suggests that Nietzsche's higher individual gives 'style to their

²⁵⁰ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p.267 (section 481, 1883-1888).

²⁵¹ Thiele, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the politics of the soul*, p.37.

character' by rendering this internal conversation of selves onto a rapturous chorus.²⁵² This is corroborated by Nietzsche's claim in a late notebook entry that 'to become master of the chaos one is; to compel one's chaos to become form [...] that is the grand ambition here'.²⁵³ The mastery of internal chaos that Nietzsche desires to compel into form is achievable only by negotiating what he appropriates from Ancient Greek mythology as the Dionysian and Apollonian drives.

Dionysian/Apollonian

In a notebook entry dated 1888, in effect, toward the very end of his writing period, Nietzsche argues that the 'highest state a philosopher can attain [is] to stand in a Dionysian relationship to existence'.²⁵⁴ The Dionysian is an explicit touchstone through his entire corpus. In the mould of the Pre-Socratics, Nietzsche understands existence to be in a state of constant flux, and finds in the works of Heraclitus an 'affirmation of passing away *and destroying*, which is the decisive feature of a Dionysian philosophy; saying Yes to opposition and war; *becoming*, along with a repudiation of the very concept of *being*'.²⁵⁵ The Dionysian marks the fact of human suffering, expressed pre-eminently for Nietzsche in the tragedies of Sophocles and Aeschylus, and, as such, that which the liberal last man would seek to eliminate from a just, utopian, society. Inspired by Dionysian *Rausch*, Nietzsche's critical task aims at rupturing

²⁵² In turn, this 'internal conversation of selves' can be read as heavily influencing Deleuze and Guattari's reading of capitalism and schizophrenia. For example, Ian Buchanan argues that, following Nietzsche: 'Deleuze rejects the *a priori* assumption that the self is an integrated global whole (the psychoanalytic theory of the fractured subject is in his view a complicated variant on this assumption). He takes the view, rather, that behind the façade of 'the self which acts are little selves which contemplate and which render possible both the action and the active subject. We speak of our 'self' only in virtue of these thousands of little witnesses which contemplate within us: it is always a third party who says "me"'. See Ian Buchanan, *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus: a reader's guide* (London; New York: Continuum, 2008), p.53.

²⁵³ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p.444.

²⁵⁴ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p.536.

²⁵⁵ Nietzsche, 'Ecce Homo', p.501.

normative Apollonian, that is, rational and discursive, mores, to reveal their contingency (culminating in the genealogical approach of the mature Nietzsche). Nietzsche therefore appropriates archetypes from ancient myth to substantiate a discourse against his contemporary epoch.²⁵⁶ Considering Nietzsche's role as a perspectival thinker as outlined above, the appropriation of such mythical figures is not to be taken as historically accurate, but as a means of presenting an alternative discourse to unsettle his prevalent one.

In the early Nietzsche, the balance between the Apollonian and Dionysian ontologies offers a reading whereby the former is representative of the thought of Alexandrian man, in that, as outlined above, it is steeped in Socratic reason that cannot tolerate Dionysian excess.²⁵⁷ Early Nietzsche believes in reform, in effect, the shape of a rebirth of tragic culture and sensibility, whilst the later, more self-critical gadfly, realizes that the Dionysian cannot be coherently articulated, and so he shifts his project to articulate the contradictions and incoherence of the Alexandrian man's reformatory project. In other words, utopia and the akairological are articulated negatively, or, in effect, by way of what they are not: quantifiable, chronological Apollonian and reasonable.

Whilst the Dionysian is representative of the primordial nature of existence, which is severe, the Apollonian is a manner of dealing with this by rationalization. For example, Socratic reason denies the existence of a terrifying aspect to existence, of the Dionysian, precisely because it assumes that there is nothing that cannot be encapsulated through

²⁵⁶ In this vein, building upon Nietzsche's incorporation of the Dionysian, Benjamin seeks to utilize the energies of *Rausch* as the 'expression of the magical relationship between the ancients and the cosmos, but he implies that the experience (*Erfahrung*) and the *Rausch* that once characterized that ritual relationship with the world disappear in modern society': Michael Löwy, 'Walter Benjamin and Surrealism: The story of a revolutionary spell', *Radical Philosophy*, 80 (Nov/Dec, 1996), 17-23 (p.19).

²⁵⁷ See Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy', p.46: 'Apollo, as ethical deity, exacts measure of his disciples, and, to be able to maintain it, he requires self-knowledge. And so, side by side with the aesthetic necessity for beauty, there occur the demands "know thyself" and "nothing in excess"'.

rational discourse. In the legacy of Socratic reason, Alexandrian man, and by extension contemporary liberals, are steadfast in their belief that whilst primordial, Dionysian, suffering may exist, it may also be successfully done away with through rationalization and bureaucratically plotted out schemes.²⁵⁸ The Dionysian is thus juxtaposed against Alexandrian man, who is representative of a 'theoretical man', happy with 'earthly consonance', and who seeks to domesticate the metaphysical in the service of positivist science.²⁵⁹ This consonance is in line with classic utopia. The Dionysian is thus, *ipso facto*, commensurate with dissonance, and, iconoclastic utopia.

The use of Dionysus as the symbol for Nietzsche's critical task is apt, for it is this god who is renowned for inducing extremes of experience. Nietzsche's discourse is not for those who would seek to experiment in self-overcoming only to return to the status quo. Rather, as argued above, it is for those who engage in constant self-overcoming, or in other words, who creatively destroy in Dionysian manner. A distinctive feature of Dionysian religions is that they elevate the 'worshipper from everyday reality to a state of exaltation so intense that it [is] called a divine madness, even by those sympathetic to it. In this state, the self-conscious spirit of the votary [is] overwhelmed and possessed by the being of the god. Ordinary reality [is] momentarily suspended'.²⁶⁰ This emphasizes the primordial power of the Dionysian, linking it to *akairos* as rupture. In opposition to a Dionysian *akairos*, *kairos*, as spelled out in the introduction, through Tillich and Marramao in particular, as 'opportune' and 'tempus', is commensurate with Apollo as the god of order.

²⁵⁸ A contemporary example of such a liberal thinker is Steven Pinker. See *The better angels of our nature: the decline of violence in history and its causes* (London: Allen Lane, 2011). Also, for a transcript of a debate against Pinker's liberalism, see Steven Pinker, Matt Ridley, Alain de Botton and Malcolm Gladwell, *Do humankind's best days lie ahead?* (London: Oneworld, 2016).

²⁵⁹ Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy', p.109.

²⁶⁰ Park McGinty, *Interpretation and Dionysos: method in the study of a god* (The Hague: Mouton, 1978), p.54.

Rupture of Apollonian limits

Throughout his corpus, Nietzsche invokes Dionysus 'as a way of countering the life-denying process of [Apollonian] rationalization'.²⁶¹ Nietzsche acknowledges the importance of Apollonian order, and indeed argues that it is crucial for surviving the extremes of experience engendered by the Dionysian, both in the use of reason (albeit against itself) and in the need to retain a sense of individual identity in the Dionysian onslaught. The Apollonian is thus important as much as the source of any sense of individual identity grounded in a *principium individuationis*, as of reason.²⁶² Nonetheless, Nietzsche does not waver in his belief that it is the primordial Dionysian that is revealed once the limits of the Apollonian have been ruptured.

In Nietzsche's critical task, the Apollonian is the lens through which the Dionysian can be glimpsed. Nietzsche cannot, and does not, therefore merely abandon the Apollonian in favour of Dionysian excess. What occurs in this relationship is not strictly a dialectic, but rather a process of qualitative development, whereby Nietzsche's individual will work through rational Apollonian discourse in order to reach its limits and thereby reveal the primordial Dionysian. Even so, it must be stressed that this potential revelation is only available to the constantly self-overcoming, transvaluing individual. This is because the individual who acquiesces in accordance with social norms, remains locked within the confines of Apollonian sensibility. Such entrapped individuals are analogous to the protagonists of Plato's allegory of the cave, in which they mistake shadows to be representative of the limits of existence.²⁶³

²⁶¹ Samir Gandesha, 'Nietzsche and the "self-mockery of reason"', *The European Legacy: Toward New Paradigms*, 3:4 (1998), 96-106 (p.97).

²⁶² Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy', p.99: 'I see Apollo as the transfiguring genius of the *principium individuationis* through which alone the redemption in illusion is truly to be obtained'.

²⁶³ The individual is thus an Apollonian illusion. Within Apollonian reason, the individual is constructed as a single, unified and coherent whole, exemplified by neoliberal economics' understanding of humans as rational,

By extension, Alexandrian, and the last, man, take the rational, Apollonian surface of appearance as the totality of existence. Positive dialectics, then, is problematic in its attempt to render 'progress':²⁶⁴ dialectics cannot rationally eliminate Dionysian suffering, nor render a sufficient understanding of history or time as able to rationally articulate teleological progress. Rather, Nietzsche's perspectivism permits the theorist to demonstrate the limits of rational, Apollonian discourse, unveiling the ineliminable qualitative surplus of the primordial Dionysian; here is a justification for equating Nietzsche's critical task with a reading of utopia that is akairological: the good place that is no place, that is negatively revealed through rupture, *not* positive resolution.

By arguing, using language and reason, to point to something beyond these Apollonian tools, Nietzsche's performative critical task seeks to undermine Apollonian truth claims: Nietzsche utilizes Apollonian images to problematize them. His use of aphorisms and rhetorical excess is arguably constitutive of a self-aware project that highlights the limits of positively articulating knowledge. As discussed above, Nietzsche's fantastical description of the metamorphoses of the spirit is an attempt to problematize existing discourse. His incorporation of an Apollonian-Dionysian tension from his first published work is an attempt, of a sustained commitment throughout his oeuvre, to undermine normative discourse, to play a different game.

Commensurate with Nietzsche's different game, in juxtaposition with classic utopia in the mould of liberal reform, I argue that utopia in Nietzsche entails that when an individual subject negatively reveals Dionysian primordial chaos, their Apollonian individuality is

self-interested agents. The mature Nietzsche's perspectivism, at the very least, disrupts the Apollonian illusion of the individual.

²⁶⁴ Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ*, p.128: 'Progress' is merely a modern idea, that is to say a false idea'.

dissolved.²⁶⁵ In this way, Nietzsche's higher individual is, to reiterate, unconcerned with either issues of the state and polis, or social reform. Ansell-Pearson argues that Nietzsche's greatest fear 'is that if it is interpreted politically, the Dionysian experience will incite people to change social and political institutions, and to reform them in accordance with the experience of oneness that the Dionysian reveals as the true ground of being'.²⁶⁶ Instead, Nietzsche attempts to demonstrate that whilst the individual self is enmeshed within Apollonian normativity, which is a necessary pre-requisite of being able to reveal Dionysian experience at all, once the individual subject reveals the latter, it engenders a rupture in their previous Apollonian security, insofar as it reveals existence as it is in its primordial unity. This in turn, as articulated by Thiele above,²⁶⁷ is necessarily inimical to the illusory secure confines of the Apollonian *principium individuationis*.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵ For example, see Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy', pp.30-31: 'The lyric genius feels a world of images and symbols growing out of the mystical state of self-abandonment and one-ness, a world which has a quite different colouring, causality, and tempo from that of the sculptor and epic poet. Whereas the latter is joyfully contented living in these images and in them alone, and never tires of contemplating lovingly even the minutest details of them, and whereas even the image of the wrathful Achilles is for him merely an image whose wrathful expression he enjoys with the dream-pleasure in semblance (so that he is protected by this mirror of semblance against merging and becoming one with his figures), the images of the lyric poet, by contrast, are nothing but *the poet himself*, merely various objectifications of him, as it were, which is why he can say "I" as the moving centre of that world. Yet this "I"-ness is not the same as that of the waking, empirically real human being, but rather the only "I"-ness which truly exists at all, eternal and resting in the ground of things, and through the images which are copies of that "I" the lyric genius can see down to that very ground of all things'. See also p.52: 'we may assume that we are merely images and artistic projections for the true author, and that we have our highest dignity in our significance as works of art - for it is only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified* - while of course our consciousness of our own significance hardly differs from that which the soldiers painted on canvas have of the battle represented on it'. In contrast to this dissolving of the individual, Adorno will be shown below in chapter three to want to preserve the subject amidst the challenge of collective delusion.

²⁶⁶ Ansell-Pearson, *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker*, p.67.

²⁶⁷ See p.77.

²⁶⁸ As Deleuze explicates, Nietzsche's introduction of the Dionysian into discourse represents an exploration of impersonal and pre-individual nomadic singularities, 'which are no longer imprisoned within the fixed individuality of the infinite Being (the notorious immutability of God), nor inside the sedentary boundaries of the finite subject (the notorious limits of knowledge). This is something neither individual nor personal, but rather singular': Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Constantin V. Boundas (London: Athlone, 1990), p.107.

Moreover, such a revelation is inimical to the Apollonian desire to ‘preserve the good’, and to reform social conditions in line with a socio-historical narrative of progress. Hence, there is a tension between the liberal individual represented in the archetype of the last man, which is commensurate with classic utopia, and Nietzsche’s Dionysian *Aufhebung* of the individual, which is post-normative. The Dionysian individual does not have to dissolve into the primordial ‘One’, nor affirm liberal individual norms. Rather, through recourse to the eternal as affirmed by the moment, the ‘individual’s individuality is grounded in the deepest essence of the world – in eternity itself, in that eternity whose existence was required to bring into being every event of one’s own existence’.²⁶⁹ Therefore, to affirm the moment is to affirm eternity; it is an enactment of *amor fati*, of saying yes to oneself and to one’s own unique expression.

In Nietzsche, through Apollonian self-overcoming, the higher individual may entertain the possibility of engendering akairological rupture in Dionysian manner. Referring back to the introduction, akairological rupture is where the ability to articulate coherent, rationally articulated, narrative, breaks down.²⁷⁰ Leston argues that such ‘ruptures’ are ‘irrational cuts’, which operate as a ‘crack’ in chronological time.²⁷¹ Whilst Leston proposes that these cracks are where kairos resides, such a reading is inextricably subject to chronos, as per the multifaceted reading of kairos in the introduction, whereby it is deemed as either timely (for example, Tillich), or, untimely (for example, Eagleton). Following Boer’s nuanced reading of kairos, the ‘crack’, or, ‘rupture’ in the context of Dionysian revelation, is, once again, better articulated as *akairos*.

²⁶⁹ Nuno Nabais, ‘The Individual and Individuality in Nietzsche’ in Keith Ansell-Pearson (ed.), *A Companion to Nietzsche* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp.76-94 (p.93).

²⁷⁰ See p.1.

²⁷¹ Leston, ‘Unhinged’, p.42.

Nietzsche's akairos

In aphorism 274 of *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche substantiates a temporal account of kairos, rendering it in terms of desire, strength, skill and resourcefulness by positing that genius requires 'five hundred hands [...] to tyrannize the *Kairos*, "the right time", seizing chance by its forelock'.²⁷² Shapiro argues that this reading involves the juxtaposition of 'the right time' (*zur rechten Zeit*) against those who wait for it. This suggests that kairos in Nietzsche's explicit reading represents a temporal contraction, 'because the time in question is not simply a passing moment', rather, it is one of 'quickening and condensation, that unpredictable moment of turning, that cannot be scheduled'.²⁷³ Shapiro posits that the best the waiting subject can therefore do is to clear away obstacles that stand in the way of its vigilance.²⁷⁴

Following on from the thought of Agamben as presented in the introduction,²⁷⁵ Shapiro deems that the most appropriate description of the relationship between kairos and chronos, with respect to Nietzsche, is found within the Ancient Greek medical works attributed to Hippocrates, collected under the title of *Corpus Hippocraticum*: "'*chronos esti en ho kairos kai kairos esti en ho ou pollos chronos*"', the *chronos* is where we have *kairos* and the *kairos* is where we have a little *chronos*'.²⁷⁶ Shapiro continues, arguing that to translate Nietzschean kairos simply as 'occasion'²⁷⁷ would be trivial, and that to render it as simply a time in juxtaposition against chronos would be to also do a disservice to its richness.²⁷⁸ Similar

²⁷² Nietzsche, 'Beyond Good and Evil', p.413.

²⁷³ Shapiro, 'Kairos and Chronos', p.123.

²⁷⁴ It is no coincidence that in this relationship between Kairos and Dionysus, that they are both often portrayed as mischievous youths, who in a manner analogous to Nietzsche's child spirit, are playful and extremely difficult to capture.

²⁷⁵ See pp.40-41.

²⁷⁶ Giorgio Agamben, *The Time that Remains*, trans. P. Dailey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp.68-69, cited in Shapiro, 'Kairos and Chronos', pp.129-30.

²⁷⁷ As per Trapani and Maldonado above (pp.35).

²⁷⁸ Shapiro, 'Kairos and Chronos', pp.129-30.

to the Apollonian–Dionysian relationship, *kairos* presupposes *chronos*, which is to say that the underlying quantitative nature of both *chronos* (as measured time) and the Apollonian reason are the preconditions of the qualitative disruption of *kairos* and the Dionysian. Hence, chronological time reaches ‘*critical points* at which a qualitative character begins to emerge’, and thus presents ‘*junctures of opportunity*’ allowing for ordered expression.²⁷⁹ This is because, in a manner analogous to how the Dionysian comes to light when the limits of the Apollonian have been reached, *kairological* time comes to the fore once the limits of chronological time have been established, and thereby a qualitative surplus is engendered. Crucially, however, unlike the New Testament appropriation of *kairos* as equitable with messianic time, the reading of it as attributed to Nietzsche’s presentation of the Apollonian–Dionysian relationship is much more in line with Boer’s analysis of *akairos* in the introduction, as unconcerned with *telos* and as beyond the discourse of either timely or untimeliness: a post-normative reading of utopia ascribed to Nietzsche is commensurate with *akairos*.

Utopia in Nietzsche is negatively articulated through revealing Apollonian self-deceit. This mode of deceit is engendered amidst contemporary utopian discourse, which is firmly entrenched in the logic of reasonableness and quantifiable measures of success and progress. Whilst this classic utopia in the blueprint tradition is not redeemable from Nietzsche’s discourse, what however *is* possible is a non-prescriptive argument for perpetual self-overcoming to avoid regressing to positivism, and mere affirmation of prevalent socio-cultural norms. This is where a unique reading of utopia can be ascribed to Nietzsche’s critical task: he does not introduce a notion of the transcendent to measure the present *à la* Plato, nor completely devalue the present in nihilistic fashion. Rather, the call for perpetual self-

²⁷⁹ Smith, ‘Time and Qualitative Time’, p.48.

overcoming and transvaluation is a material project, grounded in understanding norms to transvalue them. This project is commensurate with desire for 'a better way', thereby utopian as broadly understood. It is not classic utopia, nor kairological, for it does not posit the notion of a telos. In Nietzsche's unforgiving critical task, perpetual self-overcoming and chaos 'may be regarded as a healing and helping appliance in the service of growing, struggling life'.²⁸⁰ The growth Nietzsche speaks of here cannot be teleological in terms of maturation, but rather, should be read as a precursor to his later notion of the eternal recurrence. In this way, such growth would be read as an ongoing process; there is no telos to be had.

Summary

This section began by presenting Nietzsche's critical task as responding to positivism, Christian and Socialist ideals of order, harmony and being. His perspectival seeing was juxtaposed against Socratic dialectic and reason, and set the groundwork from which to ascribe to his discourse a reading of utopia that is both iconoclastic and akairological. This section demonstrated the criticality of the relationship between the Apollonian and Dionysian ontologies within Nietzsche's corpus to successfully articulate how the self-overcoming and transvaluing, higher, individual may engender akairological rupture. Crucially, the argument above can be read as tracing Nietzsche's thought from *The Birth of Tragedy*, up-to *Twilight of the Idols*, as emphasizing the role of the Dionysian in relation to utopia by what it does *not* do, namely, rationally and coherently convey what utopia consists of through Apollonian, rational, logic.

²⁸⁰ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p.234

In opposition to a reading such as that of Walter Kaufmann, where the later Nietzsche's Dionysian individual is understood as being synthesized with the Apollonian *principium individuationis*,²⁸¹ it follows from the analysis above that in his final works, not least *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche does not do away with the notion of overcoming the Apollonian limitation. Rather, Nietzsche regards the god of order as, at best, a distortion of perception of Dionysian wisdom, and, at worst, a veiling and denial of it. It is thus apparent in Nietzsche that while rational Apollonian language fails to positively articulate the ecstatic, primordial Dionysian, the Apollonian can, nonetheless, be exploited in the pursuit of experiencing the Dionysian. The Apollonian medium best situated to reveal Dionysian primordial excess through the creativity of the higher type, is music. The next section will explore how the Dionysian individual manifests their creativity through music, and how such creation may be equated with utopia as akairological rupture.

²⁸¹ Kaufmann suggests that the mature Nietzsche does not so much as exclusively endorse the Dionysian, but rather advocates the 'synthesis of such passion with the Apollonian "principle of individuation"'. Kaufmann, *Nietzsche*, p.169.

2. Music

Overview

This section demonstrates how, for Nietzsche, music may render Dionysian excess through demonstrating the limits of Apollonian expression. It is argued that music may thus reveal akairological ruptures amidst normative discourse. Nietzsche's critical task against Socratic reason, the logic of the last man, as well as positivism, is argued to be evident through his promulgation of music as embodying *Rausch*, or, intense intoxication. This intoxication is juxtaposed against Apollonian order, and in turn links to discussion of how a Dionysian chorus dissolves a veil of Apollonian individuality. In this manner, it is argued that Nietzsche's higher type, as a self-overcoming and transvaluing individual, is able to express themselves in post-normative fashion. The later Free Jazz of saxophonist John W. Coltrane is presented as emblematic of the work of a potential Nietzschean higher type. In other words, Apollonian consonance is pushed to its limits to reveal Dionysian dissonance, and, by extension, renders akairological ruptures from within chronological and rational discourse.

Dionysian excess

In Plato's *Republic*, the reader is presented with Socrates' dialogue with Glaucon and Adeimantus, in which it is argued that music is emotive, deceitful, and does not correspond with reason, ergo it is to be censored and produced in line with dominant mores.²⁸² Given Nietzsche's aim to usurp the dominance of Socratic reason in line with Apollonian rationality, he promotes Dionysian music as a counterpoint. In Nietzsche's critical task, Apollonian

²⁸² Plato, *Republic*, trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.94-102 (398a-403c).

consonance is pushed to its limits to reveal Dionysian dissonance. I argue that key to Nietzsche's aesthetic theory is positing the Dionysian and akairological, by using the Apollonian and chronological, to allude to a transvaluation of the latter, by way of the former. Nietzsche's discourse utilizes Apollonian tools to allude to something beyond, in other words, to the ineffable: utopia. He does this by using the tool of Apollonian language to demonstrate its limits and inherent contradictions, thereby negatively revealing a primordial Dionysian excess. This excess is incommensurate with a narrative based upon either a chronological teleology, or a kairological telos. Rather, such excess is commensurate with akairological rupture, which is unrelated to norms. As explored in the introduction, the akairological cannot be positively articulated.²⁸³ If it could, then it would be commensurate with consonance, chronology and, by extension, kairology. Insofar as kairological moments are commensurate with a positive Hegelian dialectic, which deems them emblematic of a coalescing of cultural material, in Nietzsche, the revealing of Dionysian primordial excess is negative, insofar as it goes beyond merely disrupting chronological discourse, but, rather, cannot be rendered intelligible within the framework of rational discourse. Akairological rupture therefore cannot be instructed, instead, it is gleaned by way of what it is not.

In Nietzsche's aesthetic theory, nullifying the severity of the Dionysian aspect of music renders its akairological element redundant. This nullification is commensurate with the positivist discourse against which he seeks to unveil *Rausch*. Nietzsche asks in *The Gay Science*:

Suppose one judged the value of a piece of music according to how much of it could be counted, calculated, and expressed in formulas - how absurd such a 'scientific' evaluation of music would be! What would one have comprehended, understood, recognized? Nothing, really nothing of what is 'music' in it!²⁸⁴

²⁸³ See pp.44-45.

²⁸⁴ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p.190. Andrew Edgar notes that Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841) proposed this very mathematical reductionism of music that Nietzsche derides: 'Herbart emphasizes the

This passage demonstrates Nietzsche's emotivist²⁸⁵ striving to undermine chronological Truth claims of positivist interpretations of music. A non-scientific evaluation of music would involve recognition of its qualitative value, as highlighting ineffability that transcends Apollonian rationality.

Dionysian chorus vs. Apollonian *principium individuationis*

Music for Nietzsche is the aesthetic medium through which creative autonomy is invigorated within the individual in a manner analogous to the Dionysian chorus against the Apollonian *principium individuationis*.²⁸⁶ As such, Dionysian music necessarily alludes to something beyond the realm of Apollonian rationality for those appropriately aesthetically receptive to it. In other words, the individual is still alone, but having harmonized an internal chorus through music – as discussed above through Thiele's analysis of the higher individual as the site of a 'community'²⁸⁷ – is able to transcend the confines of a liberal individualism based exclusively upon societal norms.²⁸⁸

A paradox is that Nietzsche cannot talk of the individual and social autonomy without invoking the *principium individuationis* as outlined in the previous section,²⁸⁹ steeped as his discourse is in Apollonian rationality. In a discussion of Nietzsche's final works, *Twilight of the*

precision of mathematical relations within music by grounding judgments of musical beauty ultimately in the mathematical relationships that exist between notes, and in the manner that composers exploit these relationships'. See Andrew Edgar, 'Adorno and Musical Analysis', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 57:4 (Autumn, 1999), 439-449 (p.441).

²⁸⁵ See Jenefer Robinson, 'The Expression and Arousal of Emotion in Music', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 51:1 (Winter, 1994), 180-189. Nietzsche's emotivism, as well a similar emotivism found in Bloch's aesthetic theory, will be shown to be responded to via the formalism of Adorno in chapter three.

²⁸⁶ Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy', pp.64-65.

²⁸⁷ See p.77.

²⁸⁸ Daniel K.L. Chua, *Absolute music and the construction of meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.229.

²⁸⁹ See p.81, p.83 and p.88.

Idols and *The Antichrist*, Michael Tanner argues that '[t]he idea of cultivating pure inwardness, freed from any external demands, including that of physical culture [...] is clearly one that Nietzsche found very attractive.²⁹⁰ This 'pure inwardness' is manifested through non-linguistic Dionysian music, which, as a 'superabundant' means of communication and transmission, transcends the limits of the rational Apollonian. On the one hand, music can be seen to be Apollonian because it can be subjected to rational analysis (and so reduced to mathematical relations). On the other hand, music is the expression of the rationally inarticulate inner life of the individual. There is thus a tension between rationalism and emotivism. This tension highlights the internal contradiction of the Apollonian and the individual subject at the centre of musical expression. As the later Nietzsche argues, '[m]usic, as we understand it today, is likewise a collective arousal and discharging of the emotions, but for all that only a vestige of a much fuller emotional world of expression, a mere residuum of Dionysian historicism'.²⁹¹

The Apollonian thus collapses once emotional expression is recognized. Nietzsche argues in favour of Dionysian music because of its ability to provide the artist with a means by which to transcend the limits of the Apollonian *principium individuationis*: 'in song and dance man expresses himself as a member of a higher community; he has forgotten how to walk and speak and is on the way toward flying in the air, dancing. His very gestures express enhancement'.²⁹² The higher community Nietzsche talks of is not the *polis*, but a primordial unity with that which precedes the phenomenal Apollonian realm. This is corroborated by Nietzsche's exclamation that assimilated into the 'higher community',²⁹³ the Dionysian

²⁹⁰ Michael Tanner, 'Introduction', in Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ*, pp.7-24 (p.22).

²⁹¹ Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ*, p.84.

²⁹² Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy', p.37.

²⁹³ It may be noted that in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche thinks in terms of the relationship between the Apollonian individual and a Dionysian primal unity. In his later writings, as noted above with respect to his perspectivism, the 'community' is internal to the individual. The appeal to the 'higher community' within *The Birth of Tragedy* might then be understood as a place holder for the later, more sophisticated, analysis.

individual has forgotten how to perform the Apollonian actions which belong to sobriety of 'walking' and 'speaking'.

Nietzsche's higher 'individual', contrary to either the Alexandrian or the last man, possesses a sharpened sensitivity of the instincts to be able to ascertain what is worthy of their creative faculties. That said, the higher individual is necessarily bound up with and constituted by the primal collective. Benjamin Boretz argues that certain pieces of music carry an acute charge, which only those aesthetically receptive enough can appreciate: 'In music [...] the disappearing moment of experience is the firmest reality'.²⁹⁴ In this way, Nietzsche's discussion about Dionysian music metaphorically dissolving the Apollonian individual into the Dionysian primordial unity is corroborated. The utopian connotations of the Boretz excerpt are clear: that which is not here, the 'disappearing moment', is paradoxically deemed the 'firmest reality'. Through continual self-overcoming into transvaluation, a Nietzschean higher type affirms a post-normative individuality as explored above:

[...] through a transvaluation of all values – in effect, a willing into existence of values constructed on the basis of their unique individuality. In undergoing this process, the individual transforms her life and the world around her into an *aesthetic phenomenon*. She becomes the artist and life becomes her art work.²⁹⁵

This passage reiterates the claim made in the previous section that utopia in Nietzsche involves a transformation of the individual, realising Boretz's aesthetic receptivity, not socio-political reform. Instead, the Dionysian represents a 'consuming intoxication of creation'.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁴ Benjamin Boretz, 'Thoughts in Reply to Boulez/Foucault: "Contemporary Music and the Public"', in *Perspectives on Musical Aesthetics*, ed. John Rahn (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1994), pp.121-125 (p.123). Contrary to these types of music Boretz speaks of would be popular music written entirely to a formula. A common popular song structure would be that of The Beatles' 'Yesterday', which follows a thirty-two-bar form broken down into an AABA structure: verse/verse/bridge/verse.

²⁹⁵ John Moore, 'Attentat Art', in *I Am Not A Man, I Am Dynamite!: Friedrich Nietzsche and the Anarchist Tradition*, eds. John Moore and Spencer Sunshine (New York: Autonomedia, 2004), pp. 127-142 (p.138).

²⁹⁶ Eiland, 'Translator's Foreword' in Benjamin, *On Hashish*, pp.vii-xii (p.xi).

This intoxication is inextricably linked to the higher type, who seeks to go beyond Socratic 'reason that has actively forgotten its own limitations'.²⁹⁷

Dionysian as pre-conceptual

Nietzsche argues in *The Birth of Tragedy* that music succeeds when 'Apollo finally speaks the language of Dionysus'.²⁹⁸ In doing so, Nietzsche claims that music is deeply related to the true nature of being beyond the Apollonian veil of reason used to filter it. He substantiates this argument in the following analysis:

The [Dionysian] aesthetic state possesses a superabundance of means of communication, together with an extreme receptivity for stimuli and signs. It constitutes the high point of communication and transmission between living creatures – it is the source of languages.²⁹⁹

As the 'source of languages', the Dionysian primordial is pre-linguistic, and, *ipso facto*, pre-conceptual.³⁰⁰ The Dionysian is therefore compatible with a negative articulation of utopia as outlined in the introduction as 'no place'. As non-conceptual, it is also out of time (in terms of a liberal discourse of progress) as rationally understood; in other words, akairological.

Nietzsche is adamant that Dionysian music is sovereign, and does not *need* Apollonian images and concepts, but merely tolerates them as accompaniments.³⁰¹ Nietzsche also suggests that without the Apollonian element, pure Dionysian music would destroy the listener.³⁰² For example, discussing Richard Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, Nietzsche argues that

²⁹⁷ Gandesha, 'Self-mockery of reason', p.102.

²⁹⁸ Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy', p.102.

²⁹⁹ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, pp.427-428 (1888). Analogously, Rousseau, in his unpublished manuscripts argues that a 'series of sounds or chords will amuse me for perhaps a moment; but to charm me and to move me, these series have to offer me something that is neither a sound nor a chord, and that succeeds in moving me in spite of myself' in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music*, ed. and trans. John T. Scott (Hanover; London: University Press of New England, 1998), p.324.

³⁰⁰ A discussion of language as cultural material will be explored further in chapter three through Adorno.

³⁰¹ Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy', p.55.

³⁰² Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy', pp.124-130 (section 21).

through its text, meaning the demands of its Apollonian structure, an '*Apollonian* power erupts to restore the almost shattered individual with the healing balm of blissful illusion'.³⁰³ Furthermore, Nietzsche asks: 'To these genuine musicians I direct the question whether they can imagine a human being who would be able to perceive the third act of *Tristan and Isolde*, without any aid of word and image, purely as a tremendous symphonic movement, without expiring in a spasmodic unharnessing of all the wings of the soul'?³⁰⁴

Therefore, whilst Apollonian symbolism and reason are tools which the artist employs to discuss and structure Dionysian music, language for Nietzsche can still 'never adequately render the cosmic symbolism of music, because music stands in symbolic relation to the primordial contradiction and primordial pain in the heart of the primal unity, and therefore symbolizes a sphere which is beyond and prior to all phenomena'.³⁰⁵ Nietzsche explores the futility of Apollonian attempts, steeped in Alexandrian and last man reason, to linguistically articulate and harness the Dionysian element of music:

Again and again we have occasion to observe that a Beethoven symphony compels its individual auditors to use figurative speech in describing it, no matter how fantastically variegated and even contradictory may be the composition and make-up of the different worlds of images produced by a piece of music.³⁰⁶

Beethoven's symphonies, steeped in the Western classical tradition, notated, and performed using Apollonian tools, still render a Dionysian excess, insofar as they compel 'auditors to use figurative speech' in attempts to coherently describe them. Whilst socio-political and historical narrative can be applied to the compositions, and the musical structure and harmony is both intelligible, and, indeed, repeatable, there still remains, according to Nietzsche's aesthetic theory, a Dionysian primordial excess that may not be positively

³⁰³ Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy', p.127.

³⁰⁴ Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy', pp.126-27.

³⁰⁵ Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy', p.55.

³⁰⁶ Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy', p.54.

articulated, nor rendered intelligible. For Nietzsche, a futile desire to describe aesthetic phenomena that surpasses rational articulation is a practice that a post Enlightenment, liberal and positivist culture has become accustomed to. So, while music requires an Apollonian element in order to be heard without the risk of inducing madness, positivist analysis reduces music solely to its Apollonian element; in effect, the formal structures of the composition. Similarly, approaches that attempt to reduce a piece of music to a story, a metaphor, or a set of emotions that have been supposedly expressed, are, in effect, confining the piece within pre-existing, normative, and thus conservative, categories.

Dionysian music thus necessarily alludes to something prior to the realm of Apollonian order. The Dionysian precedes and exceeds the horizons of Apollonian phenomena. On that account, 'concepts, then, are abstractions *from* particular things. Music, on the other hand, *precedes* particulars, which actualizes the forces it puts into play'.³⁰⁷ By extension, Dionysian music, then, precedes Apollonian language. This leads Nietzsche in a wilfully striking and self-contradictory manner – after the performative aspect of his role as gadfly as explicated above – to assert that 'compared with music all communication by words is shameless; words dilute and brutalize; words depersonalize; words make the uncommon common'.³⁰⁸ This reiterates the perspectivism of Nietzsche's critical task outlined above:³⁰⁹ he utilizes Apollonian expression to positively articulate its limits, thereby negatively revealing a Dionysian remainder. It is this remainder that can be correlated with iconoclastic utopia: a negative approach towards the ineffable. This reading of utopia is untimely and non-articulable in rational, Apollonian images, for it can neither be plotted out chronologically, nor positively

³⁰⁷ Christoph Cox, 'Nietzsche, Dionysus and the Ontology of Music' in Ansell-Pearson, *A Companion to Nietzsche*, pp.495-514 (p.507). This will be developed upon through analysis of Adorno's reading of music in chapter three, section two.

³⁰⁸ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p.428.

³⁰⁹ See pp.76-77.

articulated in qualitative manner in an ordered fashion into the sum of its parts, à la kairologically. Iconoclastic utopia as attributed to Nietzsche's critical task is therefore necessarily akairological.

Late Coltrane

In reference to the relationship between Apollo and Dionysus discussed above, Nietzsche's ontology is such that it is only when the individual artist has mastered an Apollonian form of expression that they can reveal Dionysian primordial truth. This is thus a monumental task, which suggests the impossibility of the individual creating *ex nihilo*. The mastery of a form requires constant new challenges, hence Nietzsche's call for unwavering self-overcoming equates with creative action 'beyond good and evil in the sense that it does not confirm to existing rules and norms, but establishes new ones'.³¹⁰

An example of musical expression that exemplifies reaching the limits of Apollonian articulation, and thereby renders akairological ruptures commensurate with iconoclastic utopia, is the later Jazz of Coltrane.³¹¹ Here, the contradictions and limits of Apollonian expression are clear to discern. Below, I will extrapolate from the discussions Nietzsche presents concerning music, primarily in *The Birth of Tragedy*, and turn the broad philosophical points concerning Dionysian music made so far in this chapter into an analysis of a particular piece of music.

³¹⁰ Ansell-Pearson, *Nietzsche as Political Thinker*, p.43.

³¹¹ See Dharmender S. Dhillon, 'The Dionysian Free Jazz of John W. Coltrane', *Telos* (Spring, 2020), TBC. Particular Coltrane records that exemplify my argument are: John W. Coltrane, *Giant Steps* (Atlantic LP 1311, 1960); *Coltrane "Live" At The Village Vanguard* (Impulse! A-10, 1961); *Impressions* (Impulse! A-42, 1961); *Crescent* (Impulse! A-6, 1964); *A Love Supreme* (Impulse! A-77, 1964); *The John Coltrane Quartet Plays* (Impulse! A-85, 1965); *Transition* (Impulse! AS-9195, 1965); *Om* (Impulse! A-9140, 1965); *First Meditations* (For Quartet) (Impulse! AS-9332, 1965); *Meditations* (Impulse! A-9110, 1965); *Sun Ship* (Impulse! AS-9211, 1965); *Stellar Regions* (Impulse! IMP-169, 1966); *Ascension* (Impulse! A-95, 1966); *Interstellar Space* (Impulse! ASD-9277, 1967); *Expression* (Impulse! A-9120, 1967)

As an example, four minutes into the recorded 1964 version of '*A Love Supreme*' part I: *the acknowledgement*,³¹² after demonstrating Apollonian mastery of form, Coltrane continues to make sounds which no longer conform to any formal musical structure or notation. To Boretz's aesthetically receptive listener, these sounds are appropriate – they are not wrong notes, mistakes or otherwise signs of musical incompetence. Rather, Coltrane's Apollonian expression of harmonic consonance has reached its limits and as such engenders Dionysian dissonance. The Dionysian is quantitatively minute in the piece, and not merely chaotic. Rather, it arises from the limitations of what a formally notated musical note, or combination thereof, may coherently express. In effect, Coltrane transvalues the normative rules of harmonic composition.

Building upon discussion of Nietzsche's higher types in the previous section, in relation to the artist, in *Beyond Good and Evil* he argues that they do not 'let go' when inspired, but that the moment of 'free ordering' is a result of a strict and subtle obeying of 'a thousand fold laws that precisely on account of their hardness and determination defy all formulation through concepts'.³¹³ In Coltrane's late works, then, there is repeated demonstration of a mastery of the norms of Apollonian, ordered expression in harmonic manner; in effect, obedience to laws, whilst simultaneously demonstrating how said laws fail to encapsulate the entirety of being. Linked to the comment above about concepts as 'abstractions *from* particular things', and music preceding particulars, the criticality of musical expression is further evidenced as part of Nietzsche's task that seeks to undermine Philosophy's attempt to render Truth claims legitimate in positivist manner. Coltrane's late works, then, cannot be analysed in an Apollonian, positivist sense. Rather, they must be heard, with any analytic gloss

³¹² John W. Coltrane, *A Love Supreme* (Impulse! A-77, 1964).

³¹³ Nietzsche, '*Beyond Good and Evil*', p.290.

necessarily falling short of encapsulating what the expressions are actually doing.³¹⁴ In terms of perspectivism, the only way in which the piece might be captured in an Apollonian manner is through a series of competing and indeed contradictory analyses, each of which serves to expose the limitations, blind spots and falsehoods of the others.³¹⁵

Dionysian music is that which constantly looms on the Apollonian horizon and can act as a profound counterpoint to reactive and decadent artistic expression. Musical dissonance is thereby a genuine example of primordial Dionysian expression presented in a realm of Apollonian intelligibility. This dissonance is not resolved according to Apollonian rules of good harmonic practice.³¹⁶ Dissonance that may be resolved according to the orthodox rules of harmonic progression provides the listener with a sense of temporal movement, in effect, from tension to its resolution. Such resolution is analogous to classic utopia, whereby suffering or dissonance is harmonized into resolution and stasis. So, orthodox harmonic progression is an articulation of chronos that culminates in kairos. Unresolved dissonance, however, is unconcerned with resolution, and thereby disrupts the reading of time as chronos onto kairos. Such dissonance stands apart, and can thereby be rendered as akairos. In this way, Coltrane qualifies as a Dionysian artist who on occasion engenders akairos. This is because by having mastered, and then discarding, the rule book, he contrasts himself with ‘the sober, the weary, the exhausted, the dried-up (e.g., the scholars)’.³¹⁷ In this vein, as Paul Crowther argues in discussion of the Kantian sublime, what differentiates original (Dionysian) genius from ‘original nonsense’ is that the artist ‘must have mastered the academic rules and

³¹⁴ John W. Coltrane, *Interstellar Space* (Impulse! ASD-9277, 1967) in particular, demonstrates the futility of seeking a central tonal key in his later works.

³¹⁵ Boretz’s listener might then be understood to aspire to the condition of an internal community (as per Thiele’s analysis noted above, see p.77).

³¹⁶ For example, Arnold Schoenberg’s aesthetic, which was concerned with liberating dissonance from such constraint.

³¹⁷ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p.422.

conventions governing his medium. This not only allows him systematically to develop his gift of originality, but also enables the observer to judge that such originality is not just a passing fluke'.³¹⁸ This discussion of original genius substantiates the importance of the higher individual in Nietzsche's aesthetic response to the challenges of positivism.

The moments of Dionysian revelation engendered by artists like Coltrane are utopian in akairological manner. This is because they satisfy the criteria required for my reconceptualization of the concept as outlined in the introduction: materially grounded, inarticulable in positive fashion, post-normative. There are, to be granted, mystical undertones in this Nietzsche inspired reading of Coltrane. However, it is important to distinguish Nietzsche's Dionysian music from that which is strictly mystical in a religious sense, such as in the Islamic Sufi tradition. For mature Nietzsche this tradition would fall into the realm of the pseudo-Dionysian analogous to Wagner.³¹⁹ In contrast, the genuinely Dionysian can be differentiated in that it necessarily transvalues, through original expositions, à la Coltrane,³²⁰ which overcome religious and instrumental knowledge in the vein of both Wagner (Christianity), and Sufi music (Islam), for example.

³¹⁸ Paul Crowther, *The Kantian Sublime: From Morality to Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.156.

³¹⁹ In juxtaposition against his early work, *The Birth of Tragedy*, in which Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* was heralded for reviving an Ancient Greek sensibility (Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy', pp.126-27 [section 21]). In mature Nietzsche, Wagner is an archetypal figure of a superficially Dionysian artist. This is substantiated through Tracy Strong's claim that 'when Wagner begins to write music to make effects, his "epistemology" is no longer Dionysian'. See Tracy Strong, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1988), p.143. The issue here for Nietzsche is that Wagner's art is steeped in instrumental thought that depicts the supposedly highest good in the manner of a propagandist, and as such, 'he is no longer embodying whatever Dionysian knowledge he might have; rather, he is looking for tools with which to convey it. For Nietzsche this leads to theatricality, and Wagner becomes merely an actor (albeit a great one)', Strong, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration*, p.143.

³²⁰ See Dhillon, 'The Dionysian Free Jazz of John W. Coltrane', in which I argue that Coltrane is a heretical Christian, whose later works are, against his avowed intent, emblematic of a Dionysian aesthetic.

Summary

This section has argued that language, for Nietzsche, fails to render the cosmic symbolism of music, and that the Dionysian precedes the Apollonian. It was argued that Nietzschean higher types may reveal akairological ruptures from normative discourse, by pushing Apollonian harmonic expression to its limits to render Dionysian excess. It was argued that this excess is commensurate with utopia as articulated in the introduction. The late Free Jazz of Coltrane was presented as archetypal of that of a Dionysian artist, who dissolves their Apollonian individuality into a rapturous Dionysian primordial chorus. Nietzsche's recourse to myth, the primordial, and hyperbolic descriptions of higher types, forms the basis of the next section, which highlights the limitations of his critical task. In turn, the next section justifies the need for chapter two, and Bloch's contribution to this argument for the reconceptualization of utopia.

3. Sociological tragedy

Overview

This section argues that Nietzsche's desire to rupture the prevalent discourse of his time can feasibly be deemed as merely reacting to the *ressentiment* of others, demonstrating an inability to articulate a means of gaining a vantage point beyond the socio-cultural mores within which an individual finds themselves enmeshed. It has been argued that a reading of utopia that can be ascribed to his critical task is in juxtaposition against that of the classic version, in the blueprint tradition, that is concerned with social reform. Instead, in Nietzsche, there is an advocacy of individual transvaluation, with no regard for liberal, social, progress. There runs the risk in his project, then, of an individual falling foul of neurosis and solipsism. Nietzsche's philosophy, however, is redeemed insofar as it a concrete engagement with his socio-political environment, and not mere retreat into idiosyncratic wilfulness. That said, through his three metamorphoses of the spirit as outlined above, there is, in Nietzsche, a position which results in the exploitation of certain individuals for the flourishing of others. Georg Simmel's notion of the 'sociological tragedy' is utilized to demonstrate how Nietzsche's task fails to fully recognize how individual social subjects are both entrapped and mediated by the society in which they reside, thereby rendering any alternative conception of being as limited by norms. This then sets the scene for Bloch's contribution to the argument, through his concern with social emancipation in classic utopian vein, before then demonstrating how Adorno combines the projects of his predecessors to provide an account of utopia that may withstand scrutiny.

'Utopistic neurosis'

In the introduction it was argued that classic utopia, with its specific conceptualization of time as *chronos* (culminating in a *kairological telos*), entailed the subsumption of different personal experiences under a single collective experience. This repression of the individual inherent in classic utopia may then be avoided by adopting Hudson's argument that utopia ought no longer be grounded in a group of social actors.³²¹ Iconoclastic utopia, as ascribed to Nietzsche, exemplifies this in that it consists in the propagation of Dionysian artists, such as Coltrane, who are able to exercise their creativity through perpetual self-overcoming and transvaluation of existing conditions. For Nietzsche, it is imperative that transvaluation involves active negation of norms, as opposed to mere reactivity (that was attributed as a characteristic of classic utopian – socialist and liberal – thought). It is problematic, however, how one is to differentiate between the active and reactive, for Nietzsche offers no definitive framework. With respect to Coltrane, judgements as to the Dionysian authenticity of his creativity were left to the possibility of an idiosyncratic response of Boretz's 'aesthetically receptive listener'. That is to suggest that Coltrane requires a listener who is always already attuned to his Dionysian (or *akairotic*) vision. Coltrane is not reacting in a musical equivalent of the last man. As Ansell-Pearson articulates the wider point: 'Nietzsche's yearning for a new humanity can itself be seen as an expression of the nihilistic condition he wishes us to overcome. Nietzsche's yearning reveals a dissatisfaction with the present, with "man", expressing the same kind of negative attitudes, such as revenge and resentment towards life as it is'.³²² As Ansell-Pearson describes above, if there are no clear criteria by which to

³²¹ Hudson, *Reform of Utopia*, p.27: 'Any notion that large numbers of individuals surrender their own utopias to a single political or social utopia must be rejected, along with the collectivism that characterized large parts of modern European utopian thought. On the other hand, the pursuit of individual utopias and life projects has to be taken seriously, even though this problematizes any attempt to pursue a *common* utopian project'.

³²² Ansell-Pearson, *Nietzsche as Political Thinker*, p.102.

differentiate the active and reactive, Nietzsche's argument is then feasibly indicative only of the 'negative attitudes' of the culture which he seeks to actively negate. Nietzsche's discourse advocating transvaluation and self-overcoming is perhaps itself a nihilistic one born out of a spirit of *ressentiment*, which, as argued above, is emblemized by a rejection of external conditions.

The ambiguity of Nietzsche's method may be explicated by recognizing its origin in his positing of the notion of a Dionysian primordial condition that cannot be satisfactorily articulated via Apollonian language – and thus not communicated to the last man. It may be argued that the transcendent notion of the Dionysian primordial risks reducing Nietzsche's proposals for self-overcoming and transvaluation to an emotive and reactive set of choices. In other words, in his attempt to challenge those he deems as kindred spirits to escape the grasp of the contemporary culture of positivism, he paradoxically reduces all decision making to a reactive selection process in which one picks and chooses provided that they remain the gadfly of their time.³²³ That is to say that the gadfly chooses emotively, merely being different or contrary, rather than in a determinate response to their conditions, and such choices the gadfly makes, being Dionysian, cannot be articulated and defended within the Apollonian language of everyday communication.³²⁴

Nietzsche offers a possible criterion to judge the difference between reaction and action only insofar as he takes the desire for peace and stasis, sought for example by the last

³²³ As Diana Coole observes, whilst Nietzsche's perspectives may be 'critically resonant in conveying the decadence of modernity', they arguably remain 'politically inefficacious in changing it'. However, as Coole continues, this is not a damning critique of Nietzsche's project of unsettling the normative discourse, but, rather, it crucially prevents utilizing his thought to present colloquial utopias based upon the Apollonian and chronological logic of the last man. See Diana Coole, *Negativity and Politics: Dionysus and Dialectics from Kant to Poststructuralism* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), p.129.

³²⁴ In the terminology of Adorno, to be explicated in chapter three below, Nietzsche is offering only inexact fantasy, as opposed to Adorno's own 'exact fantasy', that is disciplined by a rigorous and critical reflection upon its social condition.

men in their pursuit of classic utopia, to be tantamount to reactivity born out of *ressentiment*, and not *amor fati*. In this context, Nietzsche's own imagery of a 'self-war' as the means to self-disclose social conditioning, is telling. The self-war is a response to the contingent mores that make one suffer. He argues that:

War has always been the grand sagacity of every spirit which has grown too inward and too profound; its curative power lies even in the wounds one receives. A maxim whose origin I withhold from learned curiosity has long been my motto: *increscunt animi, virescit vulnere virtus* (The spirit grows, strength is restored by wounding).³²⁵

Self-war is not, therefore, grounded in a determinate analysis of social conditions – which is to say any form of analysis that would bracket the idiosyncrasies of personal reactions and prejudices. The rejection of peace and stability entails the rejection of any criteria against which the value of the higher individual's experiments in transvaluation can be judged. This is the paradox of utopian thought that Nietzsche then enacts: utopia lies in transvaluation and a perpetual self-war; because it cannot be articulated in rational Apollonian language, it can be neither judged as to its success, nor communicated to the last man (or indeed those kindred spirits who might want to follow the higher individual – they must, like Coltrane's listeners, have followed their own path of self-war and already be attuned to the higher individual). This leaves the higher individual vulnerable to, despite their own intentions, indiscriminately and perpetually, reacting to social mores, rather than offering a determinate response. Thus, while Nietzsche thereby expresses the tensions of akairological utopia, it may also be argued that he fails to grasp the importance of humanity's social being (and indeed, to deploy his own genealogical approach adequately in an analysis of contemporary society). This leaves his experiments in transvaluation vulnerable to themselves being merely motivated by *ressentiment* to existing social mores.

³²⁵ Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ*, p.31.

Thus, it is unclear what advantage there is to be drawn through this (re)activity of perpetual self-war, if no criteria – which would of necessity be Apollonian – exist by which the active and the reactive can be differentiated and communicated to others. Whilst Nietzsche would argue, no doubt correctly, that appealing to the ‘advantages’ or ‘disadvantages’ of a given choice is to be stuck in a decadent discourse steeped in an Apollonian and instrumental notion of progress, he cannot legitimately bypass the issue without undermining his critique of existing material conditions. Thus, if he lacks communicable criteria, he is led into a series of conflicts that entrap his advocacy of both perspectival seeing and the conception of the higher individual, and specifically entrap it within the entanglements of the polis of the last men. This is because responses to external conditions, which in slave morality have been argued to be merely reactive, should be transfigured into proactiveness by the perspectives of the higher individual – perspectivism itself should stimulate perpetual self-war, as different perspectives challenge each other. This higher type should be able to create and express in a hitherto unfathomable manner – escaping the restrictions of Apollonian discourse. Put otherwise, whilst the last man, emblemized by Nietzsche as Christian or Socialist, aims to transmute chaotic suffering into static happiness, the higher individual accepts suffering and advocates a severe path of self-overcoming – perpetual self-war. This might suggest, contra the image of the higher individual that was outlined above through the example of Coltrane, who masters Apollonian musical disciplines as a necessary precondition of Dionysian creativity, that the idea that the higher type can create *ex nihilo* is precisely an idea that is realized independently of any consideration of the norms of the society of which they are a member. Rather than respond to their social and cultural environment, the higher type seemingly conjures an alternative, fantastical ‘reality’ for themselves. In this way, by attributing a creative autonomy to the higher type, Nietzsche is omissive of the potential that

his own genealogical approach could play in the higher type's ability to creatively respond to their social environment.³²⁶

In proposing a non-prescriptive programme, eschewing both Apollonian discriminatory criteria and the discipline of genealogy, and advocating perpetual dynamism and becoming contra happiness and being, Nietzsche further risks reducing his critique to a parodic response to existing conditions, thereby nullifying any pragmatic social benefit (in terms of the logic of the last man) to be drawn from it. Even if Nietzsche's challenge could be realized as a social programme (shaping the lives of all in society), it would lead only to a severe way of life (perpetual self-war), which is of little appeal to most individuals, and moreover of even lesser relation to the concept of utopia as classically understood.

This claim may be justified by considering in more detail the heavy price that is to be paid for this severe way of life, and that this is a price that the last man would be unwilling to pay. Nietzsche's higher individual's sense of self is, by definition, 'a restless sense'.³²⁷ Nietzsche's view of existence is a tragic one, which rather than seeking 'redemption from the pain and suffering of life'³²⁸ after the desires of the last man, instead, actively seeks greater pain as part of a means of constant self-overcoming, transvaluation and becoming. In a self-professed Schopenhauerian turn in one of his earlier works, Nietzsche asserts that he knows of no 'better aim of life than that of perishing, *animae magnae prodigus*, in pursuit of the great and impossible'.³²⁹ In asserting this aim, Nietzsche metaphorically urges self-annihilation in the process of precisely such, colloquially interpreted, failure. While this helps

³²⁶ This is to suggest that while genealogy has a role in identify the origins of contemporary society, Nietzsche does not allow it a role in directing the reform, or more radical transformation, of that society.

³²⁷ Peter. R. Sedgwick, *Nietzsche's Economy: Modernity, Normativity, and Futurity* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp.174-75.

³²⁸ Ansell-Pearson, *Nietzsche as Political Thinker*, p.52.

³²⁹ Friedrich W. Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, ed. Daniel Breazeale, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.112.

to explain Nietzsche's advocacy of a perpetual hunt for intense suffering and pain, it makes no sense to the instrumental last man, who pursues success and peaceful stasis, not continual failure. Yet it is only in actively seeking such challenges that the higher type may entertain the possibility of overcoming them. This intense mode of engagement with the inevitable sufferings of life represents the takeover of a 'restless sense' of self, discussed above, whereby individuals courageous enough do not permit themselves to seek comfort through administered moderation. In light of this restless sense, Nietzsche's higher type is perhaps driven towards 'utopistic neurosis'.³³⁰

As argued above, through self-overcoming, transvaluation via perspectival seeing and an embrace of a Dionysian ontology, iconoclastic utopia as attributed to Nietzsche's critical task is articulated through highlighting the limits of Apollonian, rational, discourse. This utopia is deliberately juxtaposed against a classic reading of it as timely, ordered, future oriented, or, kairological. In contrast to the teleological classic utopia, it has been argued that utopia as implicitly presented in Nietzsche is akairological. Thiele indirectly highlights a problem with this reading of akairological utopia, in that it will arguably lead to neurosis. This is because Nietzsche's ideal of the higher individual exposing the limits of Apollonian normative discourse reveals only moments of Dionysian 'truth', '[b]ut the Dionysian moment is just that – momentary. And the traces it leaves behind in memory are as the aftertaste of a fruit whose possession becomes one's obsession'.³³¹ Through self-overcoming and transvaluation, the higher type is condemned to perpetually strive to reveal these Dionysian moments. Without grounding in a genealogical and critical analysis of contemporary society, and without a form

³³⁰ Ernst Bloch coins this term in *The Principle of Hope*, and describes it as 'lingering in the waking dream, for the image getting stuck in the first signs, in the mere initials of reality' when one fails to realize that subjective fantasy does not correlate with objective reality. See Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, trans. Neville and Stephen Plaice and Paul Knight (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), p.324.

³³¹ Thiele, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the politics of the soul*, p.184.

of communication that can convince the last man of the importance of these moments and the need to strive after the impossible, the Dionysian moment dissipates into a merely individual, and indeed potentially neurotic, gesture – an unsatisfactory and unsatisfying reaction, not an action.

Lebenswelt

A further problem of Nietzsche's individual utopia is, as noted above, that he does not take adequate account of humanity's social being. His higher types, regardless of their self-professed individual autonomy, require others for them to morph into the child spirit. This is because the camel spirit firstly needs a burden to carry, which can only be provided through an other.³³² This must occur before the lion spirit can then desire to fight back against the prevalent discourse, and in turn precedes the child spirit. As the fleeting apex of Nietzsche's metamorphoses, the child spirit can be the creator of values anew. Yet it is only through being in a *Lebenswelt*, or social life-world, that it is possible for the individual to be able to morph at all,³³³ as indeed Nietzsche recognizes when he respects the need for Apollonian culture (and reason) as the precondition of Dionysian insight. Ansell-Pearson argues that Nietzsche cannot strictly therefore be *only* an individualistic thinker. Rather, Nietzsche's commitment must be to culture and the citizen as opposed to the 'abstract private individual of modern

³³² This is analogous to Hegel's 'Lordship and Bondage' thesis: 'In all this, the unessential consciousness is, for the master, the object which embodies the truth of his certainty of himself. But it is evident that this object does not correspond to its notion; for, just where the master has effectively achieved lordship, he really finds that something has come about quite different from an independent consciousness. It is not an independent, but rather as dependent consciousness that he has achieved. He is thus not assured of self-existence as his truth; he finds that his truth is rather the unessential consciousness, and the fortuitous unessential action of that consciousness': Georg W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 2003), p.110.

³³³ See Edmund Husserl, *The crisis of European sciences and transcendental phenomenology: an introduction to phenomenological philosophy* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), pp.108-109. Pre-epistemological given-ness grounds phenomenological enquiry, both personal and inter-subjective.

liberal democracy'.³³⁴ Even if Nietzsche's higher type is an individual, they are not individuals in the stamp of liberal society (which is to say, paradoxically, an individual made by and unable to escape the liberal polity). This is exemplified by the example of Nietzsche's Zarathustra, who does indeed retreat to his cave of solitude, but does so, explicitly and consciously, from the *agora* of customary morality, and does so in order to morph and so return to his 'children', renewed such that he may give back owing to his abundant vitality. The question that may be posed to Nietzsche is whether this movement between cave and agora adequately grasps, either humanity's social being, or a way to transvalue the mores of the agora.

Ansell-Pearson's observation above notwithstanding, in constantly striving after self-overcoming onto transvaluation, whilst using others as means and not as ends in themselves (as Kant would have it), Nietzsche's higher individual runs the risk of becoming tantamount to the Hegelian master archetype. The claim that 'the herd is a means, no more! But now one is attempting to understand the herd as an individual and to ascribe to it a higher rank than to the individual – profound misunderstanding!!!'³³⁵ is arguably a self-obsessed discourse that runs the risk of the individual falling prey to a self-righteousness, whereby they enter into a neurotic state to deal with the reality of their social bondage. As Bloch, concerned with social emancipation, argues: 'someone goes into himself. He thinks that will heal him. But if he stays in there too long no one will notice. He will end up just trampling around on himself'.³³⁶

³³⁴ Ansell-Pearson, *Nietzsche as Political Thinker*, p.87.

³³⁵ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p.403.

³³⁶ Peter Thompson, 'Ernst Bloch and the Quantum Mechanics of Hope', in Ernst Bloch, *Atheism in Christianity: The Religion of the Exodus and the Kingdom*, trans. J. T. Swann (London: Verso, 2009), pp.ix-xxx (p.xii). This section is Thompson's translation of a section in the original German text, but missing from first translation into English in 1972. Bloch's notion of 'utopistic neurosis' is elaborated upon in the next chapter.

If Nietzsche's higher individual seeks to be rid of others in permanent isolation, it would result in an inability to return to the 'market place' of morality on a regular basis to fuel their self-overcoming. To wilfully choose, or be banished in, isolation, would not be living in the Nietzschean sense. Rather, what is needed is a cycle of solitude and engagement with the dominion of norms to transvalue them, as well as any comfort that may be attained by complacency in the face of given mores. What is found here is a method that necessarily advocates engaging with the *Lebenswelt* and others as they are, and not as one would like them to be. The latter would be tantamount to seeking to impose one's will over another. Nietzsche's successor Georg Simmel deems this relentlessly self-overcoming individual to be the site of an optimistic development, in which the fundamental motive is to resist 'being levelled, swallowed up in the social-technological mechanism'.³³⁷ It is, however, because of this development that Nietzsche's conception of a higher individual is necessarily determined by the social context in which he or she finds themselves.³³⁸ Without proper reflection on the mediation of individual and collective, this higher individual remains in danger of being condemned, as neurotic, in its attempts to resist being 'swallowed up' by the collective *Lebenswelt*.

Sociological tragedy

From the above observations, it may be suggested that Nietzsche's conception of the higher individual may be seen to highlight certain limits to utopian thought. In a pursuit of

³³⁷ Georg Simmel, 'The Metropolis and Mental Life', in Georg Simmel, *On individuality and social forms: selected writings*, ed. and trans. Donald N. Levine (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp.324-339 (p.324).

³³⁸ As Tanner observes: 'to cultivate inwardness and nothing more, as Christ did, is to avoid life in an absolute, in its way glorious, but ultimately perverse fashion. Indeed, no one but Christ managed to do it'. See Tanner, 'Introduction', p.22.

permanent self-overcoming, the individual eschews any static *telos* or kairotic end of time, and thereby avoids the dangers of classic utopia. However, they do so only at the cost of losing the protection of the *principium individuationis*, so that not merely do the conflicting voices of the perspectives they entertain within themselves bring about a neurotic disintegration of the self, but further, as highlighted above, they sacrifice any criteria according to which they can judge the worth of their experiments in transvaluation, and indeed communicate the authenticity of that transvaluation to those (kindred spirits and last men) around them. As such, they can have no external validation of their experiments and cannot be sure that they represent anything more than a reaction to society, grounded in *ressentiment*.

It is unclear, then, how feasible it is to balance retreating to become anew, given the necessity of humanity's social being, with engaging in the *Lebenswelt*. At worst, one repeats a cycle of hyper self-analysis under the false premise that one is engaging in the three metamorphoses of the spirit as argued for by Nietzsche. Once again, Nietzsche's critical task appears to fall prey to an attitude of unwitting *ressentiment*, as opposed to the realization of a post-*ressentiment* type, albeit, as such, Nietzsche may be interpreted as enacting the inherent contradictions and conflicts of his own position. As Donald N. Levine illustrates: 'the conflict between the forms of individuality and sociality is self-generated and inescapable; it constitutes the "sociological tragedy"'.³³⁹ To elaborate, Simmel's sociological tragedy focuses upon the apparent irresolvable tension between subjectivity and objectivity. Thus, a self-overcoming individual that would aspire to pure subjectivity is reliant upon an 'objective' culture, or, in other words, one existing independently of the individual, in which any

³³⁹ Levine, 'The Structure of Simmel's Thought', p.31.

teachings become a part of that objective culture. The notion of the self as a site independent of the culture in which it finds itself is thus clearly paradoxical. This is substantiated by Klossowski, who in a manner akin to Simmel, argues that ‘even when we are alone, silent, speaking internally to ourselves, it is still the outside that is speaking to us – thanks to these signs from the exterior that invade and occupy us, and whose murmuring totally covers over our impulsive life’.³⁴⁰ Owing to the social milieu stifling the ability to give rise to an ‘impulsive’ inner life, Nietzsche’s critical task is rendered a reactive one conditioned by the prevalent mores of his time, for his inability to accept his own relationship to society inhibits the possibility of critical self-reflection (or indeed the deployment of genealogical methods for radical social reform). The method he advocates of self-overcoming to lead onto transvaluation therefore arguably does not withstand scrutiny, for he is himself an unwitting example of an individual seeking to break out of the conditioning of his time, but suffering by the inescapable inability to do so, for in his neurosis he cannot accurately perceive that conditioning.³⁴¹

His discourse advocates a continuous cycle whereby the individual never allows themselves a prolonged state of rest. Temporary peace is fleeting and serves only as the spur to greater self-war still. To seek the end of war, as would be a goal of classic utopia, necessarily cannot be a desirable outcome for Nietzsche.³⁴² Thus, instead, it is through acceptance of the social conditions in which one resides that the higher type may opt to undertake the project

³⁴⁰ Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the vicious circle*, p.39.

³⁴¹ Erich Fromm, *Love, Sexuality and Matriarchy About Gender*, ed. Rainer Funk (New York: Fromm International Pub.: 1997), p.168: ‘There were traits in Nietzsche’s personality, a tremendous insecurity and anxiety, which explains [...] why he had sadistic impulses which led him to those formulations’. Fromm’s personal psychology of Nietzsche may be seen to complement the philosophical arguments above.

³⁴² As Peter Sedgwick illustrated through personal communication, classic utopia for Nietzsche is inextricably linked to ‘common’ morality; ergo a false utopianism that turns on the promise of a future heaven on earth, whereby ‘heaven’ equals no pain, no death, and is no more than an administered anaesthesia to block out the dangerous possibility that these realities have not been eradicated.

of the three metamorphoses of the spirit. As a result, the individual becomes embattled in a cycle of self-critique, where they believe themselves to be transmuting into a higher type. However, what is really occurring is no more than a perpetual self-war in which the outcome, in allusion to Simmel's 'sociological tragedy', is already preconditioned by the morality of custom in which they reside. Internalizing socio-cultural conflicts within himself, Nietzsche zealously advocates that the higher individual self-overcome as a means of annihilating the remnants of a decadent morality of custom. However, as has been argued, there is no chronological achievement to be attained through this process whereby the courageous individual may enjoy the fruits of their labours. Rather, the process of perpetual self-overcoming is in and of itself that which is to be enjoyed.³⁴³ In effect, the path is the goal, but in terms of the logic of the higher man, and not the instrumental version of the last man.

While classic utopia as can be ascribed to the last man involves engaging with the culture in which one resides – and seeking to better it as much as is possible given one's means and understanding based upon the liberal idea of progress – for Nietzsche, engaging in political activism for civil rights, for example, would equate to spurring efforts which would be better utilized in the process of self-overcoming. Nietzsche's higher individual may instead give back owing to an inner overflowing, which in turn links to Zarathustra's returns from solitude. This individual would not, however, contribute to societal projects, as they would inevitably deem them as being beneath their concern, given that they treat others as means rather than ends in themselves.

³⁴³ Enjoyment (*Genuss*) here is not the same as the last man's happiness, but rather linked to the happiness of the perpetually self-overcoming individual.

Unsettling normative discourse

Nietzsche is, as outlined above, concerned with creating a space for the higher individual to flourish, and not concerned about the polis. If utopia is read in classic manner as concerning the social collective, then Nietzsche becomes marginalized within the discourse, as he has in contemporary utopian studies. That notwithstanding, his is an iconoclastic reading of utopia, in that it negatively articulates the concept, in other words, by way of what it is not. In Nietzsche, one finds a 'restless' sense of being, where he argues that the higher type is to resist and overcome even the most comfortable of contingent social configurations. Nietzsche's critical task is politically apathetic if understood via the logic of the last man, which, as outlined above, aims for teleological, comfortable 'being'. Nonetheless, Nietzsche's method is of great importance ethically speaking. This is because of the way he is able to articulate, using rational Apollonian discourse, its limitations.³⁴⁴ Through this articulation there is the potential to unravel the genealogical origins of the prevalent discourse to gain an appreciation of the contingency of its norms (albeit that Nietzsche's genealogy ultimately may not serve to judge the worth of those norms).³⁴⁵ His method is thus unconcerned with either positive synthesis or kairological resolution. Rather, the focus of the method is non-teleological and against social progress, insofar as it attempts to reveal the disingenuousness of positivist Truth claims.

Nietzsche's hyperbolic discourse, advocating self-overcoming and transvaluation, is an attempt to ensure that his perspectival seeing does not become concretized and used as instruction via the norms of the culture in which he writes. It is expressive of contradictions

³⁴⁴ In this aspect, the tragicomic works of Samuel Beckett (1906 - 1989) demonstrate a Nietzschean influence.

³⁴⁵ Nietzsche's genealogical analysis of master and slave morality, in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, crucially, despite interpretations to the contrary, does not judge master moral to be superior or preferable to slave morality. They are merely different, with their own specific and contingent origins.

in contemporary culture and in attempts to escape it, rather than an advocacy of a method of reform. Thus, he hopes that his discourse articulates the limits of these contemporary norms. This articulation thus makes sense in terms of the possibility of akairological rupture, engendered by the higher man, over reconfiguration of the status quo via chronological measurement under the logic of the last man. Iconoclastic utopia as ascribed to Nietzsche involves an internal change in the individual, as opposed to any external reconfiguration of social conditions. This once more emphasizes the ethical concern of his critical task over any political ambition.

The above analysis of Nietzsche's higher individual corroborates Ansell-Pearson's earlier argument that Nietzsche is not an individualistic thinker in the modern sense of liberal democracy,³⁴⁶ but, rather, engages with the development of the self from within his or her culture, to then be able to adumbrate it. As David Owen argues, Nietzsche's:

distinction between the utopian ideal of the Overman and the dystopian ideal of the last man is a post-metaphysical version of the same twist, in which the capacity for the reflexive constitution of 'inner distance' draws on the fact that, on Nietzsche's account, the Overman and the last man are the limit-ideals immanent within modern culture and the products of this culture, namely, modern individuals.³⁴⁷

Nietzsche's discourse is thus a hyperbolic one, where the contradictions of his calls for resistance, amidst his entrapment, concerning individual transvaluation amidst sociological tragedy, do not nullify the efficacy of his analyses.³⁴⁸ Nietzsche's worth to my argument resides in his steadfast aim of unsettling normative discourse, in performative manner as

³⁴⁶ See pp.109-110.

³⁴⁷ David Owen, 'Modernity, Ethics and Counter-Ideals: *Amor Fati*, Eternal Recurrence and the Overman' in *Nietzsche: Critical Assessments, Volume III, On Morality and the Order of Rank*, eds. Daniel W. Conway and Peter S. Groff (London; New York: Routledge, 1998), pp.188-217 (p.210).

³⁴⁸ See Simmel's observation on p.111, deeming Nietzsche's self-overcoming individual an 'optimistic development'.

outlined above,³⁴⁹ by demonstrating its contingency and inability to fully encapsulate and articulate being.

Following Nietzsche's diagnosis, there is no possibility of salvaging classic utopia in terms of rendering it as a useful telos to guide praxis. Instead, it has been demonstrated that a material, individual and iconoclastic utopia can be ascribed to Nietzsche's critical task. This reading of utopia has shown to be Dionysian insofar as it seeks to demonstrate the limits of Apollonian discourse. Utopia as articulated through Nietzsche has also been argued to be akairological, in that it is unconcerned with positive resolution, or, kairological telos. It has been argued that music, such as the later Free Jazz of Coltrane is a mode of Apollonian expression that articulates its own limits, thereby engendering Dionysian, akairological ruptures, which can be feasibly equated with iconoclastic utopia. In this way, Coltrane transcends the criticism levelled at Nietzsche above; namely, that of neurosis when attempting to create *ex nihilo*. Instead, Coltrane goes beyond Nietzsche's conception of the higher type insofar as he demonstrates Apollonian mastery via a genealogical understanding of his particular musical art form. Coltrane's later works, then, are neither reactive nor neurotic in an unanchored and entirely subjective manner. Rather, they are grounded in Apollonian mastery, but also truly dissonant: there is no harmonious, temporal resolution to be encountered. Herein lies their akairological quality.

Summary

Nietzsche's emphasis upon the possibility of Dionysian artists, á la Coltrane, who may articulate dissonance and Dionysian, primordial truth, at the expense of consonance, and

³⁴⁹ See p.82 and p.96.

Apollonian order, is unpalatable as an articulation of classic utopia in the nineteenth century positivist tradition as described in the introduction. Nietzsche's value lies in his diagnosis of modernity as a culture in which the self is perniciously mediated by society. However, without an adequate critical understanding of that society, the higher individual, for all their creativity, remains isolated. There lies the tension in Nietzsche between the higher type disclosing the mediating element of society, but thereby isolating themselves (and indeed speaking, if at all, only to the equivalent of Boretz's 'aesthetically receptive listener'), and the incumbent, ever-present risk of the individual passively and unwittingly accommodating themselves to society in a manner that empowers them, but only in terms of the logic of the last man.

The argument will now move on to Nietzsche's successor Bloch, a thinker who focusses upon the liberal development of the social collective, over and above Nietzsche's emphasis on the higher individual. Bloch attempts to avoid the pitfalls of the 'sociological tragedy' attributed via Simmel to Nietzsche's critical task.³⁵⁰ Instead, Bloch seeks to temper the severity of Nietzsche's hyperbolic discourse, and fashion it into something – fused with a Hegelian-Marxism – useful in terms of social progress.

³⁵⁰ Bloch was once a student of, and, in the same intellectual circle as, Simmel.

Chapter Two: Bloch

Overview

This chapter begins with a contextual introduction, outlining how Bloch's positive, neo-Marxist reading of utopia functions as a key interlocutor between the negative, individual and rhapsodic reading of utopia ascribed to Nietzsche, and a negative, socially engaged and exacting utopia ascribed to Adorno. The first section demonstrates how Bloch's works develop from a Dionysian strand evident in his first published work, *The Spirit of Utopia*, to a strictly Apollonian reading of utopia in his mature works. Bloch's utopia is shown to be grounded in chronology and kaiology, as opposed to akairos as attributed to Nietzsche above. Bloch's social concern is argued for through his commitment to Marxist class theory, and a movement from illusion to clarity via a filtering process of cultural material. The second section examines Bloch's reading of music, in line with his teleological account of utopia, and juxtaposes this reading against Nietzsche's Dionysian version that has been shown to eschew social concern and progress in the service of potential ruptures of norms. The rehearsal of Bloch's philosophy of music will at once serve to provide concrete examples of his interpretation of cultural material in the light of utopia, and begin to anticipate contradictions and fallacies in his approach. The third and final section explores these limitations of Bloch's philosophy; namely, his subjective prejudice and opacity to the conservative strand in his predetermined reading of utopia. The chapter thus closes by iterating the need for Adorno's contribution to this thesis via his negative dialectic and exacting aesthetic theory.

Contextual introduction

Bloch is a critical link between Nietzsche and Adorno because he attempts to domesticate the Dionysian in service of an Apollonian, sober, historically-mediated utopia. Adorno combines the work of his predecessors: he provides a staunchly Apollonian reading of utopia without recourse to a primordial realm of Dionysian excess, nor a teleological, kairological utopia attainable through a positive Marxist science. I contest that without the oeuvre of Bloch that Adorno's negative articulation of utopia is not possible.³⁵¹ Adorno will be shown in the next chapter to negatively appropriate Bloch's Hegelian-Marxism, along with Nietzsche's perspectival seeing. This will lead to a conclusion that provides a negative reading of utopia that is both iconoclastic and akairological as per the terms outlined in the introduction.

In this chapter, Bloch's reading of utopia is shown to be compatible with a classic reading of the term, as explored in the introduction, insofar as it delineates a future society in which inhabitants reside in harmonious living conditions. In his first, Nietzschean, publication, *The Spirit of Utopia*, Bloch is reticent to delineate a path to utopia in blueprint manner. Owing to the socio-political upheaval in his native Germany, and his subsequent relocation to the USA, in his middle works, *Heritage of our Times*, and *The Principle of Hope*, Bloch's account of utopia becomes much more oriented in line with historical materialism. Whilst seeking to epistemologically ground utopia amidst an age of horror, Bloch has, up to

³⁵¹ 'The book (*Spuren*), Bloch's first, bearing all his later work within it, seemed to me to be one prolonged rebellion against the renunciation within thought that extends even into its purely formal character. Prior to any theoretical content, I took this motif so much as my own that I do not believe I have ever written anything without reference to it, either implicit or explicit': Theodor W. Adorno, 'The Handle, the Pot, and Early Experience', in Theodor W. Adorno, *Notes to Literature, Volume Two*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), pp.211-219 (p.212).

and including contemporary discourse in utopian studies, been held as an exemplar of a non-dogmatic and, instead, as an open thinker of utopia.³⁵²

Bloch endeavours to legitimize the concept of utopia as a processual method in order to reconfigure selfhood, appealing to what he terms the 'warm stream of Marxism';³⁵³ that is, a humanist tradition that is concerned with social emancipation, and a move from alienation to a feeling of being at home in the world (*Heimat*): a classless society in which individuals live commensurately with themselves and others. Significantly, *Heimat*, is the antonym of *Entfremdung*, or 'alienation'. Bloch's telos of *Heimat* through historical mediation may be placed in juxtaposition against the non-teleological reading of utopia attributed to Nietzsche.

In *The Spirit of Utopia*, Bloch differs from Nietzsche in that this first work is already one of sociology. As such, Bloch offers the possibility to go beyond Nietzsche in terms of a utopia grounded in the *Lebenswelt*. Contra Nietzsche's isolated higher individual, Bloch is concerned with the mass of people. Unlike Nietzsche's depiction of the last men, for Bloch, socially embedded individuals feel their alienation, and recognize that 'something's missing'.³⁵⁴ In his mature period, Bloch has a theory of society but is aware of the dangers of a closed system. As such, his utopia is kairological in a positive, Tillichian sense, as articulated in the introduction above.³⁵⁵ As such, there is no place for Nietzschean akairological rupture or individual transvaluation. Rather, socio-cultural material is to be mined and filtered for

³⁵² Owing to the horror of the social circumstances in which he wrote and responded to, and given the contemporary socio-political threats in terms of climate change and financial and social inequality, for example, it is understandable why Bloch's analyses can be deemed worthy of continued investigation.

³⁵³ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.209.

³⁵⁴ 'Something's missing' is the title of a transcript of a conversation that took place in 1964 between Bloch and Adorno. It can be found in the following: Ernst Bloch and Theodor W. Adorno, 'Something's Missing', in *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays*, pp.1-17.

³⁵⁵ See p.35.

instantiations that may be positively coalesced into a telos that satisfies the need of the masses. As Vincent Geoghegan acutely notes, whilst:

Nietzsche saw himself as the philosopher with a hammer, determined to smash up all certainties and dogmas, Bloch perhaps becomes a philosopher with a hammer and sickle, determined to transgress but also to create. What he adds to a consideration of being is a sense of becoming as a social rather than an egotistical goal. In this sense he is firmly in the post-1918 camp of Nietzschean gnostic revolutionaries committed to the overcoming of human limitations through social revolution.³⁵⁶

Bloch's project is thus commensurate with classic utopia as per the definition in the introduction, as a place in which inhabitants live harmoniously with one another under ideal conditions. Here, utopia entails a sense of historical progression, and thus classic utopia's link to chronos. Furthermore, given that classic utopia has a pre-defined telos, Bloch's importance to this thesis is, in large part, that he is arguing that a concretely utopian telos is only glimpsed obscurely in longing and what he terms *Vorschein*, or 'anticipatory illumination'. As such, Bloch is more radical than the positivist utopians presented in the introduction, for example, Comte. Moreover, unlike Nietzsche, Bloch's critical task emphasizes changing the socio-political configurations of society to enact a telos of *Heimat* commensurate way of living for all.

Bloch deems living commensurately with oneself and others to be the 'basic principle of utopian philosophy'.³⁵⁷ This is corroborated by his claim that 'the genuine utopian will is definitely not endless striving, rather: it wants to see the merely immediate and thus so unpossessed nature of self-location and being-here finally mediated, illuminated and fulfilled,

³⁵⁶ Vincent Geoghegan, 'An Anti-Humanist Utopia?', in Peter Thompson and Slavoj Žižek (eds.), *The Privatization of Hope: Ernst Bloch and the future of Utopia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), pp.37-60 (p.37).

³⁵⁷ Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, p.206

fulfilled happily and adequately'.³⁵⁸ This processual reading of utopia as 'being' is opposed to Nietzsche's advocacy of an akairological 'becoming'.³⁵⁹

Mature Bloch sees in Marxism – in effect, historical materialism – a method *par excellence* which will spur humanity onwards to *Heimat*. Bloch's utopia therefore has a communitarian, socialist underpinning, commensurate with a classic reading of utopia that is markedly different from Nietzsche's. It was argued that iconoclastic utopia in Nietzsche is akairological rupture, and negatively articulated through the limits of Apollonian communication, namely, through Dionysian music. Unlike his predecessor, Bloch explicitly engages with utopia, and deems it a necessary concept to counter existing socio-political ills.

Bloch is thus important to my thesis insofar as it is unfeasible to provide a reconceptualization of utopia by examining the legacy of Nietzsche upon twentieth century intellectual thought, without taking into consideration the contribution of the thinker who steadfastly reiterated its criticality to socio-political discourse. Indeed, it is reasonable to deem Bloch as the greatest thinker of utopia of the twentieth century.³⁶⁰ By challenging Nietzsche's Dionysian individualism, Bloch seeks to democratize utopia as a worthwhile social objective, attainable through historical materialism as a utopian science. However, in this way, Bloch's utopia has, against his avowed intent, a positivist bent to it.

³⁵⁸ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.16. Nietzsche, as shown above, is unconcerned with happiness as a desirable value.

³⁵⁹ As Thompson implicitly argues in support of Bloch contra Nietzsche: 'Even Heraclitus, who expounded the doctrine of *panta rhei* and who is often seen in opposition to Parmenides, in fact agrees that existence is an immanent totality. For Heraclitus, as for Hegel, dialectic contradictions were there simply to bring to completion a pre-existing telos. Everything may well have been in flux, but only within the given' in Peter Thompson, 'Ernst Bloch, Ungleichzeitigkeit, and the Philosophy of Being and Time', *New German Critique*, 125, 42:2 (2015), 49-64 (p.57).

³⁶⁰ Zygmunt Bauman once remarked: 'I would count Bloch among the most powerful ethical thinkers of the past [...] I now believe that utopia is one of humanity's constituents, a 'constant' in the human way of being-in-the-world' in Zygmunt Bauman, *Conversations with Zygmunt Bauman*, ed. Keith Tester (Cambridge: Polity; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001), pp.50-51.

Bloch is of interest to this thesis, not only because of his intellectual legacy, but also in the way that whilst he ostensibly appears as a radical thinker of utopia, upon close reading he is actually shown to be rather conservative. This has been borne out through criticism of his utopian theory by his younger compatriot, Hans Jonas, as well as a biographer, Vincent Geoghehan, amongst other recent scholars.³⁶¹ Bloch attempts to be an 'open' thinker, but, ultimately, fails. Upon close reading, his middle works are shown to be guilty of an epistemological fallacy. Namely, that of supposedly possessing a direct knowledge of the future.

Bloch's conservatism notwithstanding, as a Hegelian-Marxist who is firmly entrenched in the camp of Enlightenment thought, and its belief in reason and progress, a radicalism in Bloch's project is manifested in how he expands 'ideas taken from bourgeois philosophical idealism and re-employs them according to basic Marxist tenets and his principle of hope'.³⁶² In effect, he develops Kant's distinction between appearance (*Erscheinungen*) and mere illusion (*bloßen Schein*); namely, that only appearance forms a true object of knowledge because it is constituted in space and time, whilst illusion is born out of reason's endeavour to go beyond the bounds of experience. So, whilst illusion is deceiving, it also functions as transcendent rupture: illusion takes us beyond what the conditions of knowledge and experience allow. This rupture, in turn, functions as a regulative principle to qualify experience. As Bloch asks in correspondence with the formalist Lukács: 'are confusion, immaturity and incomprehensibility always and in every case to be categorized as bourgeois

³⁶¹ Jonas and Geoghehan's criticisms will be discussed in the next two sections. Of recent scholars, the most critical is Darren Webb, 'Concrete Utopia? The Mystical Elitism of Ernst Bloch', *Studies in Marxism*, 7 (2000), 73-100.

³⁶² Jack Zipes 'Introduction: Toward a Realization of Anticipatory Illumination', in Ernst Bloch, *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays*, trans. Jack Zipes and Frank Mecklenburg (Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press, 1988), pp.xi-xliv (p.xxxiv).

decadence? Might they not be equally – in contrast with this simplistic and surely unrevolutionary view – be part of the transition from the old world to the new’?³⁶³ This in turn is evidence of a prevalent Hegelian strand in Bloch: he incorporates Hegel’s reading of *Schein* (illusion)³⁶⁴ not as *Betrug* (deception), but rather as a distorted image of the Truth.³⁶⁵ In turn, a method of interpreting phenomena is explicitly apparent in Bloch’s schema of filtering what he deems concrete from abstract modes of utopia. The latter would be ascribed to the conceptualization argued for in the Nietzsche chapter. The next section will, in part, spell out what Bloch deems abstract utopia to consist of, and why it is problematic, before elucidating his preference: concrete utopia.³⁶⁶

³⁶³ Ernst Bloch, ‘Discussing Expressionism’, trans. Rodney Livingstone, in Ronald Taylor (ed.), *Aesthetics and Politics* (London: NLB, 1977), pp.16-27 (p.23).

³⁶⁴ See Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of man in a series of letters*, eds. and trans. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and Leonard A. Willoughby (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).

³⁶⁵ As Osborne illustrates: ‘applying the distinction between “reality” and “actuality” to history allowed Hegel to view history as the process of reason becoming actual. At any particular moment in world-history, within this scenario, reason could be judged to have reached a certain stage of development, demonstrable in the rationality embodied in its social institutions (Hegel called this “objective spirit”). Within this scenario, critique was (in Marx’s words) the “measurement of the particular actuality by the idea”’. See Peter Osborne, *How to Read Marx* (London: Granta, 2005), p.60.

³⁶⁶ Bloch uses abstract (*abstrakt*) and concrete (*konkret*) in the Hegelian sense. This is best elucidated by Gillian Rose: ‘a concrete individual is one considered in its relations to a totality, and as related to itself. This is the Marxian or Hegelian concrete as the “sum of determinations” [...] The degree of abstractness/concreteness of a concept [...] is determined by the relation between a concept as formally defined and any individual which is posited as a particular instance of the concept. When the individual does not instantiate the concept, the concept is abstract’ in Gillian Rose, *Hegel Contra Sociology* (London; Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Athlone, 1995), p.149.

1. Concrete utopia

Overview

Bloch's works develop from a discernible Dionysian influence in *The Spirit of Utopia*, to a sober and Apollonian reading of utopia in his middle works, *Heritage of our Times* and *The Principle of Hope*. In the introduction to *The Principle of Hope*, the translators observe that 'in 1923 [Bloch] issued a second re-written edition of *The Spirit of Utopia*, giving a more systematic introduction to his utopian philosophy and attempting to fuse it with Marxism'.³⁶⁷ From his middle works onwards, Bloch's demonstrates a commitment to Marx's class theory, aligned with a historical materialist reading of progress. Bloch's shift from a more iconoclastic reading of utopia in his first work, that follows from the reading of utopia as akairological as ascribed to Nietzsche's critical task above, to a more sober, Marxist historical materialist one from *Heritage of our Times* onward, forms an arc for the discussion in the chapter as a whole. This development in Bloch is important to this thesis for it demonstrates Bloch's criticality as an interlocutor between the negative critical tasks of Nietzsche and Adorno, and a (failed) attempt to overcome the challenge of a Nietzschean akairological utopia via a positive Hegelian-Marxist reading, thereby necessitating the need for Adorno's determinately negative response that will be offered in the next and final chapter.

It is argued that mature Bloch's reading of utopia is kairological. Bloch will be shown to differ from Nietzsche in a number of key ways, including through a belief that humanity is yet to come to fruition, and a commitment to Marxist class theory and hope in a revolutionary class as transforming material conditions for all in an eschatological, kairological version of utopia. It will be argued that mature Bloch domesticates Nietzsche's Dionysian in the service

³⁶⁷ Plaice, Plaice and Knight, 'Translator's Introduction' in *The Principle of Hope*, pp.xix-xxxiii (p.xxii).

of societal good, and that this is articulated through a number of filtering tools that Bloch employs to gauge what cultural material is of anticipatory, rather than compensatory, value. This will be done by presenting his notions of *Vorschein*, abstract versus concrete utopia, his 'open system', as well as notion of *docta spes*.

Dionysian onto Apollonian

Crucial to this chapter, as well as Bloch's role in this thesis's central argument that utopia ought be reconceptualized as akairological, is how Bloch's thought develops from a Nietzschean, Dionysian reading of cultural phenomena in his first published work, *The Spirit of Utopia*,³⁶⁸ to a strictly Apollonian reading in his mature work, *The Principle of Hope*. A motif to summarize Bloch's work is that 'S is not yet P',³⁶⁹ or, in other words, that a telos is the true genesis of a process. Whilst for Nietzsche, humanity is something to be overcome, for Bloch this is modified to read that humanity is something still yet to fully come to fruition. Mature Bloch argues that utopia ought to be based upon a painstaking engagement to set the *Zeitgeist* right through sober analysis.³⁷⁰ This contrasts with Nietzsche, who argues that 'all truth is crooked, time itself is a circle'³⁷¹ and that 'progress' in the chronological understanding of the term is a pernicious notion.³⁷² As has been discussed above, Nietzsche implicitly advocates usurping the positing of chronological, Apollonian time as the absolute limit of all there is, with akairological, Dionysian moments of rupture. Accordingly, Nietzsche would see mature Bloch's attempt at engaging in sober analysis as emblematic of a self-

³⁶⁸ This will be explored in greater detail with examples from Bloch's reading of music in section two below.

³⁶⁹ Ernst Bloch, 'Dialectics and Hope', trans. Mark Ritter, *New German Critique*, 9 (Autumn, 1976), 3-10 (p.8).

³⁷⁰ See Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, pp.866-867.

³⁷¹ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p.178.

³⁷² See p.59.

deceitful attempt at constructing meaning and order. Conversely, Bloch would argue that Nietzsche's ontology is an immature one, steeped in utopistic neurosis.³⁷³

A key sociological difference between Nietzsche and Bloch is that the latter perceives aspirations to utopia to exist amongst the people, whilst for the former, people, or the 'herd', are enthralled in an Apollonian culture, where the last man's norms rule. Nietzsche's higher types are thus only concerned with themselves, or in the case of Zarathustra, to preach. This self-concern leads, as has been shown above, to neurosis.³⁷⁴ In response to this neurosis, Bloch sees a utopian potential amongst the people, and particularly through utopian longings. The notion of longing and looking to the future returns to the question of 'reactivity' in Nietzsche. For Bloch, people react to their conditions, but in a determinate manner that is expressive of both what is wrong with society, and an aspiration to a better society. In Nietzsche, only higher types may act agentively; the herd merely regurgitate norms, particularly when reacting to them in *ressentiment*.

Bloch's anti-Nietzschean social concern is observed in, an otherwise Dionysian inspired, *The Spirit of Utopia*, in which he remarks: 'it is this, which is *noch-nicht*; what is lost, pre-sensed; our self-encounter concealed in the latency of every lived moment; our We-encounter, our utopia calling out to itself through goodness, music, metaphysics, but unrealizable in mundane terms'.³⁷⁵ 'Mundane terms' has connotations of the sober Apollonian. That said, Bloch does not then promote Dionysian self-overcoming, but rather stresses a collective impulse in his utopia, which is spelled out through his use of the pronoun 'we', and determiner 'our'. The 'we' is presumably a revolutionary class that envisions a better

³⁷³ Adorno will enter in chapter three as an exacting response to both the primordial Dionysian in Nietzsche, and the wilful concrete utopia of Bloch.

³⁷⁴ See p.102 and p.108.

³⁷⁵ Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, p.158.

way than that which currently exists. Bloch's nascent Marxism is thus clear to discern through a decipherable commitment to class theory.

Bloch and Nietzsche agree on their contemporary socio-political actuality as being insufficient for human flourishing. However, as noted, Bloch is, in classic utopian manner, concerned with society, whilst Nietzsche is concerned only with potential higher types. As per Simmel's notion of sociological tragedy as outlined in the previous chapter,³⁷⁶ Nietzsche's conception of higher types is subject to social mediation, albeit that Nietzsche himself is insufficiently aware of this. Bloch's contribution to this discourse thereby lies in grounding his predecessor's individualism in light of the notion of sociological tragedy, and promoting socio-political reform as concomitant with a not-yet realized better state of affairs for all. As Levitas observes, in Bloch, utopia is telos, 'not an esoteric byway of culture nor a distraction from class struggle, but an unavoidable and indispensable element in the production of the future'.³⁷⁷ For Bloch, the conception of akairological utopia ascribed to Nietzsche's Dionysian ontology would fall into the realm of an 'esoteric byway of culture'.

For the mature Bloch, Nietzsche's Dionysian ruptures are thus not correlative with the genuine utopia, for they are 'not really mediated' with the true foundation of existence.³⁷⁸ Bloch instead views the Dionysian as merely a tool, albeit a powerful one, to sharpen understanding of a subject's social alienation: 'Dionysus is one of the most powerful symbols, if not the most powerful symbol, of the man who is still beside himself, and smashes false forms'.³⁷⁹ In this way, Bloch acknowledges the symbolic power of Dionysus as that which represents discontentment with the present. That notwithstanding, the Dionysian, as

³⁷⁶ See pp.111-112.

³⁷⁷ Levitas, 'Looking for the Blue', p.291.

³⁷⁸ Bloch, 'Dialectics and Hope', p.6.

³⁷⁹ Ernst Bloch, *Heritage of our Times*, trans. Neville and Stephen Plaice (Oxford: Polity, 1991), p.328.

symptomatic of contradiction, is rendered as an intoxicating illusion, albeit one that can guide Apollonian dialectical analysis and practice.

Mature Bloch grounds Nietzsche's Dionysian by arguing that neither Dionysus nor Apollo represent the apex of humankind, but rather, that they work in 'dialectical wholeness'. For Bloch, this 'wholeness' is represented by 'the last name of Apollo, but also the first name of Dionysus; after which both alternatives disappear'.³⁸⁰ Mature Bloch argues that Dionysus is 'the fiery serpent or the utopian flash of lightning'³⁸¹ (as found within akairological ruptures negatively articulated in Nietzsche). However, against these utopian flashes, Bloch argues that 'mediation', with 'analysis of the situation' one finds oneself in, along with a 'constant time-dialectic, constant subject-object dialectic, is so unquestioningly superior to pure spontaneity' (where spontaneity is correlative with a flash).³⁸² Bloch's Hegelian-Marxism is concerned with chronological minutes into hours involved in processual change: 'to set the hour hand we have to turn the minute hand, be illuminable in all the painstaking details of revolutionary work'.³⁸³ In contrast, the akairological utopia ascribed to Nietzsche's critical task would have it that the clock is blown apart entirely, for progress is not a reasonable aim to be desired. Mature Bloch's approach adheres to a strictly processual, chronological and kairological utopia, which correlates with Marxist historical materialism, and a concomitant forward movement from illusion to clarity.³⁸⁴

Bloch deems his project to be steeped in a scientific method: 'Marxism through science – precisely with the development of socialism from utopia to science'.³⁸⁵ Different to

³⁸⁰ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, pp.952-53.

³⁸¹ Bloch, *Heritage of our Times*, p.331.

³⁸² Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.1053.

³⁸³ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope.*, p.1368.

³⁸⁴ See pp.31-32.

³⁸⁵ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.147.

orthodox Marxists who see utopia as a distraction from scientific socialism, Bloch's recourse to Marxism in relation to utopia is socially and historically grounded, and it leads him to make proclamations such as the following: 'Through Marx and Lenin, socialism has itself become a concrete ideal in each further stage to be pursued, an ideal which, through its systematically mediated solidity [...] it constitutes the finality of that history, or the last chapter of the history of the world'.³⁸⁶ Socialism as the 'last chapter of the history of the world' is a grand proclamation, and one which demonstrates a teleological and eschatological strand in Bloch's chronological onto kairological conception of utopia.

Schein to Vorschein

Genuine utopia is the 'open and still unfathomed' telos of clock time which 'ventures forward'³⁸⁷. Whilst Bloch's utopia is thus classic, as per the definition provided in the introduction,³⁸⁸ it rejects the blueprint model. Rather, it employs a notion of *Vorschein* (anticipatory illumination) to coalesce instantiations of utopia, aligned with a historical materialist reading of progress via class conflict.

Bloch's utopia is not then one of blueprints and social engineering, and thus in any appeal to general schema that might articulate progress from the present to the future. Instead, utopia in Bloch rests in the concrete and detailed analyses of individual and collective experiences – responses to the suffering and alienation of contemporary life. Bloch thus

³⁸⁶ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.174. Osborne once again indirectly helps shed light on the Hegelian-Marxist overtones in Bloch's oeuvre: 'Marx claims communism will resolve the conflict between humankind and nature. This is an extraordinary, utopian speculative claim. It means that communism will not be a stage of historical development in any usual sense, since no further "development" will come after it, much like Hegel's end of history. This is why Marx called it "the riddle of history solved". It will inaugurate a new kind of time, the time of human freedom. It will be the beginning of a new kind of "history": the history of freedom'. See Osborne, *How to Read Marx*, p.79.

³⁸⁷ Ernst Bloch, *Heritage of our Times*, p.137

³⁸⁸ See pp.14-17.

should not be able to provide a methodology for analysis, for utopia is revealed, uniquely in each concrete instance of its anticipation and in the particular analysis that is tailored to its exposition. An initial articulation of Blochian analysis is thus, of necessity, somewhat sketchy and allusive (with more concrete examples being offered in the discussion of music, below).

Bloch is concerned with a transformation of time through a hermeneutical practice of integral transformation of the (collective) self, which in turn renders possible the interpretation of cultural artefacts that contain what Bloch, in a materialist reworking of Hegelian *Schein*, dubs *Vorschein*. Bloch intimates that such a qualitative, illusory, quality may be found in

all the object worlds of human work [...] it extends [...] into technology and architecture, into painting, literature and music, into ethics and religion [...] [a]nd every work of art, every central philosophy had and has a utopian window in which there lies a landscape which is still developing.³⁸⁹

It may, nonetheless, be noted that Bloch's unique appropriation of Hegel's idealist *Schein* is rendered within a rational, Apollonian, articulation, for it is correlated with his materialist Scientific Marxist account of utopia as *Heimat*. Bloch's *Vorschein* is thus also aligned with a kairological reading of utopia in the Tillichian form outlined in the introduction, whereby contradictions and tensions (inherent in *Schein*) may be rendered palatable and understood by an ontic realization of the final 'good' time: *Heimat*.

With an end goal in mind, Bloch's task is therefore to provide the potentially revolutionary class, the 'we', with a perspective – a telescopic filter – such that they may be able to view the present illuminated through the *noch-nicht* – that is to say that, through a critical interpretation of illusion (*Vorschein*) one may recognize glimpses of more just social conditions that have 'not-yet' been realized, but that even so may guide praxis. Such a way of

³⁸⁹ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.623.

seeing thus strives to reveal genuine utopian hidden tendencies and latencies in any given present. Bloch's core material, in which *Vorschein* is manifest, is thus composed of the broad range of cultural artefacts through which individuals and groups respond to and cope with the alienating experience of living in contemporary society. On that account, in any attempt to bring to the fore our discontent at living in an unjust society, Bloch asks the question 'where do I suffer from being not enough? Where am I askew, where have I been corrupted? Where am I secure and genuine?'³⁹⁰ Therefore, whilst Nietzsche with similar sentiment resorts to the idea that the very concept of an articulable utopia, born out of the logic of the last man, is something that is to be overcome through higher individuals, and focuses thereby on the proactive rejection of society, Bloch argues that humanity is something *noch-nicht*, and instead requires a better socio-political state of affairs that remains to be fully engendered. He argues that this is realized only through a rigorous analysis of current social conditions and their potential for transformation.

Thompson argues that Bloch's work, and in particular his notions of *Vorschein* and *noch-nicht*, alludes to 'all those moments in which we seem to go outside of ourselves and to get a glimpse of the person and the world which we could become'.³⁹¹ In effect, in the cultural artefacts that express our alienation and longing for *Heimat*, we are aware that, as humans, we are not yet – unfulfilled and incomplete. However, for Bloch, such moments of awareness do not represent Kant's *Ding-an-sich*, or in other words, pre-existing noumenal ideals which are not within phenomenal existence, nor are they akairological moments of Dionysian rupture as negatively articulated in Nietzsche. Rather, in Bloch, utopia is the 'result of the "autopoiesis" of its own becoming [...] It is merely a tendency and latency, the existence of

³⁹⁰ Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, p.165.

³⁹¹ Thompson, 'Ernst Bloch and the Quantum Mechanics of Hope', p.xviii.

which we only know of because we glimpse its promise in the here and now'.³⁹² The utopian future thus exists as a potential in the present. It thus has an ontological status (as opposed to being a mere aspiration of a suffering and repressed class), Hegelian *Schein* is reconfigured by Bloch, in *Vorschein*, as that which makes this potential (*noch-nicht*) evident: the future utopia may be glimpsed in the present, albeit in only in a distorted manner.

This glimpse entails, in large part, that despite arguing in favour of a Marxist-Leninist telos of the classless society and *Heimat*, through appeal to *Vorschein*, Bloch evades the charge of being unduly prescriptive. He, like Marx, does not provide exact descriptions of the future. *Vorschein* does not yield a blueprint for utopia that could be realized through social engineering.³⁹³ The material contradictions of the present necessarily entail that *Vorschein* itself encapsulates only a contradictory vision of utopia. That vision is as much symptomatic of present contradictions and suffering as it is an image of a better society.

There remains, then, the issue of how *Vorschein* is symptomatic of the injustice of the present, and thus only ever negatively an anticipation of the utopia of the future, should be interpreted. To approach this problem it may be noted that, while deriving *Vorschein* from Hegel's conception of *Schein*, Bloch rejects the manner in which *Schein* is articulated by Hegel as beautiful (most noticeably in Hegel's aesthetics, where *Schein* is the beautiful illusion of the truth of the absolute, as realized in art)³⁹⁴ and thus a harmonious and closed image. Bloch displaces Hegel's idealism, not merely with a materialist appeal to the mediation of *Vorschein* by social contradictions, but also to a processual notion of living commensurately with oneself

³⁹² Thompson, 'Ernst Bloch and the Quantum Mechanics of Hope', p.xvii. *Autopoiesis*, in effect, gives a determinate direction of development out of the present.

³⁹³ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.621.

³⁹⁴ See Georg W. F. Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, ed. Michael Inwood, trans. Bernard Bosanquet (London; New York: Penguin Books, 1993).

and others (which has been noted above to be the 'basic principle of utopian philosophy').³⁹⁵ While *Vorschein* then offers a glimpse of this commensurate living, for Bloch, it 'does not beautify and yet close the present world, as Hegel did',³⁹⁶ but rather 'is allied with the not yet present world, with those properties of reality which bear the future'.³⁹⁷ Put otherwise, 'living commensurately' cannot be codified into a coherent blueprint for utopia. Therefore, as Thompson observes, Bloch's reworking of Hegel's dialectic involves '*noch-nicht*' and *Vorschein* functioning as a means of avoiding the closure of the dialectic.³⁹⁸ While Hegelian *Schein* offers an illusion of closure and harmony, Bloch's *Vorschein* leaves contradictions visible.

Eschatos kairos

A commitment to retaining an open dialectic notwithstanding, Bloch's philosophy is, to repeat, propelled by the telos of *Heimat*, and is thus a version of eschatological utopia as per the definition in the introduction.³⁹⁹ His utopia can be linked to the Judeo-Christian interpretation of kairos. In *The Principle of Hope*, Bloch bears out this kairological strand in his thought in the following: 'Jesus preached of kairos, of time which is fulfilled and which is consequently mediated by and through history; otherwise there would be no place for any kind of morality with a worldly connection whatever, not even a morality of immediate eschatology'.⁴⁰⁰ Bloch's classic utopia thus fuses a processual Hegelian-Marxism with eschatological utopia.

³⁹⁵ Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, p.206

³⁹⁶ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.10.

³⁹⁷ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.10.

³⁹⁸ Thompson, 'Ernst Bloch and the Quantum Mechanics of Hope', p.xx.

³⁹⁹ See pp.39-42.

⁴⁰⁰ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.1264.

More specifically, Bloch's reading of utopia is thus a chronological onto kairological one adapted from the Tillichian reading of kairos in the introduction.⁴⁰¹ In Bloch, time ceases to be an unfolding of 'one damn thing after another',⁴⁰² but rather an accumulation of unfulfilled potentialities. This is how Bloch avoids blueprint utopian thinking. The kairological element of Bloch's utopia is substantiated in early Bloch's claim that: 'So am I. So are we still. But is not all this already far too much? For who would help must absolutely go back, yet be there anew'.⁴⁰³ The human agent is here attributed a sensitivity to kairos as an awareness of qualitatively significant moments of time (crucially as 'non-synchronous' [*Ungleichzeitigkeit*] moments). Mature Bloch employs a filter of *Vorschein*, guided by a *noch-nicht* of *Heimat*, and by going back 'anew', Bloch argues for the value of (kairological) non-synchronous traces of the past not yet redeemed in the present.⁴⁰⁴ These non-synchronous traces demonstrate Bloch's Hegelian-Marxism, insofar as he reinterprets Marx's philosophy of history. Bloch's reinterpretation involves non-synchronous traces as both anticipations of future modes of being, as well as unresolved aspects of older modes. Thompson explains that for Bloch, given that a Marxist historical materialism is future oriented, 'time becomes a multiversal and non-synchronous reality. Ideas, concepts, and movements that appear to us from a former age can thus also suddenly be pre-illuminations of things not yet possible except as latent potential'.⁴⁰⁵ These 'ideas, concepts and movements' as *Vorschein*, are, for Bloch, valuable *only* insofar as they complement an improved state of affairs for all.

⁴⁰¹ See pp.35-36.

⁴⁰² See p.40.

⁴⁰³ Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, p.233.

⁴⁰⁴ Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, p.41. Bloch may here also be seen to be responding to the problem that Osborne posed for historical materialism above. Orthodox Marxism privileges the proletariat's experience of time, and thereby marginalises divergent individuals' experiences. By proposing that time is non-synchronous, Bloch recognises that there is not a single experience of historical time.

⁴⁰⁵ Thompson, 'Ernst Bloch, Ungleichzeitigkeit, and the Philosophy of Being and Time', pp.51-52.

In Bloch, appeals to the non-synchronous can function as reminders of a lack, but are not in and of themselves redemptive, and are thus somewhat analogous to the psychoanalyst's appeal to childhood memories as a means of bringing to conscious awareness of unconscious patterns adversely impacting one's present (in effect, a negatively redemptive process). It is imperative to carry 'through the thoughts of the past'.⁴⁰⁶ On that account, Michael Löwy argues in reference to Benjamin, but which relates in an essential way to discussion of chronology and kairology in Bloch's concrete utopia, that:

The opening-up of the past means also that the so-called 'judgments of history' [have] nothing definitive or unchangeable about them. The future may reopen 'closed' historical cases, may 'rehabilitate' misrepresented victims, revive defeated hopes and aspirations, rediscover forgotten battles or battles regarded as 'utopian', 'anachronistic' or 'running against the grain of progress'. In this case, the opening-up of the past and the opening-up of the future are intimately linked.⁴⁰⁷

This opening up of the past and future in turn reiterates the kairological and eschatological element in Bloch's reading of utopia. *Vorschein* provides 'intimations of a better world sighted in the *noch-nicht*-conscious'.⁴⁰⁸ These not-yet intimations render the darkness of the present apparent, and thus through negation of an unsatisfactory here and now, the right course of action may be uncovered, in line with the utopian telos of *Heimat*.

Bloch does not explicitly state that there would always be, within *Heimat*, tendencies and latencies that go beyond a utopian future. In this way, *Heimat* operates in Bloch's project in a similar manner to religion in Marx:

⁴⁰⁶ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, pp.155-56.

⁴⁰⁷ Michael Löwy, *Fire Alarm: reading Walter Benjamin's 'On the concept of history'*, trans. Chris Turner (London; New York: Verso, 2005), p.115.

⁴⁰⁸ Zipes, 'Toward a Realization of Anticipatory Illumination', p.xxxii.

Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the *expression* of real suffering and a *protest* against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people.⁴⁰⁹

In Marx's analysis, religion is both useful, and illusory. In similar vein, *Heimat* may function as illusory in an incomplete present, but also guide praxis. This is a sociological issue, in that class societies produce utopian imagery, because such images respond to existing social problems. However, owing to prevalent social contradictions, and the impossibility of an Archimedean standpoint from which to judge what is socially useful from what is not with a telos in mind, the ideology of any prevalent class society will provide a distorted image of utopia. In response to this dilemma, Bloch argues that 'the Negative is present at the heart of Process-as-such, motivating it as a process of healing salvation; for there would be no process at all if there were not something there that should not be there, something to serve as a constant threat'.⁴¹⁰ In this manner, utopia is oppositional to existing conditions. This opposition can only come to an end, as per an eschatological reading of it, when the 'last chapter of the history of the world'⁴¹¹ has been achieved.

Having established Bloch's reworking of the Hegelian and Marxist dialectic to proffer a conception of *Vorschein* in the service of a utopian telos of *Heimat*, the remainder of this first section of the chapter will explore the ways in which Bloch applies his ideas to filter cultural material in terms of its utopian potential; namely, through analysis of his distinction between concrete and abstract utopia, Bloch's employment of an 'open system', as well as the notion of *docta spes*, or, 'educated hope'. This analysis will lead onto the second section

⁴⁰⁹ Karl Marx, 'A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. Introduction (1843-4)', in Karl Marx, *Early writings*, trans. Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), pp.243-258 (p.244).

⁴¹⁰ Bloch, *Atheism in Christianity*, p.232.

⁴¹¹ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.174

of this chapter, which will focus on music as a method of critical hermeneutics that Bloch employs to realize his utopian philosophy.

Abstract/Concrete utopia

For Bloch, abstract utopia is representative of purely wishful thinking, and demonstrates an immature form of utopia which does not sufficiently engage with existing socio-political conditions. Hence, whilst abstract utopia entails desire, it is not attainable by praxis. Bloch grants abstract utopia a place in his schema of utopia, and argues that it is better than nothing 'in a world completely devoid of a utopian conscience'.⁴¹² He adds, however, that it is merely an initial rung on the ladder towards a mature, concretely utopian engagement with cultural material, and can therefore only ever be compensatory. For Bloch, an example of abstract utopia is the escapist activity of day-dreaming, in which not so much a transformed future exists for all, but rather a world in which an individual fantasizes about their changed place in the prevalent order.⁴¹³ Other examples of this type of compensatory utopia includes what Bloch interprets as escapist forms of music, film and art. The most striking example of abstract utopia in Bloch is his depiction of Miguel Cervantes's knight errant, Don Quixote. Bloch argues that:

From the angle of abstract purity, Don Quixote is clearly the patron saint of *honest-abstract social idealists*. In so far as they drag the high, usually the all too high, down into the lower regions, to remedy morally or indeed to overthrow what can only be tackled economically, in the homogeneous dirt of the matter [...] The better society does not come about through fanaticism or ideal propaganda from above [...] Thus almost all idealistic social utopians were and are of Don Quixote's breed.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹² Bloch and Adorno, 'Something's Missing', p.14.

⁴¹³ This would typify *ressentiment* as explored on pp.63-64.

⁴¹⁴ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, pp.1043-44.

Considering the connotations of the adjective 'quixotic', as 'clumsily entertaining', 'trivial', 'outdated' and 'fantastical', it is apparent that Bloch interprets abstract utopia as compensatory and impotent in the face of concrete dilemmas. It is thus comprehensible why Bloch chooses to relegate the abstract mode in his schema; he understands it to have discredited the overall concept of utopia for centuries, 'both in pragmatic political terms and in all other expressions of what is desirable; just as if every utopia were an abstract one'.⁴¹⁵ So, whilst he argues that the abstract is better than no utopia at all, it can only ever be merely compensatory, and, like Don Quixote, something immature.

In juxtaposition with Don Quixote as an example of abstract utopia, Bloch posits the figure of Johan Wolfgang von Goethe's Faust as archetypal of the concrete version. Bloch argues that 'Faust rises so far above Don Quixote', insofar as the former represents 'a subject of mediation and its phenomenology, without abstract fantasizing'. Nietzsche qualifies Goethe's Faust as Apollonian, for the figure of Faust exemplifies the positivist philosopher concerned strictly with knowledge.⁴¹⁶ For Bloch, in contrast, Faust is a concretely utopian figure, distanced from the view offered of him by Nietzsche as a figure steeped in instrumental reason. In this way, Faust is a useful figure to consider when differentiating utopia as articulated through Nietzsche from that in Bloch, for Goethe's protagonist is at odds with akairological, Dionysian utopia negatively put forth in Nietzsche. Bloch builds upon Nietzsche's critical task to reveal the possibility of a tempered and historically mediated utopia.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁵ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.145.

⁴¹⁶ Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy', pp.110-111.

⁴¹⁷ This is why Adorno is critical to my reconceptualization of utopia, insofar as his is negatively dialectical, perspectival reading of concepts, including utopia, which deem it to be necessarily akairological: utopia may not be positively articulated.

Again, this situates Bloch's importance to this thesis insofar as his is a historical materialist, mediated and rationally articulated positive utopia, as opposed to the creatively destructive conceptualization attributed to Nietzsche. Hence, he declares in *The Principle of Hope* that:

Precisely because utopian conscience will not be fobbed off with what is poorly existing, precisely because the furthest-reaching telescope is necessary to see the real star of the Earth, and the telescope is called concrete utopia: precisely for this reason utopia does not intend an eternal distance from the object, with which it wishes to coincide instead, an object that is no longer estranged from the subject.⁴¹⁸

Bloch's concrete utopia is thus a telescopic filter, which enables an individual subject to separate 'dross' elements of abstract utopia from this, apparently, more socially useful form. Considering the preceding discussion of Nietzsche, concrete utopia may be equated with the Apollonian worldview, whilst abstract utopia with the Dionysian. In Bloch, concrete utopia is based upon sober reason with coherent ramifications in the *Lebenswelt*, as opposed to the post-normative. Bloch deems Nietzsche's recourse to the Dionysian as important to unsettle normative discourse, but also immature, and supplants it with Apollonian, scientific, rational articulation. In effect, Bloch builds upon the neglected potential of the mature Nietzsche's genealogical approach to articulate a socially constructive reading of utopia via an 'open system'.

Open system

Bloch, in a development of Nietzsche's aversion toward systematic frameworks of thought, and contrary to the formalism of his fellow Marxist and former collaborator, Lukács, employs a programme of an 'open system'⁴¹⁹ to facilitate liberation from social oppression. Whilst

⁴¹⁸ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.315.

⁴¹⁹ As Dennis J. Schmidt observes: 'Bloch insisted that the style of the presentation of his open system should not conflict with the content and intent of that system, and so he sought a prose style that expressed all of the

Lukács ascribes to Marx a deterministic theory of historical change in linear, chronological fashion, Bloch's processual Hegelian-Marxism, combined with a non-synchronous reading of time, allows space for voluntary action. As Livingstone, Perry and Mulhern observe in regard to Lukács's aesthetic judgement, whilst he charges 'modernist writing with formalism because of its use of such fragmented techniques as interior monologue or montage', it is actually Lukács himself who falls into the trap of a self-deceitful formalism in his attempt to 'deduce norms for prose purely from literary traditions, without regard to the historical reality that encompasses and transforms all literature in its own processes of change'.⁴²⁰ Thus, in both his political philosophy and his literary criticism, Lukács allows himself to invoke a pre-existing standard of judgement – an Archimedian point provided by the model of a communist society as the telos of history. Political movement and art works alike are judged as to whether they bring about progressive towards or regression away from that telos. Lukács' system of thought is thus closed.

In contrast with this 'closed' system, mature Bloch argues that scientific Marxism 'in its entirety, even when brought in its most illuminating form and anticipated in its entire realization, is only a *condition* for a life in freedom, life in happiness, life in possible fulfilment, life with content'.⁴²¹ This reiterates the non-synchronicity in Bloch's analysis. For Lukács, a mode of production is self-contained, with only aspects pointing towards a future within it. Instead, in Bloch, modes of production are much less homogenous and coherent.

ambiguities, openness and suggestiveness characteristic of his position. It is on this point that Bloch found the languages and syntaxes of expressionism and the cabala helpful, for in these Bloch found the means of avoiding the language of abstraction and reflection while mirroring the expressiveness and elasticity of his themes'. See Dennis J. Schmidt, 'Translator's Introduction: In The Spirit of Bloch' in Ernst Bloch, *Natural Law and Human Dignity*, trans. Dennis J. Schmidt (Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press, 1986) pp.vii-xxvi (p.xxiii).

⁴²⁰ Rodney Livingstone, Perry Anderson and Francis Mulhern, 'Presentation II' in Taylor, *Aesthetics and Politics*, pp.60-67 (p.63).

⁴²¹ Bloch and Adorno, 'Something's Missing', p.15.

Bloch's open system explicates his processual utopianism, which seeks 'to preserve the disparities in contradiction, and discontinuities inherent in the present as the nexus of conflicting historical currents'.⁴²² Dennis Schmidt argues that 'there is no room for the finality of closure or stasis in this ontology of the perpetual renewal of the *noch-nicht*'.⁴²³ Bloch thus employs expressionism within his open system. This is best exemplified in the Nietzschean *The Spirit of Utopia*, which is 'frequently episodic and staccato [and] reflects the disjointed and fragmented quality of experience and of possibilities left dormant'.⁴²⁴ Jack Zipes argues that Bloch's expressionism is inextricably linked to his project of shocking the reader into action to break away from that which currently prevents them becoming conscious of what they are missing, so that they may dictate their own future.⁴²⁵ This shocking and educating the reader, the revolutionary 'we' is aligned with Bloch's conception of *docta spes*, or, 'educated hope'.

Docta Spes

In order to rescue what he deems the 'good core' of concrete utopia from the abstract, Bloch employs a classification process of *docta spes*. His project aims for the reader to soberly develop faculties of critical judgement, which will result in better material conditions for all. Whilst Bloch interprets a utopian surplus, or charge, in a multitude of cultural material, it is imperative for him to provide some distinction between higher and lower forms for an abstract/concrete schema to work. By providing such a distinction, Bloch evades Adorno's

⁴²² Schmidt, 'Introduction', p.x.

⁴²³ Schmidt, 'Introduction', p.xiii. This observation is at odds with Bloch's reading of Socialism as the 'last chapter of the history of the world' discussed above (p.131). The unwitting limitations of Bloch's supposed 'open system' will be explored in the next section.

⁴²⁴ Schmidt, 'Introduction', p.xxiii. Bloch's expressionism in *The Spirit of Utopia* will be discussed further through analysis of his reading of music in the next section.

⁴²⁵ See Zipes, 'Toward a Realization of Anticipatory Illumination', p.xvii and p.xvix.

erroneous charge that he sees utopia in all cultural material and thus renders it obsolete.⁴²⁶

On the contrary, it is clear that Bloch does not do this, but rather lays out a hierarchy in which many cultural creations, including Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, are to be interpreted as lacking in concretely utopian terms, since they lead to utopistic neurosis. In this way, Bloch responds to critics such as Adorno, by declaring that:

Objections to bad utopias can be raised, i.e. to abstractly extravagant, badly mediated ones, but precisely concrete utopia has in *process-reality* a corresponding element: that of the mediated *Novum* [genuinely new thing]. Only this process-reality, and not a fact-basedness torn out of it which is reified and made absolute, can therefore pass judgement on utopian dreams or relegate them to mere illusions.⁴²⁷

Bloch argues that abstract utopia is nine-tenths fantastical, with only one-tenth a critique of the present. Hence whilst this utopia 'keep[s] the goal [of *Heimat*] colourful and vivid', the 'path towards it, in so far as it could lie in given circumstances, remains hidden'.⁴²⁸ Thus, in contrast to the akairological rupture ascribed to Nietzsche, Bloch's hierarchical utopia delineates a concrete telos of *Heimat* that is attainable through 'educating desire' correctly. In doing so, his discourse escapes the charge of political apathy, or mere abstract fantasy, which can be justifiably levelled against the iconoclastic reading of utopia ascribed to Nietzsche.

As a processual thinker in Hegelian-Marxist mould, Bloch argues, following the abstract/concrete schema outlined above, that certain particular wishes are more useful than others. This is because what constitutes the 'usefulness' of a wish is whether or not it is directed towards his telos of *Heimat*, which in turn is, for Bloch, facilitated through an appropriate education of desire. On that note, Bloch argues that:

⁴²⁶ See Theodor W. Adorno, 'Bloch's "Traces": The Philosophy of Kitsch', trans. Rodney Livingstone, *New Left Review*, 1:121 (May/June, 1980), 49-62 (p.57).

⁴²⁷ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.197.

⁴²⁸ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.630.

[N]othing is good in itself if it is not directed. But nothing is desired unless it represents itself as good. The fact that drive directs itself to something presupposes the drive, but also something in that to which it is directed which is capable of surviving it. Berries are edible, whereas wood, however great the hunger, is not.⁴²⁹

This particular example of what is edible relates to the notion of health, and in turn to cultivating an appropriate *docta spes*.

Summary

Thus, to summarize Bloch's critical task, the tension of the *noch-nicht* is always apparent, Bloch's processual utopianism advocates a self-renewing discourse (*autopoiesis*) to elaborate the worth (*Vorschein*) of cultural material in relation to concrete utopia through *docta spes*. Through cultivating such *docta spes*, a nonetheless socially alienated and suffering individual may decipher what is wilful and useful (concrete) from that which is wishful and compensatory (abstract). Bloch is therefore wary of the revolutionary 'we' falling prey to 'lingering in the waking dream', and his schema seeks to ensure adherence to concrete utopia through a painstakingly close analysis of social and cultural artefacts which contain elements of *Vorschein*. This historical-materialist analysis differentiates Bloch's Hegelian-Marxist sociology from Nietzsche's genealogy which, in contrast, is provocative, without being aligned to a notion of historical progress: concrete and kairological utopia in Bloch is contrasted with abstract and akairological utopia in Nietzsche. This key difference in the works of mature Bloch and Nietzsche has a corresponding influence on the way in which they read music. Nietzsche has been shown to advocate Dionysian rupture of normative Apollonian discourse in the service of hitherto unknown higher types. Mature Bloch, in contrast, owing to a social

⁴²⁹ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.1312.

concern, would strive to read music through a strictly Apollonian lens that seeks to domesticate this most temporal of art forms in the service of a social good.

2. Music

Overview

It will be argued that Bloch's works develop from an expressionistic reading of music in *The Spirit of Utopia*, whereby music is presented as utopian in a non-synchronous way, to a Marxist sociology of music in *The Principle of Hope*, whereby particular music is deemed to be in line with concrete utopia. Bloch's attempt to ascertain *Vorschein* content in musical works will be explicated, and deemed problematically instrumental. This is because Bloch's attribution of *Vorschein* to cultural material is argued to be circular and based upon subjective prejudice, as opposed to formal musical analysis. Instead, because Bloch places music beyond language and formal analysis, he, like Nietzsche before him, cannot render a reading of it that is not purely subjective. Bloch promises much in terms of concrete utopia in relation to music, and going beyond Nietzsche's rhapsodic concern with potential higher types. However, Bloch fails to articulate an aesthetic theory that withstands scrutiny. This section thus lays the groundwork for the next, in which the limitations of Bloch's reading of utopia, as well as importance of Bloch as interlocutor between Nietzsche and Adorno, will be further explained.

Forward movement

Whilst for Nietzsche, it is not the place of music to ignite social revolution, for mature Bloch, it is essential that music be mediated by a forward-movement through historical materialist tendencies if it is to be of anticipatory, rather than compensatory, value: it is essential that it be read through *docta spes*. Otherwise, any music could potentially lay claim to being genuinely utopian. Whilst in Nietzsche, only Dionysian music can qualify as utopian, in mature Bloch, only music with a significant proportion of *Vorschein* is qualified as concretely utopian.

This difference notwithstanding, fusing a Hegelian-Marxism with Nietzsche's reading of the Dionysian aspect of music, in *The Spirit of Utopia*, early Bloch discusses music in relation to utopia through an expressionistic attitude to time: the non-synchronous. For Bloch, music is the most non-synchronous of art forms. Early Bloch rejects the idea that music can meaningfully be interpreted as technical progress, thereby rendering a chronological, or even kairological, reading of it as vacuous: 'clearly nothing detracts from even the more important artists as badly as inserting or fixing them into some succession of developments in craft, into a history of merely mediating, reinforcing, technical formulae'.⁴³⁰ It follows, that in *The Spirit of Utopia*, Bloch offers no sociology of music. Rather, great, concretely utopian composers (artists) are typically anachronisms.⁴³¹ Bloch argues that composers themselves become timeless categories, and that sociology is incapable of articulating 'the actual development and objectivity of music'.⁴³²

Early Bloch ascribes an ahistorical character to music. He deems Nietzsche's reading of music as helpful insofar as the latter grasped 'music's historical nonsynchronism'.⁴³³ However, Bloch also deems his predecessor's reading as

related all too historically to the past, instead of being illuminated from the direction of the future: as Spirit in utopian degree, which accordingly, in the middle of history and sociology, builds only its own house, the framework for its own discoveries of inner levels of existence, albeit with countless elective affinities and free adaptations.⁴³⁴

This excerpt demonstrates that music for early Bloch is ahistorical and kairological, it is eternally exuberant and creative, and moves, not to chronologically greater technical refinement, but, to outbursts of feeling and extravagance: 'music's explosive youth'.⁴³⁵

⁴³⁰ Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, p.38.

⁴³¹ Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, p.39: 'Bach clung to the old ways'.

⁴³² Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, p.42.

⁴³³ Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, p.41.

⁴³⁴ Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, p.41.

⁴³⁵ Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, p.43.

In a development from the earlier, Nietzschean advocacy of the Dionysian and emotional aspects of music, in mature Bloch, engaging with music on such terms results in utopian neurosis and an immature promulgation of abstract utopia over the concrete. In his mature work, Bloch therefore encourages the reader to filter music through their cultivated *docta spes* to deem whether an artwork in question may be positively coalesced in line with concrete utopia. Bloch's instrumental engagement with music via *docta spes* is apparent in his second work, *Traces*. Here, Bloch offers a reading of Homer's Odysseus, who, by having himself tied to a mast, evades the call of the siren song. Had Odysseus fallen prey to its call, this would have represented a capitulation to the 'mere initials of reality'.⁴³⁶ In terms of a Dionysian ontology, Nietzsche would arguably (whilst Adorno and Horkheimer explicitly do so in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*)⁴³⁷ deem that Odysseus's cunning represents a duplicitous worldview that seeks to dominate and instrumentalize the primordial power of music. Mature Bloch, however, deems it crucial to harness the Dionysian power of music in sober fashion.⁴³⁸

Longing and pre-appearance

Bloch's processual utopianism necessitates interpreting music to decipher its *Vorschein* in line with concretely utopian tendencies and latencies. For example, Bloch argues that the oeuvres of Mozart, Bach and Beethoven are concretely utopian examples of '*venturing beyond [...]*

⁴³⁶ Ernst Bloch, *Traces*, trans. Anthony A. Nassar (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2006), pp.146-47. In the Nietzschean reading, Homer, as a naïve Apollonian artist, is juxtaposed with Archilochus, as speaking through a Dionysian primordial unity, in which language is strained to its utmost that it may imitate music, but ultimately fails in doing so. Consequently, for Nietzsche, 'language can never render the cosmic symbolism of music'. See Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy', pp.48-56 (sections 5 and 6).

⁴³⁷ Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: philosophical fragments*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002), pp.25-28.

⁴³⁸ See, for example, Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.1368: '...this is characteristic of Marxism, as the above-mentioned quartermaster of the future: it removes the frozen solid antithesis between sobriety and enthusiasm by bringing both to something New and causing both to work together within it – for exact anticipation, concrete utopia. Sobriety is not there simply to clip the wings of imagination'.

limits in tone-spheres: they are articulations of human existing in a developing language of intensity which, in a world which has come to itself, seeks to gain *its entire essence* by hearing its way keenly and expanding'.⁴³⁹ In this manner, Bloch's attempt to positively coalesce socially mediated cultural material deems him a teleologist. Furthermore, Bloch's Hegelian phrasing that 'the world' is coming (listening) 'to itself' in the music of Mozart, Bach and Beethoven raises the question of how the world's self-awareness translates into the hearing, or political action, of individual human listeners and audiences – or indeed to that of collectives, such as social classes. It is through the presupposition of a concretely utopian telos that Bloch can be seen to attempt to resolve this problem. This positive coalescing corroborates the reading of Bloch's utopia as dealing with concrete, socially mediated cultural material. Bloch's painstaking hunt for utopian latencies and tendencies amidst an unsatisfactory present thus incorporates an analysis of music to articulate positive *Vorschein*, as well as highlighting the absence of *Heimat*.

A dialectician in method, Bloch argues that music is a form of human expression which sounds an emotionally wishful longing. The example Bloch uses is the sound 'of the shepherd's pipe, the panpipe, or of the syrinx', which 'is supposed to reach the distant beloved. Thus, music begins longingly and already definitely as a *call to that which is missing*'.⁴⁴⁰ In this way, rather than a compensatory form of utopia, through revealing the absence of *Heimat*, certain music is negatively utopian, and goes beyond mere lament.

The reason for the importance Bloch imparts to music is further made evident: it is for its ability to convey pre-appearance in a non-prescriptive form by tapping into the listener's emotive longing for that which is *noch-nicht*. This non-synchronous utopian charge in music,

⁴³⁹ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.1089.

⁴⁴⁰ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.1059.

by virtue of its 'residue of surplus' is corroborated by John Blacking, who argues that 'music *can* transcend time and culture. Music that was exciting to the contemporaries of Mozart and Beethoven is still exciting, although we do not share their culture and society'.⁴⁴¹ For example, Bloch argues that 'in Beethoven all music becomes a Prometheus overture'.⁴⁴² This implies that Bloch deems Beethoven's compositions to be charged with concretely utopian *Vorschein* insofar as they drive humanity toward a better condition in Promethean vein. Bloch continues by arguing in reference to the composer's *Fidelio*, that '[m]ore than anywhere else music here becomes morning red, militant-religious, whose day becomes as audible as if it were already more than mere hope. It shines as pure work of man'.⁴⁴³

Cultural authoritarianism

Bloch's justification for ascribing *Vorschein* to a piece of music is based on an expressionistic description of it: there is no formal musical analysis. Whilst the latter is lacking in Nietzsche, also, in the gadfly's critical task, a negative, akairological utopia of primordial Dionysian rupture can be ascribed. Given that mature Bloch seeks to present his reading of concrete utopia as an Apollonian, historically mediated Hegelian-Marxist response to his predecessor, he cannot succeed by merely presenting expressionist defences of particular pieces. In doing so, he unwittingly renders his reading of music as much more rhapsodic and correlative with subjective whim, as opposed to utopian science; it is thus elusive as to how Bloch's reading of music may articulate concretely utopian pre-appearance, and motivate political change. This is a remnant of Bloch's expressionistic approach in *The Spirit of Utopia*; in effect, the

⁴⁴¹ John Blacking, *How Musical is Man?* (Seattle; London: University of Washington Press, 1974), p.108.

⁴⁴² Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.1057.

⁴⁴³ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.1103.

mature Bloch, in spite of his intention of proscribing a scientific, historically mediated, concrete utopia, fails to surpass the expressionistic subjectivity of his first work.

Bloch, unlike Adorno, does not sufficiently engage with the question of how music, and, in particular, the bourgeois music that he extols, is inextricably mediated by the culture in which it is both produced as well as received. To qualify certain music as concretely utopian based on its *Vorschein* content is to risk falling prey to the whims of socio-cultural aesthetic judgment of the prevalent *Zeitgeist*. For example, Levitas illustrates that Bloch often presents operas or oratorios as musical examples of the concretely utopian. These in turn depend on plot and context as much as the music itself. Thus, in Bloch's reference to the panpipe above,⁴⁴⁴ he is invariably talking about music that has strong extra-musical resonances. There is thus the danger that, in spite of his avowed intent, Bloch is treating music as referential, and not as aconceptual or purely emotional. It could be argued that *Vorschein* escapes clear articulation and is thus not correlative with Apollonian communication. That notwithstanding, the problem Bloch falls foul of by employing the notion of *Vorschein* is that he has a pre-determined notion of human flourishing, and telos, in mind. In other words, and against his avowed intent, Bloch shares Lukács' fault of reading politics into art works, rather than allowing art works to guide his political philosophy.⁴⁴⁵

Bloch deems the music that he appreciates, for example Bach's Mass in B minor amongst others, as anticipatory through a lens of *docta spes*. Bach is in turn apparently compatible with a Marxist interpretation of history and concrete utopia. It is problematic how Bloch makes the leap from appreciating certain forms of music, at the expense of others, to then equating them with concrete utopia, whilst others are condemned as pernicious in that

⁴⁴⁴ See p.150.

⁴⁴⁵ See p.142.

they 'soil and empty the brain'.⁴⁴⁶ It is thus apparent that Bloch's argument is circular, and relies on questionable foundations upon which he posits the personal at the level of the universal. Bloch's schema neither possesses firm empirical standing, nor formal discipline in the analysis of art works as found in Adorno, for example. Bloch would retort by arguing that the music that he values is an extension of what is developed, and thus can only be appreciated by those who have cultivated the necessary *docta spes*⁴⁴⁷. This, however, is a contentious standpoint, which does not withstand scrutiny.

Moreover, Bloch's discourse runs the risk of essentializing music, and will only appeal to those who share his preferences. Gary Zabel argues that Bloch 'has nothing to say to people who hear in music merely an embellishment of the status quo, instead of – as in the trumpet blast in Beethoven's *Fidelio* – an invitation to break free from the prison of want and denial'.⁴⁴⁸ Bloch's aesthetic judgement is thus neither more developed than Nietzsche's, nor does it evade the charge of cultural authoritarianism. The problem of cultural authoritarianism in Bloch's aesthetic theory is elucidated through criticism from Hans Jonas, who argues against Bloch's policing of cultural and social affairs: 'Here we begin to feel a chill'.⁴⁴⁹ In seeking to educate desire according to his conception of 'authentic being', contrary to his supposed open system, Bloch has a clear telos of human agency in mind. This clear telos is in contrast to Nietzsche's genuinely open-ended perspectivism.

⁴⁴⁶ Bloch is highly critical of the Jazz music scene in the United States during his time of exile there: 'Nothing coarser, nastier, more stupid has ever been seen than the jazz-dances since 1930. Jitterbug, Boogie-Woogie, this is imbecility gone wild, with a corresponding howling which provides the so to speak musical accompaniment. American movement of this kind is rocking the Western countries, not as dance, but as vomiting. Man is to be soiled and his brain emptied', *The Principle of Hope*, p.394.

⁴⁴⁷ In terms of the argument made in chapter one, this may reproduce the problem of Boretz's 'aesthetically receptive listener' who is always already prepared to respond to a piece in an appropriately utopian manner.

⁴⁴⁸ Zabel, 'The Utopian Dimension in Music', p.84.

⁴⁴⁹ Hans Jonas, *The imperative of responsibility: in search of an ethics for the technological age*, trans. Hans Jonas and David Herr (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p.195. Jonas in turn refers to Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.1083 and p.1086.

Summary

This section has argued that Bloch responds to Nietzsche's music theory, and seeks to ground his predecessor's Dionysian reading with a strictly Apollonian, historical materialist reading. Bloch's teleological concrete utopia was shown to be the outcome of a coalescing of *Vorschein*. The problems concerning Bloch's discourse were made apparent: *Vorschein* is not articulable through formal musical analysis. Rather, it is subject to Bloch's rhapsodic preference. As such, *Vorschein* is rendered a circular notion, and one which fails to substantiate a scientific account of utopia as per Bloch's aim. The section below will develop the theme outlined above, namely, that Bloch's teleological utopia ultimately fails to withstand scrutiny, but is crucial to my discourse insofar as it is a sociological attempt of classic utopia, and a response to Nietzsche's Dionysian individualism and iconoclastic utopia.

3. Unwitting conservatism

Overview

This final subsection will argue that Bloch's concrete utopia is predicated on a problematic direct realization of the future, and that his open system is, in fact, and against his avowed intent, much more closed and limited in its possibilities than he would countenance. Instead, it will be argued that Bloch's reading of cultural material is similar to Lukács, and that Bloch constructs a neo-Marxism that prevents the possibility of a radical opening-up of the future. In his attempt to render utopia a science (similar to Freud's project of establishing Psychoanalysis as a science), Bloch's reading of utopia is seen to be at its richest when it allows abstract fantasy and exploration, but is limited when attempting to filter expression in line with a predetermined telos. Bloch's critical task is thus juxtaposed against Nietzsche's, whereby in the latter, individual sovereignty and creative risk taking is encouraged in the pursuit of something hitherto experienced. For Bloch, creativity is filtered according to, in spite of a laudable social concern, subjective whim, in line with a teleological notion of the future. As such, this section establishes the need for Adorno to enter this discourse, as a combination of rich elements to be found within both Nietzsche and Bloch in an articulation of utopia as akairological rupture.

Epistemological fallacy

Following from the criticisms outlined against Bloch's musical theory above, Darren Webb argues that Bloch's manner of distinguishing between lower (abstract) and higher (concrete) forms of utopia, whereby the cultural products that anticipate concrete utopia are those that articulate 'noch-nicht-become-ness' through a profusion of *Vorschein*, results in a circular line

of argument. Webb argues that Bloch ‘distinguishes between concrete utopia and abstract ideology on the purely subjective basis of his own *a priori* conception of what human authenticity involves’.⁴⁵⁰ This problem is elaborated by Paul Mendes-Flohr, who argues

that[i]f hope qua knowledge of the future is more than optimism – a psychological disposition contingent on personal and social factors – and if it is, as Bloch argues, to have an epistemological basis that is truly more than a rational construct or an empirical judgment and yet not a mere fancy or wishful urging, it must have an ontic quality of a direct realization of the future.⁴⁵¹

In Bloch, contrary to his supposed ‘open system’, there is a tension between subjective whim of the individual (‘optimism’ as described in the extract above), and the collective illusion of a concretely utopian society. According to Boer, Bloch argues for a ‘realized eschatology’;⁴⁵² for a teleological kairos that entails *novum and ultimum*; in effect, the *noch-nicht* experienced *Heimat*. Kairos in Bloch is thus a ‘combination of both possibility and finality’,⁴⁵³ which, combined with *novum* and *ultimum*, is rendered as ‘ontological transcendence’. As a doctrine of the ‘Last Thing’, Bloch’s kairological telos bends in a ‘reactionary direction to become the First Thing’.⁴⁵⁴ Thus, Bloch’s eschatological and filtering approach to reveal that which has a concretely utopian charge in the present is circular. It is based on his own socio-cultural likes and dislikes, in line with an impossible ontological direct realization of the future. Therefore, in juxtaposition with Nietzsche’s open-ended perspectivism, which eschews linear progress, I argue that Bloch offers a – problematic – rhapsodic way of interpreting aesthetic phenomena to correlate cultural material with his notion of concrete utopia.

Jack Zipes helps to justify this judgement on Bloch. He expounds upon the limitations of Bloch’s utopia, specifically the latter’s middle works, by observing that Bloch elaborates

⁴⁵⁰ Darren Webb, ‘Concrete Utopia?’, p.84.

⁴⁵¹ Mendes-Flohr, ‘To Brush History against the Grain’, p.645.

⁴⁵² Boer, ‘Revolution in the Event’, p.121.

⁴⁵³ Boer, ‘Revolution in the Event’, p.121.

⁴⁵⁴ Boer, ‘Revolution in the Event’, p.121.

'his own special brand of utopian Marxism, which appears to [prevent] him from seeing reality. What is important to consider here is that the Russian Revolution [is] a topos in his work equated with concrete utopia'.⁴⁵⁵ Bloch is adamant to align his reading of utopia along with social mediation and betterment of existing material conditions. As a result, he is obliged by the socio-historical context in which he writes to support particular social movements. Through Bloch's staunch advocacy of the concrete over the abstract form of utopia, and, as evidenced in his dogged Marxism, which included support for Stalinism and the Moscow trials, Martin Jay points out that: 'like Heidegger and so many other German intellectuals of this era, he [Bloch] had no real theory of politics per se to temper his judgement about the realization of philosophy in concrete historical terms'.⁴⁵⁶

Bloch's advocacy of concrete utopia as aligned with scientific Marxism functions in a similar way to Freud's aim of qualifying Psychoanalysis as a science. In doing so, both thinkers nullify the dynamism in their work through conservative legitimation and adherence to status quo.⁴⁵⁷ This is substantiated by Adorno's criticism that Bloch's scientific Marxist concrete utopia itself becomes reified, and that his method 'thereby turns back into the very idealism whose confines it was intended to escape'.⁴⁵⁸ Instead, analogous to how Psychoanalysis is most effective when employed as a non-dogmatic discourse of self-disclosure through

⁴⁵⁵ Geoghegan observes that: 'Bloch's son, Jan Robert, highlighted the unpardonable defence that his father offered for the Moscow trials, and his advocacy of Stalinism right throughout the period of his middle works' in Vincent Geoghegan, *Ernst Bloch* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996), p.45. When considering what Stalinism represented in light of Bloch's advocacy of concrete utopia mediated by scientific Marxism, a rather sobering reading presents Bloch's schema in an unfavourable light. Stalinism as a project had to be able to declare itself as final, and to see itself during the 1950's retrospectively as a concretely utopian actualisation; in effect, a point of arrival following a Marxist teleological scientific analysis. This message was propagated through state issued cultural products through 'fanaticism from above', precisely that which Bloch accuses abstract utopia of being guilty of.

⁴⁵⁶ Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality: the adventures of a concept from Lukács to Habermas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp.194-95.

⁴⁵⁷ See Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its discontents*, trans. David McLintock (London: Penguin, 2004) for a depiction of his concurrent radicalism alongside conservatism and essentialism.

⁴⁵⁸ Adorno, 'Ernst Bloch's *Spuren*', p.211.

unencumbered narrative to uncover subconscious patterns of neurosis,⁴⁵⁹ analogously, Bloch's reading of utopia is most fruitful when credence is given to the dynamic, albeit in his interpretation, risky, abstract form, over the safer, but limited, concrete.

Put otherwise, ideally, Bloch's cultural analyses and political practice should be guided by concrete responses to particular cultural artefacts (rather as Freud's analysis of the patient should be unique to that patient). Broad theory is needed to guide the interpretation (as indeed it is in Psychoanalysis), but it should not determine the reading of an artefact in advance. The problem with Bloch is that this is exactly what happens. An inadequate working through of the relationship of the universal (theory) and particular (artefact) leaves the interpretation open to the subjectivity of Bloch's personal, unreflective response.

Elaborating this critique of the limits of Bloch's concrete utopia, Hudson argues that Bloch's account is hampered insofar as he 're-functions the utopianism of the past without radically extending the range of things hoped for, and without providing convincing anticipations of additional developments'. Therefore, 'his utopianism has a conservative character', and moreover, given that he relates his reading of utopia 'almost exclusively to Marxism, his critique is omissive of the universal rehabilitation of utopia which is possible, and which could provide a powerful critique of contemporary philosophy as well as Marxism'.⁴⁶⁰ This omission is demonstrated in Bloch's assertion that '*in Marx a thought is not*

⁴⁵⁹ Habermas elucidates the parallels between Marxism and Psychoanalysis in *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), pp.276-77; namely, that Freud and Marx reach similar conclusions about the function of civilization as the means by which humanity enacts self-preservation in two ways: self-assertion against nature, and the organization of human inter-relations.

⁴⁶⁰ Hudson, *The Marxist Philosophy of Ernst Bloch*, p.214. At a conference held at Central Saint Martins, The University of the Arts, London, 12th December 2013, Peter Thompson remarked that one can remove Marx from Bloch, but not utopia. Through the course of the discussion, it was made apparent by Thompson that Bloch felt compelled to marry his early iconoclastic reading of utopia as found in *The Spirit of Utopia* with dialectical-materialism, so as to not see his ideas be misappropriated by non-Marxists during the interwar years.

true because it is useful, but it is useful because it is true'.⁴⁶¹ A limitation in Bloch is thus his endeavour to correlate concrete utopia with a dogmatic Marxism.

Conservative

Bloch's concrete utopia leads him to an impasse whereby he is obliged to lend ideological weight to movements which seek to reform existing conditions, no matter how crudely. This in turn restricts the utopian reach of his work by imprisoning it within the socio-political context in which he theorizes. In this manner, there is a parallel between Bloch's sober project, and that of Lukács, who, as argued above,⁴⁶² through his neo-Marxist perspective, has an already formulated conception of the good society, and thus uses this as a normative framework against which to judge art and culture. Crucially, Lukács does not allow these forms of expression to inform what the good society could be.⁴⁶³ Whilst an openness to new artistic forms is Bloch's avowed intent,⁴⁶⁴ what occurs is much more Lukácsian, and therefore limited. This problem is corroborated by Bloch's own claim following his early works, in that he and Lukács 'put order above freedom, Marx above Bakunin for the same reason, admire Catholic hierarchy and transfer this to the political sphere'.⁴⁶⁵ Mature Bloch's project includes

⁴⁶¹ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p.277.

⁴⁶² See p.142.

⁴⁶³ The following excerpt by Lukács demonstrates his realism: 'If literature is a particular form by means of which objective reality is reflected, then it becomes of crucial importance for it to grasp that reality as it truly is, and not merely to confine itself to reproducing whatever manifests itself immediately and on the surface. If a writer strives to represent reality as it truly is, i.e. if he is an authentic realist, then the question of totality plays a decisive role' in 'Realism in the Balance', pp.28-60 (p.33) in *Aesthetics and Politics*. This reiterates the critique made by the editors of the text: Livingstone, Anderson and Mulhern, on p.132 above.

⁴⁶⁴ This is evidenced in Bloch's response to Lukács regarding Expressionism in that: 'any art which strives to exploit the *real* ruptures in surface inter-relations and to discover the new in their crevices, appears in his [Lukács] eyes merely as a wilful act of destruction. He thereby equates experiment in demolition with a condition of decadence'. See 'Discussing Expressionism', pp.16-27 (p.22) in *Aesthetics and Politics*.

⁴⁶⁵ Geoghegan, *Ernst Bloch*, pp.12-13, who in turn references an unpublished manuscript of over 600 pages by Emil Lask as cited in Judith Marcus, *Georg Lukács and Thomas Mann: A Study in the Sociology of Literature* (Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1987), p.144.

a conservative hierarchy, which classifies certain socio-cultural products, institutions and movements as genuinely concretely utopian, whilst relegating others as merely abstract.

Unlike Nietzsche's call for self-overcoming in line with perpetual becoming, Bloch, as shown above, hopes that those who are receptive, cultivate *docta spes* to move beyond what he deems immature abstract utopia, onto positively coalescing instantiations of a concrete version. However, as Bill Ashcroft illustrates in Adornian vein, the "'surplus repression" of the regulated commonwealth is precisely the peril of any concrete utopia'.⁴⁶⁶ Bloch's telescopic approach to excavate hidden concretely utopian charges is limited because of its exclusive mediation by the chronological socio-historical conditions that it seeks to usurp. Bloch's positive utopia of *autopoiesis* is thus problematic. Whilst Bloch's emphasis on the importance of *Vorschein* may be correlated with an 'organic' account of utopia, in effect, one conceived through Apollonian, chronological, rational discourse, where 'institutional power inevitably consolidates the function of organic utopianism into the legislated institutional form once utopia is established'.⁴⁶⁷ *Autopoiesis* thus gives a determinate direction of development out of existing, concrete conditions, thus nullifying the complex and nuanced conception of time entailed by non-synchronicity. Time becomes, once more, *chronos*. Therefore, *autopoiesis*, especially if conceived as inevitably moving to communism, will render any moment of Dionysian excess as redundant to the confines of its limited discourse. Consequently, it is imperative to this thesis' reconceptualization of utopia that subjects enact, in Nietzschean

⁴⁶⁶ Bill Ashcroft, 'Critical Utopias', *Textual Practice: an international journal of radical literary studies*, 21:3 (2007), 411-431 (p.412). Ashcroft is here alluding to Freud, most notably *Civilization and its discontents*, as the manner in which a society based upon instrumental rationality hinders alternative approaches, or, only engulfs them to corroborate existing schemas.

⁴⁶⁷ Bill Ashcroft, 'Critical Utopias', p.414. Organic utopia in Ashcroft is commensurate with a process of classic, blueprint utopia.

manner, a mode of perpetual dynamism (abstract utopia) to eschew concrete plans that will regress into bureaucratic barbarism.⁴⁶⁸

Fantasy

Whilst utopia requires action if it is not to dwell at the realm of theory, nonetheless, every genuinely utopian project arguably begins as an abstract idea in relation to normative discourse. Such projects begin as daydreams, and the seeds of concrete utopias are planted when someone's imagination takes flight. In turn, what transmutes them into reality are dreams fuelled by a staunch refusal to believe in society's pessimistic theory of the supposed innate limitation of human agency.⁴⁶⁹ This is corroborated by Nietzsche's Zarathustra, who argues that 'there are a thousand paths which have never been taken, a thousand healths and hidden isles of life. Man and human earth is still un-exhausted and undiscovered'.⁴⁷⁰ In order that one may explore such paths, it is necessary to indulge in flights of fancy, or abstract utopias, which lead the dreamer beyond sober mediation. As evidence of this need to stretch rational discourse to its limits to reveal its inherent contradictions, one need only look at the work of the French *Situationist International* from 1957-72, as well as contemporary insurrectionist-anarchist movements, all of which for Bloch fall into the realm of immature abstract utopia, but which nonetheless carry a more dynamic charge than sober, concrete utopia. On that note, otherwise highly sympathetic to Bloch, Levitas suggests that:

⁴⁶⁸ This 'iron cage' of bureaucracy is forcefully elucidated by Max Weber, *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (London: Routledge, 2001).

⁴⁶⁹ Isabelle, Fremeaux and John Jordan, 'Paths through Utopias', *Soundings: a Journal of Politics and Culture*, 39 (Summer, 2008), 160-172 (p.172).

⁴⁷⁰ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p.102.

If one of the gifts of Situationism to political protest is its ludic quality, its mockery and experimentalism, utopianism can bring a similar playfulness to social thought [...] ideas and practices that express a wish for a world otherwise. It is to endorse the cultural practices that are 'merely' critique. It is to suggest that alongside serious political debate, the role of mockery and satire, not only of the status quo, but of utopian proposals and pretensions, is also critical.⁴⁷¹

It is precisely this mockery of scientific Marxist theory that Bloch's concrete utopia does not allow for. As a gadfly in the mode of Socrates, Nietzsche constantly mocks the status quo, as well as both modern bourgeois and religious plans to supersede it, including his own. In this manner, Nietzsche's playful engagement with socio-cultural material and mores is arguably that of a greater, genuinely dynamic utopian thinker than Bloch.

In juxtaposition against Nietzsche, as an advocate of Freudian Psychoanalysis, Bloch considers that play inevitably leads onto fantasy, and that this activity pertains at the level of childhood and immaturity. Whilst Bloch argues for the value of non-synchronous traces of the past not yet redeemed in the present,⁴⁷² these are in turn correlated with *Vorschein*, and therefore non-linear childhood imaginings are valuable *only* insofar as they complement an improved state of affairs for all, in effect, 'morality with a worldly connection' as stated by Bloch above.⁴⁷³ If such traces do not fulfil this criterion, they are relegated to the sphere of abstract utopia and can therefore, per Bloch's schema, only ever be compensatory. Through his relegation of abstract utopia, Bloch does not give enough credence to the kind of Nietzschean claim that is made by Anthony Storr, namely, that 'phantasy is part of man's biological endowment, and that it is the inevitable discrepancy between this inner world and the outer world that compels men to become inventive and imaginative'.⁴⁷⁴ In other words, abstract utopia is that which sets the parameters for concrete utopia that is to be more than

⁴⁷¹ Ruth Levitas, 'Be Realistic: Demand the Impossible', *New Formations*, 65 (Autumn, 2008), 78 - 93, p.91.

⁴⁷² Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, p.41.

⁴⁷³ See p.135.

⁴⁷⁴ Anthony Storr, *Solitude* (London: Harper Collins, 1997), p.66.

mere reformation of an oppressive state of affairs that subjects enmeshed within the *Lebenswelt* desire to usurp.⁴⁷⁵

Summary

On the one hand, Bloch is concerned with a positive *Vorschein*, or ‘anticipatory illumination’, but on the other hand, also, at least implicitly, engaged with revealing negative symptoms of what is wrong with the present. In spite of his intentions to provide an open system, what occurs is Lukácsian, and demonstrates the unwitting conservatism of his kairological reading of utopia. Despite Bloch’s attempt to sustain a radical reading of utopia via *Vorschein* in a social formation characterized by the non-synchronous, the conception of time that casts a shadow over his reading of utopia is one reduced to progress towards a predetermined utopian telos: *Heimat*. Non-synchronous elements are thereby judged by their future orientation. This tension between ascribing a positive, concrete utopia, whilst revealing what is wrong in the present, along with a social concern, demonstrates Bloch’s role as an important interlocutor between the unforgiving advocacy of individual transvaluation found within Nietzsche, and the determinately negative reading of utopia in Adorno.

Combining the radical perspectival seeing of Nietzsche, along with Bloch’s desire for social emancipation, Adorno builds upon the oeuvres of his predecessors to present a radical, determinately negative and painstaking analysis of what genuine utopia could be constitutive of, post an age of world wars and the disintegration and reformation of nation states. Bloch’s value lies in his absorption of the Nietzschean Dionysian within a teleological account of a historical materialist concrete utopia; he provides a counterpoint of kairological ‘being’ to

⁴⁷⁵ This in turn links to Freud, and the notion of the authority figure of the ‘Ego’ as repressing the ‘Id’ like Dionysus and Kairos, which by extension the ‘Super Ego’ of neoliberal society aims to repress. See Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, ed. James Strachey, trans. Joan Riviere (London: Hogarth Press, 1962).

Nietzsche's perennial akairological 'becoming'. In doing so, Bloch provides a schema to determine what one ought to do, through an education of desire, which – whilst problematic, as argued above – responds to the charge of arbitrary abstraction outlined against Nietzsche. What Adorno does is neither a recourse to the primordial in the manner of Nietzsche, nor articulate a positive, concrete utopia after Bloch. Instead, he provides a combination of both: a neo-Marxist negative dialectic, which implicitly argues for akairological utopia through individual, aesthetic, expression. Adorno develops Bloch's *noch-nicht* into a project of negative dialectics, which radically combines the Dionysian (that which is missing) with Apollonian discipline (immanent critique).

Chapter Three: Adorno

Overview

In comparison to Nietzsche and Bloch, Adorno's oeuvre appears bleak in tone, and it is initially taxing to decipher what he has to proffer in regard to the concept of utopia. That said, what makes Adorno's reading so effective is that he builds upon the works of his predecessors to provide an exacting mode of immanent critique, which sustains the possibility of utopia. Combining elements of both Nietzsche's perspectival seeing, as well as Bloch's attempt to fuse utopia with a Hegelian-Marxism, Adorno renders a highly self-aware critical project. How he does this, and why it is so effective, will be elaborated below. Discussion will focus upon his programme of negative dialectics, before turning to the notions of immanent critique and non-identity thinking. Adorno will be shown to incorporate elements of Nietzsche's Dionysian-Apollonian analysis, as well as Benjamin's idea of interrogating concepts in constellatory fashion, that is, without recourse to a Platonic realm of pure thought. Rather, Adorno's materialist critical task will be shown to interpret concepts as socio-historically mediated, and, crucially, in a manner that supersedes both Nietzsche's recourse to the primordial, as well as Bloch's teleological scientific Marxism. It will be concluded that Adorno's multi-faceted programme renders utopia as a determinate negation of any given socio-political configuration.⁴⁷⁶ In this way, it will be argued that utopia for Adorno resides only within akairological ruptures, rather than through the application of coherent and chronologically plotted out plans for reform. Moreover, it will be argued that Adorno goes

⁴⁷⁶ The 'prismatic' nature of Adorno's thought, whereby he explores not merely multiple perspectives through which to grasp any given object of study, but also offers a number of images, conceptual tools, and metaphors through which to articulate his approaches to the object of study, renders any systematic exposition of his thought problematic. In the below, I will inevitably approach certain ideas and arguments repeatedly, albeit crucially each time from a different perspective and in a different context.

beyond Nietzsche and Bloch insofar as he articulates, through formal musical analysis, how aesthetic expression may engender akairological rupture. Adorno's reading of music will be presented as mimetic, and avoiding the pitfalls of reified thought. Instead, through a formalist approach, it will be argued that Adorno is able to reveal contradictions in music as cultural material, and thereby the totality as false: he is able to engender akairological rupture via the tools of Apollonian, rational, articulation. The final section will respond to criticisms levelled against Adorno's critical task, and argue that his philosophical project is extremely exacting and builds upon the work of his predecessors to withstand scrutiny to be deemed a negative articulation of akairological utopia. It will be argued that for Adorno, class revolution is no longer possible, and that the only possibility that remains is for fortunate individuals to keep critical thought alive in both art and philosophy. The form this thought takes is necessarily akairological: a shudder, not a blueprint of a better world. Akairological ruptures are thus, in terms of capitalist discourse, unusable. It is precisely this negative value that serves a positive purpose in my Adornian-Jamesonian reading of utopia as exercising a critically substantive role. In sum, Adorno is shown to be an akairological thinker of utopia, who evades the charge of abstraction that can be levelled against Nietzsche, as well as the cultural authoritarianism of Bloch. Instead, F. H. Bradley's pithy emblem that 'where everything is bad, it must be good to know the worst',⁴⁷⁷ effectively summarizes Adorno's determinately negative critical task.

⁴⁷⁷ Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, p.83.

1. Determinate negation

Overview

This initial section focusses upon the determinately negative reading of utopia presented by Adorno, whereby the most hopeful outcome in an age of horror is to live 'less wrongly'.⁴⁷⁸ This section begins by outlining Adorno's negative appropriation of Hegel's positive dialectic. It continues by presenting Adorno's notion of immanent critique as an attempt to keep critical thinking alive through a marked self-awareness of social-cultural conditions. Next, Adorno is shown to promulgate non-identity thinking; in effect, a way of reading the relationship between Subject and Object without giving either ontological priority. It is argued that Adorno postulates this mode of conceptual engagement to avoid falling foul to the pitfalls of the logic of positivism. It will be argued that Adorno's critical task is inspired by Nietzsche's incorporation of the Dionysian worldview as a tool to unsettle Apollonian, rational, discourse, and that Nietzsche's aesthetic theory helps Adorno to respond to the analyses of the crises of industrial modernity of his predecessors, including Lukács' notion of reification, as well as Benjamin's idea of interrogating concepts in constellatory, not Hegelian dialectic, fashion. In this manner, it is argued that Adorno's reading of utopia is a determinately negative one, which offers hope through individual critical engagement with concepts in an exacting, but non-instrumental, manner. With no positive outcome to be gleaned from this critical task in terms of rational discourse (after Hegel and Marx), it will be argued that utopia in Adorno is necessarily akairological. This section concludes by arguing that music is a mode of communication, which, as per the articulation of Adorno's critical task so far, may effectively

⁴⁷⁸ Fabian Freyenhagen, 'Moral Philosophy', in *Theodor Adorno: key concepts*, ed. Deborah Cook (London: Routledge, 2014), pp.99-114 (p.109).

express the impossibility of rendering a positive account of utopia as per the definition in the introduction of it as the good place that is no place.

Negative dialectics

Adorno's works embody a spirit of what he coins 'negative dialectics'. Clearly as a simultaneous homage to, and a reworking of, Hegel's 'positive' dialectical method, negative dialectics is a manner of conceptual engagement and argumentation that refuses a redemptive moment of affirmation. Hegel's dialectic seeks to render epistemology a concrete science, whereby opposing sides (thesis and antithesis, to use Fichte's terminology) in regard to a notion are subject to sublation [*Aufhebung*] in order to arise at a synthesis. Crucially, in a development from Platonic dialectics, for Hegel, if the premises of a dialectical argument lead to a contradiction, then the premises are deemed false.⁴⁷⁹ In the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, Hegel posits the doctrine of the 'Idea', that is, 'the subject-object, the unity of notion and objectivity, the absolute truth', and it is towards this Idea or Absolute that the dialectical process moves.⁴⁸⁰ Adorno's negative dialectic is, instead, Hegel's dialectic without its moment of unity, 'of notion and objectivity'. Therefore, notions are left at the level of 'particularity', as opposed to 'individuality'.⁴⁸¹ What results is a fragmentary realm of

⁴⁷⁹ Georg W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p.79.

⁴⁸⁰ Georg W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Logic: Being Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830)*, 3rd ed., trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p.355.

⁴⁸¹ See Hegel, *Hegel's Logic*, p.226: 'The Notion as Notion contains the three following 'moments' or functional parts. (1) The first is Universality – meaning that it is in free equality with itself in its specific character. (2) The second is Particularity – that is, the specific character, in which the universal continues serenely equal to itself. (2) The third is Individuality – meaning the reflection-into-self of the specific characters of universality and particularity; which negative self-unity has complete and original determinateness, without any loss to its self-identity or universality'. Here the basic movement of Hegel's dialectic may be seen to be that from an initial stage of undifferentiated universality, through the sundering of the universal into diverse and contradictory particulars. These particulars come to recognise their place with the whole only at the final stage of individuality. Adorno's negative dialectics rests at the stage of particularity, exploring the fracturing of a false world.

concepts, where multiple and contradictory theses are necessarily entertained as both true and false simultaneously.⁴⁸²

Negative dialectics thus renders any attempt to positively articulate a notion of classic utopia (as the Hegelian Idea) implausible from the outset. In effect, negative dialectics functions in a similar way to a Kantian antinomy;⁴⁸³ Kant exposes contradictions in thought, and Adorno undertakes the same task via 'immanent critique'. In the spirit of negative dialectics, immanent critique is Adorno's reworking of a Kantian antinomy to judge socio-cultural material by its own standards and ideals and confront it with its own consequences. As Gillian Rose argues: 'Marxist sociology is often considered to employ "transcendent" theory, but Adorno seeks to show that materialist and dialectical criticism must be immanent'.⁴⁸⁴ An example of how immanent critique functions is presented in Adorno's 'The Essay as Form': 'The essay remains what it always was, the critical form par excellence; specifically, it constructs the immanent criticism of cultural artefacts, and it confronts that which such artefacts are with their concept; it is the critique of ideology'.⁴⁸⁵ Adorno's critical task, then, does not seek to realize a moment of redemptive truth. Adorno argues that 'it lies in the definition of negative dialectics that it will not come to rest in itself, as if it were total. This is its form of hope'.⁴⁸⁶

For Adorno, philosophy's realization through rational discourse, based on apparently fixed first principles, as well as either Hegelian or Marxist dialectical methods, is no longer

⁴⁸² Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p.144: 'To proceed dialectically means to think in contradictions, for the sake of the contradiction once experienced in the thing, and against that contradiction. A contradiction in reality, it is a contradiction against reality. But such dialectics is no longer reconcilable with Hegel'.

⁴⁸³ That is, a contradiction between two conclusions that both appear to be justified. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp.813-909.

⁴⁸⁴ Gillian Rose, *The Melancholy Science: an introduction to the thought of Theodor W. Adorno* (London: Macmillan, 1978), p.151.

⁴⁸⁵ Theodor W. Adorno, 'The Essay as Form', trans. Bob Hullot-Kentor and Frederic Will, *New German Critique*, 32 (Spring/Summer, 1984), 151-171 (p.166).

⁴⁸⁶ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p.406.

possible. Adorno's justification of negative dialectics lies not in the recognition of any inadequacy of the Hegelian dialectic as such, but, rather, a critical engagement with the appropriateness of Hegelian dialectics for the analysis of contemporary, late capitalist, society. Adorno's justification of negative dialectics is thus a sociological (rather than strictly philosophical) one. In contemporary society, the dialectic tension or contradiction between the forces and relations of production, that Marx identified, has come to a standstill.⁴⁸⁷ This renders the role of a revolutionary class, in the traditional Marxist sense (and thus the proletariat) redundant; all are equally enthral to the late capitalist system. In brief, this is firstly because of the rise of bureaucratic administration (as analysed by Weber), that serves as both a force of production, and yet determines relationships between producers and owners, and determines the functioning of all, be they labourers or managers. Secondly, the development of modern mass media and advertising (the culture industry) allows producers to bring the previously autonomous judgement of the use value of a commodity under their control. The late capitalist system (in contrast to the nineteenth century high capitalism to which Marx responded) is now a closed system, or a 'totally administered society'.⁴⁸⁸ It is a society in which historical time has stopped. It is not, however, a society without material contradiction. Rather, such contradictions (not least the continuing exploitation of labour for surplus value, resultant discrepancies in income and wealth, and continuing global poverty)

⁴⁸⁷ In the introduction, Osborne's arguments as to the philosophical incoherence of the conception of time implicit in historical materialism were rehearsed. In chapter two it was noted that Bloch's conception of the non-synchronous might be developed as a response to that problem – which is to say of the diversity of experience of historical time within a society. Adorno's criticism of Marxist dialectics lie at a different level. His criticism is sociological, rather than philosophical. History has come to a standstill. It might then be suggested that all now experience historical time, unconsciously or otherwise, as a form of stasis.

⁴⁸⁸ Jay, *Marxism and Totality*, pp.264-65: 'Adorno, therefore, seemed to be open to the charge of inconsistency because he combined an increasingly gloomy analysis of the totality on the macrological level with a call for theoretical and artistic resistance to it on the micrological. Either the totality was completely watertight in its reifying power and resistance could only be co-opted, or the totality still contained negations and Adorno's descriptions of its Satanic 'falseness' were exaggerations [...] Clearly Adorno did not accept the former alternative, for in the very art of writing he affirmed the possibility of some escape from co-optation'

are managed, and thus their revolutionary potential is stultified.⁴⁸⁹ Any social dialectic has been brought to a standstill by the administrative system, and thus the material possibility for change has passed. Philosophy is therefore not designed for the now necessarily hopeless task of changing society, but rather, to keep critical thinking alive, and to identify, through immanent critique, the contradictions that remain, in order to understand the true nature of late capitalism.⁴⁹⁰

In relation to this thesis, Adorno's negative dialectic, aligned with immanent critique, is crucial to a reading of utopia that eschews a chronological onto kairological telos. Furthermore, Adorno's philosophical approach is of acute importance in contemporary society, as it demonstrates a marked self-awareness of socio-cultural conditions lacking in Bloch's project, whilst also eschewing the hyperbolic aspects of Nietzsche's critical task. For Adorno, critical action is only possible through active and immanent negation of certain dominant forms of rational discourse. This negation displaces colloquial connotations of progressive action such as direct protest, demonstrations and revolutionary upheavals.⁴⁹¹ Crucially, for Adorno the moment for philosophy to be able to qualify such action has passed, and, in effect, by engaging in such modes of praxis, the individual subject will merely reinforce

⁴⁸⁹ See, for example, Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, p.156.

⁴⁹⁰ See, for example, Theodor W. Adorno, 'Late Capitalism or Industrial Society', trans. Rodney Livingstone, in Rolf Tiedemann (ed.), *Can One Live After Auschwitz? A Philosophical Reader* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003), pp.111-125 (p.114): 'Whoever holds to the insight of the predominance of the system and its structure over particular states of affairs will not, like his opponents, dismiss contradictions out of hand as an error of method or judgment, or seek to eliminate them through an internal reorganization of the system of scientific concepts. Instead he will trace them back to the structure of society as a whole, a structure which has been an antagonistic one ever since society has existed, and which remains so to this day'.

⁴⁹¹ It may be suggested that movements such as Occupy, referred to in the introduction, are ultimately doomed to failure.

the very ideological violence that has created the existing problems they seek to solve.⁴⁹² On

that note, Adorno observes:

We like to present alternatives to choose from, to be marked True or False. The decisions of a bureaucracy are frequently reduced to Yes or No answers to drafts submitted to it; the bureaucratic way of thinking has become the secret model for a thought allegedly still free. But the responsibility of philosophical thought in its essential situations is not to play this game.⁴⁹³

Not playing this 'game' does not render Adorno's negative dialectic politically defunct. Rather, the 'negative', in negative dialectics, stresses that 'negation is criticism of society which is positive (determinate) in that it aims to attain and present knowledge of society insofar as that is possible, but not positive in the sense that it confirms or sanctions [or reproduces] what it criticises'.⁴⁹⁴ In doing so, such a vigilant critique does not advance a notion of what ought to be positively enacted. Philosophy's modest freedom for Adorno is therefore 'nothing but the ability to help its un-freedom to express itself'.⁴⁹⁵

Here, Adorno is in contrast with Bloch, who has been shown above as insufficiently able to critically reflect upon his social conditioning. Akin to the last man presented in Nietzsche,⁴⁹⁶ Bloch's hopeful, albeit reactive, reading of a positive, concrete Hegelian-Marxist utopia renders him entrapped by the contradictions of his existing, unsatisfactory, society (and most emphatically, as noted above, as it is exemplified by Stalin's Soviet Union).⁴⁹⁷ By continuing to assume that historical time is progressive, towards a kairological telos, Bloch cannot recognize the temporal standstill that is central to Adorno's argument. Adorno, in

⁴⁹² Robert W. Witkin, *Adorno on Music* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998), p.61: 'In the "heroic" phase of an entrepreneurial capitalism, the possibility of a liberation from tradition and a reconciliation of individual and society must have appeared real. To that extent, ideology and social formation converged'.

⁴⁹³ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p.32.

⁴⁹⁴ Rose, *The Melancholy Science*, p.150.

⁴⁹⁵ Theodor W. Adorno, *Lectures on Negative Dialectics: Fragments on a lecture course 1965/1966*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), p.110.

⁴⁹⁶ See pp.62-65.

⁴⁹⁷ See p.157, fn.455.

contrast, by relinquishing redemption and ultimate truth or telos, registers and highlights entrapment in his contemporary culture. It is this determinate negation that marks Adorno's approach as both steadfast and necessary in the contemporary age of neoliberalism, which, as outlined in the introduction, all too easily commodifies concepts, even apparently socially emancipatory ones like 'utopia'.

Philosophically, Adorno's critical project is thus clearly a determinately negative one, which, as he is quoted as saying above, has hope only insofar as it will not come to rest in itself. Adorno elaborates upon this hope in a lecture on negative dialectics:

[...] by virtue of its own methodology philosophy bars its own way to what it wishes to achieve, namely, to be in a position to judge matters that are not itself, that are not concepts. And I would like to suggest quite simply as a programme [...] that philosophy should reflect conceptually on this process in which it deals only with concepts and, by raising it to the level of the concept, should revise it and reverse it again, in so far as this can be achieved with conceptual methods. Whereas Freud remarks [...] that psychoanalysis is concerned with 'the dregs of the phenomenal world', we might say that in its own approach philosophy generally finds its object precisely in what it denies itself: the dregs of the concept, in other words, in what is not itself concept.⁴⁹⁸

This lucid passage helps to clarify why Adorno promotes a negative dialectic: it is the least self-conceited programme that remains, given that philosophy has repeatedly shown that it cannot encapsulate the conceptual system as a whole. Building upon his relation to Freud, alluding to the above discussion of Bloch as falling foul of a scientific Marxism as a necessary condition for utopian thinking, much as Freud limited the criticality of his project through his insistence that Psychoanalysis be considered an empirically verifiable science, Adorno insists that philosophy, when seduced by the security of positivism, not only limits its criticality, but is actually disingenuous in its truth claims. Rather, it is only through a much more modest, but nonetheless exacting, programme that attempts to reveal hidden 'dregs of the concept' may

⁴⁹⁸ Adorno, *Lectures on Negative Dialectics*, pp.62-63.

ensure that philosophy can retain some emancipatory zeal.⁴⁹⁹ Aligned with negative dialectics and immanent critique, to ensure the possibility of philosophy, is Adorno's notion of non-identity thinking.

Non-identity thinking

Negative dialectics attempts to enact a mode of non-identity thinking; that is, a way of reading the relationship between Subject and Object such that the latter does not identify the former in a manner that subsumes it within itself, nor does the former subsume itself within the latter. Moreover, the concept always contains more than is realized in its object, whilst the object is always more than can be grasped by the concept. Non-identity thinking may be interpreted as Adorno's response to Logical Positivism, and, in particular, its notion of protocol statements,⁵⁰⁰ which attempt to exactly map onto an apparently fixed idea of reality. For Adorno, positivism is a manner of identity thinking, which attempts to legitimate philosophy along the lines of a formalistically conceived model of scientific method. As argued in the introduction, positivism represents instrumental identity thinking, which, in disingenuous manner, attempts to reduce the social *Lebenswelt* to a series of 'yes or no' answers.⁵⁰¹ In other words, positivism is a reductionist model that does not account for the complexity of human experience. In effect, positivism is rooted in a manner of conceptual argument that is indicative of identity thinking. An example of typical identity thinking is exemplified in a case whereby an individual (Subject) claims her or himself to be 'free'

⁴⁹⁹ Adorno juxtaposes 'truth' in Philosophy as actually the remainder, or the 'dregs' to the hitherto sacrosanct Platonic ideal. See Theodor W. Adorno, *Against Epistemology: A Metacritique*, trans. Willis Domingo (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), p.15.

⁵⁰⁰ 'Protocol statements' are those which describe immediate experience, and are used to form an apparently irrefutable ground for knowledge. See Rudolf Carnap, 'On Protocol Sentences', *Nous*, 21 (1987) 457-470.

⁵⁰¹ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p.32.

(concept onto Object), thus subsuming an element of the latter into the former. For Adorno, this represents an act of regressive, and even violent, thinking, whereby the 'subject identifies a particular concept with the conceptual system as a whole'.⁵⁰² As Yvonne Sherratt puts it: 'the claim to comprehensiveness which the system makes is believed, so that the Subject no longer relates to the Object itself, but instead solely to the system, which then becomes the source of "authority" about the Object. The system thereby comes to dominate the Object, claiming to have "grasped it"'.⁵⁰³

Dionysian – Apollonian

Adorno is, like Nietzsche, concerned with revealing disingenuous truth claims made in a culture rife with positivism.⁵⁰⁴ What Adorno contributes to this thesis over his predecessor is a determinate negation, which refuses conceptions of hyperbolic utopia; for example, the possibility of higher, child-like, types. Instead, Adorno argues that one must 'ask *what* has to be or had not to be affirmed, instead of elevating the word "Yes" to a value in itself, as was unfortunately done by Nietzsche with the entire pathos of saying yes to life'.⁵⁰⁵ Whilst not conceding any artistic licence to Nietzsche's manner of exaggeration, Adorno's oeuvre is a much more nuanced and painstaking analysis of the problems of his present than his predecessor's. Adorno will not allow for recourse to primordial Dionysian forces in the manner of Nietzsche, but, instead, seeks to reconfigure what Nietzsche would deem

⁵⁰² Rose, *The Melancholy Science*, p.131.

⁵⁰³ Yvonne Sherratt, *Adorno's Positive Dialectic* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.139.

⁵⁰⁴ See, for example, Friedrich W. Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.73: 'The habits of our senses have woven us into lies and deception of sensation: these again are the basis of all our judgments and 'knowledge' - there is absolutely no escape, no backway or bypath into the *real world!* We sit within our net, we spiders, and whatever we may catch in it, we can catch nothing at all except that which allows itself to be caught in precisely *our net*'.

⁵⁰⁵ Adorno, *Lectures on Negative Dialectics*, p.18.

Apollonian concepts embedded within rational discourse, or said otherwise, play a different game with them than has hitherto been undertaken.⁵⁰⁶

Rose observes that both Adorno and Nietzsche use indirect methods to express their criticism 'to avoid grounding their philosophy in the ways which they deem undesirable'.⁵⁰⁷ This 'undesirable way' would be represented through a positivist analysis, which would explicitly map onto the given state of affairs. It may be suggested that Nietzsche's Apollonian reason finds its parallel for Adorno in positivist science. Positivism strives after a logically coherent and rational account of the world (be it the social or the natural world) as it is. Contradictions are assumed to be indicative of the failings of the inquirer, not the object of inquiry. Yet positivist discourse is not, as it would claim, a neutral tool of inquiry, but rather itself a product of capitalist society.⁵⁰⁸ Positivist discourse thus serves to reproduce and legitimate capitalism (and thus to sustain its historical standstill). The issue here is then that a mere description of late capitalism in the language and conceptual structures that the positivist culture of late capitalist scientific inquiry makes possible would fail to capture the contradictory depth of that social reality (just as Socratic Apollonian reason fails, for Nietzsche, to grasp the Dionysian). The conceptual structures and ways of thinking available to the positivist sociologist reproduce only the surface of society, and not the contradictions that at once convict the society of its falsehood, and that can only be expressed allusively, through the surpluses that are registered by non-identity thinking.

⁵⁰⁶ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p.20: 'According to Nietzsche's critique, systems no longer documented anything but the finickiness of scholars compensating themselves for political impotence by conceptually construing their, so to speak, administrative authority over things in being'.

⁵⁰⁷ Rose, *The Melancholy Science*, p.18.

⁵⁰⁸ See Max Horkheimer 'Traditional and Critical Theory', in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell and others (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), pp.188-243.

In contrast to the identity thinking of positivism, Nietzsche and Adorno therefore strive to bring the prevalent discourse into contradiction through immanent critique. This is why both thinkers dramatize ideas, 'presenting them *as if* they were absolutely and literally true, to undermine them more effectively'.⁵⁰⁹ Through negative dialectics and immanent critique, Adorno, like Nietzsche, champions ruptures that unsettle the status quo.⁵¹⁰ This implicit Dionysian strand in Adorno echoes Nietzsche's calls for perpetual self-overcoming to spur those strong enough to unshackle themselves from a false belief in the inherent legitimacy of rational discourse, as opposed to seeking to master it merely in order to linger there in the manner of Nietzsche's last man.

Whilst at first hand, the distinction between the Apollonian/Dionysian in Adorno appears rudimentary, once read through Nietzsche's analysis, which deems that the two entities do not work in a dialectical relationship, but, rather, that the latter presupposes the former, this reading can be transmuted onto Adorno's work, whereby the determinately negative dialectic is a mode of conceptual engagement that is an embodiment of the Apollonian pushed to its limits to reveal the Dionysian. Adorno responds to the instrumental use of reason through employing it in a determinately negative and playful way, to necessarily uncover the limits and inherent contradictions of reasonable Apollonian discourse.⁵¹¹ Non-identity thinking highlights the importance of active and immanent resistance to the

⁵⁰⁹ Rose, *The Melancholy Science*, p.26.

⁵¹⁰ Adorno qualifies such disruption in his reading of three principal themes of Freudian Psychoanalysis: 'involuntary actions or slips, dreams and the neuroses', as combining an element of the 'non-conceptual', or in other words 'the absurd, the irrational', see *Lectures on Negative Dialectics*, p.69. Therefore, the Adornian philosophical programme demonstrates its negatively utopian drive in the sense that the thinker is interested in creatively destroying the stasis to be gained by way of mastering rational discourse. For Adorno, the latter equates to a tautology and 'a regressive form of consciousness'. See *Negative Dialectics*, p.128.

⁵¹¹ See, for example, Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p.160: 'What is negated is negative until it has passed. This is the decisive break with Hegel. To use identity as a palliative for dialectical contradiction, for the expression of the insolubly nonidentical, is to ignore what the contradiction means. It is a return to purely consequential thinking'.

repressive identity variant, by the individual using Apollonian tools at hand, in effect, concepts, but in a manner to reveal how they fail to fully encapsulate the conceptual system as a whole (Object).

Building upon the provocative rhapsodic element in Nietzsche's critical project,⁵¹² Adorno grounds his predecessor's style through sober engagement. Whilst Nietzsche is a diagnostician, his successor is a surgeon, not one who seeks to heal, but rather to cut and slice to reveal the inner workings of the totality, and the contingency of its constituent parts, as opposed to the ontological priority of any given particular. This programme does not fall prey to the charge of undue fantastical myth as can be levelled against Nietzsche, nor the speculative hope and political misjudgement found in Bloch, but, is instead, a concrete, socially engaged critical project, which hyper-vigilantly plays with concepts to reveal their contingency and contradictions. A key element of Adorno's conceptual engagement is his appropriation of Lukács's development of Marx's notion of *Warenfetischismus*, or 'commodity fetishism,' into *Verdinglichung*, or 'reification'.

Reification

Adorno builds upon Lukács's concept of 'reification', or, in other words, the false necessitation of particular contingent social factors, to reveal how this is inextricably tied to instrumental identity thinking, that seeks to make unlike things alike.⁵¹³ Identity thinking is necessarily

⁵¹² Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, eds. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, ed. and trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: Continuum, 1997), p.204: '[H]e [Nietzsche] misinterpreted conventions literally, as agreements arbitrarily established and existing at the mercy of volition. Because he overlooked the sedimented social compulsion in conventions and attributed them to pure play, he was equally able to trivialize or defend them with the gesture of "Precisely!"'

⁵¹³ 'Reification' may be understood as developing Adorno's early concern with 'natural history' and 'second nature', such that social phenomena come to appear as natural (and thus unchangeable). See Theodor W. Adorno, 'The Idea of Natural History', trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor, *Telos*, 60 (1984), 111-124. Adorno thus reads 'reification' after Lukács's development of Marx's theory of commodity fetishism. Marx sees commodity exchange take on a life of its own, such that an exchange between human beings appears as social interaction

instrumental because it involves the teleological use of concepts to achieve ends through rational discourse. In response to this, through his negatively dialectical non-identity thesis, Adorno reworks the Lukácsian reading of ideology into a theory of how material and economic structures are related to the way in which a socially embodied subject actually thinks. Adorno's critical lens is therefore a much more nuanced one than that of instrumental identity thinking. Adorno argues for the necessity of exposing the 'liberal fiction of the universal communicability of each and every thought'.⁵¹⁴ Instead, Adorno emphasizes the transient and contingent nature of any given socio-political configuration. He argues that as soon as reason 'wants more than simply the administrative repetition and manipulated presentation of what already exists, it is somehow exposed; truth abandoned by play would be nothing more than tautology'.⁵¹⁵ It is thus apparent why Adorno enacts a negative dialectic, accompanied as it is with an advocacy of non-identity thinking: it is to avoid repeating, and thereby strengthening, the stranglehold of the existent regressive mode of instrumental identity

between the commodities themselves (See 'The Fetishism of the Commodity and Its Secret', in Karl Marx, *Capital: a critique of political economy, Volume One*, trans. Ben Fowkes (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), pp.163-177). Lukács generalizes Marx's reading of the commodity to embrace all social interaction: 'Reification is, then, the necessary, immediate reality of every person living in capitalist society. It can be overcome only by constant and constantly renewed efforts to disrupt the reified structure of existence by concretely relating to the concretely manifested contradictions of the total development, by becoming conscious of the immanent meanings of these contradictions for the total development. But it must be emphasized that the structure can be disrupted only if the immanent contradictions of the process are made conscious', Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, p.197. For Adorno, reification, even more radically, structures thought itself, and as such underpins identity thinking, whereby a human artefact (a concept), is assumed to grasp and thus be identical to, the non-human thing to which it refers.

⁵¹⁴ Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, p.80.

⁵¹⁵ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.197. To introduce contingency into a static discourse, Nietzsche turned to Ancient Greece to resuscitate and rework a Dionysian ontology. This was itself preceded by Schiller's promotion of the Ancient Greek (over the Ancient Roman) worldview for its comparatively playful aesthetic attitude towards life. Adorno is influenced by both Nietzsche and Schiller's notion that reason is inherently limited, and that neither it, nor for that matter experience, can ever fully grasp what it is to be human. For Schiller, (wo)man is neither 'exclusively matter nor exclusively mind', and thus humanity is neither fully accounted for by experience, nor based upon reason, so that the best one can do is to embody a playful instinct, which does not seek to impose necessity either externally or internally, but rather keeps in motion a perpetual awareness of contingency. This is corroborated by Adorno's nod to Schiller in that 'the human being is only fully human when at play'. See letter XV in Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of man in a series of letters*, pp.101-109 (p.103) and Adorno, 'The Essay as Form', p.168.

thinking, which can only ever reify concepts examined through it. In other words, identity thinking is reified thought. Adorno is able to confront the problem of reification by throwing into relief the historical and social processes coagulated within cultural material. A manner of undertaking this analysis is to interrogate concepts in a constellatory fashion.

Constellation

Through the disenchantment of the concept, Adorno advocates a programme 'with a different logical structure' from rational thought. This is presented through the constellation,⁵¹⁶ where, 'instead of explaining concepts from each other, the focus is on a constellation of ideas [...] These are not treated as "constants"; the intention is not to refer back to them, but instead they congregate around the concrete historical factuality which opens up in all its uniqueness in the interplay with those moments'.⁵¹⁷ For Adorno, concepts, and language in general, are concrete, socially embedded cultural material. Edgar observes that Adorno seeks to use concepts 'emphatically'.⁵¹⁸ That is, recognizing that concepts are 'moments of the reality that requires their formation, primarily for the control of nature'.⁵¹⁹ Edgar continues, suggesting that Adorno's reading of concepts deems language as not 'an inadequate substitute for reality, for language participates in reality'.⁵²⁰ In this way, concepts

⁵¹⁶ 'It is not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, an image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words: image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is a purely temporal, continuous one, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent. Only dialectical images are genuine images (that is, not archaic)': Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1999), p.463.

⁵¹⁷ Rolf Tiedemann, 'Editor's Forward' in Adorno, *Lectures on Negative Dialectics*, pp.xi-xix (p.xvii).

⁵¹⁸ Andrew Edgar, 'Culture and Criticism: Adorno' in Simon Glendinning (ed.), *The Edinburgh Encyclopedia of Continental Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp.448-460 (p.457).

⁵¹⁹ Adorno *Negative Dialectics*, p.11.

⁵²⁰ Edgar, 'Culture and Criticism: Adorno', p.457.

(and language) carry within them traces of socio-political conflicts and contradictions.⁵²¹ The notion of the constellation is therefore a way to attempt to reveal the social *history* of the concepts under observation as material. As Edgar illustrates:

A stellar constellation is a two-dimensional image of a four-dimensional object. The fourth dimension, time, may be included because of the time that the light from stars has taken to reach the Earth-bound observer. Rigel is not merely further away from Earth than Betelgeuse, it is also seen as it was at an earlier point in time. Constellations are, in consequence, about history. If the constellation collapses four dimensions down to two, then it is an illusion. If, in Adorno's metaphor, the real stars, separated in time and space, represent the immediate object, then the constellation is the observer's mediated grasp of that object [...] The movement between concepts in a constellation entails throwing the whole constellation into a new perspective.⁵²²

It follows from Edgar's analysis that concepts are never fixed, and therefore to cognize is to be embroiled in a mode of contingent identity thinking. Adorno is thus criticizing orthodox historical materialism as, like Marramao after him,⁵²³ presupposing a single arrow of linear time; in effect, a supposed inevitable unfolding of the material dialectic of forces and relations of production.⁵²⁴

Adorno does not explicitly use the term 'kairos' in his oeuvre, and it would be improper for him to attempt to qualify the limits of chronological, Apollonian discourse in positive terms. Late capitalism and neoliberalism have brought history to a standstill, so their conception of a telos is in fact as repetition of that which is ever the same. Yet, in order to

⁵²¹ See Rose, *The Melancholy Science*, p.45: 'Adorno claims that the possibility of thinking differently from our paradigmatic mode of thinking is inherent in that very mode of thinking: "cognition of non-identity lies exactly in that is also identifies, but to a greater extent and in a different way from identity thinking. This cognition seeks to say what something is, while identity thinking says under what something falls, of what it is a specimen or representative, what it thus is not itself" [...] For example, "the judgement that someone is a free man refers to the concept of freedom". This is rational identity, the utopian moment, the condition when the "free man" would really have the property of being free, when the concept would be identical with its object. "The concept does not only say that it can be applied to all men defined as free"' (Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p.150).

⁵²² Edgar, 'Culture and Criticism: Adorno', p.458.

⁵²³ See p.25.

⁵²⁴ Adorno here may be seen to be developing a conception of a complex, multi-temporality that echoes Bloch's conception of the non-synchronous.

avoid the pitfalls of Lukács's telological (and ultimately totalitarian) Marxism, no transcendent telos can be posited that might be hoped to blow apart the positivist illusion. Thus, ostensibly, Adorno's critical task does not permit him to explicitly deem any concept (including, 'utopia') as akairological, or Dionysian. However, from an analysis of the explicit and implicit critique Adorno makes of chronology, positive kairology and Apollonian ratiocination, as in Nietzsche above, it is necessary to articulate akairological utopia through what it is not.

Moving beyond Nietzsche's diagnosis of the problem of apparently positive knowledge acquisition and a positivist exercise of mapping this onto existence, Adorno's exacting negative dialectics is a critical programme that may render akairological ruptures from within the prevalent, chronological, and Apollonian discourse. This is because such untimely ruptures are the outcome of a discourse that culminates in contradiction. The value of Adorno's self-reflexive critical task lies in exposing contradictions in social material by interrogating concepts through a constellatory approach, and encouraging self-reflection. Concepts, precisely as sedimented social history, carry unfulfilled temporal potential (akin to Bloch's non-synchronicity) within them. The constellation thereby rails against the historical stasis of the present, but by disrupting any sense of chronos, rather than simply reverting to it. In thinking through constellations, Adorno is able to render akairological ruptures, which positivism, in its attempt to wholly codify being, aims to render unpalatable.

It is only by bringing this problem of rational cognition as reified thought to conscious awareness (drawing upon the psychoanalytic model once more) that the 'dregs of the concept' can come to light. Thus, contrary to how in traditional 'first' philosophy (and a positive dialectic), the elevation to a concept is an 'implicit ideal', with materials 'selected and pre-formed in accordance with that ideal', through Adorno's immanent critique in the spirit of negative dialectics, and thinking through a constellatory model, the thinker is potentially

able to 'assemble concepts in such a way that their constellation might shed light on the non-conceptual'.⁵²⁵ In doing so, and returning to his criticisms of positive Hegelian dialectics outlined above, akin to Nietzsche, Adorno also does away with any notion of the Absolute, but also with any foundation to philosophy, and instead argues that, contrary to Rationalists such as Descartes and Spinoza, there is:

[...] no philosophical first principle, it now also results that one cannot build an argumentative structure that follows the usual progressive succession of steps, but rather that one must assemble the whole out of a series of partial complexes that are, so to speak, of equal weight and concentrically arranged all on the same level; their constellation, not their succession, must yield the idea.⁵²⁶

This is because 'greater success is achieved [...] by the constellation of concepts which the constructive mind brings to bear, much as the locksmith opens a safe not with a single key or a single numeral, but with a combination of numbers'.⁵²⁷ In doing so, Adorno's critical task acts in a manner analogous to Nietzsche's perspectival seeing, to reveal the historical and cultural contingency of any given state of affairs, in a process of continuing self-reflection on the part of the inquirer (contra the self-understanding of positivism).⁵²⁸

Just as there is no foundation to philosophical method, so too there is no moment of transcendence, reconciliation, or, final resting point. Instead, the only hope left in any given present appears in 'fragmented form', whereby the chasm separating reconciliation, with the

⁵²⁵ Adorno, *Lectures on Negative Dialectics*, p.111.

⁵²⁶ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.364.

⁵²⁷ Adorno, *Lectures on Negative Dialectics*, p.138.

⁵²⁸ See, again, Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory'. Adorno's argument is coherent with Horkheimer's, in that Horkheimer distinguishes between critical and (positivistic) traditional theory, in part, in that the latter presupposes a universal methodology. As such, traditional theory sees no need to reflect upon the social situation of the inquirer. In contrast, critical theory recognises that the inquiring subject is necessarily mediated by the (social) object, and as such must reflect upon its constitution as an inquirer, in an attempt to forestall its entrapment in the reproduction of a false society.

reality of reification and instrumental reason, is brought to light.⁵²⁹ Differentiating Adorno's project from those of his predecessors, Tom Houseman observes:

Rather than affirming the truth of eschatology (as do Marx and Benjamin, and countless more in the critical tradition), or merely denying it (as in positivism and historicism), Adorno negatively appropriates it. He recognizes eschatology as a conceptual system, and seeks to *amplify* rather than resolve its contradictions.⁵³⁰

The dynamic of the Hegelian dialectic of the Idea, the materialist dialectic of Marx, as well as the Hegelian-Marxist dialectic that informs a notion of non-synchronicity in Bloch, must all be rejected, hence the need for negative dialectics. What results, then, is not a positive utopia of stasis, of being and *Heimat*, but instead a creative and critical dynamic of the constellation.

Utopia

Adorno is concerned with revealing what it is in the present that prevents the possibility of a 'good' positivity, in effect, utopia, from being realized. He argues that the blueprint utopians such as More, Owen, Fourier et al. 'were actually not very utopian at all. But we must not provide a picture of a positive utopia'.⁵³¹ Adorno deems these earlier blueprint utopias as 'not very utopian' because they involved a reformation of the socio-cultural norms of their time, aligned with a linear notion of progress. Doing so, in Adorno's critical task, has been shown to fall foul of the tendency for concepts to be used in an instrumental manner. Adorno, instead, negatively argues that 'the ray of light that reveals the whole to be untrue in all its moments is none other than utopia, the utopia of the whole truth which is still to be realized'.⁵³²

⁵²⁹ Theodor W. Adorno, 'A Portrait of Walter Benjamin', in *Prisms*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), pp.227-242 (pp.239-240).

⁵³⁰ Tom Houseman, 'Auschwitz as Eschaton: Adorno's Negative Rewriting of the Messianic in Critical Theory', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 42:1 (2013), 155-176 (p.170).

⁵³¹ Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Towards a New Manifesto*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 2011), p.47.

⁵³² Theodor W. Adorno, *Hegel: Three Studies*, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), p.88.

Adorno thus considers it facetious to posit notions of the best set of affairs in which to live. Rather, his determinately negative reading requires the conditioned social subject to engage in a Nietzschean project of understanding the genealogical origins of their cultural bondage, but to go even further than the gadfly and actualize the potential of a genealogical approach that Nietzsche and Bloch, as has been shown above, fail to apply to their rhapsodic aesthetic theories. By undertaking a rigorous genealogical analysis of their socio-cultural situation, the individual may come upon a realization that they are in fact wed to a set of contingent criteria that they have been accepting as sacrosanct; in effect, second nature.⁵³³ For Adorno, such sociological analysis is a painstaking and humble endeavour, which is in sharp contrast to the (as he sees it) unwarranted self-assuredness of his cultural peers. On that account, continuing his critique of identity thinking enmeshed within a culture of positivism, he criticizes Aldous Huxley's 1931 dystopian novel, *Brave New World*, in that it:

[...] shares with all fully worked-out utopias the character of vanity. Things have developed differently and will continue to do so. It is not the accuracy of imagination which fails. Rather the very attempt to see into the distant future to puzzle out the concrete form of the non-existent is beset with the impotence of presumption'.⁵³⁴

In response to the problem of 'vanity', Adorno deems it necessary to immanently critique rational discourse, to reveal its illegitimate claims to express freedom – in effect, to question

⁵³³ Adorno argued, in a lecture delivered in 1932, that 'as is evident with Heidegger in particular, the course of this history is, altogether, one in which the *ratio* consumes its relation to its object. However, the *ratio* produces a second nature, ultimately the mythical, invariable existentials of neo-ontology. These absolutes are meanings inserted into reality. They are allegorical, to be conceived as part of the "original-history of signification" [...] This second nature is unable to interpret itself as what it is because its starting point is the *ratio*': Robert Hullot-Kentor, 'Adorno's Idea of Natural History', *Telos*, 60 (1984), 97-124 (p.105). See also Adorno's extended critique of existentialism: Theodor W. Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, trans. Knut Tarnowski and Frederic Will (London: Routledge, 2002), in which he asserts contra Heidegger that 'no elevation of the concept of Man has any power in the face of his actual degradation into a bundle of functions. The only help lies in changing the conditions which brought the state of affairs to this point - conditions which uninterruptedly reproduce themselves on a larger scale. By means of the magic formula of existence, one disregards society, and the psychology of real individuals which is dependent on that society', pp.68-69. Moreover, Adorno argues in the same text: 'Whatever wants to remain absolutely pure from the blemish of reification is pasted onto the subject as a firm attribute. Thus the subject becomes an object in the second degree, and finally the mass product of consolidation', p.73.

⁵³⁴ Adorno, 'Aldous Huxley and Utopia', in *Prisms*, pp.95-118 (pp.115-16).

its contention – that the subject can fully encapsulate the object.⁵³⁵ As Jameson observes, Adorno's programme does not involve 'the destruction of older, sometimes even false categories (and the projection of some new hitherto non-existent utopian philosophical terminology or language), but rather a playing through them which mobilizes even their untruth to project its opposite'.⁵³⁶ This situates Adorno as a sober negative dialectician, who does not adopt Nietzsche's rhapsodic elements, nor Bloch's positive, concrete utopia.

Adorno argues that: 'in a world of brutal and oppressed life [...] What can oppose the decline of the west is not a resurrected culture but the utopia that is silently contained in the image of its decline'.⁵³⁷ The 'silence' here is crucial, as it situates Adorno's utopia as abstract, as opposed to concrete in the Blochian reading, insofar as it is not articulable. This corroborates Jameson's observation that Adorno's game does not involve presenting a 'hitherto non-existent' utopia – nor a decoding of the yearning after the 'something missing' found in Bloch. Instead, Adorno seeks to reveal what utopia could be through engendering ruptures by interrogating concepts at hand in a constellatory manner. Elucidating Adorno's social concern, as well as his determinately negative approach to the totality, S. D. Chorostowska argues in a paper aptly entitled 'Adorno's Circuitous Path to Utopia' that:

The false dialectically determines the true, by pointing to an 'otherwise', to the possibility of the world as different. Adorno's point, then, is that utopia should neither anticipate nor wishfully dream up the future, nor provide a *Leitbild* (model) for freedom-oriented political praxis, but inspire it.⁵³⁸

Adorno's utopia is not a blueprint one in classic vein: there is no model. Nor is Adorno's utopia a version of positive Hegelian-Bloch *Schein*: it does not anticipate the future. Instead,

⁵³⁵ See p.178.

⁵³⁶ Jameson, *Late Marxism* p.203. This criticism of a projection of hitherto non-existent philosophy applies to Nietzsche's conception of higher types. See pp.66-69.

⁵³⁷ Adorno, 'Spengler after the Decline', in *Prisms*, pp.51-72 (p.72).

⁵³⁸ S. D. Chorostowska, 'Thought Woken by Memory: Adorno's Circuitous Path to Utopia', *New German Critique*, 40:1 (Winter, 2013), 93-117 (p.101).

akairological utopia as ascribed to Adorno is determinately negative. In discussion with Bloch in 1964, Adorno argues that utopia as an ethical ascription 'is essentially in the determined negation [...] of that which merely is, and by concretizing itself as something false, it always points at the same time to what should be'.⁵³⁹ Contrary to the classic reading of utopia as the ideal commonwealth in which inhabitants live harmoniously, for Adorno, utopia is that which is the good time and place, which is nowhere here, thus maintaining an etymologically sound reading of the concept as articulated in the introduction.⁵⁴⁰

What remains is only a distorted glimpse (*Schein*) of the utopian. In contrast to Bloch's positive reworking of Hegelian *Schein* to *Vorschein*, in Adorno, there is no realization of *Heimat*, nor a classically utopian resolution to all social ills. Elaborating upon the notion that there is no final resolution to be had, Adorno muses that:

Bloch's favourite metaphor for the mystical self is the house in which one would be at home, from which all alienation would be banished. But security is not to be had, there is no ontologically embellished condition in which life might be livable; all we have is a reminder of the way things should be but aren't.⁵⁴¹

Adorno's project of negative dialectics seeks to sustain this 'reminder' and disbar any compensatory utopia of *Heimat* from being realized in accordance with existing, or, a reconfiguration of, social conditions. The latter would be 'hard' utopia, insofar as it is, marked by reconciliation between subject and object. This reconciliation is possible in cognition, but not in actuality.⁵⁴²

Instead, Adorno argues that utopia (in a 'soft' reading) can only ever be a 'moment: it is entwined, not to be isolated; and for the time being it is never more than a historical node,

⁵³⁹ Bloch and Adorno, 'Something's Missing', p.12.

⁵⁴⁰ See p.14.

⁵⁴¹ Adorno, 'Bloch's "Traces"', p.54.

⁵⁴² This results in a release of the non-identical, or, in other words 'the un-functional self-belief of things', and 'their freedom from the compulsion of identity': Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, p.108.

the road to which is blocked under present conditions'.⁵⁴³ 'For the time being' suggests that this reading of utopia may be, not dissimilar to Bloch's, kairological in a future time. Nonetheless, to posit a telos akin to *Heimat* as a materially realizable state of affairs that could be bureaucratically plotted out in advance as per the classic reading of utopia would run against the grain of Adorno's negative critical task.

What remains, then, is 'soft' utopia, whereby an individual subject recognizes the problem of identity thinking and positive dialectics, and therefore ensures that they push rational, Apollonian, discourse to its limits to render contradictions. In this manner, the notion of eschatological chronological progress found within the Blochian-Hegelian positive dialectic is eschewed in favour of an indirect promulgation of soft utopia, namely, interrogating concepts in constellatory form to render contradictions in rational discourse. Constellatory interrogation of concepts is to be undertaken by an individual, as per Nietzsche's critical task, as opposed to a collective, as per Bloch's Hegelian-Marxist reading of utopia, since for Adorno, 'without consciousness transcending the immanence of culture, immanent criticism itself would be inconceivable: the spontaneous movement of the object can be followed only by someone who is not entirely engulfed by it'.⁵⁴⁴

Individual

Adorno's negative dialectics, as a strategy to resist reification and identity thinking, may be seen a development of Nietzsche's advocacy of perpetual self-overcoming to prevent an individual subject from endorsing, however unintentionally, an existing state of affairs. Adorno's approach is disciplined by a greater degree of self-reflection, by integrating

⁵⁴³ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p.219.

⁵⁴⁴ Adorno, 'Cultural Criticism and Society' in *Prisms*, pp.17-34 (p.28).

something akin to Nietzschean genealogy into the subject's self-understanding of itself as constituted by the object. Thus, rather than coming to a place of reconciliation, as Bloch's *Heimat* is, or even Nietzsche's fleeting apex of the child spirit of the metamorphoses, in Adorno, the determinately negative subject – a subject aware of its own falsehood – through 'encountering "the non-identical in the phenomenon" [...] recognizes the "untruth" of identity-thinking and moves towards "the *individuum ineffabile*"'.⁵⁴⁵ Accordingly, this individual is neither the Apollonian *principium individuationis*, nor the aesthetically abundant Dionysian individual found in the later Nietzsche. Rather, it is an invocation of what has not yet been. Whilst humanity for Nietzsche is something to be overcome, and for Bloch it is something not-yet, for Adorno individuation is only negatively articulated through a hyper-vigilant negative dialectic that refuses to come to rest at any point.

Recourse to the Dionysian individual as per the later Nietzsche is not palatable for Adorno. Instead, Adorno deems that individuation has yet to fully occur, and, moreover, cannot occur under existing conditions. In this respect, Nietzsche, Bloch and Adorno all agree that their present is an unsatisfactory one for human flourishing, be it individual or social. As a neo-Marxist, like Bloch, Adorno is much more concerned about the social and political whole as opposed to solely the individual. That said, given the perpetuation of identity thinking, Adorno's programme can paradoxically only appeal to the most individual of actors, since the 'unity of the manipulated collective consists in the negation of each individual and in the scorn poured on the type of society which could make people into individuals'.⁵⁴⁶ For Adorno, under late capitalism, collectives, as ultimately administrative 'iron cages', invariably undermine individual autonomy. Adorno's critical task is thus appropriate to the society in which he

⁵⁴⁵ Deborah Cook, 'Adorno, Ideology and Ideology Critique', *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 27:1 (2001), 1-20 (p.4), which quotes Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p.145.

⁵⁴⁶ Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p.9.

writes, unlike his predecessor Bloch, who, as shown above, adopts problematic socio-political positions and attempts to correlate his theories to fit these.⁵⁴⁷ Contrary to Bloch, and, instead, analogous to Nietzsche, Adorno lends weight to the value of the individual, in that such a person, 'unhampered by any ukase may at times perceive objectivities more clearly than the collective, which is no more than the ideology of its functionaries, anyway'.⁵⁴⁸ Individual resistance in the Adornian programme thus involves a determinate refusal to 'remain satisfied with the surface', and, after Nietzsche's Dionysian, 'breaking through the façade' of the Apollonian veil of rationality.⁵⁴⁹ The importance of the individual for Adorno is because in its potential eccentricity, it may rupture the homogenized and totally administered objectivity of the collective mass.

Adorno argues that the potential for individual resistance remains available to those who by a 'stroke of undeserved luck' have 'not quite adjusted to the prevailing norms', and thus 'it is up to these individuals to make the moral and, as it were, representative effort to say what most of those for whom they say it cannot see or, to do justice to reality, will not allow themselves to see'.⁵⁵⁰ Different, then, from either Nietzsche's higher individual who does not concern themselves with the social collective, or the last man who merely reacts to their society, Adorno attempts to bridge the gap and argues that the individual 'unhampered by any ukase' represent those who are. That said, this representation is not to be done in the manner of conventional political rhetoric, for to do so would be to fall foul of regressive identity thinking. For Adorno, each such communicative step 'falsifies Truth and sells it out'.⁵⁵¹ Instead, the individual subject may represent those entrapped by demonstrating their

⁵⁴⁷ See p.157, fn.455.

⁵⁴⁸ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p.46.

⁵⁴⁹ Adorno, *Lectures on Negative Dialectics*, p.107.

⁵⁵⁰ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p.41.

⁵⁵¹ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p.41.

entrapment through immanent critique in constellatory manner, but, also, through what Adorno deems 'exact fantasy'; in other words, the limits of that which is technically possible.

Exact fantasy

Adorno presents the notion of 'an exact fantasy; fantasy which abides strictly within the material which the sciences present to it, and reaches beyond them only in the smallest aspects of their arrangement: aspects, granted, which fantasy itself must originally generate'.⁵⁵² Exact fantasy links to immanent critique because the former is concerned with demonstrating the limits of existing cultural material, and how engaging with them results in contradictions and antinomies. Adorno's exacting immanent critique does not deem the totality as false and thereby resign itself. Rather, this critique is infinitely demanding in that it requires the individual subject to constantly recognize, master, and then interrogate cultural material (concepts) at hand to fetter its limits. Thus, what Adorno attempts to engender through his promulgation of exact fantasy is a 'precarious path between a process of verification (where the real conforms with, or, refutes the patterns elicited) and a recognition that there are no foundational, objective guarantees of truth; a route which avoids relativism or absolutism, skepticism or dogmatism, nihilism or [naïve] utopianism'.⁵⁵³

Summary

To summarize, in response to the question of utopia, employing Adorno's negative dialectics through immanent critique, and a constellatory interrogation of Apollonian concepts that are

⁵⁵² Theodor W. Adorno, 'Die Aktualität der Philosophie' (1931), *GS 1*, p.341, quoted in Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and the Frankfurt Institute* (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1978), p.86.

⁵⁵³ Coole, *Negativity and Politics*, pp.177-78.

embroiled in reified thought (identity thinking) through exact fantasy, is the best the individual subject can do. Linked to Nietzsche's perspectival seeing, Adorno's constellations are a manner of realizing immanent critique of cultural material via exact fantasy to demonstrate its inherent contradictions and antinomies. This immanent critique permits this thesis to argue that utopia in Adorno can be articulated as akairological rupture. That is, as an untimely reminder of the impossibility of positively articulating utopia in Hegelian-Marxist fashion. The next section will demonstrate how Adorno sees in music, a determinately negative utopian potential, insofar as it renders apparent contradictions coagulated within cultural material, and the impossibility of positively articulating utopia. What the subject is left with is akairological ruptures, which, in iconoclastic manner, may be deemed as constitutive of utopia.

2. Music

Overview

A strand running through the previous chapters is how music may be analysed in relation to utopia, and in the previous chapter, what for Bloch a *docta spes* of music might feasibly entail. Adorno offers a solution to this problem through an exacting method of analysing music. This method entails the philosophical tools outlined in the preceding section; namely, interrogating cultural material to reveal its antinomies via a constellatory structure that immanently critiques it in a manner of exact fantasy. The section presents Adorno's reading of music as mimetic, which is to say a way of articulating in a non-instrumental manner. It is argued that through a formalist reading, mimetic musical expression engenders a qualitative remainder, which, I argue, is correlative with an akairological rupture of positive, harmonious expression. This rupture, in turn, is argued to be constitutive of utopia. Such a rupture leaves the individual subject with what Adorno deems a 'shudder', that is, a recognition of the inability to grasp being in its entirety. The section ends by highlighting the exacting nature of Adorno's aesthetic theory, and how the recourse to music, by each of Nietzsche, Bloch and Adorno, is an attempt to render a reading of utopia that does not fall foul to the pitfalls of positivism, historicity, or, what Adorno deems identity thinking, but that, ultimately, philosophical analysis is still necessary, along with aesthetic expression, to be able to engage with a concept as polysemic as utopia.

Purposiveness without purpose

For Adorno, artworks emblemize the 'Kantian principle of *purposiveness without purpose* and thus they resist, by their form alone'.⁵⁵⁴ Adorno offers a materialist reading of Kant's formula. While for Kant a beautiful object is apparently organized by an intelligence (and as such appears purposeful), unlike a craft object, no final purpose can be attributed to it.⁵⁵⁵ For Adorno, an art work uses materials and techniques appropriated from society. This is part of its status as a social fact. However, it does not use those materials to the dominant purposes which society decrees for them. Rather, materials are explored to their own artistic ends. The art work thereby acquires an autonomy from society.⁵⁵⁶ This paradox – that an art work is at once a social fact (and as such might be subject to a reductionist sociological analysis) and yet autonomous (and thus the legitimate preserve of aesthetics), opens the possibility that art has the critical potential to throw into question the dominant purposes of society. This aesthetic theory corroborates Adorno's materialism; namely, that artistic creations play with existing cultural material in terms of its intrinsic value and qualities, and in doing so explores and articulates the contradictions inherent in the material as sedimented social content, rather than an attempt to align with the dominant purposes of the capitalist mode of production in which it is enmeshed, and that demands the realization of surplus value.⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁴ James Hellings, 'Messages in a Bottle and Other Things Lost to the Sea: The Other Side of Critical Theory or a Reevaluation of Adorno's Aesthetic Theory', *Telos*, 160 (2012), 77-97 (p.89). See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), pp.259-260.

⁵⁵⁵ See Book One of Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, pp.43-96.

⁵⁵⁶ Adorno's reading of art demonstrates his employment of a dialectical approach, as two sides of the proposition contradict each other (and yet both are true and therefore false at the same time).

⁵⁵⁷ In this way, Jacques Attali argues that 'music is a play of mirrors in which every activity is reflected, defined, recorded, and distorted. If we look at one mirror, we see only an image of another. But at times a complex mirror game yields a vision that is rich, because unexpected and prophetic. At times it yields nothing but the swirl of the void'. See Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), p.5.

Paradoxically, and in line with the notion of immanent critique, Adorno deems the commodification of art as the social ground of the artist's creative freedom, in that it frees the artist from the demands of patrons.⁵⁵⁸ The artist's primary concerns become those dictated, not by external social factors, but by the aesthetic challenges posed by the artistic material itself. The artist can then pursue the inherent logic of that material, and thus, by proxy, the inherent logic of the society from which that material emerged: this is Adorno's materialist reworking of Kant's purposiveness without purpose.⁵⁵⁹

In an age of contemporary neoliberal governance, this non-instrumental reading of art is almost unfathomable. Art's aesthetic value lies not in its exchange value as a commodity, and thus in neither serving a social purpose nor being mere entertainment. Further, Adorno is resistant to politically committed art (that would serve a purpose through the communication of an explicit analysis of society). In this vein, Adorno argues that 'it is not the office of art to spotlight alternatives, but to resist by its form alone the course of the world, which permanently puts a pistol to men's heads'.⁵⁶⁰ That is to say that, precisely in pursuing the intrinsic aesthetic challenges and potentials of its material (along with the forces of production, such as musical instruments and even computers, that it employs) the art work explicates the tensions and antinomies of the social content sedimented in that material.

As cultural material, musical creations at the level of the Marxist superstructure thus reflect inherent contradictions in the material base of society. These creations embody

⁵⁵⁸ See, for example, Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophy of New Music*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minnesota: University of Minneapolis Press, 2006), pp.20-21 and Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.1 and p.3.

⁵⁵⁹ Witkin, *Adorno on Music*, p.16: 'In music, the condition and "suffering" of the subject could find a vehicle for expressing itself, for achieving "wholeness", for perfecting its self-understanding. To the extent that a work of music achieved this, it constituted a critique of society and it did so, immanently, *by virtue of what is was in and of itself* and not through any attempt on its part to criticise society or to propagandise it. In this sense, music's "likeness" to society has to be seen, paradoxically, as underpinning its function as critique of society'.

⁵⁶⁰ Theodor W. Adorno, 'Commitment', trans. Francis McDonagh, in Taylor (ed.), *Aesthetics and Politics*, pp.177-195 (p.180).

Adorno's negative dialectic in a way that rational discourse, necessarily, cannot. It is when art attempts to imitate rational logic that it falls foul of reified, identity thinking, and succumbs to the dominant purposes and commodification to which society would subsume it.

While music has an inherent logicity – in effect, a syntax, that demonstrates adherence to a set of rules that govern the appropriateness of particular notes and underpins the development of musical argument – it is not immune to second nature and reification. The significance of reification for Adorno's argument is that the Western tonal system is accepted as a natural phenomenon (and not as the product of a complex series of cultural decisions). It may further be noted that, given the manner in which tonal keys inculcate expectations for certain forms of chord progression and the resolution of dissonance, tonality also reinforces a certain understanding of time, and specifically, time as *chronos*, progressing towards the *telos* of a cadence. Adorno observes that this tonal system 'owes its dignity to the closed and exclusive system of a society that is based on exchange, whose own dynamic tends toward totality, and with whose fungibility all the tonal elements stand in profound agreement'.⁵⁶¹ Adorno's celebration of the atonality of Schoenberg and the Second Viennese School may be explained, in part, by the challenge that such music poses to tonality (and thus 'second nature') and therefore the music's explication of the logic of capitalist exchange. Schoenberg's liberation of dissonance specifically disrupts temporal expectations, as atonal music is denied the possibility of giving any sense of a temporal resolution to dissonance.⁵⁶² In this way, music as socio-material fact functions in

⁵⁶¹ Adorno, *Philosophy of New Music*, p.13.

⁵⁶² For example, Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, Op. 21 (1912). I will further explore music's relationship to second nature below, with reference to Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* (pp.206-207). Adorno's adoption of second nature will be shown to bring together a constellation of the following critical concepts that will be analysed, including 'mimesis', 'expression' and 'shudder'.

Adorno's critical task as a potential response to the problem of positivism as outlined above.⁵⁶³

For Adorno, through the artist's pursuit of 'technical mastery of the most advanced musical material',⁵⁶⁴ music may thus expose the antinomies, contradictions and tensions at the material base of society.⁵⁶⁵ To summarize the above, Adorno holds that music's raw material: sound, the tonal or modal system, instruments, conception of time involved, idea of a coherent music argument and so on, are ultimately products of particular historically situated societies and cultures. Outside of musical creation, these materials are used instrumentally, and under the logic of capitalism, to realize surplus value. In musical creation, these materials are used for their own sake, and thus incorporated into activities that are 'purposive without purpose'. The antinomies, tensions and contradictions within and between the materials can then be revealed and explored by the composer-artist. In *Aesthetic Theory*, for example, Adorno argues that aesthetic expression is marked by its inability to coherently articulate a positive truth content.⁵⁶⁶ Music may disrupt the listener's cultural assumptions about how it will, or should, proceed.⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶³ See p.173. In contrast to Adorno's approach to musical analysis, a positivist musicology would serve to reinforce the 'second nature' of the Western musical system. This is exemplified by Heinrich Schenker's argument that all music is unified by a single structure (the *Urlinie*). See Heinrich Schenker, *Harmony*, trans. Elisabeth Mann-Borgese (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954).

⁵⁶⁴ Gary Zabel, 'Adorno on Music: A Reconsideration', *The Musical Times*, 130:1754 (April, 1989), 198-201 (p.198).

⁵⁶⁵ Harvey, in *The condition of postmodernity*, observes that the 'loss of historical continuity in values and beliefs, taken together with the reduction of the work of art to a text stressing discontinuity and allegory, poses all kinds of problems for aesthetic and critical judgement', p.56.

⁵⁶⁶ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.45.

⁵⁶⁷ This signifies the importance of the avant-garde in Adorno's aesthetic theory

Mimesis

Just as Adorno reinterprets the Kantian notion of 'purposiveness without purpose', so too, in order to articulate music's resistance to dominant social purposes and thus to instrumentality, he offers a re-reading of the traditional aesthetic concept of mimesis.⁵⁶⁸

Mimesis (imitation) in aesthetics originated with Plato, who deemed it as dramatic representation of nature, but distanced from the Truth of the Forms (*eidos*).⁵⁶⁹ In music, then, Platonic mimesis can only occur in 'programme' music, which literally seeks to imitate sounds in nature or society.⁵⁷⁰ Adorno's gambit is to argue that music is fundamentally mimetic; that mimesis is a basic human response to the world.⁵⁷¹ Adorno sets mimesis against reason; the mimetic is thus not merely imitative, but rather the intuitive, set dialectically against the supposedly enlightened role of reason. In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno states that 'the reason that represses mimesis is not merely its opposite. It is itself mimesis: of death'.⁵⁷² Mimesis, then, exposes reason as false, and mired in fruitless contradiction and false premises. Whilst in Hegelian dialectics, as argued above,⁵⁷³ it is necessary to negotiate contradictions towards concrete Truth, in Adorno such reconciliation has been shown to no longer be possible. Therefore, in regard to music, mimesis operates in a negative dialectic of the irrational and rational.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁶⁸ See Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.187. A humble memory of nature in the subject may lead to mimesis; that is, a way in which the subject may create art, but in a manner that is non-instrumental and non-violent.

⁵⁶⁹ See Plato, *Republic*, Books II, III and X (pp.167-206 and pp.479-520). Strictly, the artist's image is at two removes from the truth of the Idea, with the object in the everyday world standing between Idea and artistic image.

⁵⁷⁰ For example, Arthur Honegger's *Pacific 231* (1923), which imitates a train.

⁵⁷¹ In a discussion of 'primitive' magic contra 'enlightened' science, in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno and Horkheimer observe that: 'Magic like science is concerned with ends, but it pursues them through mimesis, not through an increasing distance from the object' (p.7).

⁵⁷² Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, pp.44-45.

⁵⁷³ See p.168.

⁵⁷⁴ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pp.53-54: '[A]rt, something mimetic, is possible in the midst of rationality, and [...] is a response to the faulty irrationality of the rational world as an over-administered world. For the aim of all rationality - the quintessence of the means for dominating nature - would have to be something other than means, hence something not rational. Capitalist society hides and disavows precisely this irrationality, and in

This focus on the intuitive or mimetic in music allows Adorno to argue that musical creation retains a non-conceptual surplus (that which cannot be reduced to reason) that can feasibly be equated with the untimely: *akairos*, and also, utopia. Adorno argues that music:

[...] is the intuition of what is not intuitable; it is akin to the conceptual without the concept. It is by way of concepts, however, that art sets free *its mimetic, non-conceptual layer* [...] that which in art is not exhausted by rational logic, the *sine qua non* of all manifestations of art. Art militates against the concept as much as it does against domination, but for this opposition it, like philosophy, requires concepts.⁵⁷⁵

Through this negative dialectic of conceptual engagement, in constellatory fashion, mimesis is therefore linked to the taboo on graven images, for 'it is only in the absence of images that the full object could be conceived'.⁵⁷⁶ In this paradoxical manner, the 'true speech of art is speechlessness'.⁵⁷⁷ This speechlessness can be equated with the non-conceptual, and therefore mimetic expression: purposiveness without purpose.

If art is successful on the Adornian reading and does not become subsumed by prevalent over-administration and rationality, it runs the risk of not being understood at all. This is because, as Adorno puts it, potentially utopian articulations 'speak like elves in fairy tales: if you want the absolute, you shall have it, but you will not recognize it when you see it [...] the knowledge that is art, has truth, but as something incommensurable with art. Through the freedom of the subject in them, artworks are less subjective than is rational knowledge'.⁵⁷⁸ In other words, contrary to Bloch's filtering of cultural material in line with a teleological account of utopia, Adorno argues that particular creations are representative of

contrast to this, art represents truth in a double sense: It maintains the image of its aim, which has been obscured by rationality, and it convicts the status quo of its irrationality and absurdity'.

⁵⁷⁵ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.96 (italics added)

⁵⁷⁶ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p.207.

⁵⁷⁷ René Buchholz, *Zwischen Mythos und Bilderverbot. Die Philosophie Adornos als Anstoss zu einer kritischen Fundamentaltheologie im Kontext der späten Moderne* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1991), pp.112-114, cited in Jacoby, *Picture Imperfect*, p.128.

⁵⁷⁸ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.126.

non-instrumental expression, which thus exempts them from perpetuating the violence of the normative, repressive discourse, but at the cost of conventional intelligibility.

Formalism

The above discussions can be brought together by recalling that, for Adorno, the dialectic of musical creation functions as both social fact, yet autonomous. In effect, it pursues its own intrinsic purposiveness without purpose, thereby offering an immanent critique of existent social conditions that are in turn embedded in the cultural material being utilized. Accordingly, and articulating the notion of exact fantasy, Adorno promotes musical formalism over and above alternative methodologies. There is a dialectic in Adorno's aesthetic theory between form and expression: the expressive moment in music is where form breaks down; in effect, is forced into contradiction. Adorno's formalism thus pushes contradictions in music, not to thereby encode them as a positivist might, but to actually highlight and accentuate the resultant akairological and ineffable challenge to rational discourse that such contradictions enact.

Absolutists, with respect to music meaning, 'insist that musical meaning lies exclusively within the context of the work itself, in the perception of the relationships set forth within the musical work'.⁵⁷⁹ Referentialists argue that 'music also communicates meanings that in some way refer to the extra-musical world of concepts, actions, emotional states and character'.⁵⁸⁰ Adorno's formalism attempts to challenge both positions, dialectically. On the one hand, seemingly embracing the absolutist position, Adorno sees meaning as syntax; in effect, relationships between notes, rather than semantics (reference

⁵⁷⁹ Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago: Phoenix Books, 1961), p.1.

⁵⁸⁰ Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, p.1.

to something beyond the notes). On the other hand, given that the material that is formed within music has a sedimented social content, an appropriately emphatic reading can explicate this extra-musical meaning.

Adorno's programme thus necessarily demerits music which conveys explicit meaning predicated upon rational, instrumental identity thinking.⁵⁸¹ For Adorno:

The process of music's development into language simultaneously means its transformation into convention and expression [...] The more – as language – it takes hold of and reinforces expression as the imitation of something gestural and pre-rational, the more it simultaneously – as the rational means of controlling it – works towards its dissolution.⁵⁸²

As noted above, expression emerges from formal contradictions, not through conventions of a musical language. Through the immanent critique of the formalist approach, musical pieces are understood as wholly embedded as cultural practice, and thus negatively embody the antinomies of normative discourse akin to the constellatory approach.⁵⁸³ In sum, if the musical material, like language itself, is crystalized social content, then in playing with musical material, the formalist creator is playing with socio-cultural material, and in doing so may expose its contradictions. The mimetic is thereby refigured by Adorno. Music does not imitate, in the traditional sense, but rather the contradictions of form are intuitively experienced as meaningful, and, as such, disruptive of second nature, rather than rationally calculated. This is because any such rationalization would argue away the significance of the

⁵⁸¹ Thus, the choral finale of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, which includes a rendition of Schiller's *Ode to Joy*, is problematic in Adorno's thesis.

⁵⁸² Theodor W. Adorno, 'On the Current Relationship between Philosophy and Music' (1953), in *Night Music: Essays on Music, 1928 - 1962*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Wieland Hoban (London: Seagull, 2009), pp.426-473 (pp.447-48).

⁵⁸³ To offer a simple example, a piece of music necessarily embodies and scrutinizes in its form certain expectations as to the unfolding of time. Precisely as the temporal logic of the composition is pursued rigorously, the sense of temporal development will break down. This contradiction in form is the moment of expression. It thereby brings to consciousness how time, narrative and progress are culturally mediated.

contradiction, or condemn it as a failing of the composer (not of the material with which she works).

The ramification of such exposure is articulated in Adorno's observation that 'the purer the form and the higher the autonomy of the works, the more cruel they are. Appeals for more humane art, for conformity to those who are its virtual public, regularly dilute the quality and weaken the law of form'.⁵⁸⁴ It follows that 'whoever rails against art's putative formalism, against art being art, advocates the very inhumanity with which he charges formalism and does so in the name of cliques that, to retain better control of the oppressed, insist on adaptation to them'.⁵⁸⁵ The truth of an art work can thus only ever be immanently revealed, as opposed to attempting to express it literally. Formalist readings of music represent aesthetic judgement that embodies non-prescriptive engagement with societal norms. Therefore, utopia in music can necessarily only be negatively articulated in the self-aware creator's piece that uses cultural material at hand to reveal immanent contradictions found within existing conditions.

Remainder

Successful artworks, then, provide a glimpse of the not existing, utopia, through exposing the inherent contradiction in the attempt to reconcile subject and object using cultural material from within a totality that is false. By investigating the formal musical structure of particular music, such as Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, for example, and then breaking it apart from within before putting it back together, Adorno overexposes the piece to demonstrate how it

⁵⁸⁴ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pp.49-50.

⁵⁸⁵ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.144.

embodies a lack of reconciliation.⁵⁸⁶ As concrete social fact, the aesthetic medium of music, is equated with conceptual, rational knowledge. Nevertheless, music contains a surplus as it involves a subject's attempt to allude to an object without subsuming it. The example of the Pythagorean comma⁵⁸⁷ is enlightening insofar as it exemplifies the inherent limits of the rational use of cultural material, in effect, concepts, to fully encapsulate the object. In other words, the limits of Apollonian reason to encompass Dionysian excess. A Dionysian foundation in music is exemplified not only through the Pythagorean Comma, but also in the simple example of the Shepard Scale, whereby it appears that a tone continually ascends or descends in pitch, only to circulate, hence the moniker of a 'sonic barber's pole'.⁵⁸⁸ What occurs in particular musical creations, then, is an akairological 'inner time; the explosion of appearance blasts open the continuity of this inner [chronological] temporality'.⁵⁸⁹ Such works, as argued above, are inevitably socio-historically immanently located, and thus to interpret them is to necessarily analyse the material conditions in which they arise. The best that the artist can do, then, is to set free art's 'mimetic, non-conceptual layer'.⁵⁹⁰ Adorno argues that:

Inherently every artwork desires identity with itself, an identity that in empirical reality is violently forced on all objects as identity with the subject and thus travestied. Aesthetic identity seeks to aid the non-identical, which in reality is repressed by reality's compulsion to identity.⁵⁹¹

⁵⁸⁶ Adorno's formal musical analysis of this Beethoven piece can be juxtaposed against Nietzsche's lack of analysis as described on p.95 above.

⁵⁸⁷ In music, the 'Pythagorean comma' resists complete rationalization oriented to tonal physics. As Edgar illustrates, beginning from an account of music in terms of the division of the octave by intervals of the fifth (and fourth), it is argued that: 'If one ascends or descends from a tonic in circles first in the octave followed by fifths to the powers of these division can never meet on one and the same tone no matter how long the procedure be continued': Andrew Edgar, 'Weber, Nietzsche and Music', in Sedgwick (ed.), *Nietzsche: A Critical Reader*, pp.84-103 (p.92). See also Max Weber, *The Rational and Social Foundations of Music*, trans. Don Martindale (Carbondale; London: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), p.3.

⁵⁸⁸ See Roger N. Shepard, 'Circularity in Judgements of Relative Pitch', *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 36:12 (December, 1964), 2346-53.

⁵⁸⁹ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.85.

⁵⁹⁰ See p.199.

⁵⁹¹ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.3.

For example, building upon the argument above that Adorno seeks to highlight contradictions in lieu of offering resolutions, *Missa Solemnis* cannot be exhausted by rational, or moreover, philosophical, analysis, precisely because it represents a 'mediated consciousness of boundaries on thought that are, as yet, beyond the scope of conceptual articulation'.⁵⁹² As such, the qualitative remainder that cannot be articulated is the unutterable glimpse of utopia. In contrast to chronological security, these remainders, or, ruptures, 'shatter the illusion of reconciliation'.⁵⁹³ Thus, whilst for early Nietzsche 'the highest goal of art is attained' when Dionysus speaks the language of Apollo and vice versa,⁵⁹⁴ for Adorno, the determinately negative 'highest' goal is a remembrance of nature by the creator who does not seek to reconcile subject and object, but instead, maintains the 'tension' and 'shudder' that arises from the awareness that they are embroiled in identity thinking and contradiction.

Shudder

Building upon the notion of the Kantian sublime above,⁵⁹⁵ Adorno argues that 'every genuine aesthetic experience' involves a modification of mimesis: the experience of rational, expected, second natural progression of the artwork is disrupted. Here, the Apollonian *principium individuationis* is fractured.⁵⁹⁶ Through exact fantasy, the limits of reasonable articulation are revealed by the artist, thereby demonstrating that the whole is tenuous: there

⁵⁹² Andrew Edgar, 'An Introduction to Adorno's Aesthetics', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 30:1 (1990), 46-56 (p.54).

⁵⁹³ Morton Schoolman, *Reason and Horror: critical theory, individuality and democracy* (New York; London: Routledge, 2001), pp.134-35.

⁵⁹⁴ Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy', p.130.

⁵⁹⁵ See p.99.

⁵⁹⁶ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.113: 'This ambivalence is registered by every genuine aesthetic experience, and incomparably so in Kant's description of the feeling of the sublime as a trembling between nature and freedom. Such modification of mimesis is, without any reflection on the spiritual, the constitutive act of spiritualization in all'.

is no solid grounding for a positive dialectic. The listener, be they the philosopher or otherwise, must have an awareness that the creation they are experiencing is undertaking such play. Disciplined listening may then inform the negative dialectician regardless of the cultural material under analysis.

Accordingly, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* satisfies the criteria of Adorno's immanent critique as it involves the aesthetically attuned individual as using the cultural material at hand to express their limits and thus expose second nature. The composition thereby successfully performs an immanent critique of a given state of affairs, which renders an akairological glimpse of utopia. Adorno makes implicit reference to such a glimpse as a 'shudder', which disorients the subject: 'it is a memento of the liquidation of the I, which, shaken, perceives its own limited-ness and finitude'.⁵⁹⁷ Perhaps most clearly, in the case of the *Missa Solemnis*, the shudder may lie in the recognition of the archaic elements of its composition that Adorno identifies. The *Missa Solemnis* disrupts any sense of historical time as *chronos*. and equally offers no coherent conceptual articulation of an alternative temporal sense. The listening subject is denied the illusory satisfaction of a sense of either endless progress or a perfected future.

Building upon this notion of the liquidation of the 'I', returning to the Free Jazz of Coltrane, as discussed above,⁵⁹⁸ these pieces exemplify the exact fantasy of the artist, and cause the disciplined listener to shudder in an Adornian reading. Coltrane's late works are far removed from Jazz conventions such as major 7th/ 9th chord extensions, but, instead, with creations such as the 'Coltrane Changes',⁵⁹⁹ enact highly original progressions that Adorno

⁵⁹⁷ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pp.245-46.

⁵⁹⁸ See pp.97-100.

⁵⁹⁹ These came to be identified by chord progressions based upon key centred movements by thirds, rather than the usual fourths and fifths of standard progressions. See Masaya Yamaguchi, *John Coltrane Plays Coltrane Changes* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2003).

could not have foreseen. 'Coltrane Changes' utilize 'the same phrase for the first eight measures of several choruses', varying it each time, and only once presenting it in its basic form. These are thus 'true variations, not just simple repetitions or inversions of his basic formulas'.⁶⁰⁰ Coltrane was preoccupied with technical mastery at the expense of harmony. In this way, he was not dissimilar to Schoenberg and the Second Viennese School's use of the twelve-tone technique.

Coltrane also employed multiphonics, which were accompanied by much overblowing, screeching, and no clear musical notes to speak of, thereby demonstrating exact fantasy. His late works had no discernible central tonal key. Coincidentally linked to Adorno's constellation via the album title, *Interstellar Space* (1967),⁶⁰¹ Coltrane plays by rules other than those of the normative aesthetic discourse based upon harmony and resolution. As such, Coltrane's late works possess a prescient utopian charge, for as Adorno states: 'is only in dissonance, which destroys the faith of those who believe in harmony, that the power of seduction of the rousing character of music survives'.⁶⁰² In this way, Coltrane's late works engender a shudder in the disciplined listener.

This notion of maintaining a shudder is articulated through Adorno's reading of Schoenberg, whereby he declares that the latter 'entrusts himself without reserve to the *principium individuationis* without concealing his entanglement in the situation of the real decline of the old society'.⁶⁰³ Adorno juxtaposes Schoenberg's self-aware individuation and preservation of the 'shudder' with Igor Stravinsky's 'stylistically contrived objectivity', which spares him from 'the qualitative movement of the material itself and treats it like a director',

⁶⁰⁰ Lewis Porter, *John Coltrane: His Life and Music* (Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan University Press, 2000), p.153.

⁶⁰¹ Coltrane, *Interstellar Space*.

⁶⁰² Theodor W. Adorno, *Dissonanzen* (Giittingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1963) quoted in Attali, *Noise*, p.43.

⁶⁰³ Adorno, *Philosophy of New Music*, p.156.

thereby rendering the material ‘flippancy itself, play from which the subject remains aloof, refusal of the aesthetic “development of the truth”’.⁶⁰⁴ Therefore, in juxtaposition with the Nietzschean adage that ‘we possess art less we perish from the truth’,⁶⁰⁵ in Adorno this can be reworked to posit the notion that art possesses us to remind us of the truth; of our social embeddedness and the inability to assume an Archimedean standpoint from which to create up on high.

Summary

This section has explored how Adorno’s aesthetic theory posits certain music as able to render apparent contradictions in cultural material, and to rupture the individual subject’s illusion of being able to encapsulate being. In this way, music for Adorno is commensurate with a negative reading of utopia, insofar as it presents a response to the problem of identity thinking; utopia is negatively articulated via akairological ruptures that are the result of music rendering contradictions in positive articulation. This negative articulation of utopia is best evidenced through aesthetic expression, but still requires conceptual interrogation in order for it to be communicated at all. Thus, for Adorno, as for Nietzsche and Bloch before him, music may express the non-verbal, but still requires philosophical conceptual engagement in order for it be discussed. In effect, one cannot stay silent.⁶⁰⁶ Rather, the role of the philosopher is to draw attention to contradictions inherent within positive, Apollonian, chronological discourse. Doing so, they may be able to negatively articulate akairological

⁶⁰⁴ Adorno, *Philosophy of New Music*, p.157.

⁶⁰⁵ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p.435.

⁶⁰⁶ In *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno remarks in relation to the prevalence of identity thinking that ‘Not even silence gets us out of the circle. In silence we simply use the state of objective truth to rationalize our subjective incapacity, once more degrading truth into a lie’, p.367.

ruptures that, as has been argued throughout this thesis so far, may be validly equated with utopia as the good place that is no place.

3. Philosophical rigour

Overview

This final section will explore and respond to some of the criticisms levelled against Adorno's exacting critical task, including Habermas' accusation of a performative contradiction, as well as contemporary theorists who charge Adorno with elitism and irrelevance in the face of contemporary socio-political challenges. Adorno's focus upon the individual as the most appropriate site of resistance amidst a 'totally administered society' under late capitalism will be explored and defended. Situating Adorno's thought as separate from Nietzsche and Bloch's responses to the problems of modernity, for example the possibility of Nietzsche's higher types, as well as Bloch's collective, processual utopia, it will be argued that Adorno's philosophical project builds upon the work of his predecessors, is extremely exacting, and, ultimately, withstands scrutiny to be deemed a negative articulation of akairological utopia.

Performative contradiction

Adorno's rendering of the totality of instrumental identity thinking means that he can only rely on the resistance of particular individuals, who, in their very eccentricity, may resist being totally engulfed. As noted above, what distinguishes Adorno from Bloch, and what the former reworks from Nietzsche, is a focus upon the eccentric individual, as opposed to emancipation of the social collective.⁶⁰⁷ Adorno states that it is the responsibility of such individuals to make the 'moral' and 'representative' effort on behalf of those who are engulfed, and who either

⁶⁰⁷ See pp.188-189. This relates to the point raised in the introduction that the individual experience of time is different to that of a collective's (p.16 and pp.25-26). In effect, whilst Bloch commits a Marxist error of subsuming all to a single (proletarian) time, Adorno, like Nietzsche, allows for an eccentric experience of time through which the akairological may be negatively revealed.

do not see their predicament, or can see it, and refuse to acknowledge it. Adorno's successor, Habermas, accuses him of a performative contradiction,⁶⁰⁸ namely, that if the totality is false, then any criticism of it is logically impossible. In response to Adorno and Horkheimer's analysis of the perils of Enlightenment reason in that it attempts to dominate nature, Habermas argues that the project of modernity has yet to come to fruition, and thus what is needed is a more discerning use of reason, not the usurping of it through recourse to an aesthetic theory, or attempts at vehemently seeking to uncover latent contradictions within normative discourse. In response to his predecessors, Habermas posits an inter-subjective solution, that of Discourse Ethics.⁶⁰⁹ Analogous to due process in a court of law, subjects communicate adhering to certain procedures to ensure reasonable and rational outcomes. Thus, Habermas responds pragmatically to what he sees as Adorno's critical task of negative dialectics and non-identity thinking as leading to a philosophical dead-end.⁶¹⁰ Habermas's Discourse Ethics, then, requires a faith in the possibility of communication that Adorno, by stressing the problems of identity thinking, lacks.

The Adornian response to this charge of performative contradiction is to undertake a tight-rope act of immanent critical engagement from within the status quo, but without positively affirming that status quo. In other words, Adorno's is an extremely demanding and self-aware project. In effect, he knows all too well that he is a product of a 'false' society, and

⁶⁰⁸ Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1987), p.127. See, also, Martin Jay, 'The Debate over Performative Contradiction: Habermas versus the Poststructuralists', in *Philosophical Interventions in the Unfinished Project of Enlightenment*, pp.261-79).

⁶⁰⁹ See Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholsen (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), p.86 and p.121.

⁶¹⁰ The Habermasian line is a criticism more of a weakness of Adorno's sociology, as opposed to his philosophical intent. As such, it can be granted that Adorno does not produce a thoroughgoing analysis of the mediation between the individual and social totality in the manner of Lukács, for example. Rather, Adorno focuses upon bringing to the fore the inherent contradictions in normative, rational discourse, thereby enacting an inversion of the Blochian programme of seeking (positive) utopian charges that possess *Vorschein*.

that his thought and communication is therefore false. There is accordingly a great humility and yet militantly engaged quality to his conceptual play, whereby the Habermasian 'performative contradiction' is revealed as a disjuncture in an apparently all-binding, rational discourse. A performative contradiction, for Adorno, is thus potentially indicative of a contradiction in the society that constitutes the human agent. This is corroborated by Adorno's argument in *Negative Dialectics*, that 'direct communicability to everyone is not a criterion of truth. We must resist the all but universal compulsion to confuse the communication of knowledge with knowledge itself'.⁶¹¹ Therefore the best the individual creator can do is to make things 'less bad', through self-awareness of their involvement in the perpetuation of instrumental identity thinking. In doing so, utopia may be revealed through akairological ruptures, but cannot be a chronological, or kairological, positive articulation. Under late capitalism and neoliberalism that has extended beyond the market to actually govern the way in which individual subjects think about themselves in a reified manner, utopia as akairological rupture is, in Geuss's words, whilst modest, 'not nothing and in any case it is probably all we have'.⁶¹²

Infinitesimal freedom

Adorno's Hegelian inspired negatively dialectical critical task insists that 'any system contains a conceptual breach (the conceptual itself can only be construed in terms of the non-

⁶¹¹ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p.41. Martin Jay, in *Marxism and Totality*, helps to further shed light on Adorno's philosophical method: 'Adorno's negative dialectics must itself be understood as an untotaled "forcefield" of apparently contradictory statements, which both reflects and resists the reality it tries critically to analyse. The disdain for traditional logic manifested in the Hegelian tradition allowed Adorno to hold opposing, even incompatible positions simultaneously without worrying about their coherence. Indeed at times he seemed to suggest that the fetish of logical consistency was a manifestation of the very identitarian thinking to which he was so adamantly opposed', p.266.

⁶¹² Geuss, *A World Without Why*, p.114.

conceptual), a rupture which allows for critique of that system in terms of itself'.⁶¹³ This is, crucially, what exempts Adorno from the charge of political quietism, or that his positing of the notion of the 'totally administered society' renders the possibility of critique defunct. Whilst the Adornian programme may 'abrogate political utility'⁶¹⁴ in conventional terms, this is precisely the game (of identity politics) that it staunchly refuses to play. More significantly, in terms of the criticism levelled by Buck-Morss that 'in the name of utopia', Adorno's negative dialectics can never work for 'utopia's realization'⁶¹⁵ this non-realization is precisely what Adorno aims to achieve. The value of the Adornian reading of utopia is its absolute steadfast refusal to hypostatize, and thereby reify it. Negative dialectics is, as argued for above, Adorno's response to late capitalism.

In the contemporary age of late capitalism and neoliberalism as articulated in the introduction, Adorno is, I argue, even more relevant now than he was during his lifetime. Contemporary society still resembles a totally administered one, and the dynamic between the forces and relations of production in classic Marxist terms seems to have ground to a halt. Historical time is at a standstill, and any (utopian) projection of a better future ultimately amounts to no more than a continuation of the current state of affairs. There is therefore no way to positively articulate utopia given the reification of conceptual thought, for such articulations cannot break out of the strangle-hold of the present. Therefore, Adorno is crucial to this thesis insofar as he effectively builds upon the thought of his predecessors, Nietzsche and Bloch, to demonstrate that the only course of action that remains amidst a totality is 'relentless criticism', via immanent critique, in the spirit of negative dialectics. Therefore,

⁶¹³ Alastair Williams, 'Music as Immanent Critique', in Christopher Norris (ed.), *Music and the Politics of Culture*, pp.187-225 (p.188).

⁶¹⁴ Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics*, p.189.

⁶¹⁵ Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics*, p.189.

chronos and kairos must be abandoned as readings of time in relation to utopia: only akairos remains; that which cannot be positively articulated.

Unlike Bloch, or even Nietzsche, Adorno's utopia does not allow for either an illusory or practical reading from within a totally administered society. Rather, the hope in Adorno's critical task very much follows Bradley's dictum above that 'it is good to know the worst'. Negative dialectics for Adorno is thus an embodiment of a 'determined negation of that which merely is',⁶¹⁶ and thereby of exposing cultural artefacts as second nature. In doing so, negative dialectics indirectly 'always points at the same time to what should be'.⁶¹⁷ In this way, Jacoby argues, 'insofar as we are not allowed to cast the picture of utopia [...] insofar as we do not know what the correct thing would be, we know exactly [...] what the false thing is'.⁶¹⁸

The Adornian dictum that 'Es gibt kein richtiges Leben im falschen', or, that 'wrong life cannot be lived rightly',⁶¹⁹ is a pithy emblem of his entire determinately negatively reading of utopia. As Geuss points out, in Adorno's sociological analysis, 'what is at issue here is a structural feature of society [...] which makes a fully satisfactory life of complete consistency and sincerity impossible'.⁶²⁰ For Adorno, it is up to the individual to take it upon themselves to determinately negate existing conditions of ideological violence, regardless of personal cost. The problem here, as Adorno himself notes, is that he:

Who stands aloof runs the risk of believing himself better than others and misusing his critique of society as an ideology for his private interest [...] the detached observer is as much entangled as the active participant; the only advantage of the former is insight into his entanglement, and the infinitesimal freedom that lies in knowledge as such.⁶²¹

⁶¹⁶ Bloch and Adorno, 'Something's Missing', p.12.

⁶¹⁷ Bloch and Adorno, 'Something's Missing', p.12.

⁶¹⁸ Jacoby, *Picture Imperfect*, p.147.

⁶¹⁹ Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, p.39.

⁶²⁰ Geuss, *A World Without Why*, p.185.

⁶²¹ Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, p.26.

This key passage demonstrates the subtlety of Adorno's programme, and his advocacy of a subject as one who is self-aware of their social embedded-ness. So, here is not a Nietzschean higher individual who looks down upon the polis from up-on high, nor the Blochian Hegelian-Marxist member of the social collective, but rather an individual who performs a tightrope act of being engulfed within the totality, but recognizes this, and as such is able to embody an 'infinitesimal' measure of freedom.

Rien faire comme une beté

The inability to positively articulate what utopia consists of notwithstanding, dotted throughout Adorno's works, there are cursory suggestions of what a better world may consist. Whilst not utopian in either a blueprint or iconoclastic reading, these suggestions, in part, refute Deborah Cook's charge that his critical task provides *only* an 'oblique reference to a qualitatively improved state of affairs'.⁶²² Whilst charging the question of what life in a fully emancipated society may be like as falling prey to the spirit of positivism, Adorno concedes in so far as he states that 'there is tenderness only in the coarsest demand: that no one shall go hungry any more'.⁶²³ Moreover, he argues that utopia is not reducible to one positively articulated category, but that instead, a 'better' society would be the 'realization of universality in the reconciliation of differences',⁶²⁴ and a liberation from the capitalist mode of production necessitating surplus value: '*Rien faire comme une beté*, lying on water and looking peacefully at the sky, being, nothing else, without any further definition and fulfilment'.⁶²⁵ As Geuss observes:

⁶²² Cook, 'Adorno, Ideology and Ideology Critique', pp.15-16.

⁶²³ Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, p.156.

⁶²⁴ Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, p.103.

⁶²⁵ Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, p.157.

These are all surprisingly reductivist conceptions [...] To be sure, these three suggestions themselves need to be read 'dialectically' and not affirmatively. They are intended to reject any form of justification of high culture that depends on subjecting people to malnourishment, Angst, or forced labor, but nothing more than that.⁶²⁶

Accordingly, whilst particular aesthetic creations are championed by Adorno insofar as they represent *promesses du bonheur*, and thus what he terms as '*das bittere Glück des Erkennens*', or a 'bitter happiness', which consists in the recognition that things are not what they might be, such manifestations can in and of themselves only be a condition of a blueprint, teleological, utopia, insofar as they necessarily denote a teleologically redemptive state of affairs, but cannot themselves be read literally, as *the* blueprint of utopia.

Elitism

In response to Adorno's *promesses du bonheur*, Miriam Hansen argues that his analysis of the violence of identity thinking is all too successful, and renders even 'promises' of particular aesthetic creations, for example, as inextricably tied up within the same logic that they seek to usurp. Hansen argues that the aesthetic demands which Adorno makes, even granting the possibility for the most individualistic of actors to resist the totality, results in a problematic division between 'high' and 'low' art. Hansen continues by arguing that Adorno thereby denies the empirical possibility of new modes of expression from existing cultural technologies that replace their predecessors.⁶²⁷

⁶²⁶ Raymond Geuss, 'Dialectics and the revolutionary impulse' in Fred Rush (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp.103-138 (p.135).

⁶²⁷ Miriam Hansen, 'Foreword' in Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere*, trans. Peter Labanyi, Jamie Owen Daniel, and Assenka Oksiloff (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1993), pp.ix-xlii (p.xviii).

However, this charge of elitism and aversion to technological development appears misguided. Whilst Adorno's project is extremely exacting, as a neo-Marxist he is, unlike Nietzsche, interested in social emancipation. That he steadfastly refuses to allow for collective action is determined by the age of late capitalism in which he writes. This reading is, as explored above, all too unfortunately easily transposed onto contemporary neoliberal society also, insofar as the mass culture industry partakes in certain ideological tropes. Therefore radicalism, be it 'high' or 'low', is all too easily engulfed and neutralized, as in the cases of Surrealism, Punk and Hip Hop for example.

Rather than a choice between two delineations of art, for Adorno, the problem is more an issue of the appropriation of radical responses to prevalent tropes. He argues in an observation made in the 1940s that American hotels decorated with abstract paintings demonstrate that 'aesthetic radicalism has shown itself to be socially affordable, [that] radicalism itself must pay the price that it is no longer radical. Among the dangers faced by new art, the worst is the absence of danger'.⁶²⁸ By extension, considering that contemporary shopping malls play pop music including staunchly anti-capitalist works such as John Lennon's *Imagine* (1971) during the Christmas shopping season, for example, it is clear that Adorno's fear that attempts at discursive radicalism itself is engulfed by that which it contests is well placed.⁶²⁹

A more powerful charge against Adorno is the acute difficulty in the process of either 'writing philosophy or of composing music that does not immediately accommodate ears that

⁶²⁸ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.29.

⁶²⁹ In the case of *Imagine*, this discursive, proto-revolutionary piece fails in the Adornian programme, and arguably socio-historically as well, given its promulgation during the Christmas shopping boom in malls. For in uttering the coming of a better world in words, and aiming to be communicable through harmony, it accommodates itself all too well to the 'insidious tendencies of society'. See Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, p.102.

tend to prefer to be accommodated'.⁶³⁰ Adorno argues that to accommodate the given would be to fall prey to its injustice. This leads Buck-Morss to ask:

Precisely whom were the avant-garde leading? The answer could only be those who understand the complexities of musical technique, that is, other intellectuals. In reality, access to the 'truth' of Schoenberg's music was open only to the cultured elite from the bourgeois ranks whose economic security gave them the necessary means for acquiring a specialized training. The difficulty was that this group would always remain a 'few'.⁶³¹

In similar vein, Levitas argues that there is a risk in 'extolling the utopian potential of music, of essentialising musical form itself'.⁶³² She continues by arguing that music is a culturally specific language, especially in the Western classical tradition, in which 'most people are largely illiterate'.⁶³³ These valid criticisms about the exacting nature of Adorno's aesthetic theory notwithstanding, unlike, for example, either the rhapsodic, subjective, whim found in Nietzsche, or the cultural authoritarianism found within the Hegelian-Marxism of Bloch, Adorno does not promote the music that he necessarily enjoys, but, rather, pieces that fulfil exacting formal criteria.⁶³⁴ This counters Hansen's criticism of his apparent aversion towards technological development. In Adorno's determinately negative programme, he requires from aesthetic creations a formalist 'technical mastery of the most advanced cultural material',⁶³⁵ and a steadfast refusal to hypostatize meaning in the manner of a proto-Expressionist such as Wagner. Whilst it can be granted that this is extremely exacting, it is not necessarily elitist, for it can be realized in the example of Indian classical music and Free Jazz, both of which are 'popular' to some degree. For example, the tabla performances of Zakir

⁶³⁰ Lydia Goehr, Lydia, *Elective Affinities: Musical Essays on the History of Aesthetic Theory* (New York: Columbia Press, 2008), p.132.

⁶³¹ Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics*, p.41. Once again, the problem of Boretz's 'aesthetically receptive listener' is encountered.

⁶³² Levitas, 'Looking for the Blue', p.294.

⁶³³ Levitas, 'Looking for the Blue', p.294.

⁶³⁴ Adorno may be mistaken in his analysis of certain music, for example, omissive of the radical qualities of certain forms of Jazz, but his individual fallibility as a critic is not a condemnation of his critical approach.

⁶³⁵ See p.197.

Hussain, as well as the later works of Coltrane. Whilst popular, these musical creations can also be qualified as the avant-garde of their respective genres. Osborne argues, in relating the avant-garde to a classic reading of utopia, that: 'The avant-garde is that which, in the flash of the dialectical image, disrupts the linear time-consciousness of progress in such a way as to enable us, like the child, to "discover the new anew" and, along with it, the possibility of a better future'.⁶³⁶

Thus, as Lambert Zuidervaart observes, it is arguable that opposed to being elitist, Adorno's aesthetic theory is one of philosophical rigour and integrity, which, whilst demanding, and lacking in sociological analysis of how to engender the conditions in which to educate in terms of musical performance and listening, prevents the reification of utopia through a steadfast refusal to hypostatize it.⁶³⁷ Adorno argues that 'it is only through the non-fungibility of its own existence and not through any special content [Inhalt] that the artwork suspends empirical reality as an abstract and universal functional nexus. Each artwork is utopia insofar as through its form it anticipates what would finally be itself'.⁶³⁸ Equating utopia with a positive anticipation of the future ('what would finally be itself') is evidence of a sociological determinism at play in Adorno, and the influence of Bloch and Marx. That notwithstanding, deeming that the artwork 'suspends empirical reality' is not dissimilar to a reading of utopia attributed to Nietzsche that rejects Apollonian, chronological teleology, and thereby (implicitly so for Adorno) argues for Dionysian, akairological ruptures. These ruptures are not concerned with positive concrete teleology, but, instead, highlight the impossibility

⁶³⁶ Theodor W. Adorno, 'das Neue wiedererkennen', *GS V*, p.493 (L Ia, 3), quoted in Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1989), p.274], in turn quoted in Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, p.150.

⁶³⁷ Lambert Zuidervaart, *Adorno's Aesthetic Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), p.142.

⁶³⁸ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.135. As the product of a false society, the artwork will of course fail to be itself – utopia is thus not present, in late capitalism, in the perfect artwork, but rather is manifest, akairologically, in the artwork's consciousness of its failure to be itself.

of such a project. In this way, a determinately negative reading of utopia ensures that the concept retains its critical function in an age of instrumental reason and reification.

Summary

It has been argued that Adorno's exacting critical task, including formal analysis of music, aims to present the impossibility of emancipatory, positive action amidst a culture of reified thought. Instead, it is lucky individuals who are not necessary revolutionary in the sense of undertaking political action, but, instead, keep critical and creative thought alive through immanent critique. In this manner, by highlighting existing contradictions, such individuals may 'overwinter an ice age',⁶³⁹ in order to demonstrate the incongruity of positively articulating methods of escape from it. The best the subject can do is to become less opaque to themselves, and aim to render akairological ruptures as glimpses of utopia. This negative articulation of utopia as akairological rupture, argued for through Adorno's oeuvre, which itself is an extension of the critical tasks of Nietzsche and Bloch, is commensurate with the reading stipulated in the introduction: utopia cannot be positively plotted out in either chronological or kairological fashion, but, instead, only negatively articulated through

⁶³⁹Adorno, *The philosophy of new music*, p.89. Furthermore, Adorno argues that 'if anything can help against coldness as the condition for disaster [...] it is the insight into the conditions that determine it and the attempt to combat those conditions [...] The exhortation to love - even in its imperative form, that one *should* do it - is itself part of the ideology coldness perpetuates. It bears the compulsive, oppressive quality that counteracts the ability to love. The first thing therefore is to bring coldness to the consciousness of itself, of the reasons why it arose': Theodor W. Adorno, 'Education after Auschwitz' in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (New York; Chichester, Columbia University Press, 2005), pp.191-204 (p.202). See, also, Nora M. Alter, Lutz Koepnick and Richard Langston, 'Landscapes of Ice, Wind and Snow: Alexander Kluge's Aesthetic of Coldness', *Grey Room*, Fall (2013), 60-87, who argue that 'Adorno leaves little doubt that individual expressions of human warmth, intimacy, care, and love cannot correct the historical process. In fact, injecting the warmth of personal compassion and love - the dogma of Christianity - into the coldness of modern civilization would make matters worse, because it would obscure the very conditions that foster indifference in the first place' (p.61).

akairological rupture. The following conclusion will explore what the consequences of this thesis are in terms of contemporary discourse surrounding utopia.

Conclusion

What?

This thesis has argued that utopia may be rendered akairologically, through determinate negation of rational discourse by fortunate individuals, and that this negation can be best engendered through exacting music, which articulates the dialectic between Dionysian irrationality and Apollonian rationality. A central problem remained as to how utopia could be articulated within contemporary society that is dominated by neoliberal discourse (and within which history has come to a standstill), and the critical potential of music realized. It was argued that rational articulation and reasonable discourse will yield nothing but an emasculated blueprint utopia that serves only to reproduce existing social conditions, rather than to realize that which is radically new.

How?

After presenting different readings of utopia as either classic or iconoclastic, and discussion of time as polysemic through chronos, aion and kairos, the first chapter argued that Nietzsche's higher, self-overcoming, Dionysian individual is able to engender akairological ruptures which are utopian as read from within an Apollonian conception of chronological progress. Bloch was shown, in the move from his early, expressionist, *Spirit of Utopia* to the mature philosophy of the *Principle of Hope*, to domesticate Nietzsche's Dionysian in the service of a sober, collective and strictly Apollonian conception of utopia as a concrete possibility via a positive Hegelian-Marxist dialectic; a dialectic that positively coalesces cultural material in kairological fashion to proffer a classic, teleological reading of utopia. It was argued that while Bloch strives to avoid a classic, teleological conception of utopia,

through the notions of 'not yet' and *Vorschein*, he ultimately falls foul of cultural authoritarianism and commits an unwitting epistemological fallacy of having a pre-conceived notion of a future utopia. Adorno was shown to return to Nietzsche's individualism and invert Bloch's positive dialectic of utopia into a negative reading, whereby utopia is engendered by fortunate individuals who may, through technical mastery of advanced cultural material, render apparent such material's antinomies and contradictions. Adorno's lucky individual, then, is a reworking of Nietzsche's higher type, as one who is, after Bloch's social concern, interested in collective emancipation, as opposed to solipsism. Yet, while Nietzsche's higher type remained indifferent to the society that bore them, Adorno's lucky individual is always already a product of a particular society and culture, albeit one that, through their luck, has gained a precious distance from that society, and thus, like the art work that is at once a social fact and autonomous, has a capacity for critical reflection.

Ultimately, Adorno was presented as combining the works of his predecessors to provide a determinately negative reading of utopia that is premised on the notion that individuality cannot positively articulate utopia amidst a culture of reified thought. Instead, given that the Hegelian-Marxist dialectic is at a standstill – the forces and relations of production no longer in contradiction⁶⁴⁰ – contrary to orthodox Marxism, with its faith in *chronos*, and the coming of a better time (*kairos*) through revolution via class conflict, Adorno's negative dialectic eschews, in Nietzschean manner, notions of historical progress in favour of eccentric individuality rendering apparent the violence of identity thinking that such notions of progress are predicated upon. It was argued that through formal musical analysis (as most representative of Adorno's commitment to the immanent critique of the artwork –

⁶⁴⁰ See pp.169-170.

and thus a reading that allows the artwork to inform theory, contra Bloch's tendency to read theory into the particular work), and incorporating Nietzsche's perspectival seeing and Dionysian-Apollonian analyses, Adorno presented a reading of utopia that may be deemed akairological insofar as no positive outcome may be articulated in rational manner; the artwork is utopian in its aspiration to be itself, but realizes this aspiration only negatively, for it does not achieve identity, but only consciousness of its failure. This determinately negative reading of utopia meets the criterion of the etymological definition of the concept in the introduction as 'the good place that is no place'.

Why?

This thesis responded to the contemporary discourse surrounding utopia that reduces it to reform, where Bloch's reading of the concept is a dominant touchstone in any discussion of utopia, whilst Adorno's explicit, and Nietzsche's implicit discussions of utopia are conspicuous by their absence. I argued that Adorno's negative reading of utopia is a Nietzsche inspired one insofar as it demonstrates the limits of Apollonian, rational articulation, and, instead, argues that utopia may only be negatively approached. It is apparent that there is an acute need for Adorno's determinate negation as a counterpoint to Bloch's Hegelian-Marxism in utopian studies. This is because Adorno offers a sober, yet paradoxically radical, reading of utopia, given that he negatively articulates it through Nietzsche's perspectival seeing and hope in individual resistance to social mores.

As a result of this negative reading, it was argued that either a chronological, or, kairological reading of utopia would fail to withstand scrutiny amidst a culture of reified thought (identity thinking). Akairological utopia thus withstands scrutiny as a legitimate pursuit of the logic of identity thinking to its limits in contradiction. Nonetheless, akairological

utopia lacks efficacy in terms of guiding praxis. In this sense, my reading of utopia is, as outlined in the introduction, very much Adornian-Jamesonian, insofar as it proffers a critically substantive role in highlighting existing entrapment. Akairological ruptures highlight the limitations of existing socio-cultural mores in attempts – but, ultimately, failures – to render being wholly codifiable in positivist manner. Akairological ruptures are thus ultimately, in terms of capitalist discourse, untidy and unusable. It is precisely these negative qualities that serve a ‘positive’ purpose in my Adornian-Jamesonian reading of utopia as exercising a critically substantive role.

Implications

One of the motivations behind the thesis was the lack of explicit work focusing upon Nietzsche’s shadow over Bloch and Adorno, with due reference to the importance of a Dionysian ontology, music and the individual.⁶⁴¹ The importance of this relationship has been elucidated, as well as how Adorno’s corpus is indebted to the work of his two predecessors, insofar as it is representative of an exacting, negative and individualistic reading of utopia. A question remains, then, as to what the contemporary Adornian thinker of utopia is to do in the current socio-political climate. Ought they solely create or listen to avant-garde or Dionysian art, like Coltrane’s late works, in a highly disciplined manner, to exercise aesthetic awareness of the absence of utopia, and leave matters to rest there? Leaving aside aesthetics, if taking an Adornian perspective on socio-political reform, the contemporary thinker will still find little to concretely guide praxis. As Levitas observes: ‘it is all very well to say, as Adorno did, that there is tenderness only in the coarsest demand: that no-one shall go hungry any

⁶⁴¹ One notable exception to this is Rose’s *The Melancholy Science*, which is incorporated into Chapter Three for its discussion of Nietzsche’s influence on Adorno. However, there is yet to have been a comprehensive study of the influence on Nietzsche upon Bloch.

more - but honouring that has immense consequences for every aspect of social, economic and environmental organizations'.⁶⁴² In response to this, she argues that perhaps, 'pace Marx, the time has come to write some menus for the cafes of the future'.⁶⁴³ The concrete acuity to employ 'menus' for the future notwithstanding, what this thesis has argued for is the criticality of developing a reading of utopia that can withstand the challenge of a reified, fixed conception, which would seek to domesticate utopia in the service of a contingent political aspiration, however noble and humanitarian it may appear to be. Whilst concrete, piecemeal reform such as raising living wages in the UK is better than none at all insofar as it tangibly alleviates, in legislative terms at least, real world suffering, it is arguably the critical role of utopia to demonstrate the contingency of such political reforms. Put otherwise, the precondition of writing menus for the cafe of the future is an awareness of what it is – and is not – possible to think today, and to use the menu to bring those limits to consciousness.⁶⁴⁴ It is thus imperative that the concept of utopia be preserved through determinate negation, and not appropriated within the normative positive discourse; it is to favour akairological rupture over either chronological or kairological positive resolution.

My reading of utopia as akairological rupture is an iconoclastic one; through the indirect promulgation of it via determinate negation to reveal it as neither positively articulable through rational, Apollonian discourse, thus *ipso facto* Dionysian, nor legitimately chronologically plotted out, nor kairologically expressed with a telos in mind. This thesis has argued that a negative articulation of utopia as akairological is most forcefully realized

⁶⁴² Levitas, 'Be Realistic', p.92.

⁶⁴³ Levitas, 'Be Realistic', p.93.

⁶⁴⁴ As suggested in the introduction, there is a sense in which the pursuit of akairological utopia entails a negative transcendental philosophy. In highlighting the limitations of and contradictions in their thought, the thinker of utopia becomes aware of the need to side-step or outwit the limits of identity thinking. A menu of the future may be radical in the contradictory demands it places on the diner.

through music, as the most temporal of arts. That notwithstanding, utopia is also negatively realized in the oeuvre of Adorno via exacting literature, for example, the works of Samuel Beckett and Franz Kafka,⁶⁴⁵ in other words, art that engages in immanent critique of cultural material to render apparent the limits and contradictions in rational discourse. The role of the contemporary philosopher and artist, then, is to keep the possibility of critical thinking alive by highlighting existing antinomies and contradictions, instead of seeking to resolve them via positive dialectics that are necessarily implicated in identity thinking. In this thesis, both chronological and kairological futurity have been eschewed in favour of an exacting critique of any given present, to provide an Adornian-Jamesonian reading of utopia that is akairological. To echo Geuss's earlier remark, what remains in this akairological account of utopia is, whilst modest and uninformative in terms of guiding praxis, 'not nothing and in any case it is probably all we have'⁶⁴⁶ as a legitimate reading of utopia under late capitalism and the dominant logic of neoliberalism.

⁶⁴⁵ See, for example, Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.16, p.29, p.126, pp.134-135; Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, p.240; and Theodor W. Adorno, *History and Freedom: lectures 1964-1965*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), p.17.

⁶⁴⁶ Geuss, *A World Without Why*, p.114.

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