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The Affect of Dissident Language and Aesthetic Emancipation at the Margins

A Possible Dialogue between Theodor W. Adorno and Julia Kristeva

Marcia Morgan

Muhlenberg College

If the written language codifies the estrangement of classes, redress cannot lie in regression to the spoken, but only in the consistent exercise of strictest linguistic objectivity. Only a speaking that transcends writing by absorbing it can deliver human speech from the lie that it is already human.

Adorno, *Minima Moralia*¹

A Long Introduction

In this paper I focus on the interaction between affect and language as articulated in the works of Theodor W. Adorno and Julia Kristeva, sometimes in inchoate and non-explicit ways. Language is always in transit, exile, and dispossession. All language is the language of another, or the other, and precisely because of this, it is the site of dissenting and conflicting affect. In this context, the present paper traces a missed but necessary dialogue between Adorno and Kristeva. A beginning point of conversation between them is the assertion of the loss of inner subjectivity, or a 'private life' of subjective inwardness. For Adorno, this is a necessary loss that comes with the breakdown of false ideology and its concomitant reification of the subject-object relation. The destruction of subjective inwardness takes place within a critique of the problematic ideological tendencies inherent within late monopoly capitalism and its culture industry. For Kristeva the loss of a subjective or private inwardness is an unavoidable consequence of the oppression caused by the symbolic order comprised of everyday language representative of the patriarchal status quo. In her writings Kristeva

elaborates the problematic dismantling of what she calls ‘intimacy’, and it is not immediately clear how Kristevan intimacy could relate to Adorno’s critique. While Adorno proceeds from the collapse of subjective inwardness toward a negative dialectic of emancipation through linguistic objectivity experienced aesthetically – by means of a speaking that transcends writing by absorbing it – Kristeva aims to reawaken intimacy as the possibility of dissent and dissidence. Crucial to my analysis is Kristeva’s opposition of her notion of intimacy to any form of sentimentality, regression to an unmediated unconscious, or a turn to any mere ‘private life’ separated from the social and political spheres. Could this possibly resonate with Adorno’s critique of the subject and the aesthetic theory that arises out of this critique?

Adorno’s diagnosis of failed subjective inwardness was first presented in his monograph on Kierkegaard, the book titled *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, written between the years 1929-1933, and published in 1933. It appeared in print on January 27, “the day that Hitler declared a national emergency and suspended freedom of the press, making his transition from chancellor to dictator.”² Adorno’s *Kierkegaard* was meant to call out the fascistic tendencies internal to inward subjective ‘decisiveness’. Adorno sustained this critical theme throughout his entire collected writings, including in the posthumously published 1969 *Aesthetic Theory*. As Seyla Benhabib recently reminded us: “[...] for Adorno, thinking must resist the temptation to overpower the object, letting it instead appear and assert itself over against the epistemic imperialism of subjectivity.”³ Benhabib underscores “the primacy of the object” in Adorno, and describes compellingly how it “captures multiple epistemological, methodological, and even psychoanalytic dimensions” in his work.⁴ She recalls Adorno’s statement from *Negative Dialectics* that: “To use the strength of the subject to break through the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity – this is what the author felt to be his task ever since he came to trust his own mental impulses.”⁵ And his first and foremost measure in doing so is to break down an assumed interior life of inner ‘decisionism’ of the subject. By decisionism I mean an irrational adherence to one’s falsely assumed capacity to make ethical, moral, religious choices without any mediation of socio-political life or other materially relevant, concrete contexts that impinge upon one’s subjectivity.

In what follows, I will lay out Adorno’s forced collapsing of subjective interiority into a negative space that opens up aesthetic emancipatory potential. I then place Adorno’s negativity of subjective inwardness and the aesthetic potential after the fact of its destruction in dialogue with the work of Kristeva, who has also emphasized a subjective interiority of negativity but framed the latter in terms of the feminine, abjection and maternity. Although I engage Kristeva’s negativity, I distance my analysis from the shortcomings of her feminist theory – namely, its heteronormativity – and

problems with her psychoanalytic geopolitics. Although I agree with some of the feminist components of Kristeva's writings, I do not agree with all of them. Much previous scholarship on Kristeva has focused on the question of whether she provides an acceptable feminist theory. This is not my focus in this article. Rather, I'm interested to highlight elements of her writings that speak to a broader framework of an aesthetic capacity for emancipation at the margins of contemporary society, across categories of race, gender, class, sexuality, disability and more.

Adorno's methodology of "us[ing] the strength of the subject to break through the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity" is mirrored in Kristeva's writings where she argues against the possibility of any substantive 'subject' and advocates instead for a subject-in-process that is ever in practice as a speak-*ing* subject, but never able to be objectivized as such. For Kristeva, the subject is never spoke-*n*; it never speaks its self as an object, but continually strives for a language that could represent its ongoing processual and contingent state of being. Kristeva's examples of such subjectivity are intricately linked to her discussions of affect and intimacy. Her notion of intimacy is rooted in a conception of continual 'returning' or *changement*, a changing that provokes contestation and questioning at every juncture with stasis and any assumed progression of values, whereby one set of values would replace another in a more advanced manner.⁶ Her examples depict a subject as a striving for a language that does not become accumulated as an object; the subject does not become assimilated into the social whole but rather retains its heterogeneity and singularity. Does this mean that Kristeva is more subjective than Adorno would allow and/or that she fails to subjugate the individual to the primacy of the object? Would Adorno reject Kristeva's emphasis on intimacy because of his commitment to consistent linguistic objectivity and his destruction of subjective interiority? I will attempt to answer these questions in the negative and thereby affirm a more productive collaboration between Adorno and Kristeva than might be construed by a cursory glance at their respective theories. It is important to note that two outstanding texts have already considered a connection between Adorno and Kristeva, one briefly and one substantively. In *Kristeva and the Political* Cecilia Sjöholm reads a brief theoretical sympathy between them, but construes their divergence in Adorno's alleged foreclosing of the object.⁷ I disagree with Sjöholm's reading of Adorno on this point and attempt to read Adorno and Kristeva together through their respective relationships to language. Ewa PŁonowska Ziarek has read a much more substantive relationship between Adorno and Kristeva, and has placed this within a conversation on specifically *feminist* writing, a focus from which my project is distanced, as noted above in regard to Kristeva's feminism, although I find Ziarek's monograph as a whole extremely helpful and provocative.⁸

The process of ‘striving for’ language and subjectivity in Kristeva makes itself manifest as experiences of affects, as a means to discover *the failures of language* through affectivity, initiated by the exclusion of heterogeneous and singular dimensions of the subject from the symbolic order of everyday language. The subject that comes to fruition has something in common with what Judith Butler describes in “Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of ‘Postmodernism’” as follows: “[...] it is important to remember that subjects are constituted through exclusion, that is, through the creation of a domain of deauthorized subjects, presubjects, figures of abjection, populations erased from view.”⁹ Although Butler has been highly critical of Kristeva’s work,¹⁰ I nonetheless discern some analytic sympathies between their writings. The subjectivity just cited is what Butler has described in her essay on “Variations on Sex and Gender” as a subjective identity constituted through an ‘incessant’ repetition of acts that implode any linear temporality of selfhood, but continually attempt to re-ground their selves through performativity.¹¹ In the context of Kristeva’s work, this yields a subject that remains necessarily ungrounded and yet definitely *heard*. It is a subject bound by sensed performativity of disruptive and dissenting affect vis-à-vis the object. I appreciate a reading of Adorno in sympathy with such an understanding of the subject while not diminishing the necessity of paying heed to the object. In fact, I aim to underscore this necessity.

There are many powerful critiques of Kristeva that must be addressed here at the outset of my paper. Most relevant to my current analysis is Drucilla Cornell’s evaluation where she rejects Kristeva’s theory of language and subjectivity because it reinscribes the female as the other.¹² (Judith Butler and Nancy Fraser have made equally negative assessments, although from perspectives different from each other and from Cornell’s.¹³) Because of her criticism of Kristeva, Cornell turns to Adorno’s version of negativity as an antidote to any staid binary formulations through non-identitarian thinking. In contrast to Cornell’s argument, I aim to show a common ground between Kristeva and Adorno through the positions of exclusion and dissidence, realized by both philosophers by means of the social situation of the art work. The latter instigates an undoing of social norms that facilitates aesthetic emancipation. Kristeva and Adorno are united in their belief in social-political emancipation through art. But this is no ‘artistic revolt’ as some commentators have concluded pejoratively. Although there are certainly limitations to what both Adorno and Kristeva have accomplished, respectively, in regard to the relationship between their aesthetic theories and the political,¹⁴ I argue that when their models are thought together a powerful framework can be achieved by which to construe a political capacity of aesthetic experience while not allowing art to become politicized through either constitutive ‘subjectivity’ or its equal and opposite – idealistic objectivity – both of which lead to propagandizing art and therefore manipulation of the subject. By a political capacity for emancipation that can

arise out of Adornian and Kristevan aesthetic experience, I mean the political as a *capacity for contestation*, not concretely applicable politics.¹⁵ In order to demonstrate this claim, I will finish my analysis by placing Kristeva's linguistic theory of affect and dissidence in conversation with Adorno's philosophy of the language of music, as one example of their shared framework for aesthetic emancipatory experience. In doing so I am relying on Albrecht Wellmer's insights into the productively discordant relationship between language and music and what he helpfully pinpoints as the "rationalistic fiction" at the heart of Adorno's aesthetics.¹⁶ This sheds a great deal of light on the striving for a language advocated by Adorno in his philosophy of music, which I contend resonates provocatively with Kristevan aesthetics.

Ultimately, I claim that there is something similar between what Adorno and Kristeva each has to say regarding the relationship between affect and language when thought through the example of music. They both regard music (and literature, for that matter) as an exemplar of dissent and dissidence as an expression of social-political exclusion from the status quo of everyday normative language. There is nothing sentimental or private about what either philosopher seeks to accomplish; rather each has a social-political goal. Their respective relationships to the political—as a capacity for contestation—are similar in that they are trying to think thinking and therefore language anew by examining the failure of language for singularity and heterogeneity, what Adorno calls the nonidentical and what Kristeva regards as the intimate. Both Adorno and Kristeva aim to capture the experience of this failure through aesthetics. The philosophy of music provided by Adorno and Kristeva strives for linguistic objectivity experienced affectively. The latter acts in contradistinction to the symbolic order (for Kristeva) and in sustained opposition to positive or idealistic dialectics in which subject and object would be equal and adequate to each other and therefore fall into a static and hence empty identitarian relationship (for Adorno).

Adorno, the Collapse of Inward Subjectivity, and the Negative Space of Emancipation

Throughout his expansive collection of writings, via different philosophic constellations, Adorno diagnoses the failure of subjective interiority or inwardness to emancipate the individual subject. For example, in his early work, *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, Adorno draws on the literary motif of the bourgeois *intérieur*, first thematized in collaboration with Walter Benjamin for Benjamin's *Arcades Project*, in order to call out the collapsed space of failed subjective inwardness that Adorno critiques at the heart of Kierkegaard's religious philosophy of existence. Although I disagree with

Adorno's reading of Kierkegaard, as I have explained in detail in my 2012 monograph, *Kierkegaard and Critical Theory*, nonetheless Adorno's reading is very instructive for an understanding of Adorno's own aesthetic theory, as I argued in my dissertation.¹⁷ In *Kierkegaard*, in the section titled "Intérieur," Adorno writes:

The fitting name of the "situation," as the powerless-momentary indifferenciation of subject and object, is [...] to be found in the imagery of the apartment interior, which, while it discloses itself only to interpretation, demands interpretation by its striking independence. It is the bourgeois *intérieur* of the nineteenth century, before which all talk of subject, object, indifferenciation, and situation pales to an abstract metaphor, even though for Kierkegaard the image of the *intérieur* itself serves only as a metaphor for the nexus of his fundamental concepts. The relation is reversed as soon as interpretation gives up the compulsion of identity that is exerted even by Kierkegaard's idea of situation, which indeed exclusively occurs as the actual site of inward decisiveness.¹⁸

From this passage and from the broader context of Adorno's Kierkegaard critique, we can see the interpolation of the social space into the private domain of subjective space, for the social space both colonizes and reifies the private domain. The private space retreats into Kierkegaardian "inward decisiveness," only to invert its own situation – against its intention and self-interpretation – therefore, making explicit its embeddedness in the social "situation." Because of the failed space of inward subjectivity, Adorno turns to an aesthetic that facilitates moments – albeit transitory, fleeting ones – of emancipation from the oppression of social norms.

According to Max Pensky in his early book, *Melancholy Dialectics*, through the image of the bourgeois *intérieur* Adorno has caused one facet of Kierkegaard's writing to explode the static emptiness that Adorno indicts as the final product of Kierkegaard's inwardness.¹⁹ Similarly, in *The Origin of Negative Dialectics* Susan Buck-Morss synthesizes Adorno's forced implosion of private, isolated subjectivity in the following way:

Adorno's historical image aimed at demythification by transforming the symbolic relationships established by Kierkegaard's words into dialectical ones. By bringing Kierkegaard's philosophical contents into *critical* juxtaposition with symbols from the historical reality which had been their source, Adorno transformed Kierkegaard's eternally fixed images (which ruled over the individual fatalism of an astrological sign) into

dynamic, *historical* constellations: he set their elements in motion so that they negated the very concepts they were intended to symbolize.²⁰

The explosion of static emptiness in Adorno's critique of subjective interiority creates "dynamic, *historical* constellations" by provoking thought; I wish to explore this in more detail in and through its impact on Adorno's aesthetic theory. Following Benjamin's dictum that "Truth is the death of intention,"²¹ Adorno thwarts the aim of Kierkegaard's nineteenth-century aesthetic interior – to reach the heart of privacy and inwardness in the aesthetic domain – into a collapsed space of failed subjectivity. In fact, for Adorno, the interior space of Kierkegaardian subjectivity is no space at all. Adorno writes: "[...] the force of the material goes beyond the intention of the metaphor. The *intérieur* is accentuated in contrast to the horizon, not just as the finite self in contrast to the supposedly erotic-aesthetic infinitude, but rather as an objectless inwardness vis-à-vis space. Space does not enter the *intérieur*; it is only its boundary."²² But the failure of this aesthetic space will be also its redemption, because it infuses a dialectic into the void within which the position of the romantic aesthetic has been rendered into philosophical rubble. Adorno utilizes the place of failed subjectivity in which subject and object have been forced into a static equation as a transitional point to hope for the appearance of "the new." This motif substantiates Adorno's anti-identitarian thinking. The dialectical movement enters the remains of the domestic interior and facilitates the appearance of what has not yet existed. Thinking "the new" enables the experience of the nonidentical. Consciousness cannot master the new; it cannot even grasp the new – hence Albrecht Wellmer's description of "the rationalistic fiction" at the heart of Adorno's thinking. But the striving for the new – as an infinite process of unraveling the ever-same and simultaneously constructing what challenges the static – constitutes a negative dialectic praxis internal to artworks. This brings up their "situation," or what is referred to as their "*Ortsbestimmung*" in the German original of Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*, which was already a prominent theme in Adorno's *Kierkegaard* book. This is relevant to my analysis because *Ortsbestimmung* translates as the determination of place, localization, or fixation of position. Here we are reminded of the shattering of the bourgeois *intérieur* through Adorno's Kierkegaard critique. The place from which to determine the artwork can lie only in the margins, in exile. It belongs everywhere and nowhere contemporaneously, as a rationalistic fiction of the new without being able to seize it conceptually. This is both its freedom and its limitation. The *Ortsbestimmung* of the emancipating aesthetic experience recognizes the double-bind of its fixedness in a place that has never been. This gives it an object-like character that is also its *praxis*: the non-identical must always be strived for and can never reside in any one space. Art must empty itself of

content in order to make way for aesthetic emancipation; thus art redeems itself through its own self-abnegation. Hence the title of Adorno's *Kierkegaard* book: "The Construction of the Aesthetic." Adorno forced "Kierkegaard" into an aesthetic construction that would self-destruct. The seeds of this maneuver were already within Kierkegaard's corpus, according to Adorno, and he brought them to implode. In order to do this, Adorno constructs a practical activity of the artwork that empties the voluptuous space of bourgeois art and displaces the latter into "life"—beyond the domain of private spaces and into the public sphere. This becomes particularly ironic through Adorno's advocacy for art that is rather difficult to decipher: in refusing accessibility, difficult artworks become the most equitably created: they become available to all because they are inadequately grasped by anyone. Again, they belong everywhere and nowhere, hence their egalitarianism. The praxical comportment of difficult artworks shifts the ownership of art from the upper-middle class to an onus on each individual living subject to decipher any given artwork in a new manner. The philistine is no longer excluded from the means of high art, and the aesthetic nobility can no more lay claim to the comfort of the artwork as the material of their own private living room. By grasping Adorno's critique of the empty, or negative interiority of subjective inwardness, we achieve a renewed understanding of aesthetic emancipation via "thinking anew"—within the imaginative parameters facilitated in the face of oppressive, administrative regimes of appearances.

Kristeva, Negative Interiority in Exile, and Liberation

Adorno's aesthetic theory has been touted by many diverse critical theorists for the nonidentitarian space it provides liberatory experience. Drucilla Cornell, for one, has relied on the negativity of Adorno's thinking as an antidote to the shortcomings of Kristeva's feminist linguistics. In line with this, Kristeva has been rebuked for hypostatizing gender categories and forgetting their possible excesses outside the space of their presence as binaries because of her reliance on Lacanian psychoanalysis. In addition to Cornell's unfavorable assessment, Judith Butler and Nancy Fraser, in *Rethinking French Feminism*, strike different registers but are equally totalizing in their negative evaluation of Kristeva's work. However, I want to show another side of Kristeva's thinking distanced from the gender binary in her writings; I am trying to *hear* Kristeva's linguistics differently through "a speaking that transcends writing by absorbing it." In the spirit of Amy Allen's methodology in *The Power of Feminist Theory*, we can interpret seminal figures in ways that "make them groan,"²³ forcing them to contort their frameworks into more productive arrangements and generative constellations with seemingly incongruous or even unsympathetic thinkers.

In this way, I am trying to read Adorno with Kristeva, while also reading Kristeva against her own binaric shortcomings in her gender theory.

Drucilla Cornell points to a simultaneous destructiveness and creativity in the role Kristeva assigns the feminine in language. I argue that this double-move of creativity and destructiveness in Kristeva bears similarity to Adorno's negativity via aesthetic experience. In "Feminism, Negativity, Subjectivity," Cornell and co-author Adam Thurschwell write:

For Kristeva, feminine negativity is the unrepresentable, nonviolent disruptor of all fixed linguistic and social codes [...]. Kristeva's 'femininity' is both destructive power and life-enabling source. In it she sees the potential and home of a mode of relativity that is captured by neither the repressive totality nor hierarchized difference. However, we will suggest that Kristeva's sole reliance on the negative makes this goal unreachable, and indeed brings her very close to the very tendencies she wants to avoid.²⁴

Although they claim that Kristeva shares the ethos of Marcuse's negativity as "the liberatory impulse of the social process," which aims to distinguish "all pseudo- and crackpot" opposition from true negativity, Cornell and Thurschwell want to remedy certain shortcomings in Kristeva's linguistic analyses of the female as the negative in language by turning to Adorno's anti-identitarian framework.²⁵ Negativity in Adorno can be understood as a result of the wrong state of things. Such a formulation lends itself to Kristeva's work, but in a way not previously recognized. Kristeva's "sole reliance on the theme of the negative," which ends as a utopia of *jouissance*, has been contrasted with an analysis of negativity that would allow us "to know what such a world would look like in a concrete setting."²⁶ In order to arrive there, Cornell and Thurschwell turn to Adorno's critique of Hegel and conclude that "Hegel's central error lies in his attempt to recuperate Negativity in the Concept self-consciously returned to Itself [...]. Adorno's negative dialectics free Hegel's insight [into the Negative] from the confines of his system."²⁷ This was the move in Adorno's Kierkegaard critique elicited by Adorno's reenactment within Kierkegaard's writings of the positive idealism both Adorno and Kierkegaard attribute to Hegel. Regardless of what one regards the most compelling version of Hegelian negativity, what matters for the purposes of my analysis in this paper is Adorno's attempt to bring the structure of subjective interiority crumbling down (as we saw exemplified in his Kierkegaard book), in order then to create a new space of negativity for the not-yet-existing and ever new. Adorno's methodology ends in a negative space of aesthetic emancipation similar to what Kristeva constructs through her political writings—that is, in her writings of existence at the margins: as the dissident, the foreigner, the abject. By turning to Kristeva's writings about dissidence and the excluded abstracted from her concrete applications and her psychoanalytic

geopolitics, we can think Kristeva and Adorno together in an understanding of negative interiority via aesthetic experience.

What do I mean by the negative space in Kristeva and its link to emancipatory experience? This is an important question because I intend the answer as one of the main connections of her work to Adorno. Consider again the lack of space in Adorno's diagnosis of Kierkegaardian inwardness and the construction of the aesthetic after the downfall of the constitutive subject (analyzed in Part I of this paper). As Adorno argues in the Kierkegaard book: "Space does not enter the *intérieur*; it is only its boundary."²⁸ If the space is no space at all, it is an Archimedean point attempted by the subject to establish the self indubitably and eternally, a continued haunting by the "Cartesian ghost"—precisely the opposite of Kristeva's approach to the subject as a subject-*in-process* *as-process* of speaking. Emancipation for both Adorno and Kristeva takes place in the space *on the border* of the subject, as a margin or threshold with the object. This is a negative space in relation to the subject because the subject cannot grasp it; it can only posit the space that lies on the perimeter of its own failure as a subject. Think of Adorno's dictum that "philosophy is more than bustle only where it risks total failure," only where it borders on the complete destruction of subjectivity in order to make space for the appearance of the object. This process shows the necessity of thinking—and speaking—at the margins of the social-political sphere where subjectivity has ended and linguistic objectivity can begin. What I have described as a negative space in Adorno has been well explicated in the secondary literature as a threshold or chronotope in Kristeva's writings. These conceptions bear an interesting and helpful relationship to the political as a capacity for contestation.

In her brief article, "A New Type of Intellectual: The Dissident," published in 1977, as Toril Moi recapitulates:

Kristeva puts the case for a new form of political engagement among intellectuals, an engagement that would escape the old master-slave dialectics outlined by Hegel. In her description of the new politics of marginality, she indicates how a move away from the purely verbal level of politics (mentioning colour, sound and gesture as alternatives) would mobilize the forces necessary to break up the symbolic order and its law. The article, however, does not reject law and society; rather it hopes for a new law and a different society. Drawing on the experience of marginality and exile, whether physical or cultural, the intellectual can still spearhead a certain kind of subversion of Western bourgeois society.²⁹

Kristeva's article on "The New Type of Intellectual" challenges closed society and its groups (the Nation, the Family, the State, the Party) and its technocratic and administrative forms of discourse. There we see Kristeva breaking out of the master-slave dichotomy some of the feminist critics I have mentioned (Cornell, Butler, Fraser) have accused her linguistic analyses of repeating. As Kristeva argues: "Whether or not the master is the Greatest Number and Everyone's Idea of Good, this cannot hide the fact that this dichotomy induces a kind of pro-slavery mentality in the intellectual, who represents the supreme product of the systematic conjunction of Christianity and capitalist production."³⁰ This claim resonates with Adorno's critique of Kierkegaard. The Christian philosopher, Adorno alleges, reinforces bourgeois principles through the retreat to the domestic interior as the paradigmatic space of private capital. But it furthermore reveals Kristeva's own turn away from the dichotomous us-them relationality appropriated within her feminist semiotics. She writes further in "The Dissident" article:

[...] [t]he role of the Western intellectual has been reduced to patching up social groups. The intellectuals (a separate sociological entity made necessary by the present development of productive forces) have used their superior historical perspective inherited from the nineteenth century to devote themselves to a cause whose ideal of social and economic equality is evidence but which serves both to swallow up the particular characteristics of intellectual work and to perpetuate the myth of a successful society whose messianism, when not Utopian, has turned out to border on totalitarianism. Whether euro-communist or not, the future of Western society will greatly depend on a re-evaluation of the relationship of the masses to the individual or intellectual, and on our ability to break out of the dialectical trap between these oppositions and to recast the whole relationship.³¹

In this passage Kristeva highlights the slippage about which Adorno likewise remarked, namely, the slide from nineteenth-century bourgeois subjectivity to twentieth-century identitarianism, catastrophically realized in the most oppressive social-political forms and their totalitarian regimes of appearances. Like Adorno, Kristeva seeks to upend this trajectory and craft out of the destructiveness a newfound aesthetic materiality of the social situation from the position of exile. Both are fighting against maligned notions of progress and enlightenment in Western European contemporary culture. She argues for 'new languages' rooted in sense, sound, color and gesture. Kristeva claims:

In the wake of a Christianity in a state of terminal crisis, one sees only too well how modern art, whether painting, music or literature, is an attempt to achieve sublimation even when it inevitably borders on psychosis or mental disorder. But the *modern community* is given a new status by the practice of this independent avant-garde, and above all by the spread of underground culture to the masses. There is a new synthesis between the sense, sound, gesture and colour, the master discourses begin to drift and the simple rational coherence of cultural and institutional codes breaks down. It is on this background that we can perceive a new status of the *modern community*.³²

Important for my analysis, Kristeva concludes that “these new languages use the group to question particular forms of subjectivity or the unconscious.”³³

Kristeva and Adorno meet in exile. They collaborate in the margins of their respective aesthetic theories where they extradite identity thinking into the ‘no longer’ and make room for the ‘not yet’. The language that unites them is an artistic one irreducible to dichotomous constructions as well as subject-object idealisms, and yet it must meet what Adorno calls the “strictest linguistic objectivity.” In the next part of my paper, I will investigate what this means in the domain of music and how it is possible. Meanwhile, we can grasp the dissident dimension in Kristevan linguistics experienced aesthetically when she writes: “A playful language therefore gives rise to a law that is overturned, violated and pluralized, a law upheld only to allow a polyvalent, polylogical sense of play that sets the being of the law ablaze in a peaceful, relaxing void.”³⁴ This void—akin to an Adornian negative space of aesthetic emancipation—is experienced affectively as a form of desire that “is stripped down to its basic structure: rhythm, the conjunction of body and music, which is precisely what is put into play when the linguistic *I* takes hold of this law.”³⁵ At this juncture, the dialogue I have attempted to set up between Adorno and Kristeva will delve into the “conjunction of body and music” and resonate within the parameters of a philosophy of the language of music, in order to demonstrate a powerful aesthetic theory of liberation at the margins of language. As Kristeva has written in “My Memory’s Hyberbole,” “The labyrinths of the *speaking subject*—the microcosm of a complex logic whose effects had only partially surfaced in society— led us directly toward regions that were obscure but crucial, specific but universal, particular but transhistorical, far from society’s policed scenarios.”³⁶ So far I have sought to evince another way of seeing—or rather hearing—Kristeva’s philosophy of the Other through similarities with Adorno’s aesthetic theory, after both the destructiveness and

destruction of subjective interiority and the subsequent opening for thinking anew.

Music and Language: A Productively Discordant Relationship

Recent scholarship in critical theory questions its normative foundations and calls us to deprovincialize and decolonize critical theory.³⁷ The seeds for this were already sewn in the feminist critiques in critiquing the reification of critique.³⁸ In this context, I find a joint experiment with Adorno and Kristeva provocative. What Kristeva calls the symbolic order, what Adorno criticizes as positive dialectics, can be placed within the context of everyday language and the reification of norms: the language of patriarchal institutions, the language of the unreflected natural attitude. I am interested to show that Kristeva and Adorno are working on similar moves within their respective challenges to the linguistic status quo, and in the way in which they are doing it, although certainly some components of their projects diverge and even clash.

Let me turn now to the philosophy of the language of music as a culmination of my analysis. Throughout her collected writings, but most specifically in the early works, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (published 1974 in France, 1984 in the U.S.) and *Language the Unknown* (published 1981 in France, 1989 in the U.S.), Kristeva repeatedly references music as an exemplar of artistic creation that “questions the omnivalence of the sign and meaning,” therefore “mak[ing] the problematic that stops semiotics evident.”³⁹ In her linguistics Kristeva theorizes that the symbolic order oppresses but is also in a constant dynamic with the semiotic domain of the corporeal, material pre-linguistic realm coextensive with heterogeneity, singularity, and desire. I would like to highlight features of her language theory for music that speak to what I have presented already. In *Language the Unknown* Kristeva argues that music is “a differential system without semantics, a formalism that does not signify.”⁴⁰ Could this be close to the “consistent linguistic objectivity” intended by Adorno, when thought within his philosophy of music?

In *Language the Unknown* Kristeva includes a brief analysis of musical language in the culminating chapter of the book, the chapter on “Semiotics.” In these pages she rejects both “the subjective and vague discourse that floods music treatises” as well as “precise but purely technical studies.”⁴¹ Similar to Adorno, she wants answers to the question that asks in what way music is a language, and by what means it can be clearly, even “radically,” distinguished from verbal language. In regard to terms such as “musical language,” “semantics,” “morphology,” and the “syntax” of music, Kristeva inquires what kind of “specific system” is “the signifying system of

music."⁴² Her response is that the similarities between the system of the language of music and the system of verbal language are indeed "considerable." Consider the following passage from *Language the Unknown*:

Verbal language and music are both realized by utilizing the same material (sound) and by acting on the same receptive organs. The systems both have *writing* systems that indicate their entities and their relations. But while the two signifying systems are organized according to the principle of the *difference* of the components, this difference is not of the same order in verbal language as it is in music. Binary [phonematic] [my bracketing] differences are not pertinent in music. The musical code is organized by the *arbitrary* and *cultural* (imposed within the frameworks of a certain civilization) difference between various vocal values: *notes*.⁴³

There is something alternative in the language of music that does not yield meaning in the sense of verbal language. Music "takes us to the limit of the system of the sign."⁴⁴ It gives us a system of differences that does not *mean* something, as is the case with verbal language. Again, she calls music a "differential system without semantics, a formalism that does not signify."⁴⁵ I ask in turn whether, in its lack of meaning, it is more capable of resisting the symbolic order than verbal language? Could this relate to the 'linguistic objectivity' intended by Adorno? How could this be possible if the musical code includes components that are arbitrary and culturally imposed? This would seem to be the implications of her description. Let me re-trace the steps of my argument: I am exploring the relationship between language and affect. I began by thinking through Adorno's imperative that "only a speaking that transcends writing by absorbing it" no longer lies that it is human. Such a speaking recaptures the human in the form of linguistic objectivity. How? What kind of speaking does this? This is not speech in the normative sense because this is "regressive" to constitutive subjectivity and idealist dialectics for Adorno and oppressive within the symbolic order for Kristeva. It is through a speak-ing subject that is not constituted, but rather aesthetic and political at the same time. How? Music is the example for both Adorno and Kristeva in what can carry this out.

Kristeva tells us that semiotics can do two things with music: 1) it can "study the formal organization of different musical texts," and 2), "it can establish the common 'code,' the common musical 'language' of an era or culture." Therefore, the "degree of communicability of a particular musical text" relies on "its resemblance to or difference from the musical code of the time."⁴⁶ The more a musical text resembles the musical 'code' of its time, the less it communicates. Music that is truly communicative creates its own new code. Such music partakes of the semiotic realm, in contrast to the symbolic

language she finds oppressive and which forecloses on heterogeneity and individuality. She cites Schoenberg's work as a search for a language, not a language itself: "The idea of sound itself comes to occupy the preponderant position—a new syntax and specific new forms [...]."⁴⁷ Schoenberg serves as Kristeva's main example. This places her in an interesting alliance with Adorno's philosophy of the language of music. Kristeva is attracted to the idea of a new code that breaks the system of previous linguistic structures and thereby enables emancipation from the symbolic order.

Let us think about this in relationship to Adorno's philosophy of music. In *Quasi Una Fantasia* in a fragment on music and language Adorno offers the following analysis:

Music resembles a language. Expressions such as musical idiom, musical intonation, are not simply metaphors. But music is not identical with language. The resemblance points to something essential, but vague. Anyone who takes it literally will be seriously misled. Music resembles language in the sense that it is a temporal sequence of articulated sounds which are more than just sounds. *They say something, often something human* [my emphasis]. The better the music, the more forcefully they say it. The succession of sounds is like logic: it can be right or wrong. But what has been said cannot be detached from the music. Music creates no semiotic system.⁴⁸

Music is the example for Adorno of a speaking that offers something human, a speaking that transcends written language. While Adorno regards music to have a conceptual-like constitution, he is careful to delimit the language of music from conceptual language itself. Music entails what he calls "ciphers," which are "always capable of entering into a particular context." He claims that music "does contain things that come very close to the 'primitive concepts' found in epistemology. It makes use of recurring ciphers." Not to regard this as a positive statement, it serves as the beginning of Adorno's critique of sedimented and reified musical elements foundational to harmony and voice leading, which he opposes through his celebration of works such as Schoenberg's. So when Adorno contends that music's ciphers "come close" to primitive concepts in epistemology, he means this as what is culturally to be overcome, similar to Kristeva's critique of the symbolic order.

The repeating ciphers in music make it difficult for those trained in tonality to let go of it. The ciphers:

become sedimented like a second nature [...] But the new music [such as that of Schoenberg, Berg and Webern, to name just three examples] rises up in rebellion against the illusion implicit in second nature. It dismisses as

mechanical these congealed formula and their function. However, it does not dissociate itself entirely from the analogy with language, but only from its reified version which degrades the particular into a token, into the superannuated signifier of fossilized subjective meanings. Subjectivism and reification go together in the sphere of music as elsewhere. But their correlation does not define music's similarity to language once and for all. In our day the relationship between music and language has become critical.⁴⁹

The language of music is different for Adorno because of its distance from the language of intentionality. But he also regards a theological dimension in music that could be related to Kristeva's notion of intimacy through the connection of sensuousness experienced in a messianic context. Where music has no signitive meaning for Kristeva, it embodies ambiguity and vagueness for Adorno. Adorno rejects a semiotic dimension in music but attributes "incipient intentions" to musical meaning, to be distinguished from the unambiguous constructions of intentional language. Music need not be consoled for its curse of ambiguity, according to Adorno, because, through its mythic aspect "intentions are poured into it," however, in a way that keeps the intentions "hidden." What kind of intentions does music then perform? They are not conceptually grounded; they are linked to what he calls a theological dimension. And they imply mythic content, and are, perhaps most important— *human*. Music's intentions are hidden and yet manifestly experienced through the continued generative capacity of musical performance and listening. Music is interpreted by playing more music; musical meaning lies in its performance, not in its correspondence with intentional language. There is nothing sentimental or subjective to this; but there might be what Kristeva allows under the name of intimacy. Adorno creates an intimate sphere of musical expression that cannot be reduced to mere "elusive individual intentions" or "intentionless content"⁵⁰; remember, he is striving for linguistic objectivity and made his first move in this direction against Kierkegaard's alleged "objectless intentions." Adorno rejects "transitory and adventitious meanings in music."⁵¹ But this is also no *mere* formalism. He is careful to define this:

Every musical phenomenon points to something beyond itself by reminding us of something, contrasting itself with something or arousing our expectations. The summation of such a transcendence of particulars constitutes the 'content'; it is what happens in music. But if musical structure or form is to be more than a set of didactic systems, it does not just embrace the content from outside; it is the thought process by which content is defined.

Music becomes meaningful the more perfectly it defines itself in this sense—and not because its particular elements express something symbolically. It is by distancing itself from language that its resemblance to language finds its fulfillment.⁵²

What Adorno calls ‘the new music’ invites our expectation by grasping language as a thinking that hears the delimitation from language. The new music provokes our assumed intentions in a way that is not itself linguistic, but rather affective. New music thwarts our presumptions as it relies on sedimented ciphers. In this way, music is a speaking that transcends the written sign by absorbing it. This can only be felt in the phenomenon of the affect by listening to and performing musical innovation.

For Adorno, ‘the new music’ makes explicit as a sensuous experience what is already taking place as the self-alienating process within language itself, indeed within the language we hold to be most dear and closest to our native conceptions of our selves: our mother tongue. In a chapter in the 2012 publication, *Beyond the Mother Tongue: The Postmonolingual Condition*, Yasemin Yildiz recapitulates Adorno’s argument that language is neither natural nor arbitrarily constructed as a relationship between signifier and signified.⁵³ I agree in this context with both Yildiz and with Peter Hohendahl’s claim in *Prismatic Thought* that for Adorno the semantic and semiotic are not separated and arbitrary, but related. This places Adorno’s philosophy of language well in conversation with Kristeva’s in regard to their shared understanding of a meaning that arises in between a process of grasping thought and manifested truth, as a battling interplay between the mutually reliant semiotic and semantic domains. Yildiz demonstrates forcefully that: “Words partake of truth and therefore are not arbitrary signs, but also [...] are nevertheless not organic.”⁵⁴ Adorno therefore positions his notion of language against a monolingual paradigm according to which the mother tongue would be the site of pure origin. He relies rather on the notion of the *Fremdwort* (foreign-derived word, not ‘foreign word’ as it has been translated) in the mother tongue so that homogeneous and fully familiar language becomes impossible.⁵⁵ Yildiz argues: “In an unexpected way, then, this philosopher, who has been criticized for his privileging of German over other languages, reveals the different dimension of that which is *fremd* (foreign, alien, strange) within the ‘mother tongue’ and participates in a critically postmonolingual move beyond that linguistic family romance of maternal origin and purity.”⁵⁶ This adds a particularly productive tension to a dialogue between Adorno’s philosophy of language and Kristeva’s linguistics, in particular as a challenge to her semiotic claim of a maternal origin of language. But certainly we can read this not as a ‘pure’ linguistic origin for Kristeva, rather as a place of abjection and sensuousness, as a return and *changement* that undergirds the dynamic interplay between the symbolic order and semiotic maternity and negativity. Regardless of how

this tension could be further developed or speculated upon, both philosophers are in agreement against a 'prisonhouse' of everyday language and against facile forms of communication that foster administrative forms of rationality.

Adorno references the *Fremdwort* in the mother tongue as a way to articulate language as both produced (rather than naturally unfolding) and meaningful (rather than arbitrary). In his essay "Über den Gebrauch von Fremdwörtern [On the Use of Foreign-Derived Words]" Adorno claims: "This is why the life of language is not lived with the teleological rhythm of creaturely life with birth, growth, and death, but rather with naming as the enigmatic ur-phenomenon in between grasping thought and manifested truth, with crystallization as well as disintegration."⁵⁷ For Adorno foreign-derived words display their man-made nature openly. They therefore "serve as reminders of the origin of language in the acts of naming. In this manner, not the 'native' words, but these categorically strange words relate back to the moment of emergence of originary language." Yildiz continues:

Whereas original acts of naming are located in a mythical framework, the *Fremdwort* as an act of naming is a profane reminder of a theologically informed origin. In their profanity, *Fremdwörter* are historical; they are 'points at which cognizing consciousness irrupts'. What enters through them is freedom, as they signify the 'incursion of freedom' [...] The nonorganic, unassimilated existence of foreign-derived words testifies to a more general disjuncture in society, according to Adorno [...] The foreignness of words is thus a site at which social relations become legible.⁵⁸

Adorno has tried to capture precisely this dynamic of language that exposes the rift in social relations and the irruption of freedom into cognitive consciousness through the musical aesthetic experience.⁵⁹ Adorno's philosophy of the language of music attempts to capture the foreign-derived sense of all naming structures constitutive of originary language acquisition. In this sense all language is the language of another, or the other, and because of this the site of contesting affect.

Affect, the Transformed Subject, and New Constellations of Collectivity

What is then the connection between what I have worked out between affect and language, on one hand, and emancipation, on the other hand? Sara Ahmed has provided insightful scholarship on affect in Kristeva in regard to transformed subjectivity and its newfound potential for a collectivity that is

open and non-oppressive vis-à-vis all others, including “the stranger within.” Ahmed claims rightfully that in Kristeva’s work, even in its most political constellations, for example, in her discussions of nationhood, “emotions are ever present: whether in the passionate attachments to nationhood, or in the shame and pride of failing or living up to the national ideal. Here, [Ahmed considers] the role of emotion in aligning individual and collective, and the way in which such emotions do not come from either the inside (psyche) or the outside (collective), but allow for the very surfacing of bodies and collectives.”⁶⁰ Ahmed draws on Kristeva’s early work on *Powers of Horror* (1982) by etymologically evoking the literal connection among emotion, attachment, and *being moved*: “The word ‘emotion’ comes from the Latin *emovere*, suggesting “to be moved, to be moved out,” and “[w]hat moves us, what makes us feel, is also that which holds us in place, or gives us a dwelling place.”⁶¹ We are reminded of Kant’s description of aesthetic reflective judgment which manifests as a *feeling* that causes us to want to linger—although Kant means this in a non-emotional sense of feeling—, to while away in the midst of that which has moved us, as he writes in the third *Critique*.⁶² Yet, for Kristeva this fixedness in place has inherent within it a contingency that yields a connection between the contact that emotions move us to make and the contingency of those points of contact. Ahmed reminds us that the “The word ‘contingency’ has the same root in Latin as the word ‘contact’ (Latin: *contingere*: com-, *tangere*, to touch)” and she concludes from this word history that:

Contingency is linked then to metonymy and proximity, to getting close enough to both touch another and be moved by another. So what attaches us, what connects us to this or that place, or to this or that other, *such that we cannot stay removed from this other*, is also what moves us, or what affects us such that we are no longer in the same place. Hence movement does not cut the body off from the ‘where’ of its inhabitation, but connects bodies to other bodies—indeed, attachment takes place through movement, through being moved by the proximity of others. Emotions are bound up with how we inhabit the world ‘with’ others. Since emotions are, in the phenomenological sense, always intentional, and are ‘directed’ towards an object or other (however imaginary), then emotions are precisely about the intimacy of the ‘with’ [...] Such intensifications of feeling create the very effect of the distinction between inside and outside, or between the individual and the collective, which allows the ‘with’ to be felt in the first place.⁶³

Ahmed then engages in an analysis of pain in Freud’s *The Ego and the Id*. This leads her to theorize the creation of the surface of the body and therefore the

boundary of the self. But she is careful not to ontologize pain or suffering as the cause of the formation of the self: “Rather, it is through the flow of sensations and feelings that *become* conscious as pain and pleasure that different surfaces are established [...] [t]he transformation affected by recognizing a sensation as painful [...] also involves the *reconstitution of bodily space*.”⁶⁴ This brings us back to Adorno, the breakdown of the space of subjective interiority, and the construction a negative space of subjectivity as a border with the formerly constituted subject—through aesthetic emancipation.

Ahmed summarizes her argument about affect and the transformation of subjectivity into a contingent being with ever-developing borders open to questions by others and to questioning the dominance of the ‘stranger within’. Ahmed writes: “What this argument suggests is that feelings are not about the inside getting out or the outside getting in, but that they affect the very distinction between inside and outside in the first place. Clearly, to say that feelings are crucial to the forming of surfaces and borders is also to suggest that what makes those borders also unmakes them.”⁶⁵ Affect can “question the integrity of the subject” or become involved “in the very making of boundaries.”⁶⁶ The affective release provoked by listening to what both Adorno and Kristeva cite as an exemplar—the “new music” or other kinds of abject art—brings about alternative constructions of subjectivity from aesthetic experience. The subject thus created presents a different capacity of selfhood not constituted by means of bourgeois rationalism and its Cartesian ghost. Moreover, it is a capacity of the subject that had been rendered invisible by previous constructions of the relationship between reason and emotion. Kristeva and Adorno both want to make the invisible visible again. The newly transformed subjectivity must be encountered through aesthetic provocations so as not to ontologize pain and suffering, but to keep alive the memory of past harm in order to confront its possible futurity. The aesthetic in this manner agitates against future actual harm through the dissent internal to its unique way of speaking and being heard. This process resists the reification of overly subjectivized i.e. commodified and fetishized bodies as subjects in the bourgeois space of private capital, as well as the anesthetization of all feeling.

In his 2013 publication, *The Fleeting Promise of Art: Adorno’s ‘Aesthetic Theory’ Revisted*, Peter Uwe Hohendahl has also made this clear in his reconsideration of Adorno’s *Aesthetic Theory*. Hohendahl combines Adorno’s recasting of Kantian natural beauty with the necessity of the sublime in twentieth century aesthetics and emphasizes the role of ugliness in modern art. In his review of Hohendahl’s Adorno reading, David Roberts writes:

The concept of the ugly has a number of interrelated functions in [Adorno’s] *Aesthetic Theory*. It protests against

the commercialization of beauty; it points back behind the civilized semblance of art to art's primitive origins in myth and ritual and highlights the changing socio-historical purposes of art. The salience of the sublime in modern art can thus be read as a return of the repressed, of mythic terror. This unresolved dissonance of the archaic in the modern exemplifies the entwinement of enlightenment and myth as a dialectic of civilization, which calls conventional notions of progress into question.⁶⁷

Hence Adorno's aesthetics might be just what critical theory needs today in conversation with recent efforts to decolonize its normative commitments to progress.⁶⁸

Related to Adorno's turn to the sublime and regard for the necessity of ugliness in modern art, we can return to Kristeva's work on the powers of horror and the affects of the abject. Sara Ahmed writes: "It is not that what is abject is what has got inside from the outside; the abject turns us inside out as well as outside in. Hence, Kristeva suggests that, in abjection, borders become transformed into objects."⁶⁹ The abject dimensions of subjectivity become objectified through the social situation of the artwork. The affectivity of the subject that has lost its 'inner self' reveals the primacy of the object—as another object of sense experience and emotion. The affectivity turns the subject inside out, transforming an empty space that can only grasp the margins of what it is not into a new object to be sensed and experienced in a concretely material way. This maneuver from Kristevan scholarship calls for the end of imperial subjectivity, and in turn, the primacy of the object, which furthermore enables thinking new constellations of collectivity capable of political action.⁷⁰

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¹ Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, trans. E.F.N. Jephcott (London and New York: Verso Books, 2005), §65, p. 102.

² See Robert Hullot-Kentor, editor's introduction to Theodor W. Adorno, *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. xi.

- ³ Seyla Benhabib, "Arendt and Adorno: The Elusiveness of the Particular and the Benjaminian Moment," in *Arendt and Adorno: Political and Philosophical Investigations*, eds. Lars Rensmann and Samir Gandesha (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 33.
- ⁴ Benhabib, "Arendt and Adorno: The Elusiveness of the Particular and the Benjaminian Moment," 292 n. 11.
- ⁵ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1995), xx. Cited in *ibid.*
- ⁶ See S.K. Keltner, *Kristeva* (Cambridge UK and Malden MA: Polity, 2011), especially Chapter 3: "The Public Stake of Intimacy" and Chapter 4: "Intimate Revolt, Temporality, and the Society of the Spectacle," pp. 61-107. See Birgit Schippers, *Julia Kristeva and Feminist Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), especially Chapter 2: "Crisis, Revolt, Intimacy," pp. 55-86. See also Cecilia Sjöholm, *Kristeva and the Political* (Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2005), especially Chapter 5: "Revolutions of Our Time: Revolt as return," pp. 110-127. See also the collection of essays in *Revolt, Affect, Collectivity: The Unstable Boundaries of Kristeva's Polis*, eds. Tina Chanter and Ewa PŁonowska Ziarek (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005).
- ⁷ Cecilia Sjöholm, *Kristeva and the Political* (Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2005), 116-18.
- ⁸ Ewa PŁonowska Ziarek, *Feminist Aesthetics and the Politics of Modernism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), especially Chapters 1 and 5.
- ⁹ Judith Butler, "Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of 'Postmodernism'," in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, eds. Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), 13.
- ¹⁰ See Judith Butler, "The Body Politics of Julia Kristeva," in *Revaluing French Feminism*, eds. Nancy Fraser and Sandra Lee Bartky (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 162-76.
- ¹¹ Judith Butler, "Variations on Sex and Gender," in *Feminism as Critique*, eds. Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1987).
- ¹² Drucilla Cornell and Adam Thurschwell, "Feminism, Negativity, Subjectivity," in *Feminism as Critique*.
- ¹³ See Butler, "The Body Politics of Julia Kristeva," and Fraser, "The Uses and Abuses of French Discourse Theories for Feminist Politics," in *Revaluing French Feminism*, pp. 162-76 and 177-94, respectively.
- ¹⁴ For a helpful analysis of Adorno's relationship to the political, see Espen Hammer, *Adorno and the Political* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005). See also Sjöholm, *Kristeva and the Political*, in addition to the secondary literature referenced in the final endnote below.
- ¹⁵ In fact, Kristeva's concrete politics are problematic in the form of her psychoanalytic geopolitics and her comments on Muslims and immigrants.
- ¹⁶ Albrecht Wellmer, "Modernism and Postmodernism: The Critique of Reason Since Adorno," in *The Persistence of Modernity: Essays on Aesthetics, Ethics and Postmodernism*, trans. David Midgley (Malden MA: Polity Press, 1991), 71.

- ¹⁷ See Marcia Morgan, *Kierkegaard and Critical Theory* (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield/Lexington Books, 2012).
- ¹⁸ Theodor W. Adorno, *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, trans. Robert Hollot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1989), 40-41.
- ¹⁹ Max Pensky, *Melancholy Dialectics* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 141.
- ²⁰ Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics* (New York: The Free Press, 1977) 121.
- ²¹ Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (New York and London: Verso, 1998), 36.
- ²² Adorno, *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, 43.
- ²³ Amy Allen, *The Power of Feminist Theory* (New York: Westview Press (Boulder CO: 1999), Paper 5: "A Feminist Conception of Power," 119-38.
- ²⁴ Drucilla Cornell and Adam Thurschwell, "Feminism, Negativity, Subjectivity," in *Feminism as Critique*, 144.
- ²⁵ Cornell and Thurschwell, "Feminism, Negativity, Subjectivity," 152.
- ²⁶ Cornell and Thurschwell, "Feminism, Negativity, Subjectivity."
- ²⁷ Cornell and Thurschwell, "Feminism, Negativity, Subjectivity," 159.
- ²⁸ Adorno, *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, 43.
- ²⁹ Toril Moi, Introduction to "A New Type of Intellectual: The Dissident," in Julia Kristeva, *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 292.
- ³⁰ Kristeva, "A New Type of Intellectual: The Dissident," 293.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*
- ³² Kristeva, "A New Type of Intellectual: The Dissident," 294.
- ³³ *Ibid.*
- ³⁴ Kristeva, "A New Type of Intellectual: The Dissident," 295.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*
- ³⁶ Kristeva, "My Memory's Hyperbole," trans. Athena Viscusi, *New York Literary Forum*, 12-13, 1984: 261-76; reprinted in *The Portable Kristeva*, ed. Kelly Oliver (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 3-21, cited at 7. See also Bruce Baum, "Decolonizing Critical Theory," *Constellations*, vol. 22, no. 3 (September 2015), 420-34.
- ³⁷ See Drucilla Cornell, *Moral Images for Freedom: A Future for Critical Theory* (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), especially Chapter 4: "Decolonizing Critical Theory: The Challenge of Black Existentialism," pp. 105-36; Amy Allen, *The End of Progress: Decolonizing the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).
- ³⁸ See the collection of essays in *Feminism as Critique*.
- ³⁹ Kristeva, *Language the Unknown: An Initiation into Linguistics*, trans. Anne M. Menke (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 310.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

- ⁴¹ Kristeva, *Language the Unknown*, 308.
- ⁴² Kristeva, *Language the Unknown*, 308-9.
- ⁴³ Kristeva, *Language the Unknown*, 309.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Kristeva, *Language the Unknown*, 310.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ⁴⁷ Kristeva, *Language the Unknown*, 311.
- ⁴⁸ Theodor W. Adorno, *Quasi Una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London and New York: Verso Books, 1963), 1.
- ⁴⁹ Adorno, *Quasi Una Fantasia*, 2.
- ⁵⁰ Adorno, *Quasi Una Fantasia*, 5.
- ⁵¹ Adorno, *Quasi Una Fantasia*, 6.
- ⁵² Ibid.
- ⁵³ Yasemin Yildiz, *Beyond the Mother Tongue: The Postmonolingual Condition* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 67-108.
- ⁵⁴ Yildiz, *Beyond the Mother Tongue*, 80.
- ⁵⁵ Yildiz, *Beyond the Mother Tongue*, 67.
- ⁵⁶ Yildiz, *Beyond the Mother Tongue*, 71.
- ⁵⁷ Theodor W. Adorno, "On the Use of Foreign Words," in *Notes to Literature*, 2 vols., ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), vol. 2, 288.
- ⁵⁸ Yildiz, *Beyond the Mother Tongue*, 80-1.
- ⁵⁹ See Richard Leppert, "Introduction," in Theodor W. Adorno, *Essays on Music: Selected, with Introduction, Commentary, and Notes by Richard Leppert*, trans. Susan H. Gillespie (Berkeley, Los Angeles, New York: University of California Press, 2002), especially pp. 62-65.
- ⁶⁰ Sara Ahmed, "The Skin of the Community: Affect and Boundary Formation," in *Revolt, Affect, Collectivity: The Unstable Boundaries of Kristeva's Polis*, eds. Tina Chanter and Ewa PŁonowska Ziarek (Albany: SUNY Press, 2005), 100.
- ⁶¹ Ibid.
- ⁶² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J.H. Bernard (New York and London: Hafner Press, 1951), First Book: Analytic of the Beautiful.
- ⁶³ Ibid.
- ⁶⁴ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 101.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶⁶ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 101-2.

- ⁶⁷ David Roberts, "Review of Peter Uwe Hohendahl, *The Fleeting Promise of Art: Adorno's 'Aesthetic Theory' Revisited*," *Thesis Eleven*, vol. 1, no. 132 (February 2016), 116.
- ⁶⁸ In addition to Cornell's and Allen's respective scholarship on decolonizing critical theory, cited in note xxxv above, see the most recent scholarship on Adorno's aesthetics by Espen Hammer, *Adorno's Modernism: Art, Experience, and Catastrophe* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015). Hammer's work provides a very clear and convincing case why we should engage Adorno's aesthetics today and in what ways Adorno's writings relate to contemporary movements in art and art theory.
- ⁶⁹ Ahmed, "The Skin of the Community," 102.
- ⁷⁰ See, e.g., S.K. Keltner, *Kristeva* (Cambridge UK and Malden MA: Polity, 2011); Noëlle McAfee, *Julia Kristeva* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004); Cecilia Sjöholm, *Kristeva and the Political* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005); Kelly Oliver and S.K. Keltner (eds.), *Psychoanalysis, Aesthetics, and Politics in the Work of Kristeva* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009); Tina Chanter and Ewa PŁonowska Ziarek (eds.), *Revolt, Affect, Collectivity: The Unstable Boundaries of Kristeva's Polis* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2005).